

Deputy UN chief highlights stronger AU-UN partnership to benefit Africa's youth

3 July 2017 – Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed today called for strengthening the relationship between the African Union (AU) and the United Nations to deliver on promised development for Africa's youth.

Addressing her first African Union Summit since taking office, Ms. Mohammed said that the AU's thematic focus this year on youth is a "powerful reminder" of the core principle at the heart of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, the AU's strategic framework known as Agenda 2063 and other global agreements, namely, creating a better world for the next generation.

"For the 226 million young people aged 15 to 24 living in Africa today, these agendas address challenges and opportunities that are integral to their futures," she [said](#).

"Today you are here taking decisions that will ensure that Africa benefits from the full potential of all its people, including young women and men," she added, in a nod to this year's theme of [Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through investments in Youth](#).

"Investing in our youth today reaps the dividend of a peaceful and prosperous Africa tomorrow."

Addressing leaders from across the continent who have gathered at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Ms. Mohammed called for "building new bridges between us, and fortifying the ones that already exist" to deliver on the promises of the development agenda for Africa and its people.

In April, the UN-AU annual conference in New York resulted in a joint framework for enhanced partnership on peace and security. The two organizations are now preparing a joint framework on sustainable development, focusing on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and of Agenda 2063, according to Ms. Mohammed.

She also noted that the UN will be collaborating with the AU on a new UN-European Union initiative to be launched at the UN General Assembly this September to end gender-based violence around the world.

The deputy UN chief also highlighted some of the other areas where the UN and the AU are working more closely, including on efforts to enhance the UN's partnership with Africa's regional economic communities in areas of peacekeeping, elections and democratic transitions.

[Secretary-General](#) António Guterres recently reiterated the need for "predictable, reliable and sustainable" financing for AU peace

operations, and is said to be working on a set of concrete proposals for the UN Security Council.

“Our efforts should continue to be based on urgency, flexibility and innovation to improve complementarity, cost-effectiveness and impact,” Ms. Mohammed said.

She also echoed Mr. Guterres’ call at the G7 summit in Italy, where he urged world leaders to invest in young people, with stronger investment in technology, relevant education and capacity-building in Africa.

“The challenge of strengthening Africa’s human capital, starting with its young people, has galvanized commitments to promote their rights and invest in quality and relevant education at all levels, health, science and technology and innovation,” said Ms. Mohammed.

[Refugee and migrant flows from Libya to Europe on the rise – UNHCR study](#)

3 July 2017 – Movements by sea from Libya to Europe, despite being the most dangerous route for reaching the continent, have increased and there are indications that it will likely continue to do so, a new study by the United Nations refugee agency has revealed.

According to [Mixed Migration Trends in Libya: Changing Dynamics and Protection Challenges](#), a study commissioned by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), around half of those travelling to the country did so believing they could find jobs there, but ended up fleeing onwards to Europe to escape life-threatening insecurity, instability, difficult economic conditions and widespread exploitation and abuse.

“Foreign nationals going to Libya are part of mixed migration flows, meaning that people with different backgrounds and motivations travel together along the same routes, often with the help of ruthless people smugglers and criminal gangs,” said the UN agency in a news release today, [announcing the findings](#).

“They include refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, unaccompanied minors, environmental migrants, victims of trafficking and stranded migrants, among others.”

The study also found that almost 80 per cent of the [refugees and migrants](#) in Libya were young men (80 per cent), aged 22 on average and travelling alone (72 per cent).

Of particular concern was the rise in number of unaccompanied and separated

children travelling alone, now representing some 14 per cent of all arrivals in Europe via the Central Mediterranean route, as well as women, particularly those from West and Central Africa, who could be victims of trafficking.

Refugees and migrants in Libya also tended to have a low level of education, with 49 per cent having little or no formal education and only 16 per cent having received vocational training or higher education, noted the study.

It also revealed that while economic reasons was the major factor motivating people to travel, many were also trying to flee violence, conflict or political persecution in their countries of origin.

In addition from people from within the African continent, the refugees and migrants in Libya also included individuals from as far as Syria, Iraq and Bangladesh.

However, many arriving in the country risk being kidnapped, held captive and abused by human smugglers or criminal gangs.

RELATED: ['No limit' to cruelty of traffickers, says UN agency, as video surfaces of abused migrants in Libya](#)

In the news release, UNHCR noted that conflict, instability and the collapse of the justice system and reigning impunity in Libya have contributed to an environment where human smuggling and criminal networks flourish.

In order to provide humanitarian assistance to those arriving as well as to the Libyans affected by the ongoing conflict, UNHCR is scaling up its response and recently issued an appeal for \$75.5 million to strengthen protection monitoring and interventions, as well as advocacy on issues related to respect for human rights, access to basic services, asylum procedures and freedom of movement.

The UN agency is also stepping up efforts in Libya and the neighbouring countries to provide credible alternatives, find durable solutions and establish legal pathways for refugees and asylum seekers, as an alternative to dangerous trips to the country or over the Central Mediterranean Sea to Europe.

The study was commissioned by UNHCR and done by Altai Consulting, a specialised consulting firm that focuses on research, monitoring and evaluation in fragile states, and IMPACT Initiatives, a Geneva-based think-tank that assesses, monitors and evaluates aid programmes.

Its findings are primarily based on qualitative data – including interviews with refugees and migrants – collected in Libya, Algeria, Chad, Italy, Niger and Tunisia, between October and December 2016.

'Clear understanding' in ongoing talks between Greek Cypriot, Turkish Cypriot sides – UN

1 July 2017 – [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has met with the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities and their backers at the Conference on Cyprus in Switzerland, saying there is now an understanding of what is needed for a possible settlement on the Mediterranean island.

In a statement from his spokesperson, the Secretary-General said he held a “positive, results-oriented meeting” last night with the heads of the delegation, including Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci.

“A clear understanding emerged of the essential elements of a package that might lead to a comprehensive settlement in Cyprus,” the spokesperson said, adding that the talks are continuing today at the political level.

“The Secretary-General remains fully engaged in these efforts to deliver a comprehensive settlement to the people of Cyprus,” said the spokesperson.

Also attending the UN backed Conference, which began on 28 June in the Swiss town of Crans-Montana, are the three guarantor powers – Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom – and a European Union representative, as an observer.

Cyprus has been divided since 1974. The negotiations have come down to six main areas, which include new territorial boundaries, power-sharing and the economy.

Women scientists and youth take centre stage at UN-backed technology forum

30 June 2017 – As an international conference on science and technology wrapped up in Vienna, the head of a United Nations partner organization that works to end nuclear testing stressed that women have a “powerful voice” in the global scientific community.

“We cannot build a world that is just, a world that is fair, a world that is peaceful, without the contribution of women,” stated Lassina Zerbo, the

Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization ([CTBTO](#)).

In an interview with *UN News* during the CTBT: Science and Technology 2017 Conference, Mr. Zerbo said: “If women are at the heart of solving problems domestically in their respective families, and socially, why don’t we use them on big issues that require heart, feeling and vision, which they have already?”

The Conference, the sixth of its kind, focused on nuclear test monitoring technologies and their various applications. In addition to the participation of women scientists, Mr. Zerbo also noted the “youth strand” that had been integrated throughout the programme.

The CTBTO Youth Group was launched last year with only nine members. Today there are around 200, about 70 of whom attended the conference, held at the Hofburg Palace.

“I’ve watched them take advantage of the opportunity we offer them to be acquainted on issues of non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as the threat of nuclear weapons. They have decided they do not want their generation and future ones to have to deal with this,” said the Executive Secretary.

The biggest contribution of young people, he added, was to spread the message about the importance of the CTBT on social media networks and their blogs.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, adopted by the General Assembly in September 1996, has not yet entered into force. For this to happen, ratification is required from the so-called Annex II countries. Of these, China, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan, and the US have yet to ratify.

Mr. Zerbo noted that using the right words to get to the heart of those who know that nuclear test monitoring is important to ban nuclear test explosions, once and for all.

“The ban on nuclear testing is a low-hanging fruit in our fight towards banning nuclear weapons.”

[‘Important work ahead,’ Security Council says, as UN mission in Côte d’Ivoire concludes](#)

Côte d'Ivoire ([UNOCI](#)) in promoting peace, stability and development, the UN Security Council today marked the closing of the mission by underscoring the importance of action by the Government to address the remaining challenges in the country for the benefit of all Ivorians.

In a statement read out by Ambassador Sacha Sergio Llorentty Solíz of Bolivia, which holds the Council presidency for June, the 15-member body also emphasized that the departure of the mission did not mark the end of the UN's support to the country.

In addition, the Council welcomed progress in the West African nation, including the consolidation of peace and stability, improvements in economic prosperity and the successful holding of presidential and legislative elections in 2015 and 2016, respectively.

At the same time, it noted that "there is important work ahead" in tackling remaining challenges – including in the fight against impunity, the advancement of national reconciliation and social cohesion, security sector reform and other critical areas.

It also noted that the Government had indicated that the UN would continue to be an important partner in the next phase of Côte d'Ivoire's development, and in that regard, encouraged the international community, including bilateral and multilateral donors, to assist the activities of the UN Country Team – the group of all UN agencies working in Côte d'Ivoire – and to consider providing funding for its transition plan.

SEE ALSO: [Secretary-General voices support for sustaining 'hard-won peace' after UNOCI's closure](#)

Also in the statement, the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to undertake a study on UNOCI's role in Côte d'Ivoire, and expressed its intention to take its findings into account in ongoing efforts to enhance the overall effectiveness of UN peacekeeping efforts.

The UN mission was deployed to Côte d'Ivoire in 2004 when the country was divided in half by an armed conflict. During its time in the country, the mission helped protect civilians, enabled inclusive political dialogue and supported the Government in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of nearly 70,000 former combatants.

It also supported social cohesion through about 1,000 quick impact projects, resulting in the decrease in inter-communal conflicts by 80 per cent.