



## Bi-Weekly Press Briefing 29 October 2021

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### Story

#### COP26

Alessandra Vellucci, for the UN Information Service (UNIS), said that the Secretary-General was now in Rome, where he would attend the G20 Summit. He would stress to the G20 leaders that we were now at the “make-or-break” moment and underscore how we were off track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. He would emphasize how the Paris Agreement objective of keeping global heating under two degrees Celsius was becoming more elusive. The Secretary-General would speak to the press at the G20 media center in Rome at 2:15 pm today; it would be an in-person press event.

On 31 October, the Secretary-General would travel to Glasgow for COP26, informed Ms. Vellucci, and he would take part in the World Leaders’ Summit there on 1 November. He would call on countries to take bold actions to tackle climate change, and underscore the need for global solidarity to move a shift from fossil fuels.

Clare Nullis, for the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), stated that the WMO was supporting the United Nations Climate Change Conference with scientific information about the state of the climate and greenhouse gas concentrations. During COP26 the WMO would also launch major initiatives to support climate change adaptation. A provisional state of global climate multi-agency report would be presented at a press conference in Glasgow on 31 October at 4 pm Geneva time. The report included data until the end of September; a press release under embargo would be sent out shortly. The provisional report confirmed that

climate action was urgently needed, stressed Ms. Nullis. The IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report, released in August, showed that there was no doubt that human activity had led to the rising temperatures on Earth. Ms. Nullis then spoke of two letters by scientists calling for urgent action ahead of COP26, including one on [water and climate action](#) and the other [one](#) emphasizing that "the scientific case for urgent climate action was unequivocal."

Also ahead of COP26, the head of the World Meteorological Organization and nine other international organizations had issued a united and urgent call to governments to prioritize integrated water and climate action given the all-pervasive impacts on sustainable development.

A new coalition fund to improve [collection of weather and climate data](#) would be launched in Glasgow on 3 November, to address the growing data gaps, which were impeding our ability to monitor and react to weather patterns.

Tomson Phiri, for the [World Food Programme](#) (WFP), said that the climate crisis was driving up hunger levels around the world, also by undermining people's ability to feed themselves. If we did not take global action now to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help communities adapt to the new reality of the climate crisis, hunger would increase exponentially. Those who had contributed the least to the climate crisis were finding themselves in the hardest position, stressed Mr. Phiri. In a four-degree Celsius warmer world, as many as 1.8 billion people could become food-insecure. He provided several worrying examples, from floods in Yemen to a drought in Afghanistan. WFP was helping food insecure communities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from climate shocks and stresses. WFP was calling for a coordinated global action on climate to decrease its impact on hunger. Governments should manage risks rather than disasters. WFP was advocating for a more predictable climate funding, to help countries build better climate management systems. Humanitarian organizations were experienced risk managers and ought to be recognized by governments as such. A broad coordinated action in the humanitarian sector was necessary. More information is available [here](#).

Alessandra Vellucci, for the [UN Information Service](#), speaking also on behalf of the [United Nations Development Programme](#) (UNDP), said that UNDP and the UN Office at Geneva, together with various partners including the City of Geneva, would hold a press conference at the Natural History Museum on 3 November at 9:30 am to launch a major cultural event for the climate: [From Geneva to Glasgow - COP26](#). The event would include a first-ever projection on the façade of the Palais des Nations, debates and screenings, including Cyril Dion's two latest films, and a citizens' walk between the Palais des Nations and the Museum of Natural History. On 4 November at 6:30 pm, the documentary "Breaking Boundaries" would be shown at the Cinerama Empire, as part of the Ciné ONU programme.

Responding to questions, Ms. Nullis stressed that the WMO's message was that all the countries' commitments on carbon neutrality had to be translated into actions. The benchmark would be to step up the level of ambition and accelerate carbon neutrality action. The work of the UN was primarily to bring countries together and facilitate the multilateral dialogue, but the national leaders would need to take the critical steps, said Ms. Vellucci. The commitment to USD 100 billion climate finance for developing countries should also be honored. Bold action was now needed more than ever. Mr. Phiri added that, if there was a lesson learnt from the COVID-19 crisis, it was that concerted global action within a short lead time in a decisive manner was possible. Some of that determination was needed with the climate crisis.

### **Sexual abuse in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Margaret Harris, for the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), responding to questions, said that the WHO had received a letter from the European Union regarding its EUR 20.7 million funding of WHO operations in the DRC; WHO was currently considering its response. Journalists asked Ms. Harris to share detailed information on the overall budget of the WHO's operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

## Other announcements

Alessandra Vellucci, for the UN Information Service, speaking on behalf of the Human Rights Council (HRC), informed that the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review Working Group would hold its next session from 1 to 12 November. During this session, 14 States were scheduled to have their human rights records reviewed. Responding to a question, Ms. Vellucci said it was possible that the review of Sudan would be postponed to a later date given the current situation in the country.

Also on 1 November, the Human Rights Council would be convening a panel discussion on the right to social security in the changing world of work. The event would commence at 10 am and would be webcast live. The panel would feature opening remarks by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet.

Ms. Vellucci also informed that the President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Nazhat Shameem Khan, would present the annual report on the activities of the Council to the General Assembly at UN Headquarters, which would be webcast live at 6 pm today.

She also informed that on 3 November at 11 am, OHCHR would present a report by the UN Human Rights Office and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission of their investigation into alleged violations of international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law committed by all parties to the conflict in Tigray. Speakers would be Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Maarit Kohonen Sheriff, Chief, Africa Branch, OHCHR, and Françoise Mianda, Section Chief, East and Southern Africa, OHCHR.

On 8 November at 10:30 am, there would be a press conference to launch the World Intellectual Property Indicators Report (under embargo until 12:30 pm that day). Speakers would be Marco Aleman, Assistant Director General, IP and Innovation Ecosystems Sector, and Carsten Fink, Chief Economist at WIPO.

The Human Rights Committee would review this afternoon at 3 pm the progress reports of its Special Rapporteurs on follow-up of concluding observations and follow-up of views.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was concluding this morning its review of the report of Indonesia and would conclude this afternoon its review of the report of Ecuador.

Finally, Ms. Vellucci invited the journalists to the official inauguration of the H Building at the Palais des Nations, that would take place on 1 November at 2:30 pm, just outside the new building. The ceremony would be attended by Tatiana Valovaya, UN Geneva Director General; Ignazio Cassis, Vice-President of the Swiss Federal Council and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs; Serge Dal Busco, President of the State Council of Geneva; Nathalie Fontanet, Geneva State Counsellor; and Frédérique Perler, the Mayor of Geneva. At 12 noon and 12:30 pm, there would be two guided tours of the building led by the Director of the Strategic Heritage Plan. Answering questions, Ms. Vellucci specified that the H Building was an office building rather than a conference facility, and journalists who had official business in H Building could get access through UNIS.

Responding to questions, Ms. Vellucci said that, for the time being, COVID19 medical certificates were not required for official mandated meetings. For cultural activities, events including food and drinks with a large number of participants and guided tours, such certificates were required. Vaccinations were still not mandatory – but were strongly recommended – for UN Geneva staff. All other measures, including mask wearing, hand washing and physical distancing, were followed and enforced throughout the premises.