

# Solidarity across generations is vital for sustainable development, UN special event hears

1 August 2017 – The wisdom, experience, energy and ideals of the old and the young are vital to realizing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres said today, stressing that they together can help break the cycles of poverty that have lasted for generations.

“The youth and the older persons in this room have wisdom, experience, energy and ideals,” the UN chief said in his [video message](#) to a [special event](#) at UN Headquarters, “Intergenerational Dialogues on the Sustainable Development Goals,” which was also addressed by his newly-appointed Envoy on Youth, Jayathma Wickramanayake, and the President of the General Assembly, Peter Thomson.

“Together, you can help break cycles of poverty that have lasted for generations and trigger transformational change that endures for generations to come,” Mr. Guterres stressed.

The event aimed to raise awareness of the valuable role youth and the elderly can play together in implementing the [SDGs](#) and ambitious and all-encompassing development targets agreed by more than 190 countries nearly two years ago to ensure growth and protect the people and planet.

Mr. Thomson, now in his late-60s, talked about his own youth growing up in the Pacific island of Fiji, before mountains of plastic waste and ocean-warming had begun to threaten its very existence.

He said he was determined to use his experience in order to speak out on behalf of the SDGs for many years to come.

“We are going to ensure that all people, young and old, recognize themselves as the owners, drivers and beneficiaries of the SDGs [...] As a grandfather, I care for all my being that we will bequeath sustainable world to our grandchildren and those who come after,” he said.

Ms. Wickramanayake, who is 26, stressed that “building bridges for different generations to work together in a mutually empowering relationship is one of the most important factors affecting the implementation of the SDGs.”

“It needs to be recognized that generations do not operate as a binary,” she said. “Solidarity across generations is key for social development, and for this we require new approaches in the workforce, in education, and in socioeconomic development. Aging populations must work with younger populations to foster successful and reciprocal intergenerational

relations and partnerships, which will lie at the core of every well-integrated society.&#8221

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including the Major Group on Children and Youth and the Stakeholder Group on Ageing, were also represented at today's event, which was co-hosted by the Department of Public Information (DPI) and NGO/DPI Executive Committee.

---

## Venezuela: UN rights chief 'deeply concerned' by detention of opposition leaders

1 August 2017 – The top United Nations human rights official today expressed deep concern about the detention of two opposition leaders by Venezuelan authorities after Sunday's elections for a Constituent Assembly convened by President Nicolás Maduro.

&#8220I am deeply concerned that opposition leaders Leopoldo Lopez and Antonio Ledezma have again been taken into custody by Venezuelan authorities after their house arrest was revoked,&#8221 said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein in a statement issued by his Office ([OHCHR](#)).

He urged the Government to immediately release all those being held for exercising their rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, association and expression, noting that the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention considers the detention of both Lopez and Ledezma to be arbitrary.

President Maduro has declared victory in Sunday's elections for the new body, which could replace the current National Assembly.

Mr. Zeid also expressed his regret that at least 10 people reportedly died over the weekend amid demonstrations over Sunday's polls, calling for a prompt, effective and independent probe into these deaths.

He urged the authorities &#8220not to make an already extremely volatile situation even worse&#8221 through the use of excessive force, including through violent house raids that have occurred in various parts of the country.

&#8220I appeal to all parties to refrain from the use of violence,&#8221 he said.

---

## Breastfeeding is 'smartest investment' families, communities and countries can make – UN

1 August 2017 – Kicking off World Breastfeeding Week, the United Nations today stressed that although breastfeeding has cognitive and health benefits for infants and mothers, investment shortcomings impede the practice.

"Breastfeeding gives babies the [best possible start in life](#)," said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)).

He added that breastmilk works like a baby's first vaccine, protecting infants from potentially deadly diseases and giving them all the nourishment they need to survive and thrive.

The *Global Breastfeeding Scorecard*, a new report by the UN Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) and WHO in collaboration with the [Global Breastfeeding Collective](#) – an initiative launched today that aims to increase global breastfeeding rates – points out that breastfeeding not only helps prevent diarrhoea and pneumonia, two major causes of death in infants, it also helps reduce mothers' risk of ovarian and breast cancer, two leading causes of death among women.

Yet, the scorecard, which evaluated 194 nations, reveals that no country in the world fully meets recommended breastfeeding standards.

It found that only 40 per cent of children younger than six months are given nothing but breastmilk and only 23 countries have exclusive breastfeeding rates above 60 per cent.

### ***Global investment in breastfeeding 'far too low,' says UN***

The scorecard was released at the start of World Breastfeeding Week alongside a new analysis, *Nurturing the Health and Wealth of Nations: The Investment Case for Breastfeeding*, demonstrating that an annual investment of only \$4.70 per newborn is required to increase the global rate of exclusive breastfeeding among children under six months to 50 per cent by 2025.

The analysis suggests that meeting this target could save the lives of 520,000 children under the age of five and potentially generate \$300 billion in economic gains over 10 years, as a result of reduced illness and health care costs and increased productivity.

"Breastfeeding is one of the most effective and cost effective investments nations can make in the health of their youngest members

and the future health of their economies and societies,&#8221 said UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake. &#8220By failing to invest in breastfeeding, we are failing mothers and their babies &#8211 and paying a double price: in lost lives and in lost opportunity.&#8221

The investment case shows that in five of the world's largest emerging economies, namely China, India, Indonesia, Mexico and Nigeria, the lack of investment in breastfeeding has resulted in an estimated 236,000 child deaths per year and \$119 billion in economic losses.

Globally, investment in breastfeeding is far too low. Each year, governments in lower- and middle-income countries spend approximately \$250 million on breastfeeding promotion &#8211 donors provide only an additional \$85 million.

Co-led by UNICEF and WHO, the Global Breastfeeding Collective is calling on countries to increase funding to raise breastfeeding rates from birth through two years of age; enact paid family leave and workplace breastfeeding policies, building on the UN International Labour Organization's maternity protection guidelines as a minimum requirement; improve access to skilled breastfeeding counselling as part of comprehensive breastfeeding policies and programmes in health facilities; and strengthen links between health facilities and communities, and encourage community networks that protect, promote, and support breastfeeding.

Both UN agencies emphasize that breastfeeding is critical to achieve many of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), asserting that it improves nutrition, [SDG 2](#); prevents child mortality and decreases the risk of non-communicable diseases, [SDG 3](#); and supports cognitive development and education, [SDG 4](#). Breastfeeding is also an enabler to ending poverty, promoting economic growth and reducing inequalities.

---

## [UN migration chief visits Nigeria's northeast; new fund allocates \\$10.5 million](#)

1 August 2017 – The United Nations has scaled up its efforts to tackle the humanitarian crisis in northeast Nigeria, through a visit by its top migration official and the allocation of \$10.5 million from a new fund.

According to the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)), nearly two million people fled their homes to escape Boko Haram violence in northeast Nigeria. More than half of the displaced are children and 133,000 infants.

&#8220We've seen the suffering of the people. We've seen their resilience. We've seen their courage. We've seen their patience,&#8221 [said](#) IOM Director

General William Lacy Swing during his visit to the area from 28 July to 30 July.

This crisis is competing with about eight others, including that of Syria, Yemen and South Sudan, for the world's attention

This crisis is competing with about eight others, including that of Syria, Yemen and South Sudan, for the world's attention, he added.

IOM's emergency response is based in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno and the birthplace of Boko Haram. Mr. Swing's visited Maiduguri and other main cities that have been devastated by the whole Boko Haram conflict, and the first camp for the internally displaced in the region.

Mr. Swing met with the deputy governor of Borno state and discussed IOM's increasing focus on livelihood interventions for displaced Nigerians, such as sewing, knitting and barbershop work.

IOM has built tarpaulin shelters for nearly 11,000 families, about 102,000 people in Borno state. A few hundred other households were given shelter kits to expand or repair their spaces in Adamawa, the other state devastated by the conflict.

Mr. Swing also met with Nigeria's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Geoffrey Onyeama, in Abuja to discuss ways to prevent irregular migration.

According to IOM, about 37,000 Nigerians arrived in Italy by sea last year and more than 9,000 so far this year. Most travel to find work in Europe. But more than 2,000 migrants have died on the precarious Central Mediterranean route they follow from Libya to Italy in 2017.

The idea is not to stop migrants. It's about trying to save lives by counselling them about the risks of putting their lives in the hands of a smuggler, Mr. Swing said, explaining that IOM opened a migrant information office in Agadez, Niger, last year to try to engage migrants heading north from Nigeria to Libya and the Mediterranean Sea on the dangers many face.

IOM has helped more than 1,800 Nigerians return home safely from Libya this year through the organization's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme.

#### ***\$10.5 million in relief aid allocated from new fund***

Meanwhile, the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund (NHF) managed by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) [has allocated](#) \$10.5 million to life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable, including those in the hard-to-reach and newly accessible areas.

It will fund about 15 different projects, including the provision of safe drinking water, emergency shelter and health services.

Some 8.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in the three worst-affected Nigerian states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe; of them, 6.9 million people are targeted for humanitarian assistance.

---

## **Mobile broadband subscriptions on track to hit 4.3 billion in 2017 – UN report**

31 July 2017 – Mobile broadband subscriptions are expected to reach 4.3 billion globally by the end of 2017, according to a new report released by the United Nations telecommunications agency.

New data from the International Telecommunication Union ([ITU](#)) also show that 48 per cent of the world's population now uses the Internet. The proportion is 71 per cent for the group of young people aged 15-24.

ITU's [ICT Facts and Figures 2017](#) shows that great strides are being made in expanding Internet access through the increased availability of broadband networks, [said](#) ITU Secretary-General Houlin Zhao in a press release.

Digital connectivity plays a critical role in bettering lives, as it opens the door to unprecedented knowledge, employment and financial opportunities for billions of people worldwide, [he added](#).

Of the 830 million young people online worldwide, 320 million, or 39 per cent, are in China and India, the report finds.

### ***Youth at forefront of Internet adoption***

In the least developed countries (LDCs), 35 per cent of the individuals using the Internet are young people aged 15-24, compared with 13 per cent in developed countries and 23 per cent globally.

In developed countries, 94 per cent of the youth population uses the Internet, while the proportion is 67 per cent in developing countries and only 30 per cent in LCDs.

The report also reveals that mobile broadband subscriptions have grown more than 20 per cent globally in each of the last five years.

Between 2012 and 2017, the LDCs saw the highest growth-rate of mobile broadband subscriptions. However, the number of mobile subscriptions per 100 inhabitants in these countries remained the lowest, at 23 per cent.

The number of fixed-broadband subscriptions has increased by nine per cent

annually in the last five years.

There has been an increase in high-speed fixed broadband subscriptions parallel to the growth in the number of fibre connections. Most of the increase in high-speed fixed broadband subscriptions in developing countries can be attributed to China, which accounts for 80 per cent of all fixed-broadband subscriptions at 10 Mbit/s or above in the developing world.

Mobile broadband prices, as a percentage of gross national income per capita, dropped by half between 2013 and 2016.

Mobile broadband is more affordable than fixed broadband in most developing countries.

### ***Digital gender divide***

While the Internet user gender gap has narrowed in most regions since 2013, the proportion of men using the Internet remains slightly higher than the proportion of women using the Internet in two-thirds of countries worldwide.

In 2017, the global Internet penetration rate for men stands at 50.9 per cent compared to 44.9 percent for women.

In the Americas, the number of women using the Internet is higher than that of men.

### ***ICTs for sustainable development***

The report demonstrates that ICTs continue to play an increasingly critical role in achieving the global Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

“ICTs continue to be a key enabler of economic and social development, bridging the digital divide and fostering an inclusive digital economy,” ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau Director Brahima Sanou.

The [World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017](#) will take place 9 to 20 October in Buenos Aires, Argentina, under the theme ‘ICT for Sustainable Development Goals.’