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Despite major gains, world's education goals far from achieved – UNESCO

9 April - Just one third of countries have achieved all the measurable education goals set in 2000 and only half of all countries have achieved universal primary enrolment, the United Nations agency mandated with promoting learning spotlighted today, urging countries to bridge the $22 billion annual finance gap needed to achieve quality basic education for all by 2030.

“Despite not meeting the 2015 deadline, millions more children are in school than would have been had the trends of the 1990s persisted,” Ms. Bokova said. “However…we need to see specific, well-funded strategies that prioritize the poorest – especially girls – improve the quality of learning and reduce the literacy gap so that education becomes meaningful and sustainable.”
universal.”

As far as achieving universal primary education, particularly for girls, ethnic minorities and marginalized children, 52 per cent of countries met this goal, 10 per cent are close and the remaining 38 per cent are far or very far from achieving it. This leaves almost 100 million children not completing primary education in 2015. And the world's poorest children remain five times less likely to complete a full cycle of primary education than the richest.

At current rates, only half of all children in low-income countries are expected to complete lower secondary education by 2030. In many countries even the core goal of achieving universal primary education will remain out of reach without concerted efforts.

And yet UNESCO point out that there has been some important progress. Around 50 million more children are enrolled in school now than were in 1999. While education is still not free in many places, cash transfer and school feeding programmes have made a positive impact on enrolment for the poor. Forty-six per cent of countries reached universal lower secondary enrolment. Globally, numbers in lower secondary education increased by 27 per cent and more than doubled in sub-Saharan Africa.

In terms of achieving a 50 per cent reduction in levels of adult illiteracy by 2015, only 25 per cent of countries reached this goal, and 32 per cent remain very far from it. While globally the percentage of illiterate adults fell from 18 per cent in 2000 to 14 per cent in 2015, this progress is almost entirely attributed to more educated young people reaching adulthood. Women continue to make up almost two-thirds of the illiterate adult population. Half of sub-Saharan African women do not have basic literacy skills.

Gender parity will be achieved at the primary level in 69 per cent of countries by 2015. Child marriage and early pregnancy continue to hinder girls' progress in education as does the need for teacher training in gender sensitive approaches and curriculum reform.

The numbers of pupils per teacher decreased in 121 of 146 countries between 1990 and 2012 at the primary level, but 4 million more teachers are still needed to get all children into school. Trained teachers remain in short supply in one third of countries; in several sub-Saharan African countries, less than 50 per cent are trained.

In many countries, funding remains a major obstacle, the report finds. Governments must find ways to mobilize new resources for education and international partners must ensure that aid is distributed to those most in need.

“Unless concerted action is taken and education receives the attention that it failed to get during the past 15 years, millions of children will continue to miss out and the transformative vision of the new sustainable development agenda will be jeopardized,” said Aaron Benavot, the Director for today's report.

The report recommends that governments and civil society develop programmes to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged so no child is left behind in the post-2015 development targets for education, which must be specific, relevant and realistic.

Education should be free for all children and fees for tuition, textbooks, school uniforms and transport must be abolished. Policy makers should identify and prioritize skills to be acquired by the end of each stage of schooling. Literacy policies should link up with the needs of communities. Teacher training should be improved to include gender-focused strategies. Teaching styles should better reflect student needs and the diversity of classroom contexts.
Nigeria: UN launches appeal for refugees as Boko Haram violence continues

9 April - The United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) has issued an urgent funding appeal as it seeks to provide tens of thousands of people fleeing the violence in north-eastern Nigeria with critical assistance and protection.

“Displaced people in north-eastern Nigeria and across borders are in a very dramatic situation, they fear for their lives, and are at this point unable to return to their homes,” UNHCR Regional Representative for West Africa and Coordinator for the Nigeria Refugee situation, Liz Ahua, declared in a press release today.

“We need more financial support to continue to help the refugees and to plan for increased aid in case of more people fleeing for safety outside Nigeria.”

The appeal, which calls for $174.4 million to help some 192,000 refugees, also foresees a plan to respond to any additional population movements amid an unrelenting volatile climate across Nigeria’s Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states.

Since 2009, when the Boko Haram insurgency resorted to wide-scale violence, more than 15,000 people have been killed, countless children, women and men have been abducted, abused and forcibly recruited, and women and girls have been targeted for particularly horrific abuse, including sexual enslavement.

The terror caused by Boko Haram has also provoked the instability of Nigeria’s north and spilled over the country’s borders, affecting the wider region and displacing over a million people.

According to UNHCR, in fact, the latest movements of refugees across Nigeria’s borders are expected to bring the total of Nigerian refugees in Cameroon to nearly 66,000.

Elsewhere in the region, refugee numbers are also rising. Some 18,000 people have fled to western Chad, including more than 15,000 since early January after Boko Haram’s offensive against the town of Baga in Nigeria’s Borno state. At the same time, more than 100,000 people have already found refuge in Niger despite a steadily deteriorating humanitarian situation and a spike in insurgent attacks against the towns of Bosso and Diffa.

The refugee crisis is also compounding the economic stability of the area. A recent World Food Programme (WFP) food security and vulnerability assessment in Niger in November 2014 showed that a total of 52.7 per cent of displaced households and their host families were severely – 14 per cent – or moderately – 38.7 per cent – food insecure, and in need of food assistance.

In today’s appeal, UNHCR admitted that aid agencies on the ground in the region are struggling to upscale and maintain basic services to refugees in camps, including shelter and food, access to health and education, as well as to clean water and sanitation.

At the same time, thousands of school-age refugee children remain unable to attend school because of a lack of classrooms and teachers, while the need for mental health support among local civilians has also sky-rocketed.

Ms. Ahua added that the boost in humanitarian funding from the appeal would help the UN’s humanitarian agencies to relocate refugees away from the conflict border areas and establish additional refugee camps where needed.

“Adequate funding is crucial to make sure aid agencies can improve the living conditions for refugees in asylum countries and respond to their protection needs,” she said.
Civilians in Yemen 'willfully abandoned to misery,' says Ban, urging immediate political solution to crisis

9 April - Countless civilians are being “willfully abandoned to misery” in Yemen, amid a rapidly deteriorating security and humanitarian crises inflamed by escalating violence, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told reporters at United Nations Headquarters today.

“The crisis has only multiplied in recent days,” Mr. Ban, said. “Ordinary Yemeni families are struggling for the very basics – water, food, fuel and medicine. Hundreds of civilians have been killed. Hospitals and schools are shutting down – some of which are direct targets of the fighting.”

The situation in Yemen has been rapidly deteriorating since the country formed a new Government in November 2014 aimed at ending a period of political turbulence and bringing about a full transition towards democracy. The country continued to be plagued by violence and political demonstrations despite UN efforts to bring about a peaceful political resolution. Recent weeks have seen a steady ratcheting up of fighting between the Government and Houthi militias.

“Even before the latest crisis, Yemen's overall humanitarian needs were on a scale similar to all nine countries of the Sahel region – combined. And Yemen had almost double the number of people classified as severely food insecure,” the Secretary-General added.

Attempts by the Houthis and their allies to take territory by force and undermine the authority of the legitimate government are in clear violation of Security Council resolutions and their commitments in the UN-facilitated political process, the UN chief reiterated.

Since the initial advances by the Houthis, the situation has greatly escalated through the Arab coalition military operation led by Saudi Arabia at the request of the Yemeni President. Coalition air raids and continuing attempts by the Houthis and their allied armed groups to expand their power have turned an internal political crisis into a violent conflict that risks long-lasting regional repercussions.

“The last thing the region and our world need is more of the chaos and crimes we have seen in Libya and Syria,” Mr. Ban said, stressing that UN-brokered negotiations, endorsed by the Security Council, remain the “best chance to help get the transition back on track” and preserve the country's unity and territorial integrity.

For over two months, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy Jamal Benomar has facilitated all-inclusive negotiations. Although disagreements remain on some critical issues, many others had been resolved.

“There needs to be a return to political negotiations. All parties to those negotiations must participate in good faith. There is no other solution,” Mr. Ban said.

All parties to the conflict in Yemen must adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law, the UN Chief urged, as he called on all those involved in the fighting to protect civilians and enable humanitarian workers to safely deliver life-saving assistance to people in need.

“I expect Member States to do everything possible to make this happen and get the parties back to the peace table without conditions and without delay,” Mr. Ban emphasized.

Also today, Mr. Ban's Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, and on the Responsibility to Protect, Jennifer Welsh, expressed alarm at the impact military operations were having on the civilian population.
“The region is facing a critical moment,” they said in a statement. “We call on all parties involved in the crisis, including decision-makers, political parties and groups, military, religious, tribal and community leaders, to take all possible measures to prevent sectarian reprisals amid the ongoing violence, to engage constructively in peace initiatives, and to promote respect for diversity.”

The Special Advisers expressed shock that protected groups, such as health workers, and civilian objects, such as medical and education facilities and private homes, have been hit by indiscriminate attacks in the course of the fighting. They also deplored the number of casualties since the escalation of violence.

Special Advisers Dieng and Welsh noted with concern that sectarian tensions are increasing in Yemen, as demonstrated by media reports of calls by religion leaders in the Aden Governorate on 8 April for followers to engage in a holy war, and by the 20 March bomb attacks at two mosques.

**UN chief urges ‘concerted action to save lives, restore measure of humanity’ in besieged Yarmouk camp**

9 April - Briefing members of the international press this afternoon at United Nations Headquarters, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon described the “epic humanitarian catastrophe” facing the 18,000 Palestinian refugees and Syrians being held hostage by extremist militants in Yarmouk camp.

“In the horror that is Syria, the Yarmouk refugee camp is the deepest circle of hell,” he said. “A refugee camp is beginning to resemble a death camp. The residents of Yarmouk – including 3,500 children – are being turned into human shields.”

After more than two years of a merciless siege, residents now faced a “double-edged sword”, with members of ISIL and other extremist groups inside the camp and Government forces outside.

“We are now hearing worrying reports of a massive assault on the camp and all civilians in it,” as he described the latest chapter in a war which, he said, had long ago exceeded words to describe the mayhem. “This would be yet one more outrageous war crime for which those responsible must be held accountable.”

Mr. Ban said the priority is to stabilize the situation in the camp and he joined the Security Council in demanding an end to hostilities, access for humanitarian assistance and safe passage for civilians who wish to escape safely.

In that regard, he called on all Member States with influence on the Government and all parties on the ground to take all steps necessary to send a clear message.

“ Civilians must be spared. Civilians must be protected at all times,” he said, adding that he would continue to press that unequivocal message in meetings and phone calls with world leaders as the international community faced an “epic test” of its resolve as it tried to avoid an “epic humanitarian catastrophe.”

Concerted action to save lives in Yarmouk and restore a measure of humanity was needed and he underlined that the world could not simply stand by, abandon Yarmouk’s residents and watch a massacre unfold.

“Surely we can all agree that what is unfolding in Yarmouk is unacceptable,” he said. “Surely, we can all act to end the suffering. Surely, we can all refuse to tolerate the intolerable.”
Mali parties must seize ‘historic opportunity’ to resolve crisis – UN peacekeeping chief

9 April - The international community must continue to support dialogue between Malian stakeholders to achieve a political solution to the crisis, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations told the Security Council this morning, calling on all parties to the conflict to seize this historic opportunity to reach a settlement.

“The crisis in Mali can only be resolved through an inclusive and viable political agreement that can be implemented,” Hervé Ladsous said at a briefing to the Council during which the Foreign Minister of Mali, Abdoulaye Diop, also spoke.

Mr. Ladsous said there is a historical opportunity currently present in Mali as the international community has shown willingness to accompanying the parties in reaching and implementing a peace agreement.

“Extremism and criminality thrive in the lack of law and order,” he said, stressing that it was critical that all parties distance themselves from violent, illicit activities. The Security Council must also emphasize that point, and he also pointed out that, since the last Council meeting on Mali, three more peacekeepers had lost their lives.

Introducing the Secretary-General’s 27 March report on Mali, he said that two of the three Malian parties – the Government and the so-called ‘Platform’ of northern movements – had initialled the text of a draft peace agreement on 1 March, following the fifth round of inter-Malian dialogue in Algiers.

The other coalition of northern movements known as the ‘Coordination,’ however, requested more time to consult with their constituency, he said. Talks continued between the Coordination and the international mediators, and the coalition had indicated it, too, would sign on next week on the understanding that further talks to clarify modalities of the agreement would follow. That was not certain at this point however, he cautioned.

As progress towards a negotiated solution advanced, it is critical that the Malian parties, supported by the mediators, begin putting in place a detailed framework and calendar of implementation, he said. Clear and robust implementation mechanisms would build confidence.

However, the security situation continues to remain a challenge. On 19 February, parties recommitted themselves to the ceasefire that is so far holding. Mr. Ladsous warned against any party seeking to gain ground militarily, emphasizing that peace is only possible through negotiations.

Speaking on deployment of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), he said efforts are ongoing to scale up operations in the northern regions. The military component has now reached 80 per cent of authorized deployment and that figure should rise significantly in the weeks to come. At the same time, infrastructure is being built, though hampered by security challenges.

Moreover, outreach to local populations is an important component of the Mission’s work, Mr. Ladsous said, reiterated that to continue these efforts, budgetary support is needed.
Thwarting threat of disease, UN launches animal vaccination campaign along Syria-Lebanon border

9 April - An emergency vaccination campaign along the Syria-Lebanon border is underway in order to protect the region’s livestock from preventable infections, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) announced today amid growing concerns over the spread of high impact transboundary animal diseases.

Triggered by an influx of 1.5 million refugees fleeing the conflict in neighbouring Syria and bringing with them legions of unvaccinated goats, cattle, sheep and other animals, FAO is now targeting all animals in the Syria-Lebanon border area with vaccinations.

The UN agency has warned that as many as 70,000 cows and around 900,000 sheep and goats could be exposed to transboundary disease if left untreated.

According to a farmer in Lebanon’s eastern Bekaa Valley, in fact, animal fever has already established a foothold, killing of livestock and impacting the incomes of herders and pastoralists. FAO estimates that almost 60 percent of livestock farmers in Lebanon depend on dairy animals as their main source of income.

“The idea is to reduce the risk of disease, and avoid drops in the productivity of the national herd,” Maurice Saade, FAO Representative in Lebanon, said in a press release.

The UN agency further warned that an outbreak of disease among Lebanon’s livestock could potentially have a devastating impact on the country’s natural resources and food production systems, particularly as up to 25 per cent of the country’s active population is employed in agriculture.

Several animal diseases are highly contagious and can spread extremely rapidly, causing high mortality and morbidity in animals and resulting in serious socio-economic and public health consequences, the FAO continued.

The three most prevalent diseases already detected in Lebanon include lumpy skin disease, foot-and-mouth disease and the peste des petits ruminants, otherwise known as “goat plague” – a highly contagious disease characterized by fever, mouth sores, diarrhoea, rapid weight loss, pneumonia and a high death rate in a short period of time.

Women have ‘very important role’ in Libyan peace process, says UN envoy

9 April - Libyan women have a crucial role to play in resolving the crisis in their country, a senior United Nations official said in an address to 250 Libyan women gathered in Tripoli, at a dialogue aimed at including women from all walks of life in the political process.

“We count on Libya women, who were active during the 17 February revolution, to continue to advocate for peaceful solution … We count on you to spread the culture of peace in your communities and to talk and engage with all who have a role to play in bringing stability to Libya,” said Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya, Bernardino León, via Skype on Saturday.

Mr. León briefed the audience about the progress of the ongoing political dialogue and answered questions regarding the ceasefire, timeframe for agreement and addressed concerns about spoilers seeking to derail the process.

He also stressed that efforts to bring peace to Libya must continue regardless of the obstacles, adding that quick solutions
were necessary due to the humanitarian and economic difficulties the country is facing and the increasing terrorist attacks by Daesh also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Libyans, particularly women, have paid and continue to pay a high price in the North African country’s armed conflict, said Mr. León, adding that the role of women in pushing for the dialogue process is crucial, as it is also crucial in ensuring the implementation of any political agreement resulting from these talks. Women must get involved in talks at the municipality and tribal level.

“Women have a very important role in following up on the political process and in participating in the new unity government,” the Special Representative said, adding that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has stressed the importance of women’s participation in the transitional process.

The dialogue was facilitated by the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) in collaboration with various Libyan women groups. Mr. Leon acknowledged the role of the two women participants in the political dialogue, Ms. Nehad Meiteeg and Ms. Naima Jebril, for their efforts to reconcile the differences among the other participants.

More specifically, he commended their communication with and briefings to civil society and women’s groups at gatherings in Tunisia and Jordan in recent weeks in support of the dialogue were of tremendous importance.

**UN bodies present projects showing how ‘Big Data’ can save lives, fight hunger**

9 April - Anonymized data – information from which the identity of the sender has been stripped – from mobile telephone usage could provide vital support in efforts to achieve sustainable development and to respond to humanitarian crises, according to insights derived from a study by the United Nations.

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) and UN Global Pulse – an innovation initiative of the Secretary-General – have teamed up on research projects exploring the link between mobile phone usage and hunger and they are presenting their findings at the Netmob Conference for Scientific Analysis of Mobile Phone Data at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston, United States.

“This is a new frontier for humanitarian assistance,” said Arif Husain, WFP Chief Economist. “As agencies begin adopting these new techniques, information collection will become cheaper and faster, making relief programmes much more responsive to the needs of hungry poor worldwide.”

The joint projects focused on ways anonymous mobile phone data could be analysed to understand household hunger and vulnerability patterns, and doing so in real-time helps humanitarian agencies pinpoint areas of acute need with a level of speed and precision that have never been achieved before.

They uncovered a new method for estimating household expenditures on food based on mobile phone spending patterns in Africa, along with a technique for potentially identifying households for assistance during floods in Mexico and a method to quantify population mobility patterns in relation to the agricultural and livelihood cycles based on calling patterns in Senegal.

“New technologies are leading to an exponential increase in the volume and types of data available, creating unprecedented possibilities for improving humanitarian aid,” said Makena Walker, Deputy Director of Global Pulse, the UN body that explores how new, digital data sources and real-time analytics technologies can help policymakers gain better understandings of changes in human well-being and emerging vulnerabilities.

In particular, “big data” generated by mobile and online communications offers major opportunities to complement more traditional data sources, such as face-to-face surveys and satellite imagery, used by humanitarian agencies. The difference is that call data records offer the opportunity to do analysis in near real-time and at very low cost.
While the big data revolution offers tremendous opportunities, agencies are extremely mindful of the pitfalls that using such information sources implies.

“Protecting people’s privacy is of utmost concern as we develop these new approaches,” said Walker.

UN Global Pulse and WFP are appealing to telecommunications companies to join the effort in making this type of information available to the humanitarian community, where it would be used for the common good.

**UNESCO chief condemns killing of Bangladeshi blogger**

9 April - The head of the United Nations agency mandated to defend press freedom denounced today the murder of Washiqur Rahman Babu, a Bangladesh-based blogger, and reiterated the call for local authorities to defend freedom of expression and public debate in the South Asian country.

“It is important that the Bangladeshi authorities find and prosecute those responsible for this attack,” Irina Bokova, Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), declared in a press release issued earlier today.

“Freedom of expression and free debate cannot thrive in a climate of fear and self-censorship.”

According to UNESCO, three men attacked Mr. Rahman on 30 March as he left his home in the Bangladeshi capital of Dhaka to go to work. Mr. Rahman used to write under the penname Kutshit Hasher Chhana, or ‘Ugly Duckling.’

In a report released in March 2014, UNESCO stressed the growing trend of media workers being killed around the world. Focusing on the latest challenges affecting media development and freedom of expression, the report, called *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development*, noted that more than 430 journalists were killed between 2007 and 2012.

**Malaysia’s anti-terror and sedition laws ‘curtail’ human rights, warns UN rights chief**

9 April - A series of amendments to Malaysia’s 1948 Sedition Act risk seriously undermine freedom of expression and opinion throughout the country, the top United Nations human rights official warned today as he urged the Asian state to bring its legislation in line with international human rights standards.

“It is very disappointing that the Malaysian Government is now proposing to make a bad law worse,” Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said in a press release issued earlier today.

“These proposals are particularly worrying given that the Sedition Act has been applied in many instances to curb the legitimate exercise of freedom of expression in Malaysia – including through the arrests of individuals for merely tweeting their criticism of Government policies and judicial decisions.”

The 1948 Act, which carries sentences of up to five years in jail, outlaws a number of vague offenses, such as expressing “any seditious words” or acting with “seditious tendency” to incite hatred or disaffection of the government or the judiciary, promoting hostility between different races or classes, or questioning any right, privilege, sovereignty prerogative stated in the country’s Constitution.

The latest proposal to amend the Act, however, further broadens the scope of the offences and introduces harsher penalties,
including up to 20 years’ imprisonment for “aggravated” sedition, according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which added that new provisions for travel bans had also prompted cause for concern.

“The UN Human Rights Office has long urged Malaysia to either repeal the 1948 Sedition Act or to bring it in line with international human rights standards,” the High Commissioner continued, recalling that the Government had committed to repealing the Act during its Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council in 2013.

In addition, Mr. Zeid also voiced concern at the passage of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) in the lower house of Parliament on Tuesday this week, observing that among the serious human rights shortcomings in the law were provisions which permitted the indefinite detention of individuals without trial and grant sweeping powers to law enforcement authorities.

“Silencing dissent does not nurture social stability, but an open democratic space does,” he added.

“Curtailing the legitimate exercise of human rights in the name of fighting terrorism has been shown, time and again, to backfire and to only lead to festering discontent and a strong sense of injustice.”

**Civil society has ‘important role’ in building sustainable future, says UN General Assembly President**

*9 April* - Civil society actors have a critical role to play in the outlining of a successful post-2015 sustainable development agenda, President of the United Nations General Assembly Sam Kutesa declared today.

In a statement made to the Assembly’s Informal Interactive Hearing ahead of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, Nicholas Emiliou, Acting President of the General Assembly, explained that the formulation and successful implementation of “an inclusive and transformative” agenda would depend on the key “mobilization of financial resources” from both the private and public sectors.

“It is evident that in order to achieve our goals, we need to harness vast resources, skills, knowledge and innovative ideas from all segments of society,” Mr. Emiliou said in a statement made on behalf of Mr. Kutesa. “Civil society has an important role and it should play its part in this endeavour.”

Pointing to the upcoming Third International Conference on Financing for Development to be held in Addis Ababa later this year, the Acting President also noted that civil society actors had already been engaged in the conference’s preparatory process but, he added, today’s meeting provided yet “another unique opportunity” for them to “give their input and views” on Addis’ planned outcome document.

This year marks wrap up of the landmark UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which world leaders agreed on 15 years ago. There has been significant progress in meeting the targets. For example, global poverty has been halved well ahead of the 2015 deadline; in developing countries, 90 per cent of children now enjoy primary education; the number of people lacking access to improved drinking water has halved, and the fight against malaria and tuberculosis has shown results, according to the UN.

But challenges persist, and with the deadline of the MDGs set for the end of this year, the UN will craft a new set of targets known as the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Globally, 73 million young people are looking for work and many more are trapped in exploitative jobs. In recent years, more than two and a half million more children in affluent countries fell into poverty, bringing the total above 76 million.

“It is essential that we work towards concrete deliverables and a new global partnership for sustainable development that will support the implementation of the new universal development agenda,” Mr. Emiliou continued.

“Let us continue working together for a comprehensive financing framework for sustainable development in order to deliver
High-level UN forum seeks answers to questions on how to make sustainable development reality

As the Economic and Social Council began today its Development Cooperation Forum in Incheon, Republic of Korea, senior United Nations officials emphasized the need to build on the success of the Millennium Development Goals and to deliver sustainable development for all by finding strategies to mobilize significant financial resources.

Such means of implementation for the development agenda, which can come from many private, public, national and international sources, will be vital once the world adopts its new sustainable development plan for the next 15 years.

“A unique, unparalleled in history, path forward is taking shape, with the crafting of a transformative, unified and universal post-2015 development agenda, focused on poverty eradication and sustainable development,” said ECOSOC President Martin Sajdik (Austria).

“There is broad consensus that the agenda's successful implementation will depend on a comprehensive financing framework for sustainable development.”

The Forum, held under the slogan, 'Development cooperation for people and planet: What will it take?' brought together leaders from Government, the private sector, academia and civil society for a three-day high-level symposium to grapple with the topic.

The event aims to generate concrete ideas and policy recommendations to explore how to deliver 'the future we want' – an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future for our planet and for present and future generations.

As well as ensuring availability of means of implementation, Mr. Sajdik said that success of the new agenda would also hinge upon the effective review of progress on substantive goals and follow-up to commitments made, especially on the full spectrum of means of implementation – financial and other, from capacity building to technology transfer.

“This requires a flexible, multi-layered global framework,” he said. “It must build on existing mechanisms at all levels, following a bottom-up approach.”

The symposium comes as countries are gearing up for the Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa this July, the Sustainable Development Summit in New York, and climate negotiations in Paris. The DCF high-level symposium is geared to produce new ideas and policy recommendations into the preparations of the summits.

While underlining the importance of preparations for the Addis Ababa Conference to ensure its outcomes were fully integrated into the negotiations on the post-2015 agenda, Mr. Sajdik added that development cooperation embraces practices that involve both financial and non-financial means of implementation.

“It has to be more at the centre of a coherent narrative, vision and concerted action for the realization of the new agenda,” he said. “Development cooperation is a vital part of the broader global partnership for sustainable development needed to bring about the systemic policy changes for all partners to come closer together and make progress, to leave no one behind, to tackle common global problems and take up opportunities to put the world on a firm path toward sustainable development for all.”
In Qatar, UN forum to discuss link between crime prevention and sustainable development

9 April - Ahead of a major summit in New York in September on the future global development agenda, the 13th United Nations Crime Congress will convene in Doha next week to discuss the links between crime prevention, security, justice and sustainable development.

“The rule of law, better criminal justice systems, access to justice, well-functioning law enforcement and prosecution authorities – they could be enablers for development,” the Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Yury Fedotov, said in a recent interview with the UN News Centre.

“That’s why the Crime Congress is important, especially this year, just a few months before the UN summit on the post-2015 development agenda,” added the chief of the Vienna-based UNODC.

The theme of the Congress, which will take place in the Qatari capital from 12 to 19 April, is “Integrating crime prevention and criminal justice into the wider United Nations agenda to address social and economic challenges and to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and public participation.”

Hundreds of policymakers and practitioners in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice, as well as individual experts from academia, representatives of inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, specialized agencies and other UN entities, and the media are expected to attend the forum, which is held every five years.

This year’s Crime Congress, which will be opened by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, also marks the 60th anniversary of the first such meeting held in 1955. Participants are expected to discuss the successes and challenges in the implementation of comprehensive policies and strategies for the prevention of crime and criminal justice in order to strengthen the rule of law at the national and international levels and to support sustainable development.

Other issues include international cooperation, including at the regional level, to combat transnational organized crime; comprehensive and balanced approaches to prevent and adequately respond to new and emerging forms of transnational crime; and national approaches to public participation in the strengthening of crime prevention and criminal justice.

In addition to the main session, several side-events are planned on various topics, such as human trafficking, smuggling of migrants, wildlife and forest crime, and cybercrime.

The Congress is expected to adopt the ‘Doha Declaration,’ a political document that will put an emphasis on important aspects of fighting transnational organized crime and strengthening criminal justice systems and crime prevention. It will contain recommendations which will be submitted to the next session of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, to be held in Vienna from 18 to 22 May.

Mr. Fedotov believes that international cooperation is crucial to fight crime. “National borders do not stop criminals. That’s why international cooperation has to grow. That’s why the 13th Crime Congress is very important,” he said.

He also believes that the role of the public in strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice is very important, noting: “We cannot do anything without civil society.”
In advance of the Congress, a Youth Forum involving the participation of more than 160 students from different backgrounds will take place during which they will be asked to role-play the 13th Crime Congress to discuss the main themes.