



**INTERACTION
COUNCIL**

Established in 1983

InterAction Council

36th Annual Plenary Meeting

Final Communiqué

**14-16 May 2019
Cartagena, Colombia**

From 14 to 16 May 2019, the InterAction Council met in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, for its 36th Annual Plenary Meeting to discuss the Venezuelan crisis, the global situation of refugees and migrants, climate change and human development, as well as the development of smart cities.

Continuing its long tradition to foster intergenerational dialogue, the InterAction Council invited ten One Young World Ambassadors to participate in the Annual Plenary Meeting.

The Venezuelan Crisis

There is an unprecedented humanitarian and democratic crisis in Venezuela, and the situation continues to deteriorate. Venezuela was once the wealthiest country in South America. Now, an entire generation is being raised without access to proper nutrition, education, and medication. At least 23,000 Venezuelans died violently as a direct result of the crisis in 2018 alone. The long-term effects on Venezuelan society will be severe. The crisis has forced over 3.5 million Venezuelans to flee to neighbouring countries; 1.1 million of them have arrived in Colombia.

High-ranking officials of the Venezuelan military are suspected of participating in illicit drug trafficking and cooperating with the Colombian leftist guerrilla group, Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN).

Countries across Latin America are seized with the urgency of the crisis and are working cooperatively to achieve a solution. The Organization of American States (OAS) has recognized Juan Guaidó as the official envoy to the organization until new elections can be held. A regional bloc, the Lima Group, has reaffirmed its support of the Venezuelan people under the leadership of Juan Guaidó and condemned the regime of Nicolás Maduro.

The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has documented numerous human rights violations and abuses by security forces and pro-government armed groups, including excessive use of force, killings, arbitrary detentions, torture and ill-treatment in detention, and threats and intimidation. The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court initiated a preliminary examination in 2018 into alleged crimes against humanity in Venezuela. In addition, grand corruption, drug trafficking and other crimes must be addressed. Because of the urgency of the crisis, the InterAction Council released a Statement on the Venezuelan situation.

Recommendations:

The InterAction Council calls on the international community to:

- Condemn in the strongest terms all acts of violence, abuses, and human rights violations committed against civilians;
- Insist on the peaceful transition of power in Venezuela based on democratic rule;
- Recognize the National Assembly as the only legitimate democratic institution in Venezuela;
- Support Juan Guaidó, the Interim President of Venezuela, as recognized by the Organization of American States, in his proposal to democratize the nation through new transparent elections;
- Increase humanitarian aid to Venezuela through international organizations while supporting Venezuelan NGOs to distribute the aid;
- Increase support to the countries in the region in their efforts to help the Venezuelan refugees and migrants;
- End impunity for human rights violations and alleged international crimes in Venezuela, by creating a commission of inquiry at the United Nations Human Rights Council; cooperating with the preliminary examination by the International Criminal Court; and by using universal jurisdiction to initiate investigations.
- Support accountability measures for grand corruption, for example by supporting the initiative for an International Anti-Corruption Court.

Refugees and Migrants

The plight of refugees and migrants dominates the political agenda in many states and elections. Politicians in some states have capitalized politically on the refugee crisis by driving xenophobic and restrictive migration policies. This is despite the fact that there are currently more displaced people in need of refuge and protection than there has been since the Second World War. Because of this pressing need, the InterAction Council convened an expert group meeting in January 2019 in Cyprus, which submitted a comprehensive report to the plenary session.

The vast majority of refugees are hosted by developing countries, including Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, in already conflict-ridden regions, while wealthier States put increasing resources on border control and continue to externalize their migration management to developing States. This lack of solidarity and coordination among States is likely to increase.

According to the World Bank, more than 1.1 billion people worldwide lack any form of legal identity. Refugees, migrants, and stateless individuals are disproportionately affected by a lack

of ID. For those fleeing violence or persecution, it can be impossible to locate identification documents prior to escaping. And in the context of war and conflict, governments can be unreliable sources of identity authentication. Especially for marginalized populations fleeing persecution, it can be too dangerous to carry such documentation on their person.

This lack of identity not only impact refugees and migrants, but hundreds of millions of others, primarily in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Without a trusted and official way to prove who they are, over a billion people worldwide are unable to access healthcare, education, and other vital public services. To that end, the Council welcomes the virtual summit to be held from 12-13 June 2019 in Ottawa, Canada, by the UN Refugee Agency and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), on how digital identity can provide greater opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers.

Refugees only make up a small proportion of people on the move. In 2017, the United Nations estimated there were 258 million migrants (3.4 per cent of the world's population), moving for different reasons, be they voluntary or involuntary. The World Bank has estimated that climate change might force over 140 million people to migrate in the future. It is therefore necessary to find durable solutions to address the current refugee situation and prepare for increased displacement in the future.

Recommendations

The InterAction Council calls on the international community to:

- Recognize the humanity of each migrant and refugee;
- Examine prevention of causes that force people to become refugees;
- Implement the recommendations of the Global Compacts to address increased migration and refugee protection;
- Create and circulate a policy handbook on “local integration”;
- Address populism by highlighting the advantages of migration;
- Review, update, and promote the draft Universal Declaration on Human Responsibilities as a tool to address migration and refugee protection;
- Work to ensure that all refugees, IDPs, and stateless persons have access to a digital identity that protects their privacy, and is portable within and across borders, and across time.

Human Development: The Arctic, Climate Change and Indicators of Sustainability

On the weekend prior to the plenary meeting, a temperature of 28 degrees Celsius (84 degrees Fahrenheit) was recorded in Northern Russia and Finland. These unprecedented temperatures in the Arctic demonstrate that the climate crisis is real. The InterAction Council convened an experts' group on climate change in the Arctic that met in Finland in October 2018 and which reported, in turn, to the 2019 plenary.

The Arctic is warming at twice the rate of the rest of the world, with rising sea levels, melting permafrost, a growing ozone hole, and the shifting jet stream bringing extreme weather all over the globe. In the Arctic, the majority of infrastructure – built on permafrost – is at risk of collapsing, and economic losses due to a warming Arctic could reach US\$90 trillion. While the world must adhere to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and even improve upon it, the fact remains that the Earth is warming, and we must adapt to this crucial change. There is much to learn from the Inuit and Saami peoples who have lived in the Arctic for more than 10,000 years. Mitigation and adaptation must be the two-pronged response to climate change.

The Arctic is the canary-in-the-coal mine for climate change. Climate change creates increasingly volatile weather events that disproportionately impact the most vulnerable societies by wreaking havoc on fragile human settlements. In addition to the lives lost, the damage has lasting impact in that those impacted societies do not have the resources and infrastructure to recover from the devastation, which further propels the cycle of despair.

While climate change is being fuelled by known sources such as carbon emissions, it is also an effect resulting from other human activities, such as production and distribution of single-use plastics. Each region has its struggles: In Colombia, narcotrafficking, driven by demand in Europe and the U.S., has devastated the ecosystem and environment, with 1.5 million hectares of the Colombian rainforest destroyed for coca plantations, which means less rainforest to absorb and store carbon dioxide. A recent report by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said that in order to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, as per the Paris Agreement, there must be a reduction in emissions of 40 to 50 per cent by 2030, and we must be a completely carbon neutral world by 2050. However, given the reluctance of many countries to take effective measures to reduce carbon emissions to mitigate sea level rise, steps must be taken now to plan strategic withdrawals from low lying areas in many coastal cities.

A basic rule of public policy is that you can't manage what you can't measure. A singular focus on GDP as a measure of socio-economic progress is inadequate as it favours financial indicators over other measures of human well-being and progress such as environmental sustainability.

GDP ignores structures leading to cultural vitality, communal and familial cohesion, robustness of civil institutions, and other forms of productivity. Critically, GDP ignores education, health, ecology and the environment. Pursuit of GDP growth has created a vicious cycle that puts planetary health in peril. The Human Development Index by the United Nations Development Program has led the way in developing new measures for well-being and human progress. These indices should guide decision makers as much as our traditional reliance on the GDP.

The InterAction Council committed itself to convene an experts' meeting on climate change adaptation and practical solutions in 2020 and on further exploring how to advance "Measuring what Matters: Moving Beyond GDP."

Recommendations

The InterAction Council calls on the international community to:

- Encourage Arctic States to adequately fund Permanent Participant involvement in the Arctic Council, both to facilitate their participation in meetings, but also to enable research, expert review, and community outreach;
- Involve indigenous communities in the work on climate change;
- Urgently redouble efforts to meet the Paris Agreement goal of a reduction in emissions to keep global temperature rise to a maximum of 1.5 degrees Celsius, while preparing and implementing adaptation strategies for the global warming that is already underway;
- Develop new mechanisms to effectively evaluate corporate mitigation strategies in an era of rapid environmental change;
- Convene a meeting of the Arctic Heads of State to discuss pressing issues facing the Arctic, especially climate change;
- Create a Task Force of the Arctic Council to focus on corporate sustainability.

From Smart Cities to Wise Cities

Smart cities of the future offer promise of more transparent, sustainable and intelligent cities through the use of smart technology. Complementing this greater goal to improve urban life is the potential for technology to enhance the quality and performance of urban services – such as energy, transportation and utilities – in order to reduce resource consumption, wastage and overall costs. However, just as technology has the potential to improve life, it comes with potential risks. Any implementation of smart technology that collects information on individuals must be implemented responsibly, with sufficient review and civil oversight to ensure it benefits individuals. As such, smart cities must go beyond utilitarian design and give

way to wise cities, which provide the conditions for individuals to enjoy high levels of well-being, equality, and environmental security.

While the overarching aim of a smart city is to foster productivity, competitiveness and efficient service provision within the urban context, the wise city enables individual and community well-being. Both are crucial for human progress. Given the rising power of cities, we must rethink how the international system can provide cities its proper place within the international structure, and proper opportunities to thrive.

The Council concluded that it would revisit the concept of responsibility, and explore how it applies to a variety of issues in the 21st century - including the city context, particularly the trade-offs on security and privacy, the ethical implications of data owned by major companies, as well as escalating concerns regarding data security.

Recommendations

The InterAction Council calls on the international community to:

- Encourage states to ensure the cities of the future are centred around individual and community well-being;
- Governments of wise cities must develop measures for tracking comprehensive well-being metrics, and regularly assess the impact of smart technologies on urban life;
- Encourage the use of the Human Development Index and other well-being indices to improve public policy and better measure the prosperity of societies.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

InterAction Council Members

1. The Hon. Bertie **Ahern**, Co-Chairman (former Prime Minister), Ireland
2. H.E. Mr. Olusegun **Obasanjo**, Co-Chairman (former President), Nigeria
3. H.E. Mr. Andrés **Pastrana**, Organizing Chairman (former President), Colombia
4. The Rt. Hon. James **Bolger** (former Prime Minister), New Zealand
5. H.E. Dr. Gro **Brundtland** (former Prime Minister), Norway
6. H.E. Dr. Lawrence **Gonzi** (former Prime Minister), Malta
7. H.E. Mr. Kabiné **Komara** (former Prime Minister), Guinea
8. H.E. Mr. Luis Alberto **Lacalle** (former President), Uruguay
9. The Rt. Hon. Sir James **Mitchell** (former Prime Minister), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
10. H.E. Mr. Jorge **Quiroga** (former President), Bolivia
11. H.E. Dr. Danilo **Türk** (former President), Slovenia
12. H.E. Mr. Viktor **Yushchenko** (former President), Ukraine

Associate Members

13. H.E. Mr. Prithviraj **Chavan**, 17th Chief Minister of Maharashtra (India)

Secretary-General

14. Dr. Thomas **Axworthy**, Chair of Public Policy, Massey College, University of Toronto (Canada)

Special Guests

15. H.E. Prof. Dr. Vesna **Pusić**, MP, Former Minister of Foreign and European Affairs and First Deputy Prime Minister (Croatia)
16. Mrs. Kateryna **Yushchenko**, Chair, Ukraine 3000 International Foundation (Ukraine)
17. Ms. Xiomara **Acevedo**; International Relations Professional; One Young World Ambassador (Colombia)
18. Mr. Mark **Anielski**, President and Chief Well-being Officer, Anielski Management Inc. (Canada)
19. Mr. Sebastián **Arévalo Sánchez**, Co-founder and CEO, Fundación Pasos Libres; One Young World Ambassador (Colombia)
20. Dr. Arne Olav **Brundtland**, Researcher and Specialist in Security Policies and “Nordic Balance” (Norway)
21. Mr. Neil **Desai**, Vice President, Magnet Forensics (Canada)
22. Mr. Mamadou Pathe **Dieng**, President, Université Ahmadou Dieng (Guinea)
23. Mr. Daniel **Duque-Velasquez**, One Young World Ambassador (Colombia)
24. Ms. Carolina **García Arbelaez**, Sustainability Manager, AB InBev; One Young World Ambassador (Colombia)
25. Ms. Nchimunya **Hamukoma**, Researcher, The Brenthurst Foundation (South Africa)
26. Dr. Alejandro (Alex) R. **Jadad**, Director, Institute for Global Health Equity and Innovation; Founder, Centre for Global eHealth Innovation; Professor, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto (Canada)
27. Ms. Meredith **Kravitz**, Ecosystem Manager, ID2020 (Canada)
28. Dr. Milorad **Kovacevic**, Chief Statistician, UNDP (Canada)
29. Mr. Sebastián **Lanz Sánchez**, Co-founder, Temblores NGO (Colombia)
30. Ms. Laura **Palmese**, Environmental Law Consultant, Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (ELAW); One Young World Ambassador (Honduras)
31. Prof. Mariano **Rojas**, Professor of Economics at Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Sede México and at Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla (Mexico)
32. Ms. Maria **Rueda**, Forensic Psychologist, Fiscalía General de la Nación; One Young World Ambassador (Colombia)
33. Dr. Jeffrey **Wilson**, Assistant Professor, University of Waterloo; Director, Terrametrics Research Lab (Canada)