

## On Africa Day, UN chief says world must move from 'managing crises to preventing them'

25 May 2017 – 'Africa Day' 2017 comes at an important moment in the continent's endeavours towards peace, inclusive economic growth and sustainable development United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres said, urging humanity to listen and learn with the people of Africa.

"All of humanity will benefit by listening, learning and working with the [people of Africa](#). It starts with prevention. Our world needs to move from managing crises to preventing them in the first place. We need to break the cycle of responding too late and too little," said Mr. Guterres in his message commemorating Africa Day.

The UN chief pointed out that most of today's conflicts are internal, triggered by competition for power and resources, inequality, marginalization, disrespect for human rights and sectarian divides. Often, they are inflamed by violent extremism or provide the fuel for it.

But prevention goes far beyond focusing solely on conflict.

"The best means of prevention and the surest path to durable peace is inclusive and sustainable development. It is critical to continue building more effective and accountable institutions to address governance challenges, advance the rule of law and promote civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights," he stressed.

As the international community has entered the second year of implementing the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development to tackle global poverty, inequality, instability and injustice, Mr. Guterres highlighted that Africa has adopted its own complementary and ambitious plan: Agenda 2063.



In Swaziland, children clap at morning assembly at a UNICEF-supported child-friendly school in Mbabane. Photo: UNICEF/Giacomo Pirozzi

"For the people of Africa to fully benefit from these important efforts, these two agendas need to be strategically aligned," he said.

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Mr. Guterres referred to last month's first-ever UN-African Union annual conference as "a unique opportunity to strengthen our partnership and establish a higher platform of cooperation," saying: "Our work is based on four driving principles: mutual respect, solidarity, complementarity and

interdependence.

Mr. Guterres said that the UN partnership with Africa is also rooted in a deep sense of gratitude.

“Africa provides the majority of United Nations peacekeepers around the world. African nations are among the world’s largest and most generous hosts of refugees. Africa includes some of the world’s fastest-growing economies,” he elaborated.

Turning to youth, he noted “We can speed progress by doing more to provide opportunities and hope to young people. More than three out of five Africans are under 35 years of age. Making the most of this tremendous asset means more investment in education, training, decent work and engaging young people in shaping their future.”

The UN chief also stressed: “We must also do our utmost to empower women so they can play a full role in sustainable development and sustainable peace. I am pleased that the African Union has consistently placed a special focus on gender equality and women’s empowerment.”

He also reaffirmed his commitment as a partner, friend and committed advocate for changing the narrative about this diverse and vital continent.

“Crises represent at best a partial view. But, from a higher platform of cooperation, we can see the whole picture – one that recognizes the enormous potential and remarkable success stories throughout the African continent,” concluded the Secretary-General.