

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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END-OF-YEAR LETTER TO STAFF

December 2017

Dear Colleagues,

At the end of my first year in office, I would like to express my deep appreciation for your warm welcome, your hard work and your willingness to embrace change in our Organization.

This past year has seen no let-up in global crises, and the United Nations has been at the centre of seeking solutions across the spectrum of our work for peace, sustainable development, human rights and humanitarian support.

I would particularly like to highlight the exceptional sacrifices made by United Nations peacekeepers in 2017. I pay tribute to the fallen. Their families and friends are in all our thoughts. I am taking steps to ensure that we are doing everything possible to protect all those who serve under the United Nations flag.

Building on the efforts of my predecessor, we have made significant progress on mobilizing climate action around the world in 2017, but there is still far more to be done. Projections indicate that carbon dioxide emissions rose in 2017 after a three-year plateau, while atmospheric levels of CO₂ are higher than they have been for 800,000 years. We need greater ambition to protect people and planet.

Humanitarian agencies and their partners have managed to stave off famines in Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and Nigeria – but the threat remains and we must intensify our efforts. Improving humanitarian action will mean working more closely than ever with development agencies. Reducing needs, managing risks and preventing and ending protracted and recurrent crises will be vital to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Support for gender equality and women's empowerment is an integral part of these efforts, and of all our work.

I have spoken out regularly about the horrific conditions faced by many migrants and refugees, including the commercial sale of human beings, which is an affront to our common humanity. The absence of a global strategy to deal with millions of people on the move who lack the most basic protections has had very serious consequences. The global compacts on refugees and migrants, to be adopted in 2018, will provide a framework to better manage this situation.

A new deal for migrants and refugees is just one of our efforts to support fair globalization. The benefits of greater prosperity have reached many of the world's people – but far from all. The 2030 Agenda is our opportunity to bring people in from the margins and build truly cohesive societies in which all feel they have a stake.

We will also continue our efforts to counter violent extremism and terrorism in 2018, building on the work we have already done to align the United Nations entities and initiatives. We will push for greater coordination of counter-terrorist activities, with a firm basis in human rights.

Our reform agenda, aimed at making the Organization more effective in delivering our mandates, is making progress and I look forward to seeing its results in 2018 and beyond. We are reinforcing our efforts to prevent and end conflicts, to build resilience and restore hope in crisis zones, and to support human rights and fight bigotry and intolerance around the world.

As we implement our mandates on behalf of peoples and States, I would like to stress that I expect the United Nations to be a safe and respectful workplace for all staff, without discrimination or harassment of any kind. I have instructed senior leaders to review policies and support to victims across the United Nations system to ensure that this is the case.

The year ahead will test our Organization and our partners. But I am confident that we can face these challenges together for the people we serve. The basis for my confidence is you: our dedicated women and men striving to advance the goals and values of the United Nations Charter in every corner of the globe. I thank you all for your service, and I wish you and your families a peaceful, healthy and happy New Year.

Yours sincerely,

with my warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'António Guterres', written in a cursive style.

António Guterres