

Media Update

29 September 2020

United Nations

SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS OF FOOD LOSS AND WASTE

29 September 2020

Food loss and waste is an ethical outrage. In a world with enough food to feed all people, everywhere, 690 million people continue to go hungry and 3 billion cannot afford a healthy diet.

Food loss and waste also squanders natural resources – water, soil and energy, not to mention human labour and time. It worsens climate change, given the significant role of agriculture in generating greenhouse gas emissions.

International concern is reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 2, which enshrines a commitment to achieving zero hunger, and in SDG 12, which calls on us to halve food waste and reduce food loss by 2030. While many countries are taking action, we need to step up efforts.

The COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the fragility of our food systems, and worsened food loss and waste in many countries. We need new approaches and solutions.

This inaugural observance of the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste comes as we prepare for the 2021 Food Systems Summit.

I urge countries to set a reduction target aligned with SDG 12, measure their food loss and waste and act boldly to reduce it. Policy action in this area should also be included in climate plans under the Paris Agreement.

Many businesses should take a similar approach. Individuals can shop carefully, store food correctly and make good use of leftovers.

Let us work together to reduce food loss and waste for the benefit of people and our planet.

Video link:

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/downloads2.unmultimedia.org/public/video/evergreen/MSG+SG+/MSG+SG+Food+Loss+and+Waste+28+Sep+20+/MSG+SG+Food+Loss+and+Waste+28+Sep+20+clean.mp4>

UNICEF

Statement by UNICEF Executive Director

Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore on 30th anniversary of World Summit for Children

NEW YORK, 29 September 2020 – “The 30th anniversary of the first ever [World Summit for Children](#) is an opportunity to celebrate the huge gains of the past three decades but also a stark reminder of how COVID-19 could turn back the clock.

“The first meeting in the United Nations’ history to focus exclusively on children’s needs was held against a backdrop of increasing global concerns including war and violence, poverty and environmental issues. The more than 70 world leaders who attended pledged to protect children’s lives and well-being through concerted international action, including reducing malnutrition and infant deaths; guaranteeing access to clean water and basic education; eradicating polio; and making prenatal and maternal care available to all.

“Three decades since that landmark meeting, there have been impressive gains for children as more and more are living longer, better and healthier lives. Between 1990 and 2019, the global under-five mortality rate had fallen by about 60 per cent. The global number of out-of-school children of primary

school age dropped from 100 million in 2000 to 59 million in 2018. Fewer children are suffering from malnutrition or preventable illness.

“Yet the odds continue to be stacked against the poorest and most vulnerable. In addition to the persistent challenges of health, nutrition and education, hard-won gains to protect and advance children’s rights are being threatened by ongoing issues such as inequality, climate change, raging conflicts and, now more critically, the COVID-19 crisis.

“We know that, in any crisis, the young and the most vulnerable suffer disproportionately. The number of countries experiencing violent conflict is the highest it has been in the last 30 years. The result is that more than 30 million children have been displaced by conflict. Many of them are trafficked, abused and exploited. Many more are living in limbo, without official immigration status or access to education and health care.

“In addition, due to the current pandemic, the number of children living in multidimensional poverty has soared by 15 per cent to approximately 1.2 billion worldwide. At least 24 million children risk dropping out of school. Thousands of children could die every day if the pandemic continues to weaken health systems and disrupt routine services. Restricted movement and school closures have also cut children off from teachers, friends and communities leaving them at increased risk of violence, abuse and exploitation.

“Unless we act now, we risk not only causing irreversible damage to the social and emotional development, learning and behavior of an entire generation, but reversing the advances made since the World Summit for Children 30 years ago. Now more than ever, countries and communities around the world must work together to address the crises affecting children with stronger commitment to ending conflict and with increased investments in children.

“What the world looks like for children and young people tomorrow is our collective responsibility today.”

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About UNICEF

UNICEF works in some of the world's toughest places, to reach the world's most disadvantaged children. Across more than 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone.

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