Update on the situation in northeast Syria

Alessandra Vellucci, for the United Nations Information Service in Geneva, wished to draw attention to the statement on Syria made recently by the spokesperson of the UN Secretary-General. The Secretary-General was gravely concerned by the military developments in northeast Syria, which had already reportedly resulted in many civilian casualties and the displacement of at least 160,000 civilians. He continued to urge for maximum restraint and stressed that any military operation should fully respect international law, including the United Nations Charter and international humanitarian law. The full statement had been distributed to the journalists.

Jens Laerke, for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), read the following statement:

“The security situation in northeast Syria remains highly volatile with continued reports of airstrikes and ground attacks as the military operation continues. On both sides of the border, civilian injuries and deaths are being reported.

At least 160,000 people have been displaced since the start of military operations. Most displacements have taken place from Ras al-Ain and Tell Abiad. Most of the displaced, fleeing south from the border area, are...
staying with relatives or host communities, but increasing numbers are arriving at collective shelters.

We are particularly concerned for the civilians at Ein Issa camp, hosting approximately 13,000 people, and where services, including provision of water and bread, have been suspended since 13 October. Hostilities and shelling continued yesterday close to the camp. The situation is highly fluid and latest reports indicate population movements both in and out of the camp between 13 and 14 October. This could indicate that some people who left have returned to the camp.

Around 15 families remain in Mabruka internally displaced persons camp, which is close to Ras al-Ain, a major flashpoint in the military operation. The camp was largely evacuated earlier due to insecurity. We continue to advocate for protection of all IDP camps and guarantees of safe and unhindered passage for those staying behind, and for humanitarian actors to reach them with assistance.

Humanitarian partners continue to provide life-saving assistance in the existing displacement camps – except Mabruka, due to insecurity – including the most populated camps such as Areesheh and Al-Hol. Efforts are also underway to assist displaced people in the new collective shelters established in Al-Hasakeh, Tal Tamer and Ar-Raqqa further to the south.”

Marixie Mercado, for the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), read the following statement:

“As indicated in the statement issued by our Executive Director last night, we estimate that nearly 70,000 children have been displaced since hostilities in northeast Syria escalated nearly a week ago. As of now, 33 collective shelters – mostly schools and unfinished buildings – have been identified across Hasakeh city, Raqqa city and Tal Tamer. They are hosting nearly 3,400 people, but the numbers fluctuate quickly as most people do not stay long. UNICEF is providing emergency assistance to families as they arrive at the shelters.

UNICEF can confirm the deaths of at least four children, and the injuries of nine, in northeast Syria. Seven children have reportedly been killed in Turkey. At least 170,000 children could require humanitarian assistance due to the violence.

The Alouk water station that supplies water to 400,000 people in Al Hasakeh, remains out of service. Technical repair teams were able to assess the water station and make some repairs yesterday, but damage to the electricity lines may not be immediately reparable. An alternative water supply, from the Al Himme water pumping station, can only meet about 30 per cent of needs in Al Hasakeh and there are shallow wells that people are using now, but the water is not safe, so it is critical that the Alouk water pumping station gets back online. UNICEF will be providing fuel for back-up generators, and we are trucking water to the shelters now taking in displaced people.

At least one school in Tal Abiad has also been attacked. In Ras Al-Ain, schools, clinics and markets have been closed since 9 October. In Tal Abiad town, water and electricity remain unavailable and the national hospital has been closed since 11 October. Our partners in Ras al-Ain and Tal Abiad have had to stop most of their work, as many of their staff and volunteers are among the displaced population.

Early on 13 October, there were reports of shelling near Ein Issa camp. The camp hosts some 13,000 IDPs including approximately 8,000 children. An unspecified number of people from the camp may have fled. Twenty-seven unaccompanied children between 2 and 14 years old, including 24 of foreign nationalities, were safely evacuated to Ar-Raqqa city. A UNICEF medical mobile team will be visiting them today.

On October 11, around 5,000 people including 3,100 children started evacuating Mabruka camp due to security concerns. As of 13 October, there were 15 households, mainly women and children, who have not been able to safely leave the camp.

Finally, in Al-Hol camp, which has about 64,000 children and women, UNICEF and partners continue water trucking efforts at a rate of 300 cubic metres per day. Despite constrained access, UNICEF’s health and nutrition partner in Al-Hol has been able to reach women and children in two sections of the camp with
nutritional and health services.

As violence continues to escalate, UNICEF renews its calls on all parties to the conflict and those who have influence over them to protect children at all times. Those fighting in the northeast and elsewhere in Syria must protect civilian infrastructure and not use it for military gains.

During the course of the offensive or defending against it, all parties should take action to avoid attacking areas where civilians, including children may be found; prevent children from being separated from their caregivers; and allow unimpeded access by independent humanitarian organizations to deliver life-saving assistance to children and families affected by the conflict.

In the face of the deteriorating situation UNICEF calls on member states to repatriate their nationals, including children, as soon as possible so that they can be protected from harm.”

Tarik Jašareviæ, for the World Health Organization (WHO), read the following statement:

“Already weakened health services in northeast Syria have been severely impacted by the latest security developments. The national hospital in Ras Al-Ain is currently out of service, and the national hospital and two health centres in Tel Abyad are also currently non-functional.

Health facilities in camps hosting displaced people in Ain Issa and Ras al Ain have also been evacuated, with additional facilities under threat as the conflict rapidly escalates.

A number of health partners have already suspended services due to insecurity, further disrupting access to essential health care services.

On 12 October, a trauma stabilization point located south of Ras Al-Ain was evacuated after being reportedly attacked, resulting in two health staff injured and two ambulances destroyed. On the same day, the hospital in Ras Al-Ain was also reportedly attacked. There were no casualties as the facility had already been evacuated. A previously partially functioning primary health centre in the al-Amalakiyah area of Al-Hassakeh governorate also sustained damage from heavy weapons and its current functional status was unknown.

Across northeast Syria, shortages of health workers is widespread as they too have been among those displaced by the ongoing insecurity, aggravating an already critical situation and further depriving underserved populations of access to medical care.

Ain Issa camp has no health services, and most of the camp residents have left. It was reported that many families have moved to Al-Mahmoudli camp. In Al-Hassakeh governorate, as of 14 October, there is one fully functioning public hospital (Al Qamishli National Hospital), three partially functioning hospitals, and one not functioning (Ras Al-Ain national hospital). Out of 100 public health centres in Al-Hassakeh governorate, one health centre is fully functioning, 58 are partially functioning and 41 are not functioning.

WHO was planning a 50-ton air shipment of medical supplies to be dispatched to Al-Qamishli. The health sector is taking into consideration the changes on the ground and discussions are ongoing on various levels to fill any apparent gaps. With WHO support, nearly 15 tons of life-saving medicines and medical supplies were airlifted to Al-Qamishli National Hospital yesterday.

The second day of the ongoing polio vaccination campaign has been completed, 2,000 children in Al-Hol camp were vaccinated during the last two days. The Syrian Arab Red Crescent, supported by ICRC, continues the provision of first aid services through six ambulances and first aid squads.

WHO calls on all parties to the conflict to preserve the right to health of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians in northeast Syria and comply with international humanitarian law to protect all civilians including
Hervé Verhoosel, for the World Food Programme (WFP), said that, despite tremendous challenges, WFP was responding to the food and nutritional needs of the newly displaced people in northeast Syria. It had dispatched enough food assistance to support 130,000 people and, of that amount, it had already provided and delivered immediate food assistance to more than 83,000 people fleeing towns in the northeast.

WFP had the capacity to reach over 450,000 people in northeast Syria with one round of ready-to-eat food packages, mobilizing stock from other locations as required. Each package provided enough nourishment for five days. Production of further stocks of ready-to-eat food was ongoing.

WFP called on all parties to ensure that vital supply routes were kept open and safe for humanitarian deliveries. Without such access, people in need across Syria would be in grave danger.

Bakeries in host areas were struggling to meet the needs of an influx of new arrivals and were short of raw materials. One of the main bakeries was no longer operating due to the security situation and many markets had closed.

More than eight years of war had pushed millions of Syrians into hunger and poverty, displacing millions both inside and outside the country. Despite challenges, WFP was assisting more than around 4 million people in the country every month. It was important to note that 6.2 million Syrians were displaced within the country.”

Elizabeth Throssell, for the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), read the following statement:

“Since the escalation of violence in north-east Syria last week, teams from UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, have assisted some 31,800 people. In Al-Hassakeh and Tal Tamer, UNHCR has distributed blankets and other core relief items to some 20,250 people in three camps for internally displaced people (IDPs) and to another 11,550 people living in communal shelters.

UNHCR has also sent additional aid, including blankets for 52,000 people, plastic sheeting for 15,000 people and solar lamps for 20,000 people to Qamishli.

We continue to conduct through our protection partners assessments in communal shelters in Al-Hassakeh, Tal Tamer and Ar-Raqqa. Many newly displaced families have reportedly settled within the host communities and their needs are also being assessed.

Among the immediate protection needs which have been identified are the lack of civil documentation, as people left their homes without papers and other belongings. Families have also been separated.

Some people are in need of psychological first aid and psychosocial support. UNHCR mobilized protection teams to identify critical protection needs of the most vulnerable, including people with specific needs, elderly people and those with disabilities and serious medical conditions.

Following the reported departure of camp administration/management from Ain Issa camp, located approximately some 45 km south of the border town of Tell Abiad, UNHCR mobilized outreach volunteers and community leaders to arrange the return of identification documents to camp residents who were without papers. As of today, humanitarian workers are unable to safely access the camp to provide critical life-saving assistance. Basic services, including food and water, are no longer being provided.

UNHCR estimates its initial additional funding needs inside Syria at US$31.5 million within the existing
appeal for Syria (HRP). This is provisional given the fast evolving developments on the ground.

Amid the continued fighting, some 184 people crossed from north-east Syria into neighbouring Iraq on Monday, with a further 277 arriving overnight into Tuesday. Many of the refugees had fled their homes in the Kobani area, some of them walking for three or four days to reach safety.

UNHCR and its partners with the local authorities transported the group to Domiz reception centre in Dohuk where they were given hot meals, water, shelter, blankets and other essential items, as well as medical attention.

Their needs are currently being assessed by the local authorities and UNHCR.

One man our colleagues spoke to, who had arrived with his wife and six children, said the journey had been very difficult but they had fled in fear of their lives as shells fell near their home. He said he had seen people fleeing in all directions, including towards the Iraqi border.

It is estimated that another 2,000 people who have fled the latest fighting in north-east Syria are currently close to the Syria-Iraq border.”

Paul Dillon, for the International Organization for Migration (IOM), read the following statement:

“The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is deeply concerned by the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in northern Syria, where heavy fighting is displacing hundreds of thousands of civilians.

According to humanitarian partners, an estimated 190,000 people have fled their homes in northeast Syria since the latest round of military operations began last Wednesday.

“All parties to the conflict must adhere to International Humanitarian Law. Humanitarians must be allowed access to the displaced in order to provide urgent medical and lifesaving assistance,” said IOM Director General António Vitorino.

On Monday, IOM’s Rapid Assessment and Response Teams (RART) deployed to Sahela, in Iraq’s Kurdistan Region, and attended to a group of 182 people who fled the fighting across unofficial entry points. Two doctors and a psychologist were also present, to provide emergency medical and psychosocial care. The group was transported to existing camps where they said family and friends are already living.

The Organization is prepared to scale up its humanitarian response in the region should more people become displaced and need assistance and safety.

Many of Syria’s 6.1 million internally displaced have been repeatedly forced from their homes, in some cases after they have returned to their communities. Between May and August of this year, fighting displaced an estimated 400,000 Syrians in the northwest of the country.

“The cycle of successive displacement is particularly concerning. Continued military operations will have devastating consequences for the seven million people living in Northern Syria,” DG Vitorino added.

IOM has been supporting displaced Syrians and their host communities since the beginning of the crisis in 2011 and will continue to provide lifesaving assistance to those most in need.”

Rupert Colville, for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), read the following statement:

“Since the Turkish military offensive began on 9 October, we have verified a number of civilian casualties each day as a result of airstrikes, ground-based strikes and sniper fire. The worst incident we are aware of so
far, which we are still seeking to fully verify, is a report that at least four civilians, including two journalists, were killed and tens of others injured when a convoy of vehicles was hit by a Turkish airstrike. The attack reportedly took place on the Tel-Tamor – Ras al-Ain Highway on Sunday 13 October.

The Turkish authorities have reported that 18 civilians have been killed in Turkey, including a nine-month-old baby, by cross-border mortar and sniper fire by Kurdish fighters, since this new conflict started last week.

We have received reports and viewed two separate pieces of video footage showing what appear to be summary executions carried out by fighters belonging to the Ahrar al-Sharqiya armed group, which is affiliated with Turkey, on 12 October. One of the videos – both of which have been widely shared on social media – seems to show the fighters filming themselves capturing and executing three Kurdish captives on the al-Hassakeh – Manbij (M4) Highway. Only one of the captives appeared to be wearing military uniform.

On the same day, we received reports indicating that a well-known Kurdish female politician, Hevrin Khalaf, was also executed on the same highway, apparently also by Ahrar al-Sharqiya fighters.

Civilians, as well as all hors de combat individuals such as captured fighters, are to be protected. Under international human rights and international humanitarian law, summary executions are serious violations – and may amount to a war crime. Turkey could be deemed responsible as a State for violations committed by their affiliated armed groups, as long as Turkey exercises effective control over these groups, or the operations in the course of which those violations occurred.

We are continuing to gather information about both these serious violations, and we urge the Turkish authorities to immediately launch an impartial, transparent and independent investigation into both incidents, and to apprehend those responsible, some of whom should be easily identifiable from the video footage they themselves shared on social media.

We are also appalled to learn of further attacks that affected medical facilities, which have been a particular and persistent feature of the conflict in Syria. As of yesterday, we had received reports of five such attacks: on 11 October, four health facilities were damaged as a result of what were alleged to be airstrikes and ground-based strikes by Turkish forces and affiliated armed groups in the areas of Ras al-Ain, Ain al-Arab, Tel Abyad and al-Malikya; and the following day, 12 October, a medical point belonging to the Kurdish Red Crescent was directly hit and damaged by an airstrike. Reports received by the United Nations Human Rights Office indicated that the Kurdish de facto authorities have relocated hospitals equipment that ceased services in al-Hassakeh and Ar-Raqqa Governorates because of the ongoing intensified bombardment.

We are also receiving reports of other attacks on civilian infrastructure, including power lines, water supplies and bakeries.

Responding to a question from a journalist about whether OHCHR had access to Turkey and why it was not reporting on reports of attacks directed against Turkey from across the border, including indiscriminate shelling that had caused thousands of civilians to flee a major Turkish town located near the border, Mr. Colville pointed out that he had just highlighted information – which came from the Turkish Government itself – that since the new conflict had begun “18 civilians have been killed in Turkey, including a nine-month-old baby, by cross-border mortar and sniper fire by Kurdish fighters”. OHCHR had never had an office in Turkey.

Answering an additional question about fighters of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), who had allegedly been released from jails in Tell Abiad by Kurdish fighters, Mr. Colville said that he had no information in that regard and was unaware of the existence of any major jails in the area mentioned. Nonetheless, OHCHR remained concerned about the situation and fate of all prisoners currently being held by Kurdish armed groups, who could potentially pass into the custody of Turkish or Syrian forces.

In response to further questions from journalists, Mr. Colville said that the extent to which one party to a conflict could be held responsible for violations committed by its affiliated armed groups would depend on
the measure of its control over those groups. If it had effective control, either over the groups or over the operations in which the violations had occurred, then it could potentially be held responsible. If so, the degree of responsibility would have to be decided by the competent authorities. He expected that the existing Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic would be looking into reported incidents. For its part, the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism on Syria would continue it work of seeking to assign individual responsibility for specific violations. All parties to the conflict needed to take account of the basic principles of international humanitarian law if they were not to risk being charged with serious crimes and violations.

Alessandra Vellucci, for the United Nations Information Service in Geneva, added that a board of inquiry of the Secretary-General in charge of investigating the destruction of health facilities that were funded or supported by the United Nations, was currently examining the allegations and planned to visit the region soon.

Asked about reports from the Kurdish side that all humanitarian aid had been cut and all humanitarian organizations had ceased to operate in the northeast region, Mr. Laerke said that that was not borne out by reports he had received that morning. The default position of humanitarian agencies was to remain and to continue delivering aid until they could no longer do so. Nonetheless, the United Nations and other organizations had a duty of care to their staff and they could not operate in areas where there was active fighting. At times, however, there might be a perception that aid had been discontinued when, in fact, it had been redirected; for example, to places where displaced persons where arriving, where needs assessments continued to be conducted.

For his part, Mr. Verhoosel said that that WFP had not suspended its operations. It continued to deliver humanitarian assistance to persons in need, using alternative routes when the normal strategic routes were impracticable. It was vital for all parties to the conflict to respect humanitarian access routes.

Ms. Mercado said that she could also confirm that UNICEF continued to implement its programmes in the camps and in Al-Hassakeh city, without interruption.

Responding to a question from a journalist, Jenifer Fenton, for the Office of the Special Envoy for Syria, said that the Special Envoy still expected the first meeting of the Constitutional Committee to go ahead as planned on 30 October, despite the crisis in the northeast.

Answering a further question posed by a journalist, Mr. Laerke said that OCHA was seeking to consolidate the various statistics relative to the situation in northeast Syria as they emerged from the different United Nations agencies. Overnight updates were issued but the situation was very fluid. Sometimes information came very late and could only be incorporated the following day.

In response to a question posed by a journalist, Mr. Laerke said that the aid being delivered was largely coming from stockpiles prepositioned inside Syria in advance. Other aid crossed the border at two points in the northwest of the country, which was not affected by the current conflict, or in the northeast across the border with Iraq. The latter were limited but important and included medicines and trauma kits. Only four lorryloads had crossed the border from Iraq so far in October 2019. The next delivery was scheduled for 16 October. The humanitarian response in northeast Syria was being overseen by a country coordinator, based in Damascus and a regional coordinator in Amman.

Asked about the reparation of children of ISIL combatants, Ms. Mercado said that, of the estimated 68,000 persons in Al-Hol camp, more than 90 per cent were women and children. Of the 47,000 children in the camp, approximately 19,000 were Syrian. The remaining 28,000 came from 60 different countries including 20,000 from Iraq. Most of them were under the age of 12.

**Bahamas – Deportation of Haitians affected by Hurricane Dorian**
Rupert Colville, for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), read the following statement:

“We are concerned about the deportation of 112 Haitian migrants from the Bahamas to Haiti last Thursday, including people from the Abaco Islands, which were badly hit by the destruction caused by Hurricane Dorian in September this year. We call on the Government to refrain from deporting individuals who lack documentation, without the individual assessments and due process guarantees to which they are entitled under international law.

Haitian migrants have often found themselves in positions of vulnerability in the Bahamas, as documented by United Nations human rights mechanisms. Many of them lived in informal settlements that were destroyed by the hurricane, losing their documents, jobs and belongings.

While Bahamian authorities had initially said immigration enforcement activities would be suspended in the affected islands, this position was publicly reversed at the end of September, when they announced that all migrants without valid documents would be apprehended and deported.

This has led to panic among Haitians affected by Hurricane Dorian, and reports are emerging of people leaving temporary shelters for fear of arrest, and of people failing to avail themselves of necessary humanitarian services or going into hiding.

There have also been deeply worrying discriminatory public declarations against Haitians, as well as messages of xenophobia and intolerance in the media. We are concerned that such narratives may lead to further stigmatisation of or violence against migrants and minorities.

In the aftermath of natural disasters, it is particularly important to ensure that the most vulnerable, marginalised communities do not suffer from discrimination in accessing their fundamental rights to food, water, shelter and other basic needs. We urge the Government to ensure that no one is left behind in the recovery efforts.

We encourage the Government to put in place procedures that facilitate access to documents for all those who had legal documents prior to Dorian – particularly those who may be either stateless or at risk of statelessness – and to ensure they have access to independent legal counsel. We call on the authorities to halt any further deportations to Haiti at the moment.”

World Food Day – conflicts and hunger

Hervé Verhoosel, for the World Food Programme (WFP), read the following statement:

“As we mark World Food Day on 16 October, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that more than 800 million people – one in nine people globally – are facing chronic hunger, unable to meet their basic food requirements not just today but day after day in their lives.

For the most part, the causes of hunger remain the same – conflict, the climate crisis and economic marginalization. Of the more than 800 million people facing hunger, 60 per cent are in conflict-affected countries; removing China and India, this proportion jumps to 90 per cent.

Among the worst food crises are Yemen, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Syria, Sudan, South Sudan and northern Nigeria. These eight countries – nearly all conflict-affected – account for two thirds of the total number of people facing acute food insecurity. WFP is working to bring food assistance to more than 80 million in the world. We work tirelessly to keep people alive in war-torn countries - Yemen, Syria and South Sudan, among them.

However, unless world leaders relentlessly pursue an end to all conflict and commit sufficient political will
and funding to humanitarian efforts, what we build by day will be destroyed by night.

For millions of people in war-torn countries such as the ones I have just mentioned, World food day will have a very different meaning.”

**UNDP report on irregular migration from Africa to Europe**

Sarah Bel, for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), read the following statement:


Nous organisons un briefing sous embargo le vendredi 18 octobre à 9 heures (heure de New York) / 15 heures, heure de Genève et vous êtes conviés à participer en ligne. L’auteur principal du rapport, Mohamed Yahya, présentera le rapport et répondra à vos questions.

UNDP new report “Scaling Fences: Voices of Irregular African Migrants to Europe” explores the experiences of African migrants from 39 African countries, who migrated through irregular routes from Africa to Europe and were interviewed across 13 European countries. Nigeria and Senegal form respectively the greatest number of interviewees but all regions are equally covered.

“Scaling Fences” is the second in a series of UNDP reports on the journeys of young Africans. The first, “The Journey to Extremism: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment” was published in 2017. “Scaling Fences” is the largest survey of its kind focusing on irregular migrants. UNDP has compiled this study to better understand the relationship between migration and development. It breaks many preconceptions of the irregular migration phenomenon and questions the notion that this type of migration can be prevented or significantly reduced through programmatic and policy responses designed to stop it. The report highlights the need to create more opportunities for a generation of young Africans who feel their aspirations can’t be fulfilled at home”

**WHO announcements on Universal Health Coverage, Ebola and tuberculosis**

Tarik Jašareviæ, for the World Health Organization (WHO), said that the 141st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union would take place on 16 and 17 October in Belgrade. During the event, the Union’s standing committee on democracy and human rights was expected to adopt a draft resolution on achieving universal health coverage by 2030 and the role of parliaments in ensuring the right to health. The move came in the wake of the General Assembly’s 23 September high-level meeting on universal health coverage. WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus would be attending the Belgrade meeting.

The WHO emergency committee on the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo would meet on Friday 18 October. The meeting would be followed by a press conference at WHO.

The WHO global tuberculosis report would be launched in New York on Thursday 17 October.

**New director of UNESCO Geneva liaison office**

Vincent Defourny, for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), introduced himself to journalists as the new director for the Geneva liaison office of UNESCO, which sought to establish cooperation with other United Nations agencies in the city.

He wished to announce that UNESCO would be launching a number of initiatives – including workshops on multiculturalism, an exhibition and a film – to mark the forthcoming Geneva Peace Week, which would begin on 4 November. In addition, the UNESCO Courier, publication of which had been suspended in 2012 for financial reasons, had been relaunched and journalists could use the content of the magazine free of
Geneva announcements

Alessandra Vellucci, for the United Nations Information Service in Geneva, said that 15 October marked the International Day of Rural Women, which had as its theme for 2019 “rural women and girls building climate resilience”. In his message for the day, the Secretary-General of the United Nations stated that “listening to rural women and amplifying their voices” was “central to spreading knowledge about climate change and urging governments, businesses and community leaders to act.”

Ms. Vellucci also drew attention to the fact that 17 October marked the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. In 2019, the Day had as its theme “acting together to empower children, their families and communities to end poverty”, linked to the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Journalists were kindly invited to cover the event organized by UNIS at a Geneva school on 17 November at 2:30 p.m.