The inaugural UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) concluded its five-day deliberations in Nairobi on Friday, 27 June 2014, with 16 decisions and resolutions that encourage international action on major environmental issues ranging from air pollution and the illegal trade in wildlife, to plastic debris in the oceans, chemicals and waste.

“The air we breathe, the water we drink and the soil that grows our food are part of a delicate ecosystem that is increasingly under pressure,” said UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon at the closing session. “We need to act decisively to change humanity’s relationship with our planet.”

“This is just the beginning. Change is in the air. Solutions exist,” he added. “We are now poised for the crucial next phase of human development.”

The international community participated in the Assembly in record numbers, with high-level delegations from 160 UN Member and Observer States and stakeholders from multiple sectors present.

UNEA sessions were attended by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon; the President of the Republic of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta; the President of the UN General Assembly John Ashe as well as chief executives of the UN system; among them the UN Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator Helen Clark and Secretary General
of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Mukhisa Kituyi.

The sessions were presided over by Mongolia’s Minister of Environment and Green Development Dr. Oyun Sanjaasuren.

The High-Level Segment, which began on Thursday, 27 June, focused among other things, on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Post-2015 Development Agenda, including Sustainable Consumption and Production.

UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner said: “These resolutions, including the one on air quality, provide a clear indication that, in its successful and ambitious first session, UNEA is providing a robust policymaking platform that truly places the environment at the heart of sustainable development.”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

UN Secretary-General pledges support to reduce maternal mortality in Kenya

UNITED Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Kenya received a major boost when United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for special focus to be placed on adolescent girls in order to reduce maternal mortality and improve on the realization of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 5.

Mr. Ban Ki-moon made this call during his official visit to State House in Nairobi when he met with President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya and his wife, First Lady Margaret Kenyatta.

In his speech, Mr. Ban expressed support for the First Lady’s Beyond Zero Campaign, which champions an end to maternal and infant mortality through heightened advocacy and provision of mobile ambulances in all the 47 counties in Kenya.

“I [also] welcome the plan by UNFPA and the Ministry of Health to focus attention on the ten counties where maternal deaths are highest. This can strongly improve the national ratio, steer Kenya towards achieving MDG 5 and serve as a role model for the rest of Africa,” he added.

In the high level event whose theme was on ending maternal mortality in Kenya, the UN Secretary-General maintained that for Kenya to triumph over maternal mortality, initiatives must focus on adolescent girls, especially those that allow girls to go to school, marry whom they choose, shield them from harmful traditional practices and provide them with appropriate family planning services.

“When an adolescent girl is safe from harm and is able to choose whom to bear children, she can be saved from HIV infection, haemorrhage, obstetric complications such as obstructed labour and fistula, and death,” Mr. Ban Ki-moon said, adding that “a little investment in simple solutions, which can range from basic midwife training for women in villages, to motorcycle ambulances in remote rural areas, can go a long way”.

“Women need a safe environment to deliver with the assistance of skilled birth attendants,” the Secretary-General said. He also highlighted the impact of harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation, on the lives of adolescent girls in Kenya, 20 per cent of whom are cut in this “barbaric practice”.

Mr. Ban applauded Kenya’s efforts, which include free maternity services, which he said were serving as a “role model for the rest of Africa”.

In expressing her gratitude to Mr. Ban Ki-moon for his support to the Beyond Zero Campaign, which she said was a cause she held dear to her heart, Mrs. Kenyatta pointed out that it was her responsibility as a mother to stop the wanton death of other mothers as they gave birth.

“Sadly, for thousands of mothers in Kenya and around the world, having a child is tantamount to a death sentence,” she said, adding that funds raised through the Beyond Zero Campaign would be used to purchase mobile clinics for all the 47 counties to bring better healthcare for mothers and
Kenya joined the world in celebrating the World Blood Donor Day with a call for collective responsibility to save lives and policies that protect blood donors. The celebration kicked off by a marching band in Nairobi, featured poetic recitals, skits, testimonies from students and members of the public as well as speeches by various dignitaries.

The World Blood Donor Day observed on June 14, is set aside by the World Health Organization (WHO) to raise awareness about the need for blood and blood products as well as celebrate blood donors. This year, the focus was on ‘Safe Blood for saving Mothers’, a befitting theme to highlight the plight of about 800 women globally who die daily from pregnancy or child-birth complication.

Kenya’s First Lady Mrs. Margaret

**“Donate blood and save lives”**

First Lady Margaret Kenyatta being welcomed by the WHO Representative, Dr. Mandlhate at Uhuru Park in Nairobi, Kenya ©WHO, 2014
Kenyatta who presided over the Day noted that blood was in constant demand and called on Kenyans to donate blood in order to save life.

She said that every 10 minutes, seven Kenyans faced the risk of death due to the lack of blood. "We can't remain indifferent to others and need to see blood donation as a mutual responsibility," she added.

Mrs. Kenyatta explained that her Beyond Zero Campaign initiative had fundraised for 10 mobile clinics and the first one would be rolled out in July.

The WHO Kenya Representative, Dr. Custodia Mandlhate disclosed that 62 per cent of global maternal deaths still happened in Sub-Saharan Africa and that the region was now classified as one of the most dangerous places for mothers to have a baby. She said Kenya had made progress in adopting WHO guidelines and attained full voluntary blood transfusion level.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health, Mr. James Macharia stressed how blood was a national resource that ensured health was not compromised. He pledged his Ministry’s commitment to the highest standards of health adding that it was reviewing strategies to ensure national blood policies were in place. The Ministry was also offering technical support for the Kenya National Blood Transfusion Service, KNBTS, to ensure it achieved its goals.

The function was also attended by the US Ambassador to Kenya, Mr. Robert Codec who said blood donation was an act of humanity and that with a reliable safe and enough blood many lives could be saved. He lauded the First lady for her contribution to healthcare through the Beyond Zero campaign.

UNDP and First Lady of Kenya join forces against poaching

UNITED Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has entered into a partnership with the office of First Lady Margaret Kenyatta on wildlife conservation and anti-poaching through the ‘Hands off Our Elephants campaign.’

Speaking during the launch at State House Nairobi, UNDP Administrator, Helen Clark said UNDP would scale up its support for wildlife conservation initiatives by communities and other stakeholders involved in the campaign to protect elephants and other endangered wildlife species in the country.

"The poaching crisis in Africa poses serious development, environmental and security challenges to the continent. It is fueling corruption and conflict; destroying lives; and deepening poverty and inequality," Ms. Clark said.
The First Lady welcomed the partnership saying that the battle on poaching and illegal wildlife trophies is a concerted effort at the community and global level.

“While we put in place policies, mechanisms and structures to deal with the menace of poaching, our efforts will not succeed unless we also eliminate the demand and illegal trade in wildlife products. For us to succeed, we must therefore develop and implement global strategies to address both the demand and supply sides of the illegal trade in wildlife,” she said.

The joint programme creates new sources of revenue. It will give local communities, through the creation of village councils, the authority and capacity to plan and manage the use of their own land.

Wildlife attracts over one million tourists per year, generates over 12 percent of the national revenue and directly employs over 230,000 Kenyans. Estimates put the value of a live elephant in Kenya at over USD 1 million per animal given its estimated life span and the services it renders to the wildlife tourism industry.

The programme will also aim to create better processes for information-sharing between communities, park rangers and national authorities, while raising awareness of the impact of poaching in affected areas. The Government of Kenya has accelerated its efforts to control poaching, increasing surveillance and passing a law making it easier to convict those responsible.

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illegal trade in wildlife and endangered species thus making the tours more interesting and informative”.

The sculptured animals include a massive life-size elephant family. It depicts elephants walking out of a forest, a sight that is all too common when visiting national parks of Kenya. The elephant display will “highlight the challenges of illegal wildlife trade, including ivory and rhino horns,” said Mr. Henry Ndede, the UNEP’s County Coordinator.

KWS made available to the UN four metallic sculptures: a buffalo, a cheetah, a rhino and a hyena. One youth from Canada who won a UNEP painting competition was so excited to have photos next to the sculptures. “These shiny molds not only contribute to beautiful photo moments, but seeing them displayed at the complex really helps one to visualize the importance of protecting our endangered species,” he remarked.

Following the UN General Assembly’s resolution in December 2005, a Visitors’ Service was established to open-up the UN complex in Nairobi to the public through guided tours. The operation is mandated to generate income in the same manner as the three headquarters operations in Geneva, New York and Vienna.

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**UNHCR commemorates World Refugee Day in Kenya**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) globally commemorated World Refugee Day on Friday 20 June. Pomp and color marked this year’s occasion that was held in Kakuma refugee camp in partnership with Tegla Leroupe Peace Foundation. More than 20,000 refugees, Kenyans and the diplomatic community gathered to toast to refugee resilience and Kenyan hospitality that spans more than two decades.

The focus of this year’s World Refugee Day was ‘one family torn apart by war is too many.’ UNHCR Representative, Mr. Raouf Mazou speaking during the event reiterated, “It’s a unique opportunity to better understand the plight of refugees, their exceptional resourcefulness and the generosity of the Turkana population”.

Build-up activities towards the Day kicked-off on 14 June with a chess tournament at the camp where the Chess Association of Kenya donated chess kits for refugees. A peace caravan on 19 June brought together the host community and more than fifteen nationalities for a peace walk. The caravan’s highlight was a peace torch passed on from one community to another to symbolize unity in diversity.

The main event started with a peace run that was facilitated by Tegla Leroupe Foundation and Turkana Athletics Association. At the ‘Peace Centre’ arena where the core celebrations were held on 20 June, refugees set up stalls to display their cultural wealth in dances and display
of artifacts. The Ethiopian community, which provided food to the guests, was particularly popular.

The US Ambassador to Kenya, Mr. Robert Godec, speaking at the event said, “We join countless others worldwide to recognize and honor the strength, bravery and determination of women, men, and children who have been forced to flee their homes due to conflict, violence, persecution and scarcity of food. We also gather to recognize the commitment and generosity of the countries like Kenya and the organizations that provide these people with protection and assistance during difficult times.”

While referring to the situation of Somali refugees, a representative of the Cabinet Secretary for Interior and National Coordination stressed the importance of voluntary repatriation.

The event was also a perfect opportunity to bring the attention of the world to the plight of refugees affected by conflict and war. Mr. Mazou acknowledged that hosting the more than 160,000 refugees in one camp was challenging and further explained, “For the last six months we have received close to 40,000 refugees from South Sudan. The land that was available was for 25,000, therefore there is need for more land”.

Turkana Governor, Josephat Nanok who was the chief guest affirmed, “We will not expand the existing camp but will look for alternative land to accommodate more refugees in the near future”. He praised UNHCR for the mutual support which was benefiting both refugees and the host community.

UNICEF celebrates Day of the African Child 2014

This year’s Day of the African Child will go down in history as the day when Kenya’s primary school children elected their first-ever National Children’s Government – a milestone for ensuring that all children realize their right to meaningful participation in society.

More than 400 young leaders came together from primary schools across the country. Each child was eager to play their part in realizing the theme of the Day of the African Child: ‘A Child-Friendly, Quality, Free, and Compulsory Education for all Children in Africa’.

The entire campaign and electoral process, culminating in the Day of the African Child, was for children and by children. Charismatic and confident young leaders campaigned vigorously to be elected as national leaders for children.

“Marginalization is one issue that really affects us,” said 13 year old Danny Kinaro.
in his campaign speech for President. "Vote for someone who fits your perspective of a good leader regardless of where they come from. Vote for a leader, vote for change," he appealed.

The students then took part in an innovative, child-centred design workshop to map out actionable steps to making schools more inclusive, protective, healthy, and equitable for all. The student leaders represented their counties in the Children’s Government’s inaugural parliament session, debating late into the evening and voting for their top ten children’s government priorities. The priorities are available on: http://unicefstories.org/2014/06/16/primary-school-children-in-kenya-become-forces-for-change/

"By empowering children, Kenya is moving beyond the concept of a ‘Child-Friendly School’ towards a ‘Child-Friendly Education System’ for all," said Cabinet Secretary of Education Joseph Kaimenyi.

The Day of the African Child crowned the entire event. Officials from the Government of Kenya, the High Commissioner of Canada, H.E. David Angell, UNICEF staff and other stakeholders were highly enthralled and inspired by the children. So impressed was Kenya’s Majority Leader and Member of Parliament, Adan Duale, that he invited the young government to Parliament to present their priorities for education to fellow parliamentarians on 18 June 2014.

For elected President Danny Kinaro this was the beginning of greater responsibilities as children all over the country are counting on him. He concluded his inauguration speech by saying, “many people say the sky is the limit but I will make it my point of view”.


**UN Volunteer advocates for peace and reconciliation**

Daisy Cheruto (far left) with the local chief in Lanka, leading the peace procession

It is just almost two years since Kenya held its general elections. However, politics and political temperatures are still high in the country.

Through the UNDP Kenya Peace building unit, a number of UN Volunteers were deployed to serve as peace monitors in various parts of the country and counties that were hit by the 2007 post-election violence.

With the recent call for national dialogue by the opposition party in Kenya, the UN Volunteers have continued to advocate and promote peace in the counties. In Uasin Gishu county, Lankas areas in Eldoret, a UNV peace monitor, Daisy Cheruto, has been leading the locals in community dialogues and peace action programs by coordinating the local district and village peace committee volunteers. She has been working closely with the local leadership and local chiefs to ensure peace is maintained in Eldoret.

Daizy has embarked on finding the root cause of tension and violence which has led her to approach the county leadership to help address youth unemployment. She has been instrumental in mobilizing locals to attend county, gender and women empowerment programmes. Working in Uasin Gishu for two years has enabled her work with the County Commissioner to encourage locals to voluntarily surrender guns and other small arms that were used in the 2007 chaos. Daizy has also put in place an effective communication channel that assists in early warning, reporting on any alarms and responding to any emergencies or threats within the County.

Daizy has held a number of peace processions in the local market centers including in the Lankas community where all the participants committed to maintain peace regardless of comments or statements from politicians.

Just as other UNV peace monitors, Daisy commands respect from her peers and the locals for being at the fore of peace and community development initiatives.
Abolition without emancipation: Creating a dialogue on the meaning of the abolition of slavery and the contemporary challenges posed by its legacies

This year Kenya celebrates 107 years of the abolition of slavery. Under the Slave Route Project, UNESCO celebrates twenty years of notable achievements aimed at breaking the silence on the slave trade, slavery and its tragic consequences.

A series of activities have been organized to commemorate the abolition of slavery in Kenya and worldwide in collaboration with Alliance Française and in partnership with the National Museum of Kenya, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Institute of Research and Development (IRID, France), the Research Unit, Migrations and Societies (URMIS, France), the International Research Centre on Slaveries (Ciresc, France) and the National Committee for the Memory and History of Slavery (Cnmhe, France).

As part of the commemorations, a Science Café as organized at Alliance Française in Nairobi’s Central Business District under the topic “Commemorating the abolition of slavery: What is the meaning of slavery and its legacies today?”. A short documentary, “Silent memories: the unbroken chains”, produced by the National Museum of Kenya preceded the discussions. The documentary illustrates the on-going research of scholars - led by Patrick Abungu, Senior Curator of the newly rehabilitated Shimoni Slavery Museum and Heritage Site of the National Museum of Kenya – focusing on the historical significance of the slave trade in the East Africa region. Shimoni is a port village and tourist destination in South Eastern Kenya known for its British colonial ruins and slave pits which were used to store captured slaves, shaping the maritime trade from the eighteenth to early nineteenth century. Without imposing a popular narrative on the views of slavery, the documentary captures various testimonies of community members to break the silence about the subject that has been a taboo in the Kenyan society for so long.

In the film, community members give their own testimonies and understanding of the slave trade and slavery. A village leader, Mr. Ndalu Mshee testifies: “even to date, we are still getting to hear such stories. I didn’t witness it but the remains of the chains from the cave prove that slavery happened”.

A village elder, Mr. Yussuf Khatibu declares: “I can’t deny that slavery existed […] but it was other people’s business”. Another village elder, Mr. Nassir Bwashe, admits: “many people were sold, even my grandfather took people and sold them”. A community member, Mr. Fadhili Ali, also acknowledges: “we could sell our nephews or nieces but not our children: I could sell my sister’s child, and my child could be sold by my wife’s uncle.”

The discussion that followed the screening of the documentary provided an opportunity for interaction between researchers and the audience by exploring the meaning of the abolition of slavery. The lead researcher, Mr. Patrick Abungu, explained that the cave serves as a place of memory for community members, where they can make their own interpretation. He noted: “they can deny or accept, or refuse to remember or remember depending on what is at stake” referring to different factors influencing their memory. He also added that Shimoni is a good place for research as “you have different communities that have moved on through intermarriages between those who were inflicted and those who benefited, living side by side”.

The discussion also touched upon...
the lives of former slave descendants, whereby some still remain aliens in the Kenyan society, neither belonging nor assimilated into surrounding communities. Slaves in plantations along the coastal region of Kenya and East Africa were not accorded any serious compensation during the abolition and most of the freed slaves stayed with their former masters to continue rendering services for meager returns. To date, their descendants still live in poverty as squatters. There are still many families that do not have relevant national identity documents nor access to public resources such as land and property.

Mr. Mohamed Djelid, the Director of UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa highlighted the importance of education as a means to counter the contemporary challenges posed by the legacies of slavery as he noted: "let us make proper use of education in order to create dialogue and awareness and in turn empower these communities".

Mulekeni Ngulube, UNESCO’s Programme Specialist for Culture, concurred by stressing: “being exposed to education enables people to have a questioning mind, examining themselves and their surrounding environment, and looking for solutions to change their situation, linking what happened in the past to the present”.

In East Africa, the abolition of the slave trade and the sacrifices that were made can be observed in historical monuments and communities of slavery heritage. Sites such as Shimoni serve as places of memory. However, slave trade is not merely a thing of the past: it is a history that has shaped the face of many modern societies, creating unbreakable ties between people and irreversibly transforming the destiny, economy and culture of nations.

As UNESCO observes the 20th anniversary of the Slave Route Project and joins Kenya in celebrating 107 years of the abolition of slavery, partnerships will be strengthened in areas of scientific research, publication of educational resources such as books and reference materials, and especially documentation of sites and places of memory. In this way UNESCO contribute to educating current and future generations about the evils of slavery and bring about a better understanding of the dangers of modern forms of slavery such as human trafficking, racism and prejudice, which continue disrupting societies with tragic consequences.

**UNESCO partners with BBC Media Action on lifeline communication training in Kisumu County, Kenya**

UNESCO partnered with BBC Media Action to carry out a three-day training workshop on Lifeline Communication in April 2014 in Kisumu County. The training was aimed at building and enhancing capacity of media practitioners and humanitarian agencies to meet communication needs of affected communities during and after humanitarian disasters. It also helped stimulate efficient and better coordination between the media and humanitarian responders during such crises.


The training objectives included skills development for better engagement in ‘Lifeline programmes and enhanced understanding of the role of the media and the humanitarian sectors in the Kenyan Disaster Risk Reduction plan.
The Great Lakes Region has been plagued by chronic violence, thus constituting a destabilizing factor for individual countries as well as the entire region. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially the eastern part of the country, has been the theater of much of this instability. Noting the negative effects on regional development, eleven countries, namely Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, signed on 24 February 2013 in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (PSC-F) Agreement for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. The Agreement aims at paving the way for positive change and provide for peace, security and progress in the region. Kenya and Sudan also joined as signatories of the Framework in January 2014.

To demonstrate the United Nations’ support for the Framework Agreement, the Secretary-General appointed, on 18 March 2013, Mrs. Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and former UN High
The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement is a binding document which outlines key national, regional and international actions. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is to: (1) deepen the security sector reform underway in the country; (2) consolidate State Authority, particularly in eastern DRC; (3) make progress with regard to decentralization; (4) further economic development; (5) further structural reform of Government institutions; and (5) also further the agenda of reconciliation, tolerance and democratization.

At the regional level, the signatories are to: (1) refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of neighboring countries; (2) neither tolerate nor provide assistance or support of any kind to armed groups; (3) respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of neighboring countries; (4) strengthen regional cooperation, including economic integration and judicial cooperation; and (5) neither harbor nor provide protection to any person accused of war crimes or crimes against humanity.

As Special Envoy for the Great Lakes, Mrs. Robinson’s mandate focused on stimulating the parties to the Framework Agreement to deliver on their commitments, and on supporting efforts to reach durable solutions for the region. Her role was to lead a comprehensive political process to include all relevant stakeholders.

At the heart of her actions lay the question of women’s empowerment and creating space for the youths as key actors of the implementation of the PSC-F Agreement. “I have made it a priority to ensure that women, civil society, youth and children are integral partners in the implementation of the PSC Framework,” Mrs. Robinson said at a meeting with regional experts in Goma in May this year. The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement is the “Framework of Hope”, according to Mrs. Robinson.

A world figure known in the most prestigious circles, Mrs. Robinson is also a member of the Elders and serves on the Board and Prize Committee of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation. The Secretary-General established a small office for the Great Lakes Region based in Nairobi, with a liaison team in Kinshasa, to support her work.

On July 14 2014, Mrs. Robinson was appointed by the UN Secretary-General as his Special Envoy for Climate Change. Building on her work on climate justice she will engage Heads of State and Governments around the world in order to mobilize political will and action, and raise ambition in advance of the 2014 Climate Summit that the Secretary-General is hosting in New York on 23 September 2014. She will also provide strategic advice to the Secretary-General based on her consultations.

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