

[UN food relief agency chief welcomes progress on anti-hunger programmes in north-east Nigeria](#)

27 January 2017 – The head of the United Nations food relief agency today welcomed the progress made by the humanitarian community and the Government of Nigeria in fighting hunger and malnutrition in the West African country's north-east.

“You can see the tremendous progress achieved in a matter of months,” the Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme (WFP), Ertharin Cousin, said in a news release, issued following a visit to Pompomari camp for the internally displaced people (IDPs) in Damaturu, who fled Boko Haram militants in Yobe and Borno states.

“Children who could barely stand just last November are now on the road to recovery. They will continue to require our assistance in the coming months. The work of the international community in Nigeria is not over yet,” she added.

By December 2016, an agile response, combining rapid air-and-road interventions, enabled WFP and partners to reach more than a million people in need, particularly in these high risk areas. And while some areas remain inaccessible, organizations are working together to reach as many as 1.8 million vulnerable people in the first quarter of 2017.

At Pompomari camp, which hosts some 2,000 IDPs, WFP provides cash assistance in the form of money credited electronically to mobile phones. The spending helps to stimulate local markets. To prevent and treat child malnutrition, children under the age of five receive a highly nutritious, peanut-based supplement, while pregnant and nursing women receive nutritional support.

But amid concerns over continued funding, Cousin sounded a note of caution. “The world should not wait for babies to die before taking action,” she warned, appealing to the international community not to prioritize one hungry child over another.

[Human rights community mourns passing of Sir Nigel Rodley, former UN rights](#)

expert

27 January 2017 – Expressing sadness at the passing of noted rights icon, Sir Nigel Rodley, the United Nations human rights wing today recalled the contributions of one of the “best known public faces, and most eloquent voices” of the UN Human Rights Committee.

Affectionately known to the human rights community as ‘Sir Nigel,’ the rights expert passed away on 25 January, at the age of 75.

“He would speak directly and frankly to anyone, even the most powerful; yet would also treat everyone with great humanity and kindness,” Rupert Colville, the spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), told the regular bi-weekly media briefing in Geneva.

In addition to serving at the Human Rights Committee – the independent expert body that monitors worldwide implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – for 16 years between 2001 and 2016, Sir Nigel was a former UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment from 1993 to 2001, a devoted human rights defender and also an academic.

“For us at the UN Human Rights Office, he was someone who was always willing to pass on his knowledge and experience to a younger generation,” said Mr. Colville.

Sir Nigel was also the Professor of Law and Chair of the Human Rights Centre at the University of Essex in the United Kingdom. Many of his students are now working at OHCHR as well as at various other human rights institutions around the world.

Quoting OHCHR staff, he added: “Sir Nigel could be sharp, and he certainly pointed out your mistakes, but he was also generous with his praise.”

AUDIO: OHCHR spokesperson Rupert Colville speaking on what made Sir Nigel so special.

[With 2.2 million Afghans feared to be on the move, UN agency to begin tracking displacements, aid relief](#)

27 January 2017 – Amid concerns of a severe humanitarian crisis induced by

sudden return home of hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees and undocumented citizens, coupled with conflict-induced displacement, the United Nations migration agency has launched a new displacement tracking system to better understand population movements and needs in the crisis-struck country.

“There is an urgent need to know where people in vulnerable situations are living and what their needs are,” said the head of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) operations in Afghanistan, Laurence Hart.

In a news release issued earlier today, he added: “With a system in place to clearly track these concerns, humanitarian actors and the Government can deliver assistance and services to the families and communities that need it most.”

The UN agency hopes that with the launch of its Displacement Tracking Matrix – a system that employs a range of tools and processes to track and monitor population movement during crises – humanitarian actors will have a better understanding of the movements and evolving needs of vulnerable populations, whether on site or en route, and be alerted to urgent concerns, greatly facilitating humanitarian response.

According to IOM, in 2016, more than 600,000 registered refugees and undocumented Afghans returned back from Pakistan and, based on estimates, a further 1 million are expected to return in 2017.

On top of the returning population, last year also saw conflict-induced displacement of over 623,000, and an additional 450,000 people are expected to become internally displaced due to the ongoing conflict this year.



Children from an Afghan returnee family at their home in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. Photo: IOM (file)

Additional strain on overstretched services

There are particular concerns that such large-scale returns and intensified conflict, combined with rapid urbanization, have created additional strain on already overstretched local services. Further compounding the issue is the lack of accurate information on the location and needs of people who have returned or those who have been forced to leave their homes.

The first phase of the Displacement Tracking Matrix in Afghanistan will put a framework in place to track at risk populations in Nangarhar, Laghman and Kunar provinces.

IOM said that its staff in these provinces will consult with community leaders and elders, national and local authorities, as well as previous registrations and assessments. They will also conduct field visits to get a comprehensive picture of the estimated number of returnees from abroad, internal movements and needs and conditions at the village, district and

provincial levels.

“While there is good tracking along the borders, there is little knowledge of the actual final destinations, the villages and neighbourhoods, where people are arriving,” said IOM Human Mobility Tracking Expert Vlatko Avramovski. “The Matrix will deliver this information regularly and accurately.”

Rationing of this kind is totally unacceptable and is against the best traditions of the NHS – Julie Cooper

Julie

Cooper MP, Labour’s Shadow Health Minister, commenting on reports of increases in waiting times for hip operations, said:

“It

is absolutely shocking in 21st Century Britain that patients in some parts of the country will only qualify for knee and hip replacement operations on the NHS if they can prove pain so exceptional that it prevents sleep.

“Rationing

of this kind is totally unacceptable and is against the best traditions of the

NHS. However, there are concerns that if the Government continues to deny sufficient funding to the NHS, rationing of treatments could become more widespread.”

News story: The UK continues to be Scotland’s largest market for trade.

[Scottish exports](#) to the rest of the UK in 2015 (excluding oil and gas) are estimated at £49.8 billion, an increase of £2.1 billion (4.4%) over the year. This is good news not only for Scottish businesses large and small, but also for employment, for product and service development and economic stability.

Scottish exports to the rest of the UK

Scottish exports to the rest of the UK in 2015 (excluding oil and gas) are estimated at £49.8 billion, an increase of £2.1 billion (4.4%) over the year.

This was driven by an increase in the export of utilities (electricity, gas, water etc). The rest of the UK continues to be Scotland's largest export market as the figure is £21.1 billion higher than the estimated total for international exports.

Scotland's exports to the rest of the UK are 4 times greater than those to the EU.

Exports to countries within the European Union (EU)

International exports to countries within the European Union (EU) were estimated at £12.3 billion, which is 43% of total international exports. This is an increase of £520 million from the previous year (4.4%). The increase was driven by an increase in the export of petroleum and chemical products.

Within the EU, the Netherlands (£2.3 billion) was again, the largest market, followed by France (£1.8 billion) and Germany (£1.8 billion). Whilst the Netherlands is consistently reported as one of Scotland's top trading partners, a number of goods exported here are likely to be destined for onward supply to other countries. This is because of key ports in this area.

International exports to non-EU countries

International exports to non-EU countries were estimated at £16.4 billion, which is 57% of total international exports. This is an increase of £485 million from the previous year (3.0%).

Service sector exports from Scotland are of greater importance to the rest of the UK than internationally as more than half (55%) of the rest of the UK exports are services compared to 38% of international exports.

Total international and rest of the UK exports in 2015 (excluding oil and gas) are estimated at £78.6 billion, up £3.1 billion (4.1%) in the year. Exports to the rest of the UK accounted for 63% of this total, EU exports accounted for 16% and non-EU exports 21%.

The USA continues to be Scotland's top international trading partner (£4.6 billion). The top 5 international export markets (USA, Netherlands, France, Germany and Norway) accounted for £11.7 billion (41%) of international exports from Scotland.

Scotland's success in trading

Over the last ten years, findings from the Global Connection Survey have reinforced the strong trading performance that Scotland has enjoyed within the UK.

[See the full results of the Global Connections Survey here.](#)