

## Amid global paradox, solutions that unify economic and social progress needed – UN labour chief

20 February 2017 – Highlighting that many around the world are left out from being able to benefit from global prosperity dividends and that even flourishing societies are seeing inequalities widen, the head of the United Nations labour agency today called for solutions that can bring economic growth combined with social progress.

In his message on World Day of Social Justice, UN International Labour Organization chief Guy Ryder also underlined that the feeling of absence of social justice: children without secure futures, parents without decent jobs and a general feeling of abandonment, have grave consequences not only for communities and societies, but for economies as well.

“We need solutions that lead away from conflict and towards recovery, to economic growth with social progress, solutions that build institutions girded by labour standards that guarantee rights at work,” said Mr. Ryder.

“In an interconnected world this is a global agenda and a global responsibility,” he added.

Marked this year with the theme ‘Preventing conflict and sustaining peace through decent work’ the Day calls upon the international community work towards eradicating poverty, promoting full employment and decent work, gender equity, and access to social well-being and justice for all.

Mr. Ryder also stressed that lack of decent jobs and the fear that aspirations for a better life will remain unfulfilled multiplies people’s worries, leaving young people without a “stake in society.”

Urging for the formulation of policies that can deliver the decent work opportunities given their importance for the stability and success of societies, he added: “[The words] *Si vis pacem, cole justatium*: ‘If you seek peace, cultivate justice’ [...] are as compelling today as they were when written nearly one hundred years ago when the world was emerging from the ravages of war.”

RELATED: Responses to global ills must integrate peace and sustainable development, UN Member States told

In 2007, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 20 February as World Day of Social Justice, inviting Member States to promote national activities in accordance with the objectives and goals of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly.

Also today, UN independent human rights experts underlined everyone’s right

to a standard of living that ensures adequate health and well-being for themselves and their families, including access to food, clothing, housing, health care and social services.

“The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which sets out these rights, also makes clear that all people are entitled to a social and international order in which their rights and freedoms can be fully realized,” said Alfred de Zayas, UN Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order; and Idriss Jazairy, UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights.

They also underlined that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include commitments to eradicate poverty, provide clean, affordable energy, promote peaceful and inclusive societies, and implement nationally appropriate social protection systems for all, including social protection floors.

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## [‘Historic’ day as last FARC-EP members gather to turn in arms – UN mission in Colombia](#)

20 February 2017 – About 300 members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People’s Army (FARC-EP) today arrived in central Colombia’s Agua Bonita zone, bringing the number to close to 6,900, to lay down their arms under United Nations verification, and to begin a transition to social, economic and political life, the UN Mission in the country said today.

“In the past 19 days they rode cars, buses, boats or walked some 8,700 kilometres [...] across the country, accompanied by over 860 [members] of the tripartite Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM),” read a news release from the UN Mission in Colombia.

The Mission’s Chief Observer and MVM coordinator, Major General Javier Pérez Aquino, called the day “historic.”

“The UN Mission in Colombia and the MVM consider that the FARC-EP’s decision to move into the zones [...] in spite of the limited logistics in the majority of them [...] very positive,” he said.

“This decision considerably reduces the possibility of armed contact [...] and we also hope that their presence will accelerate the construction works in these camps, creating the appropriate conditions to continue with the process that will lead to their reinsertion into the social, economic and political life,” he added.

The Chief Observer also noted that despite limited logistics, the deadline for the completion of the laying down of arms 180 days after the Final Agreement, which came into force on 1 December stands.

***Working hand-in-hand so that 'our children and grandchildren live in a conflict-free country'***

In Colombia's capital, Bogotá, as well as at eight regional and 26 local sites, FARC-EP and Government members, along with 350 UN observers, are working together to verify the parties' commitments towards the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities.

We work together to implement the Final Agreement and I feel hopeful that this process will lead to a country with more social justice, said 45-year-old Esperanza Fajardo, who joined FARC-EP in the 1990's, now working with Government and UN Mission counterparts.

Mayor Alejandro Cruz, from the Government, echoed: I feel very committed to this process because I want our children and grandchildren to live in a conflict-free country.

Mr. Cruz was twice injured in combat with the FARC-EP and bears a large scar on his chest while Ms. Fajardo joined the rebel group to escape the killings of left-wing *Unión Patriótica* political affiliates.

In early October 2016, Colombian voters narrowly rejected the historic peace accord between the Government and the FARC-EP. That deal led to a cessation of hostilities and agreements on key issues such as political participation, land rights, illicit drugs and victims' rights and transitional justice. The two sides signed a new agreement in late November.

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## [Long-time Russian Ambassador to UN, Vitaly Churkin, dies suddenly in New York](#)



Vitaly Churkin, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, briefing journalists late last year at Headquarters. UN Photo/Amanda Voisard

20 February 2017 – The General Assembly today held a moment of silence honouring the memory of the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to United Nations, Vitaly Churkin, who died suddenly this morning in New York.

During a meeting of the Assembly on the reform of the world body, Russia's Deputy Permanent Representative, Petr Ilichev, informed those present about Ambassador Churkin's sudden passing.

The seasoned diplomat, who would have turned 65 tomorrow, served as Permanent Representative since 2006.

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## **UN Security Council condemns latest terrorist attack in Mogadishu**

20 February 2017 – Strongly condemning the latest deadly terrorist attack in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, the United Nations Security Council today reiterated that its determination to support peace, security and development in the long-troubled country would not be swayed by this, or any other such attack.

In a press statement that follows yesterday's terrorist attack at a market in Mogadishu that killed at least 39 people and injured many more, the members of the Council expressed their deep sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims, as well as to the people and Government of Somalia. They also wished a speedy recovery to those injured.

The Council went on to commend the swift response of Somalia's security and first responders.

It also reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and underlined the need to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of these reprehensible acts of terrorism to justice, as well as reaffirmed the need to combat the scourges in accordance with international law.

Further to the statement, the Security Council paid tribute to all Somali and international actors working to bring peace and stability in Somalia. The 15-nation body reiterated its determination to support peace, stability and development in Somalia and underlined that neither this nor any other terrorist attack would weaken that determination.

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## **Famine declared in region of South**

## Sudan – UN

20 February 2017 – Famine has been formally declared in parts of South Sudan, the United Nations said today, warning that war and a collapsing economy have left some 100,000 people facing starvation there and a further 1 million people are classified as being on the brink of famine.

“Famine has become a tragic reality in parts of South Sudan and our worst fears have been realised,” said Serge Tissot, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Representative in South Sudan, in a news release issued jointly with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

“Many families have exhausted every means they have to survive,” he stated, explaining that these people are predominantly farmers who have lost their livestock, even their farming tools.

Famine is currently affecting parts of Unity State in the northern-central part of the country. A formal famine declaration means people have already started dying of hunger.

Famine has become a tragic reality in parts of South Sudan

The situation is the worst hunger catastrophe since fighting erupted more than three years ago between rival forces – the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) loyal to President Salva Kiir and the SPLA in Opposition backing First Vice-President Riek Machar.

The three UN agencies warned that urgent action is needed to prevent more people from dying of hunger.

According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) update released today by the government, the three agencies and other humanitarian partners, 4.9 million people – more than 40 percent of South Sudan’s population – are in need of urgent food, agriculture and nutrition assistance.

The total number of food insecure people is expected to rise to 5.5 million at the height of the lean season in July if nothing is done to curb the severity and spread of the food crisis.

“More than one million children are currently estimated to be acutely malnourished across South Sudan; over a quarter of a million children are already severely malnourished. If we do not reach these children with urgent aid many of them will die,” said Jeremy Hopkins, UNICEF Representative in South Sudan.

“We have also warned that there is only so much that humanitarian assistance can achieve in the absence of meaningful peace and security, both

for relief workers and the crisis-affected people they serve,&#8221 said WFP Country Director Joyce Luma.