

European Union and UN launch new initiative to eliminate gender violence

20 September 2017 – The European Union and the United Nations today launched a joint initiative to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, one of the most widespread and devastating human rights violations across the globe.

“It is a harsh but true reality – one in three women will face violence throughout their lifetime,” UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres [said](#) at the launch event, held on the margins of the General Assembly’s high-level annual debate.

“Violence against women and girls devastates lives, and causes pain across generations,” he added.

The [EU-UN Spotlight Initiative](#) is supported by a multi-stakeholder trust fund, with the EU as its main contributor in the order of half a billion Euro, which is open to other donors.

“The European Union is committed to combatting all forms of violence against women and girls, as they undermine our core fundamental rights and values, such as dignity, access to justice and gender equality,” EU High Representative Federica Mogherini told the event.

“We need first to ensure that we keep women and girls safe, in order to empower them to deploy their full potential.”

VIDEO: Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls.

Over the next few years, comprehensive programmes will be implemented to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, such as sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices; trafficking and economic exploitation; femicide; and domestic and family violence.

Core areas of intervention will include strengthening legislative frameworks, policies and institutions, preventive measures, access to services and improving data gathering in Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Pacific and the Caribbean.

Consistent with the principles of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, the initiative will apply a rights-based approach, and give particular attention to the most marginalised women and girls in order to ‘leave no-one behind.’

The Spotlight Initiative is “truly historic,” said Mr. Guterres. “When we

shine a spotlight on the empowerment of the world's women and girls, everyone's future is brighter."

World leaders gathered at UN commit to boosting investment in education

20 September 2017 – World leaders today pledged to tackle the education crisis that is holding back millions of children and threatening economic development, at a high-level event at United Nations Headquarters in New York aimed at securing finance for this critical goal.

"Financing education is indeed the best investment we can make for a better world and a better future," stressed UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres in his [remarks](#) to the event, titled "Financing the Future: Education 2030," held on the margins of the General Assembly's annual debate.

"I started as a teacher. I saw for myself decades ago in the schools and slums of Lisbon why education is a basic human right, a transformational force for poverty eradication, an engine for sustainability, and a force for peace," he said.

More than 260 million children, adolescents and youth are out of school. Despite some progress in achieving gender equality in the world's poorest countries, far more girls than boys still do not have access to a quality education, according to a news release.

Also addressing the event was UN Messenger of Peace Malala Yousafzai, who said girls in many parts of the world are pushing back against poverty, war and child marriage to go to school.

"We have big goals, but we will not reach any of them unless we educate girls," she said, referring to the Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by UN Member States in 2015.

The event – co-organized by governments, the private sector, civil society and UN agencies – was held to boost political commitment and investment in quality early-childhood, primary and secondary education.

"Delivering an education to all – and not just some children – is the civil rights struggle of our time," said Gordon Brown, the UN Special Envoy for Global Education.

"Confronted by the largest refugee crisis since the close of the Second World War, and with education receiving less than 2 per cent of humanitarian aid, it is vital we marshal the funds to provide an education for all children – especially those left out and left behind: refugee children," he added.

International community must remain united to address global challenges, stresses Italian leader

20 September 2017 – Stressing that terrorism and violent extremism continue to cause much suffering around the globe, Paolo Gentiloni, the President of the Council of Ministers of Italy, called for broad collaboration among countries as well as regional and global organizations to successfully tackle the threat.

In particular, he underscored the need to act against all the dimensions employed by terrorist groups, including the Internet and social media, as well as financing of terrorist activities.

In his address to the 72nd general debate at the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. Gentiloni also highlighted Italy's close involvement in assisting crisis-struck countries around the world, and said that addressing such distressing situations, such as many conflicts across Africa, required dialogue and reconciliation.

Turning to the heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula due to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) nuclear weapons development programme, he underlined that unity in the international community and determination in its response is vital.

"Full implementation of the pertinent Security Council resolutions [...] is crucial [...] North Korea must immediately end its missile and nuclear proliferation and all provocative actions," he said.

He also noted the progress made by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – under which Iran reaffirmed that it would not seek, develop or acquire nuclear weapons – and said that it remains a "success story in the framework of global efforts to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction."

Further in his remarks, the Italian leader stressed the importance of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and expressed his country's pledge to do its part to ensure its strong implementation.

Mr. Gentiloni also expressed his nation's support for the reform plans proposed by [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres as well as his focus on empowerment of women and girls, and gender equality.

[Full statement available here](#)

Addressing Assembly, Portugal highlights need for UN reform, conflict prevention measures

20 September 2017 – Portugal's Prime Minister António Luis Santos da Costa took the podium of the General Assembly to reiterate his country's support of the Secretary-General's agenda, which includes boosting conflict prevention activities and creating a stronger more adaptable world Organization.

"Your priorities, Mr. Secretary General, are the same as ours: an Organization that is stronger, offers greater solidarity and is capable of preventing conflicts, alleviating human suffering and promoting peace and prosperity," the Minister said, also mentioning the importance of having a "more transparent, more effective and more adaptable" UN.

As for organizational reform, he said consolidating a culture of conflict prevention requires action across the board and an integrated vision of the three pillars of the UN system –peace, human rights and sustainable development – as well as closer institutional cooperation between the organs of the Charter, namely the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Mr. Santos Costa said the Security Council must be reformed to ensure a better representation of today's world. "The African continent cannot be denied a permanent presence, and Brazil and India are also two inescapable examples," he added in his address to the Assembly's annual general debate.

During his speech, he positioned Portugal as a multilateral country contributing to the battle against terrorism, supporting the protection of migrants and refugees, and makes participation in peacekeeping operations one of the clearest priorities of its foreign policy.

"Multilateralism is the only framework for the defense of the common good of humanity and the collective promotion of peace, security and development. In no way does it diminish the sovereignty of each nation, nor the capacity for decision of their people and institutions," he told world leaders.

[Full statement available here](#)

Japan's Abe, at UN General Assembly,

[calls for 'action now' on DPRK nuclear programme](#)

20 September 2017 – Saying that “all options are on the table,” Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe today took the podium of the United Nations General Assembly to call on world leaders to provide the necessary action now to curb the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s (DPRK) nuclear and missile programmes.

“We consistently support the stance of the United States: that ‘all options are on the table’,” he told the Assembly’s 72nd annual general debate, voicing appreciation for the unanimous adoption on 11 September of the latest and most stringent of many UN Security Council resolutions, further intensifying sanctions against the DPRK.

“But I must make an appeal to you. North Korea has already demonstrated its disregard of the resolutions by launching yet another missile. We must prevent the goods, funds, people, and technology necessary for nuclear and missile development from heading to North Korea,” he stressed.

“What is necessary is action. Whether or not we can put an end to the provocations by North Korea is dependent upon the solidarity of the international community. There is not much time left. The resolution is nothing more than the beginning,” he stated.

Mr. Abe went through a litany of two decades of failed dialogue with the DPRK, which during all that time used the talks as the best means for deception and buying time. “We must make North Korea abandon all nuclear and ballistic missile programs in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner,” he said. “What is needed to do that is not dialogue, but pressure.”

[Full statement available here](#)