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**All eyes on UN as world body prepares to adopt new Sustainable Development Goals**

24 September - World leaders, heads of global financial institutions and other dignitaries are heading to New York, where, after months of intense negotiations, the United Nations is set to launch a landmark new framework for sustainable development that will aim to end poverty and build a life of dignity for all, leaving no one behind.

The UN’s top development officials are keenly focused and enthusiastically preparing for the moment Friday afternoon when the Organization’s 193 Member States formally adopt the new framework, Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, composed of 17 goals and 169 targets to wipe out poverty, fight inequality and tackle climate over the next 15 years.

In a series of interviews with the UN News Centre, the officials forecast 2015 as “a watershed year” for the United Nations for having reached an agreement that will “change the paradigm about development,” while “leaving no one behind” and giving a boost for a global climate change accord later this year.

Already this week, the likes of pop star Shakira and footballer David Beckham, both Goodwill Ambassadors of the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), have made appearances to preview the importance of these Global Goals: the UN Headquarters complex was lit up one night with colourful, massive projections of the new Sustainable Development Goals for all to see, and for those who missed that, New York City cabs are running mini lessons on taxi TV about the Goals to which world...
leaders will commit.

The three-day UN Sustainable Development Summit kicks off Friday with a record number of top world leaders expected to attend, as well as heads of multilateral bodies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Joining them will be Pope Francis, who will be making a historic address to the UN General Assembly during a visit timed for the global gathering. The Summit will then open with a screening of the film The Earth From Space and that will be followed by performances from Shakira and fellow UN Goodwill Ambassador singer Angélique Kidjo, as well as call to action by female education advocate and the youngest-ever Nobel Laureate, Malala Yousafzai, along with youth representatives as torch bearers to a sustainable future.

UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson has said: “People have the right to have expectations because there is a need to make sure that the former goals, the MDGs [Millennium Development Goals] are truly achieved.”

The MDGs grew out of the 1992 UN Conference on Environmental and Development better known as the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where the concept of sustainable development began to gain momentum. With 2015 set as the target year for the MDGs, the new sustainable development agenda emerged from three years of negotiations to address the three interconnected elements of economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon described the agenda as “a clarion call” to “share prosperity, empower people’s livelihoods, ensure peace and heal our planet for the benefit of this and future generations” while his deputy, Jan Eliasson, said the UN leadership attaches “enormously high priority” to mobilizing the UN system, member states, civil society, the private sector and the scientific community to ensure the “transformative changes” take place to make the vision a reality on the ground.

Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson told the UN News Centre that 2015 could turn out to be a historic year for the United Nations if the world can also agree on a bold agenda to combat climate change in Paris this December.

At a press conference earlier this week, Amina J. Mohammed, the Secretary-General’s Special Adviser on Post-2015 Development Planning, described the agreement on the Goals as “really meaningful.”

“It's universal so it applies to everyone,” she explained. “We will no longer have a North-South conversation about what the North is doing for the South, but what we are doing for each other. Clearly anything that happens anywhere in this world has that fallout in many other places – from the global financial crisis to conflict and migration, we feel it everywhere – to natural disasters and climate change.”

Helen Clark, the Administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), has said the new agenda “means doing development differently.”

The new goals “leave no one behind – not people, not groups and not whole countries. That’s a powerful message that we need to work in ways that to support the poorest and most vulnerable to succeed in development as well,” Miss Clark said.

“UNDP is totally committed to working alongside all developing countries to achieve the SDGs and to work with developed countries on making it possible through getting the funding which will help support us to help build and develop the capacity of countries to fly,” she said “That’s what we are dedicate to.”

Another senior UN development official eagerly looking forward to the formal adoption and implementation of the Goals was UN Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Lenni Montiel.

“This year, 2015, is a watershed year,” said Mr. Montiel, describing the new agenda as “a unique agreement that will change the paradigm about development in the world.”

He drew attention to the fact that there was unprecedented involvement of young people from all countries throughout the negotiating process.
Jan Pasztor, the Secretary-General’s advisor on climate change, hailed the adoption of the global goals as “a really a very important development, in order to help and be ready to combat climate change.”

The new agenda gives a “very positive” momentum for governments who are negotiating a new, meaningful and universal agreement on climate change in Paris this December, Mr. Pasztor said.

Mr. Ban hopes the visit to the UN by Pope Francis will also bolster support for action on climate change, his advisor said.

And Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, whose department is responsible for the development pillar of the United Nations, encouraged everyone to watch.

“We hope you will be an eyewitness to this historic moment,” Mr. Wu said.

**Top UN relief official alarmed as aid agencies ordered to leave Luhansk region in eastern Ukraine**

24 September - Alarmed by news that the de facto authorities in crisis-torn eastern Ukraine have ordered United Nations agencies in Luhansk to end operations and to leave the area by tomorrow, 25 September, the top UN humanitarian official urged the authorities, as well as parties “with influence over [them]” to ensure the resumption of humanitarian aid by UN and non-governmental agencies.

According to a statement from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), this alarming news follows the de facto authorities’ rejection of applications by UN agencies and all international non-governmental organization (NGOs) working in Luhansk to work in the area. Several international NGOs have been informed that they must leave by 26 September.

“I am also extremely concerned by the situation regarding accreditation and registration of international NGOs in Donetsk. A decision by the de facto authorities in Donetsk on the UN’s future operations remains on hold, and all UN agency operations have been suspended,” said Stephen O’Brien, the Under-Secretary-General for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UN Emergency Relief Coordinator.

He said the de facto authorities in Luhansk and Donetsk have an obligation to allow and facilitate unimpeded and rapid humanitarian access. Their continued failure in this regard constitutes a blatant violation of international humanitarian law.

“The suspension of almost all humanitarian programmes in Luhansk and Donetsk since mid-July is putting lives at risk and preventing the most vulnerable, including children, women and the elderly, from accessing basic services. It is having a serious impact on some 3 million people as winter approaches,” said Mr. O’Brien.

According to the UN relief chief, some 16,000 tons of humanitarian assistance, including food, shelter and non-food relief supplies cannot be delivered. Hospitals cannot perform surgery because they lack anaesthesia. Patients’ lives are at risk without essential medicines such as insulin and tuberculosis vaccines.

Moreover, some 150,000 people are not receiving monthly food distributions, 1.3 million people’s access to water is at risk, and more than 30,000 people have not received shelter materials and household items they urgently need.

“I call on the de facto authorities in both Luhansk and Donetsk to ensure the immediate resumption of UN and international NGO activities,” said Mr. O’Brien.

He also called on “everyone with influence over the de facto authorities” to use that influence to ensure the immediate resumption of humanitarian aid by UN agencies and international NGOs, and to win a commitment by the authorities to end interference in the provision of lifesaving assistance.
UNICEF and David Beckham unveil digital installation to help bring voices of youth to General Assembly

24 September - A unique installation that brings the voices of children and young people to the heart of the United Nations General Assembly was unveiled today by top UN officials, UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Goodwill Ambassador David Beckham and youth representatives from an initiative called ‘Voices of Youth.’

“2014 was one of the most devastating years on record for children […] and 2015 has proven to be just as bad,” David Beckham told a press conference in New York. “As a UNICEF Ambassador and as a father, it breaks my heart to see children continue to suffer.”

In a press release, he further underlined that the international community has an opportunity this year, with the world focused on the new Global Goals, to create a better future for millions of children.

The international soccer star was referring to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a new set of 17 goals and 169 targets that seek to stimulate action over the next 15 years in areas of critical importance towards building a more equitable world for all.

As the UN prepares to adopt this new framework tomorrow, the Assembly of Youth— a digital installation created for UNICEF by Google— harnesses mobile technology and social media to deliver personal messages from children and young people across the globe directly to world leaders.

The messages highlight the challenges they face in their homes and communities – including extreme poverty, inequality, violence, deadly disease and conflict – and express their hopes for the future.

At the unveiling, Mr. Beckham urged world leaders to listen to these messages and to take action to transform the lives of children by putting the most disadvantaged at the centre of all decisions and investments in the new 15-year development agenda.

“Every child has a voice, but too often they’re just not heard,” he said. “At this crucial time, as world leaders are gathering here in New York, and thanks to this incredible installation, their voices will be heard.”

Also speaking at the press conference was UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who said the new Global Goals put people, especially youth, at the centre of development.

“I am pleased to be here today to help UNICEF bring the voices of young people to the forefront of this new development era,” said Mr. Ban. “They will live tomorrow in a world that will be shaped by the actions we take together now.”

Despite the progress made toward realizing the landmark Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the UN estimates that nearly 6 million children under the age of five still die every year from mostly preventable causes, and more than 120 million children and adolescents are still not in school.

“Unless we invest in the most disadvantaged children from the earliest years, we will continue to see in the next generation the same poverty and inequalities that divide and destabilize our world today, and rob us of the potential of so many young people,” said UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake.

“To realize tomorrow’s goals, we need to listen to children and young people today – for who knows better than children and young people themselves what their needs are? And we must do more than hear these voices, we must heed them,” he
added.

Also present were Noor Samee, 16, and Rodrigo Bustamante, 17, who are helping UNICEF bring the voices of young people to the General Assembly this week.

Data displayed in the installation located at the Visitor’s entrance of the General Assembly is drawn from U-Report, a free SMS-based system that allows young people to speak out on the issues they face and what is happening in their communities.

Data is also derived from outreach to children and young people across UNICEF social media channels.

**Colombia: Ban welcomes ‘significant progress’ towards reaching final peace agreement**

24 September - Following a recent upsurge in fighting between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the Government, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today welcomed the agreement reached by the parties in Havana, Cuba on the issue of victims and commended their commitment to place victims at the center of the peace process.

The FARC have been in talks with the Government for the last 32 months, seeking to end a 51-year conflict that has made almost a quarter of a million victims.

In a statement, Mr. Ban’s spokesperson said the announcements made by the parties represent significant progress towards reaching a final peace agreement and bring Colombia even closer to ending the hemisphere’s longest armed conflict.

“The Secretary-General looks forward to welcoming President Juan Manuel Santos of Colombia at the United Nations in New York and hearing his views about the way forward for the peace process,” the statement noted.

Mr. Ban also commended the role of guarantor countries, Cuba and Norway, as well as of Chile and Venezuela as accompanying nations in assisting this peace process.

“The Secretary-General reiterates the commitment of the United Nations to continue supporting the parties as they advance in their work toward reaching a Peace Agreement, particularly through the work of his Delegate to the sub-commission on End of Conflict,” the statement added.

He also reiterated the willingness of the United Nations system to provide the support required to ensure the successful implementation of the peace agreement in Colombia for the advancement of peace, human rights and development for all its citizens.

Meanwhile, the Secretary-General's Special Representative Zainab Hawa Bangura also commended the agreement, noting that sexual violence and other crimes against humanity, genocide and serious war crimes would not be subject to amnesties or pardons.

Taking to Twitter, Mrs. Bangura, who advocates in the United Nations for eliminating sexual violence in conflict and holding perpetrators to account, said specific mention of sexual violence in the agreement is a "victory" for survivors and activists participating in the Havana talks.
Syria: UN health agency urges donors to assist countries ‘doing the heavy lifting’

24 September - Crippling funding shortfalls are hindering the ability of emergency teams to meet the escalating health needs of the millions of Syrians displaced by civil war and donors need to step up support to countries in the region doing the “heavy lifting,” warned the World Health Organization (WHO).

“It is imperative that the health sector in this region is adequately funded to ensure refugee and host population needs are catered to,” said Dr. Nada Al Ward, coordinator of WHO’s Emergency Support Team based in Amman, Jordan. “Migration into Europe may alleviate some of the burden on these countries, but not much.”

“The international community must continue to support the countries doing the heavy lifting,” Dr. Al Ward said.

The agency said the health component of the 2015 Syria response plan is only 30 per cent funded, while the health component in the regional refugee and resilience plan is only 17 per cent funded.

“The magnitude of needs continues to escalate,” said Dr. Ward. “More than four years on and we’re seeing the same urgent health needs we saw in 2011, but on a much larger scale – trauma cases, severe mental health needs, communicable and non-communicable diseases, reproductive health issues.”

Thorough intense fighting and shifting zones of conflict have hindered the ability of health workers to reach some areas, WHO says its staff have enabled the medical treatment of more than 13.8 million people this year across Syria.

WHO also said cross-border activities from hubs in Turkey and Jordan have increased the organization’s assistance to populations in need in Syria.

WHO staff have been working to ensure that life-saving medicines and medical supplies reach Syrians and the region’s host populations and governments; technical assistance is given to the region’s ministries of health, with health care workers being trained; mass vaccination campaigns are supported; and the ability to monitor outbreaks of communicable diseases is boosted.

“Inside Syria, the conflict, now a civil war” – has left 12.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, with more than 7.6 million of them internally displaced, according to UNHCR. And more than 4 million Syrians are registered as refugees and are living outside their countries. The 1.1 million Syrians now living in Lebanon represent a third of that country’s population. In Jordan, some 600,000 Syrians have found refuge.

WHO has also been supporting the ministries of health of Jordan and Lebanon to ensure adequate and equitable health care service provision for both Syrian refugees and their host communities.

“With the conflict in Syria showing no sign of abating, it is unclear how long the emergency health response will be needed in the Middle East,” WHO said, but warned that funds, are not keeping pace with the growing needs, and the health sector is struggling to keep systems from collapsing.
UN chief ‘deeply saddened’ at deaths in wake of stampede at Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia

24 September - United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has expressed deep sadness to learn of the death of more than 700 Hajj pilgrims, as well as of injuries to many others caused by a deadly incident in Mina Valley, near Mecca, in Saudi Arabia.

“This tragic incident is all the more distressing as it took place on the first day of the Holy Eid Al-Adha marking the end of the annual Hajj season, said the UN chief in a statement released by his spokesperson in New York.

In the statement, the Secretary-General extends his sincere condolences to the families of the victims and expresses his sympathies to all the Governments concerned.

UN welcomes expanded EU support to refugees fleeing conflict, urges speedy implementation

24 September - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon joined the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees today welcomed a decision by the European Union (EU) to increase resources for humanitarian assistance countries neighbouring war-ravaged Syria.

Mr. Ban and the UN refugee agency also welcomed the decision by EU to relocate a further 120,000 people within Europe.

“The Secretary-General welcomes the decision of the European Council to inject much needed funds, worth some 1 billion euros, into the UN humanitarian response in countries dealing with the Syrian refugee crisis, including Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey,” said a statement issued by his spokesperson.

The Secretary-General also welcomed the decision to relocate an additional 120,000 people within the European Union from Greece and Italy over the next two years.

“While this is a step in the right direction, he stresses that efforts are still required to assist those in need of protection. Greater efforts are also needed to resolve the crises and conflicts that cause people to flee, including in Syria. Only peace and safety will allow refugees to return to their homes and communities,” he added in his statement.

Meanwhile, António Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees stressed that while the relocation program is not the solution for the problem, he hopes it would be “the beginning of a solution.”

“It is an important step toward stabilizing the crisis, but much more needs to be done. The plan can only work if, at entry points in Europe, robust facilities are created to receive, assist, register and screen people. These facilities must have a capacity that could handle the current average 5,000 people arriving every day by boat,” he added.

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also welcomed the announcement that there is a critical need for additional funding that must be made available for refugees in the countries offering asylum.

“So many refugee emergencies in the Middle East and Africa are woefully underfunded, leaving refugees in conditions so dire that many chose to move on. People will continue to seek safety and survival further afield if the root causes of forced displacement are not addressed,” said Mr. Guterres.

He also noted that compared to the present situation, the current programme is limited, yet must be quickly implemented.
“In order for the system to work, effective support for the dignified return of those that do not require international protection must also be in place,” Mr. Guterres said.

He also insisted that EU must also offer protection to refugees who currently are journeying across “border after border at the mercy of criminal smugglers.”

In his statement, Mr. Ban also appealed to the EU to acknowledge the rights of refugees and migrants and to provide them with protection, calling on European leaders to do more to ensure dignified and humane reception and claim processing of the thousands of men, women and children seeking protection in Europe.

He also recalled that refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants have inalienable rights that must be respected, including the right to claim asylum, and that States must abide by their international obligations, especially the principle of non-refoulement.

The Secretary-General went on to welcome the EU’s efforts to fight trafficking and smuggling of refugees and migrants, and calls on the EU to consider increasing legal and safe pathways into Europe for them, so that they are not left in the hands of criminal networks and embark on perilous journeys.

Mr. Guterres added that the UNHCR was disappointed with the lack of legal pathways for refugees to reach safely in Europe. He also urged for “a substantial and rapid increase in legal opportunities for refugees to access the EU.”

This includes better resettlement and humanitarian admission, family reunification, private sponsorship and humanitarian and student visas. According to UNHCR, 1 in 10 Syrian refugees (approximately 400,000) are presently in need of resettlement.

“The international community as a whole should adopt the type of exceptional response which had been used in other humanitarian crises. Without such avenues, refugees will continue to be left with few options, and the increase in international efforts to crack down on smugglers and traffickers is unlikely to be effective,” the statement concluded.

The news release from the UN agency underscored strengthening and managing border control at the EU external border in compliance with national, EU and international law, including the guaranteeing the right to seek asylum.

Mr. Ban also insisted that other countries along with Europe must offer more relocation places and long term solutions.

“The Secretary-General emphasizes our common humanity and reminds every one of their shared responsibility. He stresses that Europe and countries beyond must make available many more relocation places to provide the many refugees who are in camps or living under temporary arrangements with a viable long term solution, when safe return is not possible,” said the statement.

Further, UNHCR has amped up its operations in affected countries due to the refugee crisis and is ready to provide full support to the EU and Member States and other stakeholders.
Yemen: UN condemns terrorist attack on Sana’a mosque

24 September - United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has condemned today’s terrorist attack at the al-Bolayli mosque in Yemen’s capital Sana’a, which happened during prayers for the Eid al-Adha holiday.

In a statement issued by his spokesperson in New York, Mr. Ban expressed his deepest condolences and sympathies to the families of the victims and to the people of Yemen.

“Such attacks against places of worship, or civilians anywhere, cannot be justified by any cause,” the statement noted.

The Secretary-General also called for a full investigation of the bombing and for the perpetrators to be brought to justice.

Meanwhile, members of the Security Council also condemned in the strongest terms the “horrific” terrorist attacks, reaffirming that terrorism in all its forms constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.

The 15-member body also reiterated its determination to combat all forms of terrorism, and reminded States that they must ensure that measures taken to combat terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law.

Fighting between the Government and rebel Houthi forces in the country has raged for more than a year, claiming the lives of more than 2,000 civilians.

According to the United Nations, 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.

Seven new advisers named to UN Emergency Relief Fund

24 September - Since its inception in 2006, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has allocated more than $4 billion in support of humanitarian operations in 95 countries and territories facing natural or man-made catastrophes, ranging from the victims of earthquakes and tsunamis to survivors fleeing war and atrocities in their own homelands.

“Over the past 10 years, CERF has been one of the fastest and most effective ways to support communities hit by crisis,” said Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O’Brien, who manages the Fund for Mr. Ban.

“As CERF marks 10 years of operations, the Advisory Group is vital to guide the Fund in a challenging resource mobilization environment, as global discussions on humanitarian financing pave the way forward for the future of aid funding.”

“Most recently CERF helped aid agencies deliver food, water and shelter in the immediate aftermath of the Nepal earthquake, provided $44 million for life-saving activities in Yemen and supplied $78 million needed to keep critical aid operations up and running in Syria and neighbouring countries.

“The new members, who join 11 members already on the board, are:

- Ambassador Nozipho Joyce Mxakato-Diseko, Deputy Director-General of the Global Governance and Continental Agenda of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, South Africa
- Ms. Najla Alkaabi, Assistant Under-Secretary of International Cooperation in the Ministry of International
Seventieth anniversary treaty event to focus on UN contributions to international affairs

24 September - Ahead of an annual United Nations-hosted treaty signing event in New York, the Chief of the UN Office of Legal Affairs Treaty Section, Mr. Santiago Villalpando, briefed the press today, highlighting the contributions multilateral legal instruments make to the Organization’s work.

The UN treaty office decided that this year’s event, which will be held from 28 September to 1 October, will mark “the overall contribution that the United Nations had made to international affairs through multilateral treaty making,” Mr. Villalpando said.

“The very first lines of the Preamble of the [United Nations] Charter emphasize the importance of treaties in the realization of the purposes of the Organization. Seventy years later, a comprehensive and robust multilateral treaty framework has constituted to one of the major contributions of the United Nations to an international order based on the rule of law,” he declared.

Multilateral treaties have grown in number and complexity, covering a wide array of fields of international relations, Mr. Villalpando continued, highlighting such relevant contributions at the beginning of the press conference.

In this anniversary year, more than 560 multilateral treaties have been deposited with the UN Secretary-General. A number of them are close to achieving universal participation. Others require just a few more instruments of ratification or accession to trigger their entry into force, he explained.

To that end, Mr. Ban stated in his letter of invitation to Member States that the treaty event would provide a distinct opportunity for States to fulfil pledges made in national and international forums to sign on to and, particularly, to ratify or accede, to multilateral treaties.

The Treaty Event has been held annually since September 2000 coinciding with the General Debate of the General Assembly, so this year, Mr. Villalpando said, the Secretary-General invited the high level participants coming to New York to attend the UN Sustainable Development Summit to sign multilateral treaties or become party to them by depositing instruments of ratification or accession.
At meeting of African Presidents, Ban highlights importance of urban planning as tool for development

24 September - Speaking at a presidential dialogue on the African Urban Agenda at United Nations Headquarters in New York today, the Secretary-General addressed the leaders of several African countries and highlighted the importance of effective urban planning as a vital tool for development.

“Africa is the most rapidly urbanising region of the world,” said the Secretary-General. “Two-thirds of Africa’s projected total population of 2.5 billion people will require urban services by 2063. And Africa needs to be ready,” he urged.

Thanking the assembled dignitaries for their “leadership and commitment to the African urban agenda,” Mr. Ban said that urbanization, if managed well, could be a powerful engine to aid sustainable development, while “a failure in urban design can lead to more poverty, insecurity and social ills.”

“The urban model of the last 50 years showed us the role of urbanization in accelerating development,” said Mr. Ban. “However, the record is mixed. Some models have been successful in terms of economic development, but were less so in other areas such as environmental preservation and social cohesion.”

He added that, with the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 11, there is a chance to encourage effective urban planning, and make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, and develop efficient urbanization as a tool for development.

The Secretary-General also highlighted the importance of the UN Conference for Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, also known as Habitat III, which is set to take place in Quito, Ecuador, in October next year, calling it “an extraordinary opportunity to help shape the urbanization in Africa.”

The African Urban Agenda, an initiative launched by UN-Habitat, aims at raising the profile of urbanization as an imperative for development in Africa.

Meeting with developing country leaders, Ban stresses universal nature of new sustainability agenda

24 September - On the eve of a United Nations summit convened to give impetus to an ambitious new agenda to eradicate poverty and set the world on the path of sustainable development, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today called on both developed and developing nations to play their part.

“Tomorrow is a historic day. The world will unite around a universal and transformative Agenda to guide development efforts to 2030,” he told a ministerial meeting of the G77 and China, a grouping that now includes 134 states, more than two thirds of the total UN membership of 193.

“Developed countries are committing to act not only through their development cooperation, but also through domestic plans and policies,” he told the ministers ahead of the three-day summit being held with the context of the UN General Assembly’s 70th annual General Debate.

“It demands to enhance the productive capacity in developing countries, especially in the least developed countries. It addresses the preservation of the planet and the fight against climate change.”
“The new programme, Transforming Our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development consists of a Declaration, 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets, a section on means of implementation and renewed global partnership, all seeking to build on and expand the eight Millennium Development Goals adopted at a UN summit in 2000.

“Mr. Ban stressed that the Agenda focuses on growth and decent employment, while ensuring the preservation of the planet and the fight against climate change, taking into account the complexity and interconnected nature of today’s most vexing challenges.

“The Group of 77 and China has played an extremely important role in shaping this agenda. I am sure you will sustain the same enthusiasm and idealism as we move to implementation,” Mr. Ban said, committing the full support of the entire UN System. “You need to act in your countries to build awareness and commitment to this agenda.”

On World Maritime Day, UN highlights importance of maritime education and training

24 September - Marking the observance of World Maritime Day, top UN officials highlighted the importance of the international shipping industry, as well as the necessity of maintaining high education and training standards within the sector as a key part of the implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals.

“Through the millennia, shipping has united the world by carrying the goods and commodities that underpin the global economy,” said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in a message on the World Day.

“Today, shipping is a modern, highly technical, professional discipline that requires a great deal of skill, knowledge and expertise from the maritime workforce,” he continued. “A safe, secure and clean shipping industry can only be built on effective standards of education and training, which is the theme for this year’s World Maritime Day.”

He also praised the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the UN specialized agency for maritime safety and environmental protection, noting that it has had a “long and wide-ranging involvement in maritime education and training.”

The Secretary-General also noted the important role the maritime industry will play in the implementation of the goals contained in the 2030 Agenda.

“Looking ahead, the human element in shipping will be increasingly important as the industry moves towards ever higher standards of safety, environmental impact and sustainability, and seeks to do its part to implement the new Sustainable Development Goals,” he said.

In his remarks, IMO Secretary-General Koji Sekimizu marked the Day by highlighting the importance of shipping to the global community and the key role it has to play in sustainable development.

“The world depends on a safe, secure and efficient shipping industry; and the shipping industry depends on an adequate supply of seafarers to operate the ships that carry the essential cargoes we all rely on,” said Mr. Sekimizu.

He also noted the importance of making the industry appeal to a new generation of workers.

“The importance of training and education for the maritime personnel of today and tomorrow is greater than ever before,” he said, noting that education and training are central parts of the work of the IMO with regard to shipping labour.

Mr. Sekimizu also referred to the 1978 International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, which, he said, has set the international benchmark for seafarer training and education. Mr. Sekimizu said that amendments to the Convention were adopted in 2010 in Manila, and yet much remained to be done to ensure their effective implementation by the January 2017 deadline.
Three new suspected cases of typhoid near Yarmouk camp in Syria

23 September - Following humanitarian operations in the southern Syrian town of Yalda, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) said it has identified three new suspected cases of typhoid.

“Our health teams in Syria are finding increasing evidence of a typhoid outbreak among civilians from Yarmouk, in Damascus,” said UNRWA Spokesperson Chris Gunness in a statement.

“Today we saw 320 patients and among them were three suspected cases of typhoid. This brings the total figure of suspected cases to 90. That is 90 too many,” he added.

UNRWA has been providing vital healthcare to civilians displaced from Yarmouk camp, where the lives of Palestinian refugees continue to be threatened by the conflict in the region.

A situation update issued today by the agency said as high summer temperatures and regular interruptions in water and food supplies continue to affect the area, communicable illness remains a source of profound vulnerability for civilians.

“The vulnerability of civilians in Yarmouk remains of the highest severity,” Mr. Gunness warned. “UNRWA is deeply concerned that without access, the most basic humanitarian needs of Palestinian and Syrian civilians, including many children, continue to be left unmet.”

He added that today’s mission was conducted with the facilitation of the Syrian authorities.

Meanwhile, UNRWA is continuing to appeal for donors to increase their support. Only 34 per cent of funds needed for this year’s Syria Crisis Appeal have been received, while more than 95 per cent of Palestinian refugees rely on the UN for food, water and healthcare.

UN agency opens two new camps for displaced Iraqis in Baghdad

23 September - The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), partners and local authorities announced today the recent opening of two new camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Baghdad province, providing shelter to close to 3,500 Iraqis who have had to flee the Anbar province due to recent fighting.

“UNHCR, the authorities and partners are working hard to ensure that the shelter needs of internally displaced Iraqis are being met and to relieve the pressure on the local community,” said Bruno Geddo, the UNHCR Representative in Iraq, in a press release.

“While the majority of those who have been forcibly displaced would prefer to return home, a secure shelter will provide them with protection and a sense of dignity until it is safe for them to do so,” he added.

Sadr Yusufiya camp opened yesterday, six kilometres from Bzeibiz bridge, the main access point between the Baghdad and Anbar provinces, and will accommodate some 2,000 people.

In Baghdad’s Ghzaliya neighbourhood, Scout camp, which opened on 16 September, will provide shelter to some 1,500 internally displaced Iraqis who had been staying in unfinished buildings, with the host community or with relatives in the city.
According to UNHCR, Scout camp has 250 tents that are all connected to electricity, and its new residents have also received essential household items and summer assistance, including mattresses and kitchen utensils, as well as rechargeable fans, cooler boxes and water coolers, to aid their new move. The camp features innovative shaded areas that will be used as communal kitchens, and a 250 KV generator to supplement the power supply when it goes off.

Meanwhile, Sadr Yusufiya camp has 325 tents, each provided with one electric lamp and a socket outlet connected to two 350 KV generators powering the camp. Public lightning is reportedly provided by 36 pole lamp posts across the camp.

Naima, 66, fled Anbar’s capital, Ramadi, when it fell to the control of armed insurgents in April. She moved into Scout camp last week, together with her son, his wife and their newborn baby.

“It's a big relief,” she said. “We’d been living in an unfinished building ever since we arrived. Although the host community has been generous, providing us with cash, food and household items, it feels good to have a space that is ours.”

Conflict in Iraq continues unabated, causing mass internal displacement. According to the UN, Iraq now has the third highest population of IDPs in the world, with 3.2 million people having been displaced since January 2014, joining the ranks of approximately 1 million still displaced over the past decade.

In the spring of 2015, renewed fighting in Anbar displaced an estimated 250,000 Iraqis. UNHCR says it will continue various shelter interventions to respond to the crisis. For example, in safe areas on the other side of the Euphrates river, the agency is building 2 more camps in Ameriyat al Fallujah, to provide shelter for up to 4,200 people who have been displaced within Anbar.

Both camps have been made possible through flexible funding received by UNHCR from donors. Countries including the US, Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, Australia, France, Spain, Switzerland, and Canada have been providing UNHCR with unrestricted funding.

**Following coup d’état in Burkina Faso, Ban welcomes reinstatement of President**

23 September - Following a coup d’état last week in Burkina Faso, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today welcomed the reinstatement of President Michel Kafando and of the transitional institutions in the country.

In a statement, Mr. Ban commended the efforts undertaken by the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) Authority of Heads of State and Government, including the ECOWAS high-level mediation team, towards the early resolution of the political crisis.

President Kafando, Prime Minister Yacouba Isaac Zida and several Government ministers were detained one week ago and later released by elements of the Presidential Guard.

Today, the UN chief paid tribute to the excellent collaboration between the United Nations, the African Union, ECOWAS and other international partners to ensure the return to constitutional order in the country.

He stressed that the resumption of the transition process will enable Burkina Faso to hold presidential and legislative elections in accordance with the country’s Constitution and Transitional Charter.

He also called on all national stakeholders to exercise restraint and to ensure respect for the physical integrity and human rights of all Burkinabè citizens.
Meanwhile, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for West Africa, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, will continue to work closely with regional and international partners to support national authorities in the lead-up to peaceful and transparent elections.