

On International Day, UN highlights importance of collective action to protect ozone layer

16 September 2017 – Commemorating the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, senior United Nations officials, including [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres highlighted the contributions of the Montreal Protocol – an international environment agreement on the elimination of ozone depleting substances.

“When scientists found that everyday products were destroying the fragile ozone layer, the world responded with the Montreal Protocol,” said Mr. Guterres in his [message](#) on the [International Day](#).

“It rallies Governments, companies, doctors, scientists and citizens to reverse the damage [and] saves millions of people from skin cancer and cataracts each year.”

Also in his message, Mr. Guterres underscored the importance of Montreal Protocol to help combat poverty, address climate change, and protect the food chain. He also noted that new business opportunities have been created by the treaty, highlighting that it will save the global economy over \$2 trillion by 2050.

This year also marks the 30th anniversary of the [Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer](#), which was agreed on this day in 1987.

As part of the celebrations, the Ozone Secretariat (which supports parties to the Protocol in implementing actions to protect the ozone layer) in partnership with Marvel, the company behind some of the world’s most beloved superheroes, is conducting [the #OzoneHeroes campaign](#), highlighting the accomplishments of the Protocol and to increase public recognition of its success and impact.

In his own [message](#) marking the anniversary, Erik Solheim, the head of the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)), applauded the global effort in support of the Protocol to protect the health and wellbeing of millions.

“This collective power is effective only because of individual actions of Ozone Heroes everywhere,” he underscored, calling on all stakeholders to mark the anniversary to support the ratification of the Kigali Amendment to stop hydrofluorocarbons from harming the planet.

“But to make that happen, we all need to be Ozone Heroes.”

[At annual event, UN invites Member States to join multilateral treaty framework](#)

15 September 2017 – The United Nations will be hosting the annual Treaty Event next week at its Headquarters in New York, inviting Member States to sign multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General or to become parties to them by depositing instruments of ratification or accession.

“The spirit of the Treaty Event is simple – the Secretary-General invites high-level dignitaries to seize the opportunity of their presence in New York for the opening of the annual session of the General Assembly to join multilateral treaties,” Santiago Villalpando, the Chief of the Treaty Section in the UN Office of Legal Affairs, said at a press conference in New York.

“Multilateral treaties are a key instrument for States members to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations, and achieve international cooperation. Throughout the history of the Organization, hundreds of multilateral treaties have been adopted in all areas of international relations, ranging from human rights to telecommunications to protection of environment,” he added.

This year, the [Treaty Event](#) will focus on promoting multilateral treaties that safeguard humanity, such as treaties on human rights, refugees and stateless persons, health, trade, transport, terrorism and criminal matters, law of the sea, outer space, disarmament, climate change and other environmental issues.

One of the key instruments this year is the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was adopted this July and will open for signature next week

The Treaty – adopted 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.

SEE ALSO: [UN conference adopts treaty banning nuclear weapons](#)

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is one of more than 560 multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General, covering all aspects of the work of the Organization.

The Treaty Event, held annually since 2000, may be used to sign, ratify or accede to any of these treaties.

[Rohingya crisis one of the fastest growing in recent years, warns UN refugee agency](#)

15 September 2017 – The humanitarian situation in parts of Bangladesh sheltering hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees continues to deteriorate, making the crisis one of the fastest growing refugee crises of recent years, according to the United Nations.

“[The crisis is] creating enormous humanitarian needs in an area of Bangladesh already affected by earlier refugee influxes, recent floods and not equipped to cope with large numbers of new arrivals,” Andrej Mahecic, a spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), told journalists at a media briefing in Geneva today.

According to estimates, some 380,000 Rohingya refugees, fleeing violence in Myanmar, have crossed the border into Bangladesh since 25 August.

“A visit to the area this week by a UNHCR team, led by Assistant High Commissioner for Operations George Okoth-Obbo, found people suffering real hardship and some of the most difficult conditions seen in any current refugee situation,” said Mr. Mahecic.

Refugees continue to arrive daily outside of the two established camps which are already substantially overflowing, and many people have received little meaningful help to date, he added.

The UN agency has been responding to the situation and assisting those coming but its in-country stocks have been exhausted, noted the UNHCR spokesperson, adding that deliveries of more aid – flown in earlier this week – are currently underway.

Children worst affected

Challenges, however, are the greatest for children. According to the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)), there are at least 240,000 children among the refugees, including about 36,000 who are less than a year old. There were also 52,000 pregnant and lactating women.

“Conditions are ripe for the spread of disease,” Marixie Mercado, a UNICEF spokesperson highlighted at the briefing, noting that refugees have little protection from the elements and lack drinking water.

“There is nowhere near enough latrines, and extreme mosquito activity has been forecast for the coming days. It is important to note that even before the crisis, half of the children in Rakhine state [in Myanmar] had suffered

from chronic malnutrition, meaning they were vulnerable to disease,” she said.

To help cope with this situation, the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) is stepping up its efforts, and starting 16 September, will launch a polio and measles vaccination campaign to cover 150,000 newly arrived children aged 6 months to 15 years old, said Tarik Jasarevic, a spokesperson for the UN agency.

“In the coming days, [we will also] distribute emergency medical kits to cover 100,000 people, 2 million water purification tablets and cholera kits for 20,000 people,” he added, noting that the UN health agency is also supporting the Government of Bangladesh in providing medical teams to new spontaneous settlements.

The World Food Programme ([WFP](#)), the UN’s emergency food assistance agency, has also upped its response, delivering high-energy food bars, and together with partners, hot food and rice for cooking to tens of thousands of refugees.

‘Remarkable generosity’ of Bangladeshi communities

Mr. Mahecic also noted that Bangladeshi communities have shown “remarkable generosity,” welcoming refugees into their homes and sharing resources with them.

However, as the number of new arrivals continues, UN agencies are in urgent need of additional funds to provide protection and life-saving assistance.

Among them, UNHCR has appealed for an initial amount of \$30 million for its emergency response in the country until the end of year.

Similarly, UNICEF made an initial appeal for \$7.3 million over three months, including almost \$3 million for water and sanitation alone, but that amount was calculated on the basis of 200,000 people and that number had now doubled.

Fresh violence in Central African Republic leads to more displaced – UN agency

15 September 2017 – Expressing concern over continued violence in the Central African Republic and the resulting “massive new levels” of displacement, the United Nations refugee agency has underscored the need to ensure that relief workers are not made targets of hostilities and are given the humanitarian

security they need to carry out their mission.

“Since May, fresh and fierce clashes between armed groups in the CAR have [wrought increasing suffering, deaths and destruction of property](#),” said Andrej Mahecic, a spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)).

“Many newly displaced people speak of having witnessed killings, robberies, lootings and kidnappings. Even after reaching safe locations, they often risk assault by armed groups, if they venture outside,” he added.

According to the UN agency, the crisis, well into its fourth year, has left one in every two Central African in need of humanitarian assistance or protection to survive and, if left to fester, the violence could negate the progress towards recovery in the country.

The violence has also driven over half a million people from CAR to seek refuge in neighbouring countries and displaced an additional 600,000 people within the country.

The level of insecurity has also prevented UNHCR and other relief organizations to fully assess the full extent of damage or displacement from the recent violence.

“Some of our planned humanitarian deliveries by air have also been delayed or blocked, due to the armed groups’ presence [and] aid agencies, including UNHCR, are increasingly among those targeted by armed groups and have, in some instances, been compelled to temporary withdraw their personnel,” said Mr. Mahecic.

“Despite the challenges, we continue to help those displaced in areas like the Haute-Kotto provincial capital of Bria, which was at the centre of much of the displacement in the east,” he added, noting that the UN agency’s response is struggling due to lack of resources.

Earlier this year, UNCHR [issued an appeal for \\$209 million](#) for its operations within the country as well as to assist refugees from the Central African Republic in neighbouring countries. However, only 9 per cent of the appeal has been funded thus far.

[UN chief condemns deadly terrorist attack in southern Iraq](#)

15 September 2017 – [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today condemned the terrorist attacks in southern Iraq and called for the perpetrators to be quickly brought to justice.

In a statement from his spokesperson, the Secretary-General expressed “his [sincere condolences](#) to the families of the victims and to the Government and people of Iraq.”

Terrorists attacked the Thi-Qar province on 14 September, reportedly killing or wounding dozens of people.

In the statement, Mr. Guterres reiterated UN support to the Government and people of Iraq in fighting terrorism and violent extremism.