



Humanitarian workers honoured in Nairobi at World Humanitarian Day commemoration

The United Nations System in Kenya commemorated World Humanitarian Day on 19 August 2010 under the theme: “We are Humanitarian Workers: This is why we are committed”.

The ceremony, held in the Kenyan capital, was attended by a cross section of about 500 guests from the Kenyan government, the diplomatic corps, non-governmental organisations and staff from the UN.

Mr Mark Bowden, UN Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator for Somalia, paid special tribute to the Somali humanitarian aid workers whom he called heroes for dedicating their lives in serving the millions of Somali people affected by both conflict and natural disasters.

“Over the past year, working in the humanitarian field in Somalia has become ever more challenging. The ability to access populations in need is shrinking, particularly in south central regions where several aid



An OCHA staff member going through the exhibition mounted by the UN System during the commemoration of World Humanitarian Day 2010.

agency offices are being occupied, aid workers harassed and operations halting as a result”, Mr Bowden elaborated.

In his message to mark the Day, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reiterated the Organisation’s commitment to life-saving relief efforts, and paid tribute to all those who had died while serving this noble cause.

Noting that the humanitarian challenges in East Africa were wide and varied, the Secretary-General of the Kenya Red Cross, Mr Abbas Gullet, called on disaster risk reduction to be incorporated at all levels of planning in order to build safer and more resilient communities. “Investing in risk-reduction will be profitable in the long run and plays a central role in building a stable foundation for economic and social

development,” he added.

In a poem entitled “We are Called to Serve” written by Christopher Sakwa of the Kenya Boys Choir, an intern at the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Nairobi, Mary-Sanyu Osire, narrated the selfless nature and commitment of all humanitarian workers.

“We desire to put a smile on the face of every child, To save them from the fangs of the wild. We desire to change the lives of many. To touch the hearts of the needy. We are humanitarian workers and this is why we are committed”, Ms Osire recited.

World Humanitarian Day is a day that UN agencies and their partners honour the personnel who have lost their lives in the cause of duty and those who have worked in the promotion of the humanitarian cause.

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UNEP's initiative to mitigate climate change effects from households



Left: Local councilor explains the method of cooking used by villagers to Professor Ramanathan. Right: Scientific team talks to the community on the impact of household smoke on human health

On 21 August 2010, a scientific team lead by Professor Veerabhadran Ramanathan of the University of California visited the UNEP/UNIDO-supported methane biogas plant at the Nyongara Slaughterhouse at the Dagoretti market. They also visited nearby homesteads to understand the impact of smoke from biomass used in domestic cooking. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), the Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute (KIRDI) and the Department of Nuclear Sciences of the University of Nairobi were part of the team.

The purpose of the team's visit was to appreciate the extent and impact of the atmospheric brown clouds (ABC), which include smoke (Black Carbon) from domestic firewood and

charcoal. They also established that the most cost-effective and affordable method of cooking in these villages is predominantly the use of biomass products and fossil fuels which release green house gases (GHGs) and "Black Carbon"—both of which have deleterious effects on global warming and human health. Monitoring of these emissions through standard methods helps in the identification of mitigation measures.

The Institute of Nuclear Science of the University of Nairobi and the Kenya Meteorological Department have been identified as good centres to establish ABC observatories in Africa owing to their existing profile measuring instruments for carbon dioxide (CO₂), carbon monoxide (CO) and ozone (O₃). These instruments are located at their base stations and on Mt Kenya. It is proposed that ABC observatories be built on existing

atmospheric observatories. Similar observatories have been in operation in Asia since 2002.

ABCs are layers of brownish haze made up of mostly sub-micron particles, intercept solar radiation, and significantly affect the earth's energy budget. ABC is responsible for acid rain and is laden with particulate matter, which has close correlation with human respiratory diseases. Industrial smog and smoke from burning forests and grasslands contribute to the ABC load in the air and GHGs, affecting local air-quality and climates.

For generations, "black carbon" in Africa has had insidious effects on the human health, especially the women folk exposed to the use of biomass for direct cooking. Particulate matter generated during burning of the woody material and coal, lodges into the human respiratory systems causing long-term bronchial and lung complications.

Presently animal waste from the slaughterhouse is converted into methane and stored in gas bags rather than released into the atmosphere. Solar panels and biogas boiler are operated to maintain temperatures in the dialysis and digester chambers at optimum levels for gas production. Gas produced runs a "gen-set" that provides lighting, powers pumps and motors for the operations of the slaughterhouse. It is envisaged the facility will in future package purified gas for sale to the local community.

UNHCR donates 10 vehicles to the Ministry of Immigration and Registration of Persons

On 12 August 2010, Ms Liz Ahua, Country Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

(UNHCR), presented nine pick-up trucks and one bus to the Minister of the Immigration and Registration of Persons, Mr Otieno Kajwang, at

the Department of Refugee Affairs in Nairobi.

UNHCR has worked over the years in partnership with the Government

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of Kenya to reinforce security within refugee hosting areas in the country to maintain a safe and secure operating environment for the humanitarian staff. Additional vehicles are expected to facilitate the movement of the Kenyan Police and Administrative Police as they execute their duties. The bus will service the staff members of the Department of Refugee Affairs.

Ms Ahua said that there were over 400,000 registered refugees in Kenya and thanked the people of Kenya for the generosity to host these refugees while accepting new arrivals whose number reached as many as 5,000 per month on average. She reiterated UNHCR's readiness to cooperate with the Government of Kenya in providing assistance to increasing number of refugees in Kenya.

Receiving the vehicles at the Department of Refugee Affairs, the Minister of the Immigration and Registration of Persons, Mr Kajwang, ensured the government's commitment to the protection and security of both refugees and Kenyan citizens. He stated that despite various challenges of having a large number of refugees in the country, Kenya had



From left to right: Minister Otieno Kajwang, UNHCR Representative Liz Ahua, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Immigration Emmanuel Kisombe, UNHCR Deputy Representative Antonio Canhandula, and Commissioner for Refugee Affairs Peter Kusimba gather with their staff for the vehicle handover ceremony.

been prepared to protect them as its international responsibility.

As of the end of August 2010, Kenya was hosting 411,667 refugees and asylum seekers, of which 83% were from Somalia, 8% from Ethiopia, 6% from Sudan, and 3 were other

nationalities. Seventy-one percent of the total number of refugees and asylum seekers, i.e. 289,707 persons, were hosted in Dadaab, another 75,583 people or 18% in Kakuma and the rest (11%) were registered in Nairobi.

WFP embarks on food security assessment for urban populations

The World Food Programme (WFP) sent out on 19 August 2010 more than 300 enumerators to the field to carry out an urban assessment aimed at establishing the food security vulnerability of the urban population in Kenya. This was the first time that WFP conducted an urban assessment in Kenya as all previous assessments had been carried out in rural areas, mainly the arid and semi-arid regions.

According Joao Manja, head of

WFP's Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) Unit, the assessment was based on a desk survey made by analysing secondary data from various reports prepared by stakeholders on the urban population.

Manja said that the desk reviews indicated that more than three million people living in the slums in urban areas fell below the minimum food security threshold with an intake of less than 2,100 kilo calories (Kcal) which is considered the emergency

threshold.

As a result, stakeholders have pushed for an urban assessment in all towns in Kenya. The main objectives of the assessment will be to form a baseline from which stakeholders will understand the threshold of food security and health of urban populations, develop a consensual matrix of multi-sectoral activities that partners and stakeholders would choose from to implement their activities and design a monitoring

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system based on objective indicators.

The urban assessment will involve household surveys and focus group discussions. Data collection and analysis of the urban assessment which WFP is implementing with partners in various relevant government ministries and other agencies will take more than one month and preliminary results are expected to be ready at the end of October, and the final and detailed report will be released in November.



WFP staff checking that the enumerator's kit has the necessary equipment.
