Kenya Open Day 2014- Partnerships for peace-
Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the security sector in Kenya

IN recognition of the 14th Anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and in response to the call in the resolution urging consultation with women, UN Women, in collaboration with the Ministries of Defence, and Interior and Coordination of National Government, as well as the International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC), held an Open Day on **Partnerships for Peace** on 4 December, 2014, with the theme: “Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the Security Sector in Kenya”.

The event was unique as it was the first of its kind where women from the security sector were able to gather and discuss their issues with a view to improve their participation and contribution in security matters and share their perspectives, challenges, and recommendations to the Government of Kenya representatives, led by the Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Defence, Ambassador Raychelle Omamo.

Participants of the Open Day event were drawn from the various security sector institutions in Kenya with representatives from the Kenya Defence Forces, national Police and Intelligent Services, Kenya Prisons, Wildlife and Forestry Services, and the newly revived National Youth Service.

A crucial element in ensuring peace and security is adequate representation

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of women in the security sector. This is clearly missing in Kenya where women only constitute 10% of the 80,000 strong police force, with the majority in lower rank positions. The total percentage of female officers in the Kenya Defence Forces stands at 8% of all officers. This clearly shows under-representation of women in the security sector, which, as a result deprioritizes crimes that affect women and girls, such as gender-based violence and sexual gender-based violence (GBV/SGBV).

Some of the issues raised included: the lack of gender parity in security institutions, with a very low number of women in decision-making positions; security institutions policies and frameworks are gender blind (Standing Orders); extortion of female officers for sexual favors in return for promotions and opportunities for trainings; informal barriers to recruitment and an internal culture that makes it difficult for women to advance; family unfriendly human resource policies (loss of promotions/training due to pregnancy/maternity leave, separation of families at deployment); and the attitude towards women officers who are regarded as less of officers and more of a burden to male counterparts.

A number of recommendations emanating from the Open Day were shared with the policy makers by the women to help inform the discussion around the role of women in peace and security, but also policy and legislative structures that are conformed to the constitution and international normative frameworks.

The Open Day concluded with the formation of a “Security Sector Council on Gender” which will work with UN Women on following up the recommendations made to Government counterparts.

UNESCO supported capacity building of national librarians to enhance their ICT and e-literacy skills

UNESCO supported Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL) and Kenya National Library Services (KNLS) to organize a national workshop from 7 to 10 December 2014 in Nakuru, Kenya, to enhance ICT and e-literacy skills of national librarians.

The training attracted participation of thirty librarians from twenty nine public libraries that currently provide public access to computers and internet in Kenya. It aimed at enhancing public librarians’ Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) and e-literacy skills, in order to make better use of ICTs for new public library services to meet community needs.

The training also aimed at helping support delivery of the Millennium Development Goals by enabling public librarians to use ICTs in new services that meet community needs in development areas such as agriculture, education, health, culture, social inclusion and e-literacy.

During the training, Ms. Ramune Petuchovaitė, Manager of the EIFL Public Library Innovation Programme (EIFL-PLIP) stated that: “ICTs role in accelerating development is now widely recognized in Africa and governments are speeding up the roll-out of ICT infrastructure and equipment to support this development. With this development, it is important that public libraries be included in national ICT policies and strategies”.

“To date only 29 out of 60 libraries are adequately equipped with ICT infrastructure in Kenya. There is therefore an undoubted need...
for both library staff and our clients to upgrade their ICT skills to be able to better utilize the resources that we currently have in place,” said Mr. Richard Atuti, the Director of the Kenya National Library Services.

The workshop adapted courses and training methods currently being tested in Ghana and Uganda by EIFL to fit the Kenyan context and supported a broader Kenya National Library Services initiative of engaging partners in transforming libraries across the country into ICT hubs.

This capacity building initiative falls within the framework of UNESCO, supporting ICT adoption in public libraries and also enabling the creation of new services to users in Kenya.

The Kenya National Library Services is a statutory body established to develop, equip, manage and maintain national and public library services, to promote information literacy and reading, and to enhance stakeholder participation in development of libraries in Kenya.

The EIFL Public Library Innovation Programme (EIFL-PLIP) advances community development by enabling public libraries to implement innovative ideas that use technology to improve people's lives and livelihoods.

**UNDP Kenya’s UNV ICT Associate wins award**

Mr. Abdurasul Mohamedbhai with the UNV of the Year 2014 Plaque and Certificate. (Photo by UNV)

Mr. Abdurasul Mohamedbhai, an ICT Associate within the UNDP Kenya office (a national UN Volunteer) was honored with the prestigious UN Volunteer (UNV) of the Year (2014) in Kenya award during the first ever UNV Kenya, Somalia and Uganda Regional Retreat in the country.

According to established tradition, UNV retreats in Kenya, apart from knowledge sharing and team building, also serve to mark substantive contributions of UN Volunteers to the promotion of peace and development and include an awarding ceremony for the best practices and results achieved by the volunteers.

The UN Volunteer of the Year in Kenya award is the most distinctive recognition and acknowledgement for the contribution of UN volunteers to advocacy and support to volunteerism.

Mr. Mohamedbhai deserved the prestigious award in 2014 for his innovative and high tech approach to volunteer management in UNV Kenya. As a focal point in charge of a number of UNV web-based applications on a voluntary basis, he has been providing continuous support and assistance both to the UNV Field Unit and UNV team in the country, related to deployment of innovative IT tools for leave monitoring and enquiries. He also advised the UN volunteers in Kenya how to use these
tools for their convenience and better interaction. His outstanding voluntary commitment, initiative, innovative thinking and creativity made him to be nominated for the UN Volunteer award.

The UN Volunteer of the Agency in Kenya award was won by Ms. Minja Nieminen, an international UN Volunteer, fully funded by the Finnish Government and is a UNDP Programme Officer for Inclusive Growth and Social Development, and Ms. Sheila Masasabi, a national UN Volunteer who is a UNDP Programme Officer for HIV and AIDS. Both volunteers won the award for their substantive contributions to the programme mandate in line with their assignments and outstanding service. In particular, Ms. Nieminen invested her time, knowledge and skills to develop an innovative concept for County Business Centers with focus on youth and women’s entrepreneurship in Kenya.

The awards are presented to UN volunteers who demonstrate excellence, determination, dedication and exemplary performance within their assignments.

International Day highlights the need for a lasting solution to the Palestine Question

The UN Director-General, Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde addressing guests. Next to her is Ambassador Abdelmoneim Mohammed Mabrouk, Head of the League of Arab States Mission in Nairobi.

The United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Nairobi, together with the Mission of the League of Arab States in Kenya organized the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in Nairobi on Thursday 11 December, 2014.

The Mandera County Senator, Mr. Billow Kerow, represented the Government of Kenya at the ceremony and expressed concern that although 2014 was declared as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the year had come to an end with no progress. “The desire of the General Assembly was to see a conclusion of peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians before the end of this year……As the year comes to an end, we realize that the progress towards resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has not been achieved as envisaged by the General Assembly. This is primarily because the parties have since suspended talks indefinitely”. Senator Kerow expressed the need for the UN Security Council to remain engaged on the situation in the Middle East, including solving the Palestinian question and seeking comprehensive, just and lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

Addressing guests, the Director-General of the UN Office at Nairobi (UNON), Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde underlined the UN’s commitment to address the plight of the Palestinian people. Ms. Zewde acknowledged the hosting at UNON of the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People last July, organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

“I believe the Committee’s selection of UNON as the venue for the meeting was a manifestation of our increasing role as a centre for international deliberations on some of the world’s key challenges. It also reflects our commitment to playing our part in the collective efforts to assist the Palestinian people and advance a durable peace,” she said.

In his message presented at the ceremony by Ms. Zewde, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon referred to the recent fighting in the region and reiterated the need for both the Israelis and the Palestinians to work for peace. “I repeat what I said in Gaza: I condemn the Hamas rocket attacks that indiscriminately targeted Israeli civilians. They have brought nothing but suffering to all sides. I repeat what I said in Israel: the scale of the destruction by the Israeli military has left deep questions about respect for the principles of distinction and proportionality, and generated wide calls for accountability. Much more must be done to protect civilians and abide by international human rights and humanitarian law,” he stressed.

The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, in his message presented by the Head of the Mission in Nairobi, Ambassador Abdelmoneim Mohammed Mabrouk, noted how the Palestinians had suffered tremendously in their efforts to establish a viable State, living in peace before the end of this year. The UN’s commitment to address the plight of the Palestinian people...
side by side with the State of Israel. “It is a prerequisite for the Security Council to adopt resolutions, within its mandate, to maintain world peace and security, to set a date for Israeli withdrawal and define the borders of the Palestinian State, within the borders of June 4, 1967, to put an end to this endless conflict,” he concluded.

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is commemorated annually on 29 November because of its meaning and significance to the Palestinian people. On that day in 1947, the General Assembly adopted resolution 181(II), which came to be known as the Partition Resolution. That resolution provided for the establishment in Palestine of a “Jewish State” and an “Arab State”, with Jerusalem as a corpus separatum under a special international regime. Of the two States to be created under this resolution, only one, Israel, has so far come into being.

The Day has traditionally provided an opportunity for the international community to focus its attention on the fact that the question of Palestine is still unresolved and that the Palestinian people have yet to attain their inalienable rights as defined by the General Assembly, namely the right to self-determination without external interference, the right to national independence and sovereignty and the right to return to their homes and property from which they had been displaced.

THE international Volunteers Day (IVD) was celebrated worldwide on 5 December 2014. In Kenya the UN Volunteers (UNV) Office joined the volunteer community to mark the Day at the Mukuru Kwa Ruben Slum of Nairobi at the Hope Worldwide Centre.

The event attracted over 400 volunteers from the volunteer involving organizations that included among others UNV Somalia and Kenya, AMREF Kenya, Kenya Red Cross, Progressive Volunteers, the President’s Award Kenya, World Youth Alliance and Hope Worldwide.

A number of activities for the Day included tree planting and cleaning of classrooms, as well as sharing light moments. The event was graced by the UNV Regional Manager for Africa, Mr. Tapiwa Kamuruko who presented statements from both the UN Secretary-General and UNV Executive Coordinator. A representative from the Ministry of Labour, Mr. Thomas Ngumi also attended the event and presented the message of the Cabinet Secretary.

The Government appreciated the support from UNDP and UNV towards the development of the National Volunteer policy which is expected to be public in January 2015. In its message, the Government committed to ensure that the national policy document is taken through all the processes including national validation and passing of the relevant bill in parliament. The Government also emphasized the need for a budget for volunteerism and countrywide commemoration of the International Day of Volunteers.
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