

TGCI GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Global Development Update is a monthly bulletin that informs readers about the events, ideas, and people that are shaping an emerging world community. Click below to learn more about TGCI, and how to sign up for a free membership.

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FEATURED STORY

Antarctic ice melting at unprecedented rates

Antarctica, which holds 60-90% of the world's fresh water, has been losing its ice at a record pace. According to recent data, the rate of loss is nearly triple what it was in 2007. That fact alone will increase the sea level by six inches before 2100. Greenland, meanwhile, lost 1 trillion tons of ice between 2011 and 2014, making the situation far direr than it might initially appear. [Read on.](#)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Religious groups condemn separation of families at US border

The world watched in horror as the United States implemented a policy of separating immigrant children and parents at the border. Among the many responses was a thoughtful essay by the Parliament of the World's Religions, which



denounced the policy, and called for all affiliated world religions to refute any attempt to justify these actions under any canon of faith. [Read on.](#)

Photo courtesy of PBS

GENDER EQUITY

Women suffer disproportionately during conflicts

An untold story in many conflicts is the toll it has on women. The plight of the Rohingya in Myanmar and Bangladesh is illustrative of a wider trend wherein rape and gender-based violence are used as tools of war. The humanitarian assistance community has begun to shed light on the plight of women and girls in crisis situations, with the UNFPA establishing Women-Friendly Spaces in refugee camps, but much more needs to be done. [Read on.](#)



WHO takes a step to reduce LGBTI stigma

In a long overdue step towards equality, the World Health Organization will no longer classify transgender people as mentally ill. The new catalogue, which covers some 55,000 diseases, now lists being transgender as a "condition related to sexual health". Despite this positive step, the global community still has a long way to go to reduce LGBTI stigma. For example, there are 73 countries where homosexual activity between consenting adults is considered illegal. [Read on.](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

90% of plastic pollution comes from 10 rivers

According to a recent study, 90% of the plastic that ends up in our oceans comes from just 10 rivers. Eight of these rivers are in Asia: the Yangtze; Indus; Yellow; Hai He; Ganges; Pearl; Amur; Mekong. Two are in Africa: the Nile and the Niger. What they share is a population base in the hundreds of millions and generally poor waste management practices. If pollution continues at this unprecedented rate, there will be more plastic than fish in the ocean by 2050. [Read on.](#)



Climate refugees take center stage

In 2017, natural disasters forced over 18 million people out of their homes in 135 countries. A new report released by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) identifies weather-related hazards as the impetus for the vast majority of the displacement. China, the



Philippines, Cuba, and the United States had the highest levels of displacement, indicating that no country is immune to climate-related migration.

[Read on.](#)

20 nations take steps above and beyond the Paris climate agreement

More than 20 nations have taken additional steps to limit greenhouse gas emissions more what is required under the Paris climate agreement. These countries include Germany, France, Britain, and several Pacific island states. Guiding their actions is a report by UN climate scientists, due for release in October, about actionable ways countries can limit a creeping rise in global average temperatures.

[Read on.](#)

POVERTY REDUCTION & INCOME INEQUALITY

Record numbers of children under 18 engaged in work

In a recent report, the International Labour Organization revealed that there were 152 million children under the age of 18 working around the world in 2017. The majority of these youth work in agriculture. The United Nations attributes this record high of youth employment to years of conflict and climate disasters, which leaves families seeking avenues for additional financial support. [Read on.](#)



Global hunger on the rise

According to a new United Nations report, the global percentage of hungry people has risen for the first time in over 10 years. The number of undernourished people has risen from 777 million in 2015 to 815 million in 2016. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2018 report cites conflict as one of the main drivers of food insecurity in 18 countries. [Read on.](#)

Remittances are a global economic force

Financial remittances are an important source of income for many developing countries, and have become a powerful economic force in their own right. In 2017, remittances to developing countries were calculated at \$466 billion. With 258 million people currently living outside their country of origin, this number is only set to grow, comprising a more stable revenue stream than private debt, portfolio equity, and development aid. [Read on.](#)

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE & CONNECTIVITY

An in-depth look at immigration around the world

The New York Times released an in-depth exploration of immigration patterns and the attitudes that shape policy. The report evaluates a common misperception-that there are more immigrants in any country than there actually are-and the damage this overestimation can do to public perception and enactment of more humane immigration policies. [Read on.](#)



Misperceptions of migration inhibit progress

Due to the global nature of human migration, collective action has proven to be difficult. In addition, there is a pervasive lack of understanding around migration patterns, which allows controversies to persist and inhibits finding evidence-based solutions. The reality is, most migration happens within regions—not continents—and migrants comprise only 3.4% of the world's population. Understanding the realities of migration might help policymakers better address it. [Read on.](#)

GLOBAL PEACE & JUSTICE

Has the NPT been successful?

The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty was enacted on July 1, 1968, over 50 years ago. At the time, five states that possess nuclear weapons – the U.S., Russia, UK, France, and China – agreed to make "good faith efforts" to give up their nuclear weapons. Non-nuclear states, meanwhile, pledged not to acquire them. Unfortunately, there are still approximately 15,000 nuclear weapons worldwide, and states such as North Korea show no signs of slowing efforts to develop new ones. These facts alone call into question the efficacy of the NPT. [Read on.](#)



Photo courtesy of Britannica



Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

Disarmament agenda falters in the face of global conflict

UN Secretary-General António Guterres favors a strong disarmament agenda, but his efforts have struggled to gain traction amidst global tumult and a long list of development objectives. The arms race is picking up steam in much of the world, chemical weapons have been used with alarming impunity, and war seems to persist in a more protracted fashion than ever before. Given the immense need in the humanitarian agenda, disarmament seems to be a low priority. [Read on.](#)

Social media drives human smuggling

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has released a new report that estimates at least 2.5 million migrants were smuggled in 2016. This practice generated an income of between \$5.5 billion and \$7.0 billion for smugglers. At the root of this illicit industry is social media, which many smugglers use to advertise their services—a major cause for concern amongst receiving countries. [Read on.](#)

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