

Supporting spirit of UN reforms, Rwanda urges world leaders to address global challenges

20 September 2017 – The United Nations must treat all people with impartiality and respect, and be a good steward of the funds entrusted to it, the President of Rwanda today said in his annual address to the General Assembly debate in New York, adding his country's support to the spirit of reform taking root at the Organization.

“Abuse and waste are therefore not a mere public relations problem, but an existential threat, which must be tackled head-on,” Paul Kagame said.

He urged support for Secretary General António Guterres, who is leading the reform effort, which President Kagame said would make the UN “not only effective, but transformational.”

Mr. Kagame urged other world leaders to address global challenges, saying “we have the tools and the mandates but where we fall short is in getting things done.”

“The essence of reform, is a mindset of constantly striving to improve performance and delivery, and holding ourselves responsible for shortcomings and results,” he stated.

He also noted areas for closer cooperation between the African Union and the UN on issues related to peace and security, as well as development.

[*Full statement available here*](#)

At General Assembly, Bosnia and Herzegovina stresses central role of UN in preventing war

20 September 2017 – The leader of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country born two decades ago in the deadliest fighting in Europe since the Second World War, today stressed the centrality of the United Nations in resolving crises before they degenerate into war and the flight of refugees.

“In Bosnia and Herzegovina, unfortunately, we know too much about the high price of wars,” Dragan Covic, the Chairman of the country's Presidency, told

world leaders from the podium of the UN General Assembly on the 2nd day of its annual general debate.

“On a global level, the United Nations system must be at the heart of all activities using preventive measures to resolve the crises and prevent people from leaving their homes. Again, much of the responsibility for prevention lies with other levels. Within our communities, we must counter all the symptoms of trouble and conflicts,” he added.

He highlighted the importance of correcting social injustice, reconciling the seemingly irreconcilable, persevering in compromise and striving for pluralistic and inclusive solutions.

In a wide-ranging speech Mr. Covic denounced violence against civilians in Syria, backed the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, called terrorism “undoubtedly the greatest evil of today,” and highlighted the importance of gender equality in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) that seek to eliminate a host social ills like hunger and poverty.

[Full statement available here](#)

[One year on, UN officials take stock of efforts to address large movements of refugees, migrants](#)

20 September 2017 – United Nations officials today highlighted the need to continue working together towards more equitable ways to share the responsibility for refugees, as well as achieve safe and orderly migration, at an event to take stock one year after the international community agreed to find solutions to better manage human mobility.

“I believe we can and must find a way through, based on a humane, compassionate, people-centred approach that recognizes every individual’s right to safety, protection and opportunity,” [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres [said](#) at the General Assembly side event on [refugees and migrants](#).

Recognizing that the issue of large movements of refugees and migrants is too vast for any one country to handle on its own, the UN convened a meeting of world leaders in September 2016 with the aim of finding durable solutions.

At the High-Level Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, all 193 Member States came together around one plan, the [New York Declaration](#), expressing their political will to save lives, protect rights and share responsibility on a global scale.

Today's event provided an update on two key commitments of the Declaration – the global compact on refugees, and the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

Mr. Guterres pointed to several priority areas for the year ahead as Member States work to advance the two compacts, including re-establishing the integrity of the refugee protection regime, developing national and international cooperation mechanisms that take human mobility into account, and greater accountability for the human traffickers and smugglers who profit from exploiting the despair of the most vulnerable. The Special Representative for International Migration, Louise Arbour, [underscored](#) that the ability to better manage human mobility rests on both compacts being widely-supported; human rights-centred, and with the needs of those most vulnerable firmly at their heart.

Ms. Arbour, who is responsible for leading the follow-up to the migration-related aspects of the 2016 High-level Summit, urged that the global compact for safe, orderly and migration be grounded in reality.

“The overwhelming majority of migrants move in a well-regulated fashion. Migration is a net positive to migrants and the communities from which they come and in which they settle.”

The crises that drove the adoption of the New York Declaration have not abated, High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi [told](#) the gathering. “And the need for international protection for those fleeing in search of safety is more compelling than ever.”

He noted that the root causes of refugee flows and the triggers of irregular migration are often intertwined, and in mixed migratory movements, refugees and migrants often face overlapping risks.

“More safe and regular pathways for admission and the creation of a more tolerant and accepting environment, would bring important benefits for both groups,” he stated.

[Not enough new antibiotics in the pipeline, UN report warns](#)

20 September 2017 – Too few new antibiotics are under development to combat the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance, a United Nations report has found.

The report released today by the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) says most of the drugs currently in the clinical pipeline are modifications of existing classes of antibiotics and are only short-term solutions.

“Antimicrobial resistance is a global health emergency that will seriously [jeopardize progress](#) in modern medicine,” said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom in a press release.

The report found very few potential treatment options for those antibiotic-resistant infections identified by WHO as posing the greatest threat to health, including drug-resistant tuberculosis which kills around 250,000 people each year.

“There is an urgent need for more investment in research and development for antibiotic-resistant infections including TB, otherwise we will be forced back to a time when people feared common infections and risked their lives from minor surgery,” Mr. Adhanom said.

In addition to multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, WHO has identified 12 classes of priority pathogens – some of them causing common infections such as pneumonia or urinary tract infections – that are increasingly resistant to existing antibiotics and urgently in need of new treatments.

The report identifies 51 new antibiotics and biologicals in clinical development to treat priority antibiotic-resistant pathogens, as well as tuberculosis and the sometimes deadly diarrhoeal infection *Clostridium difficile*.

Among all these candidate medicines, however, only eight are classed by WHO as innovative treatments that will add value to the current antibiotic treatment arsenal.

There is a serious lack of treatment options for multidrug- and extensively drug-resistant *M. tuberculosis* and gram-negative pathogens, including *Acinetobacter* and *Enterobacteriaceae* (such as *Klebsiella* and *E.coli*) which can cause severe and often deadly infections that pose a particular threat in hospitals and nursing homes.

The report also found that although oral antibiotics are essential for treatment outside hospitals or in resource-limited settings, few are in the pipeline.

“Pharmaceutical companies and researchers must urgently focus on new antibiotics against certain types of extremely serious infections that can kill patients in a matter of days because we have no line of defence,” said Suzanne Hill, Director of the Department of Essential Medicines at WHO.

To counter this threat, WHO and the Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi) set up a research and development partnership.

According to Mario Raviglione, Director of the WHO Global Tuberculosis Programme, research for tuberculosis is seriously underfunded, with only two new antibiotics for treatment of drug-resistant tuberculosis having reached the market in over 70 years.

“If we are to end tuberculosis, more than \$800 million per year is urgently needed to fund research for new anti-tuberculosis medicines,” he said.

Treaty banning nuclear weapons opens for signature at UN

20 September 2017 – The world's first legally-binding treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons opened for signature today at United Nations Headquarters in New York at a ceremony at which speakers from international organizations, governments and civil society hailed this milestone in achieving a world free of such arsenals as well as the work that remains to be done.

"The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is the product of increasing concerns over [the risk posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons](#), including the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences of their use," UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres said at the ceremony, held on the margins of the General Assembly's high-level debate.

"The Treaty is an important step towards the universally-held goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. It is my hope that it will reinvigorate global efforts to achieve it," he added, acknowledging the contributions made by civil society and the hibakusha – the atomic bomb survivors.

At the same time, Mr. Guterres, highlighted the difficult road ahead by recalling that there remain some 15,000 nuclear weapons in existence. "We cannot allow these doomsday weapons to endanger our world and our children's future," he said.

The Treaty – adopted on 7 July this year at a UN conference in New York by a vote of 122 in favour to one against (Netherlands), with one abstention (Singapore) – prohibits a full range of nuclear-weapon-related activities, such as undertaking to develop, test, produce, manufacture, acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, as well as the use or threat of use of these weapons.

However, nuclear-armed States and most of their allies stayed out of the negotiations. Immediately following its adoption, the United States, the United Kingdom and France issued a joint press statement saying that they "have not taken part in the negotiation of the treaty... and do not intend to sign, ratify or ever become party to it."

The Treaty will enter into force 90 days after it has been ratified by at least 50 countries.

At today's ceremony, chaired by UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu, 41 countries signed the Treaty, with more expected later in the day. The Holy See and Thailand not only signed but also ratified it.

The President of the General Assembly, Miroslav Lajčák, noted at the ceremony

that the Treaty demonstrates the will of Member States to bring about change.

“It will raise public awareness about the risks of nuclear weapons. It will keep us on track for achieving our goal of a world in which nuclear weapons exist only in movies or books. But we need to do more to get the whole way there.”