

Conflict keeps 27 million children out of school, with girls at high risk of abuse – UN report

18 September 2017 – Some 27 million children are out of school due to conflict, with girls facing a heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence, the United Nations said in a report released today, calling on States and international organizations to integrate all uprooted children into the education system where they live.

“Many of the [50 million uprooted children](#) in the world are in desperate need of education – not despite being uprooted from their homes but because they are uprooted from their homes,” the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) stressed in the report.

“For without education, how will they gain knowledge and skills to rebuild their lives? How will they be able to chart a path to a more peaceful and prosperous future for themselves, their families, their communities and the world?” queried the agency.

“Finding ways to provide education for uprooted children will require funding, creativity and commitment. Together, we can, and must, find solutions so every child can go to school and learn. Children’s futures – and our own – depend on it,” said UNICEF.

In 2015, nearly 50 million children were uprooted, more than 28 million of them forced from their homes because of violence and insecurity, with 27 million children of primary and lower secondary school age out of school in 24 conflict-affected countries, the report noted.

According to UNICEF, refugees are five times more likely to be out of school than other children, with only 50 per cent of refugee children enrolled in primary school and less than 25 per cent in secondary school.

In countries affected by conflict, girls are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school than boys and are more likely to become victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

Xenophobia, exclusion and stigmatization can create inhospitable, even dangerous environments for children seeking to join a new school system, while only 10 European Union Member States recognize the right of undocumented migrant children to enter the school system and five explicitly exclude them.

Integrate uprooted children in education systems where they live – UNICEF

In 2016, UNICEF reached 11.7 million children in emergencies, providing learning opportunities and materials, teacher training and offering life

skills classes and is currently hosting the secretariat of Education Cannot Wait, which has mobilized over \$113 million from government donors and a pledge of \$100 million in both financial and in-kind support from the private sector.

The agency called on its partners to integrate all uprooted children into the education system where they live, invest in high-quality learning opportunities, provide psychosocial counselling and language instruction, and engage with partners including the private sector to provide technical assistance, expertise and talent that can be tailored to needs of uprooted children.

“UNICEF seeks partners willing to tackle the specific challenges of providing learning opportunities that deliver the skills and knowledge children need to rebuild their lives and prepare for the future,” the report concluded.

“The job requires resources, creativity and a commitment to high-quality education for every child, especially children who have been uprooted from their homes.”

[As climate change makes bad weather worse, countries must strengthen resilience, UN officials urge](#)

18 September 2017 – Noting the ever-increasing impact of extreme weather events, top United Nations officials, including [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres and Miroslav Lajčák, the President of the General Assembly today urged efforts to boost resilience and strengthen damage mitigation measures.

“[This year’s hurricane season] fits a pattern: changes to our climate are making extreme weather events more severe and frequent, pushing communities into a vicious cycle of shock and recovery,” said Mr. Guterres at a high-level event on Hurricane Irma, recalling that the past month alone saw four major hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean, causing much damage and destruction.

“[Extreme weather linked to climate change has an impact all over the world](#), including floods in southern Asia and landslides and droughts in Africa,” he added, noting also the impact of rise in ocean surface temperature on weather patterns.

In addition to controlling the carbon emissions to help control the rising temperatures, as well as adaptation methods, he urged better preparation ahead of storms, for mitigating their effects and to recover from them.

Such efforts, he noted, are also important to protect the progress made

towards agricultural and economic development as well as to contribute to the implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

Also speaking today, Miroslav Lajcak, the President of the General Assembly also [highlighted the growing impact of climate change](#) and that the current trend of greenhouse gases emissions would increase likelihood of severe weather events.

“The impact of Irma, Maria and other recent systems reminds us of the importance of adaptation and resilience to climate change and further strengthening mitigation efforts, through the implementation of the [Paris Agreement](#) [on Climate Change], which is a milestone for collective engagements towards the planet’s sustainability,” he said, adding:

Let us be inspired to take personal and collective action to support the victims and survivors rebuild their communities, homes and lives, stronger than even before

Miroslav Lajcak, President of the General Assembly

“Let us not let the lives lost be in vain. Rather, let us be inspired to take personal and collective action to support the victims and survivors rebuild their communities, homes and lives, stronger than even before.”

The high-level meeting was co-hosted by the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, and saw the participation of a number of top Government officials from UN Member States, including Gaston Browne, the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda; Darren Henfield, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Bahamas; Bert Koenders, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands; Alistair Burt, the Minister of State for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom.

It was also attended by Achim Steiner, the Administrator of the UN Development Programme; Mark Lowcock, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Kristalina Georgieva, the Chief Executive Officer of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Development Association at the World Bank.

Hurricane Irma left a wake of destruction on several islands in the Caribbean, affecting Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, St. Barthélemy, St. Martin, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba, the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos and other islands in the Caribbean Sea, [affecting](#) hundreds of thousands of people and resulting in massive economic damage across the region.

UN agencies have been assisting with response and recovery efforts since the storm struck and last week, the Organization launched a \$15.1 million [regional humanitarian response plan](#), covering the urgent needs of the most vulnerable populations impacted.

The plan aims to reach an estimated 265,000 affected people until the end of this year.

UN emergency relief fund releases \$10 million to assist with Irma response

In related news, the UN Central Emergency Response Fund ([CERF](#)) allocated \$10 million to enable humanitarians to help tens of thousands of people in need of assistance following the devastating category five hurricane.

According to a [news release](#) issued by the Fund, the allocation will enable UN and other organisations support the national and regional response, including providing immediate food, critical health care, clean water and other urgently needed aid to the people most affected by Irma, in particular women and girls.

“We will continue to stand in solidarity with the people of the Caribbean to ensure maximum support is available to the commendable national and regional efforts,” Mr. Lowcock, who manages CERF on behalf of the Secretary-General, said in the release.

[‘Window of opportunity’ closing on non-communicable diseases, warns UN health agency](#)

18 September 2017 – Millions around the globe are dying prematurely from diseases such as cancer or heart disease, the United Nations health agency warned, urging governments to step up efforts to control non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

“[Limited national progress has been made in the fight against NCDs](#) – primarily cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases, cancers and diabetes – which are the world’s biggest killers,” noted the UN World Health Organization in a news release today.

According to estimates, 15 million people aged 30-70 succumb to these diseases annually. Furthermore, the latest edition of the WHO [Non-communicable Disease Progress Monitor](#) shows that progress around the world to control such conditions been uneven and insufficient, and over three-fourth of the deaths in low- and middle-income countries.

“[Bolder political action is needed](#) to address constraints in controlling NCDs, including the mobilization of domestic and external resources and safeguarding communities from interference by powerful economic operators,” said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO Director-General, in his foreword to the Progress Monitor.

SEE ALSO: [More people warned against tobacco use, but industry interference continues, reports UN](#)

The findings also reveal that the world is not on track to meet one of the key health targets of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) on reducing premature mortality from NCDs by a third by 2030.

Underscoring that “the window of opportunity is closing,” on being able to save increasing number of people, particularly children and adolescents, Douglas Bettcher, the Director the Department for Prevention of NCDs at WHO urged: “If we don’t take action now to protect people from NCDs, we will condemn today’s and tomorrow’s youth to lives of ill-health and reduced economic opportunities.”

The Progress Monitor provides data on 19 indicators in all of WHO’s 194 member States, such as setting time-bound targets to reduce NCD deaths, developing comprehensive policies to address NCDs; implement key measures to reduce tobacco demand; reduce harmful use of alcohol, and promote healthy diets and physical activity; as well as strengthen health systems through primary health care and universal health coverage.

Findings contained in this year’s edition will form the basis for a WHO study later this year which will be released ahead of the third UN High-level Meeting on NCDs (to be held in 2018).

[Iran implementing its nuclear commitments, UN atomic agency chief stresses](#)

18 September 2017 – Iran is implementing its commitments under “the world’s most robust nuclear verification regime,” the United Nations atomic agency head said today, while at the same time voicing “grave concern” at the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s (DPRK) nuclear programme.

“The nuclear-related commitments undertaken by Iran under the JCPOA are being implemented,” UN International Atomic Energy Agency ([IAEA](#)) Director General Yukiya Amano told the opening of the Agency’s annual [General Conference](#) in Vienna.

Endorsed unanimously by the UN Security Council in 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), between its five permanent members (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States), plus Germany, the European Union (EU) and Iran, set out rigorous [mechanisms for monitoring](#) limits on Iran’s nuclear programme, while paving the way for lifting UN sanctions against the country.

“Iran is now subject to the world’s most robust nuclear verification regime,” said Mr. Amano, who was [appointed by acclamation](#) today to another four-year

term as Director General of the 169-member Agency.

Turning to the DPRK, he called upon it to comply fully with its obligations under all relevant Security Council and the IAEA resolutions.

“The nuclear test by the DPRK on September third, its sixth and largest to date, is [extremely regrettable](#),” he said. “The Agency is working to maintain its readiness to return to the DPRK when political developments make this possible.”

On 11 September, the Security Council unanimously imposed tighter sanctions on the DPRK, including limits on oil exports to it, banning its textile exports and its access to gas liquids, and more closely inspecting cargo ships going in and out of its ports.

The Council has passed eight resolution over the DPRK’s nuclear programme since it withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2003, many involving increasingly severe sanctions.

Turning to other matters within the Agency’s remit, Mr. Amano stressed its unique role in transferring nuclear technology to developing countries, and its work in supporting countries achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals in energy, food and agriculture, industry, water management and health.

“The Agency will continue to deliver high-quality programmes and respond promptly to Member State needs,” he said, noting that the modernization of the IAEA nuclear applications laboratories near Vienna was making excellent progress and the new Insect Pest Control Laboratory would be inaugurated in a week’s time.

“When completed in a few years’ time, the expanded laboratory complex will greatly increase our capabilities as a technology holder,” he added.

[UN chief outlines three-part strategy to reshape global finance for sustainable development](#)

18 September 2017 – As the high-level week of the United Nations General Assembly gets underway, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today stressed the role of the UN to help reshape “unproductive and unrewarding” finance and redirect investment to creating a better world for all.

“The choices we make on finance will be critical,” Mr. Guterres told [a special event](#) held at the UN Headquarters in New York on financing for global development goals.

Mr. Guterres noted that the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) – adopted by UN Member States in September 2015 – are a blueprint for building an inclusive, sustainable fair globalization.

“We can choose to bemoan the lack of financing for the 2030 Agenda in a world awash with so much unproductive and unrewarding finance. Or we can grasp the opportunity to reshape finance, according to our urgent, collective needs,” he said. “The choice is clear. Let us invest in the 2030 Agenda and finance a better world for all.”

However, today’s global financial system, which manages some \$300 trillion in financial assets, is simply not fit for purpose, the UN chief said, recalling that the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#), adopted in 2015 at an international conference in the Ethiopian capital on financing for development, highlights the importance of being innovative in leveraging resources and financing for development.

The UN’s three-part strategy for enhancing its support to financing the 2030 Agenda would help achieve short- and medium-term results, he said.



Secretary-General António Guterres speaks at the Financing the 2030 Agenda, “The Role of the United Nations”. Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed (right) and Vice President Gabriela Michetti (left) of Argentina listen. UN Photo/Ariana Lindquist

The Secretary-General said that he will lead UN efforts to ensure that the objectives of the 2030 Agenda are fully reflected in international economic and financial policies by working closely with key inter-governmental platforms, such as the G20.

Second, he will reform the UN development system to strengthen its country teams, and third, he will champion key international initiatives that can harness large-scale changes in financing and financial system development, such as in the fields of digitalization and climate finance and in cooperating with major investment initiatives.

Also addressing the event was Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, who [said](#) that trillions of dollars need to be mobilized a year by tapping into the savings of citizens around the world, official development assistance (ODA), domestic financing and the world’s financial system.

The UN has always been engaged in this financing agenda, with its partners, allies and of course Member States, but “our question is whether we are doing enough, and the answer, in short, is no,” she said, explaining that this event is timely as it highlights progress and opportunities from parts of the UN’s leadership team, key partners such as the World Bank, private sector actors, and Member States.