

## [ICC adds one year to Bemba's conviction for attempted bribery of witnesses](#)

22 March 2017 – The United Nations-backed International Criminal Court (ICC) today sentenced the former Congolese Vice-President, Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo, to another year in prison and about \$325,000 in fines for interfering with his trial.

Judges ordered that the sentence be served consecutively to Mr. Bemba's existing 18 year sentence for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the Central African Republic between October 2002 and March 2003.

In their ruling, the judges ordered the fine to be paid within three months to the ICC and then transferred to the Trust Fund for Victims, according to a press release.

Mr. Bemba, along with two of the four other people accused, were found guilty in October 2016 for having jointly committed the offences of intentionally corruptly influencing 14 defence witnesses, and presenting their false evidence to the court.

Mr. Bemba was also found guilty of soliciting the giving of false testimony by the 14 defence witnesses and attempting to corruptly influence two defence witnesses.

These charges were in addition to the main ruling issued in March 2016, in which the ICC found Mr. Bemba guilty beyond reasonable doubt on two counts of crimes against humanity (murder and rape) and three counts of war crimes (murder, rape and pillaging) committed in the Central African Republic in 2002-2003.

Mr. Bemba had been the commander-in-chief of the former Congolese rebel group, the Movement for the Liberation of Congo, as well as a vice-president of the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the 2003-2006 transition.

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## [Wastewater should be recognized as a valuable resource, UN says on World](#)

# Water Day

22 March 2017 – In a world where the demand for water continues to grow and the resource is finite, a new United Nations report argues that wastewater, discarded into the environment every day, once treated, can help meet the needs for freshwater as well as for raw materials for energy and agriculture.

Needless to mention, treating wastewater and removing pollutants can also remarkably reduce the impact on the environment as well as on health.

Improved wastewater management is as much about reducing pollution at the source, as removing contaminants from wastewater flows, reusing reclaimed water and recovering useful by-products [as it is about increasing] social acceptance of the use of wastewater,&#8221 noted Irina Bokova, the Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Director-General in her foreword to the *World Water Development Report 2017 &#8211 Wastewater: An untapped resource*.

The report, launched today in Durban, South Africa, on the occasion of World Water Day, also highlights that improved management of wastewater is essential in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It's all about carefully managing and recycling the water that runs through our homes, factories, farms and cities,&#8221 said Guy Ryder, the Director-General of the UN International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Chair of UN-Water, urging for reducing and safely reusing more wastewater.

Everyone can do their bit to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal target to halve the proportion of untreated wastewater and increase safe water reuse by 2030.&#8221

Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG6) has specific targets on halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally (target 6.3) as well as supporting countries in wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies (target 6.a).

## ***Health and environmental dimension &#8211 particularly stark for low-income countries***

The report also revealed that low-income countries are particularly impacted by the release of waste water into the environment without being either treated or collected, where, on average, only 8 per cent of domestic and industrial wastewater is treated, compared to 70 per cent in high-income countries.

As a result, in many regions of the world, water contaminated by bacteria, nitrates, phosphates and solvents is discharged into rivers and lakes ending up in the oceans, with negative consequences for the environment and public health.

For instance, in Latin America, Asia and Africa, pollution from pathogens from human and animal excreta affects almost one third of rivers, endangering

the lives of millions of people.

Furthermore, growing awareness on the presence of hormones, antibiotics, steroids and endocrine disruptors in wastewater poses a new set of complexities as their impact on the environment and health have yet to be fully understood.

These set of challenges underscore the need for urgent action on collection, treatment and safe use of wastewater.

#### *Wastewater as a source of raw materials*

In addition to providing a safe alternative source for freshwater, wastewater is also a potential source of raw materials, noted the report.

Owing to developments in treatment techniques, certain nutrients, like phosphorus and nitrates, can now be recovered from sewage and sludge and turned into fertilizer. It is estimated that nearly 22 per cent of the global demand for phosphorus (a depleting mineral resource) can be met by treating human urine and excrement.

Use of treated wastewater has long been practised by astronauts, such as those on the International Space Station who have been reusing the same recycled water for over 16 years

Similarly, organic substances contained in wastewater can be used to produce biogas, which could power wastewater treatment facilities as well as contribute to energy needs of local communities.

In addition, use of treated wastewater is growing for agricultural irrigation. At least 50 countries around the globe are now using treated wastewater for this purpose, accounting for an estimated 10 per cent of all irrigated land.

Lastly, the report also mentioned that treated wastewater can augment drinking water supplies, although this is still a marginal practice. Cities such as Singapore, San Diego (United States), and Windhoek (Namibia) have been treating wastewater to supplement drinking water reserves.

A great example is use of treated wastewater, long practised by astronauts, such as those on the International Space Station who have been reusing the same recycled water for over 16 years.

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**[In Juba, UN peacekeeping chief urges](#)**

# political solution for South Sudanese crisis

21 March 2017 – The security situation in South Sudan is “very worrisome,” the head of United Nations peacekeeping operations today said, warning that the number of people fleeing the country showing no signs of slowing, and calling for a political solution to the hostilities.

“You cannot hope that a solution will come by the use of weapons, the solution has to be political,” said outgoing Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous in a press conference in Juba, alongside Jean-Pierre Lacroix, who will take up the position in April.

Mr. Ladsous underscored the importance of the 2015 peace agreement signed by President Salva Kiir and opposition groups, but noted that there are concerns about implementing an agreement which will shortly be two-years old.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Ladsous said he spoke with President Kiir in what he described as a “good” meeting. Among the topics discussed were the challenges to humanitarian action, including impediments to getting clearances, as well as instances of aid workers killed or injured while on the job.

Meanwhile, the needs in the country are greater than ever with two counties in Unity state – Mayendit and Leer – formally declared famines.

Mr. Ladsous warned that the situation is “man-made” after several years of fighting and “is not going to improve” because it is now crop planting season and all farmers are displaced or seeking refuge in neighbouring countries.

Speaking to journalists, Mr. Ladsous also noted that the first vanguard of the UN Security Council-mandated Regional Protection Force should be deployed to Juba “in the next few weeks.” The units will be comprised of Bangladeshi, Nepalese, and Rwandan troops, followed by Ethiopian forces and troops from other countries.

The senior UN official added that he will meet tomorrow in New York with Member States who are contributing troops to discuss the deployments.

Once deployed to Juba, the Force will free a number of UNMISS units to “the countryside to better protect the civilians,” he said.

Mr. Ladsous noted, however, that the main responsibility for protection is with the Government of South Sudan: “We cannot have one blue helmet behind every single South Sudanese citizen. The responsibility to protect its own citizens is that of the Government. And we are here to support, to facilitate, to help the Government of the sovereign country of South Sudan.”

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## [Greener energy for a third of the world bodes well for all, says UN on International Forest Day](#)

21 March 2017 – Cautioning the impact of human activity such as practices use of woodfuel on world's forests, the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) today called for better wood-energy conversions technologies and more sustainable management of forests so that everyone benefits.

"This is an area where we can make a real difference," said Wu Hongbo, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

"Sustainably managed forests are productive and resilient ecosystems, providing people with livelihoods and renewable energy, along with timber, food, shelter, clean air, water and climate benefits," he added.

At the same time, fuel wood – the primary source of energy for nearly a third of the world's population and a product derived from forests – is also an important part of the energy equation.

However, current fuel production practices (such as production of charcoal) are not only contributing to degradation of forests and soils, they are estimated to cause up to seven per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions caused by humans.

Most of the emissions is largely due to unsustainable forest management and inefficient charcoal manufacture and fuelwood combustion, FAO said in the report, *The Charcoal Transition*, which was launched coinciding with the International Day of Forests .

"This is especially important for poor people in rural areas of developing countries, where wood is often the only energy source available [and its] conversion to charcoal is often done using rudimentary and polluting methods," noted FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva announcing the report at a ceremony marking the International Day in Rome.

### ***Forests, energy, climate change and sustainable development***

Forests and energy are also linked to sustainable development and can help combatting climate change.

According to estimates, about a third of the world's population (about 2.4 billion people) still rely on the traditional use of woodfuel for cooking, and many small enterprises use fuelwood and charcoal as the main energy carriers for various purposes such as baking, tea processing and brickmaking.



Efficient charcoal manufacture and use can help mitigate climate change. A man arranging bags of charcoal to a temporary holding area in Ntendesi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Photo: FAO/Giulio Napolitano

Of all the wood used as fuel worldwide, about 17 per cent is converted to charcoal, however the production often relies on inefficient technologies and unsustainable resources and in some cases the emission of greenhouse gas can be as high as nine kilograms of carbon dioxide-equivalent per kilogram of charcoal produced.

“Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [and it is] fundamental for addressing the impacts of climate change and eliminating extreme poverty and hunger,” explained the head of FAO.

“We need, for instance, to adopt improved technologies for energy conversion,” he noted, referring to the UN agency’s programmes to deliver fuel-efficient stoves, especially for poor people in Latin America and Africa.

Greening the charcoal value chain and applying sustainable forest management practices can, therefore, mitigate climate change and further efficiencies can be gained by reducing charcoal waste, for example, by transforming charcoal dust into briquettes, adding a new iteration to the energy cycle.

#### ***Economic benefits and environmental improvements***

The FAO report also argues that although the transition from unsustainable to sustainable sourcing could impose costs on the charcoal value chain, a greener charcoal sector would have an overall positive economic impact.

For instance, a cost-benefit analysis in Kenya estimated that a transition to efficient charcoal production would require an investment of \$15.6 million per year excluding upfront costs. However, it would generate \$20.7 million in benefits.

At the same time, demand for sustainable charcoal production can provide opportunities for afforestation and reforestation. And providing local people with greater tenure security can increase their willingness and ability to invest in sustainable approaches.

Furthermore, fostering an enabling political environment and an attractive investment climate for transition to a greener charcoal sector can also help increase government revenue collection and investments in sustainable forest management and efficient wood conversion technologies.

A win-win for all concerned, including for the forests.

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## Despite progress, world's most marginalized still left behind – UN development report

21 March 2017 – A flagship United Nations report launched today finds that although the average human development improved significantly since 1990, progress is uneven, with systemic discrimination against women, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities.

The latest Human Development Report, released annually by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), found that while many people have greater access to education, health and sanitation, for example, more focus needs to be paid to who has been excluded and why.

“By eliminating deep, persistent, discriminatory social norms and laws, and addressing the unequal access to political participation, which have hindered progress for so many, poverty can be eradicated and a peaceful, just, and sustainable development can be achieved for all,” said UNDP Administrator Helen Clark, speaking at the report launch in Stockholm, alongside Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and the report’s lead author and Director of the Human Development Report Office, Selim Jahan.

Entitled *Human Development for Everyone*, the report noted that one in three people worldwide continue to live at a low level of human development, as measured by the Human Development Index – essentially a ranking of countries based on strides made with a peace-centric model of progress.

According to the report, women and girls are systematically excluded by economic, political, social and cultural barriers.

“Women tend to be poorer, earn less, and have fewer opportunities in most aspects of life than men,” according to the report.

Authors found that in 100 countries, women were legally excluded from some jobs because of their gender, and in 18 countries, women needed their husband’s approval to work.

The report also points to “dangerous practices,” such as female genital mutilation and forced marriage, which continue to hamper the development of women and their inclusion in society.

In addition to women and girls, the report points to “patterns of exclusion and lack of empowerment” of people in rural areas, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, migrants and refugees, and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community.

The report calls for far greater attention to empowering the most marginalized in society, and recognizes the importance of giving them greater voice in decision-making processes.

The report also warns that key development metrics can overstate progress when they focus on the quantity, rather than the quality, of development. For instance, girls' enrolment in primary education has increased, but in half of 53 developing countries with data, the majority of adult women who completed four to six years of primary school are illiterate.

Unlike in previous years, this year's report is also available in an app for iOS and Android.