

In Jordan, UN chief urges region's leaders to shape 'new Arab world' able to address differences through cooperation

29 March 2017 – Addressing the League of Arab States Summit in Jordan today, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted the importance of unity among the countries in the region to confront the challenges it is facing.

“Divisions in the Arab world have opened the door to foreign intervention and manipulation, breeding instability, sectarian strife and terrorism,” said Mr. Guterres.

“At this time of transition and upheaval, unity will be critical,” he said, emphasizing: “I appeal to your leadership in shaping a new Arab world able to address and solve, by itself, differences through dialogue and cooperation.”

In his remarks, the Secretary-General also underscored the importance of partnership between the UN and the Arab League and said that it was his responsibility to use his good offices, in cooperation with Member States, as an added dimension for conflict resolution.

“It is time to end the fighting in Syria,” he said, expressing hope that the Astana process can achieve an effective ceasefire.

“By now it should be clear to all involved that while fighting terrorism is essential, any success will prove ephemeral without a political solution that allows the Syrian people to freely decide their own fate,” he added, underlining the need, also, to support Syrian refugees in their hour of need.

Further, welcoming the progress in retaking territories held by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), the UN chief expressed hope that the violence in Yemen and Libya can be resolved soon.

Turning to the peace process in the Middle East, Mr. Guterres underscored that the two-state solution is the only path to ensure that Palestinians and Israelis can realize their national aspirations and live in peace, security and dignity.

“There is no Plan B,” he stated.

Concluding in his address, the Secretary-General highlighted the importance of addressing youth unemployment as well as empowerment of women – both as a matter of human rights as well as a spur to human development.

Let us recognize the power and responsibility that lies in our hands to improve the lives of the people we serve.

David Beasley of United States appointed as head of UN emergency food agency

29 March 2017 – The United Nations today announced the appointment of David Beasley of the United States as the Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme (WFP), which delivers emergency food assistance around the world and works with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres and José Graziano da Silva, the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), announced the appointment today after consulting with the WFP Board at a special session in Rome.

In a statement, Secretary-General Guterres said that Mr. Beasley brings to the position extensive experience with key governmental and business leaders and stakeholders around the world, with very strong resource mobilisation skills.

Mr. Beasley, who is the Chair of the Center for Global Strategies, was Governor of the state of South Carolina from 1995 to 1999.

He will replace Ertharin Cousin, also a US national, whose five-year term expires on 4 April.

Ms. Cousin said she was impressed with Mr. Beasley's understanding of the organization and the strategic plan that guides WFP's work, as well as his commitment to the UN agency's work and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Ms. Cousin led WFP from April 2012 through a period of unprecedented number of major emergencies, according to the UN agency.

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Medicines should help, not harm, says UN health agency launching global patient safety 'challenge'

29 March 2017 – Medicines should help, not harm, says UN health agency launching new global patient safety 'challenge'

Underlining that medicines should fulfil their real purpose help people, not harm them the United Nations health agency today launched a world-wide 'Challenge' that seeks to reduce severe, avoidable

medication-associated damage across the globe by half over the next five years.

“We all expect to be helped, not harmed, when we take medication,” said the Director-General of the UN World Health Organization (WHO), Margaret Chan, announcing the new campaign *Global Patient Safety Challenge on Medication Safety*.

“Apart from the human cost, medication errors place an enormous and unnecessary strain on health budgets. Preventing errors saves money and saves lives.”

According to estimates, the global cost associated with medication errors has been estimated at \$42 billion annually or almost 1 per cent of total global health expenditure. In terms of impact on the health of people, for instance in the United States, medication errors cause at least one death every day and injure approximately 1.3 million people annually.

While low- and middle-income countries are estimated to have similar rates of medication-related adverse events to high-income countries, the impact is about twice as much in terms of the number of years of healthy life lost.

Furthermore, many countries lack good data, something that the new initiative will attempt to address.

The initiative will also improve the way medicines are prescribed, distributed and consumed, and increase awareness among patients about the risks associated with the improper use of medication.

It also urges countries to take early priority action to address key factors, including medicines with a high risk of harm if used improperly, patients who take multiple medications for different diseases and conditions, and patients going through transitions of care, in order to reduce medication errors and harm to patients.

The actions in the Challenge will focus on four areas: patients and the public, health care professionals, medicines as products, and systems and practices of medication.

The initiative also aims to make improvements in each stage of the medication use process including prescribing, dispensing, administering, monitoring and use and the UN health agency will disseminate guidance, and develop strategies, plans and tools to ensure that the medication process has the safety of patients at its core, in all health care facilities.

“Over the years, I have spoken to many people who have lost loved ones to medication-related errors,” said Sir Liam Donaldson, the WHO Envoy for Patient Safety. “Their stories, their quiet dignity and their acceptance of situations that should never have arisen have moved me deeply. It is to the memories of all those who have died due to incidents of unsafe care that this Challenge should be dedicated.”

This is WHO’s third global patient safety initiative, following the Clean

Care is Safe Care challenge on hand hygiene in 2005 and the Safe Surgery Saves Lives challenge in 2008.

[In Senegal, UN General Assembly President calls for sustainable management of marine resources](#)

28 March 2017 – Visiting a traditional fishing community in Senegal, the President of the United Nations General Assembly has called on the countries in the region to prioritize conserving and sustainably managing their marine resources.

“I learned a lot today about how ocean issues like acidification, rising temperatures, overfishing and marine pollution affect the daily lives of fishermen,” said Assembly President Peter Thomson.

Mr. Thomson is currently in Senegal as part of his visit to several African countries to build momentum towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), one of which specifically deals with the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources.

“Understanding and acting upon the perspectives and expectations of artisanal fishers is an important component of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) that will be covered in The Ocean Conference this June,” added the UN official.

Being held from 5 to 9 June at the UN Headquarters, in New York, the Conference aims to reverse the decline in the health of oceans for the benefit of the people and the planet.

SEE ALSO: UN kicks off preparations for upcoming summit on oceans, launches voluntary commitment website

Involving all relevant stakeholders, including Governments, intergovernmental organizations, financial institutions, non-governmental and civil society organizations as well as the academia and scientific communities, the Conference will also contribute to the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda and provide input to the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

Also, while in Senegal, the Assembly President met with the country’s Minister of Fisheries and Maritime Economy and discussed the country’s response to challenges facing oceans such as overfishing, marine pollution, acidification and ocean warming.