All countries must contribute to solving global refugee crisis, says General Assembly President

21 September - All countries must contribute to solving the global refugee crisis, the President of the United Nations General Assembly said today, underscoring that the international community has an unequivocal obligation towards the women, men and children seeking refuge from conflict and violence.

“The world has not seen a global humanitarian crisis of this magnitude since the Second World War and with winter approaching in the northern hemisphere, it is only going to get worse,” Mogens Lykketoft cautioned during his first formal press conference since taking office last week.

“The tragic stories and heart-breaking images we are seeing in the media are only the tip of the iceberg – the manifestation of much bigger issues which only multilateral cooperation and global leadership can solve,” he added. “This is a global crisis. And it requires a global solution.”

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who has invited Member States to a special meeting on 30 September in New York to discuss the crisis, also voiced his concern about the deteriorating situation facing refugees and migrants arriving across Europe.

Mr. Ban “calls on all European States to ensure that they abide by their international obligations, including the right to seek asylum, and the prohibition of refoulement,” his spokesperson said in a statement.
“All persons must be received with dignity and their human rights must be respected. The Secretary-General has followed with increasing concern the closing of some borders in Europe, as well as the lack of proper reception facilities as well as the increased use of detention and criminalization of irregular migrants and asylum-seekers.”

Meanwhile, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is helping survivors of two separate incidents over the weekend involving boats carrying refugees and migrants between Turkey and Greece, which left up to 40 people either dead or missing. Nearly 3,000 people have died or gone missing crossing the Mediterranean this year.

The agency and its partners in Greece are providing ongoing support for the survivors and families, including medical and psychological care, accommodation, legal assistance, food and water.

Mr. Lykketoft will shortly be convening a meeting of the General Assembly on the refugee crisis, building on the high-level meeting organized by the Secretary-General. He will also discuss the situation with Pope Francis, who will be visiting UN Headquarters in New York on Friday.

“The majority of people fleeing war and violence are refugees and have the right to seek asylum without any form of discrimination. It is not a crime to seek refuge and asylum,” he said. “We need to ensure that our responses are tangible, focused and that we work towards lasting, sustainable solutions.”

“We need to ensure that countries affected by the arrival of refugees, particularly Syria’s neighbouring countries, receive the support and assistance necessary to address the needs of these vulnerable populations,” he added.

UN observes International Day of Peace with call for global ceasefire

21 September - The United Nations today observed the International Day of Peace with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appealing to all warring parties to lay down their weapons and observe a global ceasefire and “stop the killings and the destruction, and create space for lasting peace.”

The UN chief made the call at the Peace Bell ceremony, which kicked off the series of events at UN Headquarters in New York for the Day, which is observed annually on 21 September and whose theme this year is “Partnerships for Peace – Dignity for All.”

“Just as surely as striking this Bell makes a sound, we will continue to hammer this point and demand peace,” Mr. Ban said.

“We live at a moment of peril,” he said in his message for the day, but also drew attention to the fact that “this is also an era of great promise.”

“In a matter of days, leaders from across the globe will gather at the United Nations to adopt the 2030 Agenda, our 15-year plan to achieve sustainable development,” the UN chief said. “This is fundamental to ushering in a life of dignity for all, where poverty is history and peace is paramount.”

Joining Mr. Ban at the Peace Bell ceremony and later at the International Day of Peace Student Videoconference that followed were UN Messengers of Peace anthropologist Jane Goodall and actor Michael Douglas, and UN Goodwill Ambassador and musician Herbie Hancock. Fellow Messenger of Peace and cellist Yo Yo Ma performed for the students attending the conference.

General Assembly President Mogens Lykketoft used the occasion of the International Day to urge all countries to solve the global refugee crisis “whether they have the luxury of distance or face the challenges of proximity.”

“The international community has an unequivocal obligation towards the women, men and children seeking refuge from conflict and violence,” said Mr. Lykketoft, who added that he intended to discuss the issue with Pope Francis during his visit
to the UN on Friday.

“The tragic stories and heart-breaking images we are seeing in the media are only the tip of the iceberg – the manifestation of much bigger issues which only multilateral cooperation and global leadership can solve,” Mr. Lykketoft said. “This is a global crisis. And it requires a global solution.”

The International Day of Peace was established in 1981 by the General Assembly to coincide with the opening of its session, which was held annually on the third Tuesday of September. The first Peace Day was observed in September 1982. And in 2001, the General Assembly established 21 September as an annual day of non-violence and cease-fire.

“On the International Day, as we mark the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, let us seize the opportunity achieve the Organization’s founding purpose: to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war,” the Secretary-General said.

Mr. Ban also attended a Tea Ceremony for Peace at which he said “the beauty of this tea ceremony is its simplicity” and even though the world is facing many complex problems, “we just have to act in solidarity based on our common values of human rights, justice and peace.”

**Head of UN atomic watchdog reports ‘significant’ progress in resolving outstanding issues with Iran**

21 September - Significant progress has been achieved in the implementation of a road-map to resolve all outstanding issues regarding Iran’s nuclear programme, the head of the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said today, after visiting a nuclear site and meeting senior Government officials, including the President, over the weekend.

“I reported [to the IAEA Board] on my visit to a particular location at the Parchin site, which, as I have said many times, is important in order to clarify issues related to possible military dimensions to Iran’s nuclear programme,” Director General Yukiya Amano told the press at the Agency’s headquarters in Vienna.

This was the first time the Agency visited the location; it had previously only been able to observe it using satellite.

“Inside the building, we saw indications of recent renovation work. There was no equipment in the building. Our experts will now analyse this information and we will have discussions with Iran in the coming weeks, as foreseen in the road-map,” Mr. Amano reported.

This process is taking place under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) recently agreed by Iran and the E3/EU+3 countries – China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States – and which gives the IAEA greater access to information and to sites in Iran.

“As I have stated in my reports to the Board, the extensive work that has been conducted at the location since early 2012 undermines the Agency’s ability to conduct effective verification there,” Mr. Amano continued.

“Before our visit, certain IAEA safeguards activities were carried out at the particular location at the Parchin site. These included the taking of environmental samples.”

The Director General underlined that sample taking is a “complex process,” and that as a result of experience gained over the years, the Agency has, in certain circumstances, permitted States’ representatives to carry out activities in support of its verification work.

“This is done in a way that ensures that the Agency’s verification processes are not compromised,” he ensured.
“In the case of Parchin, the Iranian side played a part in the sample-taking process by swiping samples. The Agency can confirm the integrity of the sampling process and the authenticity of the samples, which were taken at places of interest to the Agency at the particular location in Parchin.”

He added that the samples have been brought to Vienna, where it will be analysed by experts.

“The implementation of the road-map has reached an important phase. However, much work remains in the weeks ahead,” Mr. Amano stated, adding that full implementation of the road-map is essential to clarify all outstanding past and present issues regarding Iran’s nuclear programme.

Iran’s nuclear programme – which its officials have stated is for peaceful purposes, but some other countries contend is driven by military ambitions – has been a matter of international concern since the discovery in 2003 that the country had concealed its nuclear activities for 18 years in breach of its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

**Billions of people in developing world still without Internet access, new UN report finds**

**21 September** - Broadband Internet is failing to reach billions of people living in the developing world, including 90 per cent of those living in the poorest nations, according to a new United Nations report that offers country-by-country data on the state of access around the globe.

The State of Broadband, produced by the UN Broadband Commission and released today, reveals that 57 per cent of the world’s people remain offline and unable to take advantage of the enormous economic and social benefits the Internet can offer.

The report, which comes ahead of this week’s summit in New York at which world leaders will adopt the 2030 Agenda which contains the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), stresses that access to information and communication technology (ICT), particularly broadband Internet, has the potential to serve as a major accelerator of development. The importance of ICT connectivity is specifically recognized in the SDGs.

“The UN Sustainable Development Goals remind us that we need to measure global development by the number of those being left behind,” said Houlin Zhao, the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), who serves as co-Vice Chair of the Commission with Irina Bokova, the Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

“The 2030 Agenda recognizes the power of new technologies to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide, to develop knowledge societies – we must do everything to support States in reaching these goals, especially developing States,” Ms. Bokova noted.

“This calls for stronger efforts by governments and all actors, in ensuring access, use and affordability – it requires also greater work to build the capacities of all women and men to make the most of all new opportunities,” she added.

According to the report, the Internet is currently only accessible to 35 per cent of people in developing countries. The situation in the 48 UN-designated Least Developed Countries (LDCs) is particularly critical, with over 90 per cent of people without any kind of Internet connectivity.

This year’s figures show that the top ten countries for household Internet penetration are all located in Asia or the Middle East. The Republic of Korea continues to have the world’s highest household broadband penetration, with 98.5 per cent of homes connected, followed by Qatar (98 per cent) and Saudi Arabia (94 per cent).

The lowest levels of Internet access are mostly found in sub-Saharan Africa, with Internet available to less than 2 per cent of the populations in Guinea, Somalia, Burundi and Eritrea.
‘Time to overcome diplomatic failure’ in Syria, says head of UN-mandated rights probe

21 September - It is time to overcome diplomatic failure and recognise that there is a global interest in returning Syria to peace, the head of a United Nations-mandated human rights inquiry said today, warning that if conflict continues, nations will be “fuelling a war to keep their influence over a country that will barely exist.”

“The international community cannot pretend to be blind to the cycle it has allowed to prevail for so many years,” said Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, Chair of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria.

In a statement to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Mr. Pinheiro told delegates that it is time to give “full and effective support to the ‘de Mistura plan’,” a new political approach to solving the conflict presented in late July by the UN Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura.

The plan calls for consultations and discussions with the Syrian parties in four thematic working groups: safety and protection for all; political and legal issues; military, security and counterterrorism issues; and continuity of public services and reconstruction and development.

“And it is time for the Security Council to act with the responsibility vested in it,” Mr. Pinheiro continued. “It is auspicious to note that Russia and the United States have agreed to discuss mechanisms for ‘deconfliction’ in Syria.”

He added that States cannot continue affirming their support for a political settlement “while arming belligerents, failing to adequately fund humanitarian services, and be taken aback by the spreading refugee crisis.”

Indeed, he noted that the current refugee crisis – which he highlighted has existed for years in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq – is largely driven by the Syrian conflict.

“The Syrian tragedy has now reached European shores. The deaths of children, suffered daily by Syrian families for more than four and a half years, are being mourned afresh. The profound human suffering, long seen in the hospitals and camps of Syria’s neighbours, is etched on the haggard faces of refugees huddled in European train stations and camping behind razor wire at Schengen borders.”

The Chair’s statement follows the release on 3 September of the Commission’s latest report on the situation in Syria, which found that atrocities are being carried out by both Government and terrorist groups, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Jabhat Al-Nusra.

“In mid-August, a Government bombardment of a market in Douma resulted in scores of civilian casualties. […] Anti-Government armed groups continue to conduct indiscriminate shellings on civilian areas, particularly in Aleppo, Damascus and Dara’a cities,” Mr. Pinheiro reiterated in today’s statement.

He concluded the statement by urging for “narrow national or regional self-interests” to be set aside, insisting that “Syrian victims deserve no less.”
UN chief strongly condemns reported violence against civilians in Burkina Faso

21 September - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today strongly condemned reports of violence against civilians in Burkina Faso and urged the country’s defense and security forces, especially the Presidential Guard, to exercise restraint and respect the human rights of all citizens.

Meanwhile, Mr. Ban’s Special Representative for West Africa, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, is coordinating with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union and other international partners to support and safeguard the transition in Burkina Faso.

On Saturday, the UN envoy met with Burkinabé President Michel Kafando at his residence, as well as the Chairman of ECOWAS, President Sall, and other regional leaders.

Today, Mr. Chambas is in Abuja, Nigeria, ahead of the ECOWAS Extraordinary Summit that is scheduled for Tuesday to discuss the situation in Burkina Faso.

The Secretary-General is following closely the ongoing regional mediation efforts towards the resolution of the crisis and spoke with Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade over the weekend.

Mr. Ban reiterated his demand for the swift resumption of the country’s political transition in accordance with Burkina Faso’s Constitution and Transitional Charter, saying “those responsible for the coup d’état and its consequences must be held accountable,” his spokesman told reporters at UN Headquarters.

The Secretary-General is following with “great concern” the situation in Burkina Faso and strongly condemns reports of violence against civilians, which has resulted in an unconfirmed number of deaths and injuries, said spokesman Stéphane Dujarric.

Secretary-General condemns suspected Boko Haram attacks in north-east Nigeria

21 September - United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has condemned the multiple bomb attacks at a mosque and nearby areas conducted by suspected Boko Haram elements in Maiduguri in north-east Nigeria on Sunday.

The attacks in Borno state reportedly killed at least 50 civilians and injured scores of others.

“The Secretary-General extends his sincere condolences to the families of the victims to whom he wishes a speedy recovery,” his spokesperson, Stéphane Dujarric, said at a press briefing in New York.

“The Secretary-General is deeply concerned about the continuing brutal attacks against civilians, including children,” he said. “He is also deeply concerned about the increasing number of those displaced, including some 500,000 children over the past five months, with serious humanitarian consequences.”

Mr. Ban reiterated the UN’s support to the Nigerian Government in its fight against terrorism, which should be grounded on international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, the spokesperson added.
In wake of adoption of Nepal’s constitution, Ban stresses need for dialogue, non-violence

21 September - While acknowledging the adoption of the long-awaited constitution of Nepal, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon voiced concern about recent violence in the country and stressed the need for dialogue and non-violence.

“The Secretary-General acknowledges the adoption of the new Constitution in Nepal. Noting that the Constitution is a living document, he urges all political leaders to act in the broad national interest and with continued flexibility and inclusivity,” his spokesperson, Stéphane Dujarric, told reporters in New York.

“He remains concerned about the recent violence and stresses the importance of dialogue and non-violence as well as respect for peaceful protest and freedom of assembly,” he added.

“A peaceful and democratic Nepal is what the people of Nepal seek and deserve.”

According to media reports, President Ram Baran Yadav officially promulgated the Constitution yesterday. This is the sixth constitution since the country established democracy in 1950, and the first to be created by the people’s elected representatives. The previous constitutions were drafted by the monarchy or select committees.

Prime minister’s appointment ‘important step’ for ending Guinea-Bissau crisis, says Security Council

21 September - The United Nations Security Council took note of the recent appointment of Carlos Correia as the Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau as an important step towards ending the country’s political crisis, and stressed the importance of forming a new Government at the earliest.

“The members of the Security Council emphasised this as an important step towards bringing an end to the political crisis that has prevailed in the country since mid-August 2015,” said a statement issued to the press.

The 15-member body also commended the respect for the Constitution and the rule of law demonstrated by the Bissau-Guinean actors, including the non-interference of the security forces in the political situation in the country and the restraint shown in this regard.

“The members of the Security Council further commended the peaceful way Guinea-Bissau's population is following the political situation in the country,” the statement added.

Guinea-Bissau, one of the world’s poorest nations, has been plagued by chronic political instability since gaining independence in 1974. The international community, including the UN, is providing various forms of assistance aimed at helping the West African country build stable, democratic institutions and achieve greater economic prosperity.
Indigenous and local groups from 20 countries recognized with UN Equator Prize

21 September - A Brazilian indigenous group that inspired the film Avatar, a conservation outfit in Indonesia that is saving sea turtles and a movement for pygmy rights in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are among the 20 winners of a United Nations prize that recognizes outstanding community efforts to reduce poverty, protect nature and strengthen resilience in the face of climate change.

The winners of the 2015 Equator Prize were announced by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) at a press conference in New York that also featured Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and actor and activist Alec Baldwin.

“These winners show what is possible when indigenous peoples and local communities are backed by rights to manage their lands, territories and natural resources,” said UNDP Administrator Helen Clark.

In addition to Brazil, Indonesia and DRC, the other winners are from Belize, Bolivia, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Ethiopia/Kenya, Honduras, Madagascar, Malaysia/Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Tanzania, and Uganda. The award was given to groups from Afghanistan, Guyana and Iran for the first time.

Speaking at the press conference, Miss Clark noted that among this year’s winners are those who have used drones and smartphones; and others who are practising organic agriculture; promoting peaceful conflict resolution; and advocating through media and other campaigns.

Some have succeeded in securing land rights and resource access for hundreds of communities, she added. Between them, their actions have protected forests, fields, coastlines, and waterways from degradation and destruction. In the process, thousands of sustainable jobs have been created for communities.

“This is the true face of sustainable development,” said the Administrator. “The achievements of Equator Prize winners tell us something fundamental: that low-cost, innovative, local solutions do help the world battle climate change and realize sustainable development.”

Noting the importance of the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris this December, Ms. Figueres stressed the vital role of indigenous groups and local communities in assisting the world in reaching its collective climate goals.

“The agreement governments will reach in Paris will be a crucial catalyst for sustainable development in the 21st century – everyone, from governments, cities and companies to local and indigenous communities have an interest and everyone has a role to play in bending down emissions and building resilient societies,” she stated.

Mr. Baldwin commended the efforts of the “remarkable” group of winners and stated that the “world is in awe of their leadership and bravery.”

This year’s winners were chosen from a record 1,461 nominations from across 126 countries. Each winning group will receive $10,000 and is able to participate in a two-week community summit during the Paris conference, where the awards will be handed out at a star-studded gala.

The Equator Prize is a leading programme of the Equator Initiative that includes the UN, governments, civil society groups, local organizations and business to promote sustainable development solutions.
International push needed to end child rights violations in Yemen – UN official

21 September - Describing the current situation in Yemen as “beyond tragic” for all affected by the hostilities, a senior United Nations official said it is “ever more important” for both the Security Council and the international community to promote political dialogue aimed at ending violations against children.

“Regrettably, the scale of killing and maiming of children has increased dramatically in 2015,” the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Leila Zerrougui, said in a statement issued on Sunday.

Citing UN figures, she said that more than 400 children were killed, and more than 600 injured between 26 March – which saw an escalation in the conflict with the launch of air strikes by a Saudi-led coalition – and August.

“This is already more than triple the number of children killed and maimed during the whole of 2014,” Ms. Zerrougui continued. “I am appalled by the high level of child casualties, which indicates a failure by the parties to conflict to distinguish between civilian and military objects, and to take precautionary measures to avoid and minimize civilian casualties.”

Yemen has suffered turmoil and instability since Houthi rebels seized the capital Sana’a one year ago and then advanced on the port city, Aden. According to the UN, 80 per cent of the population requires some form of humanitarian protection or assistance.

Last Friday, the Special Representative briefed the Security Council working group on children and armed conflict, as well as a Security Council Committee established to monitor measures imposed by the UN on Yemen.

She said the UN had “for a number of years” documented grave violations against children committed by parties to conflict in the country. She also noted that March’s escalation in the conflict followed an escalation marked by the September 2014 takeover of Sana’a by Houthi forces.

“In this complex environment, where we are faced with political stalemate and an intensification of conflict, it is ever more important for the Security Council and the international community to promote political dialogue and to seek to end the violations committed against children,” Ms. Zerrougui said.

In her briefing, she noted that 73 per cent of child deaths and injuries during the second quarter of 2015 were attributed to air strikes by the Saudi-led coalition – and that 18 per cent of child deaths and 17 per cent of child injuries were attributed to Houthi forces during the same period.

In addition, she said reports showed there had been a “stark increase in attacks and military use of schools” since March, while violence had additionally taken a “heavy toll on education workers.”

The UN envoy also said that verified attacks on hospitals had increased six-fold from the first to the second quarter of this year, adding that the destruction – together with insecurity due to conflict – was having a “serious impact on access to healthcare.”

Meanwhile, Ms. Zerrougui highlighted other violations against children caught up in armed conflict, including recruitment and use, saying it was “increasingly being used more systematically by all parties.” The number of cases of child
recruitment and use documented by the UN during the first eight months of 2015 had been triple the number for the whole of 2014 – and 82 per cent of verified recruitment cases were attributed to Houthi forces.

Four groups remain listed for recruitment and use in the annexes of the Secretary-General’s annual report on children and armed conflict, she recalled, but added that while the Government of Yemen had signed an Action Plan with the UN to end the practice in its armed forces, the plan had been stalled since September of last year.

The Special Representative also spoke of “serious concerns about the denial of humanitarian access,” and called for urgent action to facilitate access to assistance without delay.

In Jordan, top UN relief official calls for greater support for Syrian refugees, hosts communities

20 September - The top United Nations humanitarian official wrapped up a visit to Jordan today with a call on the international community to urgently increase support to Syrian refugees and the local communities hosting them.

“The international community has been generous over the past years in responding to the humanitarian crisis in Syria and the region. But a disproportionate burden has fallen on the neighbouring countries,” said Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien.

“This includes Jordan which has kept its borders open for millions of people seeking sanctuary from the brutality of the war,” he added in remarks to the press in the capital, Amman.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), there are nearly 630,000 Syrian refugees registered in Jordan. There are many more not registered, living in Jordanian communities.

Yesterday, Mr. O'Brien visited refugees in Jordan's largest camp – Za'atari – which hosts 80,000 refugees, and also met with a family in Marka.

“Syria's neighbours are reaching the point where the rest of the world urgently must share more of the responsibility in responding to the humanitarian needs created by the Syria crisis and support the most vulnerable people,” stressed Mr. O'Brien, who is also UN Emergency Relief Coordinator

OCHA noted that the needs generated by the Syria crisis are outpacing the generous funding received so far. Only 38 per cent of the $7.4 billion needed to address the humanitarian needs inside Syria and the neighbouring countries this year has been received so far.

“I thank those who have already stepped up, but I must now urge each and everyone in the international community to do more to support Jordan and other countries in the region and increase their support for the crucial humanitarian response,” Mr. O'Brien said.
UN chief condemns rocket attacks on Israel from Gaza

20 September - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Sunday condemned the recent rocket attacks by extremist Palestinian militants on Israel from Gaza.

“Such indiscriminate attacks on civilian areas risk a dangerous escalation and must stop,” Mr. Ban said in a statement issued by his spokesperson.

“The people of southern Israel and Gaza have suffered enough from such violence,” the statement added.

Last week, both the Secretary-General and the United Nations Security Council urged calm amid escalating tensions between Palestinians and Israelis around holy sites in Jerusalem, especially surrounding the Haram Al-Sharif/Temple Mount compound.

Global brands join forces with UN to boost food aid to families affected by war

20 September - The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) today unveiled a new partnership with some of the world's leading companies, including McDonald's, Burger King, Facebook, Google and MasterCard, in an unprecedented effort to support refugees and displaced people struggling to feed their families.

The venture, announced on the eve of the International Day of Peace, which is observed annually on 21 September, comes at a time when the world's refugee crisis grows and humanitarian resources are stretched, WFP noted in a news release.

“Today is about people coming together across regions and cultures to take action for a hunger-free and peaceful world,” said WFP Executive Director Ertharin Cousin. “Food assistance plays a powerful role in times of conflict by saving lives and alleviating suffering.

“Food brings and keeps families together. Food security gives families hope during desperate times while eliminating the need for families to resort to extreme and harmful measures as the only option for survival.”

WFP noted that this multi-industry effort championed first by McDonald's represents a powerful, tangible way for people to make a real difference toward peace and support conflict-affected people who are struggling daily to feed their families.

Supporting companies include Burger King, Cargill, DreamWorks Animation, Facebook, Google, MasterCard, McCain, McDonald's, OMD, Twitter, TBWA and United Airlines.

On television and online, several companies are using donated media and social channels highlighting a 30-second WFP-branded commercial called “Symbols.” Developed by TBWA with funds provided by McDonald's, the commercial highlights the connection between war and hunger, the magnitude of current needs and how a donation to WFP can make a difference.

“Humanity has one future together. This effort provides a great example of people and companies joining forces to make sure we achieve the goal of a zero hunger future,” Ms. Cousin stated.
Deploring latest military escalation, UN mission in Libya urges immediate ceasefire

20 September - The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) on Sunday strongly condemned the military escalation in Benghazi and called for an immediate ceasefire, stressing the need to give the ongoing political dialogue a chance to bring the country's conflict to an end.

“The timing of airstrikes clearly aims at undermining the ongoing efforts to end the conflict,” the Mission said of Saturday's escalation.

It noted that Benghazi has suffered for too long, with too many civilians having been killed or wounded and more than 100,000 having been displaced by the conflict that has raged in the city for over a year now. Residential neighbourhoods have been reduced to rubble, it added.

The airstrikes are “a clear attempt to undermine and derail the ongoing efforts to end the conflict” at a time when the negotiations currently taking place in Skhirat, Morocco, have entered “a final and most critical stage,” said the Mission.

“The only solution must be within the framework of the ongoing dialogue process and a political settlement that ensures inclusion, balance and consensus. The parties in Libya now have a historic opportunity to reach such an agreement that brings an end to the divisions and suffering, and allows for a new page to be turned in Libya,” it continued.

“UNSMIL calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Benghazi and across Libya, and on the warring parties to desist from any escalation or counterattack, and to exercise utmost restraint to give the ongoing dialogue in Skhirat the chance to successfully conclude in the coming hours.”