As Rohingya crisis continues, UNICEF appeals for funds to reach 720,000 children in need

2 October – Amid the deepening refugee crisis in Bangladesh and its attendant toll on children, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) launched today an appeal for its emergency response to reach some 720,000 children – both in Rohingya refugee and host communities – with protection and assistance.

“Desperate, traumatized children and their families are fleeing the violence in Myanmar every day. We are scaling up our response as fast as we can, but the magnitude of need is immense and we must be able to do more to help them,” said Anthony Lake, the UNICEF Executive Director, who is visiting southern Bangladesh.

“These children are being denied a childhood. They need our help now and they need our help to have a future,” he added.

The UN agency's $76.1 million appeal, primarily focused on preventing outbreaks of water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea, covers expansion of safe water and sanitation services, as well as improvements in hygiene systems for Rohingya children, many of whom are living in harsh and unsanitary conditions in makeshift camps and settlements.

It will also provide nutritional support to at least 60 per cent of an estimated caseload of 7,500 children suffering from...
severe acute malnutrition and 70 per cent of children with micronutrient support, including Vitamin A.

Another key part of the response will be providing protection services, including psychosocial and recreational support to up to 180,000 children through structured activities at child friendly spaces and referrals for children who require specialized support. The UN agency will also expand the network of adolescent centres to provide life-skills training, recreational activities, and psychosocial support to an especially vulnerable group.

UNICEF will also initiate an oral cholera vaccination campaign, targeting all children over one, and 900,000 doses of the vaccine are expected to arrive in Bangladesh on 7 October, possibly earlier.

Refugee crisis a 'Level 3' emergency

In related news, the UN refugee agency also issued an supplementary appeal for its emergency response in for the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

Declaring the crisis a 'Level 3 Emergency,' the Appeal issued by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) seeks $83.7 million in urgent additional requirements from September 2017 through to February 2018 and is built on the respective elements of the Preliminary Response Plan for the Influx into Cox's Bazar.

The Preliminary Response Plan was initially drawn, in early September, up by the Inter-Sector Coordination Group. It had appealed for $77 million for the response and is presently under revision.

The UNHCR requirements presented in this Supplementary Appeal will be reflected in, and aligned with, the respective components of that revised appeal, the UN agency said.

'Nothing enduring can be built on violence,' UN Assembly President says, recalling words of Gandhi

2 October – Noting that in today's world, violence has become a “tool of choice” for many and new evidence, of destruction and suffering, every day resulting from this choice, the President of the United Nations General Assembly has called for greater efforts to prevent conflict and for the Organization to promote the use of non-violence across all three pillars of its work.

“Mediation is one of the most effective tools of non-violence. It can turn parties away from conflict, towards compromise,” said Miroslav Lajcak, speaking at an event to mark the International Day of Non-Violence.

“This means it can avert violence – which only leads to loss – and promote non-violence, resulting in benefits on all sides,” he said.

In his remarks, Mr. Lajcak recalled last week's 72nd annual general debate and noted the calls made by Member States for more support to local, national or regional actors to use non-violent ways to stop or prevent conflicts.

He also spoke of Secretary-General Guterres' prioritization of prevention in his mandate and underscored that the issue would be a main focus throughout the 72nd session of the General Assembly.

The President of the General Assembly said the Organization has entered an era of “UN reform,” and in that context urged everyone to remember its common aim: “A UN that is fit for purpose, which can offer non-violence solutions to global challenges.”
“The longer it takes to respond to a major development or crisis, the higher the chance of violence being seen as the only answer,” he stated.

Concluding his remarks, Mr. Lajčak recalled the words of Mahatma Gandhi, born this day 148 years ago, that “nothing enduring can be built on violence” and said that whether it be called sustainable development, transformative change or a better world to live in, none it is possible through violence.

“The United Nations must act as a constant reminder of this. It must not only work through non-violence – but it must inspire others to do so too,” he said.

The UN General Assembly, through a resolution in 2007, designated 2 October as the International Day of Non-Violence to coincide with the birthday of Gandhi, who led the country's independence movement and pioneered the philosophy and strategy of non-violence.

**UN human rights chief urges probe into violence during referendum in Catalonia**

2 October – The top United Nations human rights official urged today the authorities in Spain to ensure thorough, independent and impartial investigations into all acts of violence that took place Sunday during a referendum on the independence of Catalonia.

“I am very disturbed by the violence in Catalonia on Sunday,” UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said in a statement.

According to media reports, police raided polling stations, and hundreds of people were injured.

“Police responses must at all times be proportionate and necessary,” Mr. Zeid said, stressing that the current situation should be resolved through political dialogue, with full respect for democratic freedoms.

He called the Spanish Government to accept without delay the requests by relevant UN human rights experts to visit.

**Amid 'critical' resource shortage, UN agency cuts food rations for refugees in Kenya**

2 October – For 420,000 refugees living in northern Kenya, insufficient funding has forced the United Nations food relief agency to cut rations by 30 per cent, as it appeals for nearly $30 million for assistance.

“We are facing a critical shortage of resources, which has compelled us to reduce the amount of food given to the refugees only six months after we resumed full rations,” said World Food Programme (WFP) Representative and Country Director Annalisa Conte in a statement.

Overall, refugees living in Dadaab and Kakuma camps will receive a food ration equivalent to 70 per cent of their requirements.

“WFP urgently needs $28.5 million to adequately cover the food
assistance needs for the refugees for the next six months,” she added.

The UN agency provides sustenance assistance to refugees in Kenya as a combination of dry food – including cereals, vegetable oil and nutrient-enriched flour – as well as mobile phone cash transfers to buy fresh food from local traders.

However, while keeping cash transfers unchanged, starting this month, WFP will provide through health clinics fortified flour only for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers instead of the general population, which may lead to a rise in malnutrition levels among the refugees.

“Working closely with UNHCR [Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees] and other partners, WFP strives to meet urgent food and nutrition needs of refugees and other vulnerable groups, and calls upon all parties to take all necessary steps to end conflicts and create conditions for refugees to safely return home,” she continued.

In addition to the general food ration and cash transfers, WFP provides nutritious foods to young children, pregnant women and nursing mothers, to stave off malnutrition. Primary grade students receive porridge in school, which helps them concentrate on their classes and provides an incentive for families to send them to school. For the time being, WFP can maintain these critical safety nets for refugees.

“Cutting rations is a last resort and we hope that it is only a short-term measure as we continue to appeal to the international community to assist,” said Ms. Conte.

If new funds are received immediately, WFP can quickly mobilize food stocks from within the region, and/or increase the amount of cash transfers to the refugees allowing them to buy adequate food from the local markets.

“An abrupt halt to food assistance would be devastating for the refugees, most of whom rely fully on WFP for their daily meals,” she concluded.

UNICEF urges child-centred budget decisions for rebuilding of quake-hit areas in Mexico

2 October – The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has called for putting children at the heart of public and private investment in reconstruction of the areas devastated by two major earthquakes in September.

“The seven million children living in the worst affected areas of Chiapas, Mexico City, Morelos, Oaxaca and Puebla – especially the most vulnerable, who have lost their homes and schools – must be at the core of budgetary discussions in the country,” said Christian Skoog, UNICEF Representative in Mexico, in a press release.

UNICEF said that budgetary decisions linked to the reconstruction of areas affected by the recent earthquakes must guarantee full respect for the rights of children in health, education and housing for their affected families, without neglecting other fundamental rights such as the right to be protected against violence, abuse or exploitation.

Mexico has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and has special legislation protecting the rights of children and adolescents and, as such, the country has made formal commitments to undertake all necessary legal and financial measures to guarantee the realization of those rights.

The Mexican Constitution also states that all Government decisions affecting children in the country must seek to protect their best interests in all circumstances.
In a post-disaster situation, accelerating and not just adjusting investment for children must be a priority if a country is to reach its long-term objectives for economic growth and social wellbeing, UNICEF said.

**Affordable housing key for development and social equality, UN says on World Habitat Day**

2 October – As 1.6 billion people today live in inadequate housing, one billion of whom reside in slums and informal settlements, the United Nations is spotlighting affordable home on today's World Habitat Day, which also marks the official start of Urban October – a month of worldwide celebrations and citizens' engagement in urban life worldwide.

“While millions of people lack suitable homes, the stock of vacant houses is gradually increasing,” said Dr. Joan Clos Executive Director of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in a commemorating the Day under the 2017 theme 'Housing Policies: Affordable Homes.'

“Ensuring housing affordability is therefore a complex issue of strategic importance for development, social peace and equality,” he added.

This year's celebrations are noteworthy as they coincide with the first anniversary of the New Urban Agenda,” adopted at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, better known as Habitat III, in Quito, Ecuador, which enshrines urbanization as an indispensable for development and a prerequisite for prosperity and growth.

“It is thanks to this paradigm shift that urbanization and development are indivisibly linked one to another,” Dr. Clos said.

'Handing over housing to the market has proved a failure'

An analysis of housing affordability over the last 20 years reveals that despite increasing demand, housing – including rentals – has been largely unaffordable for the majority of the world population.

“Handing over housing to the market has proved a failure in providing affordable and adequate housing for all,” Dr. Clos continued.

“We all remember well that housing was at the epicentre of the eruption of the global economic crisis of 2008, instead of being at the heart of the urban policy. Today, 1.6 billion people live in inadequate housing, of which one billion live in slums and informal settlements,” he underscored.

Dr. Clos emphasized that addressing the housing needs of the poorest and most vulnerable, especially women, youth and those who live in slums, must be a priority in the development agendas.

Promoting sound housing policies is also crucial for climate change, resilience, mobility and energy consumption.

Which is why, the Executive Director said: “we would like to remind on this Day the importance of locating housing at the physical – and holistic – centre of our cities.

“For housing to contribute to national socio-economic development and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the New Urban Agenda calls for placing housing policies at the centre of national urban policies along with strategies to fight poverty, improve health and employment,” he stressed.
Each year, World Habitat Day takes on a new theme to promote sustainable development policies to ensure shelter for all – often promoting one of UN-Habitat’s focal areas such as inclusive housing and social services; a safe and healthy living environment, with consideration for children, youth, women, elderly and disabled; affordable and sustainable transport and energy; and job creation.

“As we strive to create cities for all, an urgent action for achieving affordable homes requires a global commitment to effective and inclusive housing policies,” Dr. Clos concluded.

For Yemenis and migrants, protracted conflict an 'endless nightmare' – head of UN agency

2 October – Amid worsening famine and cholera in war-torn Yemen, the head of the United Nations migration agency has called for greater humanitarian access to enable relief workers reach those most in need and save lives.

“The authorities have a responsibility to give humanitarians more access, including reopening the airport for essential aid deliveries, and the world has an obligation to come to the aid of the Yemeni people,” said William Lacy Swing, the Director General of the UN International Organization for Migration (IOM), on a visit to the country.

Responding to the outbreak has been further complicated as the conflict in Yemen has left the country’s water and sanitation systems in near-ruin and almost 80 per cent of the population – some 21 million people – as well as thousands of migrants dependent on humanitarian aid.

The world's worst cholera outbreak is now part of this volatile mix and, as mind-numbing as it may seem, one million Yemenis are expected to contract the deadly disease by the end of this year,” added Mr. Swing.

According to estimates, more than 2,000 people have succumbed to the deadly disease since October last year and 750,000 have been hit with 5,000 additional people being infected every day.

Furthermore, more than three million Yemeni children under the age of 5 are at risk of severe acute malnutrition as an ever-present risk of famine looms larger.

“The internecine conflict, which has convulsed Yemen for over two years already, shows no sign of being resolved,” said the IOM Director General, noting that the situation of the nearly 6,000 migrants who continue to enter the country each month is of particular concern.

“They come in the hope that they can make their way through Yemen to the Gulf countries to find work.”

However, few realize the grave dangers they are likely to face along the route, including exploitation, abuse and abduction by criminal gangs for hefty ransoms.

“For Yemenis and migrants, the protracted conflict has become an endless nightmare,” said Mr. Swing.

During his visit, the head of IOM has met with authorities whom he called on to improve humanitarian access. He also met with persons displaced by fighting, whom the UN agency was only able to reach with aid a few weeks ago – the first time they received assistance since fleeing their homes more than a year back.

“More than two years of brutal conflict has turned this society upside down leaving a trail of needless devastation in its
“Wake,” noted Mr. Swing, adding: “I urge all parties to the conflict to make real efforts towards finding peace because aid alone is not a solution.”

**'Winner-takes-all' dynamics in digital economy could widen income gap – UN report**

2 October – The benefits of digitalization to people’s lives are enormous, but ‘winner-takes-all’ dynamics in the digital economy creates a risk of widening income inequalities, says a report released today by a United Nations entity dealing with trade, investment and development.

The report acknowledges that information and communications technologies (ICT), electronic commerce and other digital applications are helping a growing number of small businesses and entrepreneurs in developing countries to connect with global markets and open up new ways of generating income.

“This effective national and international policies are needed to make sure the gains are spread evenly across as well as within countries,” said Mukhisa Kituyi, the Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which authored the Information Economy Report 2017: Digitalization, Trade and Development.

“We at UNCTAD are excited by the transformational power of digitalization, but we must recognize that the Internet is not a panacea,” Mr. Kituyi stated in a press release.

The world's top four companies by market capitalization are all closely linked to the digital economy: Apple, Alphabet (Google), Microsoft and Amazon.

The digital economy is expanding fast in developing economies. China and India accounted for nearly 90 per cent of the 750 million people who went online for the first time between 2012 and 2015, according to data from the UN International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

The report says that productivity gains from digitalization, however, may accrue mainly to already wealthy and skilled individuals. Winner-takes-all dynamics are typical in Internet platform-based economies, where network effects benefit first movers and standard setters.

In countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, where the digital economy has evolved the most, growing use of ICT has been accompanied by an increasing income gap between the rich and poor.

The report also states that the policy challenge depends on countries' readiness to engage in and benefit from the digital economy, with the least developed countries the least prepared. To ensure that more people and enterprises in developing countries have the capacity to participate effectively, the international community will need to expand its support.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres stressed that harnessing the power of information and communications technologies can be one of the keys to the achievement of global development goals.

At the same time, large parts of the developing world remain disconnected from the Internet, and many people lack access to high-speed broadband connectivity.

“Policymaking at the national and international levels needs to mitigate the risk that digitalization could widen existing divides and create new gaps,” he said.
In Tokyo, UN deputy chief cites benefits of local-level social dialogue on sustainable development

2 October – United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, at an event in Tokyo today, stressed the need for social dialogue on sustainable development, expressing her expectations regarding the role of media in bringing different constituents together to reflect on difficult questions such as on sustainable lifestyle.

“Every country should open up a social dialogue within its own communities. It is a marvelous opportunity which media can provide by asking tough questions,” she said at an event themed ‘Overcoming Divides for Our Future,’ which took place at the Asahi World Forum 2017. “The United Nations can help provide a space for dialogue to close the gap between reality and aspiration, with inclusiveness and representation,” she added.

Addressing to the audience, half of which was university and high school students, the Deputy Secretary-General underscored the essence of “no one left behind” enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and importance to include youth in this dialogue to decide on their future. “Youth and women remain marginalized and must be empowered to close the inequality divide.”

Referring to the fast evolving 'fourth Industrial Revolution,' she emphasized the need of high-quality education for young people to be equipped with necessary skill sets.

She also stressed her expectation for Japan and Japanese businesses to show leadership in transforming the society in the direction of sustainability and inclusion, with the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games as a momentous occasion to mobilize “whole-of-society” efforts.

Also in her remarks, the Deputy Secretary-General highlighted that though the financing needs for sustainable development are considerable, enough private and public investment do exist. “These financial resources have to be unlocked and channeled to sustainable development,” she said, referring to the importance of partnerships.

In responding to a question raised by a high school student in the audience about leadership qualities essential to addressing SDGs, Ms. Mohammed responded “integrity, courage, and passion to make a difference” and encouraged the audience to think what they hope for and what actions they can take for their aspirations.

World must step up protection for refugees, do more to solve conflict – UN agency chief

2 October – The global community is letting down millions of refugees and internally displaced people, and needs to renew efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts, focusing on protection and solutions, the head of the United Nations refugee agency said today.

“Without the shared sense of purpose needed to prevent, stem and solve conflicts, the world will continue to face new refugee flows, and must reinforce its capacity to respond,” said UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi in his opening address to the annual meeting of the Executive Committee of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Drawing attention to crises from Bangladesh to Yemen, Mr. Grandi...
presented a bleak picture of record numbers of people worldwide forcibly driven from their homes – 65.6 million at the end of 2016 – and he pointed out that the situation is getting worse.

“So far in 2017, more than two million people have fled their countries as refugees […] They often arrive sick, traumatized and hungry, in remote border locations, in communities affected by poverty and underdevelopment,” he continued.

UNHCR staff are working tirelessly to help them, often in circumstances where their own security is at risk, but the needs are immense.

“Many have urgent protection needs – children separated from their families, men, women, girls and boys exposed to sexual and gender-based violence, people with disabilities or facing other risks,” he stated.

Mr. Grandi stressed that refugee protection and security walk hand in hand and need to be tackled together.

“This is not only a matter of principles and values, but also of building regional and global stability. Refugee protection and security are complementary goals, and must be pursued in tandem,” he stressed.

Last week the UN refugee chief was in Bangladesh where he witnessed first-hand one of the fastest-growing humanitarian emergencies in living memory, noting that “in just five weeks, half a million Rohingya refugees have fled terrifying violence in Myanmar, their rights progressively eroded over decades.”

Even more distressing was that while this was happening, a further 50,000 refugees had fled South Sudan, where the dreams which had accompanied independence lay shattered, and another 18,000 people had tried to escape fresh fighting in Central African Republic.

“Ongoing crises are deepening. And for many refugees, the search for safety and protection has become more dangerous,” he declared.

Mr. Grandi praised what he termed as a groundswell of civil society solidarity with refugees, often reinforced through public figure leadership, including mayors. He welcomed the individual and collective acts of compassion as countering “widespread measures to deter and exclude.”

“The international character of refugee protection has taken on new forms – through networks of cities, civil society organisations, private sector associations, sport entities and other forms of collaboration stretching across borders, he added.

In a wide-ranging address, the UN refugee agency chief praised the generosity of “major refugee-hosting countries – some of whose leaders have their own experience of flight and exile,” but said it was time to take more action globally.

“Measures to shore up their efforts, strengthen protection, mitigate the impact of a large-scale refugee presence, and genuinely share responsibility remain essential. This is the fundamental challenge before us,” he concluded.
In Bangladesh, UN food relief agency chief urges support amid massive Rohingya influx

1 October – The head of the United Nations food relief agency called today for an end to the “horrors” driving Rohingyas by the tens of thousands from their homes in Myanmar into neighboring Bangladesh.

On a visit to the region to rally international support to help ease the humanitarian crisis, the Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), David Beasley, met refugee families in the new settlements in the Cox's Bazar area of Bangladesh, and reiterated the agency's commitment to supporting people fleeing violence in Myanmar.

According to the UN, more than 500,000 Rohingya refugees have poured into Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar since 25 August, having fled their homes after violence erupted in Myanmar's northern Rakhine province. United Nations relief agencies and partner aid organizations are rushing to help cope with the influx.

“I have heard heart-breaking stories today, speaking to people who ran for their lives and saw loved ones killed before their eyes. These horrors must stop,” said Mr. Beasley.

Noting that many of these people were receiving WFP food assistance in Myanmar, he stressed that they will receive WFP food assistance in Bangladesh, until they are able to return home safely.

This is Mr. Beasley's first visit to Bangladesh since his assuming office in April. Having been in the region since Thursday, 29 September, he saw a WFP food distribution in an area adjacent to Kutupalong refugee camp, where hundreds of thousands of people have settled in makeshift shelters over the past month.

The WP chief also toured the 2,000-acre area that has been allocated by the Bangladesh Government to accommodate the new arrivals. He also saw a WFP e-voucher shop, where registered refugees redeem monthly electronic food vouchers.

“WFP started distributing food as soon as the influx began, and has scaled up operations to reach almost half a million refugees in the past month with life-saving assistance,” said Mr. Beasley, adding: “We are grateful for the generous support of the donor community that has made this possible.”

WFP reported today that it has so far distributed rice to some 460,000 refugees, and has also been providing high energy biscuits to more than 200,000 people as a one-off emergency measure when they arrive in the settlements and at border crossing points.

As the situation stabilizes, WFP plans to transition to more sophisticated programmes, especially with a view to supporting the nutritional needs of women and children and developing electronic voucher programmes that integrate with markets.
The UN Daily News is prepared at UN Headquarters in New York by the News Services Section of the News and Media Division, Department of Public Information (DPI)
In Bangladesh, UN aid chief urges scaling up response for Rohingya refugee crisis

3 October – With over half a million Rohingya refugees having fled their homes in Myanmar since violence erupted in late August, the top United Nations humanitarian official has underscored that the solution to the crisis needs to be found within Myanmar.

“The root causes of this crisis, as you know, are in Myanmar and the solutions need to be found in Myanmar,” Mark Lowcock, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, told journalists at a news conference in Cox’s Bazar, where many of those fled are taking refuge.

Noting that relief operations are gathering momentum, he informed the media that over the past six weeks, aid agencies have delivered more than nine million food rations, provided more than 300,000 with water and sanitation support, inoculated more than 100,000 children and provided some 50,000 with counselling and psycho-social support.

However, the sheer numbers of those in need mean that much more has to be done.

“The conditions in the camps are terrible. We need to do a lot more to scale up beyond what we have done so far,” added Mr. Lowcock, urging the international community to scale up their support.
He also announced that, as the manager of the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), he today allocated an additional $12 million to relief efforts and enable humanitarian partners kick-start life-saving critical health care, access to clean water and sanitation and camp management in the new sites.

These funds follow a previous CERF allocation of $7 million, bringing the total CERF support to $19 million.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the number of Rohingya refugees who have fled into Bangladesh from Myanmar has now reached 509,000.

UN agencies, including the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), humanitarian partners, together with the Bangladeshi Government have been working alleviating the plight of those uprooted from their homes as well as supporting the host community cope with the scale of the influx.

Yesterday, a diarrhoea treatment centre was opened at the Kutupalong Refugee Camp, where refugees who have been living since 1992 have taken in thousands of newcomers. By the end of this week, there will be a total of 80 beds at the centres in three locations, with two more centres planned to open next week.

UN agencies together with the authorities have conducted an immunization campaign for children to protect them against measles and have launched another one against cholera. Similarly, UN humanitarian staff along with refugee volunteers, are visiting refugee camps and informal settlements to identify people who may be sick but have not sought treatment.

Relief operation in storm-battered Dominica ‘going in the right direction,’ says UN official

3 October – Two weeks after Hurricane Maria devastated Dominica, the island nation’s recovery is becoming more evident as the main port has reopened and supplies of food, water and basic necessities are being regularly delivered to the people, a United Nations Resident Coordinator in the region said today, while stressing that there are still “major challenges” ahead.

Briefing reporters at UN Headquarters in New York via telephone from Dominica, Stephen O’Malley, who is the UN Resident Coordinator for Barbados and for the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, said “the [relief] operation is going in the right direction.”

According to the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), this is the fifth time on record that Dominica has taken a direct hit from a hurricane, but never has it faced a storm of such ferocity and strength. The hurricane brought life in Dominica to a standstill.

“What was shocking to me was that the island, which was known as ‘the nature island of the Caribbean,’ was almost totally brown [in the wake of the category 5 storm]. But now, the green has started to come back,” he said, noting that this progress is being matched on the ground, where the situation has begun to stabilize.

Garbage is now being collected and roads are opening up, noted Mr. O’Malley, adding that power has come back to the capital, Roseau, and a few other locations.

“We are able to reach almost everybody now, and we are getting food water and basic supplies out to people,” he said, cautioning at the same time that there will certainly be major challenges ahead.

He explained that the World Food Programme (WFP), working with the Government, has distributed 60 metric tonnes of...
food last week to about 30,000 people, which is about half the population, and that more than 40 UN agency workers are on the ground to help the population.

The Government has asked the UN to work with it on a logistics plan to ensure regular delivery of relief supplies. “The Government is also focused on its recovery plan,” said Mr. O’Malley, noting that Dominican officials will head to Washington, D.C. and present the details during the Fall Meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

“What we need to do now in Dominica is keep up this regular supply of the basics for people. Make sure the electricity comes up; getting people’s water supplies up; and getting markets open again; as well as health centres,” he explained, adding that the Government was also looking at ways to “get the economy off the ground,” especially as the reconstruction effort would be massive.

He went on to recall that the UN, its partners and the Government has last week launched an emergency appeal for $31.1 million to reach 65,000 people over the next three weeks.

Responding to a question, he said that looking at the broad swathe of devastation across Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, Turks and Caicos, and other islands and territories that were affected by this summer’s series of category five storms, Mr. O’Malley said the recovery, over time, could cost as much as $1 billion, though he stressed there were no exact figures.

“It's going to be a large-scale rebuilding effort that will take time,” he said.

**UN agriculture agency and World Bank launch new initiative to avert famine in Yemen**

3 October – More than half a million vulnerable and food-insecure people in war-torn Yemen will receive immediate relief and long-term sustainable agricultural support, thanks to a $36 million project launched by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization and the World Bank.

“The project will have a strong humanitarian impact in Yemen, as it will provide emergency support and help in building the resilience of the vulnerable Yemeni population,” said Abdessalam Ould Ahmed, FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for the Near East and North Africa.

Yemen’s ongoing conflict has left 17 million people facing crisis levels of acute food insecurity. The fighting has also devastated agriculture sector and livelihoods, making the country the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.

The grant, supported by the World Bank's Global Agriculture Food Security Program (GAFSP), will prioritize FAO’s projects to boost productivity, income and nutrition, especially in those most famine-hit regions in the country.

The initiative will also contribute to sustainable agriculture solutions in the long term, according to Salah El-Hajj Hassan, FAO Country Representative in Yemen.

These solutions include “furthering rural development, providing food security, rehabilitating community water infrastructures and improving capacity development,” he said.

“The implementation of the project will also allow FAO to build on previous projects, such as those empowering women to become more involved in conflict resolution issues,” he added. “Given the ongoing hostilities in Yemen, this project could also contribute to bringing stability to the country.”
To date, FAO has vaccinated over one million livestock and it plans to assist over three million people who are on the brink of starvation.

**Pioneer of work in women’s reproductive health appointed head of UN Population Fund**

3 October – United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today appointed Natalia Kanem of Panama to head the UN’s women’s health agency.

In making the announcement, UN spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric highlighted that Dr. Kanem “brings to the position more than three decades of strategic leadership and management in the fields of medicine, public health, international peace and development, human rights and social justice.”

Currently serving as the agency’s Acting Executive Director, the new Under-Secretary-General is the fifth Executive Director of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA). Prior to that, she was the UNFPA’s Deputy Executive Director for Programmes and earlier, its Representative in Tanzania.

She started her career in academia with the Johns Hopkins and Columbia University schools of medicine and public health.

While serving as a Ford Foundation Officer from 1992 to 2005, Dr. Kanem helped pioneer work in women’s reproductive health and sexuality, in particular through her position as the representative for West Africa. She then served at the Foundation headquarters, becoming Deputy Vice-President for its worldwide peace and social justice programmes in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and North America.

**UN and partners aim to slash 90 per cent of cholera deaths by 2030**

3 October – A taskforce of United Nations and international partner agencies is gearing up to launch an ambitious new strategy to combat cholera – aiming to reduce deaths by 90 per cent by 2030, the UN health agency announced today.

“This is a disease of inequality that affects the poorest and most vulnerable. It is unacceptable that nearly two decades into the 21st century, cholera continues to destroy livelihoods and cripple economies,” said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO).

With an estimated 95,000 cholera-related deaths, and another 2.9 million more people affected annually, the Global Task Force on Cholera Control (GTFCC), a diverse network of more than 50 UN and international agencies, academic institutions and others, will launch tomorrow ‘Ending Cholera: A Global Roadmap to 2030, which pinpoints endemic ‘hotspots’ where predictable cholera outbreaks occur year after year.

“WHO is proud to be part of this new joint initiative to stop deaths from cholera. This roadmap is the best way we have to bring this to an end,” said Mr. Tedros Adhanom.
Urgent action is needed to protect communities, prevent transmission and control outbreaks.

The ‘Global Roadmap’ aims to align resources, share best practice and strengthen partnerships between affected countries, donors and international agencies. It underscores the need for a coordinated approach to cholera control with country-level planning for early detection and response to outbreaks. Through its implementation, up to 20 affected countries could eliminate cholera by 2030.

“Every death from cholera is preventable with the tools available today, including use of the oral cholera vaccine and improved access to basic safe water, sanitation and hygiene as set out in the Roadmap,” underscored the WHO chief.

Although access to water and sanitation is recognized as a UN basic human right, today over two billion people worldwide still lack access to safe water and are potentially at risk of cholera. Weak health systems and low early detection capacity further contribute to the rapid spread of outbreaks.

Cholera disproportionally impacts communities already burdened by conflict, lack of infrastructure, poor health systems, and malnutrition. Protecting these communities before cholera strikes is significantly more cost-effective than continually responding to outbreaks. The introduction of the oral cholera vaccine has been a game-changer in the battle to control cholera – bridging the gap between emergency response and longer-term control.

With two WHO-approved oral cholera vaccines now available, for just $6 per person, individuals can be fully vaccinated for up to three years of protection.

The ‘Global Roadmap’ provides an effective mechanism to synchronize the efforts of countries, donors, and technical partners and underscores the need for a multi-sectoral approach to cholera control with country-level planning for early detection and response to outbreaks.

“We must act together. And we must act now,” asserted Mr. Tedros.

**HIV-related stigma, discrimination prevent people from accessing health services – UN**

3 October – People living with HIV who experience high levels of stigma are more than twice as likely to delay enrolment into care than people who do not perceive such stigma, a United Nations report released today reveals.

“When people living with, or at risk of, HIV are discriminated against in health-care settings, they go underground,” said Michel Sidibé, the Executive Director of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), in a press release.

“This seriously undermines our ability to reach people with HIV testing, treatment and prevention services,” he added.

The report, Confronting discrimination: overcoming HIV-related stigma and discrimination in health-care settings and beyond, gives evidence on how stigma and discrimination is creating barriers to accessing HIV prevention, testing and treatment services and putting lives at risk. It then highlights best practices on confronting stigma and discrimination.

“Stigma and discrimination is an affront to human rights and puts the lives of people living with HIV and key populations in danger,” Mr. Sidibé said.
Often, people living with HIV avoid going to clinics for fear of having their status disclosed or of suffering further stigma and discrimination based on their HIV status.

In 19 countries with available data, one in five people living with HIV avoided going to a clinic or hospital because they feared stigma or discrimination related to their HIV status, and one in four people living with HIV have experienced discrimination in health-care settings.

Where programmes have been put in place to respond to stigma and discrimination, access to services for HIV prevention, testing and treatment has improved. In one clinic in Namibia, a shift towards integrated health service delivery led to a 20 per cent reduction in deaths among people with HIV.

The report was launched at the Human Rights Council Social Forum taking place in Geneva, Switzerland, from 2 to 4 October under the theme of ‘Promotion and protection of human rights in the context of the HIV epidemic and other communicable diseases and epidemics.’

SDGs ‘take off’ in Nepal’s skies with UN development programme-airline partnership

3 October – Through a partnership between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and a private aircraft company, airplanes flying in Nepal’s skies will bear UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) branding icons, disseminating the globally-agreed targets far and wide.

“This is a powerful example to show the world that in partnership with the private sector, the [2030 Agenda for] Sustainable Development can really take off,” Renaud Meyer, the UNDP Country Director for Nepal, said in a news release announcing the new aircraft livery.

“We are very pleased to see these airplanes flying in Nepali skies, spreading messages on how we can tackle some of the world’s biggest challenges,” he added.

In addition to the SDG-branded aircrafts, the partnership between UNDP and Yeti Airlines also includes the Goals features on airport shuttle buses and boarding passes, information leaflets on sustainable development, social media campaigns as well as a link on the airline’s website for donating to UNDP programmes in country.

Thousands across the landlocked mountainous country, including those residing in remote areas – where aircrafts provide a vital transport and connectivity link – are expected to be informed about the SDGs through concrete and action-oriented messages, noted the news release.

Also under the partnership, UNDP and the airline will undertake joint initiatives to raise awareness on sustainable development, and mobilize stakeholders and advocates for its implementation.

The partnership will also explore, adopt and promote innovative and sustainable business models in the aviation and tourism industry that would help Nepal meet some specific SDG indicators in the areas of climate change adaptation, poverty reduction and gender equality, it added.

The SDGs, adopted by UN Member States in 2015, have a specific goal on partnerships, including with the private sector given their potential to mobilize resources, technology and innovation to aid and accelerate the implementation of the overall sustainable development agenda.

“In Nepal, we have been exploring ways in which the UN could help the local businesses grow more responsible and SDG
friendly,” said Mr. Meyer, expressing hope that more such “inspiring” joint initiatives will be unveiled to help the country meet the global development goals by 2030.

Global Goals embraced by Japanese society, UN deputy chief says, wrapping up Tokyo visit

3 October – Concluding her three-day visit to Japan today, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed today noted how much the Japanese society has embraced the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a compass guiding to a more prosperous future for themselves.

“Throughout my visit, I have been impressed to see how much SDGs are embraced enthusiastically in Japan by the business community represented by Japan Business Federation (Keidanren), civil society, media, and young students,” said Ms. Mohammed.

Referring to her visit to the Paralympic Support Center at the Nippon Foundation, which is extremely inclusive in its barrier-free structure and in its workforce, as well as her meeting with the ‘Tokyo2020’ Olympic and Paralympic Games Organizing Committee, she expressed her high expectation that taking Paralympic sport as starting point, Japan would open up towards people with disabilities as a whole. The Deputy Secretary-General shared these observations in her meeting with Foreign Minister Kono Taro today.

Ms. Mohammed also paid a visit to the exhibition at JICA World Square on ethical fashion titled “Fashion as Action: Supporting Sustainable Society Through Clothes.” The exhibition explains how consumers can contribute to sustainable development by being sensitive to how fashion items they buy are produced and disposed. The Deputy Secretary-General was extremely impressed with how these messages were communicated with fun in an innovative way.

Iraq: UN migration agency assists thousands newly displaced from west Anbar

3 October – With some 8,500 people displaced over the past two weeks amid Iraq’s military operations to retake Anbar province, the United Nations migration agency announced today that it is stepping up provision of life-saving assistance.

“People newly displaced from their homes often arrive dehydrated, suffering from hunger and thirst,” said Dr. Hamed Amro, in a news release while assisting recently internally displaced people (IDPs) in Rutba.

While military operations to retake west Anbar were officially launched on 19 September, many families – often children, women and older people – walk long distances, some for several days, often in intense heat, to reach safe areas.

“Many require psychosocial support and need medical care. Some have chronic illness and exacerbated conditions due to long term lack of care, and others suffer from malnutrition; we have also received a few trauma cases,” Dr. Amro stressed.
From early January through 2 October, IOM’s Emergency Tracking has identified a total of 54,546 displaced individuals from west Anbar, particularly from Ana, Al Ka’im and Ra’ua districts.

An IOM update shows that some 85 per cent of them transited through Kilo 18 screening site and are displaced within Anbar governorate. By district, Falluja hosts 25,300 individuals, Ramadi another 15,100 and Heet 3,100. At the same time, 3,600 sought safety in the Baghdad governorate and 4,400 in the Erbil governorate.

Since January, 32,886 of the total 54,546 IDPs are currently registered in camps, and 21,660 in out-of-camp locations – with 21,132 in private settings and 528 in critical shelter arrangements.

In Anbar, IOM medical staff are providing immediate assistance to nearly 1,000 IDPs per week through four Mobile Medical Teams working in greatest-need locations, including Falluja city, Ameriyat al Fallujah, Heet and Garma. All are identified in cooperation with Anbar Directorate of Health, part of Iraq’s Ministry of Health.

In the past two weeks, IOM has worked closely with Iraq’s Ministry of Migration and Displacement in distributing 795 non-food item kits, including a plastic cool box and rechargeable fan, to families in Al Habanyah – in addition to 500 kits previously distributed to those not living in camps in Heet. Additional distributions are scheduled for the coming week.

“Life in Al-Ka’im city, under the control of ISIL, was extremely difficult,” said Ahmed, who, according to IOM, was displaced with his family of six to Haditha district, Anbar, in a perilous and long journey.

“I hired smugglers to help my wife, four children, my mother and myself to escape. They drove us early morning through unpaved roads. Now we are displaced and living in an unfinished building; we have spent all our limited savings and have no money to cover our needs. The supplies we received today will help us get through this difficult time,” Ahmed told IOM staff at an aid distribution.

**UN agency alarmed by largest influx of Congolese refugees into Zambia in five years**

*3 October – Growing violence in south-eastern areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has driven at least 3,360 refugees into northern Zambia over the past month, the United Nations refugee agency said today, warning that the humanitarian needs of the displaced could intensify on both sides of the border as the rainy season approaches.*

“This is the largest influx of Congolese refugees into Zambia in the past five years,” Andrej Mahecic, a spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) told reporters in Geneva.

The refugees and asylum-seekers, mainly from the Congolese provinces of Haut-Katanga and Tanganyika, are escaping inter-ethnic clashes, as well as fighting between Congolese security forces and militia groups.

“At Nchelenge Transit Centre in Chiengi, Luapula Province, northern Zambia, Congolese refugees receive one of their three hot meals per day, provided by local authorities and UNHCR. Photo: UNHCR/Pumla Rulashe

“Those arriving in Zambia report extreme brutality, with civilians being killed, women raped, property looted and houses set alight,” Mr. Mahecic said.

Some 60 per cent of those arriving in Zambia are children. Many show signs of malnutrition. Malaria, respiratory problems, dysentery and skin infections are common among the refugees.

The Zambian Government, UNHCR and the Zambian Red Cross are distributing hot and providing psycho-social support for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. The humanitarian response team is delivering basic items, including
tents, plastic sheeting, mosquito nets, blankets, buckets, hygiene kits and soap. Temporary shelters are being erected, boreholes are being drilled for drinking water and temporary latrines are being constructed.

Because of overcrowding, UNHCR has started work on a second transit facility to receive the growing number of new arrivals. A more permanent settlement will also be developed, with a social infrastructure where new arrivals will be able to stay for longer and develop some self-sufficiency.

Since the beginning of 2017, about 5,761 Congolese have crossed the border into Zambia. In total, there are 27,338 Congolese refugees and asylum seekers in that country.

Meanwhile, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is scaling up its displacement assessments and emergency activities in Tanganyika as well as the Kasai province.

Increased ethnic violence throughout these provinces has uprooted more than 1.4 million people over the past few months, bringing the total number of internally displaced nationwide to some 3.4 million.

In Tanganyika province, the UN migration agency has carried out a survey in six of the 12 displacement sites in and around the city of Kalemie to collect information on the profile, needs and intentions of the displaced, including on their return and reintegration requirements.

The survey will be conducted at the remaining sites in the following weeks. According to IOM’s database, as of September 2017, an estimated 90,000 individuals reside in these sites in precarious conditions.

“The data collected during this assessment will provide useful information to IOM and its partners on the needs and intentions of internally displaced persons,” said IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) expert, Stephanie Daviot. “It will also allow us to better target the assistance to those most vulnerable on the sites.”

In Central Kasai province, DTM has identified around 197,000 internally displaced persons and 490,000 returnees in 1,809 villages.

The DTM assessments in Central Kasai will continue over the upcoming weeks and provide an overview of the displacement situation in the entire province by the end of October.

**Cameroon: UN Secretary-General urges dialogue to resolve grievances**

*3 October* – Strongly condemning recent violence in south-west and north-west regions of Cameroon, including reported loss of life, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has urged all stakeholders to refrain from any further acts of violence and called on the authorities to investigate the incidents.

In a statement attributable to his spokesperson, the Mr. Guterres urged “political leaders on both sides to appeal to their followers to refrain from any further acts of violence, and to unequivocally condemn all actions that undermine the peace, stability and unity of the country.”

“[He] takes note of the calls by the authorities for dialogue and encourages representatives of the Anglophone community to seize the opportunity in their quest for solutions to the community’s grievances, within the framework of the Cameroonian constitution,” the statement added.
The Secretary-General reiterates the support of the United Nations for such efforts, through the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), the statement noted.

**Dire lack of winter funding puts millions of refugees in Middle East at risk, warns UN agency**

*3 October* – Dwindling resources could severely jeopardize efforts to provide refugees and displaced persons across the Middle East with essential winter supplies such as thermal blankets and warm clothing, the United Nations refugee agency has warned.

For many it will be the seventh consecutive winter in displacement, living in tents or in makeshift settlements in near-freezing temperatures.

“We estimate that as many as four million are at extreme risk and need timely and substantial help to properly prepare for the forthcoming winter [and] of these only one in four are likely to get the assistance they need,” said Andrej Mahecic, a spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), calling for greater funding for the agency’s response plan to ensure help is provided to all in desperate need.

According to estimates, there are nearly 15 million Syrian and Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons across the region, in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Iraq.

With their needs rising significantly during winter due to the harsh conditions, ensuring sufficient funding for UN agency’s Regional Winter Assistance Plan for 2017/2018 (amounting to $245 million but only 26 per cent funded) is critical, the spokesperson noted.

“Without proper help, many refugee families end up being pushed further into debt and come under increased pressure to resort to desperate steps to try to make ends meet. Women and children are especially affected,” Mr. Mahecic added.

Throughout this autumn (September-November), UNHCR plans to provide cash assistance, distribute winter items and invest in preparation, insulation and repairs of shelters, as well as improve drainage in the camps.

With sufficient funding, the Regional Plan will ensure basic winter necessities – including blankets, clothing, tarpaulin and fuel – are provided to refugees and displaced persons. It will also assist those living below the poverty line with a special assistance programme.

More than 50 per cent of the assistance package is scheduled to be delivered in cash which would allow refugees and the internally displaced to address their priorities and meet urgent needs.
Rohingya refugees living in ‘dire’ conditions, senior UN officials warn, appealing for assistance

4 October – The human tragedy unfolding in southern Bangladesh is staggering in its scale, warned two senior United Nations officials today as they wrapped up a mission to the Cox’s Bazar with calls for a “significant increase in assistance” for the hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas have settled in the area after fleeing violence in neighbouring Myanmar.

“We leave Bangladesh […] all the more determined that the United Nations do all it can to assist the Government of Bangladesh in coping with this crisis,” said Mark Lowcock, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator and Anthony Lake, Executive Director of the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

In the last few weeks, well over half a million Rohingya people have crossed the Myanmar border into Bangladesh, making this the world’s fastest developing refugee emergency.

“People arrive fearful, exhausted and hungry, and in desperate need of immediate help including shelter, food, clean water and sanitation, and healthcare,” they asserted. “They bring with them terrible accounts of what they have seen and suffered – stories of children being killed, women brutalized, and villages burned to the ground.”

The UN officials lauded the Government and people of Bangladesh for its “extraordinary spirit of generosity” in opening the country’s borders and their providing relief to the refugees as “an inspiring example of humanity.”

Explaining that the refugees are living in flimsy shacks in sprawling, densely-crowded sites that have sprung up to accommodate them – with ever-growing risks for a disease outbreak – they underscored the urgency for funding so that all
refugees have access to food, shelter, water, sanitation facilities, health care and protective services.

“Conditions in the temporary settlements are dire. Without a significant increase in assistance, the refugees, who have suffered so much already, could face another catastrophe on top of the tragedies that caused them to flee their homes,” they stressed.

Today an update to the UN and the international aid community’s response plan was released, seeking $434 million to scale up the relief operation supporting the refugees and host communities. In support of this, an additional $12 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has been allocated to help establish additional sites for newly arrived refugees.

While the two senior UN officials welcomed assurances of close cooperation with the Government, they underscored that the “appalling situation” is not over as people continue to flee for their lives, crossing from Myanmar into Bangladesh – and requiring immediate support.

“We call again on the Myanmar authorities to allow the full resumption of humanitarian action across all of Rakhine state, and will continue to advocate for conditions to be created that allow for people to safely, securely and voluntarily go home,” they concluded.

UN chief urges world to implement Paris climate accord ‘with greater ambition’

4 October – Pointing to scientific evidence warning of increased extreme weather events, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, ahead of a trip to the storm-ravaged Caribbean, urged all countries to implement the Paris Agreement on climate change “with greater ambition.”

“We know that the world has the tools, the technologies and the wealth to address climate change, but we must show more determination in moving towards a green, clean, sustainable energy future,” Mr. Guterres said at a press encounter at the UN Headquarters, in New York.

“Today and every day, I am determined to ensure that the United Nations works to protect our common future and to seize the opportunities of climate action,” he affirmed.

He said: “Today I am announcing that I will travel on Saturday to Antigua, Barbuda and Dominica to survey the damage and to assess what more the United Nations can do to help people recover, visiting of course also the operations that are taking place there.”

The islands were recently hit by back-to-back category 5 hurricanes.

Since the disasters struck, the UN and partners have delivered relief by both air and the sea, reaching thousands across the region with food, water purification tablets, water storage tanks, tents, school kits, mosquito nets and cash assistance. The Organization also launched a $113.9 million appeal to cover humanitarian needs for the immediate period ahead.

Within a span of few weeks, the Caribbean region was struck by major hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria and Jose that left terrible destruction in their wake.

Noting that over the past 30 years, the number of annual weather-related disasters nearly tripled, and economic losses increased five-fold, Mr. Guterres said that with climate change warming the seas – resulting in more water vapor in the atmosphere – intensity of hurricanes has worsened considerably.
“Instead of dissipating, they pick up fuel as they move across the ocean,” he warned, cautioning also that the melting of glaciers and the thermal expansion of the seas would result in bigger storm surges and with more people living along coastlines and causing more damage.

Concluding his remarks, the UN chief underlined the Organization’s commitment to help all countries, in particular small island States to adapt to climate change and strengthen resilience, and called for innovative financing mechanisms to enable countries cope with external shocks.

**Expert meeting at UN aspires to create ‘space’ for women in science and technology**

**4 October** – A three-day event on how to, among other things, improve women’s involvement in the aerospace sector as well as in the fields of science, technology and mathematics, kicked off today under the leadership of two United Nations offices.

The UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and UN Women have teamed up in organizing a ‘Space for Women’ Expert Meeting at UN Headquarters in New York to share expertise, enhance partnerships and promote efforts to encourage women and girls to become involved in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education – especially in developing countries.

“Space for Women is really a gender mainstreaming project where we will like to work with Member States; not only for STEM education but also to help young girls when they graduate to then find their place in their own society without being obliged to leave their own country,” Simonetta Di Pippo, Director of UNOOSA, said prior to the event.

The meeting will also delve into the role of space technology and science to fulfil Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality.

“And this has to be done with each Member State, and we will start with a small group of champions – as I like to call them – so, pilot countries with which we will develop this medium to long-term project,” she added.

With the most cross-cutting thematic priority of “capacity-building for the twenty-first century,” the event is discussing innovative approaches to meet the 2030 Agenda.

Astronauts, diplomats, decision makers and experts from around the globe have converged in to discuss the creation of a dedicated ‘Space for Women’ Project.

In line with UNOOSA’s vision to bring the benefits of space to humankind, the focus of the Project is to realize that women and girls are included in those benefits and that they play an active and equal role in space science, technology, innovation and exploration.

On the final day of the event, a high-level panel on ‘Space for Women,’ which will include UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, Ms. Di Pippo and UN Women’s Deputy Executive Director Laskhmi Puri, will make recommendations to UNOOSA.

The proposals, which will focus on using space to empower women, women’s involvement in the aerospace industry and STEM fields, and how alliances can be made to move forward the project, will feed into the development of the 'Space for Women' project.

The first UN Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the global governance of space activities,
known as UNISPACE, was held in 1968 – with subsequent others in 1968, 1982 and 1999. June 2018 will mark its 50th anniversary with a special segment of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which will set the future course of global space cooperation to advance humanity.

In December 1999, the General Assembly declared World Space Week to be celebrated internationally each year from 4 to 10 October.

**Libya: UN Mission condemns deadly bombing in Misrata**

4 October – Condemning an attack against a court house in the Libyan city of Misrata, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) underscored that those behind the incident must be held accountable.

At least three individuals were killed and more than 15 injured in the attack today, the responsibility for which is claimed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da’esh) terrorist group.

“Indiscriminate attacks against civilians, including employees of the judicial institutions, are violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and cannot be justified,” the Mission said in a statement.

“Those behind today's bombing and other such despicable acts must face justice.”

In the statement, the Mission also expressed its solidarity with the Government and people of Libya.

It added that the Special Representative for the Secretary-General for the country and the head of UNSMIL, Ghassan Salame, expressed his condolences to the families of those killed and wished a swift recovery to the injured.

**Counselling and dieting among new UN health agency guidelines on child obesity**

4 October – An estimated 41 million children under five years old are obese or overweight, United Nations health experts warned today, launching new guidelines to tackle what they call a global epidemic.

Faced with evidence indicating that the problem affects rich and poor countries alike, the World Health Organization (WHO) has released details on how trained professionals can better identify youngsters in need of help.

The just-published obesity guidelines include counselling and dieting, an assessment of eating habits along with the more usual weight and height measurements.

WHO says the prevalence of obesity in children reflects changing patterns towards unhealthy diets and physical inactivity. Urbanization, increased incomes, availability of fast foods, educational demands, television viewing and gaming have led to a rise in the consumption of foods high in fats, sugar and salt and lower levels of physical activity.
While there have been major public health interventions to promote improved diet and patterns of physical activity in adults, the contribution of antenatal and young-child interventions to reducing the risk of obesity in later life have not been significantly reviewed.

Read full story

An estimated 41 million children under five years old are obese or overweight, United Nations health experts warned today, launching new guidelines to tackle what they call a global epidemic.

Faced with evidence indicating that the problem affects rich and poor countries alike, the World Health Organization (WHO) has released details on how trained professionals can better identify youngsters in need of help.

The just-published obesity guidelines include counselling and dieting, an assessment of eating habits along with the more usual weight and height measurements.

Failing to heed these recommendations may leave vulnerable children at an increased risk of dying young from a range of life-threatening diseases, WHO warns.

In 2016, Asia accounted for half of all overweight or obese children, and one quarter lived in Africa, according to the UN agency’s Dr. Francesco Branca, Director of the Department of Nutrition for Health and Development.

He explained that this is related to the fact that children in poorer countries often get too little breastmilk, nor the right complimentary food.

Paradoxically, this leaves under-nourished children at greater risk of putting on excess weight as they grow, when they’re offered so-called “cheap calories,” in the form of fatty, sugary foods.

“Malnutrition is responsible for a lack of resilience to changes in the food environment. So a malnourished child would be more susceptible to gaining more weight when exposed to a food environment which is high in far, sugar, for instance.”

The problem of excess weight is rising in all world regions, but most rapidly in poorer and middle-income countries.

Dr. Branca insisted that it was up to governments to do more to address the problem, faced with what he called an “unsuitable food system” that fails to provide sufficient nutritious foods “with the right levels of vitamins and minerals.”

Educating people about the risks of eating unhealthily is a welcome first step, he said, but what’s really needed is more regulation to ensure that healthier foods are cheaper and more readily available.
Sustainable cities key to implement SDGs, says head of UN regional development arm

4 October – Noting the high speed of urbanization in Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations development arm in the region underlined the need to keep a close watch on the provision of services, equipment, mobility, housing and urban land to make sure they can match pace with the demand.

Speaking at the opening of the Cities Conference, Alicia Bárcena, the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) underscored that despite significant progress in reducing poverty, high degrees of socioeconomic residential segregation continues to persist in metropolises and large and small cities and towns.

“Socioeconomic segregation deepens inequity and contributes to social fragmentation and the high levels of violence that characterize many cities in [the region],” she said.

According to estimates, by 2030 – the timeframe to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – there could be more than 92 million additional people living in cities in Latin America and the Caribbean. The region is already the most urbanized developing region in the world.

Therefore, added Ms. Bárcena, it is necessary to guarantee the right to the city as a basic requirement for achieving sustainable development.

Concluding this Friday, the Cities Conference focuses on the regional implementation of the New Urban Agenda – the outcome of the Habitat III conference – to build inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities.

Also at the inaugural session of the Conference, the head of ECLAC presented the Regional Action Plan for implementing the Habitat III outcome, proposing actions the countries of the region can take to ensure sustainable development of their cities and human settlements.

The Regional Action Plan is centred on six action areas, which include national urban policies; urban legal frameworks; urban and territorial planning and design; financing urbanization; local implementation; and monitoring, reporting and revision mechanisms.

The Cities Conference has been organized by ECLAC, the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the General Assembly of Ministers and High-level Authorities of the Housing and Urban Development Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean (known by its Spanish acronym, MINURVI) in Santiago, Chile.
Switzerland needs to do more to keep ‘dirty money’ at bay, urges UN expert

4 October – Highlighting the problems posed by illicit financial flows globally, including undermining rule of law and human rights, a United Nations human rights expert has called on Switzerland to ensure that so called dirty money – which stems from tax evasion and corruption – does not enter its financial market.

“Despite significant efforts in adopting legislation and improving procedures to detect suspicious transactions, the risk that the Swiss financial market is used for money laundering remains,” said Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, the UN Independent Expert on foreign debt and human rights, in a news release issued by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Facilitated by weak institutions and lack of good governance in countries of origin and financial opacity in countries of destination, illicit financial flows, such as money laundering are a particular concern in developing and under developed countries, syphoning money and resources which could have otherwise used for public services.

In the case of Switzerland, the UN expert noted that the risk of money laundering is particularly highlighted by the involvement of several banks in the Petrobas corruption scandal and in the suspicious cash flows linked to the Malaysian sovereign fund 1MDB.

“It is especially troubling that these events are not from years ago – the money was still being accepted until quite recently,” added Mr. Bohoslavsky, who today concluded his first official visit to the European nation.

In the news release, the expert also underlined that criminal sanctions in Switzerland for assisting foreigners to evade taxes remained relatively weak noting that criminal liability arises only if the tax evaded in a foreign jurisdiction exceeds 300,000 CHF (about $307,500).

He also urged that the staffing, resources and powers of the Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority needed to be proportional to the size of the Swiss financial market, and those who infringed standards needed to be named to ensure individual corporate accountability.

Further, noting that favourable tax arrangements in Switzerland made it attractive for multinational corporations to establish their headquarters in the country, but also provided incentives for profit-shifting, affecting tax revenues in foreign countries.

“I call upon the Swiss authorities to carry out a social and human rights impact assessment of the proposed corporate tax reform package, which should include an analysis of how the reforms will impact on tax revenues available for the realization of economic and social rights within Switzerland and for individuals living abroad, in particular in developing countries,” said the UN expert.

Mr. Bohoslavsky visited the country at the invitation of the Swiss authorities, where he met with Government officials as well as with leaders in the banking, financial and trading sectors, civil society and the academia in Bern (the capital), Basel, Geneva and Zurich.

His findings and key recommendations will be presented in a comprehensive report to the Geneva-based Human Rights Council – the highest UN intergovernmental forum on rights issues – in March 2018.
In the headlines:

- Mali continues to make progress, but swift action needed as civilians still face threats – UN envoy
- Asylum and refugee protection represent ‘humanity at its best,’ says senior UN official
- Security Council authorizes UN Mission to verify truce between Colombian Government and ELN
- Empower teachers; give them the freedom to teach, UN urges on World Day
- FEATURE: In Western Afghanistan, an ancient love of poetry thrives again
- UN peacekeeping chief seeks Security Council support for speedy deployment of uniformed personnel
- A year after Hurricane Matthew, Haiti’s children still incredibly vulnerable to disasters – UNICEF
- Vegetable oils lift food prices in September; cereal prices down on bumper crop prospects
- UN report reveals shocking levels of grave violations against children affected by conflicts
- Partnerships will play key role in future of work in Europe and Central Asia - UN labour agency
- Security Council re-authorizes operations to disrupt migrant smuggling off coast of Libya

Mali continues to make progress, but swift action needed as civilians still face threats – UN envoy

5 October – While recent crises threatening the peace process in Mali had been overcome and new agreements reached, progress must be accelerated as the situation remains perilous for peacekeepers and civilians, the head of United Nations peacekeeping efforts in the West African country told the Security Council today.

“Despite the positive developments, we must remember that the agreed deadlines of 2018 are quickly approaching and the challenges are enormous,” said Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Mali and Head of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) said via videoconference from the Malian capital, Bamako.

“All parties must redouble their efforts to re-establish trust between them and, despite the prolonged delays in the implementation of the Agreement [on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali], engage in necessary reforms and provide a peace dividend to the people,” he added.

He said that the period under the Council’s review, mid-June to mid-September, witnessed debate over a draft revision of the national Constitution amid armed clashes between the Platform and Coordination, the two coalitions that had signed onto the 2015 peace agreement. The combined efforts of the signatory movements and the international community had allowed
MINUSMA to overcome the crises, but delays in implementing the agreement persisted.

Following the clashes, he said, truces were agreed upon in August, with further commitments to end hostilities having been signed in September. Earlier in the day, several prisoners held by the groups had been freed and recent progress included the participation in a 20 September high-level meeting in New York of both coalition leaders, who had agreed to accelerate the peace agreement’s implementation.

Some of the specifics they had discussed included establishing a second chamber of Parliament, operationalizing territorial collectives, launching demobilization activities, security sector reform and redeploying the reformed national military.

“Yet, the challenges remain enormous,” he stressed. The Human rights situation remains a source of deep concern, particularly given the rise of armed extremism, the absence of State authority in certain areas and the imposition of anti-terrorism measures. While progress in fighting impunity for abuses that occurred during the 2012 crisis included the conviction of Aliou Mahamane Touré, there must be justice for all and every perpetrator must held accountable, he said.

He added that the recently authorized sanctions regime was an important part of the pursuit of justice and peace. Initiatives such as the dissemination of information on human rights and the establishment of the international commission of inquiry would also help fight impunity, he said, adding that MINUSMA continued to support State institutions in all areas through regular dialogue.

The security situation remained a major obstacle, he said, with nearly daily losses of UN peacekeepers due to anti-personnel mines and improvised explosives. Accelerated reconciliation efforts were needed as was the full deployment of the escort battalion for the regional reaction force. Given all the challenges, he reiterated the need for funding to invest in protection, improve monitoring, enhanced patrolling and detection, and early warning systems to reduce the toll of attacks.

Asylum and refugee protection represent ‘humanity at its best,’ says senior UN official

5 October – Warning of threats to the global asylum environment, the United Nations refugee agency’s protection chief today stressed the importance of sustained engagement by the international community to keep refugees high on the political agenda.

“The interest in refugee and displacement-related issues tends to wax and wane. We are already seeing a different dynamic today than in 2015, when refugees were foremost on the political agenda,” Assistant High Commissioner for Protection Volker Türk said in a key address to the annual Executive Committee meeting of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva.

“Sustained engagement is required, especially to address protracted refugee and internal displacement situations, but also new large movements of refugees and migrants,” he added, stressing that every nation must exercise its responsibility towards all people – nationals and non-nationals alike – who are subject to the jurisdiction of a country.

“Providing protection and hope for the future does not take anything away; if properly managed, it adds and enriches,” Mr. Türk explained, adding: “Sometimes this gets forgotten in the media chatter and myopic political discourse where abstract concepts and ideologies obscure the realities of human beings in distress.”

He added that: “Asylum and refugee protection are not things thrown easily to the wind. They represent humanity at its best, and respect for each human being.”
In this regard, next year’s Global Compact on Refugees will help to sustain this much-needed interest, he said, referring to an internationally agreed document on the refugee issues to be adopted by UN Member States in 2018.

He said the proposed compact would broaden support base by building new and reinforcing old partnerships, such as with the World Bank, regional bodies, civil society, and the private sector, and encourage much stronger commitments to resettlement and complementary pathways.

The compact would also enable greater predictability and investment in the future by strengthening the resilience of both refugees and hosting communities.

“This is a tall order, but it is achievable if we work on it together,” he told representatives of 151 States that make up the Executive Committee.

On international protection, Mr. Türk said violations of international refugee law are “wide-ranging and occur in all parts of the world.”

“In particular, they have included killings of refugees by the military,” he said, adding that there has also been a surge in serious incidents of *refoulement*, the forced return of refugees.

Another major worry is an increasing trend in deterrence measures by governments. Prolonged, arbitrary, and indefinite detention of asylum-seekers and refugees continues in a number of countries, including in so-called ‘regional processing centres,’ he said.

“Granting asylum and protecting refugees is a humanitarian, non-political act,” he said, stressing that some politicians have cast aside humanity in favour of short-term political gains, arguing that they were acting in defence of the liberty, security, and safety of their citizenry.

“This is dangerous – not just for the many refugees whose lives are affected as a result, but also for the citizens in whose defence governments purport to act,” he said.

A variety of terms are used to describe refugees, such as “undocumented people” or “vulnerable migrants,” possibly with the idea of making a stronger case for the rights of all people on the move. However, this has caused confusion and inadvertently provided fodder for those who wish to undermine refugees’ rights.

“I have to say that, quite apart from the erroneous legal depiction, I find it inappropriate to present people as a sub-set of anything, migrants or otherwise,” he said.

“A refugee is a refugee,” he continued, explaining that there is a clear legal definition of refugees linked to absence of national protection. The essence of international protection lies in identifying and recognizing the needs of people fleeing conflict, violence, human rights abuses, and other serious predicaments in their country of origin, Mr. Türk added.
Security Council authorizes UN Mission to verify truce between Colombian Government and ELN

5 October – Acting unanimously, the United Nations Security Council today expanded the mandate of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, tasking it to monitor temporary bilateral ceasefire between the Colombian Government and the National Liberation Army (ELN) armed group.

The Council, through a new resolution, decided that the UN Verification Mission will, on a temporary basis until 9 January 2018, “verify compliance with the temporary, bilateral, national ceasefire with the ELN at the national, regional and local level.”

“It shall also] endeavour to prevent incidents through enhanced coordination between the parties and resolution of disagreements” noted the resolution.

In today’s resolution, the Security Council also tasked the Verification Mission with enabling a timely response by the parties to incidents, as well as verifying and reporting publicly and to the parties on compliance with the ceasefire.

The Council also approved an addition of no more than 70 international observers, as requested by the Secretary-General for liaising with the Colombian Armed Forces and ELN to avoid conflicting movements and prevent armed clashes.

The resolution follows an agreement reached in early September in Quito, the capital of Ecuador, between the Colombian Government and the ELN on a bilateral and temporary ceasefire. The ceasefire entered into force on 1 October, and is due to remain in force until the second week of January 2018.

Also today, the Council adopted a presidential statement in which it recognized the work of the (now closed) UN Mission in Colombia and welcomed the “remarkable achievements” in the country following the 2016 Final Agreement between the Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (FARC-EP).

Empower teachers; give them the freedom to teach, UN urges on World Day

5 October – Underscoring the critical important role teachers play in ensuring the future for every society, the United Nations today called for empowering educators with the freedom and support they need to undertake their vital mission.

“Being an empowered teacher means having access to high-quality training, fair wages, and continuous opportunities for professional development,” the heads of key UN agencies and programmes said today in a joint message on World Teachers’ Day.

Empowerment also means teachers having the freedom to support the development of national curricula, the professional autonomy to choose teaching methods and approaches and being able to teach in safety and security during times of political change, instability and conflict, they added.
The joint message was issued by Irina Bokova, the Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); Guy Ryder, the Director-General of International Labour Organization (ILO); Anthony Lake, the Executive-Director of UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF); Achim Steiner, the Administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP); and Fred van Leeuwen, the General-Secretary of Education International (a global federation representing organizations of teachers and other education employees).

It emphasized that academic freedom – while important for teachers at all levels of education – is especially critical for higher-education to support the educators’ ability to innovate, explore, and stay up-to-date on the latest pedagogical research.

“This World Teachers’ Day, join us in empowering teachers to teach in freedom so that, in turn, every child and every adult is free to learn – to the benefit of a better world,” they urged.

The importance of building a skilled, valued and empowered education workforce has also been underscored in the 2030 Agenda’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Target 4C of Goal 4, in particular, calls for “substantially increasing” the supply of qualified teachers by 2030, and in that context, underlines importance of international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States.

Marked annually on 5 October since 1994, World Teachers’ Day commemorates the anniversary of the signing of the 1966 UNESCO/ILO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers – the primary reference framework that addresses teachers’ rights and responsibilities at the global scale.

The theme for this year’s commemoration is Teaching in Freedom, Empowering Teachers.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel, which complements the 1966 UNESCO/ILO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, stressing the importance of teacher autonomy and academic freedom in building a world in which education and learning are truly universal.

**UN peacekeeping chief seeks Security Council support for speedy deployment of uniformed personnel**

5 October – The United Nations peacekeeping chief today said rapid deployment of uniformed personnel to the field is a costly, complex and difficult process that requires the commitment of the contributors, the host country and neighbors, as well as the support of the Security Council.

“Generating uniformed personnel for UN peacekeeping is a tireless and enormous task,” said Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for UN Peacekeeping Operations, in a briefing, noting that this is the first time the Council has dedicated a meeting to this issue – strategic force generation.

A small team of dedicated officers is in charge of generating and rotating more than 300 units – including 76 infantry battalions – with tens of thousands of troops and police from over 120 countries, while selecting and deploying several thousand individual staff and police officers throughout the year, Mr. Lacroix explained.

In the weeks and months that pass from the issuance of a mandate by the Security Council, until a mission reaches a minimum operating capacity, lives can be lost. There are financial implications of long deployment timelines as well, as a
peacekeeping operation deployed too late will have a more intractable situation to address, potentially requiring a larger footprint and prolonging the life of that mission, he stated.

The peacekeeping chief noted significant progress made towards more rapid deployment. For example, a battalion in the UN mission in the Central African Republic that was facing conduct and discipline issues has been replaced in less than 60 days.

He also said that his office recently received sufficient pledges to fulfil nearly all the requirements for a Vanguard Brigade of roughly 4,000 troops and police for the remainder of 2017 and the first half of next year.

Despite the success of the last two years, a number of specialized capabilities remain in short supply, particularly high-value enablers, such as helicopters, quick reaction forces, and units trained to dispose of explosive ordnance.

There is also a lack of progress towards targets for deployment of female peacekeepers.

He highlighted a crucial role the Security Council plays in defining and helping meet the capability requirements of UN missions, encouraging Council Members to come forward with new, innovative contributions, including through the provision of tailored and sustained training and capacity building efforts to address mid- to long-term capability gaps. The trilateral partnership between Japan and several African troop-contributing countries is a good example of this kind of initiative, he added.

The Council can also take into account current or potential capability gaps, such as those in the UN Mission in Mali, when drafting or renewing mandates. For missions like that in South Sudan, the Council should engage collectively and individually to ensure that host governments fully comply with status of mission agreements; and that the Council act accordingly when host governments fail to do so, he said.

The Council can also ensure the full implementation of performance, training and conduct requirements, and in cases of underperformance or misconduct, the UN Secretariat relies on the Council’s consistent support to address them.

The Council can also back UN efforts to foster a culture of continuous improvement and adaptation through strategic force generation and other reform efforts.

“Strategic force generation is an important and still relatively new initiative,” he said, stressing that it should be seen as only one part of a broader, ongoing effort by the Secretariat to make peacekeeping operations a more efficient, effective and accountable tool for the international community.

A year after Hurricane Matthew, Haiti’s children still incredibly vulnerable to disasters – UNICEF

5 October – One year has passed since Hurricane Matthew made landfall in southwest Haiti – leaving terrible destruction in its wake – but children and adolescents on the island still remain highly vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters and extreme weather events, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has warned.

“Hundreds of thousands of children had their lives turned upside down by Hurricane Matthew,” said Marc Vincent, the head of the UNICEF country office in Haiti, in a news release issued by the agency.

“The courage and determination of families to recover and begin to rebuild their lives is admirable and [we are] is proud to be one of the organizations continuing to support them.”
In the immediate aftermath of the storm, UN mobilized its staff on the ground to respond to the most urgent needs, sending emergency aid for affected children and families, including clean water and sanitation.

Working together with the Haitian Government and partner organizations, over the past 12 month, the UNICEF rehabilitated 120 schools damaged by the hurricane, enabling the return of more than 30,000 children to school. It also provided school furniture to some 139 schools and provided another 26,000 children with psycho-social support.

In the Sud and Grand’Anse departments – two of the worst hit parts of the island – UNICEF helped screen 160,000 children for malnutrition in an ongoing programme, and organized a series of consultations with adolescents to enable them to express their concerns and ideas about risk and disaster management, with the results shared with local authorities.

Recalling the destruction and feeling of despair, Bernard, a fourteen-year-old child from Roche-à-Bateau (in southern Haiti) said: “After [Hurricane] Matthew passed, I thought it would be virtually impossible to continue living. All the trees were uprooted.”

“But people are beginning gradually to recover,” he added.

Hurricane Matthew (Category 4) made landfall in Haiti on 4 October 2016. At the time, the “very powerful and slow moving” storm was described as the worst storm the country had seen in decades. As it passed over the country, the storm claimed hundreds of lives and destroyed critical infrastructure, including key bridges, communication links, and water and sanitation systems.

Source: UNICEF [see in full screen]

**Vegetable oils lift food prices in September; cereal prices down on bumper crop prospects**

**5 October** – Global food prices rose slightly in September, as firmer prices of vegetable oils and dairy products offset declining prices for staple cereal grains, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said today.

A news release said that the FAO Food Price Index – tracking the monthly change in international market prices for five key commodity groups – averaged 178.4 points for the month of September, up 0.8 per cent from August and marking a 4.3 per cent increase from a year earlier.

Vegetable oil prices increased by 4.6 per cent, driven primarily by palm oil, although values for soy, rapeseed and sunflower oils also rose.

Dairy prices rose by 2.1 per cent from August, driven by butter and cheese prices at a time of supply constraints in Australia, New Zealand and the European Union. Meat prices were broadly unchanged.

Cereal prices declined by 1.0 per cent, as maize and wheat quotations fell in step with strong supply and harvest prospects. FAO expects the current growing season to yield record worldwide cereals output.

Sugar prices was unchanged for the month, but it was about 33 per cent below its year-ago level - a decline due to oversupply in world markets and a slowdown in demand.
Cereal inventories head for a new high

FAO updated its global cereal production forecast for 2017, raised to 2,612 million tonnes, or almost 7 million tonnes above the record set in 2016, according to the Cereal Supply and Demand Brief, also released today.

September's forecasts were raised on account of robust wheat production trends in Europe and Russia and expected maize outputs in China and the United States.

FAO now forecasts 750.1 million tonnes of wheat to be harvested in 2017 and 1,361 million tonnes of coarse grains, as well as 500.7 million tonnes of rice.

UN report reveals shocking levels of grave violations against children affected by conflicts

5 October – More than 15,500 children became victims of widespread violations – including shocking levels of killing and maiming, recruitment and use, and denial of humanitarian access – a new United Nations report has revealed.

According to the Secretary-General’s report on children and armed conflict, presented today to the Security Council, children from countries such as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen, suffered an unacceptable level of violations by parties to conflict – both government forces as well as non-State armed groups.

“The tragic fate of child victims of conflict cannot and must not leave us unmoved; a child killed, recruited as a soldier, injured in an attack or prevented from going school due to a conflict is already one too many,” the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba, said in a news release today.

Of the 20 country situations included in the report, at least 4,000 verified violations committed by Government forces and over 11,500 by non-State armed groups. Afghanistan recorded the highest number of verified child casualties since the UN started documenting civilian casualties in 2009, with 3,512 children killed or maimed last year – an increase of 24 per cent compared to the previous year.

The report also documents 851 verified cases (more than double the number in 2015) of children recruited and used in Syria, and 1,915 in Somalia in 2016. It also notes that in Yemen, at least 1,340 children were killed or maimed. In Syria that number stood at 1,299.

UN chief ‘appalled’ at scale of violations

Expressing shock over the scale of violations documented in the report, UN Secretary-General António Guterres reiterated his call on parties to conflict to abide by their responsibility to protect children, in accordance with their obligation under international humanitarian and human rights law.

“The goal of the report is not only to raise awareness of the violations of the rights of children but also to promote measures that can diminish the tragic plight of children in conflict,” read a statement attributable to the spokesperson for the Secretary-General.

“The Secretary-General is encouraged that several governments and non-state actors are now working with the United
Nations towards that objective. He hopes that more will follow,“ it added.

The statement further noted that the new Developments and Concerns section included in the report reflects this enhanced UN engagement, which should lead to reducing the suffering of children victims of armed conflict and increase their protection.

The violations covered in the report include recruitment or use of children; killing or maiming children; committing rape and other forms of sexual violence against children; engaging in attacks on schools and/or hospitals; and abducting children in situations of armed conflict.

The parties which committed these violations are listed in annexes to the report. The annexes also include parties that have put in place measures to improve protection of children during the reporting period and those who have not implemented adequate measures.

**Partnerships will play key role in future of work in Europe and Central Asia - UN labour agency**

**5 October** – The United Nations International Labour Organization’s 10th European Regional Meeting concluded today with a call for a future of work where partnerships play a key role in promoting dialogue, social progress and economic growth in the region.

Addressing the closing session of the Regional Meeting in Istanbul, Turkey, ILO Director-General Guy Ryder said that while there is a considerable amount of uncertainty as to the direction the world of work is heading in, determination and ambition must replace optimism and pessimism.

“We all have to come together with a feeling of determination and ambition,” he said, stressing that ambition means not accepting, not being passive spectators to processes of change, but instead having the determination to be the architects of change, “so that the future of work can be shaped according to what we want.”

The three-day gathering focused on the dynamic processes shaping the future of work in the region, which include rapid technological advances, globalization, demographic trends, large movements of refugees and migrants, as well as environmental challenges.

The so-named ‘Istanbul Initiative’ presents a policy framework to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks relating to the future of work in the region. It also calls on the ILO to provide tripartite constituents in member States with the advice and support they need to design these policies.

“The ILO has not been a passive spectator to change over the past century. It has been a historic architect of change and we have done a lot to make sure that that change has bent in the direction of social justice. That is what we must continue to do,” he concluded.

The ILO European Regional Meeting takes place every four years. It brings together government, employer and worker representatives from 51 European and Central Asian countries. The theme of this year’s meeting was What future for decent work in Europe and Central Asia: Opportunities and challenges.
Security Council re-authorizes operations to disrupt migrant smuggling off coast of Libya

5 October – The Security Council today extended by one year the authorization for Member States to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya that they have reasonable grounds to suspect are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking.

Unanimously adopting a resolution, the 15-member body condemned all acts of migrant smuggling and human trafficking into, through and from the Libyan territory and off the coast of Libya, which further undermine the process of stabilization of Libya and endanger the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

The Council underscored that the resolution is intended to disrupt the organized criminal enterprises, but not to undermine the human rights of individuals or prevent them from seeking protection under international human rights law and international refugee law.

The Council reiterated its calls on Member States, acting nationally or through regional organizations, to cooperate with the Government of National Accord and with each other to assist Libya, upon request, in building needed capacity to secure its borders and prevent, investigate and prosecute acts of smuggling of migrants and human trafficking through its territory and in its territorial sea.