Statement by
UNICEF Executive Director, Anthony Lake,
WFP Executive Director, David Beasley
and WHO Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,
following their joint visit to Yemen

“As the heads of three United Nations agencies – UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) – we have travelled together to Yemen to see for ourselves the scale of this humanitarian crisis and to step up our combined efforts to help the people of Yemen.

“This is the world’s worst cholera outbreak in the midst of the world’s largest humanitarian crisis. In the last three months alone, 400,000 cases of suspected cholera and nearly 1900 associated deaths have been recorded. Vital health, water and sanitation facilities have been crippled by more than two years of hostilities, and created the ideal conditions for diseases to spread.

“The country is on the brink of famine, with over 60 per cent of the population not knowing where their next meal will come from. Nearly 2 million Yemeni children are acutely malnourished. Malnutrition makes them more susceptible to cholera; diseases create more malnutrition. A vicious combination.

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Obituary

With sad news we learned the death of Ms. Lamia Sharafuddin the daughter of Mr Abdulsalam Sharafuddin the Officer in Charge of UNIC Sana’a. Lamia died at the age of 18 years old at a hospital in Sana’a on July 28, 2017 after a long journey with her disease.

Our heartfelt condolence, thoughts and prayers with Mr. Abdulsalam and his family about the passing of his daughter.

"وإنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون"

UNIC Sana'a staff
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Statement by UNICEF Executive.....

“At one hospital, we visited children who can barely gather the strength to breathe. We spoke with families overcome with sorrow for their ill loved ones and struggling to feed their families. “And, as we drove through the city, we saw how vital infrastructure, such as health and water facilities, have been damaged or destroyed. “Amid this chaos, some 16,000 community volunteers go house to house, providing families with information on how to protect themselves from diarrhea and cholera. Doctors, nurses and other essential health staff are working around the clock to save lives.” More than 30,000 health workers haven’t been paid their salaries in more than 10 months, but many still report for duty. We have asked the Yemeni authorities to pay these health workers urgently because, without them, we fear that people who would otherwise have survived may die. As for our agencies, we will do our best to support these extremely dedicated health workers with incentives and stipends. “We also saw the vital work being done by local authorities and NGOs, supported by international humanitarian agencies, including our own. We have set up more than 1000 diarrhoea treatment centres and oral rehydration corners. The delivery of food supplements, intravenous fluids and other medical supplies, including ambulances, is ongoing, as is the rebuilding of critical infrastructure – the rehabilitation of hospitals, district health centres and the water and sanitation network. We are working with the World Bank in an innovative partnership that responds to needs on the ground and helps maintain the local health institutions. “But there is hope. More than 99 per cent of people who are sick with suspected cholera and who can access health services are now surviving. And the total number of children who will be afflicted with severe acute malnutrition this year is estimated at 385,000. “However, the situation remains dire. Thousands are falling sick every day. Sustained efforts are required to stop the spread of disease. Nearly 80 percent of Yemen’s children need immediate humanitarian assistance.

“When we met with Yemeni leaders -- in Aden and in Sana’a -- we called on them to give humanitarian workers access to areas affected by fighting. And we urged them – more than anything – to find a peaceful political solution to the conflict. “The Yemeni crisis requires an unprecedented response. Our three agencies have teamed up with the Yemeni authorities and other partners to coordinate our activities in new ways of working to save lives and to prepare for future emergencies. “We now call on the international community to redouble its support for the people of Yemen. If we fail to do so, the catastrophe we have seen unfolding before our eyes will not only continue to claim lives but will scar future generations and the country for years to come.
Yemen is facing the world's largest cholera outbreak, the United Nations health agency today warned, with 5,000 Yemenis falling sick every day – the majority of them children and the elderly.

“The cholera outbreak is far from being over,” Fadela Chaib, spokesperson for the UN World Health Organization (WHO), told reporters in Geneva. “The rainy season had just started and would exacerbate the situation in terms of transmission.”

WHO's office in Yemen said that since 27 April 2017, over 372,900 suspected cholera cases and 1,837 associated deaths have been reported in over 91 per cent of Yemen's governorates.

UN agencies, including WHO and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), are scaling up access to clean water and sanitation, and setting up treatment centres for oral rehydration therapy and other measures.

The response is also focused on providing food as the country remains on the verge of famine. Seventeen million people are currently hungry in the war-torn country, making them more vulnerable to catching the bacteria.

“It is necessary to break the vicious cycle of malnutrition and diarrhoea,” Ms. Chaib said.

Children aged 15 and under accounted for 41 per cent of all suspected cases, and people aged over 60 for 33 per cent of all deaths.

Asked if the number of cases could rise about 600,000, as projected by the non-governmental organization Oxfam, Ms. Chaib called the current toll “heavy” and said the situation “remains alarming.”

In 2011, some 719,377 suspected cases of cholera were recorded in Haiti, and 8,767 people died, according to national figures cited by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).
UNODC’s Education for Justice (E4J) initiative is currently accepting applications for funding from institutions that are interested in creating non-electronic games to educate secondary level students (aged 13-18) on the issues of crime prevention, criminal justice and other rule of law aspects. Civil society organizations, academic and/or research institutions may apply for a grant of up to USD 10,000. Applicants from any region of the world may apply. The resources shall be used by the successful candidates for the development and testing of non-electronic games and should involve secondary level students as well as educators in the process. The deadline for submission of proposals is 6 August 2017.

Proposals should focus on at least one of the following issues:

- Crime prevention and criminal justice;
- Corruption;
- Organized crime;
- Human trafficking and migrant smuggling;
- Firearms;
- Cybercrime; and
- Terrorism.

Through this grants scheme, E4J will promote the cooperation between organizations, students and educators to come up with innovative tools to teach on and learn about these issues. Although individuals are ineligible to apply, UNODC suggests that applicants involve game developers in the design process.
Yemen’s deadly cholera outbreak puts pregnant women in danger

The cholera outbreak in Yemen is spreading at an unprecedented rate, with suspected cases of acute, watery diarrhoea increasing by an average of 5,000 every day, and nearly one person dying every hour, according to reporting from the United Nations. In less than three months, more than 330,000 suspected cases of cholera have been reported, with nearly 1,800 deaths.

Pregnant and breastfeeding women, especially those who are malnourished, are especially vulnerable. An estimated 1.1 million malnourished pregnant women are at risk, requiring immediate care.

Ibtisam contracted cholera when she was nine months pregnant. “I went to a health facility in my hometown in Rayma Governorate, but they did not know what was wrong with me,” she told UNFPA. “I felt I was going to die and lose my baby. I was going to have my first child, and I was desperate not to lose my child.”

Her husband took her to the 22 May Hospital in Sana’a – five hours away. There, she was diagnosed with cholera and treated.

“Ibtisam was in her last month of pregnancy. If she [arrived] a day or two later, we are not sure we could have saved her or her baby,” said Dr. Farea, who helped treat her.

Worst cholera outbreak in the world

The magnitude of the outbreak is directly linked to Yemen’s brutal ongoing conflict and displacement crisis, the breakdown of health and sanitation systems, and serious food insecurity.

An estimated 14.8 million people lack access to health services, and 15.7 million lack access to adequate clean water and sanitation.

Pregnant and breastfeeding women are especially vulnerable to malnutrition, and those weakened by the nutrition crisis are more prone to infections, including cholera. Pregnant women who contract cholera have a higher risk of developing dangerous or even fatal complications.

Women, in their roles as caregivers, may also face heightened exposure to cholera. Yet their lower status in terms of decision-making and control over household resources means they may be less able to seek medical care when they fall sick.

“The number of cholera cases we receive in a day overwhelms us; we can barely cope,” Dr. Farea told UNFPA. “Last week, we received another woman who was in her last month of pregnancy and suffering from extreme dehydration. She delivered early, but the baby only survived for two days. It is so important that pregnant women come to a hospital as soon as they develop symptoms of cholera to not risk their lives or that of their unborn child.”
European Union and UNDP support social protection for community resilience in Yemen

The European Union (EU) confirms its commitment to Yemen by providing EUR 25 million (nearly USD 27 million) to support the vulnerable Yemeni people affected by the devastating conflict.

The project, to be implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and local communities, will help struggling households to earn income to buy food and other essentials; keep some of the remaining healthcare facilities open and provide more psychosocial support to affected civilians.

The main results under this commitment are expected to:

- Give 42,000 people much-needed cash in return for helping to rebuild around 45 health facilities, including women, youth and those internally displaced by the conflict. The cash-for-work programme will indirectly benefit around 250,000 people;
- Invest in solar energy for at least 80 health facilities affected by fuel shortages and electricity cuts; and
- Mobilize local networks, including teachers, to identify adults and children in conflict-affected areas who need psychosocial support and refer them to adequate treatment.

The EU and UNDP will work together across the 21 governorates and one municipality in Yemen, in response to the latest conflict.

For more than two years, UNDP has worked with communities affected by the growing humanitarian crisis, including through projects to increase food production; support small and micro-businesses; train women as community health and nutrition workers and train NGO staff on working in conflict contexts.

UNDP Country Director in Yemen, Auke Lootsma, said Yemen already had high levels of poverty before the conflict, and the crisis had pushed the resilience of Yemenis to the limit and beyond.

“With the much-needed help of the EU, UNDP is complementing the ongoing humanitarian response in Yemen by enrolling the poorest families in cash-for-work activities so they can afford to buy food, water and medicines,” Mr Lootsma said.

“Yemen is among the largest forgotten crises in world, with a looming famine and devastating cholera outbreak.

“With the economy and state institutions collapsing, the population needs all the support they can get.”

Antonia Calvo Puerta, European Union Ambassador for Yemen, said: “The protracted nature of the crisis, and the fact that it is severely affecting the majority of the population, is putting immense pressure on the international community, which is called to ensure a response at scale.

“The European Union is committed to offer relief to the Yemeni population in this protracted difficult situation, with any available diplomatic and financial instruments.”

UNDP Country Director in Yemen, Auke Lootsma, said Yemen already had...
Launch of the Nippon Foundation Fellowship Programme

The United Nations announces the launch of the Nippon Foundation Fellowship Programme. The main objective of the Fellowship is to provide advanced education and training in the field of ocean affairs and the law of the sea, and related discipliners, to Government officials and other mid-level professionals from developing States.

Successful candidates will undertake their research/studies in two consecutive phases: the first, lasting three months, with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOA), Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations in New York; and the second, lasting six months, with a participating academic host institution.

The fellowship Selection Committee is currently scheduled to convene in October 2017 to award 10 fellowships for the 2018 sessions, and successful candidates will be expected to begin their placements by the end of the first quarter of 2018.

The Fellowship application deadline is 15 September 2017, and candidates should forward their applications directly to DOALOS at the following address:

The United Nations - The Nippon Foundation of Japan Fellowship Programme
Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
Office of Legal Affairs
United Nations, Room DC2-0450
New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A.
E-mail (Preferred): DOALOS@un.org
Fax: +1-917-367-0560

Additional information, including the application package, detailed application institutions, and a list of participating host institutions, is available on the Fellowship website: www.un.org/depts/los/nippon.

It is worth noting that during the last thirteen years, 130 awards have been made to nationals of 75 States.
I want to thank the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, for organizing this important panel discussion. I also commend the Government of Spain – and particularly Foreign Minister Alfonso María Dastis – as well as the many religious leaders gathered here for your initiative.

The Holy Land has a special place in the hearts of billions of people around the world. The faiths that you represent are branches of the same Abrahamic tree – and have done so much to contribute and enrich our world and global civilization.

I am tremendously inspired and uplifted by your efforts to come together around shared values and a shared commitment to building peace.

As you know better than anyone else, we live in a world where long-standing conflicts continue and new ones are emerging. Some parts of the Middle East have been the site of so much bloodshed and torment.

With every passing day, frustration grows, hope diminishes, and the perspective of a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict seems more distant.

As I have continuously stressed, the two-state solution is the only path to ensure that Palestinians and Israelis realize their national and historic aspirations and live in peace, security and dignity. The expansion of illegal settlements, or the violence or the incitement undermine this prospect.

In my opinion, there is no plan B.

Conflicts in the Middle East continue to feed extremism and radicalisation around the world.

Indeed, we are witnessing a spiralling wave of discrimination and stereotyping of “the other” in many places. Religion is being distorted to increase differences.

Together we must counter such narratives.

Sustainable peace requires not only political will from all sides, but also the collective efforts of the international community, civil society and fundamentally, religious leaders.

We need to expand the space for dialogue to encompass local and regional leaders and other actors who have a voice and influence within their respective communities.

This is why I am so greatly encouraged by the Religious Peace Initiative, which was launched in Alicante last November.

As Muslim, Jewish and Christian religious leaders, you have the opportunity to teach the shared humanistic values of tolerance, understanding, compassion and peace.

These are the core values embraced by all three monotheistic faiths represented here today, and they can be the catalysts for peace.

I applaud your efforts towards promoting the peaceful co-existence between Palestinians and Israelis.

Your initiative points the way to a more hopeful future – a future of tolerance and mutual understanding as a pathway to just and lasting peace.

I thank you very much.