

# UN migration agency releases funding for emergency response to Congolese fleeing Kasai

25 April 2017 – The United Nations migration agency released emergency funding in the amount of \$100,000 to kick-start relief operations in Angola for the 1.1 million Congolese displaced by fighting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC) south-central Kasai region.

UN Migration Agency Director General William Lacy Swing approved the funding from [IOM](#)'s Operational Support Income budget to cover the period until donor funding comes in.

"We continue to work with our UN, Congolese and Angolan counterparts to see whether it is possible to launch a [cross-border emergency relief operation](#) to reach southern areas of the Kasai, which until now remain inaccessible because of widespread insecurity and a poor network of roads," said Jean-Philippe Chauzy, the UN Migration Agency's DRC Chief of Mission.

Up to 2.4 million people have been affected by fighting between Government forces and tribal militias loyal to a local customary chief who was killed in August last year. The groups have been accused of a number of crimes and human rights abuses, including killings and abduction, recruitment of children, and targeting schools, hospitals and churches.

Thousands of Congolese have fled to neighbouring Angola to escape the violence.

The IOM mission in the DRC is preparing to position experts in its Mbuji Mayi Office in Kasai Oriental to help track and monitor displacements and population mobility, including returnees from Angola. The mission is also planning to deploy additional specialists in shelter and camp coordination and camp management to support the nascent international humanitarian response.

"The challenges that we and other humanitarians are facing in the parts of the Kasai bordering Angola are considerable," said Mr. Chauzy. "Internal displacements and the return of more than 11,000 Congolese from Angola are exacerbating existing vulnerabilities, including the risks of epidemic outbreak."

The UN agency is also working to strengthen local capacities to prevent, detect and respond to disease outbreaks and other public health occurrences along the border with Angola.

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# UN-led conference to mobilize global action to avert 'humanitarian catastrophe' in Yemen

24 April 2017 – The United Nations together with the governments of Sweden and Switzerland will convene a one-day conference in Geneva, tomorrow, to draw global attention to the deepening humanitarian crisis in war-torn Yemen where millions are close to a breaking point.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), nearly 19 million people in Yemen are in need of urgent humanitarian or protection assistance, including some 10.3 million who need immediate assistance to save or sustain their lives.

Yemen is the largest humanitarian crisis in the world [...] the time is now to come together to prevent an impending humanitarian catastrophe in the country said the UN relief wing on its website, noting that the conflict in the country and its economic consequences is also driving the largest food security emergency in the world.

Senior UN officials, including Secretary-General António Guterres and the Organization's Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien, together with top officials from Swedish and Swiss Governments, will be speaking the opening of the event tomorrow.

The event also features thematic briefings from UN agencies and humanitarian organizations on the ground.

The two-year long conflict in Yemen has already displaced more than 3.3 million people and resulted in a breakdown in public services, particularly in health care with less than half of the health centres are functional and medicine and equipment are limited.

Access to safe water also remains a challenge and there is a lack of proper sanitation, increasing the risk of communicable diseases.

Yemen is also the most food insecure country in the world and millions are also at the risk of a 'man-made' famine.

Over 17 million people are currently food insecure, of whom 6.8 million are severely food insecure and require immediate food assistance. Of particular concern is the condition of nearly two million children suffering from acute malnutrition.

In February this year, OCHA together with partners launched a \$2.1 billion appeal for its 2017 humanitarian response plan for the country. The money is crucial to fund food, nutrition, health and lifesaving assistance programmes.

However, only 15 per cent has been received, representing a massive \$1.8

billion funding gap.

**VIDEO:** The Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen: 2 years in 2 minutes. Credit: UN OCHA

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## [World Immunization Week: Power of vaccines still not fully utilized, says UN health agency](#)

24 April 2017 – Vaccinations stave off 26 potentially deadly diseases, the United Nations health agency is emphasizing on the first day of World Immunization Week, which also marks the halfway point of the Organization's goal to stop millions of deaths from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Vaccines are one of modern medicine's major success stories – tackling infectious diseases by making people immune or resistant, stimulating the body's own immune system – having prevented at least 10 million deaths between 2010 and 2015, stresses Dr. Margaret Chan, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), in a [press release](#).

At the same time, the full potential of vaccines is still not fully utilized, underlines the UN health agency, reiterating that when immunization rates are high, the wider community is protected, including infants who are too young to receive their vaccines, older adults at risk of serious diseases and people who take medication that lowers their immune systems.

WHO warns that the target of all 194 countries that signed the agency's [global action plan](#) to eliminate vaccine-preventable diseases by 2020 is behind schedule. The list with preventable diseases includes measles, rubella, and maternal and neonatal tetanus.

In a statement, the agency stresses that – in order for everyone, everywhere to survive and thrive, countries must make more concerted efforts to reach Global Vaccine Action Plan (GVAP) goals by 2020.

WHO reports that by increasing immunization globally, the lives of an additional 1.5 million people could be saved every year.

### **The Decade of Vaccines**

This year, Immunization Week falls at the halfway point of completing the target set by the Global Vaccine Action Plan to eliminate vaccine-preventable diseases. The goal of the plan is to improve the health of all people by extending the benefits of immunization through more equitable access to

vaccines.

According to the WHO latest numbers, an estimated 19.4 million infants worldwide were not reached with routine immunization services such as [Diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis](#) (DTP3) immunization coverage.

In one of the Immunizations Week messages, Dr. Chan speaks on behalf of the world's children, who should be a prime concern of all societies, saying that "no child should be denied the right to immunization for unfair reasons, including economic or social causes." The WHO director adds that "all barriers must be overcome."

Of the 19.4 million children without lifesaving DTP3 immunization about 11.5 million of them live in 10 countries, namely Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Ukraine.

The goal of all 194 GVAP signatories is to achieve vaccination coverage of at least 90% nationally and at least 80 per cent in every district by 2020.



Vaccine-preventable infectious agents or diseases. Source: WHO

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## [Status of declaration on indigenous peoples' rights in spotlight as UN forum opens in New York](#)

24 April 2017 – Speaking at the opening of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, senior UN officials today underscored the need to do more to ensure that indigenous peoples are able to benefit from global development agenda, including the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

"Far more needs to be done to fully realize the human rights of indigenous peoples," said Durga Prasad Bhattarai, Vice-President of the UN General Assembly, on behalf of the President of the Assembly, Peter Thomson, underscoring the importance of the 2030 Agenda, the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change and the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#).

"Targeted strategies would ensure that indigenous peoples could fully participate in implementing those accords," he added.

In his remarks, the Assembly Vice-President also highlighted that discussions were ongoing within the 193-member body on ways to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples within the Organization and urged UN Member States and indigenous peoples to participate in upcoming dialogues on a comprehensive

draft text addressing the matter.

This year also marks the tenth anniversary of the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), a comprehensive statement emphasizing the rights of indigenous peoples to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions and to pursue their development in keeping with their own needs and aspirations.

Underscoring the importance of the Declaration, Lenni Montiel, the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, noted that as indigenous peoples continue to suffer disproportionately from poverty, discrimination and poor health care, the world “can do better.”

“[Indigenous peoples’] collective and individual rights are too often denied; this is unacceptable. [...] we must do better,” he underscored.

Noting that indigenous peoples and UN Member States had requested increased engagement of the UN system, he spoke of the system’s response, and cited further examples of efforts, including the International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)), UN Development Programme ([UNDP](#)), Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) and the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

Such efforts would continue through the new international development phase guided by the 2030 Agenda, noted Mr. Montiel.

Also speaking today, Cristián Barros Melet, Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, said that while the 2030 Agenda made a commitment to “leave no one behind,” voluntary national reviews on implementation had shown the risk of indigenous peoples being left behind.

“[As] an advisory body of the Council, the [Permanent] Forum has an important role to play in providing specialized advice and recommendations. It is essential to review progress made to date and to consider what additional efforts were required,” he said.

The Permanent Forum should meanwhile continue its collaboration with other Council bodies, noted Mr. Barros Melet, underscoring that its recommendations would help ensure that provisions of the Declaration were promoted. He also expressed hope that it would provide advice and guidelines which ensured indigenous issues remained an integral part of UN’s work.

Also today, the Deputy Executive Director of UN Women, Lakshmi Puri, highlighted the importance of empowerment of indigenous women, noting that indigenous women and girls needed to be aware not only of their identity, but also their human rights, and they must claim those rights.

“No traditional culture or custom can be invoked to justify and perpetrate violence and harmful practices against indigenous women,” she said.

Highlighting the place of indigenous women and girls in the discussions and outcomes of the [2017 session](#) of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, she

said that the international community could no longer tolerate a situation in which such precious stakeholders and actors for sustainable development were not only left behind, but also the furthest to reach.

Within the UN system, the Permanent Forum is mandated to deal with indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights.

It also works to raise awareness and promotes the integration and coordination of activities related to indigenous issues within the UN system; and prepares and disseminates information on indigenous issues.

Its current (sixteenth) [session](#), the Permanent Forum runs until 5 May 2017.

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## [Starvation looms for 20 million, UN agricultural advisory group told at opening session](#)

24 April 2017 – If nothing is done soon, 20 million people will starve to death over the next six months in South Sudan, Somalia, north-eastern Nigeria and Yemen, the United Nations agricultural chief today warned the UN agency's Council.

Addressing the opening of the 165th session of the UN Food and Agricultural Organization ([FAO](#)) in Rome, Director-General José Graziano da Silva cautioned that famine – which is threatening those countries as a result of drought and ongoing conflict – will leave many dead and rip apart societies.

– Famine does not just kill people. It contributes to [social instability](#) and also perpetuates a cycle of poverty and aid dependency that endures for decades, Mr. de Silva told the FAO Council.

Comprised of 49 elected countries, the FAO Council convenes between sessions to provide advice and oversight related to programs and the budget.

As part of the week-long Council, members will be briefed on the extent of the conditions in the countries facing famine, and in the case of South Sudan, where famine has already been declared in parts of the country.

Mr. de Silva also cautioned about family farmers and rural communities in the Lake Chad Basin, where people feel – hopeless – as they struggle with the impacts of climate change, related droughts, and the lack of public investment and opportunities for youth.

“If we do not support these people, they will have no option other than to join local militias or movements of distress migration,” the Director-General said.

#### ***Approval of projects and budget***

The Council is also tasked with approving FAO’s Programme of Work and Budget for the years 2018 and 2019.

The budget prioritizes areas where FAO can deliver “the greatest impact [greatest impact](#) to Member countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable agriculture production, water scarcity management, and building the resilience of poor family farmers,” according to a press release.

Food and agriculture are central to the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), and FAO’s work is projected to contribute to the achievement of 15 of the 17 Goals.

“This full alignment has been possible because of the centrality of food and agriculture to the sustainable development agenda 2030,” Mr. da Silva said.

Council will also discuss a new scale of assessed contributions, which are the annual payments made by member countries to FAO.