

In Jordan, UN chief urges region's leaders to shape 'new Arab world' able to address differences through cooperation

29 March 2017 – Addressing the League of Arab States Summit in Jordan today, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted the importance of unity among the countries in the region to confront the challenges it is facing.

“Divisions in the Arab world have opened the door to foreign intervention and manipulation, breeding instability, sectarian strife and terrorism,” said Mr. Guterres.

“At this time of transition and upheaval, unity will be critical,” he said, emphasizing: “I appeal to your leadership in shaping a new Arab world able to address and solve, by itself, differences through dialogue and cooperation.”

In his remarks, the Secretary-General also underscored the importance of partnership between the UN and the Arab League and said that it was his responsibility to use his good offices, in cooperation with Member States, as an added dimension for conflict resolution.

“It is time to end the fighting in Syria,” he said, expressing hope that the Astana process can achieve an effective ceasefire.

“By now it should be clear to all involved that while fighting terrorism is essential, any success will prove ephemeral without a political solution that allows the Syrian people to freely decide their own fate,” he added, underlining the need, also, to support Syrian refugees in their hour of need.

Further, welcoming the progress in retaking territories held by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), the UN chief expressed hope that the violence in Yemen and Libya can be resolved soon.

Turning to the peace process in the Middle East, Mr. Guterres underscored that the two-state solution is the only path to ensure that Palestinians and Israelis can realize their national aspirations and live in peace, security and dignity.

“There is no Plan B,” he stated.

Concluding in his address, the Secretary-General highlighted the importance of addressing youth unemployment as well as empowerment of women – both as a matter of human rights as well as a spur to human development.

Let us recognize the power and responsibility that lies in our hands to improve the lives of the people we serve.

Medicines should help, not harm, says UN health agency launching global patient safety 'challenge'

29 March 2017 – Medicines should help, not harm, says UN health agency launching new global patient safety 'challenge'

Underlining that medicines should fulfil their real purpose – help people, not harm them – the United Nations health agency today launched a world-wide 'Challenge' that seeks to reduce severe, avoidable medication-associated damage across the globe by half over the next five years.

We all expect to be helped, not harmed, when we take medication, said the Director-General of the UN World Health Organization (WHO), Margaret Chan, announcing the new campaign *Global Patient Safety Challenge on Medication Safety*.

Apart from the human cost, medication errors place an enormous and unnecessary strain on health budgets. Preventing errors saves money and saves lives.

According to estimates, the global cost associated with medication errors has been estimated at \$42 billion annually or almost 1 per cent of total global health expenditure. In terms of impact on the health of people, for instance in the United States, medication errors cause at least one death every day and injure approximately 1.3 million people annually.

While low- and middle-income countries are estimated to have similar rates of medication-related adverse events to high-income countries, the impact is about twice as much in terms of the number of years of healthy life lost.

Furthermore, many countries lack good data, something that the new initiative will attempt to address.

The initiative will also improve the way medicines are prescribed, distributed and consumed, and increase awareness among patients about the risks associated with the improper use of medication.

It also urges countries to take early priority action to address key factors, including medicines with a high risk of harm if used improperly, patients who take multiple medications for different diseases and conditions, and patients

going through transitions of care, in order to reduce medication errors and harm to patients.

The actions in the Challenge will focus on four areas: patients and the public, health care professionals, medicines as products, and systems and practices of medication.

The initiative also aims to make improvements in each stage of the medication use process including prescribing, dispensing, administering, monitoring and use and the UN health agency will disseminate guidance, and develop strategies, plans and tools to ensure that the medication process has the safety of patients at its core, in all health care facilities.

“Over the years, I have spoken to many people who have lost loved ones to medication-related errors,” said Sir Liam Donaldson, the WHO Envoy for Patient Safety. “Their stories, their quiet dignity and their acceptance of situations that should never have arisen have moved me deeply. It is to the memories of all those who have died due to incidents of unsafe care that this Challenge should be dedicated.”

This is WHO’s third global patient safety initiative, following the Clean Care is Safe Care challenge on hand hygiene in 2005 and the Safe Surgery Saves Lives challenge in 2008.

[In special address, Chile’s President spotlights efficacy of UN Human Rights Council](#)

29 March 2017 – Addressing a special meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Council, Chilean President today stressed the importance of multilateralism and the work of the 47-member body.

“I raise my voice in support of the efficacy of the United Nations and the Human Rights Council,” said Michelle Bachelet, stressing the need for the UN to increase a regular budget allocation to the human rights agenda from the current three per cent.

“In my opinion, it is important to preserve the essence of the Council and to prevent it from being used for alternative purposes by any one State. We are all responsible for ensuring that the international system works as it is supposed to,” she said.

“One fundamental element is the principle of adherence to international law, which includes respect for treaties and preventing the misuse of mechanisms or institutions designed to resolve differences,” she added.

Chile has resisted dictatorship and has taken charge of the burdensome legacy of brutal human rights violations, she said.

Among other things, Chile has made a commitment to head an initiative against torture to prevent this crime from occurring and promote ratification of international instruments related to the issue, said Ms. Bachelet.

After having received numerous recommendations, Chile in November 2016 modified the Penal Code that defined the crime of torture according to three categories: physical, psychological and sexual violence.

The Government is also working on efforts to present a bill that would create a national preventative mechanism against torture within the national human rights institution.

In his video message, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, said that Chile has long been a strong human rights advocate at the international stage.

Chile has made great strides since the end of the dictatorship, but too many families still do not know the truth about what happened to their loved ones.

The right to truth for victims of gross human rights violations is inalienable. Any potential measure of pardon or early release for perpetrators must be carefully considered in light of human rights law, he said.

UN chief confirms the remains found in DRC those of the two missing experts

29 March 2017 – United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has confirmed the deaths of Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalan, two members of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo who had been missing since 12 March, and vowed that the Organization would do everything possible to ensure that justice is done.

In a statement late yesterday, the UN chief expressed his deepest condolences to the families, loved ones and colleagues of Mr. Sharp (United States) and Ms. Catalan (Sweden) and said that the Organization will honour their memory by continuing to support the work of the Group of Experts and the whole UN family in the DRC.

Michael and Zaida lost their lives seeking to understand the causes of conflict and insecurity in the DRC in order to help bring peace to the country and its people, said Mr. Guterres.

He also called on the national authorities to continue to search for the four Congolese nationals who were accompanying the experts and said that the UN would cooperate with them in the continuing search.

Also in the statement, the Secretary General underscored that the UN will conduct an inquiry into the deaths.

“In case of criminal acts, the UN will do everything possible to ensure that justice is done,” he stressed.

Mr. Guterres also expressed hope that the cause of their deaths will be determined following a thorough examination and that the Congolese authorities will conduct a full investigation into the incident.

On Monday, peacekeepers from the UN Mission in the country (MONUSCO) discovered the two experts’ remains outside the city of Kananga in the DRC’s Kasai-Central province.

The Group of Experts on the DRC has been supporting the work of a Committee established by the Security Council to oversee sanctions measures, including arms embargo, travel ban and assets freeze imposed upon armed groups in the country.

DR Congo: UN and regional partners express concern about Kasai unrest

28 March 2017 – The United Nations and regional partner organizations today expressed deep concern about the situation in the central Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) where at least two United Nations experts disappeared two weeks ago and dozens of police officers were reportedly found dead.

The UN, the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU) and the International Organization of La Francophonie (IOF) today released a joint statement warning that the level of violence and reported human rights violations necessitate “an urgent response from the country’s political leaders.”

The statement calls on defence and security forces to exercise restraint in the efforts to restore order, and encourages the recently-initiated dialogue between the Government and the Kamuina Nsapu militia.

The UN, AU, EU and IOF also reiterated their call for a credible investigation into the human rights violation and assurances that the perpetrators are held to account.

In the joint statement, the organizations underscored their support for the

31 December 2016 political agreement.

The agreement – facilitated by Conférence Episcopale Nationale du Congo (CENCO) mediators, and reached in DRC's capital, Kinshasa, on 31 December 2016 – represents a significant step towards a peacefully managed transition consistent with the democratic principles enshrined in the country's Constitution.