**ADDIS: important financing roles of private investment, business highlighted at UN conference**

14 July - In Addis Ababa, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today underscored the crucial financing role of the business sector in ensuring the necessary resources for people-centred sustainable development.

“I urge private sector leaders - including CEOs and institutional investors - to be part of the solution, and to consider new commitments for investment in sustainable development,” Mr. Ban told participants at the Business Forum of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is taking place in the Ethiopian capital from 13 to 16 July.

“I also urge even greater engagement in socially responsible investment and environmental, social and governance issues,” he added.

The Conference is expected to launch a renewed and strengthened partnership to secure the resources needed for the well-being of all people and the health of the planet.

The Business Forum provides an opportunity for business and investors to, among other things, influence the global dialogue to ensure an enabling environment for business; underscore the role and success of the private sector in delivering development solutions; and demonstrate the private sector’s ability to scale and accelerate progress given their creativity, capacity for innovation, technical and management skills and financial resources.

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*For information media - not an official record*
“It is clear that responsible business and investment will play a critical role,” the UN chief stated, noting that the financing requirements to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals that world leaders will adopt in September will “far surpass” current development flows.

“We will need complementary forms of financing,” he said, adding that private investment and the business sector have important financing roles.

Mr. Ban also highlighted the UN Global Compact, the world’s largest voluntary corporate sustainability initiative, which has rallied business behind important issues such as fighting corruption, fair labour standards and human rights.

With over 8,000 companies and 4,000 non-business stakeholders in 160 countries, the Compact can “mobilize a global force of businesses for good,” he stated.

**ADDIS: UN negotiations resume on financing framework to advance global development**

Negotiations on a comprehensive financing framework for sustainable development resumed today in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where Member States have gathered for a United Nations conference aimed at securing the resources necessary for the well-being of all people and the health of the planet.

Deliberations are being held in the 'Main Committee' established by the Third International Conference on Financing for Development with a view to finalizing the outcome document, which will be known as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda once it is adopted.

Chaired by Ethiopia’s Foreign Minister, Tedros Adhanom, the committee has before it the task of bridging differences on three main areas of contention in the 35-page draft outcome document.

The final text, once adopted, will support the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, including the set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that world leaders are expected to adopt this September.

In an interview with the UN News Centre, Alexander Trepelkov, Director of the Financing for Development Office in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), highlighted the unresolved issues, which include the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

“In view of the fact that the Addis Action Agenda goes beyond the Monterrey Consensus [the outcome of the first development financing conference, held in Mexico in 2002] to address all the three dimensions of sustainable development, developing countries propose to make explicit reference to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities as it applies to financing sustainable development as a whole.”

Currently, the reference to this principle is contained in the paragraph dealing with climate finance.

The second area of contention relates to the area of international cooperation on tax matters. “In general, developing countries, as a precondition to agreeing to the universal financing agenda, are asking for a more inclusive mode of discussion and a seat at the table in policy decision-making on financing for development,” Mr. Trepelkov explained.

In that context, developing countries are proposing upgrading the UN Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters to an intergovernmental body, or at least to strengthen the Committee vis-à-vis the role of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on tax cooperation.

“The exact relationship between the UN work on tax matters and the OECD work in the same area remains to be clarified,” Mr. Trepelkov stated.
Thirdly, the precise relationship of the Addis outcome document and the post-2015 development agenda still needs to be agreed.

“Developed countries see the Addis outcome as the means of implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, while developing countries believe that Addis should of course support the implementation of the SDGs but should not preclude additional efforts in this area,” said Mr. Trepelkov.

The conference that began on Monday includes plenary sessions, round tables and side events held all around Addis Ababa. It is being held at the highest political level, with 28 heads of State, vice presidents and heads of government; six deputy prime ministers; and 95 ministers and vice-ministers attending.

In addition, some 1,000 representatives from civil society and the business sector are expected to be in Addis for the conference, which concludes on Thursday.

**ADDIS: world has delivered on halting and reversing AIDS epidemic, UN announces**

*14 July* - The world has exceeded the targets contained in the Millennium Development Goals to halt and reverse the spread of HIV and is on track to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030, according to a report released today in Addis Ababa by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

“Fifteen years ago there was a conspiracy of silence. AIDS was a disease of the 'others' and treatment was for the rich and not for the poor,” said Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS. “We proved them wrong, and today we have 15 million people on treatment—15 million success stories.”

*How AIDS changed everything - MDG 6: 15 years, 15 lesson of hope from the AIDS response* was released at a community event at Zewditu Hospital in the Ethiopian capital, by Mr. Sidibé, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Ethiopian Minister of Health Kesetebirhan Admassu, and Abiyot Godana from the Ethiopian community of people living with HIV.

“The measure of success for the United Nations is not what we promise, but what we deliver for those who need us most,” Mr. Ban said at the event, held on the sidelines of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

“When it comes to halting and beginning to reverse the AIDS epidemic, the world has delivered.”

He noted that 15 million people on HIV treatment means millions of families protected and billions of dollars saved. It means that the world is on its way to an AIDS-free generation. It also means that nearly 75 per cent of all pregnant women living with HIV have access to antiretroviral medicines that improve the quality of their lives and protect their children from HIV.

Mr. Ban congratulated Ethiopia for leading the way in ensuring all children are born HIV-free, and noted that the country has reduced new HIV infections among children by more than 85 per cent in the past 15 years.

By 2014, UNAIDS estimates that 85 countries had less than 50 new HIV infections among children per year, and in 2015 Cuba became the first country to be certified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as having eliminated new HIV infections among children.

According to the report, the AIDS targets of MDG 6 - halting and reversing the spread of HIV - have been achieved and exceeded, new HIV infections have fallen by 35 per cent and AIDS-related deaths by 41 per cent, while the global response to HIV has averted 30 million new infections and nearly 8 million AIDS-related deaths since 2000, when the MDGs were set.
“The report demonstrates that the response to HIV has been one of the smartest investments in global health and development, generating measurable results for people and economies,” UNAIDS said. “It also shows that the world is on track to meet the investment target of $22 billion for the AIDS response by 2015 and that concerted action over the next five years can end the AIDS epidemic by 2030.”

To do so, the report calls for dramatically changing the status quo in terms of both resources and efforts. “Simply put, we will not end the AIDS epidemic by continuing business as usual. We have to urgently and rapidly scale up our efforts over the next five years,” it says.

It also underscores that international assistance, especially for low-income and low-middle-income countries, will be necessary in the short term before sustainable financing can be secured in the long term. Sub-Saharan Africa will require the largest share of global AIDS financing: $15.8 billion in 2020.

The report is both a look back on the journey of the last 15 years and a look forward to the future of the AIDS response and the path to ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030.

“Knowing that one day the ribbons will be gone and the lights will be dimmed as the world celebrates ending the AIDS epidemic, what a wonderful day that will be,” it concludes.

**ADDIS: UN agency stresses role of partnerships to finance inclusive, sustainable industrial development**

**14 July** - Partnerships involving all development players will be key to scaling up the financing needed for industrial infrastructure and projects, an important element in the economic and social advancement of countries, a senior United Nations official told a conference in Ethiopia today.

“There is not a single country in the world that has achieved lasting economic and social development without having undergone industrial transformation,” Li Yong, Director General of the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), said at a form on financing for inclusive and sustainable industrial development.

The objective of the forum, held on the sidelines of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, is to demonstrate concretely how multi-stakeholder partnerships can mobilize and scale up financing for industrial infrastructure as well as for industrial projects of various scales, ranging from domestic small and medium-sized enterprises to international large-scale investments.

Mr. Li said that the crucial challenge for the global community gathered in Addis Ababa is to address how to finance the achievement of the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which countries expect to adopt in September.

“In my view, this challenge is so immense that no single country or institution will be able to overcome it on their own. I firmly believe that it can only be resolved through effective multi-stakeholder partnerships bringing together all the major players in the development process.”

He added that as the international community formalizes the post-2015 development agenda, UNIDO is particularly pleased to know that the proposed SDGs duly acknowledge - in Goal 9 - the importance of inclusive and sustainable industrialization together with resilient infrastructure innovation.

In his remarks to the forum, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also highlighted the fact that the proposed Goal 9 promotes inclusive and sustainable industrialization.

“Often, when people think of industry, they think of pollution or bad labour practices,” Mr. Ban said. “But when countries industrialize in an inclusive and sustainable way, they can create decent jobs and preserve their resources without exploiting the environment or people. This is at the heart of SDG 9.”
He went on to say that achieving the SDGs requires more than finances. “I am convinced that partnerships are the means to implement the post-2015 development agenda.”

UNIDO has been among the first to propose a concrete model to operationalize and advance SDG 9 with the Programme for Country Partnership, which convenes different partners, under the ownership of the host government, to coordinate and optimize the contribution of each, and pool resources together.

This means that traditional financial flows for development are reinforced with new, additional sources of investment for greater development impact.

Mr. Ban applauded UNIDO and the Governments of Ethiopia and Senegal for their dedication and hard work towards advancing inclusive and sustainable industrialization in their countries through the Programme, saying that they “set an example for the rest of us on how to partner together to accelerate public investment and attract private finance in key industrial sectors.”

**ADDIS: investing in gender equality vital to economic growth, sustainable development, says Ban**

14 July - Increased investments in gender equality are vital if the world is to achieve sustained economic growth and development, United Nations Secretary-General said today during the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

“It is clear that we have not invested sufficiently in gender equality,” Mr. Ban said at a side event hosted by UN Women and the World Bank on Financing for Gender Equality. “We know that persisting gaps in gender equality and women’s empowerment in the world have been a barrier to the full achievement of each of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).”

He noted that currently, less than 10 per cent of official development assistance (ODA) targets women, and many gender equality policies and programmes remain unfunded by domestic resources. “This has to change now if we are to achieve sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and development.”

Mr. Ban said that gender-responsive budgeting and planning processes, such as those in Tanzania that provide free primary schooling or farm input subsidies, can help ensure that public revenue is raised, prioritized and spent in ways that benefit women and girls.

In addition, accounts from Cambodia, Costa Rica and Sri Lanka show how reducing spending on security and the military can effectively redirect financing into social programmes.

Enforcing existing tax obligations can also yield significant revenue from the private sector for this purpose, the Secretary-General added, while the business community has a key role to play in creating decent employment, equal pay and supporting women’s leadership.

He noted that the expected outcome of the development financing conference – the Addis Ababa Action Agenda – is clear about the need to invest in policy making and legislation to ensure women’s equal rights and their participation and leadership in the economy.

“It will take the concerted efforts of all of us to implement the right financing policies and allocations to ensure that women and men, girls and boys will benefit equally from the new global sustainable development framework. This is their right and it must be our legacy.”

Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank Group, told the gathering that evidence showed that gender equality is not only a condition for social justice but a powerful driver of economic growth that can help deliver social justice.
He noted that despite progress in recent years in areas such as education and maternal mortality, the world has fallen short in bringing women’s assets, earnings and employment in line with those of men.

“This should galvanize all of us to arm ourselves with the best possible evidence about what works to close these gaps, leverage new partnerships and funding streams and sharply scale up the smartest, most promising programmes to meet these challenges,” he stated.

Stressing the need for a “new financing mindset,” Mr. Kim said that while aid is critical, it is now also time to catalyze and leverage new streams of financing from public, private, domestic and international sources. “Collecting taxes fairly, efficiently and transparently is critically important in ways that don't penalize women when they bring home a second income, for example, or spend money on food and other goods that sustain their families.

“When women earn more, public finances will improve and commercial profits increase because of increased demand and productivity,” he continued. “When we promote true equality, including equal pay for equal work, we all stand to benefit because better educated mothers produce healthier children and women who earn more invest in the next generation.

“Creating a level playing field is always good for business, and it's especially good for women,” he stated, adding that this kind of inclusive growth is vital to ending extreme poverty over the next 15 years.

“Only by empowering women and giving them an equal opportunity for jobs and equal pay for equal work can we be the first generation in human history to end extreme poverty in our lifetime. Reaching that goal will be one of humankind's greatest achievements and I have no doubt that women will lead the way.”

Ahead of this week’s conference, UN Women called for transformative financing to end gender inequality by 2030. High ambition, backed by stepped-up action to make the right investments, puts that goal within reach for all women and girls, it pointed out.

UN Women added that beyond increasing the amount of financing, including through official development assistance and domestic resources such as taxation, countries need to adopt public policies that address the root causes and consequences of gender inequality and discrimination in all areas of life. In this regard, women must participate fully in decision-making at all levels, and action should be taken to mainstream gender in national planning and budgeting processes.

**Yemen: UN agencies deliver life-saving medicines and domestic supplies amid ongoing fighting**

14 July - With an expected humanitarian pause failing to take hold in crisis-torn Yemen over the past weekend, the United Nations said today that four out of five people in the country rely on some type of assistance, and the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that it has been able to deliver urgently needed supplies to the port city of Aden.

“The humanitarian and health situation in Yemen continues to deteriorate, but the health situation is especially critical in Aden, with many people no longer having direct access to food, fuel, medical care and safe drinking-water,” said Dr. Ahmed Shadoul, WHO representative in Yemen.

The life-saving health supplies, which were part of a larger UN convoy, contained 46.4 metric tonnes of medicines, medical supplies, and water and sanitation supplies for more than 84,000 beneficiaries in eight districts of Aden governorate, WHO explains in a press release.

Following a surge in the number of suspected cases of malaria and dengue fever since the start of the crisis, most significantly in Aden, WHO said it has also conducted rapid testing for dengue fever and malaria and provided support to a hospital in Aden to resume functionality of its fever/dengue ward and trauma management centre.
In addition, stressed WHO, Yemeni health professionals were trained by the Organization’s experts on epidemiological field investigations and early warning system surveillance. As part of malaria preparedness activities, bed nets were distributed to more than 9,000 households in four districts and residual spray materials and equipment in the 8 districts. Staffs were also trained to begin house-to-house spraying.

To date, WHO has distributed a total of more than 175 metric tonnes of medicines and medical supplies and more than 500,000 litres of fuel to maintain the functionality of main hospitals, vaccine stores, ambulances, national laboratories, kidney and oncology centres, and health centres in 13 governorates, reaching a total of almost five million people, including 700,000 internally displaced persons and 140,000 children under the age of five.

The total civilian death toll since 26 March in Yemen is 1,670 and another 3,829 people were injured during this period. In the mere 10 days between 3 and 13 July, at least 142 civilians, including 36 children and 27 women, were killed, and 224 others injured, according to Rupert Colville, spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

On one particularly deadly day, 6 July, two markets in different provinces were hit by airstrikes. Forty civilians, including 12 children and seven women, were killed in the first airstrike, while 17 other civilians were injured. The second one killed 36 civilians, including eight women and nine children, while injuring another 21.

During the bi-weekly press briefing today in Geneva, Johannes van der Klaauw, the representative in Yemen of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), today recalled that this country is impacted by one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world, four out of five Yemenis being in need of some kind of assistance, which amounts to 21 out of 25 million people.

A party to international instruments for the protection of refugees, Yemen has currently a population of 250,000 refugees, mostly Somalis, who are among the most vulnerable to the current war situation, emphasized Mr. van der Klaauw.

Meanwhile, UNHCR also reports that some 10,500 people have arrived in Yemen by sea since March 26 – bringing to over 37,000 the total so far this year, among them Ethiopians, Somalis and others.

Many have been tricked into making the crossing by smugglers who told them the conflict in Yemen is over, said the agency, adding that those making the sea crossings faced the usual risks of such journeys – abduction, attacks, drowning, exploitation and sexual assault. However, due to the ongoing conflict and reduced access in general, UNHCR and its partners were unable to take arrivals to urban centres to receive assistance.

To discourage crossings, he said mass information campaigns were now planned for Puntland and Somaliland and other points of departure, said Mr. van der Klaauw.

**UN applauds 'historic' deal on Iranian nuclear programme**

14 July - The United Nations has welcomed the agreement reached between international negotiators and the Government of Iran as the two parties pave the way for a viable solution on the Gulf country’s nuclear programme and towards possible peace in the region.

Describing the deal between Tehran and the so-called ‘E3+3’ as “historic” in a statement earlier this morning, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon applauded all parties for their resolution of the long-standing diplomatic negotiations as “a testament to the value of dialogue.”

“I know that an immense amount of work went into this and I admire the determination and the commitment of the negotiators as well as the courage of the leaders who approved the deal that was so painstakingly worked out by their teams in Vienna and elsewhere,” Mr. Ban declared from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where he is currently attending the UN’s Third International Conference on Financing for Development.
“I hope, and indeed believe, that this agreement will lead to greater mutual understanding and cooperation on the many serious security challenges in the Middle East.”

In addition, the Secretary-General lauded both the 'E3+3’ – composed of China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States and more commonly labelled as the 'P5+1’ – and Iran for their “vital contribution” in laying the foundation towards a more peaceful and stable future for both the region and the world.

The UN, he concluded, would stand ready “to fully cooperate” with the parties as they proceeded in the implementation of the “historic and important agreement.”

In a similarly toned statement issued in Vienna, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General, Yukiya Amano, also congratulated Iran and the 'E3+3’ for having reached a positive conclusion to their “many months of tireless negotiations.”

As a result of the agreement, the IAEA will now be asked to monitor and verify the nuclear-related measures set out by all parties as part of the UN agency's ongoing verification process of the Iranian nuclear programme.

Among the additional measures the agency has adopted in partnership with Iran and in light of today's agreement is a 'Roadmap for the Clarification of Past & Present Outstanding Issues regarding Iran's Nuclear Programme' which, the Director-General said, would help the IAEA establish “an understanding of the whole picture” concerning Iran's nuclear issues.

The newly created Road-map would require Iran to provide written explanations to the IAEA by 15 August regarding a number of outstanding issues that have yet to be resolved.

“I am confident in our ability to do this important work,” Mr. Amano confirmed. “The IAEA stands ready to undertake the necessary monitoring and verification activities when requested.”

Against that backdrop, the new UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and international sanctions, Idriss Jazairy, celebrated the deal as the beginning of the end of the strict sanction regime to which Iran has been bound for years – sanctions which also included a number of “additional, unilateral coercive measures decided by a number of States individually or in the framework of various regional organizations.”

“The stockpiling of sanctions and unilateral coercive measures against Iran, some of which went well beyond what was required by the Security Council, has had a significant adverse effect on the country's economy, its population and ultimately on the enjoyment of human rights of the people of Iran, including its right to food, its right to health and its right to development,” the independent expert declared in a press release.

In particular, Mr. Jazairy pointed the “indiscriminate character” of measures such as the ban on the use of international interbank financial telecommunications or of measures which ultimately impeded access to medicine and medical treatment.

“When a group of diverse targeted unilateral coercive measures converge on the same country, the outcome may become a comprehensive coercive measure,” he concluded, adding that he hoped nuclear agreement was “a vessel of a trend” of things to come. “We are witnesses of the fact that change is possible.”
Afghanistan: UN condemns ‘cynical, cowardly’ attack targeting civilians at a mosque

14 July - Offering deep condolences to the victims’ families and a speedy recovery for those injured in the latest attack in Afghanistan targeting civilians, the top United Nations official in the country, Nicholas Haysom, condemned the attack, which targeted people gathered for Iftar at the Grand Mosque in Pul-e-Khomri, in the northern Baghlan province.

According to the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which Mr. Haysom heads, an improvised explosive device planted at the mosque detonated during a Government-planned dinner for 500 people – arranged to distribute oil and rice to the poorest families of the city – wounding more than 40 civilians, many critically.

In a statement issued from Kabul, Mr. Haysom underscored, that an attack deliberately targeting families, colleagues and friends praying together in a mosque “is another horrific example of the conflict in Afghanistan. Such attacks highlight the perpetrators’ intent to destroy lives, and spread terror among the civilian population.”

“The cold statistics of civilian casualties do not adequately capture the horror of the bombs – the torn bodies of children, wives and daughters, sons and fathers.

[They] do not reveal the grieving families and the loss of shocked communities of ordinary Afghans…which are the real consequences of those acts of terror,” he declared.

“This cynical act of terror is a particularly cowardly act. It is an attack bereft of humanity, in violation of national and international law, and is contrary to the precepts and principles of Islam,” Mr. Haysom added.

With more than 100 civilians injured or killed in the past two days, Mr. Haysom reiterated UNAMA’s repeated calls for the immediate cessation of attacks targeting civilians, stressing “The perpetrators of this war crime must be held accountable.”

Ukraine: UNICEF appeals for help to restore damaged water facilities for 1.3 million people

14 July - With only 60 per cent of the pre-conflict water supply capacities still functioning in Ukraine, some 1.3 million people are struggling to cope with a “serious water crisis” because of damaged or destroyed water lines, forcing many families to travel with buckets to working wells in neighbouring villages, the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) warned today.

Robert McCarthy, UNICEF’s Regional Chief of Emergency for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), who has just completed a mission to take stock of the situation in eastern Ukraine, namely in Donetsk and Luhansk, also said humanitarian actors needed to strengthen response to the impact of violence and displacement on children.

“In terms of water supply, up to 1.3 million adults and children faced a serious water crisis due to damaged or destroyed water lines and acute water shortages,” Mr. McCarthy told reporters at a press briefing in Geneva, Switzerland.

“More than 470,000 people, including 118,000 children, were also facing serious problems in accessing safe water in non-government areas of Luhansk region,” he said.
The UNICEF officials said many families had to rely on trucks or travel to neighbouring villages to get water from functioning wells.

Mr. McCarthy noted that Mariupol, which was under Government control, is no longer receiving water from the water channel damaged by shelling and that the city is now reliant on a water-storage reservoir that is rapidly depleting.

“The risk of waterborne disease is likely to increase as people are unable to store or transport water safely,” he warned.

He appealed for more humanitarian partners to assist in the emergency water and sanitation response despite the fact that UNICEF and its partners have helped more than 500,000 people in Donetsk and Luhansk regions to access safe water since January 2015.

Nearly 1.4 million people are displaced, including at least 174,000 children in Ukraine, where the humanitarian crisis affects more than 5 million people, including 1.7 million children, and movement across the Government/non-government-controlled areas remained difficult, according to UNICEF.

“As the winter season approaches, there is a need to improve contingency planning,” Mr. McCarthy said.

He appealed on behalf of UNICEF for $55.8 million to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of children and families in eastern Ukraine for 2015. To date, just $10.48 million, or 20 percent of what was needed, had been received.

New UN report finds ‘huge inequalities’ in global mental health services, calls for more investment

14 July - People suffering from mental health disorders are facing unequal access to specialized care, the United Nations health agency announced today as it urged international governments to boost financing for mental health services around the world.

According to the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Mental Health Atlas 2014, on average, globally, there is less than one mental health worker per 10,000 people – a number which falls below one per 100,000 people in low and middle-income countries.

Against that backdrop, global spending on mental health remains very low as low- and middle- income countries spend less than $2 per capita per year on mental health. High-income countries, in comparison, spend more than $50.

The WHO notes that the crisis is further compounded by the dramatic number of people reportedly suffering from mental health disorders which, the report says, amounts to nearly one in 10 people worldwide.

“Huge inequalities in access to mental health services exist depending on where people live,” the WHO confirmed in a note to the media issued earlier this morning. “Nearly half of the world’s population lives in a country where there is less than one psychiatrist per 100,000 people.”

The Mental Health Atlas does point out that many countries are, in fact, making progress on policy- and law-making for mental health which, the WHO says, provide “the bedrock for good governance and service development.”

At the same time, however, most of the policies and laws are not fully in line with international human rights instruments and suffer from weak implementation.

Today’s release of the report – the fourth and latest edition of the WHO’s initiative to measure progress in mental health around the world – follows the UN agency’s 2013 launch of the Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020 which sets out four objectives including strengthening leadership and governance for mental health; providing comprehensive mental health and social care services in community-based settings; implementing strategies to promote and
prevent mental health; and strengthening information systems, evidence and research.

**Turkish authorities urged to tackle anti-LGBT violence and discrimination – UN rights office**

14 July - The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) expressed deep concern over attacks and incitement to violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Turkey and has called on the authorities to take active measures to combat homophobic and transphobic violence and discrimination, a UN spokesperson said today.

“In the past two weeks alone, reported incidents include the appearance of posters in Ankara encouraging the murder of LGBT people; a violent homophobic attack against a group of young gay men in Istanbul; as well as rape, assault and robbery against Kemal Ördek, a human rights defender and founder of the Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association,” OHCHR spokesperson Rupert Colville told reporters in Geneva, Switzerland.

He went on to say that the Office is “further concerned about allegations that in the last case, police officers trivialized the attack, used discriminatory language, tried to dissuade the victim from filing a complaint, and did not provide protection from additional threats by the alleged perpetrators.”

In addition, Mr. Colville said, these incidents follow reports that the police used unwarranted force against individuals who were peacefully assembling and participating in the 13th Istanbul LGBT Pride Parade.

“Everyone is entitled to the same fundamental human rights without discrimination or arbitrary restrictions of any kind, including the rights to life, liberty, physical integrity, privacy, equality before the law, freedom of expression and peaceful assembly,” he noted.

“We call on the Turkish authorities to take active measures to combat homophobic and transphobic violence and discrimination, to uphold the rights of LGBT people to peacefully assemble and express themselves and to ensure that LGBT victims of crimes are treated with respect and dignity and have access to protection mechanisms and effective remedy,” Mr. Colville said.

He went on to say that it is critical for authorities to prevent impunity for these human rights violations through prompt, effective, independent and impartial investigations and prosecution in line with fair trial norms and standards.

**UN rights office welcomes Israel’s release of Palestinian prisoner, urges end to administrative detentions**

14 July - The United Nations rights office today welcomed the recent release of a Palestinian prisoner who had been on a hunger strike protesting his continuing administrative detention by the Israeli authorities since 8 July 2014.

“We reiterate our call, last made in April, on Israel to end its practice of administrative detention and to either release without delay or to promptly charge all administrative detainees, affording them all the due process guarantees required by international human rights law and standards,” said Rupert Colville, spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), during a press briefing in Geneva.

The prisoner, Khader Adnan, had been on hunger strike for over two months.

At the end of March of this year, 396 Palestinians, including one woman, were reportedly held in administrative detention in Israel. Administrative detainees are held without charge or trial, often on the basis of secret evidence, for periods of up to six
months, which are extendable indefinitely.

“The Secretary-General, the UN Human Rights Office and the Human Rights Committee have called for this practice to end,” recalled Mr. Colville.

Last June, he continued, the Israeli cabinet approved a bill that would permit the “force-feeding” of Palestinian hunger-striking prisoners. While the bill is now advancing towards final approval by the Knesset, both the High Commissioner and a group of UN Special Procedures, or human rights experts, expressed concerns that the implementation of such a law could breach international human rights standards, concerns the Spokesperson reiterated today.

“We are also seriously concerned at the situation of another Palestinian hunger striker, this time being detained by the Palestinian authorities,” he stressed.

Islam Hasan Jameel Hamed has been protesting since 11 April 2015 at his continued detention by the Palestinian General Intelligence Services despite a Palestinian court ruling that he has served his sentence – originally imposed in 2011 – and should be immediately released.

“We urge the Palestinian authorities to respect the court ruling and release Islam Hamed,” said Mr. Colville.

**DR Congo: success of UN mission depends on ‘constructive partnership’ with Government, Security Council told**

14 July - The capacity of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) to fulfil its mandate rests on “persistent engagement” with the authorities, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the Mission, Martin Kobler, told the Security Council today.

“The success of our mandate rests on a continued, constructive, partnership with the Government,” in particular regarding the security situation in the East and the electoral process.

On the security situation, there is “a ray of hope on one of the front lines”, he said, describing ongoing military cordon and search operations conducted by the national Congolese army (FARDC) supported by MONUSCO forces against the Force de résistance patriotique en Ituri (FPRI).

“While the priority is to ensure that the group disarmed voluntarily, the use of force proved inevitable after the lapse of three consecutive deadlines,” he explained.

However, Mr. Kobler said, joint operations against the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) in North Kivu, South Kivu and Katanga had been at a standstill for five months. While the Congolese Government had made great strides in the past decade in restoring security, the population in East lived at the mercy of a number of armed groups, he explained.

Despite the progress in dislodging the FDLR from some of its strongholds, the FARDC was finding it difficult to consolidate its hold in liberated areas, he said, adding that paralysis had cascaded into other fields of operation. “Waiting is not an option,” he said.

DRC will hold presidential and legislative elections in November 2016, which under the imperatives of a Security Council resolution must be transparent, credible and respectful of the Constitution and the electoral calendar. The responsibility for such elections, however, ultimately rested with the Government and a number of actions were required, Mr. Kobler noted.

“Urgent needs include a budget and a realistic electoral calendar. The voters’ registry need to be updated and political space must be given to the opposition and civil society,” the Special Representative noted. Welcoming President Joseph Kabila’s
initiative to reach out to a wide range of stakeholders to ensure consensus, he underlined that such consultations should not delay the elections.

While there had been progress in the fight against sexual violence in the country, violence against women and girls remained endemic, deplored Mr. Kobler. “We must ensure that the women’s bodies are not used as battlegrounds in never-ending wars,” he said, stressing the need to ensure victims had access to justice.

Security Council extends UN peacekeeping force in Abyei through December 2015

14 July - The United Nations Security Council has extended the mandate of the Organization’s interim peacekeeping force in Abyei – a resource-rich area contested by Sudan and South Sudan – as part of ongoing efforts to maintain peace and protect civilians in the disputed territory.

Using language similar to their previous action on the issue, the 15-member body adopted the resolution in a unanimous vote held earlier today while recognizing that the continuing tensions in Abyei and along the border between Sudan and South Sudan constituted “a serious threat to international peace and security.”

The mandate of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) was extended until 15 December 2015. The force, set up by the Council in June 2011 following an outbreak of violence after Sudanese troops took control of the oil-rich area in the weeks before South Sudan became independent, is tasked with overseeing the demilitarization of the area and maintaining security.

Among other measures, the Council welcomed the resumption of the work of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee, otherwise known as the AJOC in March 2015. The UN body had previously declared the AJOC’s functioning as important “to ensure steady progress” on the implementation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement, which provides for temporary administrative arrangements for Abyei and the withdrawal of troops by both sides.

At the same time, the Council condemned the “intermittent presence” of South Sudan security service personnel and the deployment of Diffra Oil Police units in the Abyei area and reiterated its demands that the Government of South Sudan “immediately and without preconditions” redeploy such units away from Abyei.

The Security Council also underscored that UNISFA’s protection of civilians mandate required the peacekeeping force to take “necessary actions” in order to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence.

Government, UN and Donors examine Organization’s work in Afghanistan

14 July - The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), senior Afghan Government officials and representatives from the international donor community have gathered today in Kabul for the first of three meetings aimed at examining the role of UN entities in the country.

During the meeting – co-chaired by Salahuddin Rabbani, Afghanistan’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, and UNAMA chief Nicholas Haysom – participants agreed that procedures would be in line with the principles of Afghan national sovereignty, national leadership and national ownership. The three parties committed to a productive exercise and a positive outcome.

“We must ensure that UNAMA’s mandate remains in line with the goals of the Transformation Decade,” said Mr. Rabbani in a UNAMA press release. “In doing so, we would also like to emphasize the concept of the ‘One UN’ approach to the
activities and engagement of the UN in Afghanistan, to achieve greater integration and coordination.”

Mr. Haysom affirmed that the UN welcomes the examination undertaken on behalf of the Secretary-General, adding: “The United Nations has been in Afghanistan for more than 50 years and is committed to improving the lives of Afghans.”

“We have made significant strides in focussing our contribution in areas where we bring the most value,” said Mr. Haysom, who is also the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan. “This process will help us ensure that our involvement is even more focussed and effective, and aligned with Afghan priorities. Above all, our engagement in Afghanistan must serve to maximise the international community’s focus on and support for Afghanistan.”

A detailed report on the result of the process will be presented to the Security Council, which mandated the review of UN operations, through the Secretary-General, ahead of its September debate on Afghanistan.

The Council renewed UNAMA’s mandate on 16 March.