

In Nairobi, UN chief Guterres marks International Women's Day, hails Kenya's role in multilateralism

8 March 2017 – The richness, welfare and prosperity of countries depend on the full integration of women in the development process, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said today, commemorating International Women's Day at a ceremony in Nairobi as part of his visit to Kenya.

Speaking at an event alongside the First Lady of Kenya, Mr. Guterres told the hundreds of assembled women leaders at the Government's official celebration of the International Day, that every effort had to be made to finally defeat male-dominated culture if we are to be able to achieve gender equality.

"The truth is that north and south, east and west [...] everywhere, we still have a male-dominated culture," he said, recalling that he had pushed hard for women's empowerment when he was the Prime Minister of Portugal and, as the former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, he had met women who suffered the worst possible abuse.

Against this background, and the enduring male-dominated culture and violation of women's human rights, "we need to have [...] policies of gender equality [and] policies of protection of women in vulnerable situations, but the key [...] is our strong commitment to women and girls' empowerment in our societies," he stated.

Noting the three pillars of the UN – human rights, peace and security and development – he also underlined that "it is better to prevent conflict when we have women fully empowered in societies and it's better to solve conflicts when fully participate in conflict resolution."

Mr. Guterres also had the opportunity to visit a number of field projects in the Mathare slums, including a women's empowerment program run by UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) as part of its slum upgrading initiative and a UN WOMEN project designed to encourage the political participation of women. He was able to listen to a group of women who had decided to run for office, often against great odds.

VIDEO: Wrapping up his three day-visit to the Horn of Africa, Secretary-General António Guterres attends the commemoration of International Women's Day in Nairobi, Kenya in the company of First Lady of Kenya, Margaret Kenyatta.

Earlier in the day, the Secretary-General met with Kenya President Uhuru Kenyatta at State House.

Speaking to the press following the meeting, Mr. Guterres expressed his

belief that the “narrative of the UN about Africa has not always been the right one,” being sometimes “too much concentrated on crisis.”

And while it is true that there are crises in Africa – as there are crises in Europe, Asia and elsewhere – Africa must be seen more and more as a land of achievements and opportunity. “And [...] Kenya is the symbol of that achievement and that opportunity,” he said, going on to express solidarity with the Kenyan Government and people regarding the drought that is affecting the country.

“I hope that the international community will be able to match the generosity that Kenyans have always shown, namely in relation to refugees, and support the country now that the drought has been prolonged in such a way that, of course, the resources of the country are themselves in difficulty to face this enormous challenge,” he underscored.

Turning next to his visit yesterday to neighbouring Somalia, he reiterated his concern for ongoing drought there, saying: “People are dying. This must stop.” The “international community must act now and mobilize to support the Somali people in this very difficult situation.”

Mr. Guterres visited a settlement for people displaced by the drought. For over an hour, he walked through the camp, asked questions and listened to the stories of men, women and children who had come to Baidoa to seek food and water. Some had recently resettled from the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya only to be forced to move again because of the drought.



Secretary-General António Guterres and First Lady Margaret Kenyatta of Kenya commemorating International Women’s Day at a ceremony in the capital Nairobi. Photo: UNIC Nairobi

International Women’s Day around the UN system

Meanwhile in New York, the official UN commemoration of International Women’s Day took place at Headquarters and featured statements from Peter Thomson, the President, 71st Session of the UN General Assembly; Bjarni Benediktsson, the Prime Minister of Iceland; Amina Mohammad, UN Deputy Secretary-General; Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Chair of the upcoming 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women ; Lana Nusseibeh, President, UN Women Executive Board; Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director, UN Women; Casar Jacobson, Disability Activist and Youth Champion; and Anne Hathaway, UN Women Global Goodwill Ambassador.

“As we meet today to celebrate the positive developments that have taken place over the years in the promotion and protection of women and girls’ human rights, let us pause to recognize that this progress has often been slow, fragile and uneven,” said Mr. Thomson.

He called on the event to recall that “if we are to achieve a future in which all women and men enjoy equal rights, empowerment, and opportunity, then we

must commit to decisive action to overcome the entrenched obstacles still preventing progress.”

Noting the theme of this year’s International Day – ‘Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50-50 by 2030’ – brings focused attention to a critical driver of gender equality, he said that if governments and other stakeholders are serious about achieving a ‘Planet 50-50 by 2030,’ specific action must be taken now to accelerate the realization of gender equality.

Also today, the Organization’s Rome-based agencies – the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) – reminded the world that women and girls play a crucial role in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular, the goal of eradicating hunger and extreme poverty.

Leaders from the three agencies reinforced their commitments to step up efforts to invest in the capacities of rural women as key agents of change in building a world without hunger.

Speech: British High Commissioner’s speech marking International Women’s Day 2017

Honorable Minister for Aviation Mrs. Cecilia Dapaah, Chairman of the Electoral Commission Charlotte Osei, distinguished guests, Colleagues from the diplomatic community, the media, ladies and gentlemen, all protocols observed.

Last year, organizations and individuals around the world, including myself supported the #PledgeForParity campaign, pledging to help women and girls achieve their ambitions, through commitments which included, but are not limited to; challenging conscious and unconscious bias; calling for gender-balanced leadership; valuing women and men’s contributions equally; and creating inclusive flexible cultures. From awareness raising to demonstrations of concrete action, organizations rallied their people to pledge support to help forge gender parity on International Women’s Day (IWD) 2016.

But the World Economic Forum predicts the gender gap won’t close entirely until 2186. This is too long to wait. Around the world, IWD can be an important catalyst and vehicle for driving greater change for women and moving closer to gender parity.

In this light, this year’s theme “Be bold for change- Women in the changing

world of work,” calls us all here today to help forge a better working world – a more gender inclusive world. A world where female voices and leaderships are heard and seen in sectors traditionally dominated by men.

The British High Commission is delighted to be partnering with the Canadian and the Australian High Commission today bringing together successful industry professionals to mentor female students selected from senior high schools. Indeed, we know that women and girls typically make up just over half of most national populations, including here on the African continent.

The UK’s Gender Equality Act 2014 puts existing commitment to gender equality on a statutory footing and ensures that gender equality remains at the heart of our development assistance. Through our Department for International Development -DFID, we work closely with the Government of Ghana and other stakeholders to address key barriers to the attainment of gender parity.

In 2016, the UK’s DFID launched a new initiative: ‘Leave No Girl Behind,’ an initiative committed to delivering quality education to disadvantaged girls. We believe that access to a good education, in a safe environment, significantly improves the life chances of girls. In Ghana, DFID programming provides over £100m every year, much of which is focussed on women and girls, helping those who are at significant risk of dropping out of school complete their secondary education. Our Complementary Basic Education programme targets out of school children, including girls, and provides them with a second chance at education.

In health, the UK remains a key partner in promoting, protecting and supporting sexual and reproductive health and rights. Our Adolescent Reproductive Health programme worth £17 million works with vulnerable girls in the Brong Ahafo region to improve their knowledge and behaviour around reproductive health.

I hope students alongside mentors here today will continue to be inspired to take up professions in various industries, but more importantly to be bold; successfully taking up the study and or training and thereafter excelling in professions that have typically in the past, been associated with male dominance.

I wish you all a successful and insightful evening.

Thank you

[Latest ballistic launches by DPR Korea raise risk of regional arms race, UN](#)

Security Council warns

8 March 2017 – Expressing strong condemnation of the most recent ballistic missile launches carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the United Nations Security Council reiterated that the country should refrain from any actions, including nuclear tests, in violation of the relevant Council resolutions, and comply fully with its obligations under those resolutions.

“Such [ballistic missile] activities contribute to the DPR Korea's development of nuclear weapons delivery systems and increase tension in the region and beyond as well as the risk of a regional arms race,” stressed the 15-member Security Council in a statement issued late yesterday.

“[We regret] that the [country] is diverting resources to the pursuit of ballistic missiles while [its] citizens have great unmet needs,” the members added.

Three of the ballistic missiles launched on 5 March landed in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone.

These latest ballistic missile firing follows at least 14 launches between April last year and February this year, as well as a nuclear test in September 2016. These actions are also in violation of a number of Security Council resolutions, including one adopted in March last year that had imposed fresh sanctions on the country.

Further in the statement, Security Council members underscored the importance of maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in north-east Asian region at large and expressed their commitment to a peaceful, diplomatic and political solution to the situation.

They also welcomed efforts by Council members, as well as other States, to facilitate a peaceful and comprehensive solution through dialogue, emphasised the importance of DPR Korea showing “sincere commitment” to denuclearisation, and stressed the importance of working to reduce tensions in the Korean Peninsula and beyond.

Earlier this week, UN Secretary-General António Guterres had also condemned the missile launches and reiterated his call for the DPR Korean leadership to refrain from further provocations and return to full compliance with its international obligations.

Budget 2017 – Not much changes

Lots of money moved around in the Budget arithmetic. Practically all of the changes resulted from new forecasts. At last the Treasury and OBR have thrown off the inaccurate gloom they were enveloped in from the time of Brexit vote, and have brought their figures more into line with reality. As a result revenues leapt £10.5bn for 2016-17 compared to the November forecast! Borrowing is now scheduled to be £51.7bn instead of the £68bn estimated in November, as spending is down a bit as well. I assume they have at last got their 2016-17 forecasts broadly right, as they must know most of the numbers by now.

I raised the issue of wildly inaccurate forecasts and the danger that they drag Ministers into policy responses that are not warranted by the underlying situation.

The Chancellor himself moved very little money around for next year. He took us through a number of detailed spending pledges, itemising £5m for a commemoration for women's voting rights, £25 million for small business rate relief recipients, £25 million for a one off pubs rates relief, and £20 million for free schools capital. The one major item which is also welcome is the £1200 million more for social care. There is also £250 million for NHS improvements.

The Budget also proposed tax changes for later years, including an increase in Self employed rates of NIC and a reduction in the tax free dividend payable from a company. I would be interested in opinions on those measures, which come in during the likely run up to the next election.

Transparency data: HMNB Devonport maintenance dredging variation

On 6 March 2017 the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) announced a new disposal site was open for marine licence applications for the disposal of dredged material. The MMO has now varied the Defence Infrastructure Organisation's (DIO) licence, which licences the navigational maintenance dredging in and adjacent to Her Majesty's Naval Base (HMNB) Devonport, Plymouth.

The variation has changed the disposal site from Rame Head South (PL031) to Plymouth Deep (PL035). Due to increased regulatory burden surrounding the Rame Head South disposal site and in light of the continued requirement for dredging and disposal operations, the MMO has been working with the main users of the site in leading a disposal site characterisation study to

identify an optimal, sustainable alternative site for long-term dredged material disposal operations within the River Tamar and Plymouth Sound area. Further information on the [South West Disposal Site Characterisation Project](#).

The marine licence for the maintenance dredge at HMNB Devonport allows DIO to complete one maintenance dredge campaign of the dockyard's critical areas between now and March 2017. The dredge is required in order to maintain the operational capacity of the Naval Base.

The MMO has now determined the application and a copy of the licence and the supporting assessments have been attached for reference.

Further Information

All marine licence applications are available from the [marine licensing public register](#).

Contact information

Marine Licensing Team

Telephone: 0300 123 1032

Email: marine.consents@marinemanagement.org.uk