



# UN Newsletter

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## Eastern Africa's worst humanitarian crisis in 60 years

The drought facing the Eastern Africa region, said to be "the worst in 60 years", has caused a severe food crisis across Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya and threatens the livelihood of more than 12 million people. A large number of refugees from southern Somalia have fled to neighboring Kenya and Ethiopia, where crowded, unsanitary conditions, together with severe malnutrition have led to a large number of deaths.

In order to highlight the situation, the



*UN Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator Mr. Aeneas Chuma addressing journalists during a media briefing on the humanitarian crisis in Kenya © UNDP, 2011*

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United Nations Communication Group in Kenya organised a media briefing on 26 July 2011 to give more insight on the humanitarian crisis in the country. The briefing was addressed by various senior UN representatives in Kenya, including Mr. Aeneas Chuma, the UN Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator.

In his statement, Mr. Chuma said that up to 3.5 million people would be in dire need of food in the coming months, especially in North Eastern Kenya where resource-conflict was worsening the situation.

"We are grateful that the Government,

through a cabinet memorandum, has authorized the release of funds to nine ministries to look into the drought situation. We urge other stakeholders to support us in ensuring that we mitigate the situation", Mr. Chuma stated.

UNICEF Country Representative Olivia Yambi called for an urgent response to the famine that has led to high death rates of women and children in the Northern part of the country.

Speaking at the press briefing, Ms. Yambi said children were the most affected with high records of serious malnutrition levels and death rates. "The

### Upcoming Events

- 19 August - World Humanitarian Day
- 8 September - International Literacy Day
- 15 September - International Day of Democracy
- 16 September - International Day for the Preservation of Ozone Layer
- 21 September - International Day of Peace
- 24 September - World Maritime Day
- 27-30 September - Internet Governance Forum ( Nairobi, Kenya )

crisis is very serious, the shock hits hardest on children and women with many districts in Kenya showing elevated levels of malnutrition.”

In view of the refugees from Somalia, UNHCR Representative Elike Segbor

said discussions with the Government on opening of the Ifo II camp had gone through and already 300 tents had been set up and 1,500 refugees moved in.

He however noted that preparations were still ongoing to clear the outskirts of

the camp which has about 80,000 people. Mr Segbor also confirmed that the Kenyan Government had agreed to open a transit centre where people entering Kenya from Somalia have to pass through for screening and proper registration.

## World Population Day Celebrations: Approaching a world of 7 billion



*Mr. Fidelis Zama Chi, UNFPA Representative with Ilchamus Traditional dancers during the World Population Day celebrations in Naivasha © UNFPA, 2011*

When humanity came together to celebrate the World Population Day on 11 July 2011, it was not just a mix of joy and celebrations, but a time of reflection on the opportunities and challenges posed by the population as it approaches the 7 billion mark.

The UNFPA Kenya Country Office coordinated the celebrations throughout the country but with the national event at the Naivasha town. The theme for this year's World Population Day focused on young people. As the most interconnected population, young people are already transforming society, politics and culture. By more actively engaging women and young people, we can build a better future for all generations.

On 31 October 2011, the world population will reach 7 billion, according to the United Nations Population Division. In a speech delivered by Mr. Fidelis Zama Chi on behalf of the UNFPA Executive Director, this global milestone presents a challenge, opportunity and a call to action. “Whether we can live together on a healthy planet will depend on the choices that we make now”, said he.

In the message, Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, the UNFPA Executive Director observed that while poverty, inequality and increased stress on resources represented major challenges, the world was more interconnected than ever before, creating enormous possibilities. He noted how people currently have unprecedented capacity

to share information and ideas, and engage communities across the globe to solve common problems.

He called for new ways of thinking and unparalleled global cooperation in order to reduce inequities and improve the living standards for people alive today – as well as for generations to follow.

Dr. Osotimehin said “together, we can forge the future with young people, advance rights for girls and women, and safeguard the natural resources on which we all depend”. He added that protecting reproductive health and rights was fundamental to the collective future and sustainable development. “Together we can meet the needs of some 215 million women in developing countries who want to plan and space their births but do not have access to modern contraception. Together we can prevent the deaths of 1,000 women every day from complications of pregnancy and childbirth”, he emphasized.

On young people, he advised that everyone had an opportunity and responsibility to invest in the world's 1.8 billion adolescents and youth aged between 10 to 24 years, who constituted more than a quarter of the world's population and almost 90 per cent live in developing countries. He noted that every young person deserved education, including sexuality education and access to comprehensive health services. The Executive Director elaborated that with the right policies, investments and social support, young people could enjoy healthier lives free of poverty and enhance prospects for peace and stability.

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The United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 45/216 in 1990 recognizing World Population Day as a vehicle to promote population-related issues. Since then, the celebration of the Day around the world has provided the opportunity for governments, non-governmental organizations, faith-based organizations, civil society organizations and UN agencies to reflect and raise awareness on critical thematic

population issues.

The focus on this year's commemoration highlights how young people, through their energy and opportunity afforded by new technologies, are transforming politics and culture and leading the way on HIV prevention. The theme coincided with the International Year of Youth which commenced on 12 August 2010 and will end on 11 August 2011.

Further, the World Population Day kick-started a series of activities as part of the global campaign on the World at 7 Billion to be marked world-wide on 31 October 2011, followed by the launch of the State of the World Population Report. The Report will analyze challenges and opportunities presented by a world of 7 billion, including 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10 and 24 years.

## Nelson Mandela Day brings smiles in Kibera



*UNIC Administrative Assistant Janice Mbugua during the digging of the foundation for the classrooms at the HOYWIK Centre © UNIC, 2011*

93 years ago, in little known Transkei village in South Africa, a boy was born, his name, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. A boy who would grow into a man the whole world would one day appreciate for his relentless pursuit for freedom among the people of South Africa and the world at large. Talk about the struggle for freedom and Madiba, as he is popularly known, comes to mind, a man who has devoted his life as an international icon for freedom, justice and democracy. His life, an inspiration to all freedom loving individuals, having spent 27 years in prison for this worthy course, and even battled the tentacles of apartheid in his home country.

It is with this in mind that the United Nations General Assembly, on November 2009 set out 18 July as

Nelson Mandela International Day, to commemorate this hero and also reflect on the global strides towards freedom of all individuals.

Thousands of miles away from South Africa, this year's Nelson Mandela Day was marked in a special way in Kenya on July 21. Tucked in the slum village of Kibera, Hoywick (Humanity for Orphans, Youth and Widows Initiative Kenya) Educational Children's Centre burst with synergy as staff from the South African High Commission, United Nations Information Centre, various local and international companies, and members of the community were united under this year's theme of '67 minutes of service for Mandela Day'. Hoywick Educational Centre is an education for development community support organization that is shaping the lives

of AIDS orphans and other vulnerable children in Kibera slum.

UNIC contributed school materials received from UNICEF to the centre which included exercise books, pens, rulers, sharpeners, rubbers as well as school bags for the children. UN publications were also among the donations made by UNIC staff. The staff members also devoted their time to read Mandela stories to the pupils, paint the class rooms and also participate in foundation digging for the construction of new classrooms.

Mr Ndumiso Ntshinga, the South African High Commissioner to Kenya led the group in a ground-breaking ceremony to erect new classrooms for the needy students of HOYWIK Centre. While handing over a cheque from the South African High Commission, Mr. Ntshinga commended the centre for the major role it played in providing education to the children of Kibera slums.

"It is a day when we celebrate Nelson Mandela's contribution to humanity and we call upon people across the globe to dedicate 67 minutes of their time for the well being of humanity. One thing that Mandela is known for is what he did for humanity; his selfless contribution to the well being of humanity."

HOYWIK Educational Centre Director Zacchary Ngare said lack of funding had been a major hindrance for the centre, which apart from providing education, initiates income generating activities for youth and widows in the area.

## Celebrating IYV+10 in Africa



*Participants at IAVE's IYV+10 African Regional Conference in Nairobi*  
© UNV, 2011

In Africa, sustainable volunteer impact stories and initiatives are rarely, if ever shared. To address this, the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) held its 2nd African Regional Conference in Kenya between 11 and 13 July 2011, with the apt theme "Getting the Word Out-Volunteering in Africa." This was the second IAVE regional conference in Africa after 11 years and included the first ever Africa youth meeting on 14 July 2011, hosted by the National Volunteer Network Trust (NAVNET). The two events were part of this year's IYV+10 celebrations, for which UNV is a global and national focal point.

Dr. Kang-Hyun Lee, IAVE President, Kathleen Dennis, IAVE Executive Director and Mark Molloy, IAVE Youth Board Member were in attendance, as was the

National UNV Coordinator for IYV+10, George Oloo. A total of 31 participants from 15 countries and 25 organizations and affiliates across Africa were represented in the main conference, while 27 others representing 22 organizations and 10 countries participated in the youth meeting.

The main priority areas identified by the conference team included creating more awareness on volunteerism using information from IAVE; creating stronger and sustainable partnerships within Africa; sharing of database of African NGOs working on volunteerism; capitalizing on members' experiences to strengthen the network; and establishing a volunteer centre along the lines of the European Union (EU) which promotes volunteer work in Europe.

During the conference,

participants had an opportunity to hear from IAVE on its global volunteering network, while Kenya's Volunteer Involving Organizations (VIO) Network made presentations on its work. There were wide ranging discussions on volunteerism and some of the myths, practices and misconceptions about it, as well as challenges faced in creating volunteer programmes. Participants shared their own country experiences of volunteerism and provided a forum for exchange of ideas.

Some of the key presentations were from NAVNET and South Africa's Deline van Boon, who both shared on the process for and advantages of having national volunteer centers. There was also an inspiring presentation about the African Union's (AU's) youth volunteering programme which is focused on recruiting African youth to volunteer in other African countries for development- Africans helping Africans. The conference also had an opportunity to discuss the Volunteer Measurement Tool developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as a way of ensuring volunteer effort is being quantified.

Led by Mark Molloy of IAVE, a special youth meeting was the last event of the conference and involved students from various universities and youth leaders from select organizations.

IAVE's events for IYV+10 will now head to the World Summit on Youth Volunteering to be held in Baranquilla, Colombia from 3-5 November 2011.

## Limited success for campaigns targeting FGM/C practitioners

August is when Nchoo Ngochila would normally be gearing up for the traditional female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) season in her Ilchamus community in Kenya's Rift Valley Province.

"I would introduce myself and market my skills to the parents, I would convince them to hire me when the mutilating season came," she told IRIN. "In a day I would cut an average of 10 girls in a village, and would operate in two villages each day."

Ngochila, once a well-respected FGM/C practitioner, charged about US\$22 per girl, a healthy income by the standards of the minority Ilchamus community, which comprises just 40,000 people mainly dependent on subsistence agriculture and fishing in Lake Baringo.

"At heart, I felt the pain of watching girls weep as I cut them, but I needed money to pay school fees for my sons," she added.

This year, however, Ngochila will spend her time trying to convince her community the practice should be abandoned. About a year ago, a campaign by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) urged FGM/C practitioners in the area to put down their razors and campaign for women's rights in their communities.

"I was invited for training in our village, they talked about the suffering a girl experiences while undergoing FGM, and the way the practice denied women their rights," she said. "I felt so guilty that I cancelled all the bookings I had for August last year; instead I went to the same parents and tried to convince them against FGM."

Of the 30 bookings she had already made in 2010, just two changed their minds about having their daughters cut.

Ngochila found herself on the wrong side of elders and other members of the Ilchamus community; when she tried to convince other practitioners to give up the trade, they accused her of trying to ruin their business.

Local officials estimate that more than 50 percent of Ilchamus girls and women have undergone FGM/C.



*Nchoo Ngochila, a reformed mutilator, demonstrates how she used to cut girls*  
© IRIN / Rachel Kibui, 2011

The campaign to dissuade traditional practitioners from cutting girls continues, and local women's leader Winnie Mengiri says 15 practitioners from Marighat Division and 20 from Mukutani Division - where many Ilchamus people live - claimed to have been reformed because of various campaigns.

Today, Nodasimi Parteneu, a friend of Ngochila's, struggles to make ends meet, but is determined not to return to performing FGM/C for money.

"At first I thought it was good that Nchoo had abandoned the practice - she was my main competitor - but I later reasoned her way and put down my razor," she said. "Sometimes I get nightmares as I recall how a girl died after she bled following FGM which I had done, but I know God will give me grace to forget those memories."

But Mengiri says the high income of the practitioners often means their positions within the community do not stay vacant for long.

"Younger women are now mutilating girls secretly; some people here are yet to embrace the new anti-FGM culture," she said.

Gender and Children Affairs Permanent Secretary James Nyikal, who recently officiated at the signing of a declaration to abandon FGM/C by Ilchamus practitioners, elders and community members, said the government intended to provide alternative sources of income to women who wished to leave the profession to discourage them from returning to it.

Ngochila now makes mandazi (pastry), which she sells in schools around her village. Her income has dropped significantly, and she now survives on just \$1.10 per day; she is hoping to benefit from the government's women's entrepreneur fund to expand her business.

According to UNFPA Gender Programme Officer Florence Gachanja, a campaign targeting Ilchamus elders to fight FGM/C has borne fruit, leading to the community's endorsement of the anti-FGM declaration.

"Elders are the gate-keepers of culture, if they order that a certain traditional practice should be abandoned, the community follows," she said.

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UNFPA will also be including Ilchamus “moran”, young men, many of whom refuse to marry uncut women. “We will be having a campaign to... convince them that women are the same, cut or not cut,” Gachanja added.

The Ilchamus practise a form of FGM/C known as clitoridectomy, the removal of all or part of the clitoris. An estimated 32 percent of women in the Rift Valley Province have undergone the procedure, according to the 2009 Kenya

Demographic and Health Survey.

Area chief Francis Ole Kaprich says the education of Ilchamus girls will likely have the greatest impact on reducing the prevalence of the practice.

“I am sure this will play a big role in reducing FGM, but there is a need for more campaigns, sensitization and vigilance by law keepers if the Ilchamus are to abandon FGM completely,” he said.

Although criminalizing FGM/C does

not seem to have had much impact on the practice, Ole Kaprich said he would be enforcing the law in his own community.

“I know the majority will be doing it in secret, but I will make sure those caught will face the wrath of the law,” he said. “We are also sensitizing girls... soon, mutilators will have no one to cut.”

## The Prime Minister launches a Community Multimedia Centre in Meru County



*Prime Minister, Hon. Raila Odinga at the Mugambo 102.3 FM studios during the launch of Mugambo Jwetu Community Multimedia Centre in Meru*

© UNESCO, 2011

The Mugambo Jwetu Community Multimedia Centre, a project supported by UNESCO and the Finnish Embassy in Kenya was officially launched on 30th July 2011 at a public event attended by key leaders led by the Prime Minister, Honourable Raila Odinga. Also present at the function was Professor Joseph Massaquoi, the Director of UNESCO Nairobi Office and representatives from the Finnish

Embassy, among other guests. The function was held in Tigania, west of Meru County in Eastern Kenya, where the Community Multimedia Centre (CMC) is located. ‘Mugambo Jwetu’ are Meru words meaning ‘Our Language’.

The project was initiated with the aim to improve information sharing and facilitate training of especially rural women and youth by establishing

a multimedia centre that is managed and run by the community itself.

The Prime Minister lauded UNESCO for being at the forefront of promoting community radio and expressed hope that the centre would contribute to the region’s development, including in promoting national peace and harmony among neighbouring communities.

In his speech, Prof. Massaquoi hailed the unique partnership achieved in the implementation of the project, which brought together members of the community, UNESCO and the Embassy of Finland in Kenya.

“The community leaders demonstrated their commitment to this project by providing the building and all the necessary electrical fittings. The UNESCO and Finnish Embassy funds were used to procure equipment, provide training to the staff of the centre and produce initial local content,” said Prof. Massaquoi.

Mugambo Jwetu is one among many other community multimedia centres that UNESCO has supported in Kenya. CMCs employ multiple communication channels and methods to facilitate the flow of information within and beyond a particular community. The Meru CMC boasts of a community radio – Mugambo 102.3 FM - that has been on air since December 2008 and a tele-centre with ICT equipment including 10 computers with wireless internet

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modems. The tele-centre enables internet access to community members while at the same time providing an opportunity for members to acquire computer literacy skills.

Other channels commonly used in CMCs include a library, a community video and television. Other non-technological components may also be incorporated like community drama, music and other theatrical aspects, which could be tailored to the unique social, cultural and economic development needs of a particular community.

In another related event, UNESCO Nairobi Office officially handed

over to Daystar University, updated radio equipment for the university's Department of Mass Communication. The handover ceremony took place on 26th July 2011 at the University's Athi River Campus and was presided by Prof. Joseph Massaquoi and Dr. Timothy Wachira, Daystar University Vice Chancellor, in the presence of staff and some students of the university.

The support to the institution was initiated with the aim to enhance the quality of media training offered to Diploma, Undergraduate and Master's students. The updated radio equipment operates both digital and analogue broadcasting. Daystar University

hosts Shine FM, a radio station which airs programmes in Kiswahili, English and Kikamba languages, serving as a training facility for students and also reaching out to communities living around Athi River, with news and information.

The institution is historically known as the premier broadcast training institution in Kenya especially in the area of radio training. In 2008 it was named among nine other institutions in Africa as a potential center of reference in journalism and training by UNESCO.

## UN New Office Facility: A model of a sustainable future



*(Right) The New Office Facility (Left) the girls tour the facility. © UNEP, 2011*

Ever since the Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon officially opened the new offices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) in Nairobi, Kenya, a tremendous response in terms of visitation to the building has been observed. Students, researchers and the academia from around the world have visited Gigiri to learn and see this sustainable building.

On 1 July 2011, girls from Castilleja

School in California, USA, visited the UNEP headquarters with an interest of exploring the green building. "This building is a living model of our sustainable future," said Ms. Mirjam Steglich, a Consultant with Sustainable United Nations (SUN) under the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) and who was the facilitator for the tour.

Castilleja is an independent girl's school whose mission is to prepare students for the wider world, infusing its challenging college preparatory

programme with a global curriculum that fosters awareness, compassion, and engagement with issues worldwide.

This programme empowers young Californians to take action both locally and globally. The UN Millennium Development Goals and pertinent global social issues are in the mainstream of this educational programme.

The New Office Facility boasts of myriad environmental features, while capitalizing on the natural benefits of Nairobi's climate. The facility

shows how sustainable buildings can contribute towards tackling climate change as well as the transition towards a low-carbon and resource-efficient Green Economy.

The new offices are “energy neutral”, which means the building generates as much power (via renewable sources) as it consumes over the year. The young girls took a tour to the top of the building where all the solar panels have been laid. They learnt that the energy generated by the building comes from the 6,000 square metres of the solar panels. The

building also uses low-energy bulbs and presence detection controllers (instead of switches), which can yield savings of up to 70 percent on lighting costs.

Apart from renewable energy, the girls learnt that rainwater is harvested from the roofs to feed the fountains and ponds at the four entrances of the building. The sewage is treated in a state-of-the-art aeration system and recycled to irrigate the beautifully-landscaped compound.

The four distinct gardens inside the

building with indigenous plants and trees depicting eco climate themes - a forest landscape, savannah grassland, desert shrub land and marine coastal landscape - are a unique feature of the building that fascinated the girls.

This is a working building but it is also in many ways a research facility. It has become an international showcase in Kenya for sustainable buildings, and a central pillar of the United Nations broader goal of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate carbon foot prints.

## Regional Workshop addresses Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Eastern Africa



*The Officer-in-Charge of the CTITF Office, Mr. Muhammad Rafiuddin Shah, addressing the regional workshop © CTITF, 2011*

**T**he Workshop on the Regional Implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Eastern Africa was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 27-28 July 2011.

The workshop, organized by the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) in partnership with the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, brought together Counter-terrorism focal points from Burundi,

Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda.

In his keynote speech, Ethiopian Justice Minister Ato Berhan Hailu reiterated the importance of having such a timely meeting in the Eastern Africa region, given its current economic and social challenges, where peace and security were constantly undermined by acts of terrorism.

Minister Hailu noted how the network of global and regional terrorists “such as Al-Qaeda, Taliban and Al-Shabaab was wide and complex’ and had executed various forms of terrorism in Africa.

He was convinced that regional states possessed the requisite knowledge and expertise to develop appropriate mechanisms relevant to local conditions to assist in the effective implementation of the CTITF strategy.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union, Zachary Muburi-Muita hailed the holding of such a workshop as a clear message against terrorism from the international community. He emphasized the need to strengthen partnerships in order to counter terrorism.

Themes for discussion included: the CTITF Strategy and its significance to the Eastern Africa region; Criminal Justice, the Rule of Law and Protecting Human Rights while Countering Terrorism; Promoting dialogue, understanding and countering the appeal of terrorism in the region; and Police and Law Enforcement.

The workshop agreed to collectively tackle some of the most critical challenges facing the Eastern Africa region, through refocusing regional

policy to priority threats and through targeted yet inclusive regional action plans.

During the workshop, the

Eritrean delegation announced their Government's decision to rejoin IGAD.

The regional meeting was facilitated by Austria, Germany, Norway, Turkey, Switzerland and the United States.



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