In the headlines:

- 'Severe impact' feared in Yemen due to rain potential of cyclone Chapala
- 'We need greater transparency and accountability,' Member States told at debate on revitalizing UN Assembly
- UN calls for urgent action to address child statelessness before problems become 'set in stone'
- Climate change poses 'major threat' to food security, warns UN expert
- 'Racism is incompatible with democracy,' says UN expert, spotlighting challenges faced by people of African descent
- Top UN humanitarian official in Libya calls for immediate release of abducted aid workers
- More reliable data needed to combat racism and discrimination – UN human rights expert
- Iraq: UN health agency mobilizes immunization campaign to help control cholera outbreak
- Ban offers ‘deepest sympathies’ to Israel on 20th anniversary of assassination of Yitzhak Rabin
- Corruption feeds and sustains ‘spiralling’ wildlife and forest crime – UN anti-crime chief
- In Peru, UN conference addresses poverty and inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean

'Severe impact’ feared in Yemen due to rain potential of cyclone Chapala

3 November - As cyclonic storm Chapala made landfall this morning in the southwest of Riyan in Yemen with a surface wind speed of 120 to 130 kilometres per hour, United Nations agencies reported that although it had weakened rapidly, the impacts could be severe and challenging.

“Our big fear about this cyclone is the rainfall potential here,” said Clare Nullis, spokesperson for the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) speaking at a press briefing at UN Headquarters in Geneva.

“There have been various reports that Yemen could get the equivalent of six years…the equivalent of ten years of rainfall, it’s actually very difficult to quantify it,” she continued.

“I think the main point to underline is that Yemen is normally very arid, it doesn’t have the infrastructure to cope, so we really do expect this cyclone to have a very significant impact.”

Cyclone Chapala made landfall in Yemen while fighting between the Government and rebel Houthi forces in the country continues. Since March 2015, the crisis has been an all-out conflict, with a military operation launched by a coalition led by Saudi Arabia.

Amid the violence, many Yemenis are now receiving a “crash course” on how to cope with the cyclone, Ms. Nullis explained. She further noted that that the country doesn’t have a functioning meteorological service or an observation network – making is challenging for WMO to know how much rain Yemen will get, and to assess what it happening.
Meanwhile, World Health Organization (WHO) spokesperson Fadela Chaib said that the UN health agency and the Yemeni Ministry of Public Health and Population are intensifying efforts to respond to the effects of cyclone Chapala, which are expected to be more severe in Shabwah and Hadhramaut.

“These areas have a combined population of about 1.8 million people. This includes more than 100,000 internally displaced people and 27,000 refugees and migrants,” said Ms. Chaib.

“In preparation for the health impact of the cyclone, WHO has delivered trauma kits 1,000 patients in Mukalla district of Hadhramaut Governorate. The Organization is also providing 12,000 litres of diesel to eight hospitals to ensure their continuous functionality as well as 2,500 litres of petrol for 16 ambulances,” she added, noting that a Strategic Health Operation Centre was being established in the WHO Office in Sana’a.

Asked about casualties, Ms. Chaib said that no information is available at the moment, and stressed the importance of preparedness to ensure that health facilities are functioning and that information is available to facilitate appropriate emergency response.

She also indicated that given the “challenging situation” in Yemen, WHO will be relying on national non-governmental organizations and the Ministry of Public Health to ensure that aid is provided in places where needs are more acute, given their knowledge of the area and accessible routes.

'We need greater transparency and accountability,' Member States told at debate on revitalizing UN Assembly

3 November - To advance the values, principles and purposes of the United Nations, the General Assembly’s role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency must be continuously reviewed and enhanced, the 193-member body’s President, Mogens Lykketoft, said today, stressing the need for transparency throughout the UN system.

In his address to the annual joint debate on Assembly revitalization, Mr. Lykketoft said that a recent resolution had mandated the Ad hoc Working Group on the issue to continue its work during this 70th session.

The Assembly President explained that the Working Group focused on four thematic clusters that identified ways to improve the General Assembly, in compliance with its mandate.

Firstly, Mr. Lykketoft said that the Working Group assessed the role and authority of the Assembly and encouraged the implementation of resolutions and reaffirmed the relationship between the principle organs of the UN.

“I am working to increase cooperation, coordination and exchange of information with the presidents of the principal organs and the Secretary-General. Indeed, only two weeks ago, I briefed the Security Council during its open debate on working methods, an exercise which I feel was beneficial to both Organs,” said Mr. Lykketoft.

Secondly, the President noted that the Group focused on the working methods of the General Assembly and reported that significant progress has been made through the sharing of best practices and lessons learned between the Main Committees.

“I have met with each of the chairs of the [Assembly’s] six Main Committees, and we have until now had one meeting with the General Committee where we discussed issues of common interest, including the streamlining of the agenda of the General Assembly in light of the 2030 agenda and the need to efficiently manage time in the work of the Committees – a further meeting will be held in November,” stated Mr. Lykketoft.

He added that he will convene an informal meeting on enhancing cooperation between permanent missions and the Secretariat during the ongoing session.
Mr. Lykketoft said that the third cluster focused by the Working Group relates to the selection and appointment of the next UN Secretary General and added that Assembly resolution 69/321 provides clear guidance as to the way forward on this issue.

“In this regard, I and the President of the Security Council will circulate a joint letter to the membership inviting candidates to be presented in a timely manner and describing the entire process,” he explained, adding that the resolution also the inclusion and consideration of female candidates will go a long way to ensure that the position is filled by the best candidate.

He went on to note that the final cluster considered by the Working Group relates to the running of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, a matter which has taken on even greater significance given “recent events” relating to the President of the 68th session, referring to John Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda, who was recently arrested on charges of corruption.

“The primary role of the President and his or her Office continues to be to officiate the meetings of the General Assembly but in reality, the work of the Office is much more extensive and includes the fulfilment of mandates set down in multiple GA resolutions,” Mr. Lykketoft remarked.

“Transparency, however, is also a matter for each and every President and from the outset I have taken a number of steps to support this objective including by carrying out regular press briefings or providing information on the staffing of my office,” he added.

He stressed that the Presidency is not just a great honour but a “considerable responsibility” as it requires an adequately staffed office that needs to be run effectively while adhering to the highest standards of ethics and governance.

“Like any institution, however, there is always scope for improvement and this, I believe, should be considered in further detail as a matter of priority by the Ad-hoc Working Group on GA Revitalization,” said Mr. Lykketoft.

Mr. Lykketoft also vowed that each staff member at the Office of the President of General Assembly, himself included, will ensure to uphold integrity and impartiality, transparency and accountability and professionalism and effectiveness in all its work throughout the session.

In his remarks, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also called for greater transparency and accountability following the allegations against Mr. Ashe, “a serious matter which strikes at the prestige and reputation of this General Assembly.”

Reiterating his shock at the “very serious allegations against the former Assembly President, Mr. Ban emphasized that the Assembly must learn from the incident and act with resolve.

“It is critical to learn from any unfortunate incident or terrible event. Member States must now improve the functioning of the Office of the President of the General Assembly to make it more robustly organized, including the budget supporting the President's activities,” said Mr. Ban.

He stressed on the upholding the highest level of integrity and ethical standards throughout the UN and added that he has taken note of the intent of the United States Attorney to get to the bottom of the very serious allegations about the propriety of the conduct of the former Assembly President.

Mr. Ban noted that in order to address the issues raised, he has requested an internal audit by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) of the interactions between the UN and the entities mentioned in the criminal complaint.

He also added that OIOS had been asked to audit any funds received from these entities, as well as any funds disbursed by the UN to them and to determine whether, during the course of the audit, any other matters arise that merit further audit.

Further, the Secretary-General said that he had established an internal Task Force, chaired by the Chef de Cabinet, to review the arrangements for the Office's financing and staffing.
“I have also requested the heads of UN entities mentioned in the criminal complaint that may have engaged with the entities involved in the criminal complaint, to advise me about what they are doing to look into the matter,” said Mr. Ban.

Regarding the revitalization of the General Assembly, Mr. Ban said that he welcomed the Assembly's initiatives to involve more stakeholders on issues of critical importance to the international community.

“Informal interactive thematic debates now include civil society and others whose voices and actions can add great value to our work,” noted Mr. Ban.

“These advances show us the wide-ranging scope of this agenda item, which encompasses the role and authority of the General Assembly, its working methods, and the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly,” he added.

**UN calls for urgent action to address child statelessness before problems become 'set in stone'**

3 November - Stateless children across the world share the same feelings of discrimination, frustration and despair, according to a new United Nations report published today, that warns that urgent action is needed before statelessness “sets in stone” problems haunting their childhood.

“In the short time that children get to be children, statelessness can set in stone grave problems that will haunt them throughout their childhoods and sentence them to a life of discrimination, frustration and despair,” the UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres said in a press release, adding that no child should be stateless.

The High Commissioner’s Office (UNHCR) described the report – I am Here, I Belong: The Urgent Need to End Childhood Statelessness – as the first geographically diverse survey of the views of stateless children, which identifies the common problems they face as profoundly affecting their ability to enjoy childhood, lead a healthy life, study and fulfil their ambitions.

More than 250 people – including children, youth and their parents or guardians – were interviewed in Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Georgia, Italy, Jordan, Malaysia and Thailand last July and August. Many of the dozens of young people in the seven countries said that being stateless had taken a serious psychological toll, describing themselves as “invisible,” “alien,” “living in a shadow,” “like a street dog” and “worthless.”

Children also shared about the tough challenges they face growing up, often on the margins of society, denied the rights most citizens enjoy. Many reportedly said they are often treated like foreigners in the country they have lived in all their lives.

According to UNHCR, stateless young people are often denied the opportunity to receive school qualifications, go to university and find a decent job. They face discrimination and harassment by authorities and are more vulnerable to exploitation. Their lack of nationality often sentences them and their families and communities to remain impoverished and marginalized for generations.

In addition, statelessness also affects the future of young people. One young woman in Asia told UNHCR researchers that she has been unable to take up job offers as a teacher because she is stateless and can only find work in a local shop. “I want to tell the country that there are many people like me.”

Mr. Guterres stressed that the report, released one year after the launch of UNHCR's #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024, highlights the need to end the suffering of stateless children in a world where a child is born stateless at least every 10 minutes. During the past year, regional initiatives and action by States have seen the global community rally behind the campaign, but UNHCR is calling on more countries to support it.
In order to end statelessness, UNHCR is urging all States to allow children to gain the nationality of the country in which they are born if they would otherwise be stateless; reform laws that prevent mothers from passing their nationality to their children on an equal basis as fathers; eliminate laws and practices that deny children nationality because of their ethnicity, race or religion; and ensure universal birth registration to prevent statelessness.

Meanwhile, Mr. Guterres is at UN Headquarters in New York today to present the new report at a high-level panel discussion on the importance of the right to nationality.

**Climate change poses ‘major threat’ to food security, warns UN expert**

3 November - Climate change poses severe and distinct threats to food security, and could subject an additional 600 million people to malnutrition by 2080, a United Nations human rights expert warned today.

“Increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather, rising temperatures and sea levels, as well as floods and droughts have a significant impact on the right to food,” said Hilal Elver, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, in a news release.

“All these climate incidents will negatively impact on crops, livestock, fisheries, aquaculture and on people’s livelihoods,” she added, warning that responding to the food demand through large-scale production oriented agricultural models is not the right solution.

Ms. Elver also underlined that there is a need for a major shift from industrial agriculture to transformative systems such as agro-ecology that support the local food movement, protect small holder farmers, respect human rights, food democracy and cultural traditions, and at the same time maintain environmental sustainability and facilitate a healthy diet.

“Those who have contributed the least to global warming are the ones set to suffer the most from its harmful effects,” she stressed. “Urgent action is needed to respond to the challenges posed by climate change, but mitigation and adaptation policies should respect the right to food as well as other fundamental human rights.”

The Special Rapporteur made her recommendations in advance of the UN climate change conference, known as COP 21 due to take place in Paris from 30 November to 11 December. The aim of the summit is to achieve a universally applicable legal instrument under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

“Civil society pressure is mounting on the parties of the UNFCCC to achieve results in Paris by adopting a human rights approach to the climate change agreement that will respect, protect and fulfil human rights of all persons, and especially those most vulnerable. Any agreement must include a clear commitment by all relevant parties to ensuring climate justice and food security for all,” Ms. Elver said.

“As jointly stated by all special procedure mandate holders on World Environment Day in June, Governments should ?make sure that human rights are at the core of climate change governance.‘”

Meanwhile, the Special Rapporteur highlighted her concerns surrounding the impact of climate change on the right to food in her recent report presented to the UN General Assembly’s Third Committee in October.

Independent experts or special rapporteurs are appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a country situation or a specific human rights theme. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.
‘Racism is incompatible with democracy,’ says UN expert, spotlighting challenges faced by people of African descent

3 November - Debunking the myth of racial hierarchy, United Nations experts on racial discrimination today said that it is imperative to deconstruct, on a global scale, the ideological myth of a superior race and the resulting conviction of a superior culture.

Addressing a special event at UN Headquarters on Confronting the Silence: Perspectives and Dialogue on Structural Racism against people of African Descent Worldwide, Mireille Fanon-Mendes, Chair of the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent said that the attacks on human dignity are elaborated due to “supposed hierarchy of races and cultures and do not concern only one or [another], but the entire international community.”

The discussion was organized by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, with the co-sponsorship of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the UN Department of Public Information, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, Black Lives Matter, and Amnesty International USA.

Among other speakers, the event featured welcoming remarks by Ivan Šimonović, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, who recalled that the gathering was being held in the context of the International Decade for People of African Descent, who, he said are a distinct group that regrettably faces racism and structural discrimination, and continue to face impediments to the realization of their rights.

“Slavery and the slave trade are the basis of the widespread and systemic manifestations of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia…that we see people of African descent face today,” he said, adding that colonialism reinforced the challenges and they were further reinforced by, among others modern day social and economic marginalization.

In her remarks, Ms. Fanon-Mendes said that in addition to historical consequences [people of African descent] had to face, they and Africans – with colonialism and economic migration or because of war – are the only ones subject to discrimination based on skin colour; a biological parameter that completely escapes the control of the victim of this ostracism. She added: “The hierarchy of races is scientifically false, morally condemnable, and socially unjust.”

She urged Member States to reverse the “process of invisibility and inferiority” that the people of African descent face and to acknowledge their legitimate aspirations.

Ms. Fanon-Mendes said that coordination of Member States and civil society will help in ensuring that “the legacy of this terrible history” is overcome. She further called for historicizing of slave trade in in order to achieve an assumed and shared history and to form an accurate sequence of the order of construction of racism.

“To question the political and social construction of race, including its role at the time of the abolition of slavery [during which the freemen] had no other choice than to continue working on the plantations of their former masters, is an essential step if we want to emerge from a traumatic past,” she explained.

She also stressed the need to deconstruct all assumed racial myths by “flushing out” any factor that contributes to inequality and structural discrimination.

Another keynote speaker Harry Belafonte, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, recalled his time with legendary African American actor, Paul Robeson, who had said artist are the gatekeepers of truth; humanity’s moral compass. As such, Mr. Belafonte continued, he sought to use the arts as a tool to bring the human family together.

Continuing, he said that while the “mighty alliance” of the Second World War was supposed to have brought an end to
fascism and intolerance, “one serious flaw was that the Allies were as guilty of racial oppression as was Hitler.” Decades of racial oppression, discrimination and intolerance, before and since the war, has meant that “most of us people of colour know very little about the diaspora…the depth of us as African descendants, is not known one to the other.

Yet, Mr. Belafonte stressed that the United Nation is “the place to sit and have a conversation about settling the affairs of the cruelty of racism and classicism,” and he looked forward to the discussions that were ahead and the presentations of other speakers and participants.

Also addressing the event, Mutuma Ruteere, UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance said the grave issue of racial profiling across the world “impairs the fundamental rights of individuals and groups and expands on discrimination already suffered as a result of ethnic origin or minority status.”

He emphasized that racial and ethnic profiling is prohibited under international human rights law, as it violates multiple human rights, including the right to live free from discrimination, the right to equality before the law, the right to personal freedom and security and the right to the presumption of innocence.

“The manifestation of racial profiling has often been observed in stop and check operations which in some places disproportionately target minority groups. In Europe for instance, minorities including Roma people suffer unequal levels of stops by police. Similarly people of African descent have historically been subjected to practices of racial profiling,” said Mr. Ruteere.

He also remarked that newer patterns of racial and ethnic profiling have surfaced since Member States took measures to counter terrorism in the recent years.

“Migrants and minority groups have been particularly susceptible to the adverse effects of these new law enforcement practices. In the context of immigration, official border crossings and hubs of transportation, such as airports, railway stations, and bus depots, have been consistent places where racial and ethnic profiling takes place,” Mr. Ruteere explained.

He expressed concern at the creation of “risk profiles” for specific ethnic groups by law enforcement agencies, as this generates fear “that racial and ethnic profiling may become a regularized and permanent fixture of immigration and border control management systems around the world.”

Additionally, he also said that racial profiling in administration of justice has led to “unjust and disproportionate punishment of individuals of traditionally discriminated against groups including People of African descent.”

He said that such practices have led to criminalization and handing out harsher punishment for using certain kinds of recreational drugs, which disproportionately affect minorities. “Studies have identified correlations between racial status and harsher criminal sentences, and evidence from different countries around the world shows that implicit biases have noticeable effects on criminal investigations,” said Mr. Ruteere.

At the same time, Mr. Ruteere observed that a number of Member States have made efforts to tackle racial profiling through the adoption of laws and policies, the establishment of adequate institutional frameworks such as oversight and equality bodies; and the implementation of training and awareness-raising initiatives.

“I also recommend that States gather law enforcement data, including statistics disaggregated by ethnicity and race, which are essential in order to prove the existence and the extent of racial and ethnic profiling,” said Mr. Ruteere, stressing that more should be done to effectively address the issue of racial profiling.

Lastly, he stressed that investigative oversight bodies should have the authority to address allegations of racial and ethnic profiling, and make practical recommendations for policy changes and called for the effective regulation of the discretionary powers of law enforcement personnel in order to reduce the risks.
Top UN humanitarian official in Libya calls for immediate release of abducted aid workers

3 November - The top UN relief official in Libya today condemned the abduction of two aid workers in southern Libya and warned that persistent threats against humanitarian workers is hindering the delivery of crucial aid to those in need in that part of the war-torn country.

“Those humanitarian workers have gone out of their way – 400 kilometres (250 miles) away from their hometown – to assist their fellow country folks despite the risks entailed. They deserve to be appreciated, not abducted,” said UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Libya, Ali Al-Za’tari.

The two men – Mohamed al-Monsef Ali al-Sha’lali and Walid Ramadan Salhub – work for the Shaik Tahir Azzawy Charity Organization, a partner for a number of international humanitarian agencies, and were abducted on 5 June 2015 in al-Shwayrif in southern Libya while on their way to deliver humanitarian assistance to areas in southwestern Libya.

“This continued abduction is undermining the efforts to distribute much-needed humanitarian assistance to the most affected communities in Libya,” Mr. Al-Za’tari said.

“The Libyan people in the south, who need the assistance the most, are victims paying the price because this abduction is compromising the distribution of aid to them,” he said.

Calling for their “immediate and unconditional release,” the UN official appealed to Libyans in position of responsibility and influence to intervene to ensure the release of the two workers, and drew attention to the fact that hostage-taking and intentionally directing attacks against civilian personnel involved in humanitarian assistance are war crimes.

Libya has been plagued by factional fighting since the 2011 revolution, with the situation continuing to deteriorate in recent months amid significant political fragmentation and violence.

More reliable data needed to combat racism and discrimination – UN human rights expert

3 November - Governments need to improve data collection as a mean to better assess the situation of vulnerable groups, a UN independent expert on racism said today, noting that “the right to be free from discrimination includes the right to access information that could serve as evidence to prove discrimination.”

“The lack of disaggregated data has led to a serious information gap that limits the effective identification of population groups that are suffering discrimination,” the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, Mutuma Ruteere, said after presenting his latest report to the UN General Assembly.

“It also hinders adequate policymaking at the national, regional and international levels and promotes impunity,” Mr. Ruteere said.

He noted that, although there is no clearly stated international obligation to collect ethnic data, the human rights legal framework provides a strong mandate to gather this kind of data.

“The right to be free from discrimination includes the right to access information that could serve as evidence to prove
discrimination,” he said.

The human rights expert acknowledged the fears and anxieties expressed by some states and vulnerable groups regarding the collection of sensitive data, but he said that these concerns can be overcome if strict human rights rules are observed, including the right to privacy, the protection of data, the establishment of participatory processes based on informed consent as well as the self-identification of respondents.

“The collection of data disaggregated by ethnicity on economic, social, cultural, civil and political indicators is a pre-requisite if we are to identify patterns of discrimination and existing gaps,” Mr. Ruteere said. “Through better data collection, discriminated groups will become more visible and get better protection.”

Equality is at the heart of the newly adopted sustainable development agenda which, under Goal 17, calls for the collection of disaggregated data to measure progress while leaving “no one behind,” to promote and foster non-discrimination while upholding the universality of human rights, he said.

“At a time where the international community is discussing how to measure progress on the new agenda, the adoption of indicators capturing levels of discrimination will demonstrate States’ commitment,” Mr. Ruteere said.

Mr. Ruteere was appointed by the Human Rights Council as Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in November 2011. As Special Rapporteur, he is independent from any government or organisation and serves in his individual capacity. He is not UN staff and does not receive a salary for their work.

Iraq: UN health agency mobilizes immunization campaign to help control cholera outbreak

3 November - The World Health Organization (WHO) has mobilized 510,000 dozes of oral cholera vaccine (OCV) to be administered to an estimated 250,000 displaced persons in Iraq, in an effort to curtail the cholera outbreak which is now feared to be spreading to neighbouring countries.

According to a press release issued by WHO, the two-dose campaign is a part of a strategy to prevent transmission in high-risk areas and avert a potentially large-scale cholera outbreak in the 62 camps for refugees and internally displaced people.

The United Nations agency reported that the preparation for the campaign has now reached its final stages in 14 governorates and added that the campaign will begin with an initial round of vaccinations during the first week of November followed by, after, as required, a minimum 14 days' interval- a second round of doses, which will complete the vaccination.

WHO stressed that the campaign can only be effective if the second dose is administered along with targeted social mobilization, campaign logistics and health education and further said that to ensure herd immunity, all members of a family above one year of age will be vaccinated.

According to WHO, an OCV is proven to be effective and can protect individuals by 85 per cent in the short-term and 65 per cent over 5 years with a good safety profile.

The UN agency said that evidence shows that high coverage of OCV in the target population can result in significant reduction of disease transmission in the vaccinated communities.

The cholera outbreak in Iraq reportedly started on 15 September 2015, according to WHO. Further, the UN agency said that as per the Ministry of Health (MoH) statistics, 2173 laboratory confirmed cholera with 2 deaths from 15 out of 19 governorates.
WHO said that the Ministry of Health of Iraq decided to use OCV in early October 2015, to prevent a potential cholera outbreak in the camps and to supplement the existing preventive measures, following an assessment conducted by the two groups to identify the high-risk groups and priority areas to be used the cholera vaccination.

However, WHO observed that the trend of cholera cases has been declining in the last 2 weeks, although some of the central and southern governorates namely are still reporting confirmed cases.

According to the UN agency, over the last 7 days, only one confirmed cholera case was reported from the northern governorates which comprise Kirkuk, Erbil, Dahuk and Suleimaniyah.

WHO said that it has been supporting the MoH and partners “to scale up the cholera response interventions, including the establishment of C4 coordination mechanism, enhanced early warning surveillance, improved case management practices, water quality monitoring and chlorination, improved sanitation and hygiene practices in high-risk areas, risk communications and prepositioning cholera supplies in strategic places”.

Lastly, the UN agency said that it has deployed epidemiologists from the headquarters and regional office, as well as experts since the outbreak was confirmed, in order to ensure that effective surveillance, case management and infection control and laboratory support are in place.

WHO added that it has donated adequate medical supplies to the Ministry of Health and facilitated the distribution of these supplies to treatment facilities across the country.

**Ban offers ‘deepest sympathies’ to Israel on 20th anniversary of assassination of Yitzhak Rabin**

**3 November** - Marking the 20th anniversary of the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has offered his deepest sympathies to the citizens of the State of Israel, and, noting current tensions in the region, urged all parties to be guided by the late Israeli leader’s realization “that the path to true security and strength is through dialogue and compromise.”

“He died after courageously seizing on the need and the opportunity to embark on serious peace negotiations with the Palestinians, recognizing that, as he said, ‘you don’t make peace with friends; you can only make peace with your enemies,’” the statement continued, further noting that Mr. Rabin was vilified by many for that move, “and then murdered by an opponent of the peace process just when it was at a moment of historic breakthrough.”

Meanwhile, the Secretary-General noted that in the years since, “terrorism, expanding settlements and halting progress in implementing Israeli-Palestinian agreements have repeatedly shattered hopes.”

“Today, the voices of the majority who support peace and oppose violence are being drowned out by inflammatory rhetoric and shocking actions by extremists on all sides,” Mr. Ban warned.

Calling the late Israeli leader a “heroic man of peace,” Mr. Ban urged all parties to stand firmly against violence and incitement, and to be guided by Prime Minister Rabin’s realization “that the path to true security and strength is through dialogue and compromise.”
Corruption feeds and sustains ‘spiralling’ wildlife and forest crime – UN anti-crime chief

3 November - Expressing concern that spiralling wildlife and forest crime – fuelled by corrosive corruption – can impede vital progress of the new global sustainable development agenda, the top United Nations anti-crime official and the head of the global UN–backed treaty on protecting endangered species today urged nations to step up the fight to disrupt criminal networks that supply the disastrous illegal trade.

The joint statement by the Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Yury Fedotov, and the Secretary-General of Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) John Scanlon, was released during the Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties (COSP6) to the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), running through the end of the week in St. Petersburg, Russia.

The statement highlights corruption as an enabler of wildlife and forest crime and expresses its concern that, as it spirals and is fuelled by corrosive corruption, this crime can impede progress on the newly-adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“As the world turns to realizing the new development agenda with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, we are concerned that spiralling wildlife and forest crime, fuelled by corrosive corruption, can impede vital progress,” the joint statement said.

The SDGs specifically address illegal trade in wildlife through two Targets under Goal 15 and a Target under Goal 16, specifically addresses reducing bribery and corruption in all their forms.

The joint statement was issued almost five years since the International Forum for Tiger Conservation was held in St. Petersburg, which also launched the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC). The event built momentum for the growing recognition that the Tiger faces a desperate struggle for survival in all its habitats and as well as the planet's biodiversity everywhere.

In their statement, Mr. Fedotov and Mr. Scanlon said “corruption feeds and sustains wildlife and forest crime, as well as many other crimes including terrorism and extremism.”

“For the criminals to succeed, customs officials must be bribed to look away; logging and hunting licenses forged; and poachers set free due to obstructed prosecutions,” they said. “Thanks to corruption’s deadly touch, the natural wealth of countries is being stolen, efforts to eradicate poverty paralysed and development efforts greatly hindered.”

“We are united in the belief that, by addressing corruption and bribery, we can deal a significant blow to all those involved in this transnational organized crime,” the statement said.

The statement noted that “central to this work is the ratification and implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption” but that “more needs to be done to encourage every country's complete implementation of the Convention.”

“Wildlife and forest crimes are serious crimes and they must be treated as such by nations willing and committed to disrupting the international criminal networks that supply this disastrous illegal trade,” the statement said.

Mr. Fedotov, in a separate statement to a side event on "Addressing the nexus between illegal wildlife and forestry trades and corruption," said: “This is our shared planet. Stopping wildlife and forest crime is our shared responsibility.”
In Peru, UN conference addresses poverty and inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean

3 November - As policymakers start putting into practice the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by world leaders in September, United Nations officials and Government representatives are meeting to discuss how to continue reducing poverty and inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean, despite the region’s economic slowdown.

“A defining feature of the 2030 Agenda is its determination to leave no one behind,” UN Development Programme’s (UNDP) Administrator, Helen Clark, told over 30 social development ministers at the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, a three-day meeting convened in Lima, Peru, by the UN’s Economic Commission for the region (ECLAC), the Government of Peru and UNDP.

“This call demands that we work together to identify and address the deep-rooted determinants of exclusion – in this region and beyond. Poverty eradication will only be achieved when we truly invest in people. Growth needs to be both inclusive and sustainable,” she added.

According to the UN, after a decade of high economic growth and poverty reduction – adding 92 million people to an emerging middle class from 2003-2013 – Latin America and the Caribbean is facing slower growth rates and relapses into poverty for some segments of the population.

Within this context, participants discussed how to turn the recently-agreed 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into reality, which the UN said requires new ways of thinking and taking on complex challenges, like exclusion and inequality.

"The Latin America and Caribbean region has not yet adopted an agenda of social transformation that favors the change from a culture of privilege to an environment in which equal rights enable a sense of ownership in a more integrated society,” said ECLAC Executive Secretary Alicia Bárcena.

She further stressed that strategies for overcoming poverty must consider three main areas: income transfers for immediate relief of basic needs, public access to quality services, and labour and productive inclusion.

During the conference, ECLAC will present the main results of the study “Inclusive Social Development: A New Generation of Policies to Overcome Poverty and Inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean”, which identifies progress and challenges and delivers several policy recommendations. One of the major advances in the report is the increase in social spending in the region, which rose from 13.8 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1990 to 19.1 per cent in 2013.

Despite significant progress on reducing poverty over the past decade, nearly 167 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean are estimated to be still living in poverty, according to ECLAC figures. The majority reside in rural areas with limited access to higher levels of education and skills training.

Meanwhile, women are disproportionately affected, with about 35 per cent of poor people live in female-headed households, according to UNDP’s upcoming Human Development Report for Latin America and the Caribbean on multidimensional progress, which will offer essential policy tools to for a region with a legacy of class, race and gender-based discrimination.

“Social policies must be as strong as economic policies,” said Paola Bustamante, Minister of Development and Social Inclusion (MIDIS) of Peru. “This includes investments in health, education and transport, emphasizing the different needs of women and men at different stages of life.”
The Minister added that social development means ensuring equitable economic distribution and the necessary investment so each and every citizen can access the same quality services and have the same development opportunities.

Adopting multidimensional approaches to poverty reduction and assessing well-being beyond income measurements is also one of the topics which ECALAC says regional authorities will assess during the conference. This includes improving education, social protection, quality jobs – which are reportedly crucial for a region with high numbers of workers in the informal sector – and the acquisition of basic assets, in addition to improving health care and overall living conditions. During the conference in Lima, ministers will also discuss how to include these alternative approaches in a new generation of public policies for the sustainable development era.

Regional authorities are also to discuss challenges for middle income countries (MICs) and small island developing States (SIDS) in the 2030 Agenda, including the need to boost resilience, or the ability to absorb shocks, such as natural hazards or financial crisis, without major economic, social and environmental setbacks.

The Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean was created in 2014 during the last session of ECLAC held in the Peruvian capital and is the result of a strategic alliance with UNDP, giving continuity to seven consecutive years of the Ministerial Forum for Development in the region.