

Beat: News

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NOON BRIEFING BY STEPHANE DUJARRIC SPOKESPERSON

FOR THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

New York City, 18.05.2022, 21:44 Time

ARAC International Global Media Partner - WEDNESDAY, 18 MAY 2022

SECRETARY-GENERAL/FOOD SECURITY

This afternoon, the Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, will brief foreign ministers in a meeting on global food security, convened by the United States. He is expected to warn the gathered ministers that global hunger levels are at a new high, and that the war in Ukraine is amplifying and accelerating driving factors such as climate change, COVID-19, and inequality.

The Secretary-General is also expected to highlight urgent steps needed to solve the short-term crisis and prevent a long-term catastrophe. Those include the urgent need to reduce the pressure on markets by increasing supplies of food, the need for social protection systems to cover everyone in need, and fully funding humanitarian operations to prevent famine and reduce hunger.

Mr. Guterres is also expected to say that there is no effective solution to the current food crisis without reintegrating Ukraine's food production, as well as food and fertilizers produced by Russia and Belarus, into world markets -- despite the war.

We also expect David Beasley, the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, to address the meeting.

CLIMATE

Earlier this morning in a video message to accompany the launch of the World Meteorological Organization's latest report, the Secretary-General said that the global energy system is broken and bringing us ever closer to climate catastrophe. He underscored that fossil fuels are a dead end — environmentally and economically – and that the war in Ukraine and its immediate effects on energy prices is yet another wake-up call.

The Secretary-General outlined five actions needed to jump-start the renewable energy transition.

These include: treating renewable energy technologies as essential and freely-available global public goods; also securing and scaling up the supply of critical components and raw materials for renewable energy technologies; building frameworks and reforming bureaucracies to level the playing field for renewables; having governments shift subsidies away from fossil fuels to protect the poor and most vulnerable people and communities and tripling private and public investments in renewable energy to at least \$4 trillion dollars a year.

MEXICO

In a statement, the Secretary-General expressed his deep sadness for the more than one hundred thousand men, women and children officially recognized as disappeared in Mexico. He conveyed his profound solidarity to the families of the victims who yearn to reunite with their loved ones, search for them tirelessly, and continue to fight for truth, justice, and guarantees that this will never happen again.

The Secretary-General also welcomed the measures undertaken by the Government of Mexico to guarantee the rights of the victims of disappearances and encouraged Mexican authorities to continue to accelerate progress.

SECURITY COUNCIL

Speaking to a Security Council session on the G5 Sahel Joint Force, the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, Martha Pobe, said that terrorism and insecurity continue to spread in the region, devastating the lives of millions.

She described the decision by the Malian transition authorities to withdraw from the G5-Sahel and its Joint Force as both unfortunate and regrettable, adding that it is most certainly a step back for the Sahel.

In the coming months, she said, it will be crucial for stakeholders in the region to come to a consensus on how to best bring the transitions in Mali and Burkina Faso to a swift conclusion, and in a manner that addresses the grievances of the population of the two countries.

But the Assistant Secretary-General also said that beyond our continued support for existing efforts to stabilize the Sahel region, we

need innovative approaches in the face of the constantly evolving tactics of terror groups.

SYRIA

The Deputy Humanitarian Chief, Joyce Msuya concluded a three-day mission to Syria today. During her trip, she met the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Faisal Mekdad, and the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bashar al-Jafari, with whom she discussed ways to expand humanitarian access, protect civilians, and help affected Syrians envision a better future. She also met with affected families and renewed the UN's commitment to helping those in need of humanitarian assistance, urging donors to not let Syria become a forgotten crisis.

She also travelled to Homs where she met with families who have returned to Homs and are slowly rebuilding their lives after years of displacement. Ms. Msuya said she was struck by the courage and resilience of the Syrian people she met, and particularly women, who are among the most affected.

To give you some context, some 14.6 million people in Syria need humanitarian assistance this year. That's a nine per cent increase over the numbers for 2021 and the highest number since the conflict began in 2011. Of these, 6.5 million are children.

LIBYA

Stephanie Williams, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Libya, said that following recent reports out of Tripoli, she highlighted the fundamental need to preserve calm on the ground and to protect civilians.

She urges restraint and insists on the absolute necessity of refraining from provocative actions, including inflammatory rhetoric, participation in clashes and the mobilization of forces.

Conflict cannot be solved with violence, but with dialogue and mediation, she said in a series of Tweets.

ABYEI

The UN Mission in Abyei has convened a peace conference that brings together 30 leaders from the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities.

The conference started in Entebbe, Uganda, and the UN Mission is trying to help find sustainable solutions for communities in Abyei to peacefully co-exist.

In her opening address, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Hanna Tetteh, called on the wisdom of the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka leaders to unlock any stalemate.

Conference is taking place against the backdrop of a spike in intercommunal violence in Abyei, which has led to deaths, destruction of property and the displacement of thousands of civilians.

SOUTH SUDAN

The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) took part in a high-level mission of solidarity and diplomacy to the cities of Bentiu, Leer and Mirmir in Unity State following clashes in nearby Adok Port and the surrounding areas.

Joining UNMISS on the 12 May mission was the African Union (AU), the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (R-JMEC), the African Diplomatic Corps (ADC), the European Union and its member states (EU), and the Troika.

The joint delegation had constructive and frank discussions with the Governor of Unity State and the County Commissioners of Koch, Leer and Mayendit, as well as with traditional leaders, women, youth and others directly impacted by the conflict.

The joint delegation expressed its solidarity with the people and Government of South Sudan, and welcomed the announcement by President Salva Kiir Mayardit of a high-level investigation committee and the deployment of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces to help restore security in the area.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

In line with its mandate, MONUSCO is monitoring the recent political developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, notably those related to the electoral process. Adopting an Electoral Law guaranteeing the transparency and inclusiveness of elections - at all levels and all stages - to reduce political, institutional and pre-electoral tensions and facilitate the preparation of the 2023 elections, is essential, and we encourage all parties concerned to show flexibility to reach these objectives.

MONUSCO remains ready to support any constructive and inclusive initiative that promotes unity and national cohesion, and contributes to an enabling environment for peaceful, credible, transparent and inclusive elections.

RWANDA

Turning to issues surrounding the Rwandan genocide. Last week, one of the last major fugitives indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Protais Mpiranya, was confirmed to have died.

Today, another of the remaining fugitives, Phénéas Munyarugarama, is also confirmed to have died. He was charged with genocide and crimes against humanity, among other offenses.

The Chief Prosecutor of the Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Serge Brammertz, said the confirmation of the death is yet another important step in his Office's efforts to secure justice for the victims of the 1994 Genocide.

MYANMAR

From Myanmar, the UN team there remains alarmed by the deteriorating humanitarian situation, with civilians continuing to suffer amid the fighting, particularly in the country's northwest and southeast.

More than 950,000 men, women and children remain displaced across Myanmar, and that includes more than 600,000 people who are uprooted due to the conflict and insecurity since the military coup [last] February.

Landmines are a growing threat, with UNICEF saying there have been more than 100 civilian casualties from landmines just in the first quarter of this year.

The upcoming monsoon season is set to be a miserable one for displaced people living in the open or in camps that are in disrepair due to funding gaps and interruptions to humanitarian services over the past year.

Aid workers are staying and delivering, despite serious access challenges and funding shortfalls. They need quicker, simpler and more predictable access to process and address growing needs, especially in conflict areas.

The funding situation is particularly dire, with only 8 per cent of the \$826 million requested in the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan having been received.

HONDURAS

In Honduras, humanitarians say that between January and March 2022, the UN and its partners have reached more than 320,000 people with aid. Thanks to food assistance in late 2021 under the Humanitarian Response Plan, the number of food insecure people went down from 2.9 million in March 2021 to 2.4 million in March 2022. But there is a concern that the impact of the conflict in Ukraine on food prices and availability could slow down progress and worsen needs.

The 2021-2022 humanitarian response plans for Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala aim to assist 4.3 million of the 8.3 million people in need across the region. To date the response plans are less than 30 per cent funded.

MIGRATION

More than 1,000 migrants have died or disappeared since 2014 while trying to leave East Africa and the Horn of Africa. That's according to our colleagues in Geneva at the International Organization for Migration.

Most of these migrants were either traveling from the Horn of Africa to the Arabian Peninsula, or from the Horn of Africa to South Africa.

Migrants face dangers such as hazardous transport, asphyxiation, violence, abandonment by smugglers, limited access to medical care, and detention.

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

The Marshall Islands are the 101st country to pay their regular budget dues in full this year.

NOON BRIEFING GUESTS TODAY

Shantanu Mukherjee, the Director of the Economic Analysis and Policy Division at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and Hamid Rashid, the Lead Author and Chief of the Global Economic Monitoring Branch at DESA, briefed reporters on the launch of the World Economic Situation and Prospects Report mid-2022.

PRESS BRIEFING TOMORROW

Tomorrow, there will be a press briefing by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan.

Source: ARAC International City of NY Press

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-20806/highlights-of-the-noon-briefing-by-stephane-dujarric-spokesperson.html>

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