

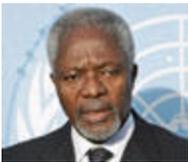


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Annan opens historic UN migration meeting by welcoming Belgian offer to host forum



Kofi Annan

14 September - Secretary-General Kofi Annan today welcomed Belgium's offer to host the first meeting next year of his proposed Global Forum on Migration and Development, a standing body in which countries will be able to discuss and exchange the best ideas and practices on the issue.

In an address in New York to the opening of the United Nations' first-ever high level gathering on migration and development, Mr. Annan said he was "especially delighted that so many of you have embraced my proposal" and asked him to help set it up.

He stressed that the planned Forum, which he first outlined in a report released in June, would not be some norm-setting intergovernmental commission on migration but would be led and overseen by States, with the UN system providing support.

"It would be informal, voluntary, consultative. Above all, it would not make binding decisions," Mr. Annan told the two-day High-Level Dialogue of the General Assembly on International Migration and Development.

"The Forum would allow us to build relationships of trust, and to bring together the best ideas that different countries have developed: facilitating remittances; engaging diasporas; exploring new ways to reduce poverty; building educational partnerships; and so on."

Peter Sutherland, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Migration, told a press conference today at UN Headquarters in New York that the Forum "will create, hopefully, an environment where a dialogue which has not existed in the past... will take place, which is a multilateral dialogue."

Mr. Annan said this week's landmark meeting is taking place at a time when the world increasingly appreciates that migrants can transform their adopted and native countries for the better.

While there are some negative aspects to migration, such as human trafficking, smuggling and social discontent, he said governments are more willing today to see the opportunities if they cooperate with other States on this subject.

More nations are affected by migration than at any time in history, evidence is mounting of the potential benefits of migration, and governments are starting to view migration "through the prism of opportunity, not fear."

General Assembly President Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa told the gathering that, "if harnessed constructively, migration can have a profound effect on development," with migrants' remittances to their native countries particularly helpful in reducing poverty.

But Sheikha Haya added that the migration of skilled peoples from developing countries to affluent nations can severely impede development in poorer States.

More than 140 speakers – comprising individual States, regional bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) – are scheduled to discuss the issues over the next two days. In addition to the plenary debate, the meeting will bring delegates together in informal round-table discussions.

Iraq must develop a 'truly national agenda' for all its people, UN envoy tells Council

14 September - Iraq's leaders must develop a "truly national agenda" relevant to all its people, the top United Nations envoy to the war-torn country told the Security Council today during a meeting to discuss Secretary-General Kofi Annan's latest situation report.



SRSG Ashraf Qazi

"The key challenge of the Government of Iraq is to develop a truly national agenda that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of all Iraqis," said Ashraf Qazi, the Secretary-General's Special Representative, at the start of the Council's discussions.

"Prime Minister [Nouri] al-Maliki has laid out a range of initiatives in his National Reconciliation Plan and has taken initial steps to broaden the basis of support for his Government and to increase the effectiveness of the Iraqi Security Forces."

Mr. Qazi, who spoke ahead of 16 other representatives, acknowledged the extent of the violence in Iraq – as laid out in the Secretary-General's report – but he said despite this there were still reasons for optimism. He also emphasized the importance of attaining stability.

"Whatever the challenges of the moment – and there are many – there is still reason for cautious optimism. The demonstrated resilience of the Iraqi people in the face of a succession of calamities and tribulations is reason enough to know they will not be defeated in achieving their aspirations," he said.

"Given Iraq's importance and potential, its neighbours and the wider international community have a vital stake in helping Iraq become a peaceful, stable and prosperous partner, fully integrated within the region and the international community."

He repeated Mr. Annan's warning that the country stands at an "important crossroads" that could lead to civil war but reiterated praise for Iraqi efforts to rehabilitate the country, in particular through the International Compact with Iraq.

The Compact, which is co-chaired by the UN, is a new partnership with the global community that was launched in July and

aims to pursue political, economic and social development over the next five years, and Mr. Qazi says this could become an “important vehicle” for reconstruction.

He highlighted that in a preparatory meeting on the Compact last Sunday in Abu Dhabi, the Government outlined its key priorities under the plan and also pledged its “strong commitment to tackling corruption...improving governance, and building and consolidating effective national institutions,” as well as reaching a host of other targets.

The UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) is fully committed to supporting the development of the Compact, which was also backed at last Sunday’s gathering by representatives of 13 Governments, the League of Arab States, the World Bank and other regional and international organizations.

Mr. Qazi said that the Secretary-General will convene a high-level meeting at UN Headquarters next Monday to review the development of the Compact along with other issues relating to Iraq, emphasizing that it was important to decide how best to assist the country.

“The best option of the international community is to prove the pessimists wrong by assisting the people and Government of Iraq in realizing their national vision,” he said. “There are few more noble endeavours to devote our energies and capacities to.”

Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon expected to be completed by end September: UN



UNIFIL
Commander Alain
Pellegrini

14 September - Marking one month since Security Council resolution 1701 ended the 34 days of fighting between Hizbollah and Israel in Lebanon, the United Nations Force Commander in the country said today he expects all Israeli forces to have withdrawn from the south by the end of September.

“The cessation of hostilities is generally maintained, the Israeli Army is continuing to withdraw from South Lebanon, while the Lebanese Army deploys in these areas. I expect the withdrawal to be complete by the end of this month,” said Maj. Gen. Alain Pellegrini, head of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

“Working in conjunction with the Lebanese Armed Forces, and in close coordination with the Israeli Army, I think we can ensure a stable environment here in south Lebanon, something that the people need very much to get on with their lives.”

UNIFIL said that it has observed a “number of minor incidents and violations” in its area of operation between the Litani River and the Blue Line that separates Lebanon and Israel, but added that these have not been of an offensive and hostile character, and the parties seem determined to uphold the cessation of hostilities agreement.

Resolution 1701 called for a strengthening of UNIFIL to up to 15,000 troops and Major General Pellegrini said a contingent from Spain would arrive on Friday. The Force currently has around 4,000 troops in its theatre of operations.

“UNIFIL is now enhancing its presence, we have been reinforced by Italian and French troops, and I expect the Spanish contingent to arrive tomorrow. We are starting to have the numbers that we need, we have a detailed concept of operation and the required rules of engagement.”

In a related development, the interim naval task force of ships from various nations continues to assist the Lebanese navy in patrolling its maritime boundary, and Secretary-General Kofi Annan has said in a letter to the Security Council that this will continue until a full UNIFIL naval task force is deployed, as agreed with Lebanon’s Government.

A group of UNIFIL military, police, customs and border experts are also reviewing security measures at other entry points in Lebanon, and the Force is also continuing its extensive humanitarian work on the ground, including helping to destroy the masses of unexploded ordnance that litter the countryside.

Darfur beset by another round of violent clashes and banditry, says UN mission

14 September - A gunman fired shots at African Union (AU) soldiers attempting to bring peace to Darfur, the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) said today as it reported on a fresh round of violent clashes and acts of banditry across the war-racked region.



UNMIS said that an unknown man fired two shots yesterday at a vehicle carrying AU soldiers near Kutum airstrip in North Darfur state. One soldier was struck in the leg while driving, and the gunman escaped.

On Tuesday, 10 armed men forced their way into a camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Tawilla, also in North Darfur, and stole animals. AU soldiers later killed one of the gunmen in an exchange of fire.

In South Darfur, the area around Buram remains inaccessible to humanitarian workers because of continued fighting, UN spokesman Yves Sorokobi told reporters at the daily press briefing in New York.

There have also been continuing clashes between Government forces, allied militias and rebel groups in West Darfur and North Darfur, according to UNMIS, although the number of casualties in either state is unconfirmed.

The clashes and banditry were reported one day after Secretary-General Kofi Annan warned that Darfur is headed for a catastrophe unless the Sudanese Government changes its mind and allows UN peacekeepers to take over from the existing AU operation.

Mr. Annan told a press conference at UN Headquarters that the world faced a “big challenge” to ensure there was not a repeat of the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

“If the African Union forces were to leave, and we are not able to put in a UN follow-on force, we are heading for a disaster, and I don’t think we can allow that to happen, particularly since we only recently passed the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ resolution,” he said.

Last month the Security Council voted to deploy more than 17,000 blue helmets in Darfur, saying it “invites the consent” of the Sudanese Government. But Khartoum has said repeatedly that it is opposed to such a force.

Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel and actor George Clooney urge UN action on Darfur

14 September - Nobel Peace Laureate Elie Wiesel and screen artist George Clooney today joined their voices at a meeting of the Security Council in New York to urge action to help the people of Darfur, Sudan, where African troops are slated to leave and a planned deployment of United Nations peacekeepers faces government opposition.

Describing Darfur as this century’s first genocide, Mr. Clooney warned the Council today that millions of Sudanese will die unless it takes “real and effective measures” before the end of the month to put an end to the killing and rapes in the war-torn region.

The actor and director – who visited Darfur earlier this year – told the 15-member body that the way it deals with the crisis there “will be your legacy, your Rwanda, your Cambodia, your Auschwitz.”

Nobel Laureate and UN Messenger of Peace Elie Wiesel, who himself survived the notorious Nazi death camp, reminded Council members that the UN Charter obligates them to save lives.

“You hold their destiny in your hands... Be worthy of your mission. Despair is not an option. Hope is,” Professor Wiesel said.

The meeting, hosted by United States Ambassador John Bolton, was held a day after Secretary-General issued a stark message that Darfur is headed for disaster unless the world can persuade Khartoum to accept UN peacekeepers to take over the work of the existing African Union (AU) peace operation.

When the Council voted to deploy more than 17,000 UN troops last month, the resolution also said it “invites the consent” of the Sudanese Government. But Khartoum has stated it is opposed to the arrival of blue helmets.

Mr. Clooney said the situation had become especially urgent because the AU operation is set to withdraw at the end of this month.

“The 1st of October will leave these people with nothing... With no protection, all the aid workers will leave immediately and the 2.5 million refugees who depend on that aid will die. [Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs] Jan Egeland estimates 100,000 a month. So after September 30th, you won’t need the UN. You will simply need men with shovels and bleached white linen and headstones.”

Acknowledging that the UN was faced with an extremely difficult task, he said that nevertheless “you have to decide what’s most urgent. You have the responsibility to protect. In the time that we are here today, more women and children will die violently in the Darfur region than in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Israel or Lebanon.”

Mr. Clooney added that Darfur represents “the first genocide of the 21st century and, if it continues unchecked, it will not be the last. My job is to come here today and to beg you on behalf of the millions of people who will die – and, make no mistake, they will die – for you to take real and effective measures to put an end to this.”

Professor Wiesel labelled Darfur “the world capital of human suffering, humiliation and despair... You know that the tragedy there seems endless as well as senseless. It has all the components of the worst and ugliest crimes of the last century: tribal hatred, vicious brutality, and scandalous behaviour of raping women [and] killing children.”

He compared the situation to that of Rwanda in 1994, when the Security Council was accused of being indifferent to the genocide there that led to the deaths of an estimated 800,000 people in less than four months.

“The victim is always doubly cursed, and doubly punished. First, by being a victim, and then, by being alone. Miserably alone and forgotten by the so-called decent people and its reputable spokesmen and leaders.”

About 1.9 million people have been displaced and nearly 3 million in total depend on humanitarian aid for food, shelter and health care across Darfur, an impoverished region roughly the size of France on Sudan’s western flank. Fighting between Government forces, allied militias and rebel groups has raged since 2003.

Security Council extends expert group on arms embargo against Côte d’Ivoire

14 September - Determining that the situation in Côte d’Ivoire continues to pose a threat to international peace and security, the United Nations Security Council today unanimously voted to extend the mandate of the three-person team monitoring the arms embargo against the West African country.

Under today’s resolution, the Group of Experts, which was established early last year to gather and analyze information on arms caches and flows in the region, will continue working through 15 December.



The Council also asked the Group to prepare an updated report on the effectiveness of the weapons ban, as well as on the success of other States’ efforts to prevent the import of rough diamonds from Côte d’Ivoire, which has been divided between government and rebel forces since fighting broke out in 2002. The Group will also report on any serious obstacles to the

freedom of movement of the UN mission in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).

Meanwhile, a UN expert is calling for full, independent investigation into last month's dumping of toxic waste around the capital, Abidjan, that has reportedly killed at least six people and sickened thousands of others.

"The dumping of toxic products and wastes violates a wide range of human rights, including the right to life, the right to health and the right to adequate housing," said Okechukwu Ibeanu, the Special UN Rapporteur on adverse effects of the illicit movement and dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes on the enjoyment of human rights.

Mr. Ibeanu called upon all concerned countries and parties "to immediately disclose all information on the exact content and composition of the toxic waste and any other information that could be used to save lives and treat persons that have been affected by the waste."

He also called for the identification and prosecution of those responsible for the dumping, as well as compensation for the victims and their families.

Last week the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) quoted sources saying the as yet unidentified substances were dumped from a vessel, Probo Koala, on 19 August, and possibly exported illegally from Europe.

UN issues first-ever performance report consolidating financial and programme data



14 September - In a move that advances Secretary-General Kofi Annan's reform agenda for the United Nations, the world body has released a corporate-style budget and programme performance report, consolidating information that had previously been scattered in numerous different documents and packaging it in a user-friendly format accessible to the general public.

The initiative stems from a proposal by Mr. Annan in his final reform report, *Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide*, calling for a single, comprehensive annual report, that, for the first time, would contain both financial and programme information in one volume.

"The intention was to share, in a transparent, accountable way, what we do, how well we do it, and the nature of the obstacles and factors in play," said Under-Secretary-General for Management Christopher Burnham, explaining that the report provides information on the UN's efficiency.

Speaking to reporters in New York, he emphasized that those who produced the report deliberately used plain language. "In devising a style for this report, we made a conscious effort to express our work in understandable language, so that complex operations and issues are made more accessible to 'non-insiders.'"

Mr. Burnham drew parallels with businesses and other entities that are accountable for producing results. "This report is what corporations around the world do. This report is what foundations around the world do. This report is what non-governmental organizations and government agencies do around the world," he said.

"It starts off with what we might call a letter to shareholders. Of course we also want to reach out to the global taxpayers who pay our salaries, who pay the electricity bill here, who pay for the operations of the United Nations," he added.

The report includes an independent assessment by the UN's Inspector General as well as data on performance. "We have tried to be absolutely honest and fair in that appraisal," Mr. Burnham said, adding financial information "shows you exactly where we are spending our money." Audit information is also contained in the document.

With Mr. Annan now completing the final year in his decade-long service at the UN's helm, Mr. Burnham said the initiative should endure. "I hope this will set the standard for future secretaries-general to produce this kind of report so that we can

continue with our commitment to transparency and accountability, first of all to the global taxpayer but equally to the Member States who comprise our board of directors,” the management chief said.

The Secretary-General echoes this idea in his foreword. “I expect this report to develop over the years along with our performance monitoring and evaluation tools. There is great scope for improvement in these systems, which should in turn enable us to improve our accountability and — what really matters — our results.”

Secretary-General welcomes philanthropic initiatives to support Africa

14 September - Hailing recent announcements by two major philanthropic organizations of plans to undertake massive development projects in Africa, Secretary-General Kofi Annan today expressed the hope that others would also come forward to help countries on the continent to fight poverty, hunger and disease.

Earlier this week, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation announced an alliance to contribute to a “Green Revolution” in Africa by dramatically increasing the productivity of small farms, starting with a \$150 million investment.

Also this week, George Soros and his Open Society Institute pledged \$50 million for the Millennium Villages Project of the Millennium Promise Organization.

In a statement issued by his spokesman, Mr. Annan said the two initiatives “represent the kind of clear, practical support needed to help give Africans living in rural areas, where the needs are greatest, the tools and support needed to help feed themselves and their children and pull themselves out of poverty.”

Spokesman Yves Sorokobi voiced Mr. Annan hope that “these far-sighted actions will encourage others to step forward and support the work by the United Nations and other partners in assisting African countries in their fight against the challenges of poverty, disease and hunger.”

UN agencies coordinate aid for thousands of flood-hit Nepalese

14 September - Families affected by the floods and landslides that have hit Nepal this year are receiving assistance thanks to a coordinated effort by United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Nepal Red Cross Society.



The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is continuously supporting district government’s coordination structure and coordinating disaster response meetings in Nepal. According to the latest assessments conducted by the Red Cross Society, a total of 26 districts have been affected. The estimated total number of affected families is around 16,000 but will increase as assessments in newly-affected districts are still in process.

“Our main concern with the floods in Nepal, that estimate of the number will of people who are affected – will drastically rise,” Stephanie Bunker, a spokesperson for OCHA said of the floods.

The Red Cross Society estimates that over 45,000 people to date have received various relief assistance. While the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that no epidemics have occurred, the agency in collaboration with the Epidemiology and Disease Control Division (EDCD) and the District Health Office in Nepal, will continue monitoring the health situation, paying attention especially to vector-borne diseases.

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) expects to deliver a total of 1,300 metric tonnes of food, including rice, lentils, salt and oil to those affected in the country’s western regions. An assessment of longer-term humanitarian needs in the realms of shelter and education is now being conducted. A total of 5,700 educational kits will be provided to affected districts by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and its NGO partners.

“Our operations are underway and working with Nepal Red Cross we plan to make sure that food isn't a problem for the victims of this tragic crisis,” Richard Ragan, WFP's Country Director for Nepal, said earlier this week. “While much of the world's attention is focused on the ongoing peace process in Nepal, it is important that we also respond to the very real and immediate needs of these victims of a terrible natural disaster.”

In the most affected districts of Banke, Bardiya and Achham, deliveries of immediate relief assistance continue despite the bad weather that has occasionally hampered transportation of the assistance, OCHA said.

In Kosovo, senior UN official speaks out against violence

14 September - Visiting a local community in Kosovo today, a senior United Nations official spoke out against violence in the province, which the world body has administered since western forces drove out Yugoslav troops in 1999.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Principal Deputy Special Representative, Steven Schook, met with leaders in Peja/Pec and condemned a recent bombing attack which was carried out against a returnee property in Shtuple village.

“I ask the citizens in Peja/Pec and surrounding communities to spread the message that it is not the time and it is never the time to take this kind of threat in action. Whoever is behind serves no interest of the people of Kosovo; they can only serve the interest of some evil, despicable thought processes,” he said.

Following meetings with local officials, he said finances figured high on the agenda. “We talked a lot about the reality of the Kosovo Consolidated Budget; how it is going to get smaller next year,” he said. “We talked about what resources we have and how we can apply more efficiently to help all the communities here.”

The top UN envoy to Kosovo was in New York yesterday where he briefed the Security Council, voicing support for Mr. Annan's call for more progress in the talks on the province's future. “Kosovo needs to be rid of this uncertainty, and to move on,” said Joachim Rucker.

UN takes over policing activities in Timor-Leste



14 September - Less than three weeks after the Security Council approved an expanded mission in Timor-Leste, the United Nations Police (UNPOL) there has assumed command of national policing in the fragile country.

At an official ceremony in the capital Dili yesterday, officers from Malaysia, Australia and Portugal symbolically replaced their national berets with UN blue berets, bringing the official number of UN Police in Timor-Leste to 554.

Addressing the officers, the Secretary-General's Special Representative Sukehiro Hasegawa said their guiding mission was “to protect the Timorese people against acts of violence and to help rebuild their houses and institutions of governance, while fully respecting the sovereign state of Timor-Leste.”

One of UNPOL's main duties will be to help reconstitute the Timorese National Police, training officers in human rights, community policing and incident management.

Violence earlier this year engulfed the tiny country, which the UN shepherded to independence from Indonesia in 2002. Dozens were killed and more than 150,000 people – or about 15 per cent of the national population – fled their homes.

Last month the Security Council approved a resolution creating a new and expanded UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). The mission's civilian component will initially include more than 1,600 police personnel and up to 34 military liaison and staff officers.

UN volunteer held by Eritrean authorities remains incommunicado

14 September - A United Nations Volunteer arrested and detained in Eritrea more than three weeks ago remains incommunicado, despite appeals by Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), the mission reported today.

The UNMEE staff member was arrested on 28 August. Since that time, Eritrean authorities have refused to provide access or to explain why they took the staffer into custody.

Following the arrest and the East African nation's simultaneous decision to expel five UN security personnel, Mr. Annan expressed his deep concern about the "pattern of hostility at the United Nations in Eritrea."

In recent months, authorities there have arrested some one dozen UN staffers, a number of whom were later released.

UNMEE monitors the ceasefire along the disputed border over which the Ethiopia and Eritrea fought a war from 1998-2000.

Its work has been hampered by Ethiopia's refusal to accept the border set by a Boundary Commission and restrictions imposed on the mission by Eritrea. In May, the Security Council cut the peacekeeping force's troop levels by more than 1,000 to 2,300.

World's poorest countries increasingly wired, UN agency reports

14 September - According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), "teledensity" has more than doubled in the majority of least developed countries (LDCs) since 2000 with some of them boosting connectivity by as much as 20 times, thanks to rapid growth in the deployment of mobile technologies.



According to ITU statistics, LDCs with the highest annual growth rate in terms of cellular subscribers over the period 2000-2005 were Djibouti, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Niger, Liberia, Mali, Sudan, Yemen and Laos. Prepaid services, accounting for almost 90 per cent of the entire market, have contributed to the explosive expansion of the mobile sector in LDCs. In Afghanistan, Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Haiti, Somalia and Niger all mobile subscriptions were prepaid.

Overall, access to the internet has increased and more interest is on deployment of broadband services in rural areas. By 2005, internet user penetration caught up with fixed line penetration in LDCs, providing access to a host of applications, such as e-education, e-health, e-business, e-agriculture, and e-government.

Despite recent progress, LDCs continue to face major challenges. Many established policies and regulations have become obsolete, leading to inefficient and increasingly untenable restrictions and barriers to the development, the ITU said in a news release, calling on policy makers and regulators to address these gap

UN agricultural development fund receives largest funding increase in two decades



14 September - The Member States of the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have set a \$720 million target for resources replenishment, the largest amount for the agency since 1981.

“This increase shows that our members recognize the crucial importance of rural development to achieving the Millennium Development Goals,” said the President of IFAD, Lennart Båge. Seventy-five per cent of the world’s poorest people, 800 million men, women and children, live in rural areas and depend on agriculture and related activities for their livelihoods.

“If we are to achieve our commitment to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, we must focus on the rural areas of developing countries, where most poor people live,” he said, referring to an international target that is part of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The funding, which covers the period from 2007 to 2009, will allow IFAD to significantly increase its programme of work in developing countries, the agency said in a news release.

A specialized agency of the United Nations, IFAD is dedicated to eradicating rural poverty in developing countries, especially low-income, food-deficit countries. It works with governments to develop and finance programmes and projects that enable poor rural people to improve their livelihoods sustainably and overcome poverty themselves.

Majority of world’s child workers employed in agriculture, says UN agency

14 September - Agricultural work accounts for some 70 per cent of child labour worldwide, forcing children to work long hours, operate dangerous machinery, and carry loads that are too heavy for their growing bodies, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said today.

“Most working children in the world are found on farms and plantations, not in factories, sweatshops or urban areas,” said Jennie Dey DePryck, Chief of FAO’s Rural Institutions and Participation Service, in a statement issued in Rome.



Agriculture accounts for 70 percent of child labour worldwide

The FAO noted that agriculture is one of the world’s three most hazardous work sectors, along with mining and construction.

“Some agricultural activities – mixing and applying pesticides, using certain types of machinery – are so dangerous that children should be clearly prohibited from engaging in them,” said Parviz Koohafkan, Director of FAO’s Rural Development Division.

He cautioned, however, that the issue is a complex one since not all of the agricultural work that children perform is harmful to their development and well-being.

“When it comes to subsistence and family agriculture, children’s participation in family farm activities helps them learn valuable skills, build self-esteem and contribute to the generation of household income, which has a positive impact on their own livelihoods,” Mr. Koohafkan said.

UN environment agency partners with Google Earth to spotlight crisis zones



UNEP Partners with Google Earth

14 September - Touring a virtual planet earth, zooming in on environmental hotspots and comparing today's crisis zones with yesterday's areas of natural beauty have all become possible thanks to a partnership between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Google Earth.

Google Earth – Google's 3D virtual world browser now provides the option to use "UNEP: Atlas of our Changing Environment," which offers satellite images of 100 environmental hotspots from around the world. The project builds on the success of UNEP's popular hardcover release *One Planet, Many People: Atlas of our Changing Environment*.

"These satellite pictures are a wake-up call to all of us to look at the sometimes devastating changes we are wreaking on our planet," said UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner. "Through spectacular imagery, Google Earth and UNEP offer a new way of visualizing the dangers facing our planet today. By tapping into the global Google community, we are able to reach out to millions of people who can mobilize and make a difference."

The printed Atlas *One Planet, Many People: Atlas of our Changing Environment* was produced in cooperation with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the United States Geological Survey and the University of Maryland.

UNEP: Atlas of our Changing Environment uses images from the 2005 publication together with satellite depictions of changes to African lakes (based on the 2006 *Africa's Lakes: Atlas of our Changing Environment*), along with several new images and updates, and brings them into the virtual world of Google Earth. Each location features multiple satellite images which are overlaid directly on Google Earth.

"Google Earth technology already allows a more informative and accessible means of delivering information about our changing environment," said the project coordinator, Ashbindu Singh, of UNEP's Division of Early Warning and Assessment. "By keeping pace with the changing world of technology and media, UNEP helps the environmental community keep pace with the real changes in our real world."