

Summary

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UN Secretary-General: Message on the occasion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day (27 January 2017)

On the occasion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, UN Secretary-General António Guterres emphasized that the world has a duty to remember that the Holocaust was a systematic attempt to eliminate the Jewish people and so many others. After the horrors of the 20th century, there should be no room for intolerance in the 21st. He added that as Secretary-General, he will be in the frontline of the battle against anti-Semitism and all other forms of hatred. Let us build a future of dignity and equality for all – and thus honour the victims of the Holocaust who we will never allow to be forgotten, said António Guterres.

UN Secretary-General: UN must get rid of straightjacket of bureaucracy

Addressing staff on 3 January, his first day of work as UN Secretary-General, António Guterres said that we live in a world in which conflicts multiply and are interlinked with this new phenomenon of global terrorism, conflicts in which international humanitarian law is not respected, situations in which we see massive human rights violations, even refugee law is no longer as respected as it was few years ago. Amid these events we see a lot of scepticism about what role the UN can play. UN Secretary-General stressed that “the only way for the us to be able to achieve our goals is to really work together as a team, and to be able to deserve to serve the noble values enshrined in the Charter, that are the values of the UN, that are the values that unite mankind.”

UNIC / Holocaust Remembrance Week in Moscow

This year, representatives of the Russian federal government participated in the Holocaust Remembrance Week events organized by Moscow City Hall, Russian Jewish Congress, Russian Research and Educational Holocaust Center and the Holocaust Foundation. The memorial activities were intended to mark the 72nd anniversary of liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp by the Red Army. From 20 January until 27 January, thematic meetings, excursions, book presentations and theatrical performances were held in the Russian capital and beyond. UNIC Director Vladimir Kuznetsov summed up the events of the Week by stressing that the Holocaust was not a crime against Jews, but a crime against the whole mankind.

UNHCR / High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi visits Russia

On 21-22 February, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi paid his visit to Moscow at a time when UNHCR marks 25 years of the agency's cooperation with Russia. In the course of his sojourn, Mr. Filippo Grandi met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Emergencies Minister Vladimir Puchkov, Ombudsman Mikhail Fedotov, among others. Overall, the visit was aimed at discussing deeper humanitarian cooperation with Russia. Mr. Grandi stressed in particular that Russia is UNHCR's key partner.

OHCHR / Education is not a service but social responsibility of a state

In February 2017, Kishor Singh, Doctor of Law, the former Special UN Rapporteur on the Right to Education (2010-2016) visited the Urals State Law University by invitation of the Consortium of Universities of Russia implementing a joint international master's programme on International Human Rights. The programme is supported by OHCHR. Dr. Singh made a series of lectures on the right for education. The main message of his lectures: education is a public good and it's a social responsibility of a state.

OHCHR / Stand up for someone's rights

At the end of 2016, OHCHR office in Moscow announced a new annual campaign titled 'Stand Up for Someone's Rights Today'. The campaign urges everybody to act here and now with a view to achieving better leadership, better laws and greater respect for human dignity. In the street, in school, at work, in public transport; in the voting booth, on social media, at home and on the sports field – wherever there is discrimination, we can step forward to help safeguard someone's right to live free from fear and abuse.

FAO / FAO supports Russian philanthropists

In an attempt to support implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Russia, FAO's Liaison Office in Moscow supported Foodbank Rus Fund's Products to Provinces initiative, which boiled down to distributing foodstuffs to the disadvantaged, needy and lower-income groups of people across the Russian Federation. The Products to Provinces project is intended for people living in Russia's vast provinces and isolated locales and experiencing difficulties in accessing foodstuffs.

ILO / ILO's flagship Global Wage Report 2016/17 launched in Moscow

The Russian edition of ILO's Global Wage Report 2016-2017 was launched in Moscow on 20 February 2017 at the Academy of Labour and Social Relations. Patrick Belser, one of the main authors of #GWR2017, took part in the launch and presented the report together with Nicolas Studer, ILO Moscow, Senior Wages Specialist. The ILO noted that last few years wages had grown slowly in most of developed countries, lagging behind productivity growth. Moreover, global decline in the share of wages in GDP indicates that wage growth is not reaching its full potential. The publication generated great interest among those present at the launch. Issues related to minimum wages were in focus of an animated discussion thereafter.

UNAIDS / 1 March – Zero Discrimination Day

On 1 March, more than 1 million people joined an interactive online debate with Vera Brezhneva, UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador for Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The discussion was aimed at educating people about stigmatization and discrimination of HIV-infected persons. People of various professions and backgrounds met online and shared their stories with a view to discussing prevention of such discrimination.

UNESCO IITE / Cooperation with UNESCO school network – IITE's priority

UNESCO's Institute for Information Technologies in Education places special emphasis on developing partnerships with UNESCO associated schools and clubs. In late 2016, UNESCO IITE together with the International Certificate Specialists Association and business partners launched a new project aimed at setting up international digital pedagogic centers. The major goal of such centers is to provide education workers with real help in mastering digital teaching technologies.

UNDP / Bicycle route in Kazan: Comfortable, healthy, eco-friendly

During the last 15 years Russia has experienced a growing motorization. In this connection, better road traffic organization, safety measures, reduction of environmental health impact have become all the more important. Doubtless, the growing number of vehicles has resulted in the scarcity of urban space. Growing oil prices and environmental pollution necessitate searching for new solutions to ensure people's mobility. Bicycle commutes are a possible option. Recently, several bike lanes were built in Kazan, Tatarstan. According to some specialists, in 5 years' time this measure will bring about the reduction of 14,500 CO2 emissions, an equivalent to planting 25,000 trees in the city.

UNDP / Energy-efficient kindergarten reopened in the town of Ostrov

Newly renovated kindergarten 'Raduga' (Rainbow) located in the small town of Ostrov, Pskov region, reopened its doors at the end of January. More than 130 foster children together with their teachers are now settling anew in their refurbished home. All the updates were made possible thanks to the support of a UNDP project titled 'Energy-efficient buildings in Russia's North-West'. The project is aimed at cutting heat consumption by 95%, compared to baseline. It is also expected to contribute to an almost 65% reduction in electricity consumption. Switching to energy-efficient technology will help to save about 870,000 budgetary rubles annually.

WHO / Exhibit depicting Russia-WHO cooperation opened at UN House

On 20 December 2016, the UN House in Moscow unveiled an exhibit focusing on cooperation between the Russian Federation and WHO in such areas as the fight against TB, immunization, non-communicable diseases, road-traffic safety, climate change, anti-tobacco campaign, humanitarian aid in healthcare. Representatives of the Russian Health Ministry, Foreign Ministry, staff of the European Regional WHO office and other Russia-based UN agencies participated in the event.

Guest of the Issue / Tao Zhan: “The key challenge is the one we pose to ourselves”

On 11 February 2017, Mr. Tao Zhan, China, was appointed Director of the UNESCO Institute for information technologies in education (IITE) located in Russia. In an interview, Tao Zhan elaborates on his professional path and plans, as well as dwells on the achievements and objectives of UNESCO IITE in the year of its 20th anniversary.