

News story: Foreign Secretary announces new Foreign and Commonwealth Office Special Envoy for Gender Equality

Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson, yesterday addressed an audience of key policy makers at a reception looking forward to International Women's Day. He announced a new Special Envoy for Gender Equality, Joanna Roper. Joanna will spearhead the UK's efforts to deliver a coherent international approach to ensuring the rights of women and girls, working closely with Whitehall departments, civil society, academics, and other Governments.

The Foreign Secretary spoke of his personal commitment to addressing gender inequality in all its forms. He argued in particular that unequal access to education, itself flowing from gender prejudice and discrimination was a major barrier to women's empowerment.

Speaking at the event, the Foreign Secretary said:

The sombre truth is that today 61 million girls between the ages of 6 and 14 do not have the chance to go to school. They have the same right to an education as anyone else – and at least as much potential and ability – but too many girls in too many countries endure the supreme injustice of being denied the opportunity to attend school.

If you want to increase prosperity; stabilise population growth; improve child nutrition; and reduce child marriage, the single most effective remedy is to ensure that all girls go to school.

I hope that every national leader will wake up to the benefits – and the essential justice – of educating the daughters of their country just as surely as they educate their sons.

The FCO are taking forward the global agenda of equality support projects to increase women's empowerment around the world, challenging gender stereotypes of what a "traditional" women's role is.

Justine Greening, Minister for Women and Equalities, described the continuing efforts to promote gender equality in the UK. By marrying up the domestic and international aspects we showcase UK leadership in this field giving us greater credibility to encourage like-minded partners and to advance action on gender equality in multilateral fora.

Justine Greening, Secretary of State for Education, said:

No woman should be held back in life because of her gender and I'm incredibly proud of this Government's work to help women around the world to fulfil their ambitions. Here in the UK we now have record numbers of women in work, and we have more women than ever before on the boards of the UK's top companies. Internationally, our investment in foreign aid is helping girls in the developing world to get an education.

We have much to celebrate ahead of International Women's Day – but there is still more to do. We are going further to deliver economic empowerment for women by requiring large employers to publish their gender pay gaps for the first time ever. We have pledged to eliminate all violence against women and girls, backed by £80 million funding. And we are supporting girls to take careers in male dominated industries so we have better gender balance in our workplaces.

On her new appointment, Joanna Roper, Special Envoy for Gender Equality said:

I'm delighted to have been appointed as the FC0's first ever Special Envoy for Gender Equality. This is really important work. Gender inequality is still too common. We must break down the barriers that hold women back.

More than 350 people attended the event held at the Foreign Office, including a number of Ministers and Parliamentarians, including Emily Thornberry MP, Dominic Grieve MP and Jess Phillips MP. Civil Society organisations including Stonewall, Womankind Worldwide and Oxfam and senior diplomats also attended were also present.

Joanna Roper, FC0 Special Envoy for Gender Equality

[Introductory video](#)

Further information

[With virtual and augmented reality, UN 'ideas forum' to explore collaboration on Global Goals](#)

28 February 2017 – Policy makers, activists and private sector representatives from over 80 countries will join gaming experts and

simulators tomorrow in Bonn, Germany, at the start of the first “playable” sustainable development conference organized by the United Nations and partners.

According to Mitchell Toomey, the Global Director at the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Action Campaign, the Global Festival of Ideas for Sustainable Development is designed to bring together diverse communities and come up with ideas on sustainability to let the “crowd” decide what happens next.

“The whole concept is taken from the great experience that the UN was able to participate in with the designing of the SDGs [...] ‘let’s ask everybody what should be in the next agenda’,” Mr. Toomey told *UN News*.

“By opening a lot of different channels, including the My World Survey and The World We Want [...] over 10 million people eventually became involved in that process,” he added.

Organized in Bonn, Germany, from 1-3 March, the Festival will see participants transform into “active players” to come up with new ideas on addressing global challenges.

Using the gaming app 2030 Hive Mind – a real-time policy simulation application – participants will explore collaboration to achieve the SDGs by 2030. They will also have to make tough choices and trade-offs along the way.

The idea to use the gaming app came from the need to “stay serious” in tackling development challenges and the importance of engaging and being approachable, explained Mr. Toomey.



Mitchell Toomey, the Global Director at the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Action Campaign. Photo: UN News/Cristina Silveiro

“[The app is] very interesting as it relies on people coming together, sharing what they know, trading policies and advice, collaborating, bringing good ideas to crescendo by getting enough people to think about them and support them at the same time,” he added.

“The goal is to provide a way to develop policies, but also to campaign around that, by walking around the event and making sure others are supporting the policies that you are, and those who do that the best will get the best scores.”

The introduction of the app also aims to engage with everyone on the topic of sustainable development and SDGs so that the goals don’t remain in the policy domain alone and to encourage everyone to take part in the issue.

The festival also features a virtual reality zone (VRZone) to showcase, in 360-degrees, content produced across the UN system and to tell stories that inspire and generate empathy, action and positive social change. The series

provides a deeper understanding for those living in the most complex development challenges, catalysing urgency for those most in danger of being left behind if the SDGs are not met.

The Global Festival of Ideas, the first in a series of annual forums, is hosted by the UN SDG Action Campaign in partnership with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) with the support of the German Government.

Taiwanese man dies of H7N9 bird flu

A Taiwan resident died of the H7N9 avian flu virus Monday evening, 23 days after the infection was confirmed, the local disease control agency said Tuesday.

The man, 69, contracted the virus on Feb. 4 and died in hospital on Feb. 27 after medical treatment failed, according to the agency.

The man, from Kaohsiung, initially felt ill on Jan. 23 when he was visiting Guangdong Province on business. He returned to Taiwan on Jan. 25 but was tested negative for bird-flu at a hospital.

The patient felt symptoms such as fever, coughing and breathing difficulties on Jan. 29, and was diagnosed with pneumonia. He was hospitalized on Feb. 1, and confirmed as having the avian-flu virus three days later.

The man was the first Taiwan resident and second person to die of H7N9 on the island, where a total of five human H7N9 cases have been confirmed, according to local media.

The first person to die from the virus in Taiwan was a mainland resident.

UN migration agency reports surge in displacement from Mosul as fighting intensifies

28 February 2017 – The United Nations migration agency today reported thousands of new arrivals at Iraqi sites for the internally displaced persons (IDPs) fleeing Mosul's western sector where fighting is taking place between the Government forces and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) terrorists.

"The stories of the survivors are heart-breaking," said Thomas Lothar Weiss, Iraq Chief of Mission of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in a press release.

Since the start of Iraqi forces' efforts to retake the city's western section on 19 February, more than 10,000 people have been displaced in the zone, according to Iraq's Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD).

"We are very worried about the fate of the tens of thousands of families still trapped inside of West Mosul," said Mr. Weiss.

IOM reported some 1,650 people arrived today at the Hamam al-Aleel facility, and nearly 2,800 arrived at Qayara air strip on Sunday night. Both these locations are in Nineweh Governorate southeast of Mosul.

MoMD estimates another 3,000 individuals are already moving towards the checkpoints and are expected to arrive tomorrow

. These numbers, among the largest in weeks, are just a fraction of the 250,000 or more people who could yet be displaced from western Mosul as fighting escalates, said IOM Iraq press officer Hala Jaber.

. "There is serious concern for the 750,000 trapped in the densely populated western sector, with conditions worsening daily, according to reports and testimonies from those who have managed to escape," she said.

RELATED: UN refugee agency focuses on sheltering displaced as Iraqi offensive moves to west Mosul

Those who arrived at the Qayara site yesterday, including children, spoke of seeing dead bodies on the streets as they escaped. Many corpses, they said, were ISIL fighters; others civilians killed by Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) laid by militants.

Families escaping with children are reportedly taping their mouths with duct tape to ensure they don't cry or make a sound that would alert ISIL. Other families are giving their children sleeping pills or Valium to keep them quiet during their escape.

IOM's Qayara site is currently providing shelter for 4,472 displaced families or 25,344 individuals, with a planned capacity to hold 10,000 families or 60,000 individuals. The Haj Ali emergency site is currently hosting 1,565 displaced families, or 6,994 individuals, with a planned capacity for 7,000 families, or 40,000 individuals.

Political advisors asked to adhere to CPC leadership

Top political advisor Yu Zhengsheng on Tuesday asked the country's political advisors to stick to the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and socialism.

Yu, chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee, made the remarks at a concluding meeting attended by senior political advisors.

Political advisors should perform their duty and make good preparation for the 19th CPC National Congress which will be held in 2017, Yu said.

Yu called on political advisors to offer advice to economic and social development, conduct consultation, raise quality proposals, perform supervision and promote solidarity.

He also urged political advisors to observe disciplines and anti-graft rules during the upcoming annual session of the top political advisory body which will start on March 3.

The meeting adopted the agenda and schedule for the CPPCC National Committee's annual session.

The meeting also approved the standing committee's work report to be deliberated at the annual session and a report on proposals made since last year's session.

Several appointments and dismissals of officials were also announced at the meeting.

The CPPCC is a consultation body. It consists of figures representative of Chinese society who advise the government, and legislative and judicial organs.