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UN Secretary General visits South Sudan

On February 25, the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited South Sudan. He held meetings with South Sudan President, Salva Kiir and also spoke by phone with the opposition leader and newly re-appointed First Vice President Riek Machar. He urged both parties to the current conflict in South Sudan to put peace above politics.

“Put peace above politics. Pursue compromise. Overcome obstacles. Establish the Transitional Government of National Unity. And do not delay it,” he said.

He also met with senior UN staff and visited Hope Primary school located at the Protection of Civilian site 3 in Juba.

Ban Ki-moon strongly condemned the violence that took place in Malakal and called upon the government to conduct full investigations and bring perpetrators to account. He reiterated the UN’s commitment to protection of civilians, both within established UN protection sites and elsewhere in the country, and urged the Government to allow access to UN personnel and humanitarian partners.



The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon at Hope Primary School in Juba. © UNMISS

South Sudan National Human Development Report 2015 released



H.E. Vice President James Wani Igga (6th from left) and the DSRSG/RC/HC/RR Eugene Owusu (6th from right) and Aggrey Tisa (5th from left) displaying copies of the NHDR together with the report authors and panelists. © UNDP.

On 24 February, the Vice of South Sudan, James Wani Igga and Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, and UNDP Resident Representative to South Sudan, Mr. Eugene Owusu launched the first South Sudan National Human Development Report 2015 at Freedom Hall in Juba.

South Sudan National Human Development Report 2015, with the theme; “People, Peace and Prosperity,” gives the latest statistics about key human development indicators in South Sudan and has Dr. Fredrick Mugisha, UNDP Economic Advisor, as the report’s coordinator.

In his keynote address, Vice President James Wani Igga said the people of South Sudan have the opportunity to collectively embark on policy and structural reforms that will set the foundation for a prosperous nation where all citizens live better and fulfilling lives.

“Fellow citizens, this report on Human Development is the first to be written for South Sudan as an independent country. The theme of the report – people, peace and prosperity reflects what we as a people aspire to. It is therefore my pleasure to forward this report to you and to all those who partner with us to ensure all South Sudanese citizens live better and fulfilling lives,” said Vice President Wani Igga.

In his opening remarks, Mr Eugene Owusu stated that the primary objective of National Human Development Reports is to stimulate discussions with policy makers and practitioners in shaping transformative conversation, transformative partnerships and transformative actions.

“This report is about the future we want for South Sudan. It is about hope and optimism. We must lift our eyes beyond the dangers of today to the hopes of tomorrow. It is the future, not the past that demands our earnest and anxious thought,” said Eugene Owusu.

UNESCO welcomes the establishment of an autonomous South Sudan Media Authority

UNESCO has welcomed the establishment of an autonomous Media Regulatory Authority in South Sudan, to oversee the media industry in terms of regulation, media development and issuance of broadcasting licenses. This is expected to contribute to a vibrant, independent and pluralistic media in South Sudan, by curbing the increased rate of incidents affecting journalists, end impunity on crimes against journalists as well as create an enabling environment for the media to operate in.

Pledging its continued support to the development of the South Sudan media sector, UNESCO, the UN lead Agency on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists, stressed the need for media donors and development partners to join efforts in supporting the full operationalization of the Media Authority and the establishment of the 8 specialized committees as outlined in the Media Authority Act, 2013.

This follows a visit to UNESCO office in Juba on Wednesday 17th February 2016 by the newly appointed Media Authority Board members. Reaffirming their commitment to the tasks and mandate given to them, the Acting chairperson Ms. Atong Majok Kur said that in spite of the financial challenges they are facing related to lack of an office space to operate from, the necessary office staff, difficulties in mobility and ICT facilities to enable real time communication with the media

stakeholders, the Media Authority is now in place and ready to engage with all the media stakeholders in execution of its duties.

They also raised with UNESCO the need to be supported in exposing them to good practices through a regional study tour, to a well-established Media Authority such as the Media Council of Kenya and Tanzania. In addition, they also expressed the urgent need to put in place a Media Authority Strategic Plan with the support of experienced and successful Media authorities from the neighbouring countries.

Noting the important role the Media Authority is expected to play in the South Sudan media sector, UNESCO emphasised to the board members the need to safeguard the independence and integrity of the newly established institution, uphold the tenets of media freedom and safeguard the media, from claw-back clauses such as the Media Authority Act Chapter 1. 5 which gives the interpretation of defamation to have the meaning assigned to it in the 2008 Penal Code.

UNESCO reiterated its commitment to support the Media Authority’s key role in ensuring South Sudan is no longer listed in the global impunity index and ranked among the countries deteriorating in the media freedom rating.

South Sudan is among the 5 countries that have been implementing the UN Plan of Action on Safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. In 2015, 7 journalists were killed which greatly contributed to the country being ranked as second worst in Africa and 5th globally, on the Committee to Protect Journalists global impunity index. Reporters without Borders also ranked South Sudan as 125/180 countries on 2015 World Press Freedom Index, 6 positions down from the previous year.

IOM responds to humanitarian needs after fighting erupts in Malakal PoC site

IOM and humanitarian agencies are responding to humanitarian needs after heavy fighting erupted between armed actors in the UN protection of civilians (PoC) site near South Sudan’s Malakal town on 17 February. The violence and a fire that ripped through the site have left at least 25 people dead, injured more than 120, forced more than 30,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) to flee their shelters to secure areas of the site and destroyed critical



Internally displaced people flee fighting in Malakal PoC site in February. © IOM.

humanitarian infrastructure, including two IOM primary health care clinics.

The fighting continued through 18 February, leaving some areas of the PoC site looted and burned, including shelters, clinics, community centres and water tanks.

IOM immediately deployed a surge team to the PoC site on 19 February to assess needs and facilitate life-saving aid operations. In addition, IOM and the Logistics Cluster have dispatched emergency relief items, including tents for medical assistance, to Malakal via daily cargo flight.

Prior to the fighting, more than 47,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the Shilluk, Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups, as well as Darfuris, were seeking protection at the site in response to the two-year conflict and rising humanitarian needs across the country.

When the fighting broke out, the majority of these IDPs fled to secure areas of the site that were not designed to host IDPs, and thousands of others left the PoC site toward surrounding areas.

IOM installed temporary water points to provide safe water to IDPs and took measures to ensure the continual supply of water from the White Nile River, which sources the majority of water to the PoC site.

Following the complete destruction of IOM's clinics, IOM set up a temporary clinic by mid-day 19 February and continues to provide full primary health care services, including consultations, vaccinations and maternal care.

IOM and partners had developed new areas of the PoC site in 2014 and 2015 to improve living conditions for IDPs and shelter new arrivals, including an

influx of 16,000 IDPs in mid-2015.

Since December 2013, the conflict in South Sudan has displaced more than 2.3 million people, including an estimated 1.69 million IDPs. Relief agencies estimate that approximately 6.1 million people will be in need of humanitarian aid this year.

Assistant Secretary-General Kang visits Malakal, calls for an end to the suffering of civilians in South Sudan

The UN Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Kyung-wha Kang, visited Malakal on 26 February, together with the Humanitarian Coordinator for South Sudan, Mr. Eugene Owusu, and members of the Humanitarian Country Team. They witnessed firsthand the devastating impact of the violence that took place in the Protection of Civilians (PoC) site.

“I am outraged by what I have seen in Malakal,” said the Assistant Secretary-General. “Civilians who had sought safety in the PoC have been attacked, killed, traumatized and displaced once more, with whole sections of the PoC completely and systematically burnt down and destroyed, including medical clinics and schools. Those responsible for these heinous acts must be held to account.”

“The events which took place on 17 and 18 February in Malakal PoC site are utterly reprehensible,” Mr. Owusu said, adding that the PoC site was established as a place of refuge for people fleeing for their lives and it was absolutely unacceptable that it had become a site where people had been killed and injured.



ASG Kang and UNICEF Representative in South Sudan, Jonathan Veitch, at a destroyed school at Malakal PoC site. © OCHA.

Ms. Kang said that despite the peace agreement, civilians continue to face destitution, destruction, death and devastation, and the humanitarian needs continue to grow. “The fighting must stop now. People caught in the middle must be protected and humanitarians granted immediate and unhindered access to all those who need aid and protection,” she said.

UNIDO fisheries project holds a validation meeting with stakeholders on proposed fish market

A validation meeting was conducted with stakeholders from the national Ministry of Livestock Fisheries and Industry (MLFI) and the State Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries (SMARF) on February 09, 2016 in Juba. The aim of this meeting was to discuss and validate the recently completed technical drawings of the proposed fish market to be built in Konyo-Konyo.

The technical drawings of the market structure were developed after a series of consultations with the community and local authority in the state. These drawings include the installation of a water supply system, sanitary facilities, and management offices for the market administration. The proposed structure of the fish market covers an area of 810m².

Speaking at the event, the Director General of Livestock and Fisheries from the SMARF, George Kamillo, commended UNIDO fisheries project for involving counterparts in the planning process and promised to support the project until its completion. He continued to say that the project would not only benefit the citizens of South Sudan but also foreign traders willing to invest in the fisheries sector. “This project will be able to provide a hygienic space to sell fish products for both citizens and foreign traders who are interested in investing in the fisheries sector,” he said.

Once completed, this will be the first modern fish market to be constructed in Juba. This project is expected to benefit over 100 fish traders at Konyo Konyo market. The construction of this market is part of on-going activities implemented by UNIDO in South Sudan under the “Upgrading the Fishery Sector in the Republic of South Sudan” project, which is funded by the Government of Canada. The project started in



A group photo of participants at the validation meeting in Juba. © UNIDO.

June 2014 is expected to end in 2019. UNIDO also plans to construct other fish markets and fish landing sites in South Sudan.

The project has also successfully facilitated a consultative process which has led to the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between local government authorities, community leaders, chiefs and community representatives to document consensus reached on the allocation of land for the construction of a fish market, including a child care unit, and a women’s community business centre to support business women in Nimule. These project activities also aim to explore potential for alternative income-generating activities as means to support small-scale business development and women’s empowerment.

Victor Cobby Baah, the Technical Advisor to the project, emphasized UNIDO’s effort to ensure that the activities reflected counterparts’ priority dimensions in the fisheries sector and ultimately to establish stakeholder inclusiveness, ownership and sustainability. He expressed appreciation to technical staff from SMARF and MLFI for their active participation in the validation meeting and assured that comments from participants will be incorporated into the final technical drawings for their endorsement.

WHO and MoH conduct mass drug administration against River Blindness in South Sudan

To accelerate the elimination of Onchocerciasis or River Blindness in South Sudan, WHO and the MoH is conducting community based mass drug administration with ivermectin, to targeted population in endemic counties of South Sudan.

River Blindness is the world’s second leading infectious cause of blindness. It is parasitic disease caused by Onchocerciasis Volvulu (OV) and transmitted by

blackfly, an insect that breeds along fast flowing river.

River Blindness, Schistosomiasis, Trachoma, Soil Transmitted Helminth and Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) are some of the major neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), presently targeted for elimination by the year 2020 using the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended strategy of preventive chemotherapy and transmission control.

Currently, WHO continued to support the MOH to strengthen sustainable mass drug administration structures as a primary control strategy to prevent and treat residents for river blindness in endemic areas of the country.

This initiative is in line with efforts that are underway throughout the continent to eliminate NTDs. The World Health Assembly and the WHO Regional Committee for Africa recently passed resolutions WHA66 and RC63 respectively to accelerate actions against NTDs that are amenable to preventive chemotherapy (PC-NTD). These are Onchocerciasis, Lymphatic Filariasis, Soil Transmitted Helminthes, Schistosomiasis and Trachoma

The mass drug administration for river blindness is a multi-partnership initiative that would cost USD 612,500 annually in order to reach all the population at risk in South Sudan. This partnership comprise of: The MOH, the World Health Organization, Christian Blind Mission and Sight Savers. This year's MDA kicked off in Wau with the training of 40 Supervisors from the Greater Western Bhar El Gazel Region. This was followed by training of 1,632 community drug distributors (CDDs) selected by the communities and subsequent community drug distribution.

“The programme treatment coverage goal is to reach at least 80% of the eligible population of the country with the highest endemicity”, said Dr. James Ukelo the Director General, State Ministry of Health, Western Bahr el Ghazal Region.

Ivermectin was provided to the CDDs in the presence of the local chief at a time selected by the community leaders. CDDs were then given 2–4 weeks to complete house-to-house drug distribution and to report back to the State Ministry of Health through their Payam and County Supervisors.

Dr Ukelo said that according to the 2003 Rapid Epidemiological Survey supported by WHO through the

African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control (APOC) programme, the Western Bahr el Ghazal Region was found to be hyper-endemic, justifying mass drug administration (MDA), hence community awareness and involvement is key to reduce or eliminate River Blindness.

He further noted that the CDD led efforts to implement the MDA programme within their communities will reduce barriers in treatment uptake as well as generates ownership and pride among the CDDs themselves.

“While these mass drug administration (MDA) programmes have seen considerable successes since the days of APOC, treatments must be repeated once a year to cover the life span of adult worms (1215 years) and thus reduce the prevalence of the diseases”, said Mr Evans Liyosi, Focal Point for NTDs at WHO South Sudan.

Mr Evans commended the efforts by the Government and the people of South Sudan, as well as efforts by health partners in tackling NTDs despite a number of challenges that need to be addressed to fully control and eventually eliminate the transmission of the targeted NTDs.

On behalf of Dr. Abdulmumini Usman, WHO Country Representative to South Sudan, he pledged WHO's continued commitment and support in accelerating interventions to eliminate NTDs in line with the WHA and AFRO RC resolutions of 2013.



In Wau County, community drug distributors and the WHO staff with poles they use to measure the height of participants during a mass drug administration. Height is used to determine the proper treatment dosage for participants. For example, an individual who is above 158 cm, which has the number 4, would receive four doses of ivermectin. © WHO.