South Sudan participants bring World Humanitarian Summit commitments home

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South Sudan participants bring World Humanitarian Summit commitments home

Upon their return from the World Humanitarian Summit, which took place in Istanbul on 23-24 May, the Honorable Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, Hussein Mar Nyuot, the Humanitarian Coordinator for South Sudan, Eugene Owusu, and Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul, briefed the press in Juba on their participation at the summit and the commitments made there.

Minister Nyuot said that the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) is committed to addressing the suffering of the South Sudanese people and that the Summit was a learning experience for South Sudan, as a young country, and an opportunity to meet with different stakeholders.

The Humanitarian Coordinator noted that issues discussed at the summit, including the centrality of political will to prevent and end conflict, enhancing the protection of civilians, and humanitarian financing, are particularly pertinent in South Sudan today. "We must capitalize on the momentum generated by the Summit to ensure that the global community does not allow South Sudan to become a forgotten crisis," Mr. Owusu said.

Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul highlighted that the summit recognized the important work of faith-based groups in assisting people in need.

Remembering fallen heroes: UNMISS pays tribute to peacekeepers

More than 300 attendees from the South Sudanese government, the diplomatic community, the UN Country Team and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan joined forces in remembering fallen peacekeepers as UNMISS marked the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers on 30 May at UN House in Juba.

Under this year's theme, “Honouring our Heroes,” a parade of 220 peacekeepers, composed of members from six of the Mission's military contingents, UN Police officers and civilians - national and international staff as well as United Nations Volunteers, marched with the flags of the United Nations, South Sudan and other respective countries, and saluted in tribute to fallen heroes. Last year, in 16 peacekeeping missions throughout the world, the UN lost a total of 129 peacekeepers, out of which UNMISS accounted for 13.

To honour their ultimate sacrifice in the name of peace, the UN flag and the South Sudanese flag were lowered as the names of the 13 UNMISS peacekeepers who lost their lives while serving peacekeeping operations in 2015, were read out. Ellen Margrethe Loej, Head of the Mission and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), laid a wreath during the ceremony along with the guest of honour representing the Government of South Sudan, Hon. Hussein Mar Nyuot, Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management.
“Today we honour our heroes who have lost their lives in the service of peace. But this day is also about honouring our heroes – including those of you here today – who continue to serve the mission in your various capacities. Every day, each of you performs essential functions. You, too, are heroes, and today we honour your contribution,” SRSG Loej said.

The guest of honour, Hon. Hussein Mar Nyuoit, Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, echoed her sentiments. He passed on his greetings from President Salva Kiir, First Vice President Riek Machar and Vice President Wani Igga and expressed his gratitude for “the wonderful work you are doing here”, but also highlighted that there is more to be done with the support of the international community.

SRSG Loej pledged the continuous support of UNMISS to the transitional government “in these critical next phases of the peace process”.

**UNDP Associate Administrator Tegegnework Gettu visits South Sudan**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Associate Administrator, Tegegnework Gettu visited Juba, South Sudan this week. He met with leaders of the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) and development partners. His visit coincides with the successful formation of the TGoNU on 29 April following the signing of a peace agreement in August 2015.

“I would like to commend the government of South Sudan for their commitment to the Peace Agreement,” said Mr. Gettu on arrival. “UNDP, in close cooperation with other agencies, will continue to support the Transitional Government of National Unity to effectively implement the Peace Agreement and lay the foundation for a peaceful transition to democratic governance, sustainable development, and inclusive growth.” He also encouraged early recovery and reconstruction efforts to complement humanitarian assistance.

Mr. Gettu held discussions with senior government officials, including H.E First Vice President, Dr. Riek Machar, H.E Vice President, James Wani Igga, and Hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, David Deng Athorbei.

He also met with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, Ellen Margrethe Loj to discuss the collaborative efforts made between UNMISS and UNDP to strengthen the nation’s state-building process.

“Through the Global Focal Point arrangement, UNMISS and UNDP are providing a united front for overall UN assistance to strengthen the rule of law in South Sudan,” said Ms. Loj. “We are working together to improve the areas of police, justice and corrections within the context of the Peace Agreement.”

Mr. Gettu also had a consultation meeting with key donors, including Norway, United States, UK, and Japan, to discuss areas of cooperation between UNDP and international development partners.

In addition to that, Mr. Gettu discussed the need to complement humanitarian efforts with sustainable development interventions with the D/SRSG/RC/HC/UNDP Resident Representative, Eugene Owusu.
UNHCR and FAO help vulnerable communities strengthen their food security

The UN Refugee Agency and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations completed distribution of seeds and agricultural tools to 200,000 refugees and their host communities across South Sudan to help them become more self-sufficient.

Assessments have shown that the food and nutrition security situation is worrying in many parts of the country, including in Upper Nile – a region hosting four refugee camps and South Sudan’s largest refugee population of 134,000 Sudanese refugees. A nutrition survey, conducted in late 2015, found that Upper Nile’s Maban refugee camps registered higher levels of malnutrition compared to 2014. This was particularly the case in Doro camp, where the rates of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) and Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) were respectively 15.5 percent and 2.6 percent – above UNHCR standards of 10 percent and 2 percent.

“To quickly respond to this situation, UNHCR and partners are distributing nutritious food for children under five years and all pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, in coordination with WFP. We are pleased to announce that these interventions are working well, but we are also looking beyond quick-fix solutions that help refugees become more self-reliant and less dependent on humanitarian assistance in the long run. This is the essence of the UNHCR-FAO partnership,” says Ahmed Warsame, UNHCR Representative.

This year, the two UN agencies have jointly contributed 186 tons of crop seeds, assorted vegetable seeds, hand tools and fishing kits for refugees and local communities in Unity, Upper Nile, Jonglei, Central Equatoria and Western Equatoria. This donation will enable communities to start planting their cereals and replenish their stocks, in so decreasing food shortages.

“People here lack the resources to buy the things they need to start planting and need support to be able to produce their own food. These distributions have been very timely since the planting season has just started,” says Serge Tissot, FAO Representative. “It is vital to strengthen the livelihoods of vulnerable communities in the long-term so that they can become more resilient, absorbing shocks and increasing their access to food through their own means.”

While many have received assistance through direct distributions in the past, in 2016 refugees in Central Equatoria were invited to attend seed fairs for the first time. With this FAO, in partnership with UNHCR, strives to help transform agriculture in South Sudan by facilitating the sale of high quality local seeds instead of imported seeds. At the fair, vulnerable farmers were issued with vouchers to be exchanged with local traders for seeds which directly injected cash into the local economy.

“Without seed distributions we cannot survive. Not all of us are able to keep seeds for next year, some people do, but because of lack of food, sometimes we are forced to eat the seeds kept for planting,” said Michelle, Sudanese refugee from Blue Nile State. “We hope for peace so that we can return home, where we can be free,” she added.

UNHCR and FAO have recently launched a joint livelihood strategy to improve access to livelihood opportunities for refugees and their host communities across South Sudan.

Italy, UNOPS donate vehicles to Doctors With Africa CUAMM

The Italian Development Cooperation (IDC) in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) announced a donation of two vehicles to Doctors with Africa CUAMM, an international NGO that is supporting health systems strengthening in South Sudan to improve the delivery of basic and emergency healthcare services.

Dr. Dario Mariani, an IDC representative, attended the handover event in the presence of UNOPS Head
of Programme, Richard Martin Schroeder, and CUAMM Deputy Country Manager, Paolo Ferrari. Maternal mortality rate in South Sudan is high at 2,243 per 100,000 live births. A child born in South Sudan has a 25 percent chance of dying before age five. Pregnant women often experience considerable time delays when trying to reach a health facility. They travel long distances by foot in search of health services, as many villages do not have roads and families do not have access to vehicles or public transportation. Many die from treatable complications.

IDC has supported the strengthening of basic health services in South Sudan for several years, with a focus on improvement of maternal health and reduction of child mortality. IDC engaged UNOPS to renovate, maintain and equip selected health facilities and train medical personnel.

In a statement, Mr. Ferrari said: “This valuable donation of vehicles will allow CUAMM to effectively maintain and further enhance its intervention in support of health services delivery in different regions of South Sudan. CUAMM confirms its commitment in strengthening local health system to make it responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable.”

**UNMAS ensures access to water and sanitation for all**

Just 41% of people in South Sudan have access to safe water, impacting upon a whole range of issues including the nutritional and health status of the population. Women and girls are usually responsible for the collection of water, forcing them to walk long distances poses serious protection risks, while also negatively impacting on the amount of time a girl can spend at school.

Unfortunately, water points such as boreholes can be strategic targets and as such are often contaminated by landmines and UXO. Through survey activities, UNMAS has located 690 water points which are contaminated by mines and UXO.

While the actual figure of contaminated water points is likely to be far higher than 690, 594 of these have already been cleared. Recently, in Bentiu, UNMAS received a request from the ICRC to survey and clear borehole sites and in Mundri, UNMAS received a similar request from Oxfam. Oxfam reported that, afraid of explosive hazards in or close to their boreholes, the local population was consuming swamp water.

Once UNMAS declared the sites safe, Oxfam Programme Manager, Nick Lacey said, “I very much appreciate the support, it is the only way we can do our job of repairing the boreholes for these populations that are currently drinking from swamp water. It also clearly improves the safety of Oxfam staff in the area and the local population.”

**How to remain human in the face of extreme suffering—A UN volunteer’s story**

“When fighting broke out in South Sudan in 2013, many civilians were killed and thousands of people sought protection at the UN base in Bentiu, with a large influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to the Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). This posed serious challenges to the management of the sites – scarcity of space and resources, an increase in inter-communal tensions, looting and attacks to humanitarian assets, and increased sexual and gender based violence (SGBV).

My role as a UN Volunteer Relief, Reintegration and Protection Officer with UNMISS is to strengthen coordination among the different humanitarian actors in order to mitigate the risk of violence. My work also
involves engaging with leaders from IDP communities within and outside the PoC sites to address intercommunal tensions, and to support local confidence to build community resilience and a peaceful coexistence.

There are eight community-based organizations (CBOs) inside the PoC site in Bentiu that actively support IDP communities. I support these CBOs through capacity building and mentoring of their leaders, helping them to become agents of social change who look for sustainable solutions to local socio-economic and political realities.

The positive role played by leaders of CBOs in managing intercommunal conflict has significantly contributed to successfully resolving many intercommunal conflicts within PoC sites.

While I have gained valuable professional experience in the coordination and facilitation of complex humanitarian assistance operations, one of the most valuable things I have learnt is how to remain human in the face of extreme suffering, and grounded in the pursuit of the ideal to alleviate the suffering of others”.

Bio: Solomon Ayiko studied Global Studies and majored in peacebuilding, with a Master’s degree in Human Security and Peacebuilding. Before joining UNMISS he was Executive Director of Peace for All International, a Canadian not-for-profit organization he founded in 2006, where he promoted local perspectives of peacebuilding and local ownership as sustainable solutions.

IOM, partners conduct vaccination campaigns to combat measles in South Sudan

In response to an increase of measles cases, IOM South Sudan is teaming up with health agencies to vaccinate vulnerable people against the disease. IOM recently led vaccination campaigns for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Bentiu and Malakal and additional campaigns are in progress.

Following several suspected cases of measles in the UN Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites in Bentiu and Malakal, IOM launched a vaccination campaign for children under five living in both sites. The campaigns vaccinated nearly 45,900 children in Bentiu and 7,300 children in Malakal, reaching over 90 percent of the target group.

The campaigns were implemented in collaboration with International Medical Corps, International Rescue Committee, Médecins Sans Frontières, WHO and World Relief. Led by IMC, the Malakal campaign was also expanded to Malakal town, vaccinating 919 children against the disease.

“The success of these campaigns is due to intensive social mobilization, effective collaboration and leadership of the Health Cluster. But routine immunizations should be strengthened both within and outside of PoC sites to reduce the likelihood of further measles cases, especially among children,” said IOM Migration Health Emergency Coordinator Dr. Andrew Mbala.

Measles is a highly contagious disease that can become life threatening if complications, such as pneumonia, arise. Children and displaced populations living in crowded areas are particularly vulnerable to outbreaks of measles and other contagious diseases.

An IOM Health Rapid Response Team is currently on the ground in Yirol East and West counties to provide measles vaccines for another 46,900 children under five. Health actors have reported 31 suspected measles cases in the two counties this year.