

## Burundian authorities 'shut doors' to engagement, cooperation – Security Council told

9 March 2017 – Nearly two years after the political impasse started in Burundi, national authorities are reducing their cooperation with the United Nations system which risks undermining efforts to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis and cutting assistance to a population in need, the Security Council was told today.

Presenting the first Secretary-General's report on the situation in Burundi, the Special Adviser on the topic noted that "the report is factual and speaks for itself."

Jamal Benomar told the Council the UN has tried to constructively engage with the Government and support the people of Burundi in their search for peace and stability, to no avail.

"We have engaged quickly, refrained from public criticism and encouraged modest, small steps to build confidence with the parties. Despite this modelled approach, the doors to engagement and cooperation have been largely shut by the authorities," Mr. Benomar said.

In the past several months, the Government has decided to withdraw from the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, suspend cooperation and collaboration with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and refused cooperation with the commission of inquiry mandated by the Human Rights Council.

The Government has also avoided signing a document with the African Union that would allow human rights observers and military experts to be deployed, to aid Burundians.

These actions were taken as "human rights violations and abuses continue to be reported on a worrying scale," according to the report.

In addition, at the end of February, President Pierre Nkurunziza suggested that he might seek a change to the Constitution allowing him to seek a fourth term in office. The move, as written in the report, "has the potential to plunge the country into an even deeper crisis."

Referring to the report, Mr. Benomar called on the Burundian Government "to fulfil its moral obligation and political responsibility to return the country to a path of peace."

He noted that most Burundians do not want to continue on the track of "international isolationism, violence and repression."

The UN envoy urged the international community "guided by the Security

Council to do its part to support those who seek a peaceful resolution of this crisis, and underscored the UN's continued commitment to helping the Burundian people.

The Security Council also heard by video-conference from former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa, who is facilitating discussions between the Government and the opposition in accordance with the Arusha Agreement. Mr. Benomar stressed in his statement that Mr. Mkapa has the UN's full support in his work.

Also speaking to the Council today was Jurg Lauber, the Chair of the Burundi Configuration of the UN Peacebuilding Commission. Mr. Lauber will visit Burundi at the end of this month to get first-hand impression of the situation and meet with the Government, opposition and civil society representatives.

In his statement, Mr. Lauber echoed Mr. Benomar's call to the international community to remain active in Burundi: "Abandoning Burundi now would mean wasting past efforts and putting the country and its people at risk of recurring conflict."

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## [New UN supply chain system to slash delays, save lives in large-scale health crises](#)

9 March 2017 – New UN supply chain system to slash delays, save lives in large-scale health crises

In collaboration with partners and as a part of a global supply chain network, the United Nations emergency food relief agency has set about developing the first-ever information platform to better manage supply chains and efficiently match deliveries with demand in responding to large-scale health emergencies such as pandemic outbreaks.

"The creation of this new platform is a prime example of the amazing endeavours that are possible when the public and private sectors work together," said Ertharin Cousin, Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme (WFP) in a news release announcing the undertaking.

The new system will bring together supply chain and logistics information and enable end-to-end tracking of pandemic response items such as protective clothing and medical equipment within a country facing an outbreak, thereby helping ensure quick and appropriate delivery of supplies to people in need.

It will also provide analysis on supply inefficiencies, promote timeliness

and cost efficiency in continuous improvement to the supply chain network.

According to WFP, the system will help overcome challenges witnessed in the response to the West Africa Ebola outbreak, such as severe warehousing and distribution capacity constraints, limited visibility of the overall supply and demand of critical items, access constraints caused by border closures, and a lack of public-private sector coordination.

Furthermore, learning lessons from the Ebola outbreak, the UN as well as Government, academic and private institutions established the Global Pandemic Supply Chain Network and have been working together in unprecedented fashion to develop a framework for improving pandemic preparedness and response.

The partnership also complements other efforts that are underway to strengthen national and international systems that prevent and manage future pandemics.

“In order to achieve any one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, we must all do our part, lending our unique expertise and experiences to innovating solutions to global problems,” added Ms. Cousin, hailing the work being done by the Network.

The end-to-end supply chain information system is being developed in collaboration between WFP and the NEC Corporation, a Japanese multinational provider of information technology services and products. The Japanese Government has provided financial support that will be used as seed funding for the new platform.

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## [UN chief Guterres unveils proposals to end ‘scourge’ of sexual exploitation and abuse](#)

9 March 2017 – Underscoring that the United Nations should not be, in any way, associated with the vile and vicious crimes of rape, sexual violence, exploitation and abuse, Secretary-General António Guterres has outlined a new victim-centred approach to prevent and respond to such abuses committed by those serving under the UN flag.

“Such acts of cruelty should never take place. Certainly no person serving with the United Nations in any capacity should be associated with such vile and vicious crimes,” said Mr. Guterres in a message announcing his report released today on ‘Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: A New Approach.’

“Let us declare in one voice: We will not tolerate anyone committing or

condoning sexual exploitation and abuse. We will not let anyone cover up these crimes with the UN flag,&#8221 he added.

The Secretary-General's report, *Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse: a new approach*, outlines a victim-centred strategy that is rooted in transparency, accountability and ensuring justice.

Noting that exploitation is also deeply rooted in gender inequality and discrimination, Mr. Guterres said that promoting gender equality throughout the UN system, including its missions and peacekeeping forces, would help advance parity and at the same time decrease incidents of abuse.

&#8220Let us do so in the name of all who look to the UN for life-saving protection and support &#8211 and on behalf of the tens of thousands of UN personnel around the world who deliver that assistance with courage and commitment to the highest ideals,&#8221 he stressed.

**VIDEO:** A New Approach – How the United Nations is responding to sexual exploitation and abuse

#### ***Four-track, victim-centred approach***

Based on four tracks, the approach documented in the report focuses on the rights and dignity of victims; ending impunity for those guilty of crimes and abuses; drawing on the wisdom and guidance of all those who have been affected, civil society, local communities and others to strengthen and improve UN's efforts; and to raise awareness and share best practices to end the vicious scourge.

The report also emphasizes the need to engage with UN Member States and calls for a high-level meeting on sexual exploitation and abuses in 2017 on the margins of the general debate of the 72nd session of the General Assembly.

The report further notes that the UN chief would seek Member States support to establish a system-wide consolidated confidential repository of case information to be placed under the supervision of the Special Coordinator on Improving UN Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

It also includes a detailed list of actions and recommendations, along with the relevant UN entity that would be responsible for consultation with relevant stakeholders, as well as provides data on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse across the UN system and by non-UN international forces authorized by a Security Council mandate, covering the period 1 January to 31 December 2016.

#### ***Peacekeeping initiatives in action*** Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

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## Yemen: UNICEF vaccination campaign reaches 5 million children

9 March 2017 – Amid escalating violence, the United Nations humanitarian agency for children and its partners have completed the first round of a nationwide door-to-door vaccination campaign reaching 5 million children under the age of five with oral polio vaccine and vitamin A supplementation.

“In the last two years, more children have died from preventable diseases than those killed in the violence,” said Meritxell Relaño, the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Representative in Yemen, in a press release. “This is why vaccination campaigns are so crucial to save the lives of Yemen’s children and to secure their future.”

In the first campaign of its kind this year, 40,000 vaccinators spread across Yemen to provide children with polio vaccine and vitamin A supplements. Mobile health teams have reached children wherever they are, including in places where access to health services has been cut off by the fighting. Health workers have shown heroic resolve in crossing frontlines, mountains and valleys to vaccinate children.

UNICEF says that the campaign comes at a critical time. Children in Yemen are living on the brink of famine and widespread malnutrition has drastically increased their risk of disease. More than half of Yemen’s medical facilities are no longer functional and the health system is on the verge of collapse.

UNICEF is scaling up its humanitarian response, including support for the treatment of 323,000 children against severe acute malnutrition, and the provision of basic healthcare services to one million children and over half a million pregnant and breastfeeding mothers.

“Children are dying because the conflict is preventing them from getting the health care and nutrition they urgently need. Their immune systems are weak from months of hunger,” said Dr. Relaño, calling on all parties to the conflict to find a political solution to this crisis.

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## International Women’s Day: Overcome prejudice, support engagement and

# **promote women's empowerment**

8 March 2017 – In his message on International Women's Day, Secretary-General António Guterres stressed that while women's rights are human rights, in these troubled times, the rights of women and girls are being reduced, restricted and reversed.

He asserted that women's legal rights, which have never been equal to that of men's on any continent, are being eroded further. Women's rights over their own bodies are questioned and undermined and they are routinely targeted for intimidation and harassment, including in cyberspace. Mr. Guterres underscored that in the worst cases, extremists and terrorists build their ideologies around the subjugation of women and girls and single them out for sexual and gender-based violence, forced marriage and virtual enslavement.

He emphasized that only by empowering women and girls can their rights be protected and their full potential be ensured.

## **Imbalances**



A woman in Sudan holds a poster promoting the collective abandonment of female genital mutilation. Photo: UNICEF/UNI73778/Holt

Historic imbalances in power relations between men and women, exacerbated by growing inequalities within and between societies and countries, are leading to greater discrimination against women and girls.



Transparent. Photo: Belinda Mason, Silent Tears

Denying the rights of women and girls is not only wrong in itself; it has a serious social and economic impact that holds us all back.

## **Women benefit all**



Women on the job at a workshop in the Dominican Republic. Photo: UNDP Dominican Republic

Gender equality has a transformative effect that is essential to fully functioning communities, societies and economies.



Abissdoun Charlotte, 26, with her 7-week-old triplets, Morouta, Nasifaté and Nasif, is receiving postnatal and newborn care at the Cooperative Clinic of

Sikecoudji, in Cotonou, Benin. Photo: UNFPA/Ollivier Girard

Women's access to education and health services has benefits for their families and communities that extend to future generations. An extra year in school can add up to 25 per cent to a girl's future income.



Women and technology – the attitude gap. Photo: UN Women/Gaganjit Singh

When women participate fully in the labour force, it creates opportunities and generates growth. Closing the gender gap in employment could add \$12 trillion to global GDP by 2025.



Students of Computer Sciences at Khowaja Institute of Information Technology (KIIT) in Hyderabad, Pakistan learn computing skills. Photo: Visual News Associates/World Bank

Increasing the proportion of women in public institutions makes them more representative, increases innovation, improves decision-making and benefits whole societies.



Women in Pakistan build their knowledge and skills at an FAO-supported rural livelihoods school. Photo: FAO/Farook Naeem

Gender equality is central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the global plan agreed by leaders of all countries to meet the challenges we face. Sustainable Development Goal 5 calls specifically for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and this is central to the achievement of all the 17 SDGs.