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Syria: UN agency appeals for $30 million to help besieged civilians in Yarmouk camp

17 April - The United Nations agency tasked with the ensuring the well-being of Palestinian refugees is appealing for $30 million to carry out life-sustaining assistance to 18,000 civilians from besieged Yarmouk refugee camp, including 3,500 children.

Over the past days, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has significantly expanded its response in areas neighbouring Yarmouk, on the southern edge of Damascus, where civilians have sought shelter amid a deteriorating security situation since armed groups began fighting in and around the camp.

“This remains a volatile, rapidly changing environment of armed conflict and we must be prepared to respond to those in need, wherever they are,” said Michael Kingsley-Nyinah, UNRWA Director in Syria, in a statement to the media.

The appeal for $30 million is part of the UNRWA Syria Crisis Appeal, which provides humanitarian support to 480,000 Palestine refugees throughout Syria and to those displaced to Lebanon and Jordan. The funds for Yarmouk are for an initial 90-day response.

Yesterday, UNRWA distributed supplies to Yalda, an area the Agency previously had not had presence, but which now temporarily hosts hundreds of families displaced from Yarmouk. The agency also plans to expand its operations to the neighbouring areas of Babila and Beit Saham in the coming days.
In the meantime, UNRWA staff has established a mobile health point, treating over 400 patients over the last few days and delivered humanitarian materials to families, including food, medical supplies, water purification treatments, mattresses, blankets, family kitchen sets and hygiene kits.

“The cooperation with a wide range of partners, including local leaders and the Syrian authorities, has been constructive,” Mr. Kingsley-Nyinah said. “But the agency cannot fully respond to this escalation without a major increase in funding.”

The situation in Yarmouk “characterizes the severe suffering of civilians” trapped in the Syria conflict, and the particular vulnerability of Palestine refugees, he added.

Cut off from the world for almost two years, people in the Yarmouk refugee camp remain deprived of food, water, and subjected to frequent eruptions of armed violence. That camp is, unfortunately, not the only crisis facing Palestine refugees in Syria, UNRWA stresses.

There are currently some 480,000 Palestine refugees in Syria in need of assistance.

**Last mile of Ebola struggle 'may be most difficult,' Ban says in Washington**

17 April - While there has been important progress over recent months, the Ebola epidemic remains a pressing challenge, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said today, stressing that on the road to eradicating the scourge the “last mile” may be the toughest.

“Our Marathon effort has been a success,” Mr. Ban told a special high-level event on Ebola convened as part of the World Bank's annual spring meetings in Washington, D.C.

However, “too many lives have been lost. Families, communities and nations have been devastated,” he said. “When we reach zero cases, we must maintain our response capacity for at least a year.”

In connection with the event, the World Bank announced that it would provide at least $650 million during the next year and a half to help the most-affected countries – Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone – recover from the social and economic impact of the outbreak. The new pledge brings the World Bank's total financing for Ebola recovery to $1.62 billion.

“Many of us have acknowledged that the international community was slow to react to Ebola. Let's show that we have learned this lesson by supporting an effective and sustainable recovery that also prepares these countries – and the rest of the world – for the next pandemic,” said World Bank Group President, Jim Yong Kim.

Echoing that sentiment, Mr. Ban called on the international community to continue strengthening surveillance and community engagement. He commended Presidents and governments of the affected countries for showing leadership and communities for adopting safe and dignified methods of caring for the sick and burying the dead.

“We have seen multilateralism at its best. I thank the many governments, local and international NGOs and, in particular, the brave doctors and nurses working on the front lines,” the UN chief said.

As a result, there has been a significant decline in new Ebola cases. Liberia has only recorded one case in the past two months. And the outbreak has “shrunk considerably to a narrow belt” along coastal Guinea and Sierra Leone.

“These efforts must also recognize the fragility of these countries' transitions from past conflicts and instability to sustainable peace and development,” continued Mr. Ban.

Women, men and children need to have safe and affordable access to clinics, hospitals and schools. People need jobs and
access to markets. Affected communities, the bereaved and orphans need support. People's faith in their governments' ability to serve them must be reinforced.

“These are our building blocks to repair the fabric of communities, economies and societies torn apart by this terrible disease,” the Secretary-General added.

Later at a press conference, Mr. Ban thanked the President of the World Bank for organizing the gathering, and commended the leadership of the Presidents of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

“This is multilateralism at its height,” he said. “Just as we helped the affected countries when the outbreak was at its height, we have to stand by them as the outbreak now ebbs.”

That means providing essential services to these countries – health care systems, education, jobs and markets.

Mr. Ban said he will convene a high-level pledging conference in New York in July to mobilize resources, financial and technological resources, to help the economic and social recovery in the affected countries.

“Looking forward, I count on the international community to continue to demonstrate generosity and unity of purpose,” he emphasized. “In the meantime there is the urgent unfinished task of getting to zero cases and staying there. I think we can make it.”

According to the latest data from World Health Organization (WHO), some 25,826 people have been infected and 10,704 have died from the Ebola virus.

**DOHA: UN conference weighs efforts to combat cybercrime, create safer digital world**

17 April - Efforts to tame the fast-growing cybercrime threat took centre stage at the United Nations Crime Congress under way in Doha, Qatar, as a diverse group of experts in the field urged strong partnerships between the public and private sectors to create a safer digital landscape.

“Cybercrime has become an established threat to the security of States and individuals alike,” Loide Lungameni, Chief of the Organized Crime and Illicit Trafficking Branch in the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), told a high-level event on the topic.

Continuing, she warned those gathered for the 13th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice that in the near future, due to ever-increasing global connectivity, it will become hard to imagine a form of cybercrime – or perhaps any crime – that does not involve electronic evidence.

According to UNODC, threats to Internet safety have spiked dramatically in recent years, and cybercrime now affects more than 431 million adult victims globally.

Cybercrime exists in many forms, the most common being identity-related offences. This occurs by ‘phishing’ (deceiving Internet users into giving their personal information), the dissemination of ‘malware’ (software that disrupts computer systems and collects personal or sensitive information) and hacking (illegally accessing someone’s computer remotely).

Criminals tend to use these methods to steal credit card information and money. Moreover, the Internet has become a breeding ground for criminal activity related to copyright and intellectual property rights, as well as offences such as child pornography and abuse material.

For the past two years, UNODC, under its programme for cybercrime, has been delivering technical assistance to law enforcement authorities, prosecutors, and the judiciary, in three regions of the world, in Eastern Africa, South-East Asia, and
Central America.

The agency has emphasized that developing countries lack the capacity to combat cyberattacks and other forms of cybercrime. Criminals also exploit countries’ legal loopholes and weak security measures to perpetrate cybercrimes.

“The main objective of the programme is to respond to identified needs in developing countries by supporting Member States to prevent and combat cybercrime”, Ms. Lungameni explained.

UNODC works with international partners in carrying out this technical assistance, including the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Commonwealth Secretariat, the World Bank, Interpol, and Europol.

At another meeting, Jinyong Chung, senior counsel for the World Bank, stressed how important it is for international organizations and their partners to combat cybercrime.

“We all know that cybercrime is a not an easy issue to deal with. But if we do nothing, just because it is very hard to deal with, it causes other risks,” he said.

He added that the Bank’s mission in combating cybercrime is “to build capacity among policymakers, legislators, public prosecutors and investigators and civil society in developing countries, in the policy, legal and criminal justice aspects.”

“We are trying to achieve this goal through synthesizing international best practices in these areas”, he said, adding that the World Bank has developed a virtual library which gathers all what is available regarding cybercrime issues. This virtual library will be open to the public.

The head of Cybercrime Program Office in the Council of Europe, Alexander Seger, said in another session that capacity building is crucial as an effective way to address the challenge of cybercrime.

“We have seen a lot of progress in that field over the last five years, how donors have opened up their financing instruments to support capacity building programs”, he said. “Capacity building on cybercrime contributes to human rights and the rule of law, contributes to human development and democratic governance,” he added.

The private sector is also involved in combating cybercrime and a side event discussed public-private partnership about it, with the participation of Microsoft Corporation.

In an interview with UN Radio, the head of the Microsoft Digital Crime Unit for Middle East and Africa, Dale Waterman, said: “We are trying ultimately to create a safer digital world for our customers.”

As such, Microsoft is focusing its efforts on malware and vulnerable populations, “who tend to be the young and the less tech-savvy…and the elderly. With the young, we are developing ways in which child exploitation abused images can be removed from the Internet,” he explained.
Burundi: UN refugee agency warns surge in people fleeing pre-election violence

17 April - The number of Burundians seeking refuge in neighbouring countries has surged in recent weeks following an uptick in pre-election violence and intimidation throughout the African nation, a spokesperson for the United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) said today.

Briefing reporters in Geneva, Adrian Edwards warned that more than 8,000 Burundians had sought refuge in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) over the past 14 days amid intensifying harassment and reported disappearances of people associated with the political opposition.

Earlier this week, during his visit to Burundi, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein confirmed that recent events in the country were of great concern, with tensions rising sharply over the past few months as the elections approach, reportedly stoked by an increase in politically motivated harassment, intimidation and acts of violence, as well as a reported rise in hate speech.

In addition, he urged politicians and activists to ensure that the country’s political debate did not transform into incitement or violence, and urged those competing in the election to do so fairly and graciously.

With political tension rising throughout the country and more acts of violence being reported, the UNHCR official continued, concerns are increasing regarding the possibility of more people fleeing in the lead up to the elections, which are slated to take place from May to July.

Mr. Edwards noted that the bulk of those fleeing in the past two weeks – some 7,000 people – had sought refuge in Rwanda with more than 60 per cent of them being children. Meanwhile, in the DRC, over 1,000 Burundian asylum-seekers had arrived in South Kivu so far this month.

As a result, UNHCR and its partners on the ground are working to provide basic assistance at refugee centres in both countries, distributing essential items such as plastic sheets, mosquito nets, blankets, mattresses, jerry cans and soap to help families cope.

Public, private sectors essential for progress on climate change, says UN chief

17 April - United Nations Secretary-General, in his remarks to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) meeting on climate change in Washington D.C., said that collaboration and bold leadership from both the private and public sectors is needed to progress on climate change at this “enormous opportunity to chart a new path.”

“This year’s annual Spring meetings come at a critical moment. 2015 is our year to set the world on course to a more sustainable future for generations to come,” Ban Ki-moon said as he commended the leadership of both World Bank and IMF for organizing the conference.

“I welcome leaders from the public and corporate sectors,” the UN chief added.

On the political front, Mr. Ban called for a “realistic” trajectory to mobilize $100 billion per year by 2020 that was pledged
by developed countries in 2009 – with resources above and beyond official development assistance (ODA).

The UN Green Climate Fund has to be “up and running” – with projects and funding ready to go, he added. That means at least half of the pledged contributions have to be in by October. Least developed and small island developing countries which are especially vulnerable need significantly larger allocations from public funding, ODA, the Green Climate Fund and the LDC Fund.

He added that least developed countries (LDCs) and small Island developing States (SIDS) need help tapping into international markets and attracting investors.

Companies announced $200 billion in commitments at the UN Climate Summit in September. Now, they must turn commitments into actions that can blaze a trail for the trillions in low-carbon infrastructure that can help meet the world's needs for cities, energy and agriculture.

Businesses who are publicly stepping up to meet the climate challenge know that taking bold climate action makes good business sense, and that an ambitious global agreement is vital, Mr. Ban said, urging CEOs around the world to “lead by example and make good on their commitments.”

“It is time to end the separation between infrastructure and sustainability. I urge finance ministers, Government leaders and the business community to invest in a low-carbon pathway for future infrastructure projects,” Mr. Ban continued.

Policy dimensions of a climate finance package must help put the global economy on a less-than-two-degree pathway. The World Bank and the IMF can help by supporting economic drivers like carbon pricing, a phase out of fossil fuel subsidies and stronger energy efficiency standards.

“I will continue mobilizing all partners so that we can bring all three dimensions together in a comprehensive finance package for Paris,” he said, emphasizing that for the upcoming climate change conference in Paris in December to succeed, it needs a finance package that covers the political, economic and policy dimensions.

‘Dire’ human rights situation in Ukraine likely to deteriorate further – UN

17 April - The United Nations human rights office said today that it is increasingly worried that the dire situation in parts of the east of Ukraine is likely to deteriorate further due to breaches of the ceasefire and violations of the Minsk Agreement.

“Civilians continue to suffer seriously as a result of the protracted conflict,” UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani told reporters in Geneva today. “In 2015 alone, about 400 civilians have been killed as a result of indiscriminate shelling of residential areas and because of landmines and unexploded ordnance – both in Government-controlled territories and in territories controlled by armed groups.”

According to reports, fighting has intensified, especially in the vicinity of the Donetsk airport and near the village of Shyrokin in the Donetsk region, where heavy weapons, including mortars, artillery and tanks are reportedly extensively used – running counter to the Minsk Accords.

“In one day alone, on 13 April, the Ukrainian armed forces reported six servicemen killed and 12 wounded,” said Ms. Shamdasani. “While the self-proclaimed ‘Donetsk people’s republic’ and self-proclaimed ‘Luhansk people’s republic’ claimed four of their fighters were killed and 17 wounded. We fear a further escalation of hostilities.”

The UN Human Rights Office and the World Health Organization estimate that since April 2014, at least 6,116 people, both military personnel and civilians, have been killed and 15,474 wounded. The actual number of casualties could be considerably higher, as hundreds remain missing and hundreds of bodies are still pending recovery.
As well as pointing to the thousands of civilian deaths, Ms. Shamdasani also highlighted the killings of former parliamentarian Oleh Kalashnikov and of two journalists, Oles Buzyna and Serhiy Sukhobok, which it said were “very disturbing” and which required “swift, independent and credible” investigations to ensure justice and accountability for those responsible.

“The protection of civilians must be considered the utmost priority,” she said. “Those committing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, in any part of the country and by any side to the conflict, must be held accountable.”

The impact of the conflict on civilians went beyond the direct destruction and death experienced by many, according to the press release. The conflict also continues to affect the daily lives of people in conflict-affected zones and elsewhere in Ukraine.

“The proliferation of arms, the lack of job opportunities, limited access to medical and psychological rehabilitation, particularly for more than 20,000 demobilised soldiers, and a deep anxiety that the ceasefire may not hold all have a serious impact on the population,” Ms Shamdasani said.

In late February 2014, the situation in Ukraine transcended what was initially seen as an internal Ukrainian political crisis into violent clashes in parts of the country, later reaching full-scale conflict in the east. Despite a September 2014 cease-fire agreed in Minsk, the situation in Ukraine has since continuously deteriorated, with serious consequences for the country’s unity, territorial integrity and stability. In February 2015, the parties in Ukraine and the Trilateral Contact Group signed a “Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements.”

As Yemen fighting surges, UN humanitarian arm issues urgent appeal for country’s civilians

17 April - The United Nations has launched an urgent appeal for over two hundred million dollars to help Yemen’s civilians with critical aid amid the country’s intensifying conflict, the Organization’s humanitarian wing confirmed today.

“The devastating conflict in Yemen takes place against the backdrop of an existing humanitarian crisis that was already one of the largest and most complex in the world,” said Johannes Van Der Klauuw of the UN’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in a press release issued this morning.

“Thousands of families have now fled their homes as a result of the fighting and airstrikes. Ordinary families are struggling to access health care, water, food and fuel – basic requirements for their survival.”

OCHA’s flash appeal for Yemen calls for $273.7 million in order meet the life-saving and protection needs of some 7.5 million people who are increasingly under threat.

According to the UN’s overview of the situation on the ground, in fact, the fighting in Yemen has steadily escalated in recent weeks, spreading throughout the country and into urban areas and residential neighbourhoods.

Civilian infrastructure has reportedly been destroyed as airstrikes and shelling have hit hospitals, schools, airports and mosques. At the same time, reports of serious human rights violations being committed are also emerging.

In its appeal, the UN office warned that the conflict was also significantly impacting civilians themselves. The latest data point to 731 people killed and 2,754 injured from 19 March to 12 April, including a large number of civilian casualties. Meanwhile, the number of food insecure people has increased from 10.6 million people to 12 million and at least 150,000 people have been displaced.

Mr. Van Der Klauuw explained that the humanitarian community in Yemen continued to operate and deliver assistance despite the insecurity and logistical challenges. But OCHA has nonetheless noted that the country remains in dire need of
medical supplies, safe drinking water, protection, food assistance as well as emergency shelter and logistical support.

“To scale up assistance, we urgently need additional resources,” Mr. Van Der Klaauw concluded. “I urge donors to act now to support the people of Yemen at this time of greatest need.”

The mood of concern was equally elevated in Geneva today where the spokespersons of the UN's other relief agencies addressed the press on Yemen's soaring humanitarian crisis.

Adrian Edwards, of the UN’s refugee agency (UNHCR), told reporters that shelter was emerging as one of the more pressing needs for Yemen's civilians, adding that the number of displaced could be expected to skyrocket from the current 150,000 if the violence continued. Moreover, he said, the current numbers of displaced were in addition to the 300,000 displaced by the previous violence that had afflicted the country, fuelling a steady flow of migrants from Yemen to the Horn of Africa.

The World Health Organization’s (WHO) Tarik Jašarevic, meanwhile, cautioned that humanitarian actors were encountering difficulties in treating casualties, especially in the country's south where there is a particular shortage of electricity for hospitals. The UN health agency was also calling for an injection of funding as it needs to raise $25.2 million to meet humanitarian health needs in Yemen, Mr. Jašarevic added.

Christophe Boulierac from the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), on the other hand, warned that the escalating conflict was expected to increase the problems of nutrition for children under five and increase the nutrition vulnerability of children and pregnant and lactating women.

Before the current conflict exploded, Yemen was ranked 50th out of 194 countries in terms of highest under five mortality rate which, he said, added to the burden already facing the country's children.

**UN mission condemns ‘murderous’ attack on civilians in north-eastern DR Congo town**

17 April - The head of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) has strongly condemned Wednesday's deadly attack on civilians in North Kivu province and expressed deep condolences to the families of the victims.

According to MONUSCO, in the early morning hours of 15 April, a group of unidentified assailants suspected to belong to the Ugandan-based Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebel group attacked Matiba village, 5 kilometres north east of Mbau in Beni territory.

"My heart is with their souls," stressed Martin Kobler, who is also the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the DRC, through a statement issued from the capital, Kinshasa.

“I am deeply shocked by the killings of civilians near Beni. It is absolutely necessary that FARDC [Armed Forces of the DRC] and MONUSCO resume their cooperation. Together it will be possible to avoid a further deterioration of the security situation” declared Mr. Kobler.
UNICEF urges Australia, Cambodia to protect rights of child refugees in Nauru

17 April - The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) raised concerns today regarding reported decisions by the Governments of Australia and Cambodia to start transferring refugees currently in an Australian-funded processing centre in Nauru to Cambodia for settlement.

“According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Australia and Cambodia are both parties, the rights of children are paramount and must be guaranteed in every situation,” said Daniel Toole, UNICEF’s East Asia and Pacific Regional Director in a statement released today. “Article 3 of the [Convention] obliges States to ensure that in all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child are a primary consideration.”

The statement recalled that all Governments have a responsibility to protect children’s rights in every circumstance.

“The special needs and rights of children and the additional risks they face must be assessed and properly addressed in any action governments take, as an essential part of the planning and the implementation of that action,” Mr. Toole said.

“Governments that take actions that can reasonably be expected to increase the risks children face must accept a special responsibility for the safeguarding of their rights. No government policy or action should knowingly put children’s lives or their wellbeing at increased risk.

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in all its work. It works with partners in 190 countries and territories to translate the commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of children all over the world.

Top UN officials condemn murders of politician, journalist in Ukraine

17 April - United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has voiced serious concern over recent reports regarding the killing of prominent political and media figures in Ukraine.

In a statement released by his spokesperson earlier today, Mr. Ban took note of Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko’s call for a swift investigation into the shooting deaths of Oleg Kalashnikov and Oles Buzyna.

Mr. Kalashnikov, a politician, was reportedly found dead from a gun-shot wound inside his home on 15 April while Mr. Buzyna, a journalist and writer, was killed outside his home by unidentified assailants the following day.

Mr. Ban urged that all other such crimes be “urgently investigated” by authorities, stating that such an approach would be “critical in order to ensure the rule of law and the need to bring the perpetrators to justice.”

At the same time, Irina Bokova, Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN agency mandated to defend press freedom, condemned Mr. Buzyna’s murder, stating that journalists must be able to practice their professions “without fearing for their lives.”

“Society as a whole suffers each time a journalist is silenced,” Ms. Bokova declared in a press release. “The authorities must spare no effort in shedding light into this killing.”
Spate of deadly xenophobic violence in South Africa draws UN concern

17 April - The United Nations refugee agency has today welcomed efforts by South Africa’s Government to contain a recent wave of xenophobic violence that has accounted for the deaths of six people in the past three weeks in South Africa.

However, Adrian Edwards, a spokesperson for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said the agency remains concerned about the attacks, which have also led to displacement of more than 5,000 foreigners, some of whom included refugees and asylum-seekers.

“The attacks in KwaZulu-Natal province began in late March following an apparent labour dispute involving South African and foreign workers and the latest population movements came on top of displacement that had taken place in January as a result of similar incidents in Soweto, near Johannesburg in Gauteng province,” said Mr. Edwards.

“South Africa’s President Jacob Zuma told parliamentarians on 16 April that refugees and asylum-seekers would be accorded support in line with international law and protocols, with the support of the UNHCR,” he added.

Yesterday, during the daily briefing at UN Headquarters in New York by the spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General, questions were raised about the incident, to which Stéphane Dujarric replied that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) remains concerned about such incidents.

Such attacks date back as far as 2008, he said, in communities that are poor, marginalized and in situations of vulnerability.

Mr. Dujarric said the Human Rights Commissioner’s Office encouraged the South African Government to accelerate enactment of legislation against hate crimes, to hold those responsible for acts of violence and violations of human rights accountable and to formulate future policy responses to the situation of migrants that conform to international standards.

Ban appoints new Director of UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute

17 April - The United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon has announced the appointment of Cindy Smith of the United States as Director of the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute.

Ms. Smith, who has a wealth of experience in the field of criminology and justice issues, policymaking and education, succeeds Jonathan Lucas of Seychelles, who the Secretary-General praised for dedicated service and commitment to the Organization in leading the implementation of the Institute’s mandate during a very challenging period.

Currently the Senior Coordinator for International Programs in the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons at the United States Department of State, Ms. Smith was a Lead Foreign Affairs Officer at the Department of State between 2011 and 2012 and an Associate Professor in Criminology and Director of the Masters in Criminal Justice Program at the University of Baltimore, United States.

She has also served as Chief of the International Centre at the National Institute of Justice in Washington, D.C. and has researched a wide range of topics related to criminal justice, including juvenile justice, corrections, human trafficking and
gender issues in courts.

A former Fulbright Senior Researcher in Turkey, Ms. Smith holds a Doctorate of Philosophy in Social Ecology from the University of California, Irvine, a Master of Science in Education Administration from National University, Irvine, and a Master of Science in Justice from American University in Washington, D.C.

**Accurate and timely data vital to post-2015 agenda, says UN Assembly President**

**17 April** - At an event today where participants discussed the importance of the data revolution to sustainable development, the President of the United Nations General Assembly stressed the importance of data to negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda and on financing for development.

“Data is an important tool for planning, monitoring, and accountability,” he said. “Particularly with regard to implementation at national, regional and international levels.”

Mr. Kutesa, who was speaking at a high-level side event during the World Bank & IMF Spring Meetings, entitled The Data Revolution for Sustainable Development, which aims to build support for financing the data revolution and to generate concrete ideas on how to make real advances for development data that can be taken forward in Addis Ababa and beyond.

He pointed to the proposed sustainable development goals, including goal 17 on means of implementation, which has a 2020 target for increasing significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, disability, geographic location and other characteristics, as well as improving the statistical capacity of developing countries.

“Accurate and timely data enables policymakers to design and evaluate policies and programmes, and to ensure that resources are used as efficiently as possible,” he said. “Quality data will be essential for follow-up and review of the post-2015 development agenda.”

That would be vital to fulfilling the ambitions of a transformative post-2015 agenda with hopes of eradicating extreme poverty, improving livelihoods of people everywhere and preserving the planet.

To implement the new agenda and to work towards achieving sustainable development it would be vital to mobilize adequate financial, technological and capacity building resources. Timely, reliable and accessible data would be equally important, he added, stressing that it could otherwise constrain implementation of policies and programmes.

“Data is a cross-cutting issue in many areas of the post-2015 agenda,” Mr Kutesa said. “The changing data and technology landscape means that we need to draw on the assets of all actors including governments, the UN system, international financial institutions, civil society, business, academia and others.”