Sports together for a united country

On April 17, UNESCO and UNMISS marked the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace by organizing a colorful and vibrant afternoon of sports at the Juba Basketball Stadium. An estimated 2,000 people thoroughly enjoyed the commemorations.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) arranged the event in close cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, the National Olympic Committee and the Maale Foundation for Heritage Development as a way to build trust and develop new partnerships with South Sudanese organizations.

The festivities were kick-started by the South Sudan National Karate Foundation. With a mesmerizing martial arts performance its athletes were sure to please the crowd.

The Maale cultural group then amazed everyone with trance-like chanting, percussions and traditional dancing. The show served as a timely reminder of South Sudan’s rich and diverse cultural heritage.

Peace messages were conveyed through keynote speeches by Mr. Salah Zaki Khaled, Country Representative of UNESCO, Mr. Eugene Owusu, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Mr. Wilson Deng Kuoirot, President of the South Sudan National Olympic Committee.

Despite the presence of numerous VIPs, the real stars of the day were the athletes. They kept everyone on the edge of their seats during the three volleyball matches that took place under the light drizzle.

The women, two teams from the South Sudan Volleyball Federation, played two matches to determine which team would go home with the trophy, while the men played against a male team from UNMISS. The South Sudanese male players demonstrated skill and precision, the UNMISS team showed incredible perseverance and team spirit, and both teams embodied the true meaning of sportsmanship. The Young Bright Stars, a group of children aged between 5 and 8 years old and lead by Mr. Sidi Moctar, also displayed their football skills in front of a packed stadium.

The day ended with all participants receiving medals for their precious contributions to this inclusive event. The spectators also got to take part in the exciting activities organized to celebrate the day. A raffle made sure that surprise gifts were handed to lucky winners as the sun was setting on Juba.

Japan, Ministry of Transport and UNOPS open Mingkaman Port to enhance delivery of humanitarian aid

The Government of Japan and the Ministry of Transportation, Roads and Bridges jointly inaugurated today a river port in Mingkaman, Awerial County. The $4.1 million port facility, funded by the people of Japan and implemented by the United Nations Office
for Project Services (UNOPS), will expand the capacity to provide life-saving supplies to South Sudan’s civilian population, particularly those people affected by displacement after the 2013 conflict.

Mingkaman is one of the largest spontaneous settlement sites in the country, with more than 100,000 registered Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) having arrived here from neighboring regions. Despite continued efforts to improve living conditions for IDPs, humanitarian access to the affected areas has been hampered by a lack of robust surface transportation systems, especially during the rainy season. As a result, the IDPs have faced severe food shortages and increased risk of outbreaks of infectious diseases. In response to the humanitarian situation, Japan and UNOPS collaborated to install drainage systems inside the settlement sites to improve hygiene and sanitation conditions to mitigate the risk of waterborne diseases.

In his remarks, Ambassador Masahiko said: “The inauguration of Mingkaman River Port is an embodiment of Japan’s answers to South Sudan’s various needs, covering humanitarian relief for the displaced while installing basic infrastructure upon which the country’s future will be built by the locals. As the momentum for peace gains steam, Japan hopes that the port serves as a key driver for economic vibrancy in South Sudan.”

Mr. Paul Cruickshank, UNOPS Country Director said, “We value our partnership with the people of Japan and South Sudan. We hope that the new port will unlock the constraint of connectivity within the country and expand opportunities for effective delivery of humanitarian services to those people who need them the most.”

UNHCR reaches 1,200 vulnerable IDPs in Western Bahr al Ghazal

In April, UNHCR provided sanitary pads, blankets and kitchen sets to some 1,200 vulnerable women in Mboro, Western Bahr Al Ghazal, as part of an inter-agency response to 5,000 internally displaced people (IDP) from Wau County.

Many of them were displaced multiple times between late November 2015 and January this year due to fighting between Sudan’s People Liberation Army (SPLA) soldiers and armed elements in the outskirts of Wau.

Among them was disabled 26-year-old Kilelia, forced into a wheelchair since her birth. “My husband dragged me to safety when our village was attacked,” she said. Together with her three children and husband, Kilelia took refuge in Mboro Catholic Church. But after two weeks, she continued, “we had move again as houses were being burnt and looted just a few kilometers away.”

Kilelia and her family fled to the bush with nothing but the clothes on their back. They lived in hiding for nearly two months. Humanitarian agencies were allowed access to Mboro on 7 April, after several failed attempts since late 2015. An inter-agency assessment team, including IOM, OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and several NGOs, estimated the number of IDPs in the area to be about 8,000.

After two weeks, humanitarian agencies including UNHCR responded with food and non-food assistance. Until then, said Kilelia, “we slept in the open and survived on wild plants and fruits.” She added
that her children have been particularly affected by the conflict. “I hope we can get our lives back and that my children be able to go back to school soon.”

In line with its protection mandate, UNHCR continues to identify and assist some of the most vulnerable IDPs in South Sudan. So far this year, through protection monitoring and delivery, tens of thousands of vulnerable IDPs received assistance from UNHCR across the country.

**National UNV midwives trained on gender equality and GBV in South Sudan.**

In 2015, UNFPA in collaboration with the national Ministry of Health and with funding from the Government of Canada deployed 15 national UN Volunteer Midwives across the country to work alongside the 30 international midwives initially posted to provide midwifery and reproductive health services. These national midwives are among the graduate midwives from the initial 4 Health Sciences Institutes in South Sudan likewise supported by UNFPA with funding from Canada.

The volunteer midwives provide a wide range of direct services including conduct of safe deliveries and basic emergency obstetric and new born care (EmONC) as well as provide health education, counselling and support to women and families.

To strengthen their skills and build their capacity to provide gender sensitive midwifery services, UNFPA organized a three-day workshop for the national midwives on gender equality and gender-based violence (GBV). The training was facilitated by a team of Gender and GBV Specialists from UNFPA South Sudan Country office supported by Ms. Dorothy Nyasulu, Gender Specialist from the UNFPA Malawi Country Office.

The workshop opening was graced by H. E. Mr. Nicholas Coghlan, the Canadian Ambassador in South Sudan who reiterated the commitment of the Government and People of Canada to continue supporting the efforts towards reducing maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality in South Sudan.

“As a male midwife this training is timely for me in the sense that I learned how to receive clients regardless of their ages and gender and also how to provide counselling and care to GBV survivors” said Archangelo Utum, UN volunteer midwife serving at Aweil State Hospital.

South Sudan has some of the world’s poorest health indicators, with a maternal mortality ratio estimated at between 2,054 and 1989 per 100,000 live births (SHHS, 2005; 2010). The number of health professionals is quite low generally estimated at 10% of the staffing norms filled by trained health workers and only 0.15 doctors and 0.2 Nurse/midwife per 10,000 population.

**Ministry of Gender, University of Juba and UN Women to enhance joint activities**

On April 8, 2016, the Ministry of Gender Child and Social Welfare, University of Juba and UN women in South Sudan, signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) to cooperate in areas of mutual concern to enhance the effectiveness of their development efforts, particularly geared towards the establishment and roll out of activities of the National Transformational Leadership Institute (NTLI).

The NTLI focuses on building a critical mass of transformational African Leaders in Politics, Conflict Management and Peace Building, and Women’s Economic Empowerment; drawing upon available expertise and Leadership Institutes within and outside the continent to build high standards and accreditation in Leadership.

The Institute was officially launched in February 22, 2016 and is currently housed at the University of Juba, Customs Campus. The signing of the MoA was attended by Hon. Esther Ikere- Undersecretary, Ministry of Gender Child and Social Welfare; Ms. Izeduwa Dere-Briggs- UN Women Country Representative; Prof. John Akek- Vice Chancellor, University of Juba and Dr. Angelina Bazugba, the Director, National Transformational Leadership Institute.
During the signing, Prof. Akec thanked all the partners for their commitment to upholding women’s rights and gender equality in the country; and urged for continued collaboration to ensure that there is promotion of tangible development outcomes in South Sudan.

South Sudan submits the fifth Biodiversity National Report to the Global Secretariat of Convention of Biodiversity

In April 2016, the Government of South Sudan submitted the Fifth Biodiversity Report (5th NR) to the Global Secretariat of Convention of Biodiversity (CBD) which is the very first of its kind for the Republic of South Sudan. The report is prepared with the technical support from UNEP South Sudan Office under the GEF Biodiversity Enabling Activity project. The report is in accordance with the guidelines for the Fifth Biodiversity National Report and can be downloaded from the following webpage: https://www.cbd.int/countries/?country=ss.

South Sudan acceded to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in May 2014 and accordingly the country is required to meet the obligations of the Convention and the implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). The South Sudan’s National Biodiversity Report was prepared through extensive desk reviews, interviews, meetings and workshops with the key stakeholders and development partners in participatory manner.

This multi-stakeholders participation enriched the quality of the report. Different categories of institutions involved in the preparation of the report include: i) Government line Ministries; ii) South Sudan Independent Commissions; iii) Local Authorities; iv) Civil Society Organizations (CSOs); v) Academia; vi) Private sector; vii) International and local NGOs; viii) UN Agencies.

The report will help South Sudanese to understand the economic benefits of conserving biodiversity and acknowledge that more works are yet to be done to increase public awareness and to strengthen the implementation and enforcement of laws related to biodiversity conservation.

This national report among others will also be used as inputs in the preparation of Global Biodiversity Outlook ahead of the 13th Biodiversity Conference Party (CoP) planned to be held in the second quarter of 2016.

UNMAS commemorates International mine awareness day

UNMAS commemorated the International mine awareness day on April 04, 2016 in Juba, under the theme "Mine Action is Humanitarian Action". South Sudan is one of the countries in the world most heavily affected by landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). Mine Action is a critical component of humanitarian response and enables the delivery of humanitarian assistance and protection.

In 2015, more than half a million people have received risk education; 14 million square meters of contaminated land have been cleared; 3,000 km of road have been made safe; and nearly 30,000 mines, unexploded ordnance (UXO) and explosive remnants of war (ERW) have been destroyed.