Akon Goch nurses her baby with a faraway look on her face. Together with her six children and two nephews, she has travelled over 500 kilometres from Bor town in Jonglei State of South Sudan to the Kenyan border to escape conflict in her country.

“There had been gunshots in our village for two days and we had locked ourselves in the house. During this time, we had not seen my husband, who is a government soldier. On the third day, he came to the house and took his gun and left. He did not say where he was going but I knew that he must have gone to join the fighting,” says Akon.

When her husband did not return after three days, Akon, the children and her brother-in-law, decided to go and hide in the forest, where many other people had taken shelter. “We did not have enough money to leave the country, yet there was the sound of guns everywhere and we were so afraid that we would get killed.”

In the forest, Akon and her family had very little food to eat and had to rely on the little they had hurriedly packed.
when they left and also on gathering edible plants from the forest. Finally, her family sent the money to pay for their transport to safety. They travelled to Juba and then on to Kakuma in north-western Kenya.

“It took us five days to travel from Bor to the border post at Nadapal,” says Akon. “We had to save money for transport and so we bought very little food on the way. We mainly ate small amounts of sweet potatoes and cassava and the children were very hungry by the time we arrived.” As she speaks, her eldest daughter distributes food bars from WFP to the rest of the children.

WFP is distributing high energy BP5 bars to the refugees on arrival at Nadapal. Once they get to reception centres at Kakuma refugee camp, the refugees get cooked meals. Children between the ages of 6 and 23 months get highly fortified porridge made from Super Cereal plus. WFP provides the food to its partner, Lutheran World Federation (LWF), which manages the reception centres and cooks for the refugees.

The reception centres are crowded so newly arrived refugees are relocated to a temporary site and WFP provides them with food while they wait to be registered. UNHCR is providing them with kitchen utensils so they can cook for themselves.

Since the outbreak of conflict in South Sudan in mid-December last year, Kakuma has received about 14,500 refugees. An average of 300 refugees daily, mostly women and children, are being received at the camp.

A barefooted little boy who has just arrived at Kenya’s Kakuma refugee camp from South Sudan, runs with a suitcase on his head, trying to keep up with registration procedures © OCHA/Gabriella Waaijman

Aid Worker Diary: South Sudanese Flock to Kakuma Refugee Camp

A barefooted little boy who has just arrived at Kenya’s Kakuma refugee camp from South Sudan, runs with a suitcase on his head, trying to keep up with registration procedures © OCHA/Gabriella Waaijman

A kon’s eldest daughter serves high energy bars to her siblings © WFP 2013

A n OCHA aid worker visits Kenya’s Kakuma refugee camp where hundreds of South Sudanese are arriving every day, most of them children who have made the journey alone.

Gabriella Waaijman is the Head of OCHA’s Eastern Africa office in Nairobi, Kenya. She recently travelled to the Kakuma refugee camp in north-west Kenya. Hundreds of South Sudanese are arriving there every day, most of them children who have made the journey alone.

“I don’t even know her name. She told me that she came from Bor in South Sudan’s Jonglei State and fled after her husband was killed in the clashes around the town. Five months pregnant, this brave woman picked up
the few belongings she could carry and escaped just in time with her three children. Friends and family who came afterwards told her that many of those who had decided to stay were killed.

“Kakuma refugee camp is located in Turkana, north-western Kenya. It houses 130,000 refugees from several different countries. Turkana is one of the poorest regions of Kenya. This year again, the early warning signs of an impending food crisis in the county are becoming increasingly urgent.

“The new arrivals are settled on a newly acquired extension to the camp called Kakuma IV, able to accommodate about 25,000 people. The extension was initially meant to decongest the overcrowded camp, but with the new influx from South Sudan of approximately 500 people a day, it will soon be full. Over the last few weeks some 10,500 people arrived. If it continues like this, Kakuma IV will be full in the coming month.

“The extension is marked by rows and rows of brand new tents. It is still a bare place, with very little to break the dust winds or provide shelter from the relentless sun. Aid agencies have been in overdrive to put the basics in place for the stream of new arrivals: tents, water and sanitation support, food distributions and medical care. It is a race against time, as new people keep arriving every day.

“Many of the newcomers are actually Kakuma old timers. Aid workers told me that many of them knew the camp procedures by heart, having left Kakuma less than two years ago following South Sudan’s independence.

“A frightening number of the new arrivals are children – around 80 per cent. In humanitarian industry jargon, they are called “unaccompanied minors”, a status which is meant to entitle them to additional support – a little bit of extra food or protection by pairing them with adults, for example.

“But rights are hard to guarantee. There is simply not enough support available. Food rations have only recently been restored after a break in the logistics chain forced aid agencies in Kakuma and wider northern Kenya to cut rations. Food is now secured until March, I am told, but this does not include assistance for newcomers.

“A barefooted little boy runs past me with a suitcase on his head, desperately trying to keep up with the registration procedures. It is a gut-wrenching sight. I think about my own son of approximately the same age and wonder if he would have ever survived such a harsh journey on his own.

“Sometimes I wonder if we actually use statistics and technical terms to protect ourselves; to place an invisible shield between "us" and "them"; to try to emotionally protect ourselves from the horror that these kids are facing. But in the end we are talking about a child – a desperately lonely and frightened child who deserves so much more than the meagre support he is entitled to as an "unaccompanied minor". "The shield is cracking, as every statistic represents a lifetime of emotional trauma".
is from a different ethnic group in Somalia where tribal-based violence has persisted for over two decades. Yet through their friendship, a new school is set to benefit children of both Somalis of Kenyan decent and refugees from Somalia.

The preschool has already enrolled 140 kids both from Dagahaley camp and the host community. “Over 400 children were lined up to register but we had to take only 140,” said Muuxi, who was in Dadaab in January for the preschool’s opening.

In this project, about US$ 35,000 has been utilized so far but Muuxi is confident that the school, which they named Humankind Academy, will attract more support from friends and partners.

The occasion was formally inaugurated by UNHCR Head of Operations in Dadaab, Mr. Ahmed Warsame who is also a Canadian from Winnipeg. “It is great to witness the extraordinary efforts made by former refugees to help their communities to alleviate human suffering,” he noted. He undertook to offer UNHCR’s support through provision of school equipment and learning materials.

This year’s Middle School Model UN (MSMUN) conference for East Africa saw several international schools taking part in the meeting which took place at the UN Office at Nairobi (UNON) in Gigiri, Kenya. Over 900 students attended the three day conference which ran from Tuesday 21st to Friday 24th January 2014.

The MSMUN was officially opened by UNON Director General Sahle-Work Zewde who commended and applauded the participating students for their hard work in the conference.

The Director-General challenged the student delegates to test their knowledge of the UN, leadership and communication skills and appreciate the role of the world organization in addressing global issues. She encouraged the students to be creative and strive for new innovative approaches to the challenges of poverty alleviation, hunger, inadequate housing, environmental degradation, and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

In his opening remarks, Slovakia Ambassador Michal Mlynár congratulated the student delegates for exposing themselves into the world of diplomacy and negotiation at an early stage. Ambassador Mlynar challenged the young girls and boys to champion their countries’ development interests and take up their roles in helping provide solutions to global problems. He ended by quoting a former President of the United States of America, J F Kennedy as saying “do not ask what your country can do for you; instead ask what you can do for her.”

The 20th annual MSMUN conference was attended by students from Kenya and Tanzania, between the ages of 11 and 14 years. The focus for this year was on “Building Leadership for Tomorrow”, emphasizing the roles of the young ones as leaders of today and tomorrow.

The UN Information Centre (UNIC) Nairobi facilitates the holding of Model UNs annually at the complex.
UN Women and KU Establish Leadership Centre

UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO), in collaboration with Kenyatta University (KU), has established the Africa Centre for Transformative and Inclusive Leadership (ACTIL) to train a crop of leaders that will transform Africa and drive it to equitable and sustainable development.

Based at KU’s main campus in Nairobi, the Centre will be officially launched on 19 February 2014 and will bring together leaders in the region to create a network of female and male policy and decision makers committed to promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment in economic, social and political development.

ACTIL seeks to build the leadership competencies of emerging and existing leaders in politics, government, business and civil society in Africa to promote innovation and social transformation and also to facilitate the emergence of a regional network of leadership Institutes in developing standards and accreditation in leadership development.

Through evidence-based policy advice, training and mentorship, ACTIL will empower male and female decision makers to promote policies that are inclusive, equitable and sustainable while accelerating growth and development.

Although Africa is one of the fastest growing continents, it still holds 30 per cent of the world’s poor, the majority of whom are women and youth. Hence the need for a critical mass of transformative leaders to drive accelerated, equitable and sustainable development within an environment of increasing challenges and complexities, influenced by both local and global developments.

UN Women Regional Director (ESARO) Ms. Christine Musisi and the Vice-Chancellor of Kenyatta University, Professor Olive Mugenda will lead leaders from Africa, development partners, implementing partners, CSOs, academicians, and regional business people in inaugurating the Centre.

ACTIL’s Board Members will also attend. They include former Zimbabwe Deputy Prime Minister Ms. Thokozani Khupe; Mr. Martin Oduor – a Senior Advisor at Deloitte; Dr. Antony Mothae Maruping who is currently Lesotho’s Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the Swiss Confederation; Ms. Catherine Ngahu - founder and Managing Director of Strategic Business Options and Ethiopia’s First Lady Ms. Roman Tesfaye, who is also the Director-General of Policy, Planning and Finance in the Ministry of Health in her country.

Enhancing Livelihoods Opportunities through Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurship - “Public Private Partnership in Uasin Gishu”

OM has in January 2014, rolled out livelihood programmes for pastoralist youth and vulnerable women in Garissa, Turkana, Uasin Gishu and Marsabit Counties, to contribute to the resilience and protection of marginalized communities in the counties.

Based on a market survey and consultations with the Government of Kenya and local communities, more than 300 individuals are currently undertaking vocational skills training including driving, computer literacy, tailoring, agriculture and entrepreneurship. The skills are expected to diversify their livelihoods.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6
The recipients are drawn from communities where populations are affected by internal conflicts, cattle rustling, natural disasters, sexual and gender based violence. In December 2013 and January 2014, IOM partnered with the Equity Bank to conduct financial literacy and entrepreneurship training for 45 business persons (10 male and 35 female). The participants were drawn from groups under Kapsimenge Welfare Society (one of the project partners in the field) which consists of 300 groups in Uasin Gishu County. The project targeted business people who were already engaged in both small and medium scale businesses but did not have knowledge on how to manage them well for profit maximization.

The programme known as Financial Knowledge for Africa is empowering youth and women with knowledge, skills and attitudes to adopt good financial management practices and ultimately transform their lives and livelihoods.

Naomy Samoei, a local business lady and a recipient of the training noted that “ever since the training organized by IOM and Equity Bank, I have seen significant changes in my business… The training has enabled me to keep records of all my income and expenses and I have been able to avoid losses, and develop confidence in marketing my businesses and products. I can now say with confidence that my income has increased”.

Tackla Sang, another recipient says “I am a farmer and have been providing for my family. Occasionally I would sale the produce for income when there was need in my household. The entrepreneurship training has opened my eyes to see opportunities that have been all around me. It is like someone just woke me up. This training has changed my way of thinking and from it, I have started a ‘kitchen garden’ which I am aiming at selling the produce for income, though it is a small one. I am sure this will change my life completely as I intend to expand it with time. I have also started keeping records and by the time I will be through selling this, I will know whether I made a profit or loss.”

This project is funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

Diplomats, UN Staff Sob as they Join the World in Remembering Holocaust Victims

It was all tears and sobbing for UN staff, diplomats and students who could not hold back their emotions during this year’s International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, as a 100-minute film entitled “Nicky’s Family” was screened.

The film was on Nicholas Winton, an Englishman who organized the rescue of Czech and Slovak children just before the outbreak of World War II. The film brought back holocaust memories but showed how the children survived to be part of Nicky’s larger family.

The United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), Nairobi organized the commemoration in collaboration with the Israeli Embassy. The Guest of Honor was the Kenya Government Cabinet Secretary for Information, Communication and Technology, Dr. Fred Matiang’i, who reiterated the need for the member states of the UN to reaffirm their commitment and remain vigilant to prevent future atrocities such as the holocaust. “Indifference is the worst enemy of impunity. Inaction and complicity in the face of unjust acts lead to tragedies of untold magnitude to humankind. We must not forget! We must remember those who perished and we must salute those who survived and triumphed,” he added.

UNON Director-General Sahle-Work Zewde welcomed the guests and emphasized the need to learn from the lessons of such horrific incidents. She then presented UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon’s message for the Day where she quoted him as saying “we must be ever vigilant against bigotry, extremist ideologies, communal tensions and discrimination against

Jolyn Samuel, an International UN Volunteer working at UNHCR successfully pioneered the coordination of the Child Protection survey for the agency. A Situational Analysis Report on refugee children in Nairobi was developed by Jolyn and finally launched in December 2013 at Eastleigh’s St Theresa Parish Hall.

The survey was conducted with the Child Protection thematic Group (CPTG) of the Urban Refugee
Protection Network whose members include HIAS, Kituo Cha Sheria, Refugee Consortium of Kenya, and Heshima Kenya.

The participants included the Country Director of the Department of Children’s Services, personnel from the Ministry of Education, UNHCR’s Community leaders, UNV Kenya and other child protection stakeholders.

The report will be handy in ensuring accountability and guided approaches to children’s rights as well as programmes in refugee set ups and initiatives.

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The United Nations works to tackle global challenges and:

1. Provides food to 90 million people in 73 countries
2. Vaccinates 58 per cent of the world's children, saving 2.5 million lives a year
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