UN Joint Mission: Marsabit-Moyale Cross Border Joint Programme

THE United Nations Country Team (UNCT), together with development partners, went on an exploratory mission to Moyale Town in Marsabit County in order to see how they will engage under the proposed Marsabit-Moyale Cross-border Integrated Development Programme. Preparatory activities leading up to this mission include concept development; high level meetings and dialogue with governments of Kenya and Ethiopia, as well as consultations between the Kenya and Ethiopia UNCTs. Both countries have shown clear interest and willingness to explore the cross-border and area-based concept with a view to developing it into a longer term programme.

Mr. Raouf Mazou, Country

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- 22 May International Day for Biological Diversity
- 23 May International Day to End Obstetric Fistula
- 25 May Africa Day
- 29 May International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers
- 31 May World Non-Tobacco Day
Representative of UNHCR led the delegation of the UNCT, joined by Kenya Government, development partners including the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), Kenya Red Cross Society, the Embassy of Sweden and national organisations present in Marsabit County. The UN agencies and entities present included UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOCHA, UNOPS, UN Women, WFP, IOM and the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office (UN RCO).

The mission met with the Governor, Ambassador Ukur Yattani, members of County Leadership, a multi-ethnic Council of Elders and civil society organizations. They discussed the County’s challenges and opportunities, agreeing on short and long-term development support strategies.

The first meeting was with the 35-member multi-ethnic Council of Elders, who shared their accomplishments in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and the ceasefire they brokered among their ethnic groups in response to the tribal clashes of late 2013 and early 2014. The elders also made requests for assistance in resettling and supporting internally displaced persons, training on peace building and conflict prevention, support in the field of public health, creating employment opportunities for the youth, sustainable drought and rangeland management, among many others.

The second day began with a field visit where the mission team visited Hellu and Sessi, two post-conflict sites where homes and institutions destroyed in the skirmishes, still have not been rebuilt.

The field visit was followed by a session with the County Leadership where the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) was presented and discussed vis-à-vis ways the County might benefit from a UN joint programme.

The mission ended with a firm commitment to continued discussions between the leadership on both sides of the border, on finalizing the proposed area-based programme document, UN support to the Peace Council of Elders; and capacity building support to the County work planning team in monitoring and evaluation. The County Government promised a dedicated liaison officer, and a joint retreat for the Kenyan and Ethiopian UNCTs to be held within the next few months.

**Prevention against Domestic Violence Bill voted for**

Participants of the PADV Bill workshop. (photo by UN Women)

THE 24th of March, 2015 will be remembered in Kenya as a historic day as the Prevention against Domestic Violence Bill (PADV) was voted for and passed for enactment in the National Assembly. UN Women has been supporting this process to ensure that Kenya ceases to be amongst the twenty countries in the world that have no specific law of parliament criminalizing and outlawing domestic violence. Furthermore, it was a very significant moment given that the first time this Bill was presented in Parliament in Kenya was over 40 years ago.

The Prevention against Domestic Violence Bill 2013 is a response to domestic violence in Kenya and seeks to address the gap that exists due to lack of any existing legislation addressing domestic violence. It was one of the three family bills: Marriage, Matrimonial Property and Protection against Violence bills. The other two have since been passed. The Bill seeks to protect the family as the fundamental unit of society.

The process of law formulation is not easy, first, all the stakeholders must have a strong united voice and consensus on exactly what they would like a bill to address. This calls for a momentum building process which was facilitated through key strategies developed, including strategic stakeholder and public mobilization, awareness raising and engagement of Members of Parliament.

Secondly, there has to be clarity on leadership for the process. The Women’s Empowerment link which brings together different stakeholders under the ‘Mwamko Mpya’ initiative took over the process to mobilize civil society and get support from the different development partners. This ensured clear communication structures and a central point for linkage with the diverse partners and stakeholders. It also ensured consistency in communication.

The next level entailed putting in place strategies for the enactment. This saw UN Women support a technical working group to assist parliamentarians to put the Bill together. At this level, both the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association [KEWOPA] and Kenya Parliamentary
Human Rights Association [KEPHRA], were instrumental. A small technical working group met several times to agree on content and then mobilized over fifty Members of Parliament to clarify any thorny issues in the Bill. One key winning strategy was the agreement that KEPHRA would drive the process in Parliament, so that the Bill would cease being looked at as a “women’s issue”. UN Women supported this process.

The technical working group then mobilized civil society and KEPHRA who met over a three-day process to categorize the amendments that were proposed. There was an agreement on key non-negotiable aspects of the Bill, such as the definition of persons in a domestic relationship, forms of domestic violence, key services that should be offered to survivors and a few more, including the role of the police. An important aspect of this phase was to identify the various skills of the Members of Parliament in order to determine who was best placed to push for which amendments in the House. At this point, it was critical for stakeholders to be in regular communication with each other and be proactively engaged in the process within the House.

Finally, keeping tabs on the House business may look a simple matter, but it is not. The technical working group kept a hawk’s eye on the House and got almost real time feedback on when the motion would come up in Parliament. This enabled stakeholders to mobilize Members of Parliament to debate and vote. This phase was filled with anxiety and therefore, there was need to focus and invest in mobilizing all and sundry.

It is important to acknowledge the contribution of the National Assembly and the Kenya Parliamentarians Human Rights Caucus who steered the process, KEWOPA for supporting the Bill from the very first day, the technical working group and all the stakeholders, especially the civil society, that relentlessly played a pivotal role to get the Bill passed. UN Women made its mark, as it was present at every stage of the way and was instrumental in supporting the different processes. Now everyone awaits the President’s ascension of the Bill.

**UN officials in Kenya sign up as HeForShe champions**

ON 16th March, 2015, the UNEP Executive Director led UNFPA, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and UNIC heads of agencies in signing on as HeForShe champions and publicly demonstrated their commitment to gender equality and the prevention of discrimination against women and girls.

“I challenge my colleagues to ask themselves, how you would like to be treated any time you are confronted with discrimination against women and girls in our families, workplaces and communities,” said Mr. Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director.

“The struggle for gender equality is not just about the law, we must take personal responsibility,” reiterated Mr. Uchenna Emelonye, OHCHR Senior Human Rights Advisor.

During the launch, UNFPA Country Representative, Mr. Siddharth Chatterjee reminded everyone that inequality affects not just the moral fabric of families but society as a whole, negatively impacting development efforts. “I urge you all therefore to sign up and join efforts to transform this country, beginning with your one individual action...”

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In 2014, during rush hour, a woman was at a crowded bus stop in Nairobi, waiting to start her journey back home. She was set upon by a group of men who roughed her up and tore off her clothes until she was naked. They kicked her in the groin and continued to beat her up even as she screamed for help and tried to cover herself up. Her crime? Wearing a short skirt.

Every day women all over the world pay a price for unequal power relations between women and men. Whether it is a woman being stripped on a street in Nairobi for being “indecently” dressed, an Indian student gang-raped in a bus, a Swedish girl beaten unconscious by her boyfriend or a female manager passed over for promotion they all represent the ultimate consequences of societal attitudes put in place to hold women down. The end result? Through various types of control and intimidation half of humanity is stopped from enjoying their human rights.

Women and girls experience violence in all forms at homes and in public, all over the globe. In many countries silence reigns on the pervasiveness of domestic violence against women, even in countries where gender equality has purportedly been achieved are affected.

It is no secret that India ranks with Afghanistan, Congo and Somalia as one of the most dangerous places for women. With reports of a woman being raped every 18 hours in New Delhi, the capital city is now infamously known as the ‘rape capital’ of India.

While commonly regarded as one of the leading countries with regard to gender equality, Sweden is hardly a stranger to gender-based violence. 28,200 cases of assault against women were reported to the police in 2014, out of which more than 60 percent were committed indoors by a person familiar to the woman.

Over the last one year, Kenya has seen staggering reports of violence against women. Not only was the violence brutal in nature, but most disturbing and worrying is the nonchalant attitude among those witnessing it.

Societal norms and structures that aim at controlling women sometimes go to extreme lengths, often through targeting women’s rights to their own sexuality. The 2008-09 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) found that four
out of ten women have experienced some form of gender-based violence, which includes female genital mutilation. In particular, the survey found that much of the violence begins at around age 15, and intensifies with age and the number of children a woman has.

Particularly alarming is the fact that the latest 2014 KDHS survey shows that 41 percent of women have experienced violence -- both sexual and physical -- perpetrated by a family member.

The time has come for all men, irrespective of nationality or profession, to introspect.

A few weeks ago, the United Nations Office in Nairobi launched the #HeForShe online campaign, urging men to sign on as #HeForShe champions in a public demonstration of their own commitment to prevent violence and discrimination against women and girls.

The #HeForShe campaign aims to bring home the message that although laws exist to deal with gender violence and guarantee gender equality, every man must take personal responsibility to root out the vice of gender discrimination in his home. Only then can a society begin to take a stand together to bring to an end injustice committed against women and girls, denying them basic human rights such as a life in dignity, choice and freedom.

The #HeForShe campaign is also about recognizing the enormous economic gains society stands to make when women are able to grow up in environments that are kept free of gender-based violence and discrimination. One study estimates that reducing barriers to women’s participation in emerging economies could raise per capita incomes by as much as 14 percent.

Violence and discriminative structures contribute to keeping women out of the workforce, thus dragging down women, their families, and entire communities for generations, in Kenya and elsewhere. For Kenya to reach the goals enshrined in Vision 2030 the potential of all Kenyans, women and men, have to be realized.

Time for change has come. All men must take a firm stand against violence and discrimination, for Kenya to reach its full promise and potential as a people and a nation.

We urge all boys and men; faith and community leaders, youth and elders, and people at all levels of society to join the #HeForShe initiative, to put an end to discrimination and violence against all women and girls.

The #HeForShe initiative offers a great opportunity to manifest our dedication to this cause and to set the trend for a healthier and safer society for all.

Mr. Johan Borgstam is the Ambassador of Sweden to Kenya. Twitter: @jborgstam.
Mr. Bob Collymore is the CEO of Safaricom. Twitter: @bobcollymore
Mr. Linus Kaikai is the Managing Editor & General Manager for Television at the Nation Media Group. Twitter: @linuskaikai
Mr. Siddharth Chatterjee is the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Representative to Kenya. Twitter: @sidchat1
Follow Siddharth Chatterjee on Twitter: www.twitter.com/sidchat1

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**UN Mission to Moyale in Pictures**

*by RCO and the Standard newspaper*

Mr. Anders Ronquistt, Head of Development Cooperation, Embassy of Sweden, addressing the Council of Elders, in Moyale.

Mr. Per Knutsson, UN RCO Head, addressing the Council of Elders.

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Ms. Karin Fueg, UN Women Deputy Country Director, greeting the Council of Elders.

Dr. Asha Mohamed, Kenya Red Cross Society Deputy Secretary-General, addressing the Elders.

Joint Council of Elders from different ethnic communities, expressing solidarity.

Spokesman of the Council of Elders making a presentation to the Joint Mission delegation.

Aerial view of houses damaged in the conflict in Hellu, Moyale.

Front view of a home destroyed in the skirmishes.
Destroyed business premises in Hellu, Moyale

A primary school in Sessi destroyed in the conflict when raiders blew it up and then carted off the stones as well, to make sure it could not be rebuilt.

Dr. Pirkku Heinonen, UNICEF Country Representative, in discussion (in the vernacular language) with Ethiopians in a section of no man’s land, at Sessi, Moyale

Governor Yattani making his remarks during the session with Joint UN & development partners and the Marsabit County Government officials

A shop-front in ‘downtown’ Moyale inscribed in three languages, English, Kiswahili and Amharic. A testament to the existing cross-border integration.

Mr. Golicha Sora, CEC, Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development presenting the CIDP

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Mr. Mukhtar Ogle, from the Office of the President addressing the group.

Mr. Pierre Gelas, UNOCHA, makes a point after the presentation of the Marsabit CIDP.

Ms. Zeinab Khalif, UNDP Kenya in an engagement in response to the CIDP.

Mr. Per Knutsson, Head of UN RCO, responding to points raised by Gov. Ukur Yattani, and members of the Marsabit County Government.

Mr. Chachu Ganya, Member of Parliament for North Horr, Moyale contributes to the discussion.

Group photo of participants, including Governor Ukur Yattani, Raouf Mazou, UNHCR, Anders Ronquist, Swedish Embassy, Mukhtar Ogle, Office of the President, Mr. Chachu Ganya, MP, North Horr and Per Knutsson, UN RCO, with members of the Joint UN Mission, and members of the County Government of Marsabit.
Kiambu to pilot UN-Habitat’s first revolutionary semi-aerobic waste management method

KIAMBU County made history by becoming the first place in Africa to pilot a land fill based on the “Fukuoka method”. The County Governor, Mr. William Kabogo was beaming with joy, saying that he felt honoured that UN-Habitat had chosen Kiambu to be the first to pilot the revolutionary semi-aerobic waste management method.

“This is something we are not taking for granted because Kiambu, just like many other places in Kenya and indeed Africa, has a big problem addressing waste management,” he said.

The project, modeled on the Japanese Fukuoka University’s technology application on solid and liquid waste management, is being supported by UN-Habitat, through a joint collaboration with the County, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), Embassy of Sweden and Japan’s Fukuoka University.

The land fill type has a comparative advantage over other waste management formulae because 70-100 tons of waste will be managed daily in addition to a leachate treatment system. The land fill will be located in Thika town on five acres of Government land. Professor Yasushi Matsufuji from Fukuoka University made a video presentation where he explained to those present how the Fukuoka method works.

“This method has been seen to work better and is now being accepted in very many places,” he said after the presentation. Governor Kabogo said he had briefed the President on the project and he had given his full blessings for the project. “The President is keen on the success of this project that would hopefully be replicated in other parts of the country,” he added.

Speaking on behalf of the agency, the Director of the Regional Office for Africa at UN-Habitat, Ms. Axumite Gebre-Egziabher, reaffirmed the agency’s commitment to support Kenya in advancing the agenda of sustainable urban development.

“While urbanization in Kenya and the rest of Africa is characterized mainly by numerous challenges, such as waste management, youth unemployment and safety; the rapid urbanization is also a huge advantage yet to be fully exploited,” she noted.

Representing the Cabinet Secretary for Land, Housing and Urban Development, Engineer Nyariki said his Ministry was happy with the project and would wish to see similar projects initiated in other parts of the country, same sentiments expressed by the representative from the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources.
Africa celebrates Africa Environment Day /Life of Wangari Maathai and World Wildlife Day

On 3rd March, 2015, a cloud of dark smoke curled over the Nairobi National Park in Kenya to mark the commemoration of Africa Environment Day (AED)/Wangari Maathai Day (WMD) and World Wildlife Day(WWD). The President of the Republic of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta graced the celebrations with the torching of 15 tonnes of contraband ivory at Nairobi National Park in a demonstration of the fight against illegal wildlife trade and its products.

The theme for the World Wildlife Day was ‘Wildlife Crime is serious, let’s get serious about wildlife crime’. The ceremony brought together more than 1,000 guests, among them the African Union Commissioner for Rural Agriculture and Economy, Mrs. Tumusiime Rhoda Peace, cabinet secretaries, UN officials and Members of the international and diplomatic community.

Africa Environment Day (AED) is celebrated every year across the Region on 3rd March. Kenya was the regional host for the 2015 celebrations under the theme ‘Empower Women for Sustainable Natural Resources Management’, which was proposed in view of the theme for the January 2015 African Union Summit which was: ‘Year of Women Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda, 2063’. AED is celebrated jointly with Wangari Maathai Day and World Wildlife Day on 3rd March.

During his remarks, President Kenyatta said: “Kenya has committed to putting its ivory beyond commercial use, a commitment that several African nations made at the London conference of February 2014. It is particularly significant that Kenya has regained the position of leadership in the fight to save elephants and we are all elated that this has happened. To ice the cake, all Kenya needs to do now is join the African-led Elephant Protection Initiative that was created in February 2014 when Botswana, Gabon, Chad, Ethiopia and Tanzania signed up”.

The President added: “Our message must remain clear. Many of these tusks belong to elephants that were wantonly slaughtered by criminals. We want future generations of Kenyans, Africans and indeed the entire world to experience the majesty and beauty of these magnificent animals in the natural world. Poachers and their enablers will not have the last word in Kenya”.

UNEP’s representative, Ms. Mette Wilkie, stated that at the UN Environment Assembly (also known as UNEA), Member States adopted a resolution calling for reinforced actions and enhanced international coordination to counter the illegal trade in wildlife. The resolution strongly encourages governments to implement their commitments to fight the illegal trade through, among other things, targeted actions to eradicate supply, transit and demand for illegal wildlife products. It promotes zero-tolerance policies and the development of sustainable and alternative livelihoods for communities adversely affected by the illegal trade.

While recognizing that more needs to be done, UNEP very much welcomes the progress made in Kenya to address wildlife crime. The enactment of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act just over a year ago was a clear signal of the Government’s determination to hold those responsible for trafficking to account and to deter those who wish to use Kenya as a transit country. The establishment of the forensic and genetic laboratory at the Headquarters of the Kenya Wildlife Service was also a significant step towards detection and enforcement, and the first of its kind in East Africa.

In celebration of the theme, “the life and work of Wangari Maathai”, Africa’s first female Nobel laureate, a champion of grassroots environmental activism and founder of the Green Belt Movement, special emphasis was placed on the importance of empowering women in sustainable natural resource management.
UNESCO High Level Policy Roundtable: Addressing the need for sustainable water management

As a pre-event of World Water Day celebrations held in Kenya, UNESCO and the Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources jointly organized a high level policy roundtable on the occasion of the launching of the World Water Development Report 2015 on ‘Water for A Sustainable World’ (WWDR). Also, the strategic partnership between UNESCO and the Government of Kenya, on the Kenya Groundwater Mapping Programme was officially announced, calling for action to build a knowledge base of groundwater resources by improving the scientific knowledge on Kenya’s groundwater wealth to face the upcoming challenges.

The alarming conclusion of the WWDR is the worldwide shortfall in water supply by 40% by 2030. Numerous issues addressed in the WWDR all show evidence of the urgent need to do things differently. Water remains the core for sustainable development and there exist complex inter-linkages between water and the social, economic and environmental dimensions across all boarders.

During the WWDR launch, Mr. Mohamed Djelid, UNESCO Regional Director, noted: “Countries have to put in place and implement coherent and harmonized policies taking into account sound scientific knowledge”. He urged all guests representing the water sector to invest more into building the knowledge base of Kenya’s water resources that brings benefits to all people.

Mr. Fred Mwango of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Secretariat (IGAD) also highlighted: “Political will is a vital aspect for a successful approach of the upcoming water crisis” for the governments to adopt policies and protocols that encourage sustainable investments in the use of water for peace and development.

From the socio-economic perspective, water is a necessary resource for industry and agriculture among others, and therefore both regulatory bodies and industries can be held accountable for water resource extraction, pollution and lack of responsible use and management.

During the roundtable discussion, Mr. Abou Amani, UNESCO Senior Water Specialist, noted: “Securing water on the long term is an achievable goal”, only if national and county governments, and industries could collaborate further in working towards sustainable development by achieving higher efficiency, re-use of resources and sustainable water management. Improving the efficiency also implied the use of innovative technologies and investments in renewable energy that can contribute to the long term needs of water resources.

Mr. Philip Olum, the Chief Executive Officer of the Water Resources Management Authority (WRMA) endorsed the idea of formulating “strict regulation and enforcement”. He underlined the importance of safeguarding the existing eco-systems and wetlands, as well as averting mismanagement of those resources and pollution that may come from industries. Mr. Olum advised that it was better to exceed costs in prevention and conservation than in restoration, as the results will eventually outweigh the costs.

Mr. Robert Goodwin, UN-Habitat Chief Technical Advisor, Water, Sanitation and Infrastructure, expressed the need for the water sector to become “more organized in terms of how to collect and present reliable scientific data to support both long term investments and to develop sustainable water management measures”.

During the discussion, the need of advocacy work was raised to create awareness on the climate change and sustainable usage of water resources. Local communities often times face the most severe challenges of climate change and the focus must be shifted from emergency to disaster and risk management. The need to partner with civil society groups and to develop an inclusive governance structure is also essential since access to water is a basic human right and all decisions have a direct impact on everyone.

The roundtable provided a platform to share information and views on water issues that most urgently need to be addressed within the Kenya Vision 2030, (Kenya’s national development blue print) and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The WWDR is the result of collaboration between the UN and international partners, who together form the UN-Water, coordinated by UN World Water Assessment Programme, hosted by UNESCO.

Water is fundamental for life and ensuring water security for communities worldwide is essential for peace and sustainable development. The scientific understanding of the water cycle, the distribution and characteristics of surface and groundwater, all contribute to the wise management of freshwater for a healthy environment and as a response to vital human needs.
Religious leaders agree to join fight against maternal deaths in Kenya

In an initiative supported by UNFPA Kenya, the country’s Ministry of Health has rallied the support of major religious institutions to combat maternal deaths in 15 counties.

The counties are responsible for 98% of maternal deaths in Kenya, where between 18 and 20 women die every day due to pregnancy and child birth complications.

The 15 counties are Marsabit, Mandera, Wajir, Lamu, Migori, Garissa, Kisumu, Homa Bay, Turkana, Taita Taveta, Kakamega, Nakuru, Nairobi, Isiolo and Siaya. This is the first time leaders of the major religions in Kenya have jointly pledged to reduce maternal deaths.

The engagement with religious leaders follows an advocacy campaign in November last year that rallied governors from the 15 most-affected counties to sign a communiqué agreeing to allocate more resources and prioritise reduction of maternal and new-born deaths in their counties.

The initiative to bring in religious leaders was regarded as a key strategy by the Government, with President Uhuru Kenyatta personally opening the meeting held on Monday, 4th March 2015.

In Kenya, faith-based organizations manage about one third of health facilities. Religious leaders also command considerable trust and following, giving them enormous potential for addressing social challenges, some of which have a direct relationship with maternal mortality. These include such problems as sexual permissiveness, teen pregnancy, drug abuse and alcoholism.

The campaign to enrol faith-based organisations is being implemented jointly by the Ministries of Health, State for Devolution and Planning, and Sports and Culture, the Council of Governors and the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya. It is supported by UNFPA.

With less than 180 days to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) deadline, Kenya is unlikely to reach the MDG of reducing maternal deaths by three quarters. The national Government is implementing several programmes aimed at fighting maternal deaths.

“The tools to prevent maternal deaths are in our hands and what we need is the commitment of each one of us wherever we are,” said President Kenyatta during the opening of the religious leaders’ workshop.

Maternal mortality in Kenya stands at about 488 per 100,000 live births. About 250,000 women are estimated to suffer from disabilities caused by complications during pregnancy and childbirth each year.

“When we empower women and couples to make informed choices, including the choice to plan the number, optimal timing and appropriate spacing of their children and to prevent unplanned pregnancies — women thrive. And when women thrive, families benefit,” stressed UNFPA Executive Director, Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin in a message sent to the meeting.

Religious leaders pledged to exploit the potential of religious organisations to combat maternal mortality. The leaders will identify county-specific priority actions to reduce maternal mortality and advocate for ending harmful traditional practices that harm women and girls.

(From left) UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas, UNFPA Kenya Office Representative, Mr. Siddharth Chatterjee, Health Cabinet Secretary, Mr. James Macharia and ACK Archbishop Rev. Dr. Eliud Wabukala, confer during the religious leaders’ meeting on maternal mortality held in Nairobi. (photo by UNFPA)
MORE than 15,000 Kenyans, including the First Lady, Margaret Kenyatta, took part in the second First Lady’s Annual Half Marathon that coincided with the International Women’s Day, on 8th March, raising more than USD 4 million to address maternal and child health concerns in Kenya.

The resources mobilized go to the Beyond Zero Campaign, which aims at improving access to maternal and child health care across Kenya through the provision of mobile clinics to the counties to supplement existing stationary health facilities. Since the campaign was launched in January 2014, Beyond Zero has made a significant impact by providing fully equipped mobile health clinics to 21 counties that bring essential services closer to vulnerable communities, including people living in informal settlements.

An estimated 63% of pregnant women living with HIV accessed treatment services aimed at preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV in 2013, but only 31% of children living with HIV had access to antiretroviral treatment in the same year.

President Uhuru Kenyatta received the First Lady at the finishing line inside Nyayo Stadium. She was joined in the event by Deputy President William Ruto and his wife, Mrs. Rachel Ruto, Cabinet Secretaries Joseph Nkaissery, Amina Mohamed, Anne Waiguru, James Macharia, Judy Wakhungu and Hassan Wario.

“Today is International Women’s Day. Thousands of events are held across the globe to celebrate the achievements of women and it is quite appropriate that in our own way we mark this day by running to raise resources to safeguard the lives of children and women in Kenya,” said Mrs. Margaret Kenyatta.

In recent years, Kenya has made notable progress in improving the health of mothers and children. New HIV infections among children have declined from 21,000 in 2009 to 13,000 in 2013. An estimated 63% of pregnant women living with HIV accessed treatment services aimed at preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV in 2013, but only 31% of children living with HIV had access to antiretroviral treatment in the same year.

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Leadership for women and girls’ health: Beyond Zero Campaign in Kenya side event at the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women

FIRST Lady Margaret Kenyatta joined other world leaders for the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

The meeting took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 9th to 20th March, 2015. Representatives of UN Member States, UN entities, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) members and accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world attended the session.

The main focus of the session was on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including current challenges that affect its implementation and the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women. The session also addressed opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda.

On 13th March, 2015, the First Lady held a side session showcasing the Beyond Zero Campaign and Kenya’s political commitment and investment in gender equality and empowerment of women within the health and social sector. The focus of the side event was around accelerated elimination of transmission of HIV from mother to child (eMTCT), maternal and child health. It also showcased the leadership of Mrs. Margaret Kenyatta and the Beyond Zero Campaign in catalyzing positive change.

The Beyond Zero Campaign stands out as a model of how political leadership and commitment can propel and accelerate action and momentum responding to systemic and structural challenges hindering overall health improvements. The side event demonstrated the Beyond Zero campaigns’ catalytic role in promoting partnerships for gender equality, advancing the implementation of the normative framework on equality and being an example of future interventions that could be modeled in the post 2015 development agenda.

Paying tribute to “Women in Slavery” on the occasion of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

SLAVERY is one of the worst horrors that humankind has committed as well as the longest perpetuation of a crime against humanity and the latest to have been recognized as such. Tragically, slavery remains a topical theme as it still persists under different contemporary forms like forced labour, trafficking, sexual exploitation or captivity in slavery-like conditions.

A roundtable was organized by UNESCO and the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), on the occasion of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, on 25th March, 2015 at the UN Office in Nairobi (UNON). The theme was ‘Woman and Slavery', honouring women, who were approximately one third of all people forcefully transported from Africa during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. In addition, the women faced severe forms of discrimination and sexual abuse among...
Panelists and students engage in discussion to advocate for further implementation and compliance of the existing laws, protocols and conventions combating modern forms of slavery.

(photograph by Masakazu Shibata / UNESCO)

others, due to their gender.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, the Director-General of UNON, welcomed all invited guests, speakers and students as she delivered the message of the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon who noted: “Slavery stubbornly persists in many parts of the world, in the form of forced labour, trafficking, sexual exploitation or captivity in slavery-like conditions. These despicable practices could not exist without deep-seated racism. It is absolutely vital that the dangers inherent in racism are made crystal clear to all”.

The UNON Director-General noted how the roundtable provided a platform for dialogue aimed at stimulating debate around issues of women and slavery within the context of the transatlantic slave trade. She added: “It also seeks to raise awareness about the impact and consequences of contemporary forms of slavery, such as human trafficking”.

During the roundtable, Teresa Njoroge, founder of Clean Start- a local NGO, highlighted that poverty is one of the major contributing factors to getting caught in the network of human trafficking and captivity-like working conditions. She explained: “Unemployed youth at villages at the countryside are desperately looking for ways to get a better life, which makes them an easy target for human trafficking recruiters”. Recruitment networks are also very hard to track down and persecute as they most often exist out of informal networks spread all over countries, she added.

Students also listened to the life experiences of Rose, a victim of human trafficking and domestic servitude. In her testimony, she recounted: “After my father died, I got raped and pregnant. This caused so much trouble between me and my mother that she chased me out of the house. Desperately looking for work to feed my daughter, I accepted a job offer in Lebanon from a friend of a friend. I was so happy back then, not knowing in what kind of a horror situation I would wake up in. After a horrifying 2-3 years I was finally rescued from my servitude”. Rose was in tears while recounting her story and informed the students that victims have most often been recruited by people they knew and trusted.

From all groups in society, poor women and children are the most vulnerable and need to be protected. Besides that, gender-based violence is a major concern when it comes to being vulnerable to human trafficking. Women in particular have less access to education and opportunities than men. Professor Anne Nangulu from Moi University, reminded the students: “Slavery did not end with its official abolition; therefore it remains critical to support education, raise awareness on the history and consequences of slavery and advocate for the adoption of legal frameworks to address the numerous forms of contemporary slavery as we move forward”.

Although governments, civil society groups and international organizations among others, have gone to great lengths to tackle these issues partly by advocating, adopting resolutions and protocols, and raising awareness through education, it is of utmost importance to keep pushing for further implementation and compliance of the existing laws, protocols and conventions combating modern forms of slavery, as this topic remains a taboo for the majority of the people in the Kenyan society. Rose’s testimony is a striking example of this practice as not even her family wanted to listen to her story. It brought her to tears that she was given the opportunity to tell her story to a public that was actually really willing to listen to her.

The students also reflected on the discussion in their questions and comments on existing laws and policies, and how they could contribute to create change. A student from Kenyatta University expressed her feelings about human trafficking and decided to take part in her campus’ discussion on these topics to be in “the movement that fights against such inhumanity.” Another one from the Technical University of Kenya commented that the roundtable was an effective way of getting to know various organizations, activities, and issues surrounding the issues of modern day forms of slavery and expressed her interest in supporting “women who had suffered and the organizations that fight these cruelties”.

As the discussions came to a close, Teresa Njoroge reminded everyone: “Any form of slavery is declared illegal, so now we must remain committed to push the right systems in place to effectively end it”. Marc Patry, UNESCO Regional Office Programme Specialist also added that: “Slavery is an unfinished business with multi-faceted challenges. It is something for which we must always be on guard; we must do what we can to expose the ills of slavery”.

As contemporary forms of slavery are still occurring in societies worldwide in multiple ways, the United Nations has adopted different conventions and agreements to address the various consequences of these malpractices. The UN Convention on Migrant Workers and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights are some of them. The International Labour Organization focuses specifically on labor conditions in the case of forced labor and human trafficking. The UN Office on Drugs
and Crime is in turn committed to combat human trafficking and its work is underpinned by the UN Convention Against Organized Transnational Crime. In addition to this Convention, a more precise Protocol has been adopted to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Woman and Children. This Protocol encourages civil society organizations, NGO’s and governments among others, to use an approach of prevention, protection and prosecution. UNICEF advocates for the specific threats that children face when involved in trafficking or slavery. Besides these, the United Nations created the Remember Slavery Programme while UNESCO, in 1994, established the “The Slave Route Project”. The aims of these initiatives are promoting research, shedding light on the heritage of slavery, educating and creating awareness on the causes, consequences and lessons of the Slave Trade.

As part of the activities to commemorate the Day, an exhibition on ‘Women and Slavery’ was also on display at the UNON lobby from 24-27 March to help people understand the strongly gendered nature of historical and current forms of servitude suffered by women.

University of Nairobi enhances education for all with Open Educational Resources

For a number of years, efforts have been made to promote Open Education Resources (OER) in Kenya. Adoption is not yet high, yet the need is obvious. Numerous academic institutions have been establishing OERs in the country and the urge to learn more about it continues. The number of faculty members utilizing OERs continues to grow demonstrating an appreciation and demand for the same.

Under the framework of the Open Education Week and in a bid to promote Open Solution for knowledge Societies and also enhance accessibility, UNESCO supported the OER of the four pilot courses at the University of Nairobi. The selected pilot courses included:

• Information Studies; a course unit offered to masters students at the school of Biological and Physical Sciences;
• Introduction to Business and Entrepreneurship; a course unit offered to undergraduate students at the School of Biological and Physical Sciences;
• Physical Sciences, Audit and Control; a course unit offered to both undergraduate and master’s students in different departments at the School of Biological and Physical Sciences;
• Physical Sciences and Database Systems; a course unit offered to both undergraduate and graduate masters students in different departments at the School of Biological and Physical Sciences.

The selection and design of the four courses was done by Dr. Tonny Omwansa, who is the head of the University of Nairobi’s innovation Centre (the C4DLab) and his two assistants; Selina Ochukut; a graduate student at the School of Computing and Informatics, and Elton Maiyo; an intern at C4DLab.

The University of Nairobi established a multidisciplinary Centre of excellence known as Computing for Development (C4D) center. This Centre serves as the technology research and development arm of the University. The objectives of the C4DLab are to provide national leadership in computing and ICT research; carry out research in technology priority areas approved by the board; incubate innovative ideas and potential commercial products from the Lab’s research efforts and University community; build research capacity in computing and ICT research; and promote innovation by creating an atmosphere of idea generation, evaluation, development and dissemination.

The Head of the University of Nairobi’s C4DLab, stated: “Having been involved in OER, through the support of UNESCO, I have come to appreciate the
UNESCO and the Teachers’ Service Commission held a face-to-face training on knowledge deepening in ICTs for teachers in Nairobi, Kenya on 10th and 11th February 2015, to be followed by a 12-week online course.

The integration and application of ICT in education is a high priority in Kenya and UNESCO is assisting the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the Teacher Service Commission and the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, in the development of Open Education Resource Materials in ICT integration in Education. Fifty master trainers drawn from all the 47 counties, including two special needs teachers, attended the two-day training in Nairobi.

With the integration of ICT in education, the roles of teachers definitely take a different turn. Instead of being the knowledge transmitters, they automatically become the facilitators of learning processes. Therefore, this capacity building equipped the master trainers with various skills and competencies on how to train other teachers and holistically understand the subject matter at a deeper level. This was an opportunity to learn more about OER and in the process created more valuable, locally relevant and useful courses.

Creative Commons featured this OER pilot at their launch of the School of Open Africa (SOO-Africa) event presided over by senior officials from Ministries of Education, Science and Technology, and Information and Communications Technology, as reported here.

“The presentation, aligned to the School of Open Africa objective of universal access to education, stimulated an exciting OER conversation among participating professors from several universities, policy makers, copyright law course graduands, other education stakeholders and SOO-Africa supporters present at the event,” commented Alex Gakuru, Regional Coordinator - Africa Creative Commons.

The educational products generated by C4DLab demonstrated quality alternative Open knowledge co-creation and mode of delivery that got the attention of, and support from the Government of Kenya, added Mr. Gakuru. The four OER courses were successfully uploaded at the OER Commons platform.

(See the link: https://www.oercourons. org/search?f.search=c4dlab)

This activity falls within UNESCO’s mandate to assist educational planners and teacher training course developers to prepare teachers for making effective use of technology solutions. This activity is a direct follow-up to the 2012 World Congress on Open Educational Resources which released the Paris Declaration on OER calling on governments to openly license all educational materials produced with public funds. Supported by a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (USA), UNESCO is working with the governments of Kenya, Oman, Bahrain, and Indonesia to implement dynamic and relevant policies to guide and recognize teachers and learners to find, adapt, use, develop, and share open educational resources.

Under the same framework, the Hewlett Foundation and the European Commission are currently funding a similar initiative for the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). As a direct outcome from the first NOUN OpenupEd workshop last September and the second workshop held in February, the NOUN OER-MOOC Project seeks to transform all 1,600+ courses of NOUN into full-featured OERs as well as launch new open-licensed MOOC versions of the courses to increase access and quality to higher education.
concept of ICT integration.

Ms. Janet Mayora of Mwijabu Primary school, Mombasa County, observed: “With the advent of ICT integration in education, most school operations are bound to change: There’s going to be a shift from the traditional way of teaching to the modern way. Learning will shift from the long boring lectures to student-centered approaches, in the growth of online learning and web based courses, whereby students are allowed direct access to information sources to discover on their own”.

The training also catered for the training of special needs teachers. Mr. Collins Odanga, a visually impaired teacher and a Teacher of special needs at Tambach Teachers’ College, Uasin Gishu County appreciated: ‘The ICT integration for learners with disabilities is an extremely important avenue to manage disability related challenges. Some types of disabilities pose a big challenge when using the orthodox chalk-talk approach. For instance, a visually impaired and a person with a physical challenge might find it almost impossible to write on a chalkboard. Therefore, the use of a computer and projector is a fine solution for this challenge. Secondly, the voice programme software such as jaws for windows, thunder, nvda and many others will transform the digital life of visually impaired persons to access the computer just like their sighted counterparts. The acquisition of ICT skills will definitely improve the employability level of people with disabilities’.

At the end of the workshop, the participants expressed their satisfaction on understanding how the KICT CFT fits into the larger picture of the Kenyan educator professional development. They also expressed their appreciation of understanding better Open Education Resources and the UNESCO ICT CFT and the potential of its use. Mr. Bonga Jobunga of Asumbi Teachers’ Training College, Homabay County, concluded: “The introduction of new learning platforms will help the teachers and learners meet various teaching, learning and communication objectives. The introduction of ICT will help in improving communication with parents. This is considered to be important in reducing the home-school divide. For enhanced teacher delivery and effective learner participation, parents play a critical role, and improving communication with them will result in better curriculum delivery”.

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