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Ukraine ceasefire exists ‘in name only,’ UN political chief tells Security Council

21 January - After weeks of relative calm, the United Nations political chief said the Security Council was meeting today amid the ‘worst hostilities’ in eastern Ukraine since the Minsk Protocol was agreed on 5 September, with the urgently needed sustainable ceasefire presently existing in name only.

Briefing the Council on conflict-related developments and his visit to the country in December, Jeffrey Feltman said that while fighting had been initially concentrated around Donetsk airport, fighting is spreading throughout the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, reaching heavily populated civilian areas and inching dangerously close to Mariupol and Debaltseve.

“Encouraging signs of progress, such as the exchange of hundreds of prisoners, are quickly being overshadowed by renewed fighting and a deepening political stalemate,” said Mr. Feltman “Ukraine, as well as its neighbours and the broader region, cannot afford the current, violent status quo. The escalation of fighting threatens to unravel the Minsk Protocols.”

Intensification of the conflict had caused further deterioration of the humanitarian situation, Mr. Feltman said, stressing the importance of funding the 2015 Strategic Response Plan, which needed $189 million but had few commitments so far.

He also stressed that all parties to the conflict should guarantee free and unhindered humanitarian access to all people in need, irrespective of where they are located. A recent directive referring to movement between government-held to rebel-held areas could make movement of humanitarian actors harder, especially to areas beyond government control.

“Humanitarian actors must have access to do their life-saving work,” Mr. Feltman said. “A country which until a year ago had no displaced people now has at least 850,000 citizens displaced within its borders and over 600,000 in neighbouring states, according to Ukrainian sources.”
He said a Normandy Format meeting took place today in Berlin at Foreign Minister level and he hoped it would bring the progress needed for proper implementation of the Minsk agreements which he said offer a solid base for a resolution of the conflict in the Donbas as long as no party made unilateral attempts to change their provisions or selectively interpreted stipulations.

“It is our understanding that the apparent differences in interpretation of the Minsk accords are small but the implications of addressing them in any other way but through dialogue are immense,” he said.

During his recent visit to Ukraine, Mr. Feltman said he met President Poroshenko, Prime Minister Yatsenyuk, Foreign Minister Klimkin and other top officials, all of whom felt that, even with progress on the Minsk process, there was no quick solution the numerous challenges facing Ukraine, given the deep economic and geopolitical rifts that have been caused by and remain intrinsically linked to the conflict.

“Diplomacy has to succeed,” Mr. Feltman stressed, noting that the enforcement of a sustainable cease-fire, which presently exists in name only, is both urgent and of primary concern. “All of us – especially the parties to the conflict – have a responsibility to concertedly, and on a most urgent basis, assist in moving from a narrative of confrontation to a narrative of cooperation, from ‘a logic of war to a logic of peace.’”

**Mali: UN mission wards off rebel attack; urges armed groups to respect ceasefire**

21 January - The United Nations Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) has confirmed it used force in response to machine gun fire directed at its troops and towards the town inhabited by civilians, yesterday in Tabankort, in the restive north of the country.

The attack was carried out with a heavy-vehicle mounted machine gun belonging to the Mouvement national de libération de l’Azawad (MNLA), a UN spokesman told reporters in New York this afternoon.

Farhan Haq said that before engaging, MINUSMA fired warning shots at the vehicle which went unheeded. In accordance with its mandate to protect civilians, its personnel and its assets against imminent threat, MINUSMA then targeted the vehicle, disabling it.

Following tensions in Tabankort since the beginning of the month, the Mission has repeatedly reminded all armed groups of their obligation to respect the ceasefire agreement they signed on 23rd of May 2014. The UN reiterates its call to all parties to immediately cease hostilities and respect their ceasefire commitments, said the spokesperson.

MINUSMA also reported that public demonstrations have taken place in Ber and Kidal since yesterday to protest the Mission's action in Tabankort. The demonstrations have now ended.

This attack is the latest in a recent spate of violence targeting UN peacekeepers in Mali. Briefing the Security Council earlier this month, the Under-Secretary-General for UN Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, said ‘no Mission has paid as much in terms of blood’ and that MINUSMA’s peacekeepers face assaults on a virtually daily basis, in the form of rocket attacks on bases and targeted attacks with improvised explosive devices.
Darfur: UN humanitarian office reports mass displacement amid ongoing hostilities

21 January - The United Nations Office for the Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is reporting that thousands of people in North Darfur are now confirmed as displaced following ongoing fighting in the region, a UN spokesperson announced today.

In the El Fasher, Shangil Tobaya, Tawila, and Um Baru areas of North Darfur, the UN humanitarian office said it had “newly verified” the displacement of more than 18,000 people in the latest report from the beleaguered region.

The news, in fact, comes amid a worsening security climate and dire humanitarian crisis across Darfur with rising hostilities between Government forces and armed movements, deadly inter-communal conflicts and a precipitous rise in criminality and banditry.

According to UN estimates, the number of people displaced by conflict has increased to more than 430,000 since the beginning of 2014, with close to 300,000 remaining displaced in addition to the more than two million long-term internally displaced persons, or IDPs.

At the daily briefing earlier this afternoon, UN spokesperson Farhan Haq said OCHA had reported that in Um Baru over 2,200 of those displaced were sheltering beside the UN-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) base. Moreover, a steady flow of displaced persons continues to arrive at the base seeking shelter and protection.

At the same time, he said, some 200 people have also reached the UNAMID site in Sortony as they reportedly feared attacks on villages in the area.

OCHA noted that access to Sortony continued to pose a challenge for humanitarians but that efforts were underway to deliver aid. Meanwhile, in Jebel Marra aid agencies were unable to reach those displaced due to ongoing hostilities and access constraints.

Genocide occurs when ‘warning signs’ ignored, action not taken – UN deputy chief

21 January - During a commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Nazi death camp today, United Nations Deputy-Secretary-General Jan Eliasson called for reflection on how better to prevent horrific crimes witnessed during the Holocaust and other genocides.

“It is important that we examine why we continue to fail to prevent mass atrocities, despite lessons learned, despite knowledge of causes and drivers and despite our assurances of ‘never again,’” he said. “Genocide can only happen when we ignore the warning signs – and are unwilling to take action.”

The event, held at UN Headquarters in New York and organized by the Permanent Mission of Poland to the UN and chaired by Boguslaw Winid, preceded the annual International Day of Commemoration of the Victims of the Holocaust.

The permanent representatives to the UN of the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, Rwanda, Israel and Germany were among those who spoke, with the Secretary-General’s Special Advisor on Genocide, Adama Dieng, Philippe Bolopion of Human Rights Watch and Robert Kostro, who is Director of the Museum of Polish History.
Mr. Eliasson said the event offered a chance to consider what must be done differently to protect people and build societies ‘where tolerance trumps hatred,’ and stressed that excuses for turning a blind eye were disappearing, with pervasive instant communication and deepening international connections, as well as the knowledge that genocide results from creeping processes unfolding over time and of conditions that allow them to thrive.

“Our challenge is to stop these processes and their enabling conditions at an early stage.” Mr. Eliasson said, adding that armed conflicts often create environments right for mass atrocities but stressing that genocide also resulted from divisions fostered in peace time.

The idea that the international community must stand ready to protect populations from genocide and other atrocity crimes was reinforced by adoption of the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ principle at the 2005 World Summit and more needed to be done to operationalize that commitment.

“We need political will, and political courage, to move forward,” he said, pointing out that the UN was engaged in a process of bolstering its capacity to act early through the Secretary-General’s Human Rights Up Front initiative, which promoted better coordination and decision-making.

The Director of the Memorial and State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau, Piotr Cywinski, delivered the keynote address to the meeting, noting that it was probably one of the last anniversaries that would give the chance to host survivors. Mr. Cywinski said it was an important moment to look to the future and form a vision for the memory of the Holocaust.

Auschwitz today served as ‘testimony, symbol, and a place for education,’ he said, describing the camp’s history and significance, and the Museum’s efforts to reach out to a younger generation.

Mr. Cywinski said protection of the site’s authenticity for younger, less connected audiences was an essential part of his duties and he was working hard to fuse the words of remaining survivors with the physical site where the killing took place.

The representative of Rwanda described the overlap between the events of 70 years ago and of 20 years ago in his own country, asking, in the context of the ‘never again’ pledge made after the Holocaust, why another genocide was allowed to happen.

The year 2015 marked 70 years since the Holocaust, he said but was also 70 years since the creation of institutions that were designed to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. The question was whether those institutions were strong enough to prevent atrocities in the future and he underlined the importance of political will and implementation of decisions and principles like the Responsibility to Protect.

**Central African Republic: UN investigators urge establishment of war crimes tribunal**

*21 January* - United Nations-mandated investigators warned today that war crimes are being committed in the Central African Republic and called for the establishment of a ‘truly international’ tribunal with international judges who could objectively investigate and prosecute perpetrators of such crimes in the war torn country.

Briefing the press at a UN Headquarters news conference this afternoon, Fatimata M’Baye and Philip Alston, two members of the International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic (CAR), reported that crimes against humanity have been widely committed by all parties to the ongoing conflict in the country.

The Commission, set up by the UN Security Council in 2013 and tasked with probing reports of human rights violations in the long-embattled nation, compiling information and helping identify the perpetrators of such abuses, is scheduled to submit its latest report to the Council tomorrow.

More than two years of civil war and sectarian violence have displaced thousands of people in the CAR. According to UN
estimates, nearly 440,000 people remain displaced inside the country while some 190,000 have sought asylum across the borders. At the same time, more than 36,000 people – including the Peuhl – remain trapped in enclaves across the country, hoping to find asylum in neighbouring States.

In December, Under-Secretary-General for UN Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous warned of a potentially explosive situation in the CAR amid continuing violent clashes between the mainly Muslim Séléka alliance and anti-Balaka militia, which are mostly Christian.

Today, two of the Commission’s three members warned that unless the world pays attention and holds perpetrators accountable, the situation in CAR could very much spiral into genocide. A full list of perpetrators ‘surely implicated’ in the conflict will be handed-over by the Commission’s President to the Secretary-General and could be shared with other agencies.

“We are here to say that we make some recommendations to the Security Council and Secretary-General but also to the African Union and the CAR Government,” said Ms. M’Baye, adding that: “We think that for the conflict in CAR not to grow even more, the international community must act fast against those who abuse human rights law and humanitarian law.”

Mr. Alston said that the latest inquiry, conducted over the course of the past year at the request of the Security Council, is strongly recommending that accountability mechanisms be put in place to identify the ‘cycle of impunity’ in CAR.

He emphasized that ‘Government officials have a well-founded expectation of impunity and assume that no action will be taken for their crimes’. He added while there is no sufficient evidence of genocidal intention, crimes against humanity ‘have certainly been perpetrated.’

The report recommends the establishment of a ‘fully international’ tribunal to investigate such crimes. The UN is currently in negotiations to establish a criminal court to prosecute ‘political players’ who have committed crimes against humanity, Mr. Alston added.

“If that goes ahead we are extremely concerned in making sure that a majority of the judges must come from the international community…We do not believe that national judges have that type of independence,” Mr. Alston said.

That goes for funding as well, he stressed, emphasizing that the CAR Government ‘simply does not have the resources nor the political incentive’ to fund the justice-seeking process. Hence, the international community must step up and fund a tribunal.

“With none of the key countries coming forward to say that they will fund it, we are deeply concerned that the UN will stumble in creating an [effective] tribunal and will be unable to prosecute effectively,” he added.

Responding to a question from a journalist about why the Commission was reluctant to make claims of genocide even though there seems to be evidence of such crimes, Ms. M’Baye said that there is a possibility that genocide may have occurred.

However, the criteria in place right now have determined that it is too early to call what has happened ‘genocide’. She emphasized that genocide can occur ‘if we don’t pay attention and say if everything is well in the country.”

When asked about violations committed by UN and international peacekeepers, Mr. Alston said that whenever there is a major international peacekeeping operation, ‘there will be problem’ of some sort. While it does not ‘discredit’ the UN, the Organization does have a responsibility to set up a system that investigates claims and holds perpetrators accountable.

The three-person inquiry, established by the Security Council, includes Fatimata M’Baye of Mauritania, Philip Alston of Australia and its head, Bernard Acho Muna of Cameroon.
UN political chief says Burundi making strides towards ‘peaceful, credible’ elections

21 January - Amid a flare-up in fighting and ongoing political tensions between the Government and opposition members, the organization of legitimate elections in Burundi remains ‘one of the most pressing challenges’ facing the African country in 2015, the top United Nations political official declared today.

“Burundi has made substantial progress, overcoming the formidable challenges since the end of the civil war,” Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman, said in a briefing to the Security Council earlier today.

“As in previous elections, the 2015 elections present Burundians with the opportunity to further strengthen peace consolidation efforts undertaken since the Arusha Accord.”

However, cautioned Mr. Feltman, the creation of a ‘peaceful and credible’ electoral process would hinge on the impartiality and independence of the country’s Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), the free exercise of civil and political rights for all Burundians, the Government’s prevention of violence without infringing on civil liberties and the immediate prosecution of all violent acts “without delay.”

Despite outbursts of violence in certain areas of the country which risk heightening current political tensions, Burundi’s multifaceted challenges also extend to a wider slate of issues relating to health, education, employment, and infrastructure, all of which need to be “at the heart of the debate,” he told the Council.

“Addressing the remaining challenges will require the efforts of all Burundians and sustained support from Burundi’s development partners,” he concluded. “I am pleased to note that the United Nations will continue to provide support through the Peacebuilding Fund to enhance political dialogue and social cohesion; youth participation in political and socio-economic life; human rights; and resolution of land disputes.”

The Security Council set the creation of the UN Electoral Observation Mission (MENUB) in motion last February following the Burundi Government’s request for a UN-backed electoral observer mission before, during and after Burundi’s upcoming 2015 elections. MENUB officially began its work two weeks ago with a ceremony in Bujumbura.

It replaced the UN Office in Burundi (BNUB), which was set up in 2006 following a ceasefire between the Government and the last remaining rebel forces to support peace consolidation, democratic governance, disarmament and reform of the security sector. BNUB wrapped up its mandate at the end of last year.

Meanwhile, in his remarks to the Council, Ambassador Paul Seger of Switzerland, Chair of the Burundi configuration of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), said he had been ‘heartened’ by the discussions he had with national stakeholders during his most recent trip to Burundi from 9 to 12 December. Nonetheless, he added, issues related to the country’s current security and political situation, the UN’s presence on the ground, and the future of the PBC, continued to warrant the UN body’s attention.

In particular, Mr. Seger told the Council he remained concerned about the spate of recent violence which had rippled across the Burundian provinces of Cibitoke and Ruyigi, fomenting mistrust between the Government and opposition and resulting in a ‘significant number of victims,’ which he deplored.

According to reports, on 30 December, the Burundian army reported clashing with an unidentified armed group of approximately 100 to 200 members entering Cibitoke from neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo. Following
fighting between the two sides, some 100 members of the armed group were killed. Meanwhile, in a separate incident in Ruyigi, five unidentified gunmen dressed in military fatigues executed three members of the ruling party in a bar 250 kilometres east of Bujumbura, the country’s capital.

“I strongly recommend the competent national authorities to pursue investigations into the events in a quick and impartial manner,” he stated, warning that “as long as facts are not established, rumours will spread and further fuel an already tense political environment in the run up to the elections.”

As a result, he called on all Burundian stakeholders to continue along the “path of dialogue.”

“This cannot be stressed enough,” he continued. “Only a truly inclusive political dialogue and open political space that ensures the protection of all public liberties and rights for all can lay a fertile ground for genuinely free, fair, peaceful and credible elections.”

Against that backdrop, Mr. Seger noted that the UN presence on the ground was “undergoing substantial changes” amid BNUB’s drawdown, the UN Development Programme’s (UNDP) appointment of a Resident Coordinator to the country, and the ‘dire’ financial situation affecting the UN human rights office’s (OHCHR) Burundi operations which had already provoked the loss of experienced staff.

To that point, he urged Member States to contribute the necessary financial resources to the OHCHR, totalling $2.2 million per year, underlining that human rights support and monitoring ‘remain as important as ever in Burundi.’

Finally, turning to the future of the PBC itself, he suggested there was ‘merit’ in the body’s continued engagement in Burundi beyond the elections as it would add both “an element of continuity in the accompaniment of the country” and provide a future focus on socio-economic development.

“BNUB is already gone and MENUB’s mandate is also bound to expire in the aftermath of the elections,” Mr. Seger explained. “The PBC can help smooth the effects of this transition by remaining engaged through its three main pillars: political accompaniment, resource mobilization and forging coherence in international assistance.”

Davos: UN launches $1 billion appeal for global Ebola response

21 January - The United Nations today appealed for $1 billion needed for the first six months of 2015 to sustain the momentum to stamp out Ebola in West Africa, where ‘the epidemic has started to turn’ in all three of the worst-hit countries – Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

“We’re beginning to see an overall decline in number of new cases each week,” Dr. David Nabarro, the UN Special Envoy on Ebola, told a news conference in Davos, Switzerland, at the 2015 World Economic Forum, where global leaders from across business, Government, international organizations, academia and civil society are gathered for strategic dialogues on events and trends shaping the world.

Valerie Amos, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, also welcomed the “early signs of reduction of Ebola in all three countries” but noted the need to remain vigilant.

And as the Secretary-General of the United Nations [Ban Ki-moon] said yesterday, complacency would be our worst enemy,” Ms. Amos, who is also the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs told reporters.

The appeal was launched by Ms. Amos and Dr. Nabarro, who are in Davos where there are some 20 scheduled events at the World Economic Forum devoted to the global fight against the Ebola epidemic.

“This is an appeal for funds to support the efforts of the national governments of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone as they identify and treat people affected by Ebola, ensure a rapid end to the outbreak, re-establish essential social services and
improve people’s food and nutrition security,” according to the appeal. “[It] includes funds needed for enabling nearby countries to reduce their people’s risk of Ebola infection.”

Explaining the background to the revised $1 billion funding appeal from January to June 2015, the UN notes that ‘some of the funding has already been raised by an earlier appeal.’

In October 2014, it said, the total financial needs were estimated to be to $1.5 billion through to March 2015. By the end of 2014, $1.3 billion had been raised against this appeal. Approximately $800 million has been spent leaving $500 million available for use now in 2015.

Meanwhile in Geneva today, the fourth meeting of the Emergency Committee convened by the Director-General of the UN World Health Organization (WHO) met and recommended maintaining “robust” exit screening in the three affected countries, which is ‘critical for minimizing the risk of exportation of Ebola cases.’

But the Committee reaffirmed the need to avoid unnecessary interference with international travel and trade, noting that more than 40 countries have implemented additional measures, such as quarantine of returning travellers and refusal of entry.

“Such measures are impeding the recruitment and return of international responders,” said WHO. “They also have harmful effects on local populations by increasing stigma and isolation, and by disrupting livelihoods and economies.”

“The Committee concluded that the primary emphasis must continue to be on ‘getting to zero’ Ebola cases, by stopping the transmission of Ebola within the three most affected countries,” said the agency, adding: “This action is the most important step for preventing international spread. Complacency is the biggest risk to not getting to zero cases. Continued vigilance is essential.”

**UN disaster reduction chief hails ‘major milestone’ in earthquake risk assessment**

**21 January** - The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) has welcomed the launch of a new web-based platform that will provide global access to critical information on earthquakes and enable ‘cutting-edge’ risk assessment aimed at limiting the hazard of these potentially devastating natural events.

The platform – known as OpenQuake – is a ‘major milestone’ for the international community of earthquake hazard and risk experts, according to Margareta Wahlström, the head of UNISDR, who hailed the unveiling in a press release today while emphasizing that the deep understanding of risk remained the basis of any disaster risk reduction (DRR) policy and action.

“Loss of life and economic loss from earthquakes can only be mitigated or prevented through DRR efforts that include urban planning, improved regulation through building codes and compliance with those codes,” said Ms. Wahlström.

“This requires sound technical information to support the financial investments and governance required to reduce risk in the long term.”

Seismic risk will be an important feature of the upcoming Third World Conference on DRR scheduled to take place from 14-18 March in Sendai, Japan.

The Conference will seek to adopt a new framework for disaster risk reduction, updating the 2005 Hyogo Framework for Action – the world’s first comprehensive blueprint for disaster risk reduction.

In the UNISDR press release, Ms. Wahlström appealed for more ‘multi-hazard, multi-sectoral’ risk information which should include tools for measuring ‘socio-economic vulnerability as an underlying risk driver’ – an issue she suggested
should become a standard part of all risk assessments.

In addition, she urged the diffusion of tools to further assess exposure, hazard, building vulnerability, community resilience and assistance in developing the capacity of member countries and other stakeholders.

Mali: UN conference to examine conservation of country’s precious ancient manuscripts

21 January - The United Nations agency mandated to protect cultural sites around the world will examine long-term conservation of Mali’s invaluable ancient manuscript collection at an international conference set to kick off in the country’s capital, Bamako, next week.

The three-day gathering, scheduled for next Wednesday, 28 January, is being organized by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO), the Malian Government and the Ahmed Baba Institute of Higher Learning and Islamic Research.

Cultural heritage, including manuscripts, suffered severe damage during the occupation of northern parts of the country by armed groups in 2012 and 2013, and the insurgents burned or stole 4,203 manuscripts held at the Ahmed Baba Institute. Nonetheless, the local population was able to save 90 per cent of these documents, with the help of the non-governmental heritage organization.

The conference, “Ancient Manuscripts Facing Modern Day Challenges,” will examine the future of the manuscripts that were smuggled out of Timbuktu in 2012 to Bamako, where they are still kept.

Participants will discuss the historic importance of this fragile heritage and the role of local communities in its safeguarding. The agenda of the conference will also address issues relating to the fight against illicit trafficking and UNESCO’s activities to help preserve the manuscripts.

Speakers at the event include scholars, representatives of cultural institutions, religious and local communities and policy-makers.

The manuscripts of Timbuktu form a collection of several hundred thousand documents some of which date as far back as the 13th century. They include scholarly and theological works as well as commercial texts. They are written in Arabic and in African languages using different forms of Arabic script.

Madagascar needs resources to continue battle against locust plague – UN agency

21 January - The battle against a plague of locusts in Madagascar is in danger of being lost, as funding to continue efforts against widespread infestations runs out, putting 13 million people at risk of food insecurity, the United Nations agricultural agency said today.

A three-year anti-locust programme was launched by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) alongside the Madagascan Government in 2013 in response to a plague that swept the country the previous year. It successfully halted the spread but the risks of relapse are high in the rainy season, which provides ideal breeding conditions, an FAO press release said.

“Taking action now is critical to ensure the significant efforts made so far, financially and technically, are built upon rather than lost,” said Dominique Burgeon, Director of FAO's Emergency and Rehabilitation Division. “The current campaign is essential to reinforce the decline of the current plague, avoiding any relapse, and then continue towards a full-fledged locust recession.”
The first quarter of the year is especially important because it corresponds to the second phase of breeding. Most locusts present at this time are wingless ‘hoppers’, which are easier to combat because they are more sensitive to pesticides and slower moving than winged adults. After last year’s successes, the FAO warns that hoppers will gather in smaller groups, making them harder to find and requiring more ground and aerial surveys to do so.

Failure to carry out in full the 2013-2016 FAO-Government joint programme would waste the $28.8 billion so far mobilised and could trigger a large-scale food-security crisis in the country. A further $10.6 million is needed to complete the campaign, paying for monitoring and spraying operations to the end of the rainy season in May 2015.

The FAO cautions that even a relatively short interruption to monitoring and spraying operations of about two months could significantly erase progress made so far, which includes the surveying of about 30 million hectares - an area almost as large as Japan - and the tackling of locust infestations over more than 1.3 million hectares.

“The costs that will result from ceasing locust control activities will be far greater than the amount spent so far, so it is critical for the international community stay the course and complete the Locust Emergency Response Programme,” said Patrice Takoukam Talla, FAO’s Representative in Madagascar.

About 40 per cent of crops in southern Madagascar are at risk from locusts and more than three quarters of the population in the Atsimo Andrefana and Androy regions, where maize and cassava production have declined sharply and rice output remains well below trend, currently face food insecurity, up notably from a year earlier.

Resources raised so far as part of the $39.4 million needed have come from several Governments, a World Bank loan, the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund and the International Fund for Agriculture Development.