



Number 5 | 2017

Published by the [International Press Syndicate Group](#)
in cooperation with the [Global Cooperation Council](#)

Poverty Swoops on Southern Africa's Urban Dwellers



By Jeffrey Moyo

HARARE (IDN) – At one stage in her life, she was a top accountant with the National Railways of Zimbabwe. Now, domiciled in Epworth, a crowded informal settlement in south-eastern Harare Province, 25 kilometres outside Harare, the Zimbabwean capital, hers has turned out to be a riches-to-rags tale.

Shuvai Chikoto, a 48-year-old mother of three who was widowed five years ago, is just one of millions of other Southern African urban dwellers who have plunged into poverty over the years – and she is not particularly impressed that the United Nations has set the goal of ending poverty in all its forms everywhere within the next 13 years. (P20) | [JAPANESE TEXT VERSION PDF](#) | [KOREAN TEXT VERSION PDF](#)

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Climate Change Threatens Agriculture in Pacific Rim Economies



By J Nastranis

NEW YORK (IDN) – Global warming is expected to have a significant impact on future yields of everything from rice to fish, particularly in countries situated closer to the equator, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has warned, and urged the Asia-Pacific economies to take a leading role in

adaptation and mitigation.

“Many APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation] economies have already felt the full force of agricultural losses from natural disasters in recent years, with the vast majority of these being climate related,” [said](#) Kundhavi Kadiresan, Assistant Director-General and FAO Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, reported UN News.

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The Sound of Rain and Bees Murmuring – Not Noise, Please



Viewpoint by Jonathan Power*

LUND, Sweden (IDN-INPS) - Everyone has their favourite sounds – a ball on a cricket bat on a summer's afternoon, birds singing, waves breaking on the beach, the coffee pot perking on the stove, children playing scoobydoo. Mine are the quiet sounds of the English Lake District- William Wordsworth's:

“A flock of sheep that leisurely pass by one after one; the sound of rain and bees murmuring; the fall of rivers, wind and lakes, smooth fields; white sheets of water, and pure sky.”

Noise is less and less sweet sounds. It is cars and trucks, airplanes and builders, canned music in cafes, a symphony playing an atonal concerto. Some pop music makes so much noise that pure sounds no longer exist.

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UN Chief Calls For The Protection of Civilians In Conflicts



By Santo D. Banerjee

UNITED NATIONS (IDN) – Around the world, conflict is exacting a massive toll on people's lives. Trapped in wars that are not

of their making, millions of civilians are forced to hide or run for their lives. Children are taken out of school, families are displaced from their homes, and communities are torn apart, while the world is not doing enough to stop their suffering. At the same time, health and aid workers – who risk their lives to care for people affected by violence – are increasingly being targeted.

For the World Humanitarian Day 2017 on August 19, humanitarian partners came together to reaffirm that civilians caught in conflict are #NotATarget. [Through a global online campaign featuring an innovative partnership with Facebook Live](#), together with events held around the world, voices were raised to advocate for those most vulnerable in war zones, and demand that world leaders do everything in their power to protect civilians in conflict.

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Violence Against Women Is Still An Unresolved Issue



By Afreeha Jawad

COLOMBO (IDN) - Having grown up in a biological family unit that upheld male domination, envied and resented female intellect, with a mother that declared in no uncertain terms that even though crestfallen a male is a male, Fathima's ears soon were not alien to such sexist remarks but the bitterness that swelled inside was

inexpressible.

Maternal discriminatory insistence that even vehemently once asked, "if they can tame a wild elephant then why not you?" simply threw this child off board. There was no one in whom she could have faith to snuff out all her agony. Fathima's

was no one in whom she could have laid to spell out all her agony. Fatima's utter consternation, dismay and disgust over maternal sexist expressions licensed continuous harassment even assaults from her biological membership which term she even resents to this day.

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Indigenous Women Still Face Huge Rights Challenges



By Phil Harris

ROME (IDN) – Almost ten years have come and gone since the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 13, 2007, but indigenous people continue to face discrimination, marginalisation and major challenges in enjoying their basic rights.

“The Declaration, which took more than twenty years to negotiate, stands today as a beacon of progress, a framework for reconciliation and a benchmark of rights,” according to a joint statement on the occasion of [International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples](#) on August 9 issued by Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine, Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

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Freetown Flooding Raises Concern About Maternal Healthcare



By Joan Erakit

UNITED NATIONS (IDN) - In the early hours of August 14, disastrous weather took to Freetown as the city was flooded with torrential downpour. Shortly after, a mudslide followed dragging countless homes down a suburban hillside in slushy red dirt in Regent, east of Freetown. The

Red Cross reported at least 200 people dead as aid organizations and local authorities rushed to the scene.

In a statement attributable to the Spokesperson of the UN Secretary-General, Deputy Spokesperson Farhan Haq told IDN that, “the Secretary-General is saddened by the deaths and devastation caused by the mudslide and flooding in the town of Regent, Sierra Leone, and throughout Freetown,” adding, “the Secretary-General extends his condolences to the people and Government of Sierra Leone for the loss of life and destruction caused by this natural disaster.”

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Eastern Spirituality Could Help Sustainable Development



By Kalinga Seneviratne

This article is the 18th in a series of joint productions of [Lotus News Features](#) and [IDN-InDepthNews](#), flagship of the [International Press Syndicate](#).

YANGON, Myanmar (IDN) – “The desire for peace exists everywhere, but the majority of people are not in a position to enjoy peace, stability and security they

majority of people are not in a position to enjoy peace, stability and security they desire," noted venerable Dr Ashin Nyanissara, spiritual head of the Sitagu International Buddhist University (SIBU), in opening a two-day gathering of spiritual leaders and scholars at the university here on August 5.

The event was the second Global Initiative for Conflict Avoidance and Environmental Consciousness ([SAMVAD](#)) conference, following the first held in New Delhi in September 2015.

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Investing in Women, Girls Central to Efforts for Sustainable Peace, Development



By Amina J. Mohammed

Following is a slightly abridged version of UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed's remarks, as prepared for delivery, to the Security Council meeting on peace and security in Africa, in New York on August 10, in which she reports on her visits to Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. - Editor

UNITED NATIONS (IDN) - This undertaking, from 19 to 27 July, was the first of its kind: a high-level mission focused entirely on women, peace, security and development. I was pleased to be joined by the Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women ([UN Women](#)) and the [Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict](#). . . as well as the [African Union Commission's Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security](#).

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The "Youth Bulge" Calls for Creating Jobs in Rural Areas



By Ronald Joshua

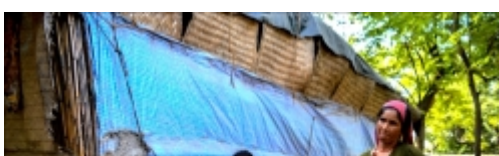
ROME (IDN) - "Rural areas are failing to provide opportunity and are losing their young people. This has major consequences at the local, national and global level. It can erode national economies, political stability, and food security," warned Gilbert F. Houngbo, president of the International Fund for

Agricultural Development ([IFAD](#)) at a recent [conference](#) hosted by the [African Union Commission](#), the [European Commission](#) and the [Estonian Presidency of the EU](#) in Rome, Italy.

The conference on July 2, 2017 focused on *Making Sustainable Agriculture a Future for Youth in Africa* – against the backdrop that an estimated 440 million young people will enter the rural labour market by 2030 in Africa alone.

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International Law is a Powerful Tool to Reduce Ethnic Disputes



Viewpoint by Jonathan Power*

LUND, Sweden (IDN-INPS) - It's not that many years ago that Warren Christopher, the U.S. Secretary of State, commenting on



the U.S. Secretary of State, commenting on the outbreak of separatist ethnic strife in the 1990s in countries such as Somalia, Zaire, Rwanda, East Timor and ex-Yugoslavia, asked. “Where will it end? Will it end with 5,000 countries?”

It was a serious misjudgement. Separatist wars have fallen sharply. Minorities are not fighting for their own patch of territory at the rate they were. Since 1993 the number of wars of self-determination has been halved.

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Colonialism Very Much Alive on UN Agenda



By Shanta Rao

UNITED NATIONS (IDN) – There has been a longstanding myth that colonialism has been long dead – and was unceremoniously buried in the 1950s and 1960s.

But not so fast, says the United Nations.

A 29-member [UN Special Committee on Decolonization](#), which was established by

the General Assembly back in 1961, is very much alive and remains fully engaged.

But it is fighting a near-losing battle with a fistful of Western colonial powers who are determined to hold onto their colonies – euphemistically called “non-self-governing territories.”

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Humanities to the Rescue of Sustainability



By A.D. McKenzie

PARIS (IDN) – If you suggest studying the humanities to some college-bound young people, you might be met with loud, pitying laughter. What is the value of a degree in literature, philosophy or history, they may ask.

An ambitious conference in Liège, Belgium, aims to provide an attitude-changing response to that question and, at the same time, draw up a programme to keep the humanities from becoming more “marginalised” at universities.

The event, titled the “World Humanities Conference: Challenges and Responsibilities for a Planet in Transition”, will take place from August 6 to 12.

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Do Not Exaggerate Private Sector Role in Achieving Agenda 2030



By Manuel F. Montes*

GENEVA (IDN | SOUTHVIEWS) - In discussions at the UN about achieving [Agenda 2030](#), it has become de rigeur to highlight the role of the private sector. It is

often introduced as the discovery of the idea that private sector investment and financing is indispensable to achieving Agenda 2030.

For developed country diplomats and their associated experts this new celebrity treatment appears to be an article of faith, at least during negotiations on economic matters in the UN. They are foisting a misleading 'Trumpian' exaggeration that is technically harmful to development policymaking and to Agenda 2030.

The practical, and long-running, reality is that investment by enterprises has always been indispensable to growth and development. It is NOT a new reality. It's NOT a reality specific only to Agenda 2030.

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Published by

The [International Press Syndicate](#) Group

as part of a [media project](#) with Soka Gakkai International

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