

[Strong partnerships key to unleash full potential of industrialization, highlights senior UN official](#)

26 April 2017 – Speaking at the conclusion of a global meeting on importance of agriculture and agro-industries for sustainable and resilient food systems, the President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) today urged for greater partnerships to ensure that global development agenda brings prosperity to all.

“[We have] to go beyond past and current models, beyond individual areas of expertise, beyond separate locations and beyond institutional frontiers,” said the [ECOSOC](#) President, Frederick Musiiwa Makamure Shava, at the close of the meeting held at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.

“In doing so, we can unleash the full potential of infrastructure development and sustainable industrialization, including agro-industries, to generate growth and employment while preserving planetary boundaries,” he emphasized.

Such partnerships, Mr. Shava underscored, would also be crucial to mitigate the challenges of climate change and natural disasters as well as to address the impact of increasing global population and migration on global food security.

The three-day meeting discussed a wide range of topics, including the particular development context of developing countries and countries in special situation (including least developed and landlocked developing countries), holistic approaches and integrated approach to climate change and other challenges that agriculture confronts, public-private-partnerships of inclusive agro-industry development, and the role of public sector and donor organizations in mitigating financial risks in agriculture and agro-industry.

The [meeting in Victoria Falls](#) follows an earlier [meeting in Dakar](#), Senegal, that discussed the role of infrastructure development in promoting sustainable industrialization.

These two events were organized to prepare for a special ECOSOC meeting on [innovations in infrastructure development](#) and promoting sustainable industrialization, convened by President Shava, at the UN Headquarters in New York on 31 May.

The ECOSOC – one of the six principal organs of the UN – is responsible for coordinating the economic, social, and related work of UN agencies, functional and regional. Furthermore, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development ([HLPF](#)), the main platform dealing with sustainable development, meets every year under the auspices of the Council.

Promoting sustainable and inclusive industrialization is the [Goal 9](#) (SDG9) of

the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

[Chernobyl disaster, 31 years on: International cooperation still needed to address consequences, says UN](#)

26 April 2017 – The United Nations today commemorated the International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day recalling the devastating explosion of 1986 at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant which spewed radioactive material to an area stretching 155,000 square kilometres across Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.

Underscoring the need to strengthen international cooperation to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the disaster, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in December last year in which it designated 26 April as the [International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day](#).

In the [resolution](#), the Assembly recognized that “three decades after the Chernobyl disaster, the still-persistent serious long-term consequences thereof, as well as the continuing related needs of the affected communities and territories.”

It also acknowledged “the need for continuing international cooperation on Chernobyl under the auspices of the UN that can contribute to the implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#) 2015-2030.”

About 8.4 million people across four countries were exposed to radiation, including some 600,000 “liquidators,” who were involved in fire-fighting and clean-up operations.

Also, agricultural areas covering nearly 52,000 square kilometres were contaminated with Cesium-137 and Strontium-90, with 30-year and 28-year half-lives respectively. Nearly 404,000 people were resettled, but millions continued to live in an environment where continued residual exposure created a range of adverse effects.

As any radioactive decay is on an exponential scale, it can take many decades and even centuries for the material to become inert fully.

UN efforts to aid the recovery from the disaster started in 1990 when the global Organization’s General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for international cooperation to address and mitigate the consequences of the explosion.

Since the disaster, UN programmes and agencies have, together with non-governmental organizations have launched more than 230 different research and assistance projects in the fields of health, nuclear safety, rehabilitation, environment, production of clean foods and information.

Also today, at the UN Headquarters in New York, the Permanent Mission of Belarus together with partners organized a roundtable discussion on identifying and mitigating the long-term consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster entitled 'Building the Case for Continued International Cooperation'.

[‘Progress under threat,’ warns UN chief on twentieth anniversary of chemical weapons convention](#)

26 April 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today warned that progress made in eliminating the world’s declared stockpiles of chemical weapons is threatened by belligerents in the Middle East.

“The recent attack in Syria was a horrific reminder of the stakes,” [said](#) Mr. Guterres in a video message to the commemorative ceremony for the 20th anniversary of the [Chemical Weapons Convention](#) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons ([OPCW](#)) held in The Hague, Netherlands.

The OPCW is the implementing body of the Convention, which entered into force in 1997. As of today OPCW has 192 member States, who are working together to achieve a world free of chemical weapons.

“Nearly all countries are party to the Convention – and the Organization has helped eliminate most of the world’s declared stockpiles,” Mr. Guterres noted.

“But progress is under threat. In the Middle East, belligerents are breaking the norm against chemical weapons,” he added.

The UN chief expressed hope that all States will support the OPCW’s critical fact-finding mission, as well as its joint investigative mechanism with the United Nations.

Noting that the Convention and the implementing body celebrate two decades of success, Mr. Guterres urged: “Now, let us renew our resolve to consign these diabolical weapons to the pages of history.”

The OPCW Member States share the collective goal of preventing chemistry from ever again being used for warfare, thereby strengthening international

security. To this end, the Convention contains four key provisions:

- destroying all existing chemical weapons under international verification by the OPCW;
- monitoring chemical industry to prevent new weapons from re-emerging;
- providing assistance and protection to States Parties against chemical threats; and
- fostering international cooperation to strengthen implementation of the Convention and promote the peaceful use of chemistry.

[Turning problems into progress: UN celebrates 'risk-takers' on World Intellectual Property Day](#)

26 April 2017 – On [World Intellectual Property Day](#), the United Nations is spotlighting innovation – “future-shapers and risk-takers” – exploring how it is making our lives healthier, safer, and more comfortable, turning problems into progress.

Marking the Day at World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) headquarters in Geneva, UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres [noted](#) that while the world is facing enormous changes and challenges, including new technologies and shifting labour markets that will impact people’s lives, WIPO has an essential role to play.

“Your organization can be a central tool of the UN to be able to cope with these challenges, to provide us with the knowledge about what is happening, to give us the ideas, the suggestions of how we can organize ourselves at different levels to be able to cope with these challenges,” he said.

WIPO is the global forum for intellectual property services, policy, information and cooperation. We are a self-funding agency of the United Nations, with 189 member States. The agency’s mission is to lead the development of a balanced and effective international intellectual property (IP) system that enables innovation and creativity for the benefit of all.

Mr. Guterres continued: “Your organization has an extremely important role, because you are in the frontier of knowledge and the frontier of knowledge is in the end what will determine the future of our international community.”

For his part, WIPO Director General Francis Gurry [said](#), this year’s campaign celebrates all those risk takers, those ‘future shapers,’ those innovators who develop a new technology, product or service that spurs us onward and

makes us better.”

“On World Intellectual Property Day, let us reflect on and appreciate the energy, drive and dedication required to translate an idea into reality. And let us renew our commitment to building a global IP framework that makes innovation work for everyone, everywhere,” he said.

He noted that innovation – and the technological progress it represents – makes a significant contribution to economic growth and creates opportunities for new and better jobs.

“We often do not take enough time to think about the many ways in which innovation improves the quality of our lives. One only has to compare the way we live today with the way we lived 100 years ago,” he continued.

Over the past century, he said, the world had seen an extraordinary transformation in the quality of “our material lives, thanks to the introduction of countless new and improved technologies and products.”

Mr. Gurry went on to explain that intellectual property, such as patents, trademarks, industrial designs and copyright are a crucial part of a successful innovation system.

“It provides a return for those who take the risk to introduce the ‘new’ – in terms of products and services – into the economy. It provides a framework for the rather difficult and challenging journey that any idea has to undertake before becoming a commercially available product or service,” he stated.

Mr. Gurry concluded by inviting everyone to take advantage of this year’s campaign as “an opportunity for us all to think about what it actually takes to invent something and the challenges associated with that process. It is also a chance for us to consider how we can make innovation really work for the benefit of the whole of society.”

Inequalities between rich and poor temper broad success of immunization – UNICEF

26 April 2017 – Even though billions of doses of vaccines for children across 100 countries around the world were supplied in 2016, millions of children – especially those in conflict zones – still miss out on life-saving inoculations, the United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) has warned.

“All children, no matter where they live or what their circumstances are,

have the right to survive and thrive, safe from deadly diseases,” Robin Nandy, the Chief of Immunization at UNICEF, said in a [news release](#).

Access to immunization has led to a dramatic decrease in deaths of children under the age of five from vaccine-preventable diseases, and has brought the world closer to eradicating deadly scourges like polio and measles but despite this progress, 1.5 million children still die from diseases which can be prevented by vaccines.

According to estimates, 19.4 million children around the world still miss out on full vaccinations every year.

Around two thirds of all unvaccinated children live in conflict-affected countries. Weak health systems, poverty and social inequities also mean that one in five children under the age of five is still not reached with life-saving vaccines.

On top of this, persisting inequality between rich and poor children further exasperate the problem.

In countries where 80 per cent of the world’s under-five child deaths occur, over half of the poorest children are not fully vaccinated. Globally, the poorest children are nearly twice as likely to die before the age of five as the richest.

“In addition to children living in rural communities where access to services is limited, more and more children living in overcrowded cities and slum dwellings are also missing out on vital vaccinations,” said Dr. Nandy.

“Overcrowding, poverty, poor hygiene and sanitation, as well as inadequate nutrition and health care increase the risk of diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhoea and measles in these communities; diseases that are easily preventable with vaccines,” he added.

Furthermore, given predictions that one in four people could be living in urban poor communities, mainly in Africa and Asia by 2030, the focus and investment of immunization services must be tailored to the specific needs of these communities and children, noted UNICEF.

This re-focusing of efforts is all the more important given that efforts in these communities would be crucial for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).