

## [Ahead of Hurricane Irma, UNICEF preparing supplies and communication lines to youth](#)

6 September 2017 – If Irma stays on its current track as a category 5 hurricane, it will bring devastating damage within hours to parts of the Caribbean, affecting the lives of hundreds of thousands of children, the United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) today cautioned.

“Although it is still early to know the full impact that Irma will have in the region, the main concerns of UNICEF centre around the supply of drinking water and food, and the health and protection of children and adolescents,” the UN agency said in a statement.

UNICEF’s office in the region has activated its emergency protocols and is working with Government officials in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, St. Maarten, St. Kitts and Nevis, and the Virgin Islands, as well as the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba, which the hurricane is projected to hit next.

Supplies of drinking water, unperishable food and medicines, and emergency kits are pre-positioned and ready for distribution in the most affected communities, UNICEF said.

The agency also activated its U-Report platform, which allows it to send urgent messages via Facebook and other social media platforms to young people who subscribed.

“Considering the possible magnitude that Irma represents, it is both hugely urgent and necessary to be prepared, informed and vigilant so that we try to avoid the impact on the most vulnerable, that is to say children,” said Marita Perceval, Regional Director of UNICEF in Latin America and the Caribbean.

According to recent information, Irma has become “the most dangerous natural phenomenon” in the region this year.

Its impact will likely surpass Hurricane Matthew, which was a category 4 hurricane on a five-point scale and affected 3.2 million people last October – of whom 1.3 million were children.

Since last fall, UNICEF said it has been working with Government officials in the area to help create better access to clean water and hygiene, education, protection, nutrition and health, and respond to the spread of cholera.

---

# Conflict, widespread poverty stall progress on education rates over past decade – UNICEF

6 September 2017 – Pervasive levels of poverty, protracted conflicts and complex humanitarian emergencies have led to stagnation in reducing the global out-of-school rate over the past decade, prompting the United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) to call for more investments.

With 11.5 per cent of school-age children – or 123 million missing school today, compared to 12.8 per cent – or 135 million – in 2007, the percentage of out-of-school 6-15 year olds has barely decreased in the last decade, according to UNICEF.

“Investments aimed at increasing the number of schools and teachers to match population growth are not enough,” said UNICEF Chief of Education Jo Bourne.

“This business-as-usual approach will not get the most vulnerable children into school – and help them reach their full potential – if they continue to be trapped in poverty, deprivation and insecurity,” she added.

Children living in the world’s poorest countries and in conflict zones are disproportionately affected. Of the 123 million children missing out on school, 40 per cent live in the least developed countries and 20 per cent live in conflict zones.

UNICEF points out that war continues to threaten – and reverse – education gains.

The conflicts in Iraq and Syria have resulted in an additional 3.4 million children missing out on education, bringing the number of out-of-school children across the Middle East and North Africa back to 2007’s level of approximately 16 million.

With their high levels of poverty, rapidly increasing populations and recurring emergencies, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia account for 75 per cent of the global out-of-school primary- and lower-secondary school age population.

“Governments and the global community must target their investments at eliminating the factors preventing these children from going to school in the first place, including by making schools safe and improving teaching and learning,” she continued.

However, some progress has been achieved.

Ethiopia and Niger, among the world’s poorest countries, have made the most

enrolment rate progress in primary-school-age children with an increase of more than 15 per cent and around 19 per cent, respectively.

Emergency funding shortfalls for education affect access for children in conflict to attend school.

On average, less than 2.7 per cent of global humanitarian appeals are dedicated to education.

Six-months into 2017, UNICEF had only received 12 per cent of the funding required to provide education for children caught up in crises. More funds are urgently required to address the increasing number and complexity of crises and to give children the stability and opportunities they deserve.

“Learning provides relief for children affected by emergencies in the short-term, but is also a critical investment in the future development of societies in the long-term,” underscored Ms. Bourne.

“Yet investment in education does not respond to the realities of a volatile world. To address this, we must secure greater and more predictable funding for education in unpredictable emergencies,” she concluded.

---

## [DPRK’s nuclear risk ‘most dangerous crisis we face today,’ warns UN chief Guterres](#)

5 September 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today unequivocally condemned the latest nuclear and missile tests by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), denouncing them as profoundly destabilizing for regional and international security.

“Yet again, the DPRK has [broken the global norm](#) against nuclear test explosions,” Secretary-General António Guterres told reporters today at UN Headquarters in New York.

“Yet again, the country has defied the Security Council and the international community.

“Yet again, the DPRK has needlessly and recklessly put millions of people at risk including its own citizens already suffering drought, hunger and serious violations of their human rights,” he added.

Mr. Guterres reiterated his call on DPRK authorities to comply fully with its international obligations, including [Security Council Resolution 2371](#), which was adopted last month.

He welcomed yesterday's meeting of the Security Council, saying: "The unity of the Council is crucial in addressing this crisis. That unity also creates an opportunity to engage diplomatically to decrease tensions, increase confidence and prevent any escalation all aimed at the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula."

The Secretary-General stressed dialogue and communication as necessary to avoid miscalculation or misunderstanding.

"Confrontational rhetoric may lead to unintended consequences," he elaborated. "The solution must be political. The potential consequences of military action are too horrific."

"As Secretary-General, I am ready to support any efforts towards a peaceful solution of this alarming situation, and as I said, to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula," underscored Mr. Guterres.

In response to a journalist who asked which of the global challenges he thought would be most focussed upon at the forthcoming General Assembly's High-Level Week, Mr. Guterres answered "The most dangerous crisis we face today, [is] the crisis related to the nuclear risk in relation to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea."

#### *The 'gathering force' of climate change*

Turning to another topic of vital importance, Mr. Guterres said the world continues to witness climate change gather force., and he expressed solidarity with all those suffering the devastating impacts of the unprecedented events seen in recent weeks "from Texas to Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sierra Leone.

"The United Nations stands ready to support relief efforts in any way possible," he said, noting that the number of natural disasters has nearly quadrupled since 1970, with the US, followed by China and India experiencing the most since 1995.

Last year alone, 24.2 million people were displaced by sudden-onset disasters "three times as many as by conflict and violence. Even before the current floods, preliminary reports for this year show that there have been 2,087 deaths from natural disasters.

It is true that scientists caution us about linking any single weather event with climate change.

But they are equally clear that such extreme weather is precisely what their models predict will be the new normal of a warming world.

"With science forecasting a dramatic rise in both the frequency and severity of disasters, it is time to get serious about keeping ambition high on climate action "and on building resilience and reducing disaster risk," he said.

## Grievances of Muslims in Myanmar's Rakhine have 'festered far too long'

Members of the Rohingya community crossing the border into Bangladesh. Photo: Azam Sheikh Ali Haider/UN Migration Agency ([IOM](#)) 2017

[<](#) [>](#)

Also today, the Secretary-General called for the Muslims of Rakhine state to be given either nationality or legal status, and voiced concern about violence that has since late August forced nearly 125,000 people to flee and risk destabilizing the region.

"I have condemned the recent attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army. But now we are receiving constant reports of violence by Myanmar's security forces, including indiscriminate attacks," he told journalists, expressing concern about the security, humanitarian and human rights situation in Rakhine. "This will only further increase radicalization."

Mr. Guterres said that he has officially written to the Security Council to express his concern and to propose various steps to end the violence, adding that the grievances of Rohingya and the Muslims in the Rakhine state "have festered for far too long and are becoming an undeniable factor in regional destabilization."

Mr. Guterres called on the international community to prevent further escalation and to seek a holistic solution, and urged the authorities in Myanmar to provide security and aid to those in need and safe access to life-saving aid.

---

## [In Ethiopia, UN agency chiefs say more investment is needed to bolster drought-prone areas](#)

5 September 2017 – More investment is needed in long-term projects to protect people in developing countries from droughts, the heads of the United Nations food agencies today said after a visit to Ethiopia where 9.5 million people are hungry.

The death of many livestock in Ethiopia, as well as in Somalia where 3.3 million people are in need of food after three years with too little rain, has caused a breakdown in pastoral livelihoods, contributing to soaring hunger levels and alarming increases in malnutrition rates, according to the

UN Food and Agricultural Organization ([FAO](#)).

"A drought does not need to become an emergency," [said](#) Gilbert F. Hounbo, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development ([IFAD](#)), traveling as part of a four-day visit that also included FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva and David Beasley, Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme ([WFP](#)).

"We know what works," added Mr. Hounbo, pointing to irrigation systems, rural financial institutions and other long-term development projects. "This is what we need to build on."

During the four-day visit, the three senior UN officials toured the Tigray region, where agency heads saw irrigation schemes, fruit nurseries and health centres. According to a press release, these measures are boosting productivity, increasing incomes and improving nutrition so that rural people can better withstand external shocks like droughts.

"We have seen clearly here that working together the three UN food agencies can achieve much more than alone," said Mr. Beasley.

The three agency heads met with high-level officials in Ethiopia and Somalia to discuss aid efforts, as well as with local residents.

"This drought has been going on for a long time and we have lost much of our livestock," Hajiji Abdi, a community elder told them. "If we didn't get food assistance, we would be in big trouble" but this is still not enough to feed us all."

---

## [Surge in number of civilians fleeing Myanmar's Rakhine for Bangladesh – UN agencies](#)

5 September 2017 – More than 123,000 people from Myanmar's Rakhine state have fled to Bangladesh since the latest outbreak of violence, the United Nations migration agency today announced seeking \$18 million to urgently help the refugees.

"Clear signs that more will cross into Bangladesh from Myanmar before situation stabilizes," said the Director of Operations and Emergencies at the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)), Mohammed Abdiker, on [Twitter](#). "Without more international support, suffering will continue."

Thousands of people are arriving daily in south-eastern Bangladesh, living in

makeshift sites and seeking any space for shelter.

“We are running out of space in the existing settlements and new arrivals are pitching camp wherever they can erect some plastic sheeting to protect themselves from the elements,” [said](#) Sarat Dash, IOM Bangladesh Chief of Mission.

“The new arrivals are putting immense strain on the existing support structures. These need to be immediately scaled up to ensure lives are not put at risk,” he cautioned.

With reports of ongoing violence, UN agencies today expressed grave concern about the situation, including reports that some civilians are dying enroute to safety.

“Those who have made it to Bangladesh are in poor condition. Most have walked for days from their villages – hiding in jungles, crossing mountains and rivers with what they could salvage from their homes. They are hungry, weak and sick,” a spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), Duniya Aslam Khan, [told](#) journalists in Geneva.

Two of the shelter sites – Kutupalong and Nayapara camps – are at breaking point,” Ms. Khan said. New arrivals are hosted by refugee families and in refugee schools, community centres, madrassas and covered structures.

“We are running out of available space,” she stressed.

*‘I just knew to run to save my life’*

IOM and partners today appealed for \$18 million to aid the fleeing civilians over the next three months. The support would go for people like Rohingya Dilara, who reached Bangladesh barefoot, clutching her 18-month son.

“My husband was shot in the village. I escaped with my son and in-laws,” she [told](#) UNHCR. “We walked for three days, hiding when we had to. The mountain was wet and slippery and I kept falling.”

Dilara followed other villagers into the Kutupalong camp, which was established in the 1990s along with neighbouring Nayapara camp, and already had a population of some 30,000 people. UNHCR estimates that 20,000 civilians arrived since 25 August, when the fighting in Myanmar flared up.

“I don’t know where I am ... I just knew to run to save my life,” Dilara said.