

Media Update

28 May 2019

United Nations

International Day of UN Peacekeepers

“Protecting Civilians, Protecting Peace”

29 May 2019

Download here: Video message of the UN Secretary -General

Video message (Urdu subtitle):

<https://youtu.be/HsGqbqvnnqA>

Video message (English subtitle):

<https://youtu.be/DliOMyh8Jjs>

Video message Clean version (no subtitles):

<https://unmultimedia.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=f7fc7b29afa00e9ca0f4c1d90&id=54efd2090c&e=06ac43baf5>

Message of the UN Secretary -General (Text)

“Today we honor more than one million men and women who have served as United Nations peacekeepers since our first mission in 1948.

We remember the more than 3,800 personnel who paid the ultimate price. And we express our deepest gratitude to the 100,000 civilian, police and military peacekeepers deployed around the world today, and to the countries that contribute these brave and dedicated women and men.

This year, the United Nations marks 20 years since the Security Council first mandated a peacekeeping mission to protect civilians.

Peacekeepers protect men, women and children from violence every day, often at great personal risk.

In that same spirit, on this International Day, the Captain Mbaye Diagne Medal for Exceptional Courage is being awarded for the first time.



We pay tribute to Private Chancy CHITETE, a Malawian who served in the Democratic Republic of Congo and died trying to save the life of a fellow peacekeeper.

UN peacekeeping is a vital investment in global peace and security.

But it requires strong international commitment.

That is why we launched the “[Action for Peacekeeping](#)” initiative, which aims to make our missions stronger, safer and fit for the future.

For millions in conflict-affected situations around the world, peacekeeping is a necessity and a hope. Let us work together to make peacekeeping more effective in protecting people and advancing peace.” *António Guterres*

Theme: “Protecting Civilians, Protecting Peace”

The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, 29 May, offers a chance to pay tribute to the uniformed and civilians personnel’s invaluable contribution to the work of the Organization and to honour more than [3,800 peacekeepers who have lost their lives serving under the UN flag](#) since 1948, including [98 last year](#).

The theme for this year’s Day is “Protecting Civilians, Protecting Peace” to mark the upcoming 20th anniversary when for the first time the Security Council explicitly mandated a peacekeeping mission (UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone) to protect civilians.

Over the past 20 years, protection of civilians has increasingly been at the heart of UN peacekeeping. Today, more than 90% of our peacekeepers serving in eight peacekeeping operations -- in Abyei and Darfur, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Lebanon, Mali and South Sudan – have protection of civilians’ mandates. These peacekeepers put themselves in harm’s way to protect civilians from violence every day.

The first UN peacekeeping mission was established on 29 May 1948, when the Security Council authorized the deployment of a small number of UN military observers to the Middle East to form the United Nations Truce



Supervision Organization (UNTSO) to monitor the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

Since then, more than 1 million men and women have served in 72 UN peacekeeping operations, directly impacting the lives of millions of people, protecting the world's most vulnerable and saving countless lives. From Cambodia to El Salvador, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Timor Leste, and elsewhere, UN peacekeeping has helped countries move from war to peace.

Today, in 14 peacekeeping operations on four continents, it deploys more than 88,000 military and police personnel -- from 124 Member States -- nearly 13,000 civilian personnel, and 1,300 UN Volunteers. Despite the size and breadth of its operations, peacekeeping's budget is less than one half of one percent of global military spending. Peacekeeping has clearly proven to be a solid investment in global peace, security and prosperity.

Last year, the Secretary-General launched a new initiative, "[Action for Peacekeeping \(A4P\)](#)," calling for refocusing peacekeeping with realistic expectations; making peacekeeping missions stronger and safer, and mobilizing greater support for political solutions and for well-structured, well-equipped, well-trained forces. Over 150 Member States and regional organizations endorsed the 'Declaration of Shared Commitments' for A4P demonstrating a high level of support for the initiative.

At the UN Headquarters in New York this year, the Day will celebrate on 24 May. The Secretary-General will preside over a wreath-laying ceremony in honour of all peacekeepers who have lost their lives while serving under the UN flag last year. In addition, the [Dag Hammarskjöld Medal](#) will be awarded posthumously to the peacekeepers, who perished while serving in the cause of peace in 2018.

Background

The General Assembly, in its resolution 57/129, designated 29 May as the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. This is the date when in 1948 the first UN peacekeeping mission named the "United Nations Truce Supervision Organization", or UNTSO, began operations in Palestine. On this day, we pay tribute to the professionalism, dedication and courage of all the men and women serving in UN peacekeeping operations, and honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace.

Since the first UN Peacekeeping mission was established in 1948, 3,800 military, police and civilian personnel have lost their lives in the service of peace as a result of acts of violence, accidents and disease. On 29 May, UN offices, alongside Member States and non-governmental organizations, hold solemn events to honour fallen peacekeepers.

At the UN Headquarters in New York, the Secretary-General presides over a wreath-laying ceremony in honour of all peacekeepers who lost their lives while serving under the UN flag. In addition, the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal is awarded posthumously to the peacekeepers who have fallen while serving in the cause of peace, during the preceding year.

UN Peacekeeping operations use the Day to strengthen bonds with the local populations that they have been deployed to serve. For example by holding sporting events, school and orphanage visits, art and essay competitions, photo exhibits, neighbourhood clean ups, tree plantings, concerts, and conferences and workshops on peace issues.

ESCAP

PRESS RELEASE

Asia-Pacific not on track to achieve any Sustainable Development Goal by 2030

New UN report on SDG progress urges countries to redouble efforts

Bangkok (*ESCAP news*) – On its current trajectory, Asia and the Pacific will not achieve any of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, according to a new report by the United Nations' regional arm.

Findings by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) show that for more than half the SDGs, progress has stagnated or heading in the wrong direction. The situation is deteriorating when it comes to providing clean water and sanitation (SDG6), ensuring decent work and economic growth (SDG8) and supporting responsible consumption and production (SDG12).

The region has made progress towards ending poverty (SDG1) and ensuring all have access to quality education and lifelong learning (SDG4). Measures are also underway to achieve affordable and clean energy (SDG7). Yet even where good progress has been made, reveals the report, it is too slow for these goals to be met by 2030.

Launching the *Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2019* at the 75th Commission session in Bangkok yesterday, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP Armida Alisjahbana called for urgent action to reverse these negative trends. “I hope this report will contribute to targeting our efforts to accelerate progress towards all Goals and to strengthen the region’s commitment to improving the quality of data and statistics essential to measuring progress,” she said.

Many SDG targets related to the environment and natural resources are registering negative trends. Hazardous waste generation, the reduction in forest areas and the permanent water body extent are the three SDG indicators which are predicted to regress the most by 2030, compared to 2015.

The *SDG Progress Report* shows major differences in progress between the subregions of Asia and the Pacific which have recorded different successes and face different challenges. Each subregion needs to reverse existing trends for at least three Goals. For example, East and North-East Asia is regressing in sustainable cities and communities (SDG11), climate action (SDG13) and life on land (SDG15). South-East Asia has moved backwards on SDG8, SDG13 and peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG16).

Meanwhile, South and South-West Asia is moving in the wrong direction on SDG6, SDG12 and SDG13. Since 2000, there has been a decline on gender equality (SDG5), SDG8 and SDG11 in North and Central Asia. The Pacific subregion has regressed on zero hunger (SDG2), SDG8, life below water (SDG14) and SDG16.

The lack of reliable data across all Goals and in all subregions is one of the Asia and the Pacific’s biggest challenges. Despite a significant increase in the availability of SDG indicators since 2017, data gaps remain for two thirds of the global SDG indicators. Nearly one-quarter of all SDG targets lacking evidence relate to the environment.

According to the report, there is scope for the region to make greater use of alternative data sources to complement traditional sources such as surveys and build a more accurate picture of progress towards the SDGs. It also calls for Asia and the Pacific to strengthen its global partnerships and means of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG17). Progress towards this Goal is necessary to ensure the region has the means to finance, target and implement policy solutions. Failing to do so could jeopardise the achievement of all other Goals.

Download the full report: <http://bit.ly/SDGProgress2019>

Visit the CS75 website: <https://www.unescap.org/commission/75/>

For media enquiries: Ms. Kavita Sukanandan, Public Information Officer, Strategic Communications and Advocacy Section, ESCAP, T: (66) 2 288 1869 / E: sukanandan@un.org
