

[Philippines: UN reports significant progress in child protection, despite ongoing violations](#)

2 May 2017 – The Government of the Philippines and a rebel group with which it signed a peace accord have made progress in ending and preventing the recruitment of children on the southern island of Mindanao, according to a new United Nations report.

The Secretary-General's fourth report on the impact on children of armed conflict in the Philippines "describes [significant progress](#) in the protection of boys and girls, despite ongoing violations against children," according to the UN Office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba.

In 2009, the Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) signed an action plan to halt and prevent the recruitment and use of children in the armed conflict on Mindanao.

Since then, more than 1,850 children have been identified and formally disengaged, the UN reported.

Special Representative Gamba encouraged the MILF to "draw on the current momentum to fully implement the Action Plan and to reinforce the necessary safeguards to prevent future recruitment and association of children."

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She also commended the Government, which strengthened the national framework to address violations against children by forming an inter-agency committee to monitor, report and respond to such grave violations.

In the report, the Secretary-General calls on the Government to actively use these tools to ensure independent, prompt and thorough investigations into alleged violations committed against children and guarantee appropriate services for child victims.

Despite noted progress, the report highlighted that killing and maiming of children in the Philippines remains a concern with 116 documented cases.

"Most incidents were the result of crossfire, unexploded ordnance or shelling, but others involved the targeting of children," according to the Ms. Gamba's Office.

The Abu Sayyaf Group and the Armed Forces of the Philippines took responsibility for nearly half of the 116 children killed or injured.

Among other issues, the report noted a "high number" of attacks on schools

and teachers, and an increase in attacks on indigenous communities.

The Special Representative responded by urging all parties to the conflict to end attacks or threats of attacks on schools, teachers and students.

“Using schools for military purposes is unacceptable. Children should be guaranteed safe access to education,” she said.

[On World Tuna Day, UN cites importance of sustainably managed fish stocks in achieving 2030 Agenda](#)

2 May 2017 – As migratory tuna species account for 20 per cent of the value of all marine capture fisheries and over eight per cent of all globally traded seafood, the inaugural celebration by the United Nations of World Tuna Day is an important step in recognizing the critical role of tuna to sustainable development, food security, economic opportunity, and livelihoods of people around the world.

Marking the first [World Tuna Day](#) with a call protect precious tuna resources and their surrounding ecosystems, the UN Legal Counsel today strongly urges long-term conservation and sustainable use of those resources, important for global achievement of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

According to the UN, more than 80 States currently have tuna fisheries while thousands of tuna fishing vessels operate in all the oceans. In the Indian and Pacific Oceans, tuna fishery capacity is still growing.

Designation of the World Day underlines the importance of conservation management to ensure that systems are in place to prevent tuna stocks from crashing, the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)) [says](#).

Many countries depend heavily on tuna resources for food security and nutrition, economic development, employment, government revenue, livelihoods, culture and recreation. Two main products drive tuna production; traditional canned tuna and sashimi/sushi.



FAO estimates that about one third of the world’s seven major tuna species are currently overexploited. Photo: FAO/A. Urcelayeta

In a [statement](#), General Assembly President Peter Thomson notes that nearly two-thirds of the tuna found in restaurants and supermarkets around the world comes from the Pacific Ocean, hence the Pacific small island development

States, as well as the least developed countries (LDCs) playing an active role on the designation of the World Day.

Today's celebration comes one month ahead of [The Ocean Conference](#), to be held from 5 to 9 June 2017 at UN Headquarters, "and is a good opportunity to highlight the importance of reversing the decline in the health of the Ocean to ensure sustainable management of marine life, such as tuna, that we are so dependent on."

In the latest publication of the [The State World Fisheries and Aquaculture](#), the UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) notes there is a need for effective management to restore the overfished stocks including tuna. In the 2016 report, FAO registered new record catches for tuna. Total catches of tuna and tuna like species were almost 7.7 million metric tonnes. FAO notices that market demand for tuna is still high, and that the significant overcapacity of tuna fishing fleets remains.

Addressing the decline in tuna stocks resulting from overfishing in the world's oceans, the UN Legal Counsel emphasizes the critical importance of effectively implementing the international legal framework, as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, widely known as [UNCLOS](#), which has been strengthened by the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, recommendations of its Review Conference, annual General Assembly resolutions on sustainable fisheries, as well as other efforts by the international community at the global, regional and national levels.

Economic and social benefits of sustainably managed tuna stocks

About 25 per cent of the world's supply of tuna is controlled by the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA), UNEP reports. The parties, eight States in Oceania, agreed to scheme to sell a limited number of fishing days. According to UNEP this has advanced the sustainable management of tuna and has also doubled their revenue.

Additionally, UNEP reports, 14 Pacific island countries have improved monitoring, reporting and enforcement by putting in place a regional fishing register, and a vessel monitoring system that tracks fishing vessels around the clock.

Fisheries sustainability and seafood guidelines

FAO Fisheries defines two approaches to define the sustainability of fisheries production. The first one measures the state of the system:

- Are fish abundant?
- Is nutrition good? and
- Are incomes from fishing allowing families to prosper?

The second one looks at the management of the system:

- Does the management system change management actions as the state of the system changes?
- If stocks decline, can the management system reduce fishing pressure and

- allow recovery? and
- If incomes are poor, can management actions increase incomes?
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[UN chief urges States to disclose information concerning death of Dag Hammarskjöld](#)

2 May 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has urged Member States to disclose, declassify or allow access to information that they may have regarding the tragic 1961 plane crash that killed his former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld and the members of the party accompanying him, a UN spokesman said today.

Mr. Guterres also urged Member States to actively assist Mohamed Othman, former Chief Justice of Tanzania, in his work as the Eminent Person looking into the causes of those deaths, according to a [statement](#) issued by Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General.

“The Secretary-General affirms his own commitment to this matter in the strongest terms as he strongly feels that he owes it to his illustrious and distinguished predecessor, Dag Hammarskjöld, and to the other members of the party accompanying him and to their families, to pursue the full truth of this matter,” the statement said.

Mr. Othman was Chair of the 2015 Independent Panel of Experts, which concluded, among other things, that there was significant new information with sufficient probative value to further pursue aerial attack or other interference as a hypothesis of the possible cause of the crash.

The current stage of the work will build on the findings of the 2015 Panel. The Eminent Person’s mandate is to review potential new information, assess its probative value, and determine the scope that any further investigation should take. The mandate also allows him to potentially draw conclusions from the investigations already conducted, including those of the 2015 Panel, and of the 2013 Hammarskjöld Commission.

At the daily briefing in the UN’s New York Headquarters, Mr. Dujarric [said](#) Mr. Othman has noted that more active cooperation is necessary from Member States to declassify or otherwise allow access to records that are now over 55 years old.

Mr. Dujarric also noted that Mr. Othman held meetings last week with Member States in New York, and will continue to liaise with relevant parties prior to reporting his findings to the Secretary-General before the end of the current UN General Assembly session.

'All indications suggest DPR Korea making progress' on nuclear programme, says UN atomic agency chief

2 May 2017 – The head of the United Nations atomic agency today expressed serious concern about the nuclear program of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), saying all indications suggest that the country is moving ahead with its nuclear efforts.

Speaking the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Yukiya Amano, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency ([IAEA](#)), noted that DPRK continues to launch missiles and threaten other countries.

"This is [extremely worrying](#)," the Director General told the participants at the session, where he also provided a broader overview of important developments in key areas of the IAEA's work relevant to the implementation of the Treaty since 2015.

In 2009, DPRK asked IAEA inspectors to leave the country, but the UN agency has continued to collect and evaluate information from satellite imagery, open-source and trade-related information.

"Without direct access to relevant sites and locations, the Agency cannot confirm the operational status of North Korea's nuclear facilities. But all the indications suggest that North Korea is making progress with its nuclear programme," said Mr. Amano.

DPRK has also withdrawn from the Treaty, known as [NPT](#) for short. A landmark international treaty that went into force in 1970, the NPT aims to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.

It represents the only binding commitment in a multilateral treaty to the goal of disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States.

In today's speech, Mr. Amano urged DPRK to cooperate with the IAEA in implementing NPT [safeguards](#), to fully comply with its obligations under relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and resolve any outstanding issues.

He also noted that IAEA inspectors are ready to return to the country "at short notice" if political conditions allow it.

The [Preparatory Committee](#), which started today, will last through next Friday. It is the first of three planned sessions to be held prior to the

[Citing Uruguay's 'inspiring' record on environment, UN expert says country must do more](#)

2 May 2017 – Uruguay has much to be proud of in its record on human rights and the environment, but the South American country still has some challenges ahead, including the setting up of an environment ombudsperson, a United Nations-appointed expert said today.

“Uruguay has supported its obligations to human rights and the environment by adopting a number of laws and policies on rights to information, public participation in environmental decision-making, and providing remedies following environmental harm,” UN Special Rapporteur John Knox said at the end of his five-day mission to the country, according to a [news release](#) from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)).

Mr. Knox is appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council to examine and report on the issue of human rights obligations related to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

“But the Government should adopt affirmative measures to structure environmental information in a way that is easily understandable by the general public, especially those, like people living in poverty, who are most vulnerable to environmental degradation,” he noted.

Like other countries, Uruguay seeks to pursue both economic growth and environmental protection. These goals can sometimes come into conflict with one another. For example, expanding agricultural production through the use of fertilizers, agro-chemicals, and irrigation can cause environmental harm, including to water quality.

“The best way to ensure that development is truly sustainable is to provide effective access to information, which in turn allows informed public participation in the decision-making processes,” said Mr. Knox. “Only in that way can the public be assured that economic growth is not coming at the expense of human rights.”

He pointed to complaints that the current system for reporting problems was “confusing and not always responsive” and called for a new mechanism, which would include an ombudsperson with the authority to receive all environmental complaints to ensure that each was addressed promptly by the appropriate office.

The expert's final report will be presented to the Human Rights Council in March 2018.

The positions of Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are honorary and they are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.