In the headlines:

- Recent political, security tensions threaten Libya’s transition, warns UN envoy
- UN political chief attends Ukrainian president’s inauguration, reiterates support for new government
- Pakistan: Ban strongly condemns latest terrorist attacks
- Ahead of World Cup, UN hails power of sport to bring communities, peoples together
- New UN site in Malakal offers protection to South Sudanese civilians fleeing conflict
- At high-level event, UN officials call for human rights-backed development agenda
- Ban urges recommitment to landmark treaty governing use of world’s oceans
- UN, Norway to launch state-of-the-art research vessel to support endangered fisheries
- Nigeria: UN envoy urges national actors to ‘close ranks’ to ensure release of schoolgirls
- UN envoy appeals for end to clan-based fighting in Somalia’s Lower Shabelle region
- FEATURE: Out from the shadows, victims of terrorism take centre stage at UN
- In Gaza, senior UN envoy pledges support as Palestinian unity government takes shape

More stories inside

Recent political, security tensions threaten Libya’s transition, warns UN envoy

9 June - The recent turmoil in Libya has not only slowed the pace of important aspects of the democratic transition but threatens to thrust the North African nation back into conflict and instability, the United Nations envoy to the country told the Security Council today.

“There is a continuing sense of concern among the Libyan people regarding the prospect of a protracted conflict,” Tarek Mitri, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative and head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), said in his briefing to the 15-member body.

“The crisis which has dominated the political scene for the past few months poses a threat to their country’s political transition.”

Libya, which has been undergoing a democratic transition since the toppling in 2011 of former leader Muammar al-Qadhafi, has recently witnessed political tensions as well as “significant security developments,” particularly in the eastern part of the country.

Foremost among these has been the move by retired General Khalifa Haftar in mid-May to mobilize some units of the Libyan National Army, as well as other tribally-affiliated armed elements, against groups he has labelled as terrorist and blamed for much of the violence and targeted assassinations in Benghazi and other areas of eastern Libya.
In the midst of these challenges, Mr. Mitri said he has redoubled his efforts to urge all parties in Libya to resolve the political impasse through peaceful means, and to impress upon them that a resort to the use of force will have disastrous consequences for the country.

“Following consultations with all concerned parties, I will be convening soon a meeting that brings representatives of the major actors, with the aim of forging an agreement on principles of political interaction, national priorities during the remainder of the transition, and on ways of addressing immediate security, and otherwise divisive, issues,” he stated.

“The stakes are high, and we will spare no effort in helping prevent Libya’s descent into greater instability and violence.”

Notwithstanding the political and security crisis that has engulfed Libya, the constitutional process has made considerable progress since March, the envoy noted. In addition, the country’s election commission is preparing, with UN technical support, the election of the 200-member Council of Representatives that will succeed the General National Congress. There are 1.5 million voters registered for the 25 June polls.

Meanwhile, the security situation continues to impede the proper functioning of the justice system, and has slowed the pace of security sector rebuilding.

**UN political chief attends Ukrainian president’s inauguration, reiterates support for new government**

9 June - The top United Nations political official today concluded a visit to Ukraine where he reiterated Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s commitment to supporting the country, and held meetings with senior Government and civil society representatives to discuss political efforts.

According to a UN spokesperson, Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman represented Mr. Ban at the inauguration of President Petro Poroshenko on Saturday. The UN Secretary-General had spoken by phone with Mr. Poroshenko a week earlier, congratulating him “on having received a strong mandate from the people” to steer the country “towards security, greater prosperity and genuine democratic governance.”

In addition to meeting with the newly sworn-in President, Mr. Feltman held a series of bilateral meetings to discuss opportunities for a political process to put Ukraine on a path of long-term stability, prosperity and peace.

Mr. Feltman emphasised “the importance of inclusive dialogue and reform to fulfil the hopes and expectations of all citizens of Ukraine.”

He also noted the responsibility of the international community to play a constructive role in Ukraine.

While in Kyiv, Mr. Feltman also met with Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Secretary-General Lamberto Zannier and expressed the UN’s dismay that four OSCE monitors captured on 26 May, still have not been released.

“It is unacceptable that staff of an international mission are being put in danger,” the UN spokesperson said.

Addressing the Security Council at the end of last month on behalf of Mr. Ban, Mr. Feltman conveyed the same message to the 15-member Council appealing to everyone with influence to do all to assist in the monitors’ release.

The Security Council briefing was held amidst increased fighting in eastern Ukraine. Mr. Ban has supported Mr. Poroshenko’s statement that he would immediately engage in dialogue and de-escalation with communities in that part of the country.
Pakistan: Ban strongly condemns latest terrorist attacks

9 June - Strongly condemning yesterday’s attacks in Pakistan – which reportedly left more than 50 people dead in the wake of separate assaults on the country’s main airport in Karachi, and on busloads of Shia pilgrims in Baluchistan – United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today urged the Government step up its efforts to tackle terrorism and religious extremism.

In a statement issued by his spokesperson in New York, Mr. Ban deplored the terrorist attacks, including the assault on Jinnah International Airport in Karachi in which reportedly at least 29 people died, and the suicide attacks targeting Shia pilgrims in Taftan, Baluchistan, which reportedly left at least 25 people dead and many more injured.

“The Secretary-General is deeply concerned by this upsurge of violence across Pakistan,” said the statement.

“While acknowledging the measures already taken to maintain security, he urges the Government of Pakistan to further increase its efforts to address terrorism and religious extremism, including with a view to protecting the rights of all people to safely practice their religion, and to bring the perpetrators of such attacks to justice.”

The Secretary-General also expressed his solidarity with the Government and the people of Pakistan and extended his deepest condolences to the families of the victims.

Ahead of World Cup, UN hails power of sport to bring communities, peoples together

9 June - Just days away from the kick-off of the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon hailed the “best values of sport” – teamwork, fair play and mutual respect – as the United Nations today joined the international fervour that accompanies the games, even getting its normally staid diplomats out of suits and ties and into their national team uniforms.

“The first game is not until Thursday, but the level of excitement is already high. I suspect people are already adjusting their schedules in order to be in front of the television to see their teams perform,” Mr. Ban said at an event at Headquarters to mark the start of the World Cup, taking place in Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia, Salvador and elsewhere across Brazil, from 12 June to 13 July.

Along with the UN chief, today’s event featured General Assembly President John Ashe, as well as the Ambassadors of Brazil and the 31 other competing countries, and many local school children, many dressed in their national team uniforms.

Over the next month, hundreds of millions of people will be entertained and enthralled following the action at venues across Brazil, said the Secretary-General, adding that today’s gathering is an occasion to celebrate the best values of sport: teamwork, fair play and mutual respect.

“Sport has a unique ability to unite us, and to show us what we have in common. There is no better testimony than today’s event. What else can get ambassadors to shed their suits and ties and dress like this?!” Mr. Ban asked.

He wished all the competing teams in Brazil good luck, and recalled that last year he had had the honour of kicking off the ball at a Real Madrid match. “This year, they won the Champion’s League. I hope to bring all of your teams the same luck,” he declared.

Meanwhile, at a special event earlier today in Salvador, Brazil, the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Protect the Goal campaign was officially launched.
UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé said the agency wants to harness the passion and solidarity of the World Cup to engage everyone involved in efforts to ensure that young people around the world protect themselves against HIV and have access to life-saving HIV services.

New UN site in Malakal offers protection to South Sudanese civilians fleeing conflict

9 June - The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) today inaugurated a new site adjacent to its base in Malakal to offer protection for civilians uprooted by conflict and to relieve the congestion inside the world body’s compound, which is hosting an estimated 19,000 people.

“As long as people feel afraid, they can know they have our protection,” Hilde F. Johnson, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative and head of UNMISS, said during the inauguration of the protection-of-civilian site.

UNMISS threw open its gates to all unarmed civilians facing an imminent threat of physical violence when the crisis in South Sudan erupted in mid-December 2013. Over 93,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) are currently living in 10 of the Mission’s compounds across the country.

The new facility in Malakal, the capital of the state of Bor, has an area of 100,000 square metres and can accommodate between 8,000 and 9,000 IDPs, the Mission stated in a news release.

Of the estimated 19,000 civilians currently living inside the UNMISS facilities in Malakal, slightly over 3,100 had already moved to the new site as of last Saturday.

A new protection site adjacent to the UN House complex in the national capital, Juba, has also been opened. A large-scale relocation of IDPs from the Mission’s Tomping compound to the new site is expected to take place during the second half of this month.

The protection of civilians was given the utmost priority when the Security Council recently renewed the Mission’s mandate, along with addressing the security, humanitarian and political crisis that has gripped the world’s youngest nation.

The Mission also noted that South Sudanese President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar were supposed to meet in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, today, as agreed to in the 9 May document that aimed to end the fighting.

As part of the May agreement, the two South Sudanese officials agreed to meet on a monthly basis to review progress in the implementation of the accord, which followed a 23 January Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities that failed to stem the conflict.

“We really hope that progress will be made so that there will be full compliance with the cessation of hostilities agreement and major steps are taken towards comprehensive peace,” said Ms. Johnson.

“Ultimately, it is peace and stability that will permit people to feel safe enough to return to their communities and neighbourhoods,” she added.
At high-level event, UN officials call for human rights-backed development agenda

9 June - A new global new development agenda based on human rights and the rule of law is the surest pathway to balancing the needs of people and the planet, while eradicating extreme poverty and closing socio-economic gaps, senior United Nations officials said today.

Speaking to the UN General Assembly’s high-level event on that topic, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reminded participants that “everyone is entitled to all rights.”

“We have an opportunity to recognize the important role of human rights and the rule of law in reducing the vulnerability of the poor and building the future we want,” he told diplomats that are working towards a sustainable development agenda after 2015, the deadline for the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Legal identity, starting from birth registration, is essential for equal access to basic services, the UN chief noted. He also highlighted the importance of secure land tenure, for example, for enhancing food security.

Mr. Ban stressed, however, that the realization of human rights, including the right to development, depends fundamentally on the rule of law consistent with international norms and standards.

Over two days, the General Assembly will deliberate questions, among others, such as how human rights and the rule of law can be measured, said the 193-member body’s current President, John Ashe, and what kind of technical assistance can be given to Member States that lack a regime of respect for human rights and the rule of law but seek to have one.

He reminded participants of the “unfinished business” which includes children who remain unfed, uneducated, unprotected, unemployed and whose rights “remain unfulfilled.”

“At the same time, many nations remain under-developed, subject to systemic imbalances, with empty promises from development partners,” Mr. Ashe continued.

In a video address, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay urged participants to work on creating a development agenda where human rights are not a standalone goal but are included in all targets, addressing both sides of development – freedom from want and freedom from fear.

Speaking about her personal experiences in South Africa, Ms. Pillay underscored that “not every law is a good law” and “not every effort to enforce the law protects human rights.”

“Rule of law without respect for human rights is an empty shell,” she continued, calling also for strong global partnership, equality and non-discrimination in decision-making, and strong accountability.

In the process of creating a new development agenda based on human rights, representatives have the opportunity “to redefine the very idea of global development”, said Ms. Pillay. “No work more meaningful than this.”

Also addressing today’s opening, Anthony Lake, Executive Director of the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), highlighted that deliberations are taking place amid the 25th anniversary of the Convention of the Child, which states that the world’s youngest have rights. Despite this human rights treaty, “the plight of too many is lost,” he said.

Mr. Lake listed moral, economic and humanitarian reasons to aid children and respect their human rights, noting that they remain discriminated against due to gender, ethnicity, disability and other reasons. In addition, children are often overlooked, living in hard to reach areas such as slums, torn by conflict and natural disasters.
Today’s opening panelists also included Norway’s Crown Princess Mette-Marit who is the UNAIDS International Goodwill Ambassador. She urged politicians to remain committed and decisive in their actions, and to remember young people when creating the future development agenda. She also stressed the successes of a holistic agenda to prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS, and underlined the important role civil society has played in changing the way health care is delivered.

In programmes today and tomorrow, participants will hear from a variety of Government and civil society representatives. They include UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson who will give the keynote address on supporting national and international efforts on poverty eradication and sustainable development. He will speak on a panel with Asha-Rose Migiro, former Deputy Secretary-General and current Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs in Tanzania.

**Ban urges recommitment to landmark treaty governing use of world’s oceans**

9 June - Marking the upcoming 20th anniversary of the entry into force of the landmark treaty that has become known as the “Constitution for the Oceans”, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today encouraged Member States to recommit to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) at what he considers a crucial moment for climate change.

“People everywhere continue to look to the oceans for food security and as a source of jobs, prosperity and well-being,” Mr. Ban said in his remarks to the meeting of State parties to the UNCLOS, which runs through Friday at the Headquarters in New York.

“Oceans and seas can play a critical role in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and in the post-2015 development agenda,” he continued, referencing the anti-poverty targets whose approaching 2015 deadline has led to discussions on a new set of sustainable development goals.

Among its provisions, UNCLOS established that the seabed and the ocean floor beyond the limits of national jurisdiction are the “common heritage of mankind” whose use and protection are the right and responsibility of all.

The Convention, which came into force on 16 November 1994, governs all aspects of ocean space – including the delimitation of maritime boundaries, exploitation of living and non-living resources, protection and preservation of the marine environment, marine scientific research and the settlement of relevant international disputes.

It has contributed to setting up the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the International Seabed Authority and the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

The maritime accord also provides the basis for the equitable utilization, protection and preservation or resources in the oceans and seas.

The livelihoods of 12 per cent of the world’s population depend on the fishing sector. On average, 17 per cent of global animal protein intake comes from fisheries and aquaculture, and demand for fish protein is expected to double in the next 20 years, the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) has reported, yet some 28 per cent of global stocks are already overfished.

“We must address the many pressures facing the oceans as a result of overfishing, acidification, land-based activities and, above all, climate change,” he said, echoing his message for World Oceans Day, marked on 8 June and which this year underscored the power of collaboration to keep oceans and seas clean and healthy.

Mr. Ban will host a summit in September to further highlight the importance of climate change and sustainable development, and general momentum towards a universal UN-backed treaty on climate change by 2015 which would enter into force by 2020.

Ahead of this summit, and in line with the UN General Assembly’s declaration of 2014 as the International Year of Small
Island Developing States, the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States will be held in early September in Apia, Samoa, to focus on partnerships for sustainable development those nations.

UN, Norway to launch state-of-the-art research vessel to support endangered fisheries

9 June - The United Nations agricultural agency announced today that it is partnering with Norway to build an advanced research vessel as part of efforts to avert the effects of climate change and other threats to the world’s fish stocks, as calls were heard for urgent action to address those threats at an international forum in Rome.

The new $80 million research vessel Dr Fridtjof Nansen will host seven laboratories to collect data on marine ecosystems, climate change and pollution to help countries develop sustainable fisheries management, according to a press release by the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).

At the same time, FAO’s Director-General opened the Committee on Fisheries in Rome by stressing the importance of fisheries to the world’s food security and nutrition and sounding an alarm on the threats those resources face.

Fisheries and aquaculture make a “central contribution to food security and nutrition,” Jose Graziano da Silva said, adding that that sustainable development in the world’s island and coastal states was especially dependent on the “vitality of oceans and fish stocks.”

“Overfishing, pollution and climate change are putting this vitality at risk. The impacts are already evident. And the world’s poor, in rural and coastal areas, are among the most affected,” he said.

The Director-General pointed out that fisheries and aquaculture were the sources of 17 per cent of the animal protein consumed in the world and up to 50 per cent in some small islands and Asian countries. They were also central to the livelihoods of some of the most vulnerable families in the world.

“The livelihoods of 12 per cent of the world’s population depend on this sector. In particular, small-scale fisheries are the source of employment for more than 90 per cent of the world’s capture fishers and fish workers, about half of whom are women,” he said.

The Dr Fridtjof Nansen will replace an older craft of the same name that has been navigating the coast of Africa since 1993, carrying out in-depth research into the state of the continent’s marine ecosystems for the EAF-Nansen Project, the latest phase of a unique 40-year programme.

As a direct result of the project and with technical guidance from FAO, 16 countries in Africa have developed management plans for their fisheries, FAO said.
**Nigeria: UN envoy urges national actors to ‘close ranks’ to ensure release of schoolgirls**

**9 June** - A United Nations envoy today renewed the world body’s commitment to supporting ongoing efforts by the Nigerian Government to secure the safe release of the abducted schoolgirls from Chibok, and called for concerted efforts to tackle the insurgency in the north-east of the country.

The comments come as Said Djinnit, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for West Africa, concluded his second visit to the country since the 14 April abduction of the more than 200 girls from their school in Chibok in Borno state by Boko Haram militants.

“In the face of the threat of terrorism and insecurity posed by the activities of Boko Haram, the Special Representative urged all national stakeholders to close ranks and work together to overcome this daunting national challenge,” said a news release issued by the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA).

In the wake of the abduction, Mr. Djinnit was tapped by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to serve as his High-Level Representative to Nigeria. During the just concluded visit, he renewed the UN’s commitment to supporting Government’s ongoing efforts to secure the quick and safe release of all the abducted girls with the assistance of its partners.

He also continued his consultations on the abduction and related issues with government officials, prominent Nigerian personalities, civil society organizations, as well as regional and international partners.

In addition, Mr. Djinnit presided over the finalizing, with the UN Country Team in Nigeria, of a UN Integrated Support Package (ISP) to complement the Government’s efforts towards securing the safe release of the schoolgirls and addressing the related challenges.

The Package includes immediate support to the affected families, the population and the girls after their release, in particular with psycho-social counselling and helping them reintegrate with their families and communities.

It also includes response to emergency needs both in food and non-food items, early recovery support by promoting alternative livelihood, and activities geared towards addressing the long-term structural challenges through capacity building.

**UN envoy appeals for end to clan-based fighting in Somalia’s Lower Shabelle region**

**9 June** - The top United Nations envoy to Somalia today appealed to an end to clan-based hostilities in the Lower Shabelle region which have resulted in a number of casualties in recent days.

“All parties must refrain from violent actions, make immediate efforts to de-escalate the situation and resolve their differences through peaceful dialogue and compromise,” said Nicholas Kay, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM).

“I welcome the efforts of the Prime Minister, Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed, to diffuse tensions and restore stability. I call on the parties to respect the Prime Minister’s call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and to cooperate fully with the ministerial delegation being sent to the area,” he stated in a news release.

“The Somali people have suffered enough and know that no good can come from further violence and insecurity. We stand ready to support mediation efforts,” he added.
According to media reports, the clashes affected hundreds of residents and farmers in areas newly liberated in recent months from the insurgent group Al-Shabaab by the Somali National Army backed by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

FEATURE: Out from the shadows, victims of terrorism take centre stage at UN

8 June - Imagine being caught up in a hotel bombing while vacationing abroad and you find yourself alone in a foreign hospital. You are treated for the severe physical injuries sustained in the horrific incident and are eventually released from the hospital. But you and your loved ones have no idea about where or to whom to turn to deal with the consequences of your having witnessed and become a victim of a terrorist attack.

“The international community speaks about fighting terrorism, but we need to pay more attention to the human consequences of this global scourge,” Jehangir Khan, Director of the Office of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), told the UN News Centre.

“We need to ensure that the needs of victims and their families are met,” Mr. Khan said. “We have to do better collectively to listen to the voices and needs of the victims and their families and show support and solidarity” he added.

Although victims bear the brunt of terrorist attacks, they are often forgotten after the initial media interest surrounding the attacks inevitably evaporates.

But with terrorist attacks having been reported in some 40 UN Member States over the past two years, and deaths and injuries continuing to mount, victims of terrorism will take center stage at next week's review by the General Assembly of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

"The voices of victims of terrorism, who have suffered silently for far too long, also provide a powerful counter-narrative to the insidious propaganda of terrorists around the world," said Mr. Jehangir.

In that spirit, this coming Wednesday, in the presence of two UN staff who survived the 2003 bombing of UN headquarters in Baghdad, the Organization will launch a “Victims of Terrorism Support Portal.”

This means, with a few simple clicks, victims and their families will have the means to look for practical support and assistance from anywhere in the world.

The web platform is designed so that anyone can look up by country where they can seek medical, psychological, social and material support, as well as legal resources available to victims, and a list of organizations that are able to assist victims’ coping with the trauma of a terrorist attack.

As the website collects more information, it will grow into a repository for resources available to support victims, their families, communities and other organizations working on issues related to victims.

The recommendation for such a platform to help in building awareness of the cause of victims of terrorism and offer a tangible support base to alleviate their suffering came when UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the first time ever at the global level convened, victims, Governments, experts and civil society at a Symposium he convened on Supporting Victims of Terrorism in 2008.

And in his most recent report to the General Assembly on UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the Secretary-General noted that “the international community also needs to remember and support victims of terrorism.”

Reporting that there have been tens of thousands of additional victims and terrorism had spread to new areas in new and more challenging forms since the adoption of the strategy in 2006, the UN chief outlines a number of recommendations...
focusing on preventive aspects of counter-terrorism.

The report will serve as a basis for the Fourth Review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by the General Assembly to be held from June 11-13.

On the agenda are events examining such issues as “Conditions Conducive to the Spread of Terrorism” to the “Protection of Critical Tourism Infrastructure”, as well as “Countering Violent Extremism and Promoting Community Engagement in West Africa and the Sahel”, and the “Role of Young Community Leaders to Foster Resilient Communities.”

On the 13th of June, the General Assembly is expected to adopt a strong consensus resolution endorsing the Secretary General’s recommendations to make the Organization more responsive to the evolving global threat of terrorism - best demonstrated by the new UN Victims of Terrorism Support Portal.

In Gaza, senior UN envoy pledges support as Palestinian unity government takes shape

8 June - The senior United Nations envoy in the Middle East visited the Gaza Strip today for the first time since the signing of the Beach Camp Agreement and the formation of a Palestinian government of national consensus, and pledged the Organization’s ongoing support as the nascent process moves forward.

The formation of a unity government was announced on 2 June by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, and follows the late April reconciliation deal agreed in Gaza City's Beach Camp between long-time rival Palestinian factions, Fatah and Hamas.

While in Gaza, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, held a joint meeting at the Ministry of Public Works and Housing with a host of newly appointed officials: Minister of Women's Affairs, Haifa Al-Agha; Minister of Labor, Mamoun Abu Shahla; Minister of Public Works and Housing, Mufeed Al-Hasayneh; and Minister of Justice, Salim al-Saqqa.

"I congratulated the Ministers on their appointment and discussed with them the many practical challenges ahead,” said Mr. Serry in a press release issued by his Office, which added that he assured the officials of the full support of the UN, which is ready to increase its considerable programme of works in Gaza, including in the priority areas of water and energy.

“Gazans must, as soon as possible, feel the dividends of unity. Open crossings both for goods and people, access to construction material, re-establishing trade links between the West Bank and Gaza and exports are urgently needed to kickstart the economy and create job opportunities,” he said, highlighting in that regard the critical importance for calm to advance this agenda.

Mr. Serry also expressed hope that the obstacles on the Ministers' travel would soon be removed so that the new Government could carry out its duties unimpeded both in Gaza and in the West Bank.

"We count on a constructive approach by all stakeholders, including Israel, and urge all to refrain from unhelpful actions," he said.

The UN has long underscored the need for progress towards Palestinian unity in line with existing resolutions, within the framework of the Palestinian Authority and the commitments of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The formation of the Government of national consensus is a first step and opportunity to address the serious political, security, humanitarian and economic challenges ahead, says the press release.
‘One planet, one ocean – together, we must protect them,’ urges UN on World Oceans Day

8 June - To commemorate World Oceans Day, the United Nations family is encouraging the international community to reflect on the multiple benefits of oceans and commit to keeping them healthy and productive for current and future generations.

“We have to ensure that oceans continue to meet our needs without compromising those of future generations,” stressed Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in a message marking the Day, adding “their depths hold current and future solutions to humanity’s energy needs.”

Oceans regulate the planet’s climate while providing a significant source of nutrition and essential passage for global trade. World Oceans Day is an opportunity to celebrate the importance of the oceans for life on earth and to stand up for their protection.

Oceans generate most of the oxygen we breathe, absorb a large share of carbon dioxide emissions, and are important economically for countries that rely on tourism, fishing and other marine resources for income, and serve as the backbone of international trade.

Unfortunately, human pressures, including overexploitation, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, destructive fishing, as well as unsustainable aquaculture practices, marine pollution, habitat destruction, alien species, climate change and ocean acidification are taking a significant toll on the world’s oceans and seas.

In her message, Irina Bokova, Director-General of the UN Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO), emphasized that “at a time of rising threats, 'business as usual' is no longer acceptable – we must change how we understand, manage and use ocean resources and coastal areas. For this, we need to know more about the ocean and draw on stronger science to craft sustainable, ecosystem-based policies for the ocean and coasts.”

The UN General Assembly has recognized oceans and seas as an important part of sustainable development – as envisioned by the Millennium Declaration and its landmark anti-poverty Goals (MDGs). Looking now to craft a successor post-2015 sustainable development agenda, Member States have identified protecting oceans as one of the keys to creating a better, cleaner future for the planet.

“Billions of humans, plants and animals depend on our oceans each and every day,” said General Assembly President John W. Ashe in his message. “I call on Member States and other stakeholders to continue to take action to protect our oceans by reducing pollution, and protecting marine life for present and future generations.” he added.

Since 2009, the UN family has come together each year, urging communities to ensure that our oceans remain clean and healthy. This year’s theme “Together we have the power to protect the ocean!” underscores the power of collaboration.

This year, the observance coincides with the 20th anniversary of the entry-into-force of the landmark UN Convention on the Law of the Sea – known as “Constitution for the Oceans” – that provides a comprehensive legal regime for all ocean activities. It is also the International Year of Small Island Developing States.

The ocean is essential to our well-being and the future of our planet. World Oceans Day is an occasion for all Governments and societies to join forces in ensuring its protection.

“One planet, one ocean – together, we have the power to protect them both,” exhorted Ms. Bokova.
Afghan people will 'not be deterred,' declares UN envoy, condemning latest terrorist bombing

7 June - Following yesterday's “appalling” suicide bomb attack in Kabul against the convoy of a presidential candidate, the top United Nations official in Afghanistan has condemned the incident and reiterated his belief that the Afghan people will “not be deterred by such acts of terror.”

“I strongly condemn this appalling attack against the democratic process,” said Ján Kubiš, head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in a press statement issued earlier today in the wake of the incident, which killed 13 civilians and security personnel and wounded a further 46 people.

The incident took place in the run-up to the 14 June second round run-off to elect the country's next President. According to UNAMA, two suicide bombers attacked the convoy of presidential candidate Dr. Abdullah Abdullah while he was travelling to a political rally in western Kabul. Dr. Abdullah was uninjured.

“The high number of civilians killed and injured further shows a complete disregard for the lives of ordinary Afghans. Such an attack on a busy road used by many civilians violates the most basic principles of humanity” the UNAMA chief declared.

Mr. Kubiš underlined continued support for Afghanistan's electoral process and belief that the Afghan people were determined to defend democracy and would not be deterred by such acts of terror.

While expressing condolences to the families of those killed and wounded in the incident, UNAMA also reiterated that attacks directed against civilians are serious violations of international humanitarian law which parties to the armed conflict - including all anti-Government elements – must uphold.

“Attacks on civilians particularly through the use of indiscriminate improvised explosive devices (IEDs) may amount to a war crime,” added the Mission.

The UN Security Council yesterday issued a similarly strong condemnation of the attack on Dr. Abdullah's convoy, and also underlined their support for Afghanistan's democratic processes and looked forward to the second round of the presidential election and the continued orderly transition to a new administration.

In early April, Afghans thronged to polling stations to cast their ballots for a successor to President Hamid Karzai and members of 34 provincial councils. Following next weekend's run-off election, the presidential poll will result in the first democratic transfer of power from one elected leader to another in the country.

UN peacekeepers in eastern DR Congo help restore calm after inter-ethnic violence flares

7 June - Strongly condemning the fresh outbreak of deadly violence in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), sparked by a dispute over cattle, the head of the United Nations mission there has called for an immediate end to the fighting and has deployed UN peacekeepers to work alongside local authorities to help restore calm.

The inter-ethnic clashes “caused many casualties”, leaving at least 30 dead and 15 wounded, said a press release issued by the UN Organization Stabilization Mission (MONUSCO), describing the aftermath of a cattle rustling incident last night that led to fighting between the Bafuliru and Barundi/Banyamulenge communities in Uvira, South Kivu.

“This violence is unacceptable and must be halted immediately,” said Mission chief Martin
Kobler, noting that on the ground, peacekeepers have evacuated the injured to health centers, while MONUSCO and Congolese forces, known by the French acronym FARDC, are actively supporting local authorities to restore calm.

"Arrangements are being made to protect local populations with the deployment of peacekeepers in the town of Mutarule to strengthen the locally-based FARDC [troops],” confirmed Mr. Kobler.

As part of its mandate, which was renewed at the end of March for a period of one year, MONUSCO, is tasked with, among others, protecting civilians and working with Congolese Forces to quell the recurrent waves of conflict in eastern DRC threatening the overall stability and development of the country and wider Great Lakes region.

**Somalia: UN envoy welcomes release of ship crew held by pirates since 2010**

7 June - The United Nations envoy for Somalia has welcomed the release earlier today of sailors on a ship hijacked by Somali pirates nearly four years, and has called for the release of all remaining captives still being held by Somali pirates.

In a press release from the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), Nicholas Kay welcomed the release today of 11 crew members of the ship MV Albedo, held hostage since November 2010.

According to UNSOM, the 11 survivors of the MV Albedo crew were released to officials from the UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) inside Somalia and are now safely back in Kenya. The crew members from India, Iran, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka will be repatriated to their home countries over the coming days.

The MV Albedo had been held by armed Somali pirates since 12 November 2010. The ship sank close to the Somali coast in July 2013 due to mechanical failure and bad weather and the surviving crew had been held on shore by pirates since that time.

"For over three years the crew members and their families have suffered unimaginable distress. The crew underwent the trauma of piracy, their ship sinking and then being held ashore in very difficult conditions, said Mr. Kay, who heads UNSOM.

He commended the efforts of UNODC colleagues and the local authorities, who facilitated their safe return today.

UNODC’s Counter Piracy Programme, now in its fourth year of operation, supports the criminal justice professionals of States in the Indian Oceans region that are dealing with Somali piracy. It has developed an extensive police and Coast Guard contingent, as well a division that deals with hostage release and repatriation.

“While we have seen a significant reduction in piracy off the coast of Somalia in recent years, I remain deeply concerned that 38 other crew members are still being held hostage by Somali pirates,” said Mr. Kay: adding: “I call on those who continue to detain these crew members to release them without further delay so they can rejoin their families and loved ones.”