



## **Bi-Weekly Press Briefing 29 November 2022**

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### **Story**

#### **PRESS BRIEFING BY THE UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION SERVICE**

29 November 2022

#### **New UNDP Report on Internal Displacement**

Luca Renda, Head of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Mobility Team, said UNDP was launching today a new report titled *Turning the tide on internal displacement: A development approach to solutions*, prepared in collaboration with the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre.

There was a global crisis of displacement. In December 2020, the number of people forced from home crossed the 100 million mark. Two-thirds of these people were displaced within their own countries. The war in Ukraine alone had create 6.5 million internally displaced persons.

There was renewed political commitment to addressing the trend. For example, the United Nations Secretary-General had in June released an Action Agenda on Internal Displacement. There was cause for optimism, but only if we changed the way that we addressed internal displacement. Displacement needed to be treated not only as a humanitarian issue but also as a development issue. Efforts to support internally displaced

persons needed to be led by national governments.

The report was the first on internally displaced persons issued by UNDP, and it addressed the issue from a development angle. It showed the social impact of internal displacement. One-third of internally displaced persons reported unemployment. Two-thirds did not have enough money. One third reported worsening of health. The economic impact of internal displacement was estimated at around 21 billion dollars. 80 per cent of internally displaced persons lived in fragile countries. Displacement was both a consequence and cause of fragility in terms of security.

The report presented a blueprint for national government on how to address internal displacement through strengthening institutions and legislation, providing security and access to justice, ensuring social integration and cohesion of internally displaced persons and supporting full participation of internally displaced person organisations in decision-making.

UNDP was calling on international organisations, national governments and civil society to champion the cause of internally displaced persons and to support the UNDP's initiative. This was a unique opportunity to turn the tide on internal displacement.

### **UNHCR Refugee Response in Uganda Under Threat**

Joung-ah Ghedini-Williams, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Head of Global Communications Services, said that she had returned from an eye-opening visit to Uganda, where she visited Kyaka II and Rwamwanja refugee settlements in Kyegegwa and Kamwenge districts in the country's Western Region.

Refugee centres in Uganda were indistinguishable from local communities. Refugee children attended school alongside Ugandan children, health facilities served both refugee and host communities, and several district-level water services had been transitioned to national systems.

However, services and systems were bursting at the seams. Uganda was already hosting over 1.5 million refugees at the start of 2022, making it largest refugee-hosting country on the African continent. This year, 130,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and South Sudan have fled continuing violence to find safety Uganda, putting further pressure on an overstretched humanitarian response.

Health workers were seeing up to 80 or 90 patients a day. Many child patients were forced to sleep on the floor. There were nearly 200 students per teacher in schools for refugee children, and there were not enough bathrooms or books in schools. In the rainy season, schools were muddy and flooded.

Poverty was increasing the risk of gender-based violence, such as child marriage and intimate partner abuse. The issue was linked to a lack of resources.

There were signs of hope, despite the challenges. Rice farmers had created a viable business model. Farmers were expecting to harvest around 200 tonnes of rice in the coming season. However, these gains needed to be supported by funding from the international community. UNHCR had been forced to cut life-saving funding across the world. Uganda was one of UNHCR's most underfunded operations. UNHCR had only received 46 per cent of the of US\$ 343.4 million required in Uganda for 2022.

Read the full press briefing [here](#).

### **Instability Continues in Burkina Faso**

Abdouraouf Gnon-Konde, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Representative in Burkina Faso, said that Burkina Faso was marked by political instability and environmental challenges. There were escalating humanitarian needs for displaced people in Burkina Faso leading to an increase in refugees fleeing the country. As violence against civilians and intercommunity conflicts continued, close to

50,000 refugees had fled to Niger, Mali, and further south to the coastal states of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Ghana to seek safety in the last two years.

With a total of 1.76 million registered internally displaced people, Burkina Faso was experiencing one of the fastest-growing displacement crises in the world.

Attacks by non-State actors had increased by almost 40 per cent this year. Around 10 per cent of the total population were internally displaced persons. There had been an increasing number of incidents of cross-border displacement. Insecurity in the region, competition over natural resources, human rights abuses, gender-based violence, competition in urban areas, and the search for economic opportunities were some of the main reasons for the displacement.

To respond to the new displacement, UNHCR was working closely with local authorities and partners to provide shelter and life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable, such as children and survivors of gender-based violence. However, more resources were needed to prevent internally displaced Burkinabés from becoming refugees and to find durable solutions for them.

This plight of the displaced was being made worse by severe underfunding. UNHCR was calling on the international community to provide greater solidarity and support for the displaced in Burkina Faso and their hosts through urgent financial assistance. Despite the growing needs in Burkina Faso and neighbouring countries, just 52 per cent of the US\$336.9 million required by UNHCR this year had been funded.

Read the full press briefing [here](#).

### **Health Impacts of Floods in South Sudan**

Fabian Ndenzako, World Health Organization (WHO) Representative in South Sudan, said that South Sudan was currently facing its fourth consecutive year of devastating floods. Half of the country's counties was affected. Over 1 million people have been affected by severe floods and 180,000 people had been forced to leave their homes. People in need of humanitarian aid had been steadily increasing every year. In 2023, it was estimated that an unprecedented three out of four South Sudanese would need humanitarian assistance.

Around 16,500 hectares of agricultural land had been potentially affected by flooding. Farmers could not sow crops for future harvest, prolonging the food crisis. About 6.6 million people, over 50 per cent of the population were estimated to be in food crisis. 1.4 million children under five were severely malnourished. These children were nine times more likely to die than well-nourished children, being too weak to fight off diseases such as pneumonia.

Water facilities had been destroyed and latrines submerged by the floods, causing water-borne diseases to spread. There had been outbreaks of anthrax, measles and malaria, the leading cause of death in South Sudan.

Some of the worst affected were those who had been displaced from their homes. The floods had also destroyed 45 health facilities, affecting 675,000 people. Those that were functioning were facing a shortage of essential medicines and supplies.

WHO and partners were working to serve the population. It was providing medicines and other health supplies; ensuring disease surveillance; distributing mosquito nets, and malaria drugs and diagnostic tests; conducting campaigns on preventing the spread of diseases; and providing training to health workers. These actions were the difference between life and death.

WHO was calling for immediate funds to support its efforts. Currently only two-thirds of life-saving work in South Sudan had been funded. Sustained, longer-term investment was needed to build a strong and resilient health system in the country, and to respond to and prevent natural disasters exacerbated by climate change.

## **ICRC Raises Concerns about Global “Crisis of Neglect”**

Martin Schuepp, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Director of Operations, said that there had been a crisis of neglect. Humanitarian needs in dozens of countries were rising. Countries like Afghanistan, Somalia and Democratic Republic of the Congo were at risk of being abandoned by the international community.

As winter set in in Afghanistan, there had been a spike in cases of child pneumonia and malnutrition. At 33 ICRC-supported hospitals across the country, child malnutrition cases were already 90 percent higher in 2022 compared to 2021. People were unable to afford both heating and food.

In Somalia, the ICRC stabilization centre in Baidoa had seen an 80 per cent rise in malnourished children versus 2021, while ICRC-supported hospitals had recorded a 30 per cent increase in mass casualty events.

ICRC teams had resumed moving humanitarian aid into Tigray, and were continuing to assist people in Amhara and Afar. This aid work needed to be scaled to prevent further suffering after months without food and medical care.

Fighting had intensified in the Democratic Republic of Congo. ICRC surgical teams in Goma were caring for the injured, but many people were struggling to get care in remote areas.

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen was likely to worsen in 2023 without a de-escalation of the conflict. Funding had decreased even while 70 per cent of the population depended on some form of aid.

In Syria, more than 11 years of conflict had seriously damaged the water network. This year, rising cases of acute watery diarrhoea were adding to the suffering.

Millions of people in Ukraine were facing the coldest months of the year with limited heat and water after attacks on critical infrastructure. The most vulnerable people, including children, the elderly, injured, and people with disabilities were likely to suffer the most.

The impacts of rising food and energy prices were felt hardest in communities impacted by armed conflict and violence. In 2022, food staples rose by 45 per cent in Ethiopia and Yemen and over 30 per cent in Mali, Afghanistan and Somalia.

There were more than 100 conflicts happening around the world right now. The ICRC called on the international community to ensure that all those conflicts would not become forgotten, and that the people suffering were provided with the help that they needed.

In response to questions on the situation in Afghanistan, Mr. Schuepp said that more than half of the Afghan population, over 20 million people, were in need of humanitarian assistance. ICRC continued to operate across Afghanistan to provide humanitarian relief, but this was not enough. Further political action was needed to provide Afghans with support. It was key that resources were made available to provide basic services to Afghans today.

## **UNAIDS Calls for Action to Address Unequal Access to Health Innovations**

Hervé Verhoosel, spokesperson for the global health agency Unitaaid, said that the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) released this morning in Tanzania a new report, *Dangerous Inequalities*, highlighting how inequalities were obstructing the end of AIDS.

The report revealed how gender inequalities were creating barriers to care and hindering efforts to reach everyone affected by or at risk of HIV. Unitaid was dedicating to fighting those barriers so everyone could benefit from vital medicines and tools.

In 2021, more than 38 million people globally were living with HIV, 1.5 million people became newly infected with HIV, and 650 000 people died from AIDS-related illnesses. The effects of gender inequalities on women's HIV risks were especially pronounced in sub-Saharan Africa, where women accounted for 63 per cent of new HIV infections in 2021. In the same region, adolescent girls and young women aged 15 to 24 years were three times more likely to get HIV than adolescent boys and young men of the same age group.

Unitaid had proven that game-changing advances in HIV prevention, diagnostics and treatments, including HIV medicines adapted to children, had the potential to save lives and transform care for millions of people. But more financial and political investments were needed.

Unitaid called on the international community to address the social and economic inequalities that were exacerbating the HIV epidemic and to increase their financial support to enable equitable access to critical medicines, preventive tools and other health products.

Maureen Murenga, Unitaid Board Member, said that the lack of progress in access to treatments and preventative measures for HIV demonstrated in the report was really saddening. Many gains in these fields had been made over the past 20 years, when Ms. Murenga was first diagnosed with HIV. Now, HIV could be diagnosed much faster, and new technologies were available to prevent the spread of HIV and to treat it.

However, treatments were not reaching everyone. Child-friendly treatments were particularly difficult to obtain in some areas. This was why efforts to raise awareness of HIV and increase access to treatments were so important. Unitaid measures had made medication more affordable. Unitaid hoped to receive additional support to end HIV within our lifetime.

In response to questions, Ms. Murenga said that there was a lack of availability of treatment for children because researchers were not allowed to do research on children, and because pharmaceutical companies were reluctant to invest in lower-volume treatment for children, among other reasons.

The long-acting cabotegravir treatment would be a game-changer when it reached the hands of the people, Ms. Murenga said. It was still expensive, but there were efforts to lower barriers to access. This was a long-lasting treatment that needed to reach the hands of users as fast as possible.

Mr. Verhoosel said that in Brazil, Unitaid would introduce a cabotegravir injection that would last for three months. Similarly, injections would be delivered to young women and at-risk groups in South Africa. This, along with advancements in self-testing and paediatric medicine, would change the lives of millions if given the required funding and support.

## **Announcements**

David Hirsch for the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) said that *Facts and Figures 2022*, the latest edition of ITU's worldwide overview on the state of digital connectivity, would be released tomorrow, Wednesday, 30 November at 2 p.m.

The report would present the latest figures on Internet use, including information on affordability and access to online digital services. It would also provide details on the challenges confronting efforts to close the digital divide, including the gender gap in Internet use.

Aurélia Blin, Communication focal point for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)'s Climate Finance Unit, said that UNEP and Economics of Land Degradation Initiative, with collaboration from McKinsey Research, were releasing the *State of finance for nature* report on 1 December at 9 a.m. in

Geneva. Today, a press briefing on the report's findings would be held by the co-authors of the report.

This was the second report in a series that aimed to quantify public and private finance laws on nature-based solutions, and was an assessment of the extent to which finance laws aligned with global conventions and the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The report would be released in advance of the 2022 Montreal Biodiversity Conference (COP15).

Christian Lindmeier for the World Health Organization (WHO) said that this year's World AIDS Day theme was "Equalize". WHO was calling on global leaders and citizens to boldly recognize and address the inequalities which were holding back progress in ending AIDS; and equalize access to essential HIV services, particularly for children and vulnerable groups.

WHO, UNAIDS and partners would hold an event in Geneva to mark the day. Activists and global health leaders would speak at the UNAIDS Red ribbon café from 2 p.m., followed by a solidarity walk from the UNAIDS building to the Place des Nations and the construction of a "human red ribbon" at the Place des Nations.

On Friday, 2 December, at 3 p.m., WHO would release its *What works to prevent online violence against children* report. The report highlighted the dangers faced by children when using digital communication technologies and provided strategies to prevent online abuse of children. It focused on two forms of online violence: child sexual abuse, including grooming and sexual image abuse, and cyber aggression and harassment.

Another report would be released on Friday on health inequalities leading to premature death of persons with disabilities. The report would show that persons with disabilities were at a higher risk of illness and death compared to others in society.

In response to a question on China's "zero COVID" policy, Mr. Lindmeier said that WHO issued guidelines regarding COVID-19 policies. Each country adapted policies according to national socio-economic situations. It was important to prioritise vaccination of those most at risk and most vulnerable.

Michele Zaccheo, Chief of the Television, Radio and Webcast Section within the United Nations Information Service (UNIS) in Geneva, said that the United Nations Special Envoy for Syria, Geir O. Pedersen, would brief the Security Council today, Tuesday 29 November, at 4 p.m.

A press briefing would be held by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to announce the *State of Global Water Resources report 2021* on Tuesday, 29 November at 2:30 p.m. Speaking would be Professor Petteri Taalas, WMO Secretary-General, and Dr Stefan Uhlenbrook, Director (hydrology).

On Wednesday, 30 November at 10 a.m., the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) would launch its *2023 Global Humanitarian Overview*. Speaking would be Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

On Wednesday, 30 November at 2:30 p.m., the International Labour Organization (ILO) would virtually launch the *Global Wage Report 2022-23*. Speaking would be Manuela Tomei, ILO Assistant Director-General for Governance, Rights and Dialogue, and Rosalia Vazquez-Alvarez, ILO Econometrician and wage specialist.

On Friday, 02 December at 12:30 p.m., the Permanent Mission of Switzerland would host a hybrid press conference to introduce the six young activists selected to participate in the Young Activists Summit 2022.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination would on Friday at 4 p.m. conclude its 108<sup>th</sup> session and release its concluding observations on the countries assessed during the session: Bahrain, Botswana, Brazil, France, Georgia, and Jamaica.