

## [DR Congo: UN seeks \\$64 million to tackle humanitarian crisis in Kasai region](#)

26 April 2017 – The United Nations has appealed for \$64.5 million to respond to the urgent needs of 731,000 people over the next six months in the Kasai region, the latest humanitarian hotspot in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The Kasai crisis is an acute crisis of massive proportions in a country that is already going through one of the world's most relentlessly acute humanitarian emergencies, the Humanitarian Coordinator in DRC, Mamadou Diallo, [said](#) in Kinshasa.

We are facing a new challenge that requires additional resources to respond to the needs of thousands of displaced people and host families as our current capacities are being outstripped, he added.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)), more than one million people are estimated to be currently displaced as the violence started in Kasai Central and rippled across neighboring Kasai, Kasai Oriental, Lomami and Sankuru provinces.

Currently some 40 national and international humanitarian organizations are working across the five provinces to respond to the crisis, which was borne out of armed clashes that erupted in August 2016 between the Congolese army and a local militia group.

The appeal launched today will provide water, food, medicines and health services, basic household items, and provide protection services, among others, to minors, women who have suffered sexual violence, and other civilians who have been victims of violence.

In Kasai Central province alone, the current humanitarian needs are 400 per cent above what humanitarian actors had planned for earlier this year.

An effective response requires that new and fresh funding be allocated as humanitarian actors cannot afford to take away from their current operations in the eastern provinces to support the Kasai crisis, Mr. Diallo said.

More than four months into the year, the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan only received \$66 million, or less than 10 per cent of the overall \$748 million appeal.

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# Indigenous peoples are 'moral compass of humanity,' special UN General Assembly meeting told

25 April 2017 – Endorsement of the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples does not equal implementation, speakers told the UN General Assembly today at a special meeting to celebrate the Declaration's tenth anniversary and renew commitment to its tenets as a vital solution towards attaining a just and sustainable world.

Since the Declaration's adoption, global awareness of indigenous peoples had grown. However, progress had been inconsistent within countries and uneven around the world, Durga Prasad Bhattarai, Vice-President of the General Assembly told the [High-level event](#) to mark the 10th anniversary of the landmark [UN Declaration](#).

"To fulfil the commitments made under the Declaration," he said, "stronger partnerships – built on a foundation of trust – must be forged between among Governments, indigenous peoples, the United Nations, civil society, the private sector and other key stakeholders."

He invited the international community to renew its commitment to indigenous peoples, work collaboratively to achieve the Declaration's aims and secure a world in which the rights of all indigenous peoples were promoted and protected.

## ***Indigenous peoples 'can make their own future,' Bolivian President says***

Delivering the keynote address, Evo Morales Ayma, the President of Bolivia, described how the indigenous movement in his country had brought together other sectors of society, including transport workers and the middle class, to build a new Bolivia.

"There are no issues in which indigenous peoples could not or should not be involved," he said, explaining that for centuries, they had resisted invaders who sought to extinguish their identity, he said, emphasizing that indigenous people around the world shared the same history.

Describing war as the direct product of capitalism, he pointed out that, for the rich, there is no crisis as they continued to accumulate wealth on the backs of the poor. "Humanity is in danger," but that is a challenge, not destiny. Indigenous peoples had shown that they could resist, "and they must."

And indeed, indigenous peoples can make their own future. What had been achieved in Bolivia – a country that had gone from a colonial State to a sovereign and plurinational one – demonstrates what could be done at a global

level. "Indigenous peoples are the moral compass of humanity, with their own ways of organization and production," he stressed, adding that their responsibility is to organize a global fight "to save humanity and the world."



Mariam Walleh Aboubakrine, Chairperson of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, addresses High-level meeting on the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. UN Photo/Manuel Elias



Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, addresses High-level meeting on the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. UN Photo/Manuel Elias



Andrew Gilmour, Assistant-Secretary-General of the New York Office of Human Rights, addresses High-level meeting on the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. UN Photo/Manuel Elias



Kyung-wha Kang, the Secretary-General's Special Advisor on Policy, addresses High-level meeting on the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. UN Photo/Manuel Elias

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Kyung-wha Kang, the UN Secretary-General's Senior Adviser on Policy, said to ameliorate progress on the rights of Indigenous peoples, several tools should be used, including the three relevant United Nations mechanisms – the Permanent Forum, the Special Rapporteur and the Expert Mechanism. In addition, the UN system-wide action plan and ongoing consultations could also be used to help to amplify indigenous voices in the Organization's processes.

While hailing the progress made this far, Andrew Gilmour, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights said: "The struggle is far from over. Although the Declaration was approved 10 years ago, many of the obstacles that led to its enactment are still present today. Endorsement of its fine principles, alas, does not equal implementation."

So once again, the indigenous movement – with its diverse voices, including those of indigenous women, youth, and persons with disabilities – is "rising to meet the challenge of making the Declaration a reality," he said pointing, to the 'water protectors' in Standing Rock, South Dakota, in the United States, as well as those speaking up for their rights, from Nepal to Mexico,

who are insisting that their informed consent must be sought.

Yet, extractive industries continued to destroy their land, seeing the indigenous populations on them not as a vital element, but as an obstacle. Human rights defenders were being killed. The Office for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)) has called for follow up on enforcing indigenous peoples' rights.

The private sector must be aware of the Declaration's principles, he stressed, adding that information about the rights of indigenous peoples should be part of the business schools' curriculums. To foster progress at the country level, his Office is working towards building national action plans.

Also addressing the meeting, Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine, Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, said the Declaration reflects a global consensus, with some countries such as Canada taking leadership positions after having had initially voted against the instrument in the General Assembly.

"The Declaration outlines a range of rights," including with regard to land, education, health and to freely determine political status, she said, adding that the principles of free, prior and informed consent are a critical factor in the Declaration. However, while implementation progress continued, the situation on the ground is "grim," with indigenous peoples living shorter lives and having limited political participation.

The most fitting way to mark the Declaration's anniversary is to honestly identify and confront the obstacles it faces for effective implementation at all levels

Advocating for the Declaration's principles to be realized on the ground, she said political will is needed. More than 200 frontline defenders, half of whom had been defending land, had been killed in 2016. Those and other situations must be addressed and remedied.

For her part, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, said her first report had pointed to two challenges to implementing the Declaration: a lack of awareness and understanding about the human rights instruments; and States' difficulties for States to translating them into practical steps.

On promoting awareness and understanding, the results of her predecessor's work had seen the reversal of position by the four countries – Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States –that which had originally voted against the Declaration in the Assembly.

"The Declaration is an essential tool for reconciliation, a much much-needed process in countries where indigenous peoples continue to suffer gross human rights violations," she stated, but stressed: "The most fitting way to mark the Declaration's anniversary is to honestly identify and confront the

obstacles it faces for effective implementation at all levels.”

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## [UN agency and Chinese bike-share firm team up to raise awareness about climate change](#)



Li Zekun, Vice President of Marketing (left), and Mr. Dai Wei, Founder and CEO of ofo, a Beijing-based start-up company that has become the world's first and largest bike-sharing platform. Photo: UNDP/Freya Moralesofo

25 April 2017 – The United Nations development agency is teaming up with ofo, a China-based bike sharing platform, to raise public awareness about climate change, it was announced today.

“This is an [innovative partnership](#) which will make real strides towards protecting our precious environment,” said Michael O’Neill, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Director of External Relations at the UN Development Programme ([UNDP](#)).

Ofo, which is recognized by yellow bicycles in China, Singapore and the United States, will also donate its income on the 17th of the month to celebrate the universally approved 17 Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)). The [SDGs](#) are a to-do list to wipe out poverty, fight inequality and tackle climate change by 2030.

The funding will be used to provide financial support “to innovative projects that address urban environmental challenges,” according to a press release.

The includes creating campaign messages about how each and every person can reduce CO2 emissions.

UNDP and ofo have also said that they will establish a scholarship program for environment research and start-ups offering green products and technologies.

In addition, ofo will share abandoned bikes with children in rural areas to improve their access to education.

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## South Sudan's political process 'not dead' but needs 'resuscitation' – UN envoy

25 April 2017 – The political process in South Sudan is not dead but requires significant resuscitation, the head of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the crisis-torn country told the Security Council today.

“Regrettably, no party has shown interest in reviving the Peace Agreement,” said David Shearer, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative and the head of UN Mission in South Sudan ([UNMISS](#)), referring to the August 2015 accord between the country’s warring sides.

Despite the peace agreement, South Sudan slipped back into conflict due to renewed clashes between rival forces – the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) loyal to President Salva Kiir and the SPLA in Opposition backing former First Vice-President Riek Machar.

Mr. Shearer explained that unlike this time last year, where the conflict was construed on a bipolar basis, today the opposition has splintered, making it necessary for UN peacebuilding efforts to be more widely cast than previously.

He told the 15-member Council that, “virtually no part of the country is immune from conflict. Yet, there has been no concerted effort by any party to adhere to a ceasefire. Instead, we are seeing an intensification of the conflict over the past month.”

Mr. Shearer said that in some of the violence, Government forces have responded to attacks by opposition forces, notably in Wau and the Equatorias. In others, in contrast, Government-led operations such as those in Upper Nile and Jonglei appeared “more strategic in focus” and were aimed at taking opposition-held areas.