



WHEC Update

Briefing of worldwide activity of the Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC)

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Making A Difference

There is no single or simple solution to wiping out poverty and hunger. Decent work, equal pay, the promotion of rights, employment, social protection and dialogue – will always be at the heart of successful policies, to get there. Let there be no illusion: COVID-19 may look pale in comparison to the future challenges ahead, if we do not learn from the failures that have costed lives and livelihoods. Our best projections show that a stark choice confronts us on decent-work-for-all. Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC) promotes sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent-work-for-all, with special focus on girls, women, minorities and marginalized people. The experience gained so far in mainstreaming decent-work-for-all, shows that there is much to be gained and to build upon, for both our global advocacy and our country-level initiatives.

Decent work is declining in many parts of the world, despite considerable rates of economic growth. According to the World Bank, more than half of world's 3 billion labor force, is either unemployed or live on less than \$2 a day. Youth unemployment is around 80 million, almost 40% of the total unemployed. Women in most parts of the world still remain an unpaid and overworked human resource and constitute 60% of the working-poor – a ratio that is unfortunately showing an increasing trend, in the last decade. The growing number of natural and man-made crises has had a disastrous impact on employment of women and minorities, in parts of the world, where decent jobs are most needed.

Double Jeopardy: Motherhood stands out as one of the key factors in explaining the gender-gaps in the labor market, since women are still the primary caregivers, at home. This means that, in the work-force and in the well-paid jobs, motherhood explained 40% of the gender gap. It can also be attributed to the presence of children at home. Motherhood reduces women's labor workforce supply in the extensive and intensive margins. It influences female occupational structure towards flexible occupations – part-time work, self-employment, and labor informality – needed for family-work balance. Furthermore, countries with more conservative gender norms and less generous family policies, are associated with larger differences between, mothers' and non-mothers' labor market outcomes.

Gender Inequality – Women account for 67% of workforce in health and care sectors. (Source: ILO and WHO). But currently women in the health and care sectors, face the largest gender pay gap, than in other economic sectors – earning on average of 24% less than peers who are men. There will be no inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery without a stronger health and care sectors. We cannot have better quality of health and care services without better and fairer working conditions, including fairer wages, for health and care workers, the majority of whom are women and minorities

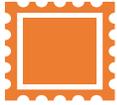
WHEC will play an active role in ensuring that its efforts, projects and programs, lead to concrete changes. By pooling our efforts to respond to people's demand for a fair chance at a decent job, for both men, women and minorities, will go a long way in eradicating poverty and hunger. Building back better means, taking action to deliver these transformative policies, for women, girls and minorities and all health and caregivers, now.

Women's unique strength in scientific research and social development should be fully emphasized. The potential of decent work as a driver of inclusive and sustainable development is well-recognized in the 2030 United Nations Agenda.

Join our vision!

Decent Work Deficits: Improving Digital Cooperation

Rita Luthra, MD



Your Questions, Our Reply

Is the cooperatives business model a viable enterprise solution to employment creation for both skilled and unskilled workers, at the same time improve access to decent work for all? Will it help to fight against poverty and hunger?

Creating Employment and Decent Work: Cooperatives were established to cater for marginalized communities' socio-economic needs in the world in the mid-1840s. their establishment is based on the philosophy of corporativism based on the ideals spelt in the cooperative principles and values. It thrives on the basis of attainment of member expectations which are themselves spelt in the member's felt needs. In the world economy, at least 12% of people on earth is a cooperator affiliated to about 3 million cooperatives that are providing employment other directly or indirectly. In the 2020 World Cooperative Monitor report, the top 300 largest cooperatives reported a total turnover of about 2.146 billion USD.

Cooperative business model, having existed for generations, cooperatives of today are recognized for building economic advantage for creating employment and decent work in all sectors of the economy. The cooperatives business model is an example of and employee-centered business since it encourages employee ownership. It encourages dignified work that allows them to earn deserved wages as they create income for their community and families.

Cooperatives and the wider social and solidarity economy have the potential to play a key role in establishing new working arrangements. This model promotes the collective use of resources, assets and services through the "sharing economy" and various forms of collective entrepreneurship. The ultimate measure of progress, however, is allowing is the wellbeing of people – and Africa's recent growth has not done nearly as much as it should to reduce poverty and hunger, or improve health. to sustain growth that improves the lives of all Africans, the continent fisheries and forests, and the energy and ingenuity of its people. This will help us in bridging the unemployment gap since we will be able to venture into the new and growing sectors.

Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC) supports and recognizes, Cooperatives as vehicles that promote the social, economic, and cultural interests of their members and by extension also the communities in which they operate. They are by design a more sustainable and reliable vehicle to drive industrialization in the continent. They have proven both in Africa and in the rest of the world that they are key players in national and global economies. Cooperative business model is also considered an efficient way business model that can lead to industrialization. It is efficient and strengthens individual economic powers, which is useful not only in increasing income and creating new employment opportunities through industrialization, but can also make considerable contributions to social life.

Cooperatives are an underestimated opportunity to deliver decent work. In order to live up to their roles as enterprises and member-based enterprises, cooperatives therefore often engage in alternative trade models. Regardless of the sector and activity in which they operate, work – social and independent producers' / workers' cooperatives are only able to display their full potential, if they are surrounded by a favorable institutional environment. This is particularly true when it comes to providing quality employment, which is highly dependent on the institutional frameworks regulating the legal status of young workers in cooperatives, but also access to financial resources and user-friendly bureaucracy.

Concrete supporting measures aimed at young workers to help them to start up and run a business, and adequate integration of cooperative entrepreneurship in the main educational system, is a very valuable tool.



United Nations at a Glance

Permanent Mission of Niger to the United Nations



Niger became UN Member State on 20 September 1960

Niger or the Niger, officially the **Republic of Niger**, is a landlocked country in West Africa. It is a unitary state bordered by Libya to the northeast, Chad to the east, Nigeria to the south, Benin and Burkina Faso to the south west, Mali to the west, and Algeria to the northwest. It covers a land area of almost 1,270,000 km² (490,000 sq.mi.), making it the second largest landlocked country in West Africa, after Chad.

Over 80% of its land area lies in the Sahara. Its predominantly Muslim population of 25 million live mostly in clusters in the further south and west of the country. The capital Niamey is located in Niger's southwest corner. Official language: French; Independence from France – Republic proclaimed on 18 December 1958 and Declared on 3 August 1990.

Niger is a Least Developed Country (LDC). It faces challenges to development due to its landlocked position, desert terrain, high fertility rates without birth control and resulting in over-population.



Niger's new constitution was approved on 31 October 2010. It restored the semi-presidential system of government of the 1999 constitution (Fifty Republic) in which the president of the republic, elected by universal suffrage for a five-year term, and a prime minister named by the president share executive power. The military kept their promise to return the country to democratic civilian rule. A constitutional referendum and national elections were held. The presidential election was held on 12 March 2011. Mahamadou Issoufou of the Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism was elected president. A parliamentary election was held at the same time.

The border dispute with Benin, inherited from colonial times and concerning inter alia Lété Island in the Niger River, was solved by the International Court of Justice in 2005 to Niger's advantage.

Foreign Relations

Niger purses a moderate foreign policy and maintains friendly relations with the West and the Islamic world as well as non-aligned countries. It belongs to the UN and its main specialized agencies and in 1980 – 1981 served on the UN Security Council. Niger maintains a special relationship with colonial power France and has close relations with its West African neighbors.

It is a charter member of African Union (AU) and the West African Monetary Union and also belongs to the Niger Basin Authority and Lake Chad Basin Commission, the Economic Community of West African States, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA). The westmost regions of Niger are joined with contiguous regions of Mali and Burkina Faso under the Liptako-Gourma Authority.

2020 Voluntary National Review

Niger reported the rate of basic service in rural areas rose from 20.95% in 2018 to 35.7% in 2019, and the rate of access of optimal service in urban areas from 35.4% to 42.7% respectively.

Details: <https://sdgs.un.org/basic-page/niger-24776>

Collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO)

WHO | Niger



Health Situation

The Niger has made significant progress in a number of areas. The rate of maternal, neonatal and child mortality has decreased in recent years, and if current trends are maintained, the country is on track to achieve SDGs, however, for SDG 6, the country has managed to reverse the trend in HIV infections sero-prevalence was at 0.4% in the general population in 2012, down from 0.7% in 2006. The health situation is characterized by the predominance of communicable diseases and the emergence of non-communicable diseases. An average of 850,000 cases of malaria was reported each year. The disease is responsible for 30% of outpatient consultations and 50% of deaths among children under 5. The HIV/AIDS epidemic is concentrated and prevalence in low, estimated to be 0.4% in the general population in 2021. Tuberculosis prevalence is 328 cases per 100,000 of population per year. Schistosomiasis, soil-transmitted helminth infections, trachoma and lymphatic filariasis are all causes for concern, while dracunculiasis, onchocerciasis and leprosy are close to being eradicated or eliminated.

Chronic non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease are increasingly common, with the following prevalence among adults. High blood pressure 21.2%, diabetes 4.3%, overweight 26.5%, obesity 3.8%, tobacco use 4.9%. the Niger faces major food and nutrition crises as well as severe flooding.

Health Policies and Systems

The Niger's health policies are based on general principles and international strategies such as primary healthcare, the Bamako initiative, the SDGs and Universal Health Coverage. The Ministry of Health has developed a health development plan for 2016 – 2030 and a medium-term sector expenditure framework, and has signed a national compact with technical and financial partners. the primary objective of the health development plan is “to help to improve prioritizing interventions that deliver rapid health outcomes, and also by consolidating the national health system, including financial protection for users.” The health systems is organized into three administrative and care levels (local health level/district, intermediary level/region and central level/national).

Health services are provided by 876 integrated health centers, 2502 community health posts, 36 district hospitals, 6 regional hospitals, two regional maternity referral centers, seven mother and baby units, 3 national hospitals, 1 national maternity referral center, and 12 national referral centers. The private sector is composed of 283 structures, including 57 private clinics, 36 medical practices, and five private hospitals.

Cooperation For Health

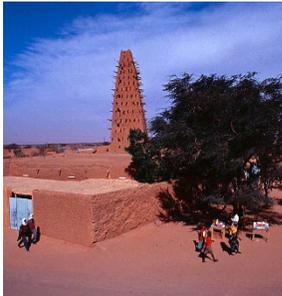
An analysis of primary sources of financing for health sector shows that, since 2008, the Government of the Niger finances two thirds of its health budget, the remaining third is funded by outside aid.

The principal bilateral donors are Belgium, France, Spain, Luxembourg, the USA, Canada, China and Japan. Multilateral health partners include the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria, the GAVI Alliance, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, the World Bank, the EU, the African Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank.

Details: <https://www.who.int/countries/ner/>



Niger Joined UNESCO on 10 November 1960



Historic Centre of Agadez

Known as the gateway to the desert, Agadez, on the southern edge of the Sahara desert, developed in the 15th and 16th centuries when the Sultanate of Aïr was established and Touareg tribes were decentralized in the city, respecting the boundaries of old encampments, which gave rise to street pattern still in place today. The historic center of the city, an important cross roads of the caravan trade, is divided into 11 quarters with irregular shapes. They contain numerous earthen dwellings and a well-preserved group of palatial and religious buildings include a 27m high minaret made entirely of mud brick, the highest such structure in the world. The site is marked by ancestral cultural; commercial and handicraft traditions still practice today and presents exceptional and sophisticated examples of earthen architecture.

From the 15th century, Agadez, “the gateway to the desert,” became an exceptional crossroads for the caravan trade. It bears witness to an early historic town, forming a major center for trans-Saharan cultural interchanges. Its architecture embodies a synthesis of stylistic influences in an original urban ensemble, made entirely of mudbrick and which is specific to the Aïr region.

The authenticity of the component parts of the property is generally satisfactory, particularly for the monuments and palaces, except for the window and door frames, which have often been renewed using non-traditional materials. The authenticity of the housing is good, but it is also threatened by the use of modern materials which do not respect tradition: breeze blocks, cement-based plasters, metal elements and corrugated metal, and the appearance of painted advertisements in aggressive colors.

Internet Universality Indicators: Lessons learnt and good practices from Africa



Despite the growing diversity in Africa’s media and digital landscape, plurality, neutrality, safety, and freedom of expression face continuous challenges. Concerns around data privacy, internet access affordability, content moderation and surveillance on the internet ecosystem based on UNESCO Internet Universality Indicators help to reveal the extent to which countries are actually performing on internet development and allow for achieving evidence-based policy and practice reform.

On 16 March 2022, UNESCO and Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) hosted a regional dialogue on the internet Universality Indicators (IUI) with the support of UNESCO International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). The event highlighted the good practices, challenges and lessons learnt from the IUI assessments conducted by Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Niger and Senegal in 2021 with the aim to attract more actors utilizing the indicators to inform advocacy for media freedom and digital rights.

Details: <https://en.unesco.org/countries/niger>

Bulletin Board



Goal 15

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably managed forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss

KEY FACTS

- 10 million hectares of forest are destroyed every year;
- Almost 90% of global deforestation is due to agricultural expansion; 49.6% cropland expansion and 38.5% livestock grazing;
- Biodiversity is largely neglected in COVID-19 recovery spending;
- Around 40,000 species are documented to be at risk of extinction over the coming decades;
- Nearly half of freshwater, terrestrial and mountain key biodiversity areas are protected;
- 133 parties have ratified the Nagoya Protocol, which addresses access to genetic resources and their fair and equitable use.

Progress and Information

Continued global deforestation, land and ecosystem degradation, and biodiversity loss pose major risks to human survival and sustainable development. Even as efforts are made in the domain of sustainable forest and natural resource management, communities and instruments designed to protect, restore and sustainably use forests and biodiversity need to be urgently implemented to ensure healthy, resilient societies.

By February 2022, 129 countries had committed to setting their voluntary targets for achieving land degradation neutrality, and in 71 countries, Governments had already officially endorsed those targets. Overall, commitments to land restoration are estimated at 1 billion ha, out of which 450 million ha are committed through land degradation neutrality targets.

At the end of 2021, 68 countries had at least one legislative, administrative or policy measure in place to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge in accordance with the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Furthermore, 79 countries reported measures in place to implement the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

As of March 2022, 89 countries and territories had implemented the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) to make nature count in policies and build back better through accounts for natural resources and/or ecosystem. This number is unchanged from 2021. Four countries started compiling the newly adopted SEEA Ecosystem Accounting in 2021.

In 2021, a total of 234 biodiversity-relevant taxes are in force, spanning 32 countries.

In 2020, the official development assistance of members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in support of biodiversity was \$7.2 billion, an increase of 3% in real terms over 2019.



Collaboration with UN University (UNU)

UNU-WIDER (World Institute for Development Economics Research)

Expert Series on Health Economics

The Care Connection: The World Bank and Women's Unpaid Care Work in Select sub-Saharan African Countries

Malawi, Mali, **Niger**, and Rwanda

With the aim of reducing women's greater unpaid care work than men's and increasing women's paid employment, this study examines the extent to which World Bank investments address unpaid care work. The study conducted an in-depth gender analysis of 36 World Bank employment-related projects in Malawi, Mali, Niger, and Rwanda. It concludes that the vast majority (92%) of reviewed projects fail to account for unpaid care work. Exceptionally, Malawi's Shire River Basin Management Program and Niger's Community Action Program target women's needs as caretakers. But most reviewed projects do not address unpaid care work. Doing so would improve economic and human development and reduce gender inequality.

Around the world, women assume a greater responsibility for unpaid care work than men. This work, which includes caring for children, the sick, and the elderly, collecting fuel and water, cooking meals, harvesting food, and maintain shelter, is as essential to the daily life of a family as to the health of a national economy. Yet despite its importance, the time spent carrying out unpaid and unquantified care work leads to persistent gaps in women's employment opportunities and economic growth metrics.

International development policy increasingly recognized the urgent need to improve women's labor market participation by addressing the persistent gender inequalities that limit their employment opportunities. The adoption of prominent rights-based conventions, including the Beijing Declaration, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the rights of women in Africa, demonstrates growing international consensus outlawing discrimination and contributing to a movement that addresses the legal, social, and educational barriers restricting women's employment.

Niger

Niger is a predominantly agrarian economy. According to the Bank's most recently available CAS (Country Assistance Strategy), of the 'actively employed' population, 84% of men and 97% of women are involved in growing crops or raising livestock. Despite women's essential contribution to the household economy, they face restricted access to land, credit, technology, health, education, and other social services, as well as one of the world's highest fertility rates. Addressing gender equality in general and care constraints in particular should therefore be a priority of any Bank investment. Of the three reviewed Niger agricultural projects, our analysis identified two as weak and one as gender sensitive.

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Details of the paper can be accessed from the link of UNU-WIDER on CME Page

<http://www.womenshealthsection.com/content/cme/>

Two Articles of Highest Impact, October 2023

Editors' Choice – Journal Club Discussions

Fully open-access with no article-processing charges

Our friendship has no boundaries. We welcome your contributions.

1. **Hemophilia: A Comprehensive Review;**

<http://www.womenshealthsection.com/content/obsnc/obsnc016.php3>

WHEC Publications. Funding: WHEC Global Initiatives are funded by a grant from an anonymous donor. Join us at WHEC Global Health Line for discussion and contributions.

2. **Newborn Exposed to HIV: Prevention, Evaluation & Management;**

<http://www.womenshealthsection.com/content/obsnc/obsnc018.php3>

WHEC Publications. Funding: WHEC Global Initiatives are funded by a grant from an anonymous donor. Join us at WHEC Global Health Line for discussion and contributions.

Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (World Health Organization) PMNCH Member

Worldwide service is provided by the WHEC Global Health Line



From Editor's Desk

WHEC Projects under Development

Responding to Multiple Crises: Moving Towards a Human-Centered Recovery



COVID-19 severely impacted Labor Markets; followed by uneven and fragile recovery in 2022

In contrast to the global financial crisis, the COVID-19 crisis of 2020 – 2022 represented a very different shock in terms of its origin, transmission channels and impact. Starting as a global health emergency in early 2020, the pandemic evolved into a severe economic and labor market shock, though its evolution was complex and uncertain owing to the changing nature of the virus.

The evolution of lockdown measures, along with the effects of the unprecedented fiscal stimulus and other policies, is also reflected in global trends in hours worked, which is the key indicator that captures the labor market effects of the COVID-19 crisis. In the second quarter of 2020, the period with the strongest lockdown measures and the deepest labor market impact, global hours worked were a massive 18.6% below the pre-crisis level.

Beyond the aggregate trends, a key feature of the COVID-19 crisis is the divergence between advanced economies, which had the most generous policy measures, and low- and lower-middle-income countries, which have suffered a much greater decline in hours worked and divergence during 2021. High-income countries experienced a robust recovery since 2021 Q1, while the situation in middle-income economies further declined in the first quarter of 2022.

The decline in working hours during the COVID-19 crisis translated into a substantial fall in employment, especially for hard-hit groups. While total employment declined by 3.2% lockdowns were more damaging for sectors that are contact intensive, particularly accommodation and food services (i.e., hotels, restaurants, and bars). Globally this sector suffered a decline in employment of 9.4% in 2020. In contrast employment in financial and insurance services grew by 1.5% in the same year, which was spurred by the massive stimulus injected into markets. Finally, employment decreased more in 2020 for workers with low- and medium-levels of skills, which was due to the sectoral impact of the lockdown measures.



Women’s Health and Education Center’s (WHEC’s) Recommendations for Moving Forward are:

In the current situation, policymakers, especially financial institutions, are facing a complex set of labor market issue, including not only the longer-term trends and challenges but also the uneven recovery form the COVID-19 crisis and now the impact of global price and trade shocks emanating from Ukraine conflict. There is considerable risk that labor market

recovery, especially in developing economies, will be delayed and even reversed in some cases over 2023 and 2024.

Our key priority policies include:

- Providing timely and effective support to maintain the purchasing power of labor income and the overall living standards of workers and their families. .
- Carefully adjusting the macro-economic policy stance to address inflationary and debt sustainability pressures while recognizing the need to facilitate a job-rich and inclusive recovery, including the creation of jobs in the green, care and digital economies.
- Ensuring that hard-hit groups and sectors are protected through social protection for workers and support to enterprises, especially those operating in the informal economy.
- Addressing multidimensional gender disparities and needs for young people (overcoming jobs and education/training crisis, etc.
- Monitoring and assessing the impacts of multiple crises on the world of work.

The most immediate impact on labor markets in developing countries has been caused by rising inflation, which has a direct effect on the purchasing power of workers and their families around the world. Estimates suggest that global growth could be reduced by over 1% point, and global inflation raised by close to 2 ½ % points in the first full year after the start of the conflict. As a result of Ukraine conflict and more general inflationary pressures, the IMF (International Monetary Fund) projects that inflation in 2023 will reach 5.7% in advanced economies and 8.7% in emerging market and developing economies.

Rising inflation will further exacerbate the increase in poverty during COVID-19 crisis: some estimates point to rise in global poverty of 40 million as a consequence of the price spike induced by Ukraine crisis. The longer Ukraine conflict continues, the shocks reverberating around the world, will lead to further disruptions in the labor market (reduction in hours worked, drop in real labor income).



In The News

Ukraine War Sets Back the Global Recovery.

It has pushed over 40 million into poverty: How should we respond?



The conflict in Ukraine is not only devastating in Ukraine, but also has created a new shock to the global economy through several transmission channels. Commodity prices have risen rapidly, especially for food and fuel, while supply chains are experiencing new disruptions.

Russia and Ukraine export 19% and 10% of globally traded wheat, respectively. Prices of key agricultural inputs are also soaring, with Russia and Belarus accounting for 6th of world fertilizer exports, oil hitting its highest levels in 10 years, and gas prices already elevated. Ukrainian planting for the autumn harvest is reported to be disrupted and its Government has forbidden many food exports (including wheat). The sanctions on Russia will also make more difficult. The impact of this all remains to be fully seen – but although futures prices have fallen back in recent days, they remain up some 50% on 6 months ago.

Targeting support and humanitarian response to the most exposed and vulnerable countries

Where will the impacts of this crisis fall hardest? Though closed economies generally tend to face greater food insecurity, in this case the invasion of Ukraine will have more severe immediate impacts on those dependent on global markets. Although immediate concern has been for the bilateral export destinations of Russian and Ukraine cereals, particularly Egypt, the impact of the shock will be felt widely, as importers switch their sources of supply, pushing up prices. Attention should be paid to countries most dependent upon imported wheat and corn: at least 24 low- and lower-middle-income countries imported more than 50 kg of wheat or corn per person in 2018.

International Financial Institutions will also need to tackle vulnerability within the macroeconomic context – the tools may differ depending on credit-worthiness, but countries are likely to have new import-financing needs; and fiscal pressures from the expansion of social safety nets.

Agricultural Policies Remain a Major Barrier to Food Supply

Food supply disruption will become more likely with climate change, and this is another moment to consider the need to re-focus agricultural subsidies. Most of these subsidies are poorly focused and a major waste of taxpayer money. They are also huge: EU agricultural subsidies in 2021 of EUR 168.5 billion (USD 185 billion) exceeded the entirety of global aid in that year (USD 161.2 billion). Farmers will be major beneficiaries of higher prices while reduced subsidies will barely affect output levels, and would be much better-spent on those struggling with food costs, or increasing climate resilience.

Policymakers should also tackle policies that undermine food security. For example, despite some reforms in the 2018 US Farm Bill, the US still insists on providing its food aid with US produce, but also that half should be delivered in US vessels (adding almost 50% of the cost of shipping). Reform could save over \$300 million per year, and tens and thousands of children's lives. With grain prices and shipping costs at all time high there is no case for these policies adding to food costs and shipping costs.

Conclusion

Even with open markets, high prices are inevitable, and many vulnerable countries will need new resources to tackle their humanitarian needs. With all eyes on conflict, policymakers at the G20 and beyond must be alive to the wider consequences, and act accordingly.

History of the Question of Palestine



Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel: This is a time for international community to come together in solidarity, advocating for protection of all civilians, no matter what. Unending cycle of death and destruction must end.

Gaza is home to 50,000 pregnant women, who are currently unable to access essential health services. Some 5,500 of these women are due to give birth in the coming month. That

is equal to 166 births per day, taking place with inadequate access to healthcare or even clean water.



1917: The Balfour Declaration promises a “national home for the Jewish people in Palestine.”

1922: The League of Nations grants mandate over former Ottoman territory Palestine to UK. Provisions include terms of the Balfour Declaration, including a “Jewish national home.”

1936/1939: Palestinian rebellion against the British Mandate and Jewish immigration.

1947: In February, UK proposes to relinquish its mandatory role and places the question of Palestine before the United Nations (UN). In November, the UN General Assembly adopts **Resolution 181(11)**, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-185393/> which called to divide Palestine into an un-named “Arab State” with Jerusalem under UN trusteeship.

1948: Israel declares independence on 15 May. Territorial expansion using force results in the first large-scale exodus of Palestinian refugees; 15 May becomes an official day to mark the *Palestinian Nakba*.

1964: Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is founded in Cairo.

1967: Six-day war – Israel occupies West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza, Golan Heights, and Siani Peninsula. In November, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted **Resolution 242** (Land for peace). <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-184858/>

1973: Following the Middle East war of October, the UN Security Council Passes resolution calling for ceasefire and peace negotiations.

1974: General Assembly reaffirms inalienable rights of Palestinian people to self-determination, independence, and sovereignty, and refugee return.

1975: The General Assembly established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) and conferred on the PLO the status of observer in the Assembly and in UN conferences.

1982: Israel invades Lebanon with the intention of eliminating the PLO. After a ceasefire, PLO forces withdraw to neighboring countries. Despite guarantees of safety for Palestine refugees left behind, there are massacres at Sabra and Shatila camps.

1983: In September 1983, the International Conference on the Question of Palestine (ICQP) adopted the following principles: the need to oppose Israeli settlements and Israeli actions to change the status of Jerusalem, the right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, and the attainment of the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

1987: A mass uprising against the Israeli occupation began in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (the intifada).

1988: The Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers proclaimed the establishment of the State of Palestine.

1991: Middle East peace conference in Madrid brings together all the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

1993: Israel and the PLO sign the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, also known the Oslo Accord. Key issues such as Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security, borders, deferred to permanent status negotiations.

2000: Ariel Sharon's al-Haram al-Sharif visit in September 2000 triggers the Second Palestinian Intifada.

2002: The UN Security Council passes **Resolution 1397** affirming vision of a two-State solution to the conflict. Israel began the construction of a West Bank separation wall, located mostly within the Occupied Palestinian Territory, ruled illegal by the International Court of Justice. During a summit, in Beirut, the League of Arab States adopts the Arab Peace initiative.

2003: The Quartet (US, EU, Russia, and the UN) released a Road Map to the two-State solution.

2005: Israel withdrew its settlers and troops from Gaza while retaining control over its borders, seashore and airspace.

2006: In January, Hamas wins Palestinian Legislative Elections; forms Palestinian Authority government, the Quartet responds with Quartet Principles, In July, Israel goes to war with Hezbollah in Lebanon.

2007: Israel imposes a blockade on the Gaza Strip after an armed takeover of Gaza by Hamas. The Annapolis process of 2007 – 2008 failed to yield a permanent status agreement.

2008: Israel broadens its sanctions and completely seals off the Gaza Strip. Later in the year, Israel launches Operation Cast Lead, a massive 22-day military assault on the Gaza Strip.

2009: Security Council passes **Resolution 1860** calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. HRC created the UN Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza conflict to investigate violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. Their findings are issued on the "Goldstone Report."

2011: President Mahmoud Abbas submitted the application of Palestine for membership in the UN. UNESCO admitted Palestine as a Member.

2012: In November, Israel launches "Pillar of Defense" an 8-day military operation against the Gaza Strip. On 29 November 2012, Palestine was granted non-member State status at the UN.

2013: A new round of negotiations begun in 2013 was suspended by Israel in April 2014 following the announcement of a Palestinian national consensus Government.

2014: Another round of fighting between Israel and Gaza took place in July-August 2014.

2016: UN Security Council adopts **Resolution 2334**, stating that Israel's settlement activity constitutes a "flagrant violation" of international law and has "no legal validity."

2017: **The US Administration announced recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and subsequently, the US and certain other embassies were moved to Jerusalem.**

UN Position on Jerusalem Unchanged.

2020: The U.S. mediated agreements to normalize relations between Israel and the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco ("Abraham Accords").

2022: The UN General Assembly requested the ICJ (International Court of Justice) to render Advisory Opinion on the legality of the prolonged Israeli occupation that started in 1967, and the implications for Member States.

2023: It saw two Israel-Gaza escalations from May to October. On 15 May 2023, following a request by the General Assembly, the UN commemorated the 75th anniversary of the Nakba for the first time.

On 7 October, Hamas launched thousands of rockets towards Israel reportedly from multiple locations in Gaza, Hamas carried out a large-scale ground incursion into Israel, capturing dozens of hostages and killing over 1,000 Israelis. In response to this attack, Israeli authorities declared war.



War that has no end. Is there a peaceful solution to the Middle East crises?

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Art & Science

Art that touches our soul

A Virgin with a Unicorn c. 1604 – 0605



The Unicorn by Domenichino

The unicorn is a legendary creature that has been described since antiquity as a beast with a single large, pointed spiraling horn projecting from its forehead. The unicorn was depicted in ancient seals of the Indus Valley Civilization and was mentioned by the ancient Greeks in accounts of natural history by various writers, including Ctesias, Strabo, Pliny the Younger, and Aelian. The Bible also describes an animal, the re'em, which is translated to “unicorn” in some versions.

Domenico Zampieri (October 21, 1581 – April 6, 1641), known by the diminutive Domenichino, after his shortness, was an Italian Baroque painter of the Bolognese School of painters. Son of a shoemaker, initially studied under Dennis Calvert. He left Bologna for Rome in 1602 and became one of the most talented apprentices to emerge from Annibale Carracci's supervision. As a young artist in Rome he lived with his slightly older Bolognese colleagues Albani and Guido Reni, and worked alongside Lanfranco, who later would become a chief rival.

This picture is a fresco called *The gentle and pensive maiden has the power to tame the unicorn*, painted by Italian Domenichino in around 1604 – 1605. It is in the collection of the Palazzo Farnese in Rome.

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