

Central African Republic: Nearly 700 people seeking refuge near UN base relocated

10 November 2017 – This week the United Nations migration agency completed the relocation of 698 internally displaced households from an impromptu camp that formed around the UN peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic (CAR) following attacks in Kaga Bandoro on 12 October 2016.

Over 20,000 people settled around the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic ([MINUSCA](#)) base after ex-Séléka members attacked an internally displaced person (IDP) camp in Evêché, the Prefect's office and the UN mission's camp.

"Consultation sessions with the households allowed us to ensure that their particular [needs are met](#) and they are fully informed and consulted all along the process," said [IOM](#) CAR Chief of Mission Jean-François Aguilera, referring to numerous sessions held with camp residents in partnership with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)).

Following August's visit of the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Ministry of Humanitarian Actions of Kaga Bandoro, it was recommended that all IDPs be urgently relocated to safe nearby locations.

The relocation of the first bloc of the provisional camp ran from 17 to 25 October and involved 312 households, 15 of which returned to their old neighbourhood.

The relocation of 'Bloc Nine,' which was near a fuel depot – exposing residents to health risks – began on 26 October and finished on 3 November. It included a total of 319 households, with one returning to its old neighbourhood.

From 4 to 7 November, 67 households close to 'Bloc One' were also relocated. Bloc One had complicated the landing and take-off of planes, forcing humanitarian aviation operators to suspend flights – gravely affecting humanitarian efforts by preventing programme implementations and medical evacuations.

"The dangerous position of Blocs One and Nine made it very clear to IOM and CAR's humanitarian team that everyone must be urgently relocated to a safer location," Mr. Aguilera said.

IOM assisted the 682 relocated households in transporting all their belongings, including huts and hangars, to safe new locations. They also received non-food item kits and \$44 per household, which totalled \$30,103. The 16 returning households were provided with return kits and assisted in

rehabilitating their homes and transporting their belongings.

CAR is experiencing a resurgence of violence and faces the risk of repeating the devastating crisis that beset the country four years ago. The number of both IDPs and refugees in neighbouring countries have dramatically increased over the past few months.

[UN, partners building roads to reach Rohingya refugees camped in muddy, flood-prone terrain](#)

10 November 2017 – The United Nations migration agency and its partners are rushing to build roads in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar to improve humanitarian access to hilly terrain, where hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees have settled in makeshift camps.

The sites where the Rohingyas have settled are desperately overcrowded and located on [inhospitable terrain](#) with insufficient drainage and little or no road access, the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) said Friday.

The few roads that exist are impossibly congested, making it extremely difficult to reach refugees with the support and services they need.

Since 25 August, an estimated 613,000 Rohingya refugees have arrived in Cox's Bazar, fleeing violence in Myanmar. The total refugee population in the area is now over 826,000.

IOM is responsible for coordinating site management at a site now home to an estimated 423,000 refugees.

IOM officials said that people hike for hours under the scorching sun, often carrying heavy loads from distribution points, to reach their shelters. Steep hills and dangerous paths mean that children, the elderly and people with disabilities are often unable to move around the site.

In October, IOM built some 850 metres of road into Balukhali to enable humanitarian agencies to deliver lifesaving assistance to at least 50,000 refugees.

"The road has vastly improved access for both refugees and humanitarian actors," said IOM Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Project Officer Stephen Waswa Otieno.

"Contractors can now deliver materials inside the site, which has allowed us to build new, essential infrastructure. For example, one of our partners has

just built a new distribution centre, bringing aid much closer to the families who need it," he notes.

IOM is currently working on six other projects, providing more access from main roads outside the sites, and inside the sites. It is also building five bridges, which will allow people and vehicles to cross canals and streams in different areas of the sites.

The agency is also working to mitigate the threat of landslides on the newly de-forested land where many of the shelters perch on steep hillsides.

IOM teams have been distributing bags that the refugees can fill with soil and use to create retaining walls and steps. These can also be used to raise shelters off mud floors, helping to keep them dry, especially when flash floods occur.

Immunizing new arrivals against measles

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) and the UN Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) are [stepping up immunization efforts](#) in overcrowded camps and makeshift shelters close to the border with Myanmar in response to an increase in the number of suspected measles cases among the newly arrived Rohingya and their host communities.

"Children are especially at risk from outbreaks of measles and other communicable diseases that result from the crowded living conditions, malnutrition and severe lack of water and sanitation in the camps and other sites," said Edouard Beigbeder, UNICEF Bangladesh Representative.

"To halt any wider outbreak, it's essential that coordinated efforts begin immediately to protect as many children as possible."

The UN agencies and its partners will administer measles and rubella vaccine to nearly 360,000 people in the age group of six months to 15 years among the new Rohingya arrivals in Cox's Bazar and their host communities.

As of 4 November, one death and 412 suspected cases of measles have been reported among the vulnerable populations living in Cox's Bazar.

"As part of stepped up vaccination efforts, 43 fixed health facility sites, 56 outreach vaccination teams and vaccination teams at main border entry points will administer MR vaccine to population aged six months to 15 years," said WHO Representative to Bangladesh N Paranietharan.

Bonn: New initiatives in energy, water

and agriculture sectors announced at UN Climate Conference

10 November 2017 – New commitments and initiatives in energy, water and agriculture sectors were announced on Friday, at the United Nations Climate Conference ([COP23](#)) in Bonn, Germany, under the auspices of the [Marrakech Partnership](#) for Global Climate Action to help implement the [Paris Agreement](#).

The Marrakech Partnership aims at catalyzing greater climate action by public and private stakeholders as the Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015, calls on countries to combat climate change by limiting the rise of global temperature below 2 degrees Celsius and strive not to exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Cleaner energy development

In Bonn, new initiatives were announced to push forward the transition to renewable energy and to show that more ambitious clean energy development can quickly become a bigger part of national climate plans submitted under the Paris Agreement.

“With the price of renewable and storage technologies tumbling, and greater understanding on how to set the policy table for a cleaner energy mix and more integrated energy planning, the question before decision makers is, why wait?” said Rachel Kyte, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and CEO, Sustainable Energy for All ([SE4All](#)).

Among key announcements, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) released a new report, *Untapped Potential for Climate Action: Renewable Energy in Nationally Determined Contributions*, which suggests there is substantial scope for countries to cost-effectively increase renewable energy.

The Climate Group also announced new members to its recently launched EV100 campaign, a major new global electric transport initiative designed to make electric vehicles “the new normal.” And 13 countries with the International Energy Agency (IEA) announced this week the launch of a new multi-year, 30 million euros plan to support clean energy transitions around the world.

Investing faster and further in agricultural climate action

Regarding agriculture, leaders and experts said that investing faster and further in agricultural climate action and to support the sustainable livelihoods of small-scale farmers will unlock much greater potential to curb emissions and protect people against climate change.

“Countries now have the opportunity to transform their agricultural sectors to achieve food security for all through sustainable agriculture and strategies that boost resource-use efficiency, conserve and restore

biodiversity and natural resources, and combat the impacts of climate change,” said René Castro, Assistant-Director General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)).

In the livestock sector, for example, FAO estimates that emissions could be readily reduced by about 30 percent with the adoption of best practices.

FAO released a new [Sourcebook on Climate-Smart Agriculture](#). It recommends scaling up public and private climate finance flows to agriculture; spurring public-private partnerships; strengthening a multi-sector and multi-stakeholder dialogue; investing in knowledge and information; and building capacity to address barriers to implement climate action.

Managing healthy water supplies



Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, President of the organization Women for Water Partnership, at the UN Climate Conference (COP 23) in Bonn, Germany. Photo: UN News/Jerome Bernard

In the water sector, the majority of national climate plans with an adaptation component prioritize action on water, yet financing would need to triple to \$295 billion per year to meet such targets, said experts on Friday.

“Sustainable use of water for multiple purposes must remain a way of life and needs to be at the center of building resilient cities and human settlements and ensuring food security in a climate change context,” said Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, President of the Women for Water Partnership.

The international water community co-signed on Friday what it called a “nature based solution declaration” to encourage the use of natural systems in managing healthy water supplies. Around 40 per cent of the world's population will face water shortages by 2050, accelerating migration and triggering conflict, while some regions could lose up to six per cent of their economic output, unless it is better managed.

“Involving both women and men in decision making and integrated water resources initiatives leads to better sustainability, governance and efficiency”, said Ms. Verhoef-Cohen.

[Unhealthy diets could undo progress on food security in Asia-Pacific, warns](#)

UN report

10 November 2017 – Urgent action is needed to tackle malnutrition and promote consumption of healthier foods in the Asia-Pacific region – home to most of the world's undernourished people – the United Nations food security agency said Friday.

“Good nutrition depends on [raising awareness about healthy foods and choices](#), as well as efficient, affordable and sustainable systems to deliver that food,” said Kundhavi Kadiresan, the head of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) in the Asia-Pacific region, announcing findings from the agency's regional report on food security and nutrition.

“If we are to reach the Sustainable Development Goal of [ending hunger] in the region, we must invest to improve our food systems and pool our knowledge and resources to meet our current food and nutrition challenges head on.”

The FAO report, [2017 Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition](#) has revealed that while food security has improved for millions of people in Asia and the Pacific, hunger and malnutrition appear to be rising in some areas, leaving roughly half-a-billion people undernourished.

The situation is particularly dire for children below five, with one in four children suffering from stunting – impaired growth and development, often as a result of poor nutrition.

At the same time, report also found that obesity is on the rise, with “significant increases” in the prevalence of overweight children over the past 15 years, especially in South Asia (from three per cent to seven per cent) and Oceania (five per cent to nearly 10 per cent).

The report was released Friday at a regional symposium on sustainable food systems in Bangkok, the capital of Thailand.

Organized by FAO, in collaboration with the World Food Programme ([WFP](#)), World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), UN Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) and the World Bank, the symposium focuses on policies that can improve food systems, and promote better nutrition and healthier diets.

The event was opened by the FAO Special Goodwill Ambassador for Zero Hunger in the region, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand, who urged participants to work together to find solutions.

“The world has committed to zero hunger and improving nutrition as a key outcome of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development. We must look at improving our current systems of production and patterns of consumption, and set a course of action,” she said.

The symposium is a component of the UN [Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025](#), which aims to increase investments and actions to improve people's diets and nutrition.

Science and technology can provide solutions to key sustainable development challenges

10 November 2017 – Integrated science is essential to strengthen water management, sustainably use the oceans and tackle climate change, the head of the United Nations cultural agency said on World Science Day for Peace and Development.

[Sciences, Technology and Innovation \(STI\) provide key answers](#) to build peace and bolster sustainable development,” said Irina Bokova, Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) in her message on the [World Day](#).

“We need more integrated science to strengthen water management, to ensure the sustainable use of the ocean, to protect ecosystems and biodiversity, to tackle climate change and disasters, to foster innovation,” she added.

Ms. Bokova underscored that STI stand at the heart of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change, pointing out that UNESCO has developed a unique approach to promote global scientific cooperation while encouraging local actions, with the dual focus of gender equality and Africa.

“In this spirit, UNESCO launched in 2017 a ground-breaking [international symposium and policy forum](#) on girls' education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), to challenge the gender inequalities in [those fields],” she stated.

Today, as the complexity of the world's issues goes beyond the framework of a single discipline, UNESCO has made “trans-disciplinarity” the cornerstone of its work for sustainability – building networks with multiple stakeholders, such as museums, universities, private and public actors, governments and non-governmental organizations.

This year's theme, '[Science for global understanding](#),' encompasses UNESCO's approach to develop scientific cooperation between and within societies, combining global sustainability and local actions and knowledge.

“There is today an urgent need to promote South-South and North-South-South cooperation to foster STI for sustainable development and to encourage mutual understanding and peace,” she continued. “In this context, science diplomacy will be a powerful instrument for the use of science as a foundation for a culture of cooperation.”

Ms. Bokova stressed that investment in science education would be equally crucial, saying: "We need to grant equal access to enrolment in sciences [to] all persons, starting at an early age, with a strong focus on girls."

In that spirit, the UNESCO chief called on all stakeholders, well beyond scientific circles, to mobilize in order to release the full potential of sciences for development and peace.

Under UNESCO auspices, the first World Science Day for Peace and Development was celebrated worldwide on 10 November 2002.