

On International Day Against Drug Abuse, UN urges collective action to realize global commitments

26 June 2017 – To mark the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, the United Nations is calling on all countries to honour their commitments to address the scourge and to ensure that steps to do so are consistent with human rights and promote equality, peace, security and sustainable development.

“Despite the risks and challenges inherent in tackling this global problem, I hope and believe we are on the right path, and that together we can implement a coordinated, balanced and comprehensive approach that leads to sustainable solutions,” said UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres .

In his [message](#) on the [International Day](#), the UN chief also recalled the [special session](#) on the World Drug Problem, convened by the UN General Assembly, where Governments agreed upon a series of steps which are more effective and humane, and leaves no one behind.

“I know from personal experience how an approach based on prevention and treatment can yield positive results,” noted Mr. Guterres, referring to steps he took as the Prime Minister of Portugal, including introduction of non-criminal responses to the possession of drugs for personal use and a flexibility afforded by the three international drug control conventions and greater resources for prevention, treatment, and social reintegration programmes.

The steps helped the country achieve one of the lowest death rates for drug use in Europe, as well reduce the prevalence of HIV amongst injecting drug users.

“I am proud of these results and hope this experience will contribute to the discussion and encourage [UN] Member States to continue exploring comprehensive and evidence-based solutions,” added the Secretary General, noting that the follow-up process to the 2016 special session includes an institutional framework to share best practices.

“This would be the best possible way to implement the UNGASS recommendations and to have a positive impact on the lives of millions of people around the world,” he said.

Similarly, in his own [message](#) on the Day, Yury Fedotov, the Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime ([UNODC](#)), also recalled the commitments expressed at last year’s General Assembly special session and underscored the challenges that drug abuse and illicit trafficking pose to sustainable development.

Once viewed as a marginal actor on the development stage, drugs and crime are now viewed as a disturbing obstruction to the achievement of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, particularly [Sustainable Development] [Goal 3](#) on health and [Goal 16](#) on peaceful societies, he said, underscoring the importance of implementing the commitments made by UN Member States last year.

The theme for the 2017 edition of the Day, *Listen First* – *Listening to children and youth is the first step to help them grow healthy and safe*, builds on the theme for the commemoration last year, as an initiative to increase support for prevention of drug use that is based on science and is thus an effective investment in the well-being of children and youth, their families and their communities.

[With hidden lives vital to our own, 'seafarers matter,' says UN on International Day](#)

25 June 2017 – Highlighting the challenges faced by seafarers – women and men sailing and working aboard ships – the United Nations International Maritime Organization has called on everyone around the world to show appreciation for their vital contributions.

Even though seafaring can provide the basis for a fulfilling and life-long career, it is still a very difficult and demanding job, Kitack Lim, the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), said [in his message](#) on [Day of the Seafarer](#).

In addition to personal issues, conditions onboard ships and in ports, unpaid wages, and even abandonment, mariners have to contend with long periods away from family and friends and the pressure to perform in a challenging economic environment, which multiply the anguish.

It is easy for seafarers to feel lonely and isolated. To imagine that they do not matter. This year, we want to show [everyone] that seafarers do matter, stressed Mr. Lim, which is also the theme for this year's commemoration.

In particular, he praised the role of seafarer's centres at port cities, where sailors and crew of ships visit for a small taste of home – a sanctuary where they can rest, recuperate, connect with loved ones back home, especially through social media, and if necessary avail of support to help them adjust and cope.

We want to create a platform to give ports and seafarer centres the

opportunity to demonstrate how much seafarer matter,” noted the IMO chief, at the Duckdalben Seafarer's Centre in Hamburg, Germany, one of Europe's biggest ports.

He also spoke of [events organized at ports and seafarer's centres around the world](#) to connect the general public to seafarers and celebrate their contributions.

“As in previous years, the campaign will be centred on social media [to] spread the word as far as possible,” he added, calling on everyone to contribute and tag their messages, photos and videos to IMO's social media channels ([on Twitter](#) and [on Facebook](#)).

“We ask all of you to join us and say *Seafarers matter!*”

The Day of the Seafarer, marked annually on 25 June, was established in a resolution adopted by the 2010 Diplomatic Conference in Manila, the capital of Philippines, to recognize the unique contribution made by seafarers from all over the world to international seaborne trade, the world economy and civil society as a whole.

[In Haiti, Security Council spotlights opportunities for country's reform towards stability and development](#)

24 June 2017 – Wrapping up a three-day visit to Haiti, a Security Council delegation today stressed that it has accomplished the objectives of the mission, including a first-hand look into how best the United Nations could contribute to the country's lasting stability and development.

“I am glad to report that the objectives of the visit were met,” Sacha Sergio Llorentty Soliz, Bolivia's Permanent Representative to the UN, who led the Council delegation, told a press conference in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

“With this visit, we have reaffirmed the Security Council's commitment towards the government and the people of Haiti and towards its institutional strengthening in order to contribute to its stability and development,” he added.

Bolivia holds the Council's presidency for the month of June.

In resolution 2350 of 13 April, the 15-member Council extended the mandate of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti ([MINUSTAH](#)) for a final six months, deciding to replace it with a smaller follow-up peacekeeping mission that

would help the Government of Haiti strengthen rule-of-law institutions, further develop and support the Haitian National Police and engage in human rights monitoring, reporting and analysis.

Haiti has fortunately entered a new period of stability, providing an important window of opportunity for the government and other state institutions to be able to bring forward a programme of reform so needed to allow Haiti to join the path of sustainable development,” Mr. Llorentty said.

The delegation also sought to review how to implement MINUSTAH's transition to the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), and identify the necessary requirements for the successful implementation of the follow-up mission's mandate.

During the visit, the Council delegation met with President Jovenel Moïse, member of his Cabinet, parliamentarians, national police, judicial officials, and civil society and private-sector representatives.

The encounters with these interlocutors allow us to come to better understanding of the challenges the government and people in Haiti face in this new political context,” Mr. Llorentty said.

We felt particularly encouraged by the government and legislature's clear commitment to resolutely address the country's challenges in the field of rule of law and governance, and place an emphasis on strengthen judiciary oversight and accountability,” he added.

We are equally encouraged by the authorities' commitment to further strengthen Haitian national police,” he added.

He said the Council believes the new mission to be part of the strategy to ensure Haiti's progressive transition to development.

The implementation of the new mission is a demonstration of the UN's long-term commitment to Haiti, he said, stressing that a stronger level of national ownership and leadership from the Government is also expected.

On cholera, the Security Council delegation reaffirmed its support for the new efforts undertaken by the UN.

We are reminded that peace and security are intrinsically intertwined with the basic needs of the population. If the basic needs, such as health, education, water and sanitation services are not met, the road to lasting stability and development will be difficult if not impossible to achieve,” Mr. Llorentty said.

Last December, then-Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon put forward a New Approach to Cholera in Haiti to demonstrate the Organization's commitment to the elimination of the disease. He also apologized to the Haitian people on behalf of the United Nations stating that the Organization simply had not done enough with regard to the 2010 cholera outbreak and its subsequent spread in Haiti.

Earlier this week, Ban's successor António Guterres appointed Josette Sheeran of the United States as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Haiti. She will guide full implementation of the Organization's new approach.

The new approach on cholera involves two tracks: the first to intensify efforts to reduce and ultimately end the transmission of the disease, improve access to care and treatment, and address the longer-term issues of water, sanitation and health systems. Track 2 involves developing a package of material assistance and support for those Haitians most directly affected by cholera.

[Yemen hit by world's worst cholera outbreak as cases reach 200,000](#)

24 June 2017 – Yemen is now facing the worst cholera outbreak in the world, with suspected cases exceeding 200,000 and the number increasing at an average of 5,000 a day, the United Nations warned today.

In a joint statement, United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) Executive Director Anthony Lake and World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) Director-General Margaret Chan said that in just two months, cholera has spread to almost every governorate of this war-torn country.

Already more than 1,300 people have died – one quarter of them children – and the death toll is expected to rise.

UNICEF, WHO and our partners are racing to stop the acceleration of this deadly outbreak, they said, also calling on authorities in Yemen to strengthen their internal efforts to stop the outbreak from spreading further.

This deadly cholera outbreak is the direct consequence of two years of heavy conflict, the UN officials said, noting that collapsing health, water and sanitation systems have cut off 14.5 million people from regular access to clean water and sanitation, increasing the ability of the disease to spread.

The UN officials also said that rising rates of malnutrition have weakened children's health and made them more vulnerable to disease.

An estimated 30,000 dedicated local health workers who play the largest role in ending this outbreak have not been paid their salaries for nearly 10 months.

We urge all authorities inside the country to pay these salaries and, above all, we call on all parties to end this devastating conflict,

they said.

INTERVIEW: Afghans need to see their Government taking the reins – UN envoy

23 June 2017 – Afghans need to see their Government taking the reins for security in the country, delivering much needed services and creating jobs, says the United Nations envoy to the country, Tadamichi Yamamoto.

At the same time, Mr. Yamamoto noted that that the international community needs to keep the promises made at the Brussels conference last October to support Afghanistan politically and financially on its path towards peace, development and a stable economy.

Mr. Yamamoto, the Secretary-General's Special Representative and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan ([UNAMA](#)), was in New York this week to brief the Security Council on the latest developments in the country. In an interview with *UN News* he elaborated on issues such as the parliamentary elections slated for July 2018, the security situation in the country and what a genuine peace process with the Taliban might look like. *The interview has been edited for length and clarity.*

UN News: What do you see as the necessary steps to address the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan?

Tadamichi Yamamoto: There are two things that we have to address. One is that in Afghanistan, the security apparatus or the Government has to really try to increase the credibility of the security institutions by, first of all, trying to reform the institutions in terms of, for instance, the command structure and try to get out of corruption so that people feel more secure about, and have the trust in, the institutions. And also, particularly given the current situation, a lot more work needs to be done in terms of trying to have more intelligence networks and collaboration with the countries in the region, as well as some other countries, to try to have the necessary information available to tackle the situation. Also, the effectiveness of how they run the security machine has to be looked at very carefully.

Another thing they have to do is to ensure, with regard to the recent incidents, that investigations are conducted thoroughly... and also those who were responsible for the security will need to be accountable for the situation depending on the findings.

UN News: Afghan civilians continue to bear the brunt of the conflict. What more needs to be done to assist the people of Afghanistan?

Tadamichi Yamamoto: The most important thing is try to, as you pointed out in

your first question, to increase the confidence and the credibility of the Government in terms of ensuring security for the country. And to do that there is a need for the Afghan Government and the security institutions to try to improve itself in terms of capability and the way they do their work. But also the international community, particularly those in the neighbourhood, need to work with them to try to arrest the possible onslaught which is expected to continue by the insurgents on the Afghan society. I think that would be the first thing.

And also the people need to have confidence in the efforts of the international community and the Afghan Government, which means what the Government is delivering for the people in terms of services and job creation, and what the international community is trying to do in terms of, for instance, the Brussels meeting of last year will have to bear fruit. The result and outcome must be understandable to the people. And rather than just plan for some development and the harnessing of the fruits of the commitments, promises down the road, we must focus more on what is possible in the next few months, what is achievable in the short term, so that the people of Afghanistan actually feel the benefits of the efforts of the international community and the Government.