

On Wildlife Day, UN says young people play special role as today's change-makers, tomorrow's custodians

3 March 2017 – With the fate of the world's wildlife soon to be in the hands of the next generation, the United Nations is observing this year's World Wildlife Day with a call to harness the power of young people's voices in conservation efforts.

Poaching and illegal trafficking pose a significant threat to wildlife, especially some of the world's most iconic and endangered species, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said in his message for the Day, which this year is on the theme *Listen to the Young Voices*.

Strict enforcement of laws is important, but so too is awareness, Mr. Guterres added, appealing to young people to protect their inheritance by becoming informed and acting to protect wild animals and plants from the threat of extinction.

In her message, Irina Bokova, the Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), stressed that young people have a special role to play as change-makers and future custodians.

We must listen to them and nurture their engagement, to craft new forms of action to conserve and protect wildlife on the basis of solidarity, she said.

On 20 December 2013, the UN General Assembly decided to proclaim 3 March as World Wildlife Day the day of the adoption of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973, which plays an important role in ensuring that international trade does not threaten the species' survival.



UN World Wildlife Day 3 March

Given the current rate of poaching and smuggling, will future generations one day speak of elephants, rhinoceros and many other endangered species as we speak of mammoths...? We must not and will not allow this to happen, said CITES Secretary-General, John E. Scanlon.

Our generation has not yet succeeded in securing the future of many wild animals and plants. Meeting this challenge will now be shared with the next generation, he added.

Habitat loss, climate change and industrial-scale poaching are impacting species great and small, from elusive pangolins to migratory sea turtles, to

apex predators like the tiger. World Wildlife Day is a very special occasion on the UN calendar as it helps to galvanize national and international action.

To succeed, it is vital to fully harness the innovation and energy of youth, and combine it with the wisdom that comes with experience, he said.

Last year, the UN launched the Wild for Life campaign, which asked people to make wildlife crime personal. Since its launch, it has engaged 35 celebrity champions, reached over 1 billion people, generated 4.5 million social media engagement and 12,000 pledges of action.

And some are taking monumental steps to combat the destruction of species. In December 2016, the future of elephants was given a huge boost by China's declaration to ban all commercial ivory trade by the end of 2017.

China has set a great example to the world with its ivory ban. Young people should take heart from this and push for further progress globally to ensure that wildlife and their habitats are sustainably managed in the future," said UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Executive Director Erik Solheim.

[UN agencies supporting Kenyans in drought-hit areas](#)

3 March 2017 – Some 2.7 million people in parts of Kenya are in urgent need of water and sanitation following the onset of a severe drought, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) today announced, noting the UN's support for what the Government is calling a national disaster.

UNICEF is working in Kenya to support the Government's efforts, alongside the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), and other partners, according to a press release.

"Our efforts should not only alleviate the current suffering brought about by this emergency, but should also aim to build the resilience of families and the capacity of local governments to deal with future droughts and other calamities," the Representative of UNICEF in Kenya, Werner Schultink said.

In addition to the need for water and sanitation, some 1.1 million children are food insecure, the UN agency said.

UN efforts of support include dispatching 12,000 cartons of ready to use therapeutic foods for the severely-malnourished children, for example.

The President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, recently declared the drought a national disaster and has called for international support.

UN urges Sri Lanka not to miss opportunity to advance justice and reconciliation

3 March 2017 – The slow pace of transitional justice in Sri Lanka and the lack of a comprehensive strategy to address accountability for past crimes risk derailing the momentum towards lasting peace, reconciliation and stability, a United Nations report said today.

Seventeen months ago, when we published a detailed report on the grave human rights violations committed during the conflict in Sri Lanka, I urged the Government and all the people of Sri Lanka to ensure that this historic opportunity for truly fundamental change should not be squandered, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said in a news release on the report.

He noted that in many ways, Sri Lanka appears to be turning a corner on the promotion and protection of human rights, but he stressed that hard-won gains could prove illusory if they are not tethered to a comprehensive, robust strategy.

This critical opportunity in Sri Lankan history cannot be missed, he said, urging the Government and people of Sri Lanka once again to prioritize justice alongside reconciliation to ensure that the horrors of the past are firmly dealt with, never to recur.

The report, issued by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), assesses progress made in tackling the legacy of grave violations in Sri Lanka between 2002 and 2011 and acknowledges that there have been positive advances on human rights and constitutional reform.

However, the report notes that the structures set up and measures taken until now have been inadequate, lacked coordination and a sense of urgency.

Party politics, including the balancing of power between the different constituencies of the coalition in the run-up to constitutional reforms, have contributed to a reluctance to address difficult issues regarding accountability or to clearly articulate a unified position by all parts of Government, the report states.

The report makes a number of concrete recommendations, including calling on the Government to embrace the report of the Consultation Task Force, to

formulate a communications campaign to inform the public about details of the reconciliation agenda, to invite the UN human rights office to establish a presence in Sri Lanka, to give the highest priority to the restitution of all private land that has been occupied by the military, and to adopt legislation establishing a hybrid court.

The report also highlights a number of serious human rights violations that are reportedly continuing to occur in Sri Lanka, including the harassment or surveillance of human rights defenders and victims of violations, police abuse and excessive use of force, and the use of torture.

The High Commissioner will present the report to the Human Rights Council on 22 March in Geneva.

On visit to Iraq, UN's focal point for conflict-related sexual violent visits abused women

3 March 2017 – The United Nations focal point for ending conflict-related sexual violence is in Iraq where she today met with survivors of rape and other abuse by the Islamic State (ISIL).

Zainab Hawa Bangura, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, visited the Girls and Women Support and Treatment Centre in Dohuk Governorate, northern Iraq. Accompanied by Gyorgy Busztin, the Deputy Secretary-General of the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), she met with women and girls who had escaped from Mosul, where Iraqi forces launched an offensive two weeks ago to dislodge ISIL.

According to a press release, the Centre – a collaboration with the Dohuk Directorate General and in support from the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) – is “at the forefront of addressing the needs of the Yazidi sexual violence survivors,” including medical and psychosocial support.

ISIL has systematically targeted the Yazidi community with rape and other sexual violence, including sexual slavery and forced marriage, according to the Office of Ms. Bangura whose legal and investigative teams have been working to aid survivors from the community.

Ms. Bangura has repeatedly called for a multipronged approach from the global to the local levels, to aid the survivors and their families and help them reclaim a role in their community.

As part of her visit to Iraq, Ms. Bangura has discussed the need for such support with Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Nechervan

Barzani. In addition, she held discussions with Jassim Mohammed Al-Jaf of the Ministry of Migration and Displaced and with Faed Zaidan, the head of the High Judicial Council of Iraq.

She also met with Sunni religious leaders to discuss reintegration of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, and to ensure that children born of rape are not ostracized by the community.

Illegally parked rental bikes seized



Bicycles, mostly from the bike-sharing company Mobike, were parked at a parking lot on Wednesday. [Photo/China Daily]

Authorities in Shanghai's Huangpu district have seized more than 4,000 rental bikes, most of them improperly parked, highlighting the poor management of bicycles rented over the internet and the shortage of parking areas,

especially in downtown areas.

There are also concerns that the problems faced by Shanghai may quickly spread to other cities as competition intensifies.

At a parking lot on Zhizaoju Road, thousands of rental bikes were laid out in rows with their wheels connected by iron chains. Some web users described the venue as a graveyard of bikes.

Zhou Lan, deputy director of the urban management department of Huangpu, said the seizure serves as a countermeasure to fight illegally parked bicycles, instead of merely revenge on bike-sharing companies.

Zhou said that the regional government authorized two independent institutions to help with the proper parking of nonmotor vehicles, and to tow away those outside designated areas on sidewalks.

A small number of properly parked rental bicycles were seized to make way for other nonmotor vehicles.

It's estimated that in Huangpu, there are about 150,000 nonmotor vehicles – more than half of them electric bikes. But there are less than 1,500 nonmotor vehicle parking lots in the district, while the number of rental bikes has surged to more than 20,000.

Citywide, it's estimated that more than 280,000 rental bikes have been put on the streets. Guo Jianrong, secretary-general of the Shanghai Bicycle Association, said that by June, the city is expected to have 500,000 rental bicycles.

"The association is busy drafting three new sets of standards: the management standard for shared bicycles, for shared electric bikes and for their service providers," Guo said.

But for the time being, the struggle between bike-sharing startups and the regional government is continuing as business leaders in the sector said they won't reduce the number of bicycles in big cities.

"We will continue to put more bikes in operation in Shanghai, depending on user demand," said a spokeswoman for Mobike, the pioneer and now dominant player in the bike-sharing sector.

She said that Mobike has a management team of about 100 in Shanghai, plus 400 front-line operators.

In a news release on Thursday, the company said that it is collaborating with Baidu by taking advantage of its cloud computing service to fix the accuracy of the position of its parked bikes, which will help with management of the bikes.

A reward plan is also in the pipeline to encourage users to park bikes properly, the company said. Regarding the seized bikes, Mobike said that it will communicate with the urban management department and is willing to cover

some of the department's management costs.