WHO Donates Trauma Kits to Support Westgate Mall Terror Attack Victims

On Saturday, 21 September 2013, an armed group of terrorists gained forceful entry into the Westgate Shopping Mall located in Westlands, Nairobi City and attacked shoppers. The mall was under siege for six days, resulting in the deaths of 67 people and injuries to many more.

Health Cabinet Secretary James Macharia (right) giving remarks upon receiving the trauma kits from WHO Country Representative, Dr Custodia Mandlhate. © WHO, 2013

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days with hostages. More than 200 people were injured and 67 people died in the attack.

Following this attack, the Ministry of Health requested the UN’s assistance in responding to the ensuing crises and specifically in boosting the medical supply capacity and contingency stock. In its response, the WHO Kenya Country Office activated its emergency response mechanism to support ongoing efforts. This included the donation of 124 trauma kits to the Cabinet Secretary of Health. The kits contain standardized, pre-packaged and WHO pre-qualified supplies that can be deployed at a very short notice.

The trauma kits donated are designed for 100 people affected by trauma, and comprises of Kit A (92 packs) which contains mainly trauma medicines (antibiotics, analgesics, steroids, Intravenous fluids (IVF) and giving sets), and Kit B (32 packs) which supplements Kit A and contains mainly medical supplies and equipment for trauma care (bandages, plasters, syringes and needles, gloves, catheters etc.), medical equipment and surgical supplies with surgical sets. The total value of the donation is 20,000 Euros, an equivalent of 2.5 million Kenya Shillings.

The Cabinet Secretary, Mr James Macharia who received the donations thanked WHO for its continued support and solidarity with the country during the crises and difficult time.

The WHO Country Representative representing the United Nations Health cluster, Dr Custodia Mandlhate expressed the UN’s sympathies on the tragic event and reiterated the Organization’s commitment to support the health sector and Government in improving the health sector disaster early warning systems, contingency planning, response planning and early recovery. Dr Mandlhate also took the opportunity to commend the many Kenyans, friends and residents who came out in large numbers to assist and support the affected.

The UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon condemned the attack and stressed: “this premeditated act, targeting defenceless civilians, is totally reprehensible. The perpetrators must be brought to justice as soon as possible”.

UN Women Boosts HIV-Positive Women’s Right to Land and Property Ownership

Laikipia County Governor Joshua Irungu (in checked jacket) with UN Women’s Tacko Ndiaye (extreme left) and Kavutha Mutuvi (second left) join KENERELA+ officials during the launch of the CBO’s policy brief on women’s right to land and property ownership, access and control in the context of HIV in Laikipia
©UNWomen, 2013

UN Women is working with Community-based organizations in Kenya to champion women’s right to land and property ownership in the context of HIV.

Only 1% of all registered land titles in the country belong to women, while 5% of the titles are in joint names with their spouses. The situation gets tricky if the women are HIV-positive as their families often disinherit them.

Even though the HIV prevalence rate in Kenya has reduced to around 5.6% currently, women continue to bear the brunt of the disease, with their prevalence being higher at 6.9% compared to that of men at 4.4%. It is against this background that KENERELA+ (Kenya Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV), one of UN Women’s implementing partners in Central Kenya, is working within faith-based-communities to help women with land ownership and utilization, specifically within the context of HIV.

Land is a key resource in Kenya and a major determinant of social and economic status and subsequently political power. However, ownership of this important resource has long been unfavourable to women. A big number of HIV-positive women live in rural areas yet HIV and Aids exposes them to the threat of being dispossessed of their land.
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

and property rights.

To this effect, KENERELA+ has been empowering women living with or personally affected by HIV on their rights to land and property ownership. In September 2013, KENERELA+ launched a policy brief highlighting the supportive legal frameworks for women land ownership and utilization, specifically within the context of HIV in Laikipia County.

The Governor of Laikipia, Mr Joshua Irungu graced the occasion and said his County government would give gender equality and women's empowerment issues a first priority. The Governor committed to championing women's right, access and control to land and property including for women living with HIV. He said he would allocate a budget to this cause and promised to ensure affirmative action in all his County structures.

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**Putting Fresh Food in the Hands of Women**

Fartun Abdi squats in front of the mound of red tomatoes in one of Dadaab’s busy markets and expertly selects a few of the best-looking fruits. She hands them to the trader, who puts them in a plastic bag. It is a simple act but it makes a big difference to the 19-year-old woman, who is expecting her first child in a few weeks’ time.

“I rarely used to eat fruits and vegetables since I could not afford them. Now with these vouchers, I can look forward to having a constant supply, not of only fruits and vegetables, but also meat,” said Abdi, a Somali refugee who lives in Hagadera, one of the five camps in Dadaab.

The Fresh Food Vouchers initiative is funded by UK Aid and the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO). The vouchers are distributed at Dadaab’s health centres when women come in for regular check-ups during and after pregnancy. Iqram Rashid, a maternal and child health nurse at one of these health centres says the vouchers are drawing more and more women to the clinics, and this benefits the women’s overall health.

“Previously, the community health workers would have to go to homes to look for those pregnant women who were not coming for check-ups, but lately there has been an increase in pregnant women voluntarily seeking health care, which is a good thing because if they have any complications, they are detected early and treated,” she said.

As the world’s largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger, WFP is constantly exploring innovative ways to deliver life-saving food assistance to those who need it, while improving communities’ ability to withstand the shocks that cause hunger. Fresh Food Vouchers are part of this ongoing drive towards eliminating hunger and its causes.

“Although the key objective of the project is to test an alternative means of delivering food assistance, the Fresh Food Vouchers will also improve the women’s dietary diversity by allowing easy access to fresh and nutritious foods, and also give the women freedom to choose from the market,” said Josephine Muli, the Programme Officer in-charge of the project.

The Fresh Food Voucher project is expected to boost trade at the refugee camp as 10,000 mothers will redeem their vouchers for food every month. Traders from both the host and refugee communities have been selected to take part in the project and the beneficiaries are free to go to the traders they choose.
UNVs Take Up Gender in Humanitarian Action Training

The United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) training on Gender in Humanitarian Action took place on September 24, 2013 in Nairobi and was attended by thirty UNVs from UNHCR, UNDP, UN Women and other affiliated agencies. The training was launched by Ms. Maria-Threase Keating -Country Director for UNDP Kenya and Ms. Tina Stoum, Gender Specialist, UNDP Kenya.

“Although women are largely the victims in humanitarian action, they are also usually the first ones in recovery highlighting the important role of women in humanitarian action effort,” noted Maria-Threase Keating.

Ms. Keating acknowledged the good work being done by UNVs in their various agencies and noted how more opportunities were to come through the “Delivering as One” initiative in Kenya.

The training was facilitated with insightful, interactive and thought-provoking presentations from Ms. Kavutha Mutuvi, Gender Advisor in UN Women, and Beatrice Alukonya, UNV National Programme Officer attached to UN Women. The sessions covered training on gender analysis, gender based violence and HIV/AIDS in humanitarian responses.

Although the training was attended solely by UNV’s, it is believed that the experiences and insights exchanged and learnt will be shared within and through the agencies/organizations to effectively target and combat gender inequalities in humanitarian efforts on the ground and at national level.

The training was coordinated and organized by Ms. Mary Ondiek, National UNV and Humanitarian Programme Assistant, under the leadership of Ms. Njoki Kinyanjui, Gender Advisor, both in UN Women.

Communities Displaced by Conflict in Moyale Receive Reintegration Support from IOM

Communities that were displaced by inter-clan conflicts in Moyale along the Kenya-Ethiopia border now have improved living conditions, access to water and sanitation facilities and improved health care and well-being, following an intervention by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) that started in February 2013 and lasted for five months. The IOM has constructed 100 shelters and distributed 500 litre-capacity water tanks to each household.

IOM has also provided support to enhance food production through the distribution of agricultural inputs. 246 families were given seedlings; farm tools were provided for 500 households; while 90 farmers were trained on land preparation, diseases and pest management, post-harvest storage system and market value of products.

Health facilities were improved by stocking five dispensaries with medical supplies and boosting the Kenya Red Cross Society in Moyale with medical provisions for emergency response. Six twin ventilated improved pit (VIP) latrines were constructed for both genders and twenty two doors repaired in existing VIP latrines. Three additional 10,000 litre-capacity water tanks were installed for improved hygiene.

In December 2011, violence stemming from cyclical inter-communal clashes broke out between warring communities.
Peace- A Responsibility for All

For the second time running, the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) collaborated with the United Religions Initiative (URI) Africa to commemorate the International Day of Peace.

Under the theme “Education for Peace”, the United Nations invited NGOs, diplomats, students from various schools and universities, and Kenya Government officials to honor a cessation of hostilities, and to commemorate the day through education and public awareness on issues related to peace.

“On this International Day of Peace, let us pledge to teach our children the value of tolerance and mutual respect. Let us invest in the schools and teachers that will build a fair and inclusive world that embraces diversity. Let us fight for peace and defend it with all our might,” said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his message presented by Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, UNON Director-General.

“Violence can never be justified in the name of God, religions of the world should provide a powerful example in their common rejection of violence in all its forms and stand to defend universal values of respect for life and the dignity and human rights of all individuals,” observed Ambassador Mussie Hailu, Regional Director of URI Africa.

In his speech, the Ambassador further called for the implementation of “the

IOM provided support to enhance food production through the distribution of agricultural inputs in Illadu. ©IOM, 2013
Golden Rules” worldwide, which encourage peaceful co-existence. This was also echoed in a peace campaign poem recited by pupils of Visa Oshwal primary school.

A minute of silence was observed in honor of victims and survivors of violence.

The Government of Kenya was represented by Ambassador Nyambura Kamau, Director of the Americas Directorate in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She elaborated on the day’s theme by saying that the Government was committed to promoting the country’s national values of nationalism, patriotism, national unity, social equality and justice, inclusiveness, non-discrimination and responsibility, through the education sector.

The new UN Resident Coordinator Nardos Bekele-Thomas reiterated that “peace promotion in all its forms is not the task of institutions only but the responsibility of each and every one of us”.

The highlight of the commemoration was the unveiling of the new Peace Pole and writing of peace messages on a large white cloth by invited guests and UN staff.

Mass Vaccination to Mark World Rabies Day

Mass vaccination for dogs and cats was carried out in Kisii County to mark this year’s World Rabies Day celebrations from 27-28 September, 2013. Other animals like donkeys, cattle, sheep and goats were also treated based on the diagnosis done.

The event organized collaboratively by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Government of Kenya and the Kenya Veterinary Association was aimed at raising awareness about the impact of rabies on humans and animals, and providing information and advice on how to prevent the disease.

On the Day, FAO presented the global step wise approach in the management of rabies in a scientific conference held in Nyakoe, Kisii County.

In her address, Ms. Khadijah Kassachoon, Principal Secretary of State in the Department of Livestock, emphasized the Government’s commitment to control rabies by elimination using the appropriate strategy.

Rabies kill more than 60,000 people and millions of animals worldwide each year. It is a preventable viral disease of mammals and can be transmitted to humans from other species such as dogs, commonly by a bite from the infected animal. The viral disease infects the central nervous system, ultimately leading to death if post exposure treatment is not done. Although vaccination of dogs and elimination of strays has been shown to effectively prevent most cases of human rabies, the cost of such a control programme is beyond the reach of most developing countries.

The early symptoms of rabies in people are similar to that of many other illnesses, including fever, headache and general weakness or discomfort. As the disease progresses, more specific symptoms appear and may include insomnia, anxiety, confusion, slight or partial paralysis, excitation, hallucinations, agitation, hyper-salivation, difficulty swallowing, and hydrophobia. Death usually occurs within days of the onset of these symptoms.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Sam Okuthe, FAO’s ECTAD epidemiologist noted how livestock can become infected with rabies by dogs or wildlife, resulting in public health hazards, economic losses and impacting on food security. “Livestock owners need to be alert and monitor how their animals are behaving and also report such incidences to their local veterinary officers. Any time the animals act differently, think about rabies. This is why FAO, OIE and WHO have united in their goal to eliminate human rabies and control the disease in animals,” he said.

In Kenya, rabies control involves reporting, diagnosis and surveillance, reduction in stray dog population through baiting, mass vaccination of dogs and cats, dog registration and public
education. “This year awareness creation has been emphasized through a public meeting where school children and the public were informed on the cause, prevention and general management of rabies and action to take after dog bite,” Dr. Okuthe added.

A person who is bitten by a rabid animal still has the chance to survive if the wound is cleaned immediately and thoroughly with plenty of water and soap and post-exposure prophylaxis is provided in time. The good news is that if post exposure treatment is given correctly and in time, it is 100 per cent effective in preventing rabies. Preventive rabies vaccination can be given to people at high risk of exposure to domestic or wild animals, such as animal health workers, veterinarians or laboratory personnel, to protect them before they are exposed.

In his remarks, Mr. Felix Koskei, Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Development encouraged the nation to aim at a rabies-free Kenya. “It is only sustained vigilance and prompt decisive interventions that will enable us control rabies and eventually eradicate it,” he concluded.

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Nigeria President Pledges Support for UN-Habitat

On a State Visit to Kenya early September, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan pledged his continuing support to UN-Habitat and promised to keep promoting the urban agenda in Africa.

The Nigerian President met with senior UN-Habitat officials during his recent three-day state visit to Kenya and talked about the significance of urbanization for Nigeria. Expressing his appreciation and praise for UN-Habitat’s work, he said that the agency could expect strong support from Nigeria in the coming years.

Speaking on behalf of UN-Habitat Executive Director Dr. Joan Clos, the agency’s Chief of Staff, Andrew Cox thanked President Jonathan for the growing partnership with Nigeria, and its deepening support at federal and state levels. He also appreciated the leadership of Nigeria’s Minister of Lands and Housing, Ms. Amal Pepple, as President of the Bureau of the UN-Habitat Governing Council.

Mr. Cox requested for political support of the President and Nigeria in driving urban issues in the sustainable development agenda. He pointed to the link between sustainable development and the Habitat III conference, as well as the significance of the conference on both the country and continent.

Mr. Cox thanked the President for his interest in and leadership of the new African urban agenda and pledged UN-Habitat’s support on behalf of the Executive Director.

Also present at the meeting were Oyebanji Oyeyinka of UN-Habitat and the Nigerian High Commissioner to Kenya, Mr. Akin Oyateru.

"Nice to see you": President Jonathan shakes hands with UN-Habitat’s Oyebanji Oyeyinka while the agency’s Chief of Staff Andrew Cox looks on.
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