

US-North Korea summit in Singapore 'a promising development' says Guterres

The summit that is due to begin shortly between the leaders of the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is "a promising development for global peace and security," [United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres](#) said on Monday.

US President Donald Trump and his North Korean counterpart Kim Jong-un are due to meet in Singapore on Tuesday morning: the first-ever face-to-face encounter between a sitting US President and a North Korean leader.

As the UN chief stated, the world is watching.

"The two leaders are seeking to break out of the dangerous cycle that created so much concern last year," Mr. Guterres told journalists at UN Headquarters in New York, referring to escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

"Peace and verifiable denuclearization must remain the clear and shared goal. As I wrote to both leaders last month, the road ahead will require cooperation, compromise and a common cause."

Mr. Guterres added that UN agencies stand at the ready to support this process.

Among them are the International Atomic Energy Agency ([IAEA](#)), which works for the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology.

He recalled that the agency has a mandate "to apply safeguards on all nuclear material in peaceful use, including all material removed from military programmes."

Furthermore, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty Organization ([CTBTO](#)) could also play a role in monitoring the DPRK's moratorium on nuclear tests, he added.

"I believe that this summit is an extremely important event," said the UN chief, taking questions from reporters. "I believe the two leaders need to be credited for the courage with which they decided to move forward with the summit and to engage in a constructive negotiation to reach an objective that is vital for us all: the peaceful and verifiable denuclearization of North Korea," he added.

Last December, the then head of the UN's Department of Political Affairs travelled to North Korea for talks with senior officials.

Jeffrey Feltman said he had stressed the international community's commitment to a peaceful political solution to the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

Speaking to reporters after returning to New York, he described the visit as “the most important mission I’ve ever undertaken,” adding that “we’ve left the door ajar, and I fervently hope that the door to a negotiated solution will now be opened wide.”

Last year, as North Korea carried out further nuclear weapons and ballistic missile tests, since conducting its first nuclear test in 2006, the UN Security Council adopted several resolutions condemning the launches and toughening sanctions against DPRK.

In December, the Council also held its fourth meeting on the human rights situation in the country.

During his remarks to journalists on Monday, the Secretary-General also drew attention to the humanitarian situation in North Korea, where the UN estimates more than 10 million people, or 40 per cent of the population, require assistance.

Aid agencies are seeking [\\$111 million](#) to assist six million in need this year.

The funding will support operations in areas such as enhancing food security, reducing malnutrition, and increasing access to healthcare, water and sanitation services.

Communities will also receive help to become more resilient in the face of recurrent natural hazards such as droughts and floods.

Among the UN agencies active in the country are the [World Food Programme \(WFP\)](#): a presence for more than two decades.

The UN agency aims to assist 650,000 women and children there every month, who are being given dietary supplements in the form of fortified cereals and biscuits.

WFP Executive Director David Beasley was in North Korea last month to assess needs and evaluate operations on the ground.

Mr. Beasley visited several projects including a WFP-supported children’s nursery and a local factory where WFP produces the fortified biscuits for its programmes.

“There is a real need for continued humanitarian assistance, especially when it comes to meeting the nutritional needs of mothers and young children,” he [said](#) at the end of the four-day mission.

“I do believe that with hard work and support from around the world we’ll be able to make a difference.”