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Head Office:

Via Museo Civico, 67 - 36061 Bassano del
Grappa (VICENZA) - ITALY

General Secretariat:

Via Venezia, 73 35129 PADOVA - ITALY
Tel: +39 049 8256848 Fax: +39 049
9270511

Representative Office in Rome

Via Cesare Bosi, 9 - 00198 ROMA



UNITED NATIONS

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Special Edition 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

17 Goals to transform our world

On 1 January 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at an historic UN Summit – officially came into force. Over the next fifteen years, with these new Goals that universally apply to all, countries will mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind. The SDGs, also known as Global Goals, build on the success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and aim to go further to end all forms of poverty. The new Goals are unique in that they call for action by all countries, poor, rich and middle-income to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and addresses a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. While the SDGs are not legally binding, governments are expected to take ownership and establish national frameworks for the achievement of the 17 Goals. Countries have the primary responsibility for follow-up and review of the progress made in implementing the Goals, which will require quality, accessible and timely data collection. Regional follow-up and review will be based on national-level analyses and contribute to follow-up and review at the global level.

UN World Data Forum to launch new action plan and innovative data solutions to improve lives

Over 1,500 data leaders from government, business, science and civil society to collaborate on challenges and initiatives

(New York/Johannesburg, 13 January) — The inaugural United Nations World Data Forum is set to kick off on 15 January in Cape Town, South Africa, with an ambitious agenda aiming to build broad consensus on how to harness the power of data for sustainable development, and boost the collaboration and resources needed to carry the work forward. It will also serve as a launching pad where diverse data producers and users can get behind a new Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data. Over 1,500 data experts from more than 100 countries are expected to gather at the Forum from 15-18 January, including from national statistical offices, the private sector and academia, international organizations, and civil society groups, as well as political leaders and sustainable development advocates. The Forum, which is being held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre, is a unique opportunity for major producers and users of data and statistics to come together to launch new initiatives and innovative

solutions that will deliver better data on health, education, income, environmental indicators and other aspects of sustainable development. With close to 100 sessions and parallel events, from data labs and interactive knowledge-sharing spaces, to more traditional keynote speeches and panel discussions, the Forum is expected to address a wide range of data issues and initiatives. "The first UN World Data Forum comes at a crucial time," said Mr. Wu Hongbo, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. "As the world mobilizes to carry out the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it is essential to have accurate, reliable, timely and disaggregated data, tracking the unprecedented range of economic, social and environmental goals." "This will require that everyone in the statistics and data community find ways to work across different domains and create synergies. It also poses enormous challenges for the global statistical community, to modernize and improve our capacity. I expect this Forum to offer a space where new partnerships can be forged, commitments announced, and support boosted for the Global Action Plan."

Global Action Plan to be launched

The Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data has been prepared over the past year by a high-level group of experts responsible for statistics and data policy in their countries, and will be officially approved by the UN Statistical Commission when it meets in March 2017. The Plan calls for the commitment of governments, policy leaders and the international community to undertake key actions under six strategic areas, including innovation and modernization of national statistical systems, dissemination of data on sustainable development, building partnerships and mobilizing resources.

Boosting capacity and commitments

Key policy issues to be examined at the Forum include rethinking how to strengthen official statistical capacity in those countries where it is needed, which is a major concern of the Global Action Plan. A number of new commitments and partnerships are expected to be announced. "The enormous challenges we face require capacity and resources—to improve current methods and to find ways to incorporate new data sources," said Pali Lehohla, Statistician-General and Head of Statistics South Africa, co-host of the Forum. "The Forum is a major opportunity. Because of the framework created by the Millennium Development Goals, we made a lot of progress on statistics at the national level around the world, and now, with the 2030 Agenda, we will make even more progress, in ways we can't even imagine." Other issues to be examined at the Forum include the need for open data and how to facilitate data sharing and integration of new data sources into official statistics. Several initiatives are focusing on how to better count minorities and vulnerable groups and improve gender data so that we leave no one behind and ensure the protection of human rights and on helping people understand the world through data, using data visualization, literacy and journalism.

Innovative solutions

The Forum will feature data labs and presentations that will launch or advance a number of innovative, practical solutions, many using new large-scale data sources such as mobile phone and bank records, social media and geospatial data. Projects to be showcased include the use of high-res satellite images to map poverty and measure soil fertility and crop yields, and the use of call records and other sources to gather better data on migration and refugees. Also to be featured are a public-private partnership utilizing open data, remote sensing and drones to improve the productivity of African agriculture, and initiatives by civil society groups using

citizen-generated data to talk to governments about people's experiences and priorities, and to spur policy change and greater accountability.

About the Forum

The Forum was agreed by the UN Statistical Commission based on a recommendation by the UN Secretary-General's Independent Expert and Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development. Improved use of data and statistics will be crucial to achieving the transformational vision of a better future for people and the planet, set out in the 2030 Agenda agreed by world leaders at the UN in September 2015. Rapid expansion in new sources of data is creating large-scale opportunities for innovative solutions, which need to be integrated with strengthened official data mechanisms and structures. The first UN World Data Forum is being hosted by the Government of South Africa and Statistics South Africa, with support from the Statistics Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. A number of partners—including governments, international organizations such as the World Bank and UNICEF, and several civil society organizations and research institutes – are collaborating to organize the Forum.

Modest global economic recovery expected, but return to robust and sustained growth remains elusive: UN report

Concerted policy efforts to revive investment and growth are needed to facilitate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals

New York, 17 January – Although a modest global recovery is projected for 2017-18, the world economy has not yet emerged from the period of slow growth, characterised by weak investment, dwindling trade and flagging productivity growth, according to the United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2017 report launched today. The report states that the world economy expanded by just 2.2 per cent in 2016, the slowest rate of growth since the Great Recession of 2009. World gross product is projected to grow by 2.7 per cent in 2017 and 2.9 per cent in 2018, a slight downward revision from the forecasts made last May. Launching the report at the UN Headquarters in New York, Mr. Lenni Montiel, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, underscored the "need to redouble the efforts to bring the global economy back on a stronger and more inclusive growth path and create an international economic environment that is conducive to sustainable development." According to the report, the moderate improvement expected for 2017/18 is more an indication of economic stabilization than a signal of a robust and sustained revival of global demand. As commodity prices trend higher, commodity-exporting economies are likely to see some recovery in growth. Developing countries continue to be the main drivers of global growth, accounting for about 60 per cent of the world's gross product growth in 2016-18. East and South Asia remain the world's most dynamic regions, benefiting from robust domestic demand and supportive macroeconomic policies. The report projects that growth in the developed economies will slightly improve in 2017, but headwinds arising from weak investment and policy uncertainty continue to constrain economic activity. GDP growth in the least developed countries (LDCs) is projected to remain well below the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) target of at least 7 per cent. This represents a key issue to address if the SDGs overall are to be attained. The report notes, specifically, that under the current growth trajectory and assuming no decline in income

inequality, nearly 35 per cent of the population in LDCs may remain in extreme poverty by 2030.

Weak investment and productivity growth

The report identifies prolonged weak investment as a major cause of the slowdown in global growth. Many economies have experienced a marked downturn in private and public investment in recent years, particularly in the oil and extractive industries. In commodity-exporting countries, Governments have curtailed much-needed public investment in infrastructure and social services, in response to sharp revenue losses. At the same time, labour productivity growth has slowed markedly in most developed economies and in many large developing and transition economies. The report stresses the importance of investment in new capital as a driver of technological change and efficiency gains. In particular, it concludes that investment in key areas, such as research and development, education and infrastructure, can serve to promote social and environmental progress, while also supporting productivity growth.

Environmental sustainability

The report highlights some positive developments related to environmental sustainability. The level of global carbon emissions has stalled for two consecutive years. This reflects the declining energy intensity of economic activities and the rising share of renewables in the overall energy structure, but also slower economic growth in some major emitters. The report found that renewable energy investment in the developing countries exceeded that of the developed countries in 2015. However, the report also warns that without concerted policy efforts from both the public and private sector, the recent improvements in emissions mitigation could easily reverse.

Risks and policy challenges

The report cautions that the global outlook faces significant uncertainties and risks. A high degree of uncertainty is identified in the international policy environment and elevated foreign currency-denominated debt levels as key downside risks that may derail the already modest global growth prospects. Given the close linkages between demand, investment, trade and productivity, the extended episode of weak global growth may prove self-perpetuating in the absence of concerted policy efforts to revive investment and foster a recovery in productivity. The report notes that many countries continue to depend excessively on monetary policy to support growth. In the context of a challenging economic and financial environment, a more balanced policy approach is required to not only restore a healthy medium-term growth trajectory, but also to achieve greater progress on sustainable development. The global economy needs policy measures that move beyond demand management. These measures need to be fully integrated with structural reforms that target the various aspects of sustainable development, including poverty, inequality and climate change. The report also calls for greater international policy cooperation and coordination, particularly in the areas of trade and investment. Deeper international cooperation is also needed to expedite clean technology transfer, raise climate finance, strengthen international tax cooperation and address the challenges posed by large movements of refugees and migrants. About the report: The World Economic Situation and Prospects report is the UN's flagship publication on expected trends in the global economy. WESP is produced annually by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the five

UN regional commissions and the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). For more information, please visit: <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wesp/>

UN World Data Forum wraps up with launch of Cape Town Global Action Plan

January 18th, 2017 The inaugural United Nations World Data Forum is concluding today with the launch of a global plan for better data to improve people's lives, and new ideas and solutions to boost the collaboration, resources and policies needed to put it into action. The Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, which will be adopted by countries at the UN Statistical Commission when it meets in March of this year, was prepared with inputs from the global statistical community and data experts from a wider range of stakeholders. "The UN World Data Forum is the perfect place to launch the Action Plan and get all the major players behind it," said UN Under-Secretary-General Wu Hongbo at a press conference. "To implement the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and build a better future for people everywhere, it is essential to have accurate, reliable, timely and disaggregated data." The Plan, which sets out a global vision and "to do" list for better data, calls for a commitment by governments, policy leaders and the international community to undertake key actions in six strategic areas, including: innovation and modernization of national statistical systems; dissemination of data on sustainable development; building partnerships; and mobilizing resources. Currently there are large data gaps that hinder policy makers from making informed decisions. Over 100 countries do not keep accurate birth and death records, and only 41 per cent of countries regularly produce data on violence against women. The unprecedented scope of the UN's 2030 Agenda, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, has magnified the challenge to track progress and inform policies. "We cannot achieve what we cannot measure," said Pali Lehohla, South Africa's Statistician-General and head of Statistics South Africa. Over 1,400 data experts from more than 100 countries have been holding discussions, data labs and interactive presentations at the Forum from 15-18 January, with participants from governments, national statistical offices, the private sector and academia, international organizations and civil society groups. The Forum was hosted by the South African government and Statistics South Africa in partnership with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

Commitments to Boosting Capacity

The Global Action Plan calls for policy leaders to achieve a global pact that recognizes that data are essential to the full implementation of Agenda 2030, that statistical systems need to be strengthened and better funded and that data producers – from civil society to private sector and academia – need to work together to fully address the needs of the sustainable development agenda. How to strengthen statistical systems was the subject of extensive discussion at the Forum, and a number of commitments were advanced or reaffirmed. The African Development Bank committed to present a proposal to its Board to sustain and even scale up, over the next 3 years, its support for statistical development work across Africa. The World Bank added its voice of commitment to support 78 IDA countries to implement a multi-topic household survey every three years, as well as support capacity for gender statistics, among other areas. Norway reaffirmed its commitment to supporting statistics and data by providing partners with high-quality technical skills and expertise. In addition to urging the

strengthening of existing statistical mechanisms, the Global Action Plan calls for the application of new technologies and new data sources into mainstream statistical activities, and integration of geospatial data. It also calls for data on all groups of the population to be expanded so that no one is left behind, a key principle of the 2030 Agenda.

Innovative data solutions

A number of innovative data initiatives and tools were announced at the Forum, including the following. The United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) launched a Data Disaggregation Action Plan, to better measure vulnerable groups and ensure that everyone is counted and everyone counts. UN Global Pulse launched a new tool, hazegazer.org, that can improve crisis management. Telefonica and CEPEI (Centro de Pensamiento independiente) launched datarepública.org, a digital platform to connect citizens and development actors in Latin America with data for the SDGs. In addition, the International Roadmap on Open Data, which summarizes the proceedings of the International Open Data Conference 2016 and includes an action plan, was launched.

United Arab Emirates to host 2nd Forum

It was announced today that the United Arab Emirates will host the next UN World Data Forum in Dubai, in late 2018 or early 2019. The announcement was made at a press conference today by Dr. Gabriella Vukovich, co-chair of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. "We are looking forward to working with the colleagues from the United Arab Emirates to organize together an open and inclusive 2nd World Data Forum," said Stefan Schweinfest, Director of the UN Statistics Division. "This will be a unique opportunity to strengthen data and statistical systems for development not only at the national, but also at the regional and global level."

About the Forum

The Forum was agreed by the UN Statistical Commission based on a recommendation by the UN Secretary-General's Independent Expert and Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development. Improved use of data and statistics will be crucial to achieving the transformational vision of a better future for people and the planet, set out in the 2030 Agenda agreed by world leaders at the UN in September 2015. Rapid expansion in new sources of data is creating large-scale opportunities for innovative solutions, which need to be integrated with strengthened official data mechanisms and structures.

Smurfs team up with United Nations in 2017 for a happier, more peaceful and equitable world

(New York, NY – 15 February 2017) – The popular Smurfs characters are encouraging children, young people and adults to make the world happier, more peaceful, equitable and healthy with a campaign launched today by the United Nations, UNICEF, and the United Nations Foundation. The "Small Smurfs Big Goals" campaign is designed to encourage everyone to learn about and support the 17 Sustainable Development Goals which were agreed on by all 193 member countries of the United Nations in 2015. A Public Service Announcement video will be used to inspire viewers around the world to champion the Goals, which include ending extreme poverty, protecting the planet and giving everyone the chance to enjoy peace and prosperity.

The public can also join "Team Smurfs" by visiting the SmallSmurfsBigGoals.com website to find out in multiple languages how they can contribute to achieving the Goals; discover which goals are best suited to their interests; raise their voices for a better world for all; and share information, ideas and images on social media. "The entertainment industry moves the hearts and minds of people of all ages, and the UN thanks our friends at Sony Pictures Animation and the Smurfs for this creative effort to mobilize support for the Sustainable Development Goals," said Maher Nasser, Director of the Outreach Division in the United Nations Department of Public Information. "We hope this campaign will motivate millions of young people and their families to do their part to end poverty, reduce inequality, and protect our planet – three key aspects that will lead to the well-being and happiness of all people." Team Smurfs will rally behind the 17 Goals through to the International Day of Happiness on 20 March 2017. Voice actors from the upcoming animated movie *Smurfs: The Lost Village* will attend a celebration at United Nations headquarters in New York on Saturday, March 18 to honour youth who have already taken action to achieve the Goals in their own communities. "We know that children and young people are some of the world's most passionate advocates on issues that matter to them the most. We must continue to find new ways to empower them to help achieve a world free from inequality and injustice for every child. This campaign will give children and young people the platform they need to have their voices heard," said UNICEF Director of Communications Paloma Escudero. "The campaign message focuses on the notion that every one of us can make a difference, regardless of our size," said Veronique Culliford, the daughter of Peyo, who created the Smurfs in 1958. "It's an honor and privilege for The Smurfs to support the United Nations and to continue our longstanding relationship with UNICEF." "All of us, even a small Smurf, can achieve big goals!" added Demi Lovato, who voices Smurfette in the upcoming animated film.

UN calls for commitments to safeguard the world's oceans ahead of first major conference

New York, 15 February – Calling for concrete actions to protect the oceans, the United Nations today launched an online register to collect voluntary commitments made by UN Member States, businesses, civil society organizations, the UN System and other intergovernmental organizations that can meaningfully contribute to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14. The Government of Sweden, UN Environment (UNEP) and the Peace Boat group, a non-governmental organization, were the first to list their contributions on the Registry of Voluntary Commitments during the Preparatory Meeting of The Ocean Conference today. Their commitments highlight efforts to protect the marine environment, curb marine pollution and address the impact of ocean acidification. "Between now and The Ocean Conference in June, we're expecting hundreds of actionable voluntary commitments to be registered. They must comprehensively cover all targets for the implementation of SDG 14," said the President of the UN General Assembly, Peter Thomson of Fiji. "These voluntary commitments will be central to the global plan to reverse the cycle of decline into which human activity has put the Ocean." The register will be a central outcome of The Ocean Conference, which will take place from 5 to 9 June in New York. The Conference will support the implementation of SDG 14, which calls for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources. The Conference will also result in a declaration that will serve as a "Call to Action" to support the implementation of the Goal. "This is a matter for all of humanity," said the Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and the

Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden, Isabella Lövin. "The Ocean Conference is the opportunity for all stakeholders to make their voluntary commitments to save our ocean." The Government of Sweden commits to expand its marine protected areas to reach the SDG 14 target in 2017; UN Environment will campaign to stop plastic pollution in the ocean; and the Peace Boat group aims to launch the "Ecoship Project", a 55,000 ton energy efficient vessel which will set sail in 2020 as a flagship for the SDGs. "Only by mobilizing all actors, from Governments and the UN system, to major groups and other stakeholders, can we generate the actions needed to conserve and protect our oceans and seas for future generations," said the Conference Secretary-General and UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Wu Hongbo. "The registry of voluntary commitments will be an important tool in this endeavour." More than three billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods. However, today some 30 percent of the world's fish stocks are overexploited, reaching below the level at which they can produce sustainable yields. Oceans also absorb about 30 percent of the carbon dioxide produced by humans, but there has been a 26 percent rise in ocean acidification since the beginning of the industrial revolution. Marine pollution, an overwhelming majority of which comes from land-based sources, is reaching alarming levels, with an average of 13,000 pieces of plastic litter to be found on every square kilometre of ocean.

ABOUT THE OCEAN CONFERENCE

The high-level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development will be convened at the UN Headquarters in New York from 5 to 9 June 2017, coinciding with World Environment Day (June 5) and World Oceans Day (June 8), to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14. The Governments of Fiji and Sweden have the co-hosting responsibilities of the Conference. For more information, please visit: <https://oceanconference.un.org/> Please follow us on social media using the hashtag #SaveOurOcean.

ABOUT THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In September 2015, UN Member States unanimously adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, focused on the three interconnected elements of: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. With 17 SDGs at its core, the Agenda is universal, integrated and transformative and aims to spur actions that will end poverty, reduce inequality and tackle climate change between now and 2030. For more information, please visit: www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment

High-level thematic discussion on the global observance of World Wildlife Day

New York, 2 March 2017 — In accordance with UN General Assembly resolution 70/301, the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Peter Thomson, will convene a high-level thematic discussion on the global observance of World Wildlife Day, including on the protection of wild flora and fauna and on tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife, in UNHQ New York, on 3 March 2017. Although overall illicit trafficking numbers are difficult to estimate given the nature of the practice, experts at CITES estimate that illicit trafficking in wildlife is a multi-billion dollar business which perpetuates the irreversible damage to and extinction of the earth's flora and fauna. The half-day High-Level meeting will aim to maintain momentum of the on-going

actions, review the progress made so far by various stakeholders, and discuss the challenges in our collective efforts to fight illicit wildlife trafficking. It will also address the World Wildlife Day 2017 theme, "Listen to the young voices", which encourages youth around the world to rally together to address ongoing major threats to wildlife, including habitat change, over-exploitation and illicit trafficking. The meeting will support efforts towards the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 15, target C to "enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities". Opening remarks will be made by President Thomson; the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Amina Mohammed; the Minister of Environmental Affairs of South Africa H.E. Edna Molewa; the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), H.E. Yuri Fedotov; and Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Mr. John E. Scanlon. Two interactive panels, on "Tackling illicit trafficking of wildlife and protecting wild fauna and flora" and "Listen to the young voices – presentations on role of the youth in protecting wildlife", will be followed by the presentation of a certificate to the grand prize winner of WWD2017 photo competition – "Through young eyes".

International Women's Day spotlights impact of changing world of work

International Women's Day spotlights impact of changing world of work

UN Women Goodwill Ambassador Anne Hathaway to focus on the need for parental leave; Planet 50-50 gathers momentum in events around the world

(New York, 7 March) At a time when women's voices are rising around the world, International Women's Day will be commemorated globally on 8 March through a rich diversity of initiatives, celebrating women's achievements, opportunities and potential, while reflecting on this year's theme of "Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50-50 by 2030". Technological advances, mobility of labour, the green economy and globalization can bring unprecedented possibilities for women if they have access to relevant education and training. On the other hand, an increasing number of women are stuck in the low-paid informal economy with no social protection. Women and girls also still carry an enormous unpaid care burden and face other barriers, such as unequal pay, lack of paid parental leave and flexible work arrangements, which significantly impact their participation and contribution to the global economy. The statistics are staggering: only about 50 per cent of working age women compared to 76 per cent of men are represented in the labour force globally today, and women take on 2.5 times more unpaid work than men. The global gender pay gap is 23 percent. "We want to construct a different world of work for women. As they grow up, girls must be exposed to a broad range of careers, and encouraged to make choices that lead beyond the traditional service and care options to jobs in industry, art, public service, modern agriculture and science," said Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Women Executive Director in her message for the Day. "In roles where women are already over-represented but poorly paid, and with little or no social protection, we must make those industries work better for women. For example, a robust care economy that responds to the needs of women and gainfully employs them; equal terms and conditions for women's paid work and unpaid work; and support for women

entrepreneurs, including their access to finance and markets,” she reiterated. Along with a wide range of events across the globe, in New York, the commemoration of the Day will include a special event at the United Nations Headquarters, bringing together activists, celebrities, business industry leaders, UN senior officials and Member States: Peter Thomson, President of the 71st Session of the General Assembly; Lana Nusseibeh, President of UN Women Executive Board; Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women; Casar Jacobson, disability activist and youth champion; singer and songwriter Jayna Brown; and American award-winning actor and UN Women Goodwill Ambassador Anne Hathaway will participate in the event. At the event, Anne Hathaway will deliver a keynote address in her first public appearance as UN Women Goodwill Ambassador, with a focus on unpaid care work and paid parental leave. A panel discussion featuring prominent speakers from governments, the UN, activists and private sector representatives will follow [FLYER with programme], moderated by ABC News anchor Sade Baderinwa. Also on International Women’s Day, in partnership with the iconic Lincoln Centre and the City of New York, UN Women will launch the HeForShe Arts Week, attended by Bjarni Benediktsson, Prime Minister of Iceland and HeForShe IMPACT Champion; Chirlane McCray, First Lady of New York City; Édgar Ramírez, Actor and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador; and Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Women Executive Director. Now in its second year, the HeForShe Arts Week is commemorated annually for one week with the aim of raising awareness and funding for gender equality through the arts. More than 60 cultural institutions will join the New York events including the Empire State Building, the MET and Guggenheim Museums, Gotham Comedy Club, and the Tribeca Film Festival, along with events across eight cities from London to Sao Paulo. Marking International Women’s Day globally, a broad range of dynamic events will be organized by UN Women, ranging from film festivals, panels, solidarity marches, seminars and press conferences to arts, sports and academic activities. In more than 50 countries, from Thailand to Rwanda, Belgium, Tunisia, Turkmenistan and Ecuador, UN Women will partner with governments, universities, civil society, youth organizations and other UN agencies to organize high-profile events. Performing arts will lead the celebrations in Morocco with a theatre play that will bring together professional actors, lawyers and activists while in Albania, a performance of “The Invisible Women” by the feminist initiative, Fight like a Woman, will be the top highlight. Across Kazakhstan, rural youth activists will come together to share experiences, and a photo exhibition titled “Yes, She Can” will be hosted in shopping malls in four cities across the country, displaying women working in non-traditional jobs. In Algeria, UN Women along with the UN Country Team will honor companies or NGOs that have taken concrete actions to promote women’s economic empowerment and in Côte d’Ivoire donors will visit women’s empowerment programmes in rural areas to see the impact of their contribution and additional opportunities to unlock women’s potential everywhere. In the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, a marathon mobilizing thousands will be organized, while stock exchanges in Sri Lanka and India will ring the bell for gender equality. In the State of Palestine, UN Women in collaboration with the British Consulate General will organize an “all-women stage” night event in Jerusalem. The celebration will include TED-style talks by successful women in sports, business, social affairs and politics. In another corner of the globe, the two main cities in Ecuador, Quito and Guayaquil, will offer workshops and panels on women in innovation leadership and the arts, among others.

The linkages between violence against women and girls and women’s economic empowerment will be highlighted in events in the Caribbean where UN Women will partner with local governments, rural women producers and micro entrepreneurs. Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica and Saint Lucia and Guyana will have solidarity marches against gender-based violence in support of the social media-based movement

#LifeinLeggings, which was born last November in Barbados during the 16 Days of Activism fortnight in 2016. In association with UN Women, Snapchat, the popular mobile story-telling app, will feature women from all walks of life in a popular format called 'Live Story', which will be shared with the Snapchat audience on 8 March. Users who watch the story in their app will have the chance to contribute their own Snaps, telling their stories of empowerment. Twitter has associated a special emoji with the hashtag #WomensDay.

More sustainably managed forests would help meet energy needs of one-third of world population

March 21, New York—Expanding the area of sustainably managed forests, especially in developing countries, is essential to meet the energy needs of billions of people who still use wood fuel as their energy source, according to United Nations officials and forest experts at an event held today marking the International Day of Forests. Today, more than 2 billion people, in rural and urban areas, still rely on wood fuel to meet their primary energy needs such as cooking and heating. Wood based energy accounts for 27 per cent of the total primary energy supply in Africa, 13 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean and 5 percent in Asia and Oceania, according to FAO estimates. Forests cover 30 per cent of the Earth's land area, yet they continue to be under threat from unsustainable use, environmental degradation, rapid urbanization, population growth, and the impacts of climate change. Between 2010 and 2015, global forest area saw a net decrease of 3.3 million hectares per year. "This is an area where we can make a real difference," said Wu Hongbo, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. "Sustainably managed forests are productive and resilient ecosystems. They provide people with livelihoods and renewable energy, along with timber, food, shelter, clean air, water and climate benefits. Promoting sustainable forest management can help us achieve the Sustainable Development Goals faster." Regions with the greatest incidence of poverty, most notably in Sub-Saharan Africa and low income households in Asia, are also the most dependent on fuelwood: "Nearly 90 per cent of all fuelwood and charcoal use takes place in developing countries, where forests are often the only energy source available to the rural poor," said Manoel Sobral Filho, Director of the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat. "In order to meet this essential need for renewable energy, now and in the future, we need to galvanize efforts to increase the area of sustainable managed forests in these countries," he added. Earlier this year, the UN Forum on Forests reached agreement on a UN Strategic Plan for Forests that includes a target to expand global forest area by 3 per cent by 2030, an area of 120 million hectares, about the size of South Africa; as well as a target to eradicate extreme poverty for all forest dependent people by 2030. Developing countries are not the only ones using forests for energy. Bioenergy from forest biomass (in various forms, including pellets and wood processing waste) accounts for about half of Europe's renewable-energy consumption. Countries across Europe are converting their power plants from using only coal to a mix of coal and wood products to meet renewable "carbon neutral" energy goals. It is estimated that about 90 million people in Europe and North America now use wood energy as their main source of domestic heating. Ongoing efforts in improving cook stoves, and technological advancements in increasing energy efficiency and production of biomass energy, along with growing concerns over reducing fossil fuel dependence, make it increasingly likely that biomass energy from forests will continue to be a source of renewable energy in the future.

About the International Day of Forests The annual celebration of the International Day of Forests raises awareness of the importance of forests and trees, and serves as a platform to highlight challenges and solutions related to sustainable forest management, from around the

world. For more information, please visit: <http://www.un.org/en/events/forestsday/> For more information on forest and sustainable development, please visit: UN Forum on Forests website: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests> The Sustainable Development Goal Indicators website: <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs>

More action needed to meet energy goals by 2030, new report finds

The current pace of progress on three global energy goals – access to electricity, renewable energy and efficiency – is not moving fast enough to meet 2030 targets, according to the latest Global Tracking Framework (GTF) report released today by the World Bank and the International Energy Agency as part of the Sustainable Energy for All Knowledge Hub. The report shows that the increase of people getting access to electricity is slowing down, and if this trend is not reversed, projections are that the world will only reach 92% electrification by 2030, still short of universal access. Only energy efficiency made progress towards meeting these objectives; with energy savings during the 2012-2014 GTF reporting period enough to supply Brazil and Pakistan combined. While the research found that most countries are not doing enough, some are showing encouraging progress, including Afghanistan, Cambodia, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, and Rwanda. These countries underscore that accelerating progress towards universal access is possible with the right policies, robust investments (both public and private) and innovative technology. Rachel Kyte, CEO and Special Representative to the UN Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All, said: “If we’re to make access to clean, affordable and reliable energy a reality, action must be driven through political leadership. This new data is a warning for world leaders to take more focused, urgent action on access to energy and clean cooking, improving efficiency and use of renewables to meet our goals. While we are making some progress – with many of the technologies we need available and policy roadmaps increasingly clear – it’s not enough. We all made the commitment to act, and every day we delay it becomes more painful and expensive.” To meet Sustainable Energy for All objectives, it is estimated that renewable energy investment would need to increase by a factor of 2-3, while energy efficiency investment would need to increase by a factor of 3-6. Estimates suggest that a five-fold increase would be needed to reach universal access by 2030. “This year’s Global Tracking Framework is a wake-up call for greater effort on a number of fronts. There needs to be increased financing, bolder policy commitments, and a willingness to embrace new technologies on a wider scale. The World Bank is committed, alongside our international development partners, to support countries to reach these goals,” said Riccardo Puliti, Senior Director and Head of Energy and Extractives at the World Bank. “The Global Tracking Framework demonstrates the urgency to speed up action on achieving Sustainable Energy for All. We at the IEA are proud to contribute once again to this key publication, which highlights the necessity of a global transition to clean, modern energy and ensure a prosperous and productive future for everyone,” said Dr Fatih Birol, IEA Executive Director.

The GTF will be launched today at the Sustainable Energy for All Forum. Report highlights include;

- On access to electricity, as of 2014, 1.06 billion people still do not have electricity – only a slight improvement since 2012. Of particular concern are populous, low electricity access countries like Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo, where electrification rates are declining. Some low- access countries made rapid progress, increasing

electrification by two to three percentage points annually, including Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, and especially Rwanda. Others, such as Afghanistan and Cambodia, are progressing rapidly by making greater use of off-grid solar energy, underscoring how new technologies can drive progress. Countries that are closing the access gap quickly will see improvements in education, health, jobs and economic growth.

- On access to clean cooking, the number of people who use traditional, solid fuels to cook rose slightly to 3.04 billion (57.4 percent – barely up from 2012), indicating that efforts are lagging population growth. In Afghanistan and Nigeria, for example, access to clean cooking has been falling by about one percentage point annually. At the other end of the spectrum, Indonesia made the most progress, raising access to clean cooking by more than eight percentage points annually. Vietnam and Sudan also fared well.

- On renewable energy, overall progress is modest. While new power generation technologies such as wind and solar are growing rapidly – representing a third of the expansion in renewable energy consumption in 2013–2014 – they are growing from a very small base, only 4% of renewable energy consumption in 2012. The challenge is to increase reliance on renewable energy in the heat and transport sectors, which account for the bulk of global energy consumption.

- Energy efficiency Of the 20 largest energy consuming countries, Australia, China, Italy, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, and the United Kingdom cut energy intensity by more than 2% annually – with the industrial sector making the greatest reductions. Going forward, the residential sector – which is becoming more energy intensive rather than less so – must be the focus of efficiency efforts.

Now into its third edition, the report measures progress from 2012 to 2014 on three global sustainability goals: universal access to electricity and clean cooking, doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency, and doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix by 2030. The report draws from official national level data and provides harmonized analysis at the regional and global levels. The 2013 edition measured progress between 1990 and 2010, while the 2015 report focused on progress from 2010–2012. The Sustainable Energy for All Global Tracking Framework is produced jointly by the World Bank's Energy and Extractives Global Practice, the World Bank's Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP), and the International Energy Agency, and is supported by 20 other partner organizations and agencies. Starting in 2018, the GTF will move to an annual rather than biennial cycle. The recently released RISE (Regulatory Indicators for Sustainable Energy) report complements the findings in this report by putting the spotlight on the adoption of policies and regulations that help to spur more rapid progress.

UN stresses need to anticipate changes in world's population age structure to achieve Sustainable Development Goals

Changes in age structure of human populations are taking place worldwide, with major implications for sustainable development policies, highlights 50th session of the UN Commission on Population and Development

Presenting changes in the age structure of the world's population and understanding their implications for present and future policies to achieve sustainable development will be the focus of the 50th session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development, which opened on 3 April at UN Headquarters and continues until 7 April. While countries are seeking to implement policies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) they will be presented with data, tools and recommendations to help them anticipate current and future demographic trends and to factor them into their development planning.

Populations ageing: consequences and solutions

The report of the UN Secretary-General on the annual theme of the Commission highlights that population ageing is a generalized global trend, even if it is characterized by substantial variations in both pace and timing across countries and regions of the world. This phenomenon presents many consequences, including increased fiscal pressure on public pension and health care programmes. The report points out that governments should react accordingly to make sure that social security systems are sustainable financially while providing adequate benefit levels in the coming years. One approach is to raise the age of retirement in response to increasing life expectancy. The Commission will review policy recommendations designed to help older populations cope with the disability and functional limitations that are common at older ages. Promoting healthy lifestyles and providing quality health care at all ages, along with supporting family caregivers and providing options for community-based or institutional care, are highly recommended by the report.

Supporting women's reproductive health care and work force access

Despite the general trend toward older populations, the numbers of children and youth are still rising rapidly in much of Africa and parts of Asia. To further reduce rates of maternal and child mortality in these regions, the Commission will discuss policies to improve maternal and child care. The report also highlights the importance of ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services for reducing levels of maternal and child mortality. Typically, such policies also lead to a reduction in the birth rate. The report points out that young and middle-aged women, in particular, face substantial challenges in balancing work demands and family care, including care for children and for older parents. Governments are encouraged to support the participation of women in the workforce and parental leave for both fathers and mothers, as well as affordable child care and long-term care for older relatives, when needed. Such policies may help to ease the downward pressure on the birth rate in countries where fertility rates are at historically low levels, while also contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Impact of international migration on changing population age structures

Lastly, the Commission will consider the role of international migration on changes in the age distribution of populations. Since migrants tend to be younger, on average, than the population of the host country, migration can help to slow the pace of population ageing. The UN report emphasizes the need for governments to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration.

European Union

The EU turns 60: anniversary of the Treaty of Rome

Sixty years ago the leaders of the six founding member states gathered in Rome to put their signatures under the agreements that would create a European common market, but also pave the way for a union of peace and prosperity that has come to encompass most of our continent. Leading MEPs will join the anniversary celebrations in Rome this weekend, while heads of state and government will use the opportunity to deliberate on the next steps for the EU. The Treaties of Rome were signed on 25 March 1957 by representatives of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. In two separate agreements, they agreed to establish a European Economic Community aiming to remove barriers to trade, and to foster cooperation in the use of atomic energy. Economic integration, based on the removal of customs duties among member states and the promotion of free movement of goods, services, capital and people, proved such a success that more and more countries in Europe expressed their wish to join in the following years. Areas of cooperation broadened over time and this led to the creation of the European Union. The treaty on establishing the European Economic Community went through several updates and is now known as the Treaty on the functioning of the EU.

The EU: past and future

Parliament President Antonio Tajani, leaders of political groups, vice-presidents and quaestors travel to Rome today to hold meetings and take part in the celebrations over the weekend. Tajani will sign a common EU declaration on the anniversary on behalf of Parliament. In recent weeks MEPs have been actively discussing how the EU should evolve to respond to challenges such as migration, economic imbalances and Brexit. MEPs adopted three reports on the future of Europe during the February plenary. During March's plenary session MEPs also discussed a European Commission strategy paper setting out five scenarios for the EU. EU heads of state will continue the debate in Rome. During a ceremony in Brussels earlier this week, Tajani said: "Europe is our freedom, Europe is our future and that is what we should hand on to our children; a future of prosperity, of peace and of freedom."

Rome Declaration of the Leaders of 27 Member States and of the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission

We, the Leaders of 27 Member States and of EU institutions, take pride in the achievements of the European Union: the construction of European unity is a bold, far-sighted endeavour. Sixty years ago, recovering from the tragedy of two world wars, we decided to bond together and rebuild our continent from its ashes. We have built a unique Union with common institutions and strong values, a community of peace, freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, a major economic power with unparalleled levels of social protection and welfare.

European unity started as the dream of a few, it became the hope of the many. Then Europe became one again. Today, we are united and stronger: hundreds of millions of people across Europe benefit from living in an enlarged Union that has overcome the old divides.

The European Union is facing unprecedented challenges, both global and domestic: regional conflicts, terrorism, growing migratory pressures, protectionism and social and economic inequalities. Together, we are determined to address the challenges of a rapidly changing world and to offer to our citizens both security and new opportunities.

We will make the European Union stronger and more resilient, through even greater unity and solidarity amongst us and the respect of common rules. Unity is both a necessity and our free choice. Taken individually, we would be side-lined by global dynamics. Standing together is our best chance to influence them, and to defend our common interests and values. We will act together, at different paces and intensity where necessary, while moving in the same direction, as we have done in the past, in line with the Treaties and keeping the door open to those who want to join later. Our Union is undivided and indivisible.

In the ten years to come we want a Union that is safe and secure, prosperous, competitive, sustainable and socially responsible, and with the will and capacity of playing a key role in the world and of shaping globalisation. We want a Union where citizens have new opportunities for cultural and social development and economic growth. We want a Union which remains open to those European countries that respect our values and are committed to promoting them.

In these times of change, and aware of the concerns of our citizens, we commit to the Rome Agenda, and pledge to work towards:

1. A safe and secure Europe: a Union where all citizens feel safe and can move freely, where our external borders are secured, with an efficient, responsible and sustainable migration policy, respecting international norms; a Europe determined to fight terrorism and organised crime.
2. A prosperous and sustainable Europe: a Union which creates growth and jobs; a Union where a strong, connected and developing Single Market, embracing technological transformation, and a stable and further strengthened single currency open avenues for growth, cohesion, competitiveness, innovation and exchange, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises; a Union promoting sustained and sustainable growth, through investment, structural reforms and working towards completing the Economic and Monetary Union; a Union where economies converge; a Union where energy is secure and affordable and the environment clean and safe.
3. A social Europe: a Union which, based on sustainable growth, promotes economic and social progress as well as cohesion and convergence, while upholding the integrity of the internal market; a Union taking into account the diversity of national systems and the key role of social partners; a Union which promotes equality between women and men as well as rights and equal opportunities for all; a Union which fights unemployment, discrimination, social exclusion and poverty; a Union where young people receive the best education and training and can study and find jobs across the continent; a Union which preserves our cultural heritage and promotes cultural diversity.
4. A stronger Europe on the global scene: a Union further developing existing partnerships, building new ones and promoting stability and prosperity in its immediate neighbourhood to the east and south, but also in the Middle East and across Africa and globally; a Union ready to take more responsibilities and to assist in creating a more competitive and integrated defence industry; a Union committed to strengthening its common security and defence, also in cooperation and complementarity with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, taking into account national circumstances and legal commitments; a Union engaged in the United Nations

and standing for a rules-based multilateral system, proud of its values and protective of its people, promoting free and fair trade and a positive global climate policy.

We will pursue these objectives, firm in the belief that Europe's future lies in our own hands and that the European Union is the best instrument to achieve our objectives. We pledge to listen and respond to the concerns expressed by our citizens and will engage with our national parliaments. We will work together at the level that makes a real difference, be it the European Union, national, regional, or local, and in a spirit of trust and loyal cooperation, both among Member States and between them and the EU institutions, in line with the principle of subsidiarity. We will allow for the necessary room for manoeuvre at the various levels to strengthen Europe's innovation and growth potential. We want the Union to be big on big issues and small on small ones. We will promote a democratic, effective and transparent decision-making process and better delivery.

We as Leaders, working together within the European Council and among our institutions, will ensure that today's agenda is implemented, so as to become tomorrow's reality. We have united for the better. Europe is our common future.

ENVIRONMENT

MEPs call for clampdown on imports of unsustainable palm oil and use in biofuel

To counter the impact of unsustainable palm oil production, such as deforestation and habitat degradation, particularly in South-East Asia, the EU should introduce a single certification scheme for palm oil entering the EU market and phase out the use of vegetable oils that drive deforestation by 2020, say MEPs in a resolution voted on Tuesday.

MEPs note that 46% of the palm oil imported by the EU is used to produce biofuels, requiring the use of about one million hectares of tropical soils. They call on the Commission to take measures to phase out the use of vegetable oils that drive deforestation, including palm oil, as a component of biofuels, preferably by 2020.

Single certification scheme

MEPs note that various voluntary certification schemes promote the sustainable cultivation of palm oil. However, their standards are open to criticism and are confusing for consumers, they say. They advocate a single certification scheme to guarantee that only sustainably produced palm oil enters the EU market.

They also call on the EU to introduce sustainability criteria for palm oil and products containing palm oil entering the EU market. The Commission should improve the traceability of palm oil imported into the EU and should consider applying different customs duty schemes that reflect real costs more accurately until the single certification scheme takes effect.

MEPs also stress that a large part of the global production of palm oil is in breach of fundamental human rights and adequate social standards. It frequently uses child labour, and there are many land conflicts between local and indigenous communities and palm oil concession holders.

Car emissions: MEPs urge EU Commission and member states to clean up their act

The fact that diesel cars' nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions are much higher in real driving conditions than in laboratory tests was known to the EU member states and Commission over a decade ago. They should now act swiftly to improve tests and checks on new cars on EU roads, say MEPs in recommendations voted on Tuesday. In a separate vote, MEPs also amended EU "type approval" rules to make environmental and safety testing more independent, with stricter oversight of cars already on the road.

The non-binding recommendations to the Commission and the Council are based on a [final report](#) by the Committee of Inquiry into Emission Measurement in the Automotive Sector (EMIS). Members concluded that although the EU Commission and member states were already aware, more than a decade ago, that diesel cars' nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions in laboratory tests differ markedly from those measured on the roads, they failed to act appropriately to protect air quality and public health.

Furthermore, no authority in the member states suspected or searched for "defeat devices" - they performed only standard type-approval tests - and neither did the Commission raise any suspicion. After the emissions scandal broke in September 2015, the Commission expected member states to conduct the investigations and did not press for additional action, while the member states failed to penalise car manufacturers or to demand recalls of faulty cars, notes the text.

Recommendations to improve EU legislation and ensure it is enforced

The key recommendations are that:

- all work on drafting on air quality and emissions legislation should be placed within the portfolio of a single Commissioner and Directorate-General, to improve oversight and focus,
- EU legislation on real driving emissions should be adopted swiftly, with tests covering a wide range of driving conditions, but also with non-predictable variations to detect illegal defeat devices,
- car buyers affected by the scandal should be financially compensated by the car manufacturers involved. The Commission should also propose rules for a collective harmonised EU redress system, strengthening consumer protection, and
- new type approval rules should be adopted as quickly as possible, to introduce new EU oversight of the system, with clearly defined responsibilities.

MEPs overhaul EU car approval rules to prevent further emissions scandals

In a separate vote, Parliament approved changes to the EU Commission's draft law on type approval to improve control of the work done by testing centres and national authorities who approve vehicles for sale. Checks on cars already on the road should be stepped up and the Commission should get more oversight whether national authorities are doing their job and, in some cases, test cars itself.

Each year EU member states would have to test at least 20% of the car models placed on the market in their country in the previous year, and fines imposed by the Commission on car manufacturers who falsify test results could be of €30,000 per vehicle, says the text. Penalty revenue should be used to support market surveillance, benefit affected consumers or for environmental protection, it adds.

INSITUTIONS

Brexit: MEPs agree on key conditions for approving UK withdrawal agreement

An overwhelming majority of the house adopted a resolution officially laying down the European Parliament's key principles and conditions for its approval of the UK's withdrawal agreement. Any such agreement at the end of UK-EU negotiations will need to win the approval of the European Parliament.

MEPs stress the importance of securing equal and fair treatment for EU citizens living in the UK and British citizens living in the EU. They also point out that the UK remains an EU member until its official departure, and that this entails rights but also obligations, including financial commitments which may run beyond the withdrawal date.

The resolution warns against any trade-off between security and the future EU-UK economic relationship, opposes any sort of cherry picking or a piecemeal economic relationship based on sector-specific deals, and reiterates the indivisibility of the four freedoms of the single market - free movement of goods, capital, services, and people.

Finally, the resolution says that only when "substantial progress" has been made in talks on how the UK is to leave the EU can discussions begin on possible transitional arrangements. These arrangements must not last longer than three years, while an agreement on a future relationship can only be concluded once the UK has left the EU.

Citizens first

Citizens' interests must be at the forefront right from the beginning, says the resolution, which goes on to note that Irish citizens "will be particularly affected". MEPs urge all parties to remain committed to the Northern Ireland peace process and avoid a hard border. The special circumstances presented by this situation must therefore be addressed as a matter of priority in the withdrawal agreement.

The resolution also warns the UK against any attempt to limit rights linked to the freedom of movement before it effectively withdraws from the EU and asks the EU-27 to examine how to address the fear of British citizens that Brexit will lead to the loss of their current EU citizenship rights.

Negotiating principles

MEPs call for both sides to act in good faith and full transparency so as to ensure an orderly exit. The resolution notes that it would be a breach of EU law for the UK to negotiate trade agreements with third countries before it left the EU, and warns against the UK engaging in

bilateral talks with one or some EU member states on the withdrawal proceedings or the EU-UK future relationship.

Continued obligations

The UK will continue to enjoy its rights as a member of the EU until its departure. At the same time, however, it will also have to shoulder its obligations, including financial obligations stemming inter alia from the current long-term EU budget. Such financial commitments could run beyond the date of departure, the resolution adds.

European Parliament closely involved

The European Parliament intends to build on the elements set out in this resolution as the negotiations develop, for example by adopting further resolutions, including on specific matters or sector-specific issues, the resolution says.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Medical devices: more safety, more traceability

Stricter rules to ensure that medical devices such as breast or hip implants are traceable and comply with EU patient safety requirements were backed by MEPs on Wednesday. MEPs also approved laws to tighten up information and ethical requirements for diagnostic medical devices, e.g. for pregnancy or DNA testing.

Both proposals had been informally agreed with the Council.

Learning the lessons of the breast and hip implants scandals

The rules provide for:

- random inspections of producers' facilities after devices have been placed on the market,
- stricter controls on notified bodies, which will have to employ medically skilled people,
- an additional safety checking procedure for high risk devices, such as implants or HIV tests. Not only a notified body, but also a special committee of experts, will check that all requirements are met,
- an "implant card" for patients, enabling patients and doctors to track which product has been implanted, and
- clinical evidence of medical device safety to be provided by manufacturers (as for medicines), especially in the case of higher risk classes.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

New rules to protect investors and help SMEs access diverse sources of capital

Uniform rules on the information given in investor prospectuses were approved by Parliament on Wednesday. They aim to protect investors, create a more efficient single capital market and ease small firms' access to finance.

Prospectuses are legally required documents published when securities such as shares in companies or the right to acquire them and non-equity securities such as bonds are offered to investors or admitted to trading. Prospectuses should be publicly available and published on the website of an issuer or a financial intermediary.

Protecting investors: key information and warnings

Under the new rules, the information that a prospectus provides must enable investors to make an informed assessment of assets, liabilities, profits, losses and rights attached to investment products.

Prospectuses should include an accurate, clear seven-page summary (with an extra one, two or three pages where a given type of a security requires further explanations), providing:

- key information that investors need to understand the risks and make an informed decision,
- information on the issuer, on the securities, on the offer to the public and on admission to trading, and
- a clear warning of the risks involved, such as the risk of losing part or all of the investment.

The summary should be read as an introduction to the prospectus and be consistent with other parts of it.

Helping SMEs: EU growth prospectus

A key aim of the Capital Markets Union, for which the prospectus regulation is an essential step, is to ease access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

As SMEs usually need to raise lower amounts than other issuers, the cost of drawing up a full prospectus could be disproportionately high for them. MEPs therefore established a specific, standardised and lighter EU growth prospectus regime for SMEs, issuers on an SME growth market and other issuers wishing to raise smaller amounts of money, i.e. up to €20 million over a twelve-month period.

Once approved, these prospectuses would be eligible for the EU passporting regime, enabling them to be offered to the investors across the EU.

Next steps

The new rules will apply from 24 months after their entry into force.

IMMIGRATION

Migration: the answer needs to be global

Multilateral measures are urgently needed to manage the unprecedented numbers of migrants on the move worldwide, and not least to halt migrant deaths in the Mediterranean, MEPs urge in a resolution voted on Wednesday.

The resolution calls for

- a "multilateral governance regime" for international migration, based on international cooperation and synergies,
- more and closer cooperation between EU, UN specialised bodies, development banks, regional organisations and other players,
- a genuine, human rights-based common European migration policy based on the principle of solidarity among member states,
- Parliament to be involved in the setting up and implementation of Partnership Frameworks and related "migration compacts" that the EU is currently negotiating with third countries such as Jordan and Lebanon. MEPs denounce the lack of transparency of these deals, which so far have not been debated before adoption, and
- EU assistance and cooperation to be "tailored to achieving development and growth in third countries". EU support should "not incentivise third countries to cooperate on readmission of irregular migrants, to forcibly deter people from moving, or to stop flows to Europe".

Stop scapegoating refugees and migrants

The resolution also backs the United Nations "Together" campaign to combat negative perceptions and attitudes towards refugees and migrants.

International Days

International Day of Women and Girls in Science (11 February)

Following is UN Secretary-General António Guterres' message for the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, observed on 11 February:

For too long, discriminatory stereotypes have prevented women and girls from having equal access to education in science, technology, engineering and maths. As a trained engineer and former teacher, I know that these stereotypes are flat wrong. They deny women and girls the chance to realize their potential — and deprive the world of the ingenuity and innovation of half the population. On this International Day, I urge commitment to end bias, greater investments in science, technology, engineering and maths education for all women and girls, as well as opportunities for their careers and longer-term professional advancement, so that all can benefit from their ground-breaking future contributions.

International Women's day (8 March)

Following is UN Secretary-General António Guterres' message for International Women's Day, observed on 8 March:

Women's rights are human rights. But, in these troubled times, as our world becomes more unpredictable and chaotic, the rights of women and girls are being reduced, restricted and reversed. Empowering women and girls is the only way to protect their rights and make sure they can realize their full potential.

Historical imbalances in power relations between men and women, exacerbated by growing inequalities within and between societies and countries, are leading to greater discrimination against women and girls. Around the world, tradition, cultural values and religion are being misused to curtail women's rights, to entrench sexism and defend misogynistic practices. Women's legal rights, which have never been equal to men's on any continent, are being eroded further. Women's rights over their own bodies are questioned and undermined. Women are routinely targeted for intimidation and harassment in cyberspace and in real life. In the worst cases, extremists and terrorists build their ideologies around the subjugation of women and girls and single them out for sexual and gender-based violence, forced marriage and virtual enslavement. Despite some improvements, leadership positions across the board are still held by men, and the economic gender gap is widening, thanks to outdated attitudes and entrenched male chauvinism. We must change this by empowering women at all levels, enabling their voices to be heard and giving them control over their own lives and over the future of our world. Denying the rights of women and girls is not only wrong in itself, it has a serious social and economic impact that holds us all back. Gender equality has a transformative effect that is essential to fully functioning communities, societies and economies. Women's access to education and health services has benefits for their families and communities that extend to future generations. An extra year in school can add up to 25 per cent to a girl's future income. When women participate fully in the labour force, it creates opportunities and generates growth. Closing the gender gap in employment could add \$12 trillion to global gross domestic product by 2025. Increasing the proportion of women in public institutions makes them more representative, increases innovation, improves decision-making and benefits whole societies. Gender equality is central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the global plan agreed by leaders of all countries to meet the challenges we face. Sustainable Development Goal 5 calls specifically for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and this is central to the achievement of all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. I am committed to increasing women's participation in our peace and security work. Women negotiators increase the chances of sustainable peace, and women peacekeepers decrease the chances of sexual exploitation and abuse. Within the United Nations, I am establishing a clear road map with benchmarks to achieve gender parity across the system, so that our Organization truly represents the people we serve. Previous targets have not been met. Now we must move from ambition to action. On International Women's Day, let us all pledge to do everything we can to overcome entrenched prejudice, support engagement and activism, and promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing staff Members (25 March)

Following is UN Secretary-General António Guterres' message on the International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members, observed on 25 March:

On this International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members, we are still awaiting news of the fate of two members of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a sanctions-monitoring body established by the Security Council. Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalan went missing in the Kasai Central region on 12 March, along with four Congolese nationals. We are doing everything possible to find and help them. This is just the latest case highlighting the perils that United Nations staff and our partners often face while serving the world's people. In 2016, seven of our colleagues were abducted by non-State actors; four were kept as hostages. Fortunately, all were ultimately released safely. More than 20 United Nations civilian personnel remain in detention. Of these, six are being held without the United Nations having received any explanation for their arrest. The Department of Safety and Security and I continue to monitor all of these cases and seek the immediate release of our colleagues. Only 92 States — just half the membership — are party to the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, and merely 30 have ratified the 2005 Optional Protocol, which extends protection to United Nations personnel delivering humanitarian, political or development assistance. I urge all countries that have not joined these instruments to do so without delay. On this International Day, let us stand in solidarity with all detained staff and pledge to work together to ensure that all United Nations staff have the safety they need to help the world's most vulnerable.

International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action (4 April)

Following is UN Secretary-General António Guterres' message for the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, to be observed on 4 April:

In today's world, conflicts are multiplying and increasingly interlinked. Most disturbingly, many warring parties shamelessly target civilians and show a flagrant disregard for international humanitarian law. Improvised explosive devices are killing and injuring thousands of civilians annually. These pernicious devices are hidden in homes and schools, terrorizing local populations. Over the past 20 years, the United Nations and its partners have cleared vast areas of land contaminated by landmines and explosive remnants of war. Land that was once dangerous and unproductive has been returned to citizens, enabling them to rebuild their communities. The removal of landmines from roads and airstrips has facilitated humanitarian access to people in need. The United Nations has provided medical assistance to victims and educated millions of people on how to live safely during or in the immediate aftermath of conflict. We have also trained and employed thousands of men and women in mine action jobs that support and sustain peace. I thank the brave women and men working in mine action for their life-saving work. I also commend the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action for its needs-driven, people-centred approach, and applaud the United Nations Mine Action Service — now in its twentieth year — for its leadership, courage and commitment to peace. Peace without mine action is incomplete peace. I urge all Member States to keep this issue at the top of the international agenda when negotiating peace, when seeking to prevent harm during conflicts and when deploying emergency humanitarian responses in war zones. Mine action establishes the foundations for lasting recovery and development. No one should have to live in fear of dying even after the fighting stops.

International Day of Reflection on the Genocide in Rwanda (7 April)

Following are UN Secretary-General António Guterres' remarks on the International Day of Reflection on the Genocide in Rwanda:

I am honoured to be with you today, on one of the most solemn occasions on the United Nations calendar. It is less than a quarter century since the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, when more than 800,000 people were systematically murdered, overwhelmingly Tutsi, but also including moderate Hutu, Twa and others who opposed the genocide. Today we remember all those who perished. We also honour those who survived. We recognize their pain and courage, and the struggles they face even today, a generation later. It is of immense credit to the people and Government of Rwanda that the country has emerged from a period of such shocking cruelty with a strong spirit of reconciliation. The best way to honour the memory of those who were murdered is to ensure that such events never occur again. History is filled with tragic chapters of hatred and persecution that have led to mass violence against persecuted minorities. That is why the world must be ever alert to the warning signs of genocide, and act quickly and early to avert it. Preventing genocide and other monstrous crimes is a shared responsibility and a core duty of the United Nations. We are working hard to strengthen our capacities for preventive diplomacy, including through mediation and the peaceful settlement of disputes. My Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide monitors events and developments worldwide for risks of genocide and other atrocity crimes. And the Human Rights Up Front initiative aims to make the UN System more ready to mobilize and sound the alarm when threats exist. Yet, the international community must recognize that, time and again, when faced with the facts, it has failed to act adequately. In the past few years alone, the Yazidi people have faced systematic persecution by Da'esh. In South Sudan, a whole population has been condemned by their leaders to appalling suffering. These examples illustrate how the values and principles of the United Nations Charter continue to be challenged on a daily basis. Genocide and other forms of atrocious violence never occur in a vacuum. Nor are they committed by only a handful of individuals. They are planned and systematically carried out — often in plain sight — with the connivance and acquiescence of many actors. The origins of such atrocities lie in the willingness of leaders and people to demonize and dehumanize individuals and communities because of their ethnicity, religion or the colour of their skin. That is why we must be especially alert today. The poisonous intolerance, populism and nationalism we see around the world, even in established democracies, are the breeding ground of far more evil acts. I have spent the past 10 years speaking out on behalf of refugees, and all my adult life standing up for the rights of the downtrodden. I have learned that, between individuals, compassion and respect are easy to find. But between larger groups, and between nations, the same values can be too easily lost. So my hope, and my goal as Secretary-General, is to promote compassion and respect for human rights at the highest levels, so that all people everywhere may live free from fear. Let us learn the lessons of Rwanda and work together to build a future of dignity, tolerance and human rights for all.

Unipax

Global Revolution for New Humanism

Multimedia Project to set up a New Humanism

The Author of this project is Orazio Parisotto (Past President and Founder member of UNIPAX), thanks also to the essential contribute of the Master Silvio Amelio, weighty sculptor and humanist responsible of the "Artists for the Peace" Department of the Unipax and also its Ambassador at UN.

Orazio Parisotto and Silvio Amelio launch an important social-cultural and ethical initiative, with the cooperation of the UNIPAX, that involves more than 100.000 associations, institutions, famous bloggers and opinion leaders from all the Countries.

This social-cultural initiative draws attention to the problems and the emergencies of the humanity, also thanks to the young people, worried about them future, who ideally address their requests to the Head of Government of all world.

The main work of this project consists in a interactive book named "The Global Revolution for a New Humanism".

The book is also available in e-book size. Unipax backs the promotion of the book, trough the collection of the adhesions, sharing and participations to the proposals and initiatives launched towards the Book. The aim of the book is to provide incentives in order that a peaceful revolution (Gandhi style) could be launched trough a general project that prefigures a "New Democratic Institutional Architecture", a "New International Ethical Economy" and a "Worldwide Regulation for the Civil Cohabitation" at the international level, specifying the "Ways Out" from the global crisis.

The general project aims to involve about 100.000 NGO and other organisms committed in the safeguard of the human rights and of the peace at international level, the project will be presented to the Head of the Government with a maxi petition (developed in 10 points).

The aim of the maxi petition is to ask concrete answers to cope with the problems that trouble the humanity and in particular the problems connected with the environmental safeguard, the social justice, the crazy arms race, the dangers produced by the use of the new technologies, the promotion of the culture.

The achievement of the "Artistic Cultural Current of the New Humanism" is part integrant of this project. The artists, the men of culture and the leaders of the associations of the social utility (that with their commitment are already contributing, as peacemakers, for change) will arrange this Document. Together with the young people, they can define a "Artistic cultural Decalogue of the New Humanism" that if properly widespread may launch the creative imagination of the men of good will from all over the World and from every culture.

It's a multimedia global project which aims to provide to the citizens and specially to the young people, the "ways out" from the current difficulties and new hopes for a better future demanding also their direct cooperation.

The entire project will be promoted with a multimedia advertisement during 3 minutes and will be backed by a Documentary-movie during about 30 minutes.

All will be carried out in two languages (Italian and English).