his family including suffered a devastating blow. A large number of 1994.

I first met Marcel in Gigiri which was then serving as the UNICEF operational hub for the developing Rwanda emergency in June 1994.

Unbeknown to me then, Marcel had just suffered a devastating blow. A large number of his family including five children, siblings, in-laws, and cousins were victims of the Rwanda genocide.

Subsequently, the UNICEF operational hub moved a few weeks later to Kigali, on the heels of the Rwanda Patriotic Front, which was then liberating Rwanda. And Marcel was there.

He was there when we were setting up the office, dealing with all the demands that come with an emergency situation and in a country where almost a million people had recently been slaughtered, many of whom yet to be buried. Marcel was there with us, grieving silently and privately - and we were oblivious to his personal tragedy in the midst of this humongous crisis.

Those who have worked in emergencies know that great chunks of money are made readily available by donors who mean well, and UNICEF Kigali at that time was receiving more than its share.

Marcel was then the National Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, one of the most critical persons needed in keeping tabs on how much money we had and how we spent it.

I don’t recall any one time ever seeing Marcel not able to assist, guide or enlighten the dozens of staff who were parachuted in to help make sense of the situation on the ground. He did it with patience, selflessness and commitment - all in the midst of his nation and family’s losses. That was Marcel for you!

When we got to know each other better in Kigali, he used to say to me that prior to the genocide, it would take him almost an hour to walk from his house to the office, not too far away. Now he did it in 10 minutes or less because many people knew were either dead, displaced or missing! There was hardly anyone to greet on the empty streets of Kigali.

Fast forward to some years later. I ran into Marcel who shared that he was heading to Djibouti. After congratulating him I alerted him that Djiboutians were very fond of eating khat (a mild leafy stimulant). Somehow the very urbane and well-traveled Marcel heard ‘cat’ and chose not to probe me further.

Once in Djibouti, Government and other UN colleagues would invite Marcel to dinner. At the first dinner he went to, the centre-piece was a small, well-cooked animal on a platter. This, unknown to him was a lamb. Immediately Marcel whispered to his wife Monique. “I think that is the ‘cat’ that Nasser was warning me about”.

He proceeded to tell his hosts and others for the next six months that he was vegetarian. The matter was only settled six months later when a friend who knew Marcel’s carnivorous habits figured that it wasn’t ‘cats’ that Marcel was warned about but khat. And there began his love affair with the Djibouti lamb.

Years later whenever we were in a group environment, Marcel would repeat the story and we laughed until tears came down our cheeks.

Tears are running down my cheeks now as I will never laugh with Marcel again.

The late Marcel Rudasingwa, Assistant Secretary-General and UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response Crisis Manager in Guinea.

First UNV Kenya, Somalia and Uganda Regional Retreat in Kenya sets pace for peer-to-peer learning innovations.

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Upcoming Events:

1 December  World AIDS Day
3 December  International Day of Persons with Disabilities
5 December  International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development
5 December  World Soil Day
7 December  International Civil Aviation Day
9 December  International Anti-Corruption Day
10 December  Human Rights Day
11 December  International Mountain Day
18 December  International Migrants Day
FIRST Lady Margaret Kenyatta is the winner of the UN in Kenya Award of the Year. Mrs. Kenyatta was awarded the prestigious prize on Friday, 24 October, 2014 during celebrations of the United Nations Day, for her efforts to improve maternal and child health in the country through her Beyond Zero Campaign.

The First Lady was in a red dress accessorized with colorful Maasai jewelry on her head and neck. Flanked by her three children Jomo, Jaba and Ngina, Mrs. Kenyatta received the plaque of recognition and then dedicated the award to fellow Kenyans who helped raise funds for her cause.

“Ending preventable maternal and newborn deaths in our country is not a choice, it is a necessity. For too long, the prospect of childbirth in Kenya has been tantamount to a death sentence. This is not acceptable. It must stop,” she said.

Mrs. Kenyatta not only made history as the first ever First Lady to run a marathon for a worthy cause, but also the first First Lady ever to be awarded the UN in Kenya Award of the Year.

The Award was introduced in 2002 as the collective UN family of agencies honour to an individual and/or an institution for succeeding to bring to public notice significant issues related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which are sustainable and serve as an inspiration to all Kenyans, and in keeping with the ideals of the UN.

The First Lady was nominated for the award by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) alongside several other deserving candidates. The UN agencies then voted and the First Lady emerged the winner. The UN also recognized Fanis Lisiagali of Health Care Assistance Kenya for her commitment and efforts in creating a rapid response system for survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

Other nominees who received certificates of commendation were: Inspector Wilson Lomalii Edung, for his outstanding passion and commitment in supporting efforts to protect human rights and reduce the vulnerability of HIV infection among sex workers, injecting drug users and men who have sex with men in Kenya (UNAIDS); Ms. Nancy Mutai, for her outstanding passion and commitment in supporting efforts to bring a fountain of peace and a ray of hope to the hopeless at Embakasi Girls Secondary School (UNEP); Tegla Lorupe Foundation, for its commitment in championing peace and harmonious existence among communities (UNHCR); and Ghetto Radio, for its outstanding commitment to transform lives through radio, by empowering young people, mainly from the slums and streets, to be self-reliant (UNIC).

It was noted that despite her humility and apathy for the limelight, the First Lady had effectively utilized her high profile position into a positive advantage for Kenya’s women and children. By launching the Beyond Zero Campaign, she had brought on international and national attention into the dire plight of Kenya’s women and children and with the initiative, thousands of lives of women and children would be saved.

Additionally, the Beyond Zero Campaign was launched to meet Kenya’s challenges in meeting MDGs 4, 5 and 6 on infant and maternal mortality, and reduction of HIV transmission and AIDS-related deaths.

At the launch of the Beyond Zero Campaign, the First Lady announced that her ultimate goal was to ensure that all 47 counties in Kenya received a mobile clinic to ensure that no more mothers and children die during childbirth.

“To date, we have delivered seven fully kitted mobile clinics to Taita Taveta, Narok, Isiolo, Homa Bay, Wajir, Baringo and Samburu counties. These are counties that have some of the highest maternal and newborn mortality rates in the country,” said the First Lady.

The mobile clinics can deliver essential health services such as vaccination, antenatal care, HIV testing and treatment, treatment of sick children and parents and strengthening emergency services. Through the Beyond Zero Campaign, the First Lady has already raised funds to purchase more fully kitted mobile clinics.

According to the Ministry of Health statistics, maternal death represents about 15 per cent of all deaths of women aged between 15-49 years. This translates to between 6,000 and 8,000 pregnant women dying every year, or 21 maternal deaths a day.

At the onset of the Beyond Zero Campaign, 8,000 women died every year from preventable pregnancy-related complications largely for lack of skilled birth attendants, while 108,000 children before the age of five died every year from communicable diseases.

Since the onset of the campaign hospital records show a significant increase in the uptake of women delivering in hospitals under skilled birth attendants (from 46% to 66%).

The Beyond Zero initiative has also accelerated Government momentum in achieving MDGs 4 & 5 by 2015, received endorsement and commitment by all 47 Governors of Kenya, particularly from the 15 counties with the highest burden of maternal deaths of Kenya, contributing 98.7% of the total maternal mortality rate in the country.

Later in the afternoon on UN Day, UNFPA hosted a high level VIP luncheon
in honour of the First Lady. The guest list included Cabinet Secretaries, Ambassadors, diplomats, Heads of UN agencies and Chief Executive Officers among others. During the luncheon, the First Lady was presented with a framed communique signed by the 15 Governors as their commitment to reduce maternal deaths made at the Governors Consultative Meeting in August. The presentation was made by the UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas, UNFPA’s Representative Mr. Siddharth Chatterjee, and Director of Medical Services, Dr. Nicholas Muraguri, who was representing the Cabinet Secretary of Health.

“We are very proud of your achievement and we salute you,” said Mr. Chatterjee. “Through the Beyond Zero Campaign, focus is increasingly being placed on women and girls, particularly the cultural and traditional practices that are harmful to their health and wellbeing. We are also beginning to see a shift in attitudes towards women and girls, where their sexual and reproductive health and rights are increasingly being taken into consideration. This is why we must sustain and accelerate the momentum if we are to realize tangible results that will be of benefit to women, girls and families in general.”

The First Lady’s clarion call continues to be that: “No woman should die while giving life.”

On 19 October, 2014 Mrs. Kenyatta launched the second edition of the First Lady’s Half Marathon at Karura Forest. Her target is to raise Sh600 million for the Beyond Zero Campaign by 8 March next year.

### High impact interventions in high burden counties: Turkana County

The beauty of Turkana County is unmatched by any other. The people are warm and welcoming; the culture is a world wonder and the landscape beautiful and breathtaking. All this is threatened by the steeply rising new annual HIV infections; the County recorded 2,997 new infections in 2013. The epidemic in this arid County is gravely compounded by the humanitarian crisis arising from the influx of refugees from bordering South Sudan and Somalia, and the inter-ethnic clashes with respect to pasture and water for livestock- the community’s major source of income and livelihood.

Turkana County had 39,000 adults and 5,700 children living with HIV in 2013, with 19,000 adults and 4,000 children in need of life saving medication. Women are two times more likely to get infected than the men in the County. With the increase in urbanization, thanks to the discovery of oil and sufficient water to sustain the whole nation for three decades in the County, the risk and vulnerability to infection in the county has also sky rocketed.

Access to health care services is a major challenge and the County government has committed to increase resources for the services.

The First Lady of Kenya, through her Beyond Zero Campaign is donating eight mobile clinics to Turkana County to complement existing health services and improve access for those who do not live near the medical facilities.

It is hoped that these concerted efforts will contribute to sustainable development in the County and realize a reduction in the number of new HIV infections. As the date of attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 draws near, and that of ending AIDS in 2020, interventions aimed at eliminating the transmission of HIV from mothers to children, and reducing vulnerability to infection among young women and girls are a critical driver of the success of Kenya’s national response.
Global Media Campaign to end FGM launched in Nairobi

The United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, launched the Global Media Campaign Against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Nairobi, Kenya on 30 October 2014.

The campaign recognizes the critical role of the media around the world in adding its voice and reach to help end FGM.

Addressing guests at the launch, the Secretary-General commended the Guardian Newspapers for its initiative and commitment to bring an end to FGM in the United Kingdom, United States, the Gambia and in Kenya.

“Change can happen through sustained media attention on the damaging public health consequences of FGM, as well as on the abuse of the rights of hundreds of thousands of women and girls around the world,” Mr. Ban added.

The Secretary-General announced the launch of two initiatives to help support media outlets in Kenya and across the continent. A new, joint UNFPA-Guardian International FGM Reporting Award will be granted annually to an African reporter who has demonstrated innovation and commitment in covering FGM.

The competition winner – who will have submitted reportage on FGM – will spend two months training and working in the Guardian’s head offices in London. In Kenya, five joint UNFPA-Guardian FGM Reporting Grants will be awarded to a number of the country’s leading media houses to help support their reporting on FGM.

In her remarks, the Kenya Cabinet Secretary for Devolution and Planning, Ms. Anne Waiguru, reiterated the Government’s commitment and willingness to end FGM by working with a diverse range of partners.

Ms. Maggie O’Kane from the Guardian Newspapers explained how the campaign was aimed at ending FGM by using the media to expose the negative impact of this malpractice.

The Chairperson of the Media Owners’ Association and Chief Executive Officer of the Standard Media Group, Mr. Sam Shollei, pledged media support in Kenya to fight against FGM and step up efforts to bring the practice to an end.

The Founder of Kakenya Centre of Excellence, Dr. Kakenya Ntaiya, added her voice by imploring the media to utilize its power and give FGM the publicity it deserves.

The UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin urged Kenyans to do “whatever it takes” to ensure that FGM is totally abandoned.

“FGM is an act of violence against women and girls and sadly, it affects the poorest and least educated girls from rural areas and those who have nowhere else to go. That is why we must stop this brutal act against girls at all costs as it denies girls the right to be themselves,” warned Dr. Osotimehin.

Already, more than 4,000 communities around the world have abandoned FGM, giving hope that ultimately, this brutal cultural rite will be no more.

The Global Media Campaign Against FGM is a partnership between the UN and the Guardian newspapers to garner sustained public support for the initiative.
UNFPA Executive Director concludes Horn of Africa Mission with a pledge to scale up efforts to end gender-based violence

Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), concluded a mission to the Horn of Africa with United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and World Bank President, Dr. Jim Kim.

They visited Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia and Kenya to spotlight the issues that threaten the region’s security and development.

During their visit to Dadaab in Kenya – the largest refugee settlement in the world – the message from Dr. Osotimehin was clear. “The conditions of the internally displaced and the refugee populations, particularly women and girls, are unacceptable, and their misery has lasted for over two decades,” he stressed.

Refugees and internally displaced populations in villages and towns surrounding refugee camps are especially vulnerable to sexual violence and other forms of harmful practices, including female genital mutilation and child marriage. Life-saving reproductive health services and service providers are often unavailable. Adolescent girls become commodities, their bodies offering the means for ensuring a family’s survival. Many women lose access to family planning services, exposing them to unwanted pregnancy in perilous conditions. There is also an additional risk of contracting HIV in countries where it is prevalent, and in some countries, refugees are not covered by national HIV/AIDS programmes.

Some 20 to 30 per cent of the displaced are young people who lack access to good education, employment, adult mentorship, and health information and services, which may negatively affect their future. Forced displacement, family separation, lack of basic protection mechanisms and essential services put women and girls at particular risk of sexual violence.

UNFPA, together with partners, is committed to significantly scaling up efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in the Horn of Africa, and improve sexual and reproductive health services for the most vulnerable, especially women and girls.

This is the third high-level mission that UNFPA’s Executive Director has undertaken with the UN Secretary-General and the World Bank Group President to Africa. In 2013, he also accompanied them to the Great Lakes and Sahel regions, ensuring a coherent and coordinated approach towards peace, security and development.
UNFPA Executive Director meets Kenya, Somalia staff

UNFPA Kenya and Somalia staff during their meeting with the Executive Director, Babatunde Osotimehin. (Photo by UNFPA 2014)

UNFPA Executive Director, Babatunde Osotimehin (centre) with UNFPA Representative in Kenya, Mr. Siddarth Chatterjee during their meeting with the Kenya and Somalia staff. (Photo by UNFPA 2014)

UNFPA Executive Director, Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, has applauded the efforts of Kenya and Somalia country offices to improve maternal health, reduce maternal deaths, increase uptake of family planning commodities and promote the realization of the demographic dividend, particularly considering that the population in both countries is largely youthful.

Dr. Osotimehin met with the staff of the Kenya and Somalia country offices in Nairobi as he concluded his five-day tour of the Horn of Africa. “I was pleased to see the humanitarian work that UNFPA has done in both countries to improve the welfare of the people,” he said.

“We must replicate these results all over the country,” emphasized Dr. Osotimehin. “Maternal deaths must drastically go down both in Kenya and Somalia, and we must support initiatives and innovations that will lead to saving more lives of women and girls.”

With about 400 days left to the end of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) timeframe, the need to achieve MDG 5 - on the improvement of maternal health - by reducing maternal deaths (maternal mortality ratio) by three-quarters by 2015 and increasing access to family planning commodities is urgent.

“MDG 5, around which UNFPA’s mandate revolves, is lagging behind and we must intensify our efforts to change this and realize the achievement of the MDG. There can be no negotiation on this,” stated Dr. Osotimehin.

Part of his Horn of Africa tour included a visit to the Kenya Red Cross hospital in Ifo 2 Camp in the Dadaab Refugee Camp that caters for thousands of refugees based at the camp, mostly from Somalia. UNFPA has, since the establishment of the hospital fifteen months ago, supported the maternity wing, including the nursery and the family planning section. The maternity wing is adequately staffed and equipped.

On average, the hospital delivers about 180 babies a month. This constitutes about 87 percent of all deliveries at the Ifo 2 Camp, thanks to a wide and sustained outreach programme by the Kenya Red Cross team that consistently educates the community on the importance of the women seeking skilled delivery, and on child spacing. The hospital has, to date, only recorded one pregnancy-related death.

While in Kenya, Dr. Osotimehin was presented with a framed communique that was signed by governors from 15 counties that bear the highest burden of maternal deaths in Kenya, contributing a cumulative total of 98 percent of the national mortality rate.

The communique was signed earlier this year in August following a high level consultative forum with the governors that shone the spotlight on the unfortunate state of maternal health in the country, but particularly in those 15 counties. Spearheaded by the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7
Ministry of Health with the support of UNFPA, the meeting was graced by the First Lady, Mrs. Margaret Kenyatta, who urged the governors and their spouses to embrace the values of the **Beyond Zero Campaign** and as a result, lead in the reduction of maternal and child deaths.

Dr. Osotimehin also took the opportunity to congratulate the First Lady, Mrs. Margaret Kenyatta on the progress made thus far with the **Beyond Zero Campaign** to draw attention on the state of maternal health in Kenya and spur the country's embrace of initiatives to reduce maternal and child deaths. He also applauded her for being nominated the winner of the UN in Kenya Award of the Year 2014.

“I'm proud to note that UNFPA Kenya is already taking the lead in an initiative that has leaders committing to safeguard the lives of women and girls by promoting safe motherhood practices. The 15 counties initiative is commendable and is a momentous one that should see Kenya change the game on maternal health. The world is watching Kenya and the success of this initiative will serve as a model for other countries to adopt. We commit to increase resources to ensure Kenya and Somalia reduce their country’s maternal mortality rates,” noted Dr. Osotimehin.

“No community enjoys watching its women dying,” he added. “We therefore must support governments to encourage their communities to demand of their pregnant women to seek skilled healthcare in health centres, right from the antenatal visits to the delivery. We shall provide ambulances to ensure that those who need them to access health centres do so. As UNFPA, we must continue to work with the gatekeepers of communities to support initiatives that promote healthy living and the survival of women and girls, which include eliminating harmful traditional and cultural practices against girls and women.”

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**Beyond awareness to action in empowering the girl child**


Other stakeholders in the fight for the rights of the girl child were also represented. They included Childline and Ghetto Radio. About fifty teenagers from various schools also attended the function and were involved in an open interactive session to better understand the current challenges of adolescent girls.

Education took the centre-stage as the empowering tool for the girl child. Ms. Malunga pledged UNFPA’s support in enabling the girl child achieve her potential: “We want to ensure that every young person’s potential is fulfilled”. She discouraged early child marriages saying it is a major health hazard including fistula.

Ms. Grace Wangeci from UN Women on the other hand led the audience into shocking revelations that the youngest victim of sexual violence (rape) recorded in Kenya is a child of two months old while the oldest a woman of 105 years old. She urged girls to be careful: “Most of these cases happen in the confines of our homes as opposed to the streets, and involve the people we trust and it’s not about the clothes we wear”.

The teenagers who attended the function are recipients of Ghetto Radio’s initiative dubbed ‘**super dada campaign**’, which has helped many girls access basic services like sanitary towels and even to secure decent employment.

“I want to challenge all organizations, including the government and the UN to shift the mindset of the girl child from white collar jobs to entrepreneurship, by enacting enabling policies. This will open up spaces for employment for the
The girls after being presented with sanitary pads by Marian Aggrey, Chief of the Visitors Service. (Photo by UNIC 2014)

UN Secretary-General calls for use of ICT to tackle emerging development challenges

Mr. Ban lauded the iHub innovation center for blazing the trail in technology, especially in encouraging girls and women to not only learn but to also come up with solutions to issues affecting them. “I am pleased and inspired by the active engagement of the young people in seeking development solutions through ICT. Creative ideas being advanced in Kenya and other developing countries will play an important role in transforming society for the future. They will make life much easier and should be used by all people around the world.”

The Secretary-General was impressed by the creativity that young people are using with limited resources to come up with innovative ideas that can spur growth in the country. He cited Mpesa as one of the local innovative solutions that Kenya has exported and is being used internationally saying that mobile technologies and the internet are opening new channels of interaction and can be used for gathering, disseminating and analyzing information. This can accelerate action to protect natural resources, combat climate change and assist vulnerable people.

He urged policy makers to support the youth by providing an ideal policy framework for their innovations to succeed in the region and the rest of the world. “Kenya is a thriving country and a powerhouse in the regional economy, strategic to the political and security stability of Eastern Africa”.

Accompanying the Secretary-General was the UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas, who said that the UN Country Team, through its ICT for Development programme, would support iHub and other innovators to develop practical solutions that can be applied in all sectors of the economy to improve the lives of the citizens. “We will partner with iHub on a pilot initiative over the next four years to exchange knowledge and expertise among social innovators, stakeholders and policy makers to come up with knowledge and solutions that meet existing...
and future demands relevant particularly to vulnerable communities in the local context and beyond.”

iHub played a crucial role in mitigating violence during the 2007 post-election chaos, through ‘Ushahidi.com’, where Kenyans used their mobile phones to record eye witness reports of violence, which helped in mapping out hotspots that could more readily receive priority attention from the police. It was also used to monitor and manage online hate messages in the run-up to the 2013 elections.

iHub currently has a membership of over 10,000 youths, many of whom have gone ahead to start their own web based businesses, and continues to offer mentorship to upcoming technology innovators to meet the growing demand for development-based technology.

Consider this: Nashiru, a practitioner of female genital mutilation (FGM) in a Maasai community in Kenya, says, “Cutting girls is something our people have done for hundreds of years. No one can convince us that it is wrong.”

FGM refers to all procedures that involve the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is incredibly painful, traumatizes girls, and results in numerous negative health consequences that last decades. It can even cause death. It is also a form of violence against girls, exacerbating a vicious cycle of oppression and poverty that prevents them from fully participating in their country’s long-term progress. Yet Nashiru’s vehemence shows us just how entrenched this practice is.

Globally, it is estimated that over 140 million girls and women have undergone some form of FGM. Currently, more than 3 million girls, the majority under 15 years of age, undergo the procedure each year. In Kenya, even in 2014, FGM is an all too painful reality for generations of women and girls. Although the Demographic Health Survey of Kenya shows that FGM among 15-49 year olds declined from 37.6 per cent in 1998 to 27.1 per cent in 2008-2009, the figures are still too high and progress has been far too slow.

This can only be changed by uncompromising political will and leadership, backed up by robust legislation, law enforcement, judicial action and community mobilization aiming at changing the social norm that drive the practice at community level. The good news is that this is happening in Kenya.

Data shows that Kenya achieved an annual rate of reduction of 6.6 percent in the prevalence of FGM between 2005 and 2010. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF joint programme on FGM focuses on protecting girls and women by accelerating abandonment of FGM and providing care for its consequences has also been operational in Kenya since 2008 to support national and grass root efforts.

The First Lady of Kenya has condemned the practice and said that it should not have any place in any community living in the 21st century. She said that “as a country we must aspire to achieve a zero FGM status where every girl can go to school, find and fulfil her destiny, enjoy her rights and contribute to nation building”.

This spirit was reflected on 27 August 2014 at a conference organized by Kenya’s Ministry of Health and supported by UNFPA and key development partners like the World Bank, Kenya Red Cross, UNICEF, WHO, USAID and DFID to reduce maternal deaths in Kenya. Fifteen county governors of the 47 counties in Kenya (which account for 98 per cent of the country’s maternal deaths, and where many communities practice FGM) signed a historic communiqué overseen by the
Cabinet Secretary for Health and the UN Resident Coordinator to end maternal deaths and eliminate harmful traditional and cultural practices.

FGM has immediate and long-term effects on women’s health. Some of the immediate effects include severe bleeding, infection and shock. The long-term complications include recurrent urinary tract infections, keloids, difficulty during menstruation and pain during sex. FGM is also associated with the transmission of HIV from use of unhygienic instruments.

A study by WHO shows that FGM exposes women and babies to significant risks during childbirth. The complications can include need for a Caesarean section, severe haemorrhage and prolonged hospitalization – where facilities exist. In Kenya, for example, 57 per cent of women deliver at home, making them especially vulnerable to these childbirth-related complications.

FGM is part of a vicious set of circumstances designed to keep women as underdogs. This begins with a culture where FGM is tolerated and extends to issues like child marriage, sexual assault and rape, lack of access to healthcare, lack of access to education, high maternal mortality and lack of economic opportunities. Where women could be drivers and leaders in Kenya’s economy, instead they are handicapped socially, culturally and economically.

Research into the practice shows that FGM is practiced by different ethnic and religious groups within the country in different ways. FGM is far more prevalent among the Somali (98 per cent), Kisi (96 per cent) and Maasai (73 per cent) communities. As a result, FGM is also geographically unevenly spread in Kenya; it is more visible in rural areas than urban areas.

It is important to note that FGM is against the law in Kenya. So what can the Kenyan government, law enforcement and civil society, including the media, do to put an end to FGM?

Firstly, the law must be enforced. The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act of 2011, “prohibits the practice of female genital mutilation, to safeguard against violation of a person’s mental or physical integrity through the practice of female genital mutilation and for connected purposes”.

Secondly, the campaign against FGM must have a coherent national strategy for the abandonment of FGM. This will not only require political will, but mass social mobilization and changing social norms and mind-sets will be key. Girls empowerment to lead a grass root movement for their wellbeing should be an integral part of the response.

Thirdly, FGM must be considered more than a health issue. It is a grave violation of human rights, as much as sexual and physical violence against girls and women. As the Executive Director of UNFPA, Dr Babatunde Osotimehin, said, “It is an affront to their human dignity, an assault on their health and an impediment to the well-being of their families, communities and countries. Human development cannot be fully achieved as long as women and girls continue to suffer from this human rights violation or live in fear of it.”

The 15 county governors hold the key to ending the scourge of FGM, and they must lead the charge. They can serve as an example for the rest of the world and demonstrate that there is ‘no place in the 21st century for the harmful practice of FGM’, a charge in which they can rely on the full support of UNFPA and all development partners.

Siddharth Chatterjee is the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Representative to Kenya.

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UN Secretary-General tours UN-Habitat’s exhibition on first World Cities Day in Nairobi

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was the chief guest at an exhibition mounted by UN-Habitat in Nairobi as part of the first World Cities Day marked on 31 October. This year’s celebrations were commemorated across the globe under the theme: “Leading Urban Transformation”.

The exhibition in Nairobi on urban issues featured a paper city and was mounted by professional photographers based in Kenya.

In his statement to mark the occasion, Mr. Ban said: “With the decision by the United Nations General Assembly to establish World Cities Day,
we now have an annual date on which to celebrate one of humankind’s greatest and most complex creations”. The global celebration was hosted by Shanghai Municipal People’s Government, in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, China and UN-Habitat. It formed part of the Urban October under which UN-Habitat and its global partners also marked World Habitat Day on 6 October 2014.

Mr. Ban added: “This new day is one of the legacies of Expo 2010 Shanghai, at which the international community explored urban best practices and concepts from all over the world. So it is fitting that Shanghai is hosting the main inaugural event of this new UN observance.”

According to the Secretary-General, the theme of this first World Cities Day — “Leading Urban Transformations” — highlights the pioneering power of cities.

“Today is also a moment to recognize the contributions of mayors and other city leaders. Urban transformations require political will and the capacity to coordinate many actors and stakeholders. Mayors give voice to their citizens and play a central role in building well-planned cities and making them engines of prosperity, innovation and inclusiveness,” he said.

UN-Habitat Executive Director, Joan Clos, emphasized the transformative potential of cities to contribute to sustainable development. “Cities are able to create positive transformations if well-planned and well-managed. A well-planned city making use of optimal density can provide services to its citizens in a more efficient and affordable manner than sprawling urban areas,” he stressed.

“In the run up to the United Nations Conference of Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III in 2016), this first World Cities Day is an opportunity to consider a new urban paradigm. Instead of waiting to see how our cities turn out, let’s seize this opportunity to start to shape the cities we need,” said Mr. Clos.

Together for peace and sustainable development: KENYA and UNESCO at 50 celebrations

T HIS year marks 50 years of collaboration and partnership between Kenya and UNESCO.

Kenya joined UNESCO as its 73rd member in 1964, and since then the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM) has been established in fulfilment of Article VII of UNESCO's Constitution.

Over the years, UNESCO has supported Kenya in the development of policies by providing technical and financial support, mainly for:

- attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning; mobilizing science knowledge and policy for sustainable development; addressing emerging social and ethical challenges; fostering cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace; and building inclusive knowledge societies through information and communication.

Kenya has also benefitted from support in numerous projects, including research undertakings and infrastructure for sustainable development.

Moreover, UNESCO has been a key partner in the preservation of Kenya’s natural and cultural heritage of international significance. Some of the sites preserved and conserved under the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage include Mt. Kenya, the Great Rift Valley Lake System, Fort Jesus, Lake Turkana National Parks, the Miji Kenda Kayas and Lamu Old Town.
Another key undertaking of UNESCO includes the establishment of a Category II Groundwater Centre hosted by the Kenya Water Institute (KEWI), which will act as a regional platform for research and training on groundwater resources. Furthermore, in September 2013, after research undertakings, UNESCO and the Government of Kenya announced the discovery of massive groundwater reserves in Turkana.

Marking Kenya’s Golden Jubilee of cooperation, national celebrations took place at Kenyatta International Convention Centre in Nairobi from 22 to 24 October, 2014, organized by the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa and KNATCOM, together with the Government of Kenya and partner institutions.

The celebration included activities such as exhibitions, cultural performances and presentations in which twenty three counties and forty nine exhibitors comprised of government institutions, universities and the private sector took part to showcase Kenya’s achievements in the UNESCO fields of competences and rich cultural diversity, under the theme, “Together for Peace and Sustainable Development”.

A Film festival was also organized in partnership with the Pan African Federation of Filmmakers, recognizing the importance of cinema and audio visual industries in the social, economic and cultural education.

The opening ceremony was presided over by Deputy President William Ruto, who delivered the President’s speech to mark the 50 years’ journey of Kenya and UNESCO. In his opening remarks, the Deputy President expressed his gratitude and noted that UNESCO had continued to promote its ideals of peace, through education, the natural human sciences, culture and communication and information and, “as an active member state of UNESCO, Kenya remains committed to the mission of UNESCO, that of promoting peace and sustainable development through intellectual dialogue and international cooperation”.

On behalf of the strategic partners to both Kenya and UNESCO, Ambassador Tatsushi Terada of Japan
to Kenya, touched upon the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) held from 10 to 12 November, 2014 in Japan. The Ambassador explained that JICA projects in Kenya, such as Strengthening Mathematics and Science Education, allow trained Kenyan teachers to contribute increasingly towards the quality of education, connecting the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, enabling “students to learn the principles and systems of nature and find out about social issues based on the knowledge of science and mathematics, and for them to think globally but act locally”.

Mr. Mohamed Djelid, Director of UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa, noted that the conversion of the Commission into a state cooperation in 2013 was a great step forward in the fulfillment of Article VII of UNESCO’s Constitution, which provides that: “Member States shall establish National Commissions with sufficient autonomy to enable them discharge their mandate”. She also thanked all guests to the celebration for “having accepted to grace this historic moment in Kenya’s relationship with UNESCO. This is a clear testimony of the Government’s commitment to its international obligations”.

The opening ceremony also marked the launch of two publications, the first being the compilation of all major programmes and activities undertaken in the last 50 years by UNESCO in Kenya and by Kenya at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France, since the country joined UNESCO in 1964. “The 50 year-journey of UNESCO-Kenya Cooperation, 1964-2014”.

The second publication, “UNESCO National Commission Strategic Plan” will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery of KNATCOM.

The celebration was concluded with an award ceremony for outstanding exhibitors with cultural performances.

The celebration’s pre-launching event, the UNESCO Roundtable on “Perspectives on Sustainable Development for the 21st Century”, was co-organized by the University of Nairobi on 21 October, 2014. Professor Jacob Kaimenyi, Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, presided as the Guest of Honour, while the keynote lecture was given by Professor Bethuel Ogot, a renowned Kenyan historian.

In addition, selected panelists also contributed to the Roundtable context of the current dialogue on the post-2015 Development Agenda and the proposed Sustainable Development Goals. Views were exchanged through a stimulating debate about the current compelling issues on sustainable development, focusing on both within and outside of Kenya on matters of policy and practice, with an audience mostly comprised of university students.

During the Roundtable, Cabinet Secretary Kaimenyi highlighted UNESCO’s work and the Ministry’s commitment to the ideals of the ESD and Education for All (EFA) agenda. He noted that the 2014 Global
Monitoring Reports “have indicated that many countries in Africa, particularly Sub Saharan, may not realize the EFA target by 2015”. He therefore expressed his expectation for the forum to critically debate and share experiences among countries with respect to implemented strategies to meet EFA Goals by 2015. Other areas that were focused on were the five functions of UNESCO, which are: capacity builder, laboratory of ideas, standard setter, clearing house for information, and a catalyst for international partnerships and cooperation.

School children at the celebration. (Photo by Masakazu Shibata/UNESCO 2014)

Leading African Activist wins top UN Environmental Prize for Inspiration and Action

Ms. Fatima Jibrell from Somalia was announced as one of the 2014 Champions of the Earth on 7 November 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Fatima is the first Somali to win the UN’s top environmental accolade, the Champion of the Earth award. The Award ceremony was hosted by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) on 19 November at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC.

Her work has been instrumental in ending the charcoal trade in Northeastern Somalia, which had been decimating the region’s acacia tree population.

Stirred by the devastation caused by the civil war in Somalia, Jibrell founded the Horn of Africa Relief and Development Organization in 1991, now known as Adeso – a non-profit organization operating in South Sudan, Somalia and Northern Kenya to bring environmental and social justice to war-torn regions and communities. Through Adeso’s Pastoralist Youth Program thousands of young people - 80 per cent of whom are girls - have been equipped with new skills to better

Ms. Fatima Jibrell. (Photo by UNEP 2014)
UNHCR and partners take tablet-based learning to 18,000 young people in Dadaab refugee camps

UNHCR and the Vodafone Foundation, Vodafone’s philanthropic arm, announced a partnership in October, to bring transformative mobile-based education programmes to students at thirteen schools in Dadaab refugee camps.

The Instant Network Schools will offer learning programmes to 18,000 young refugees between seven and twenty years old. This is supported by UNHCR Innovation, a multi-departmental initiative launched within the agency to find new ways of working together with refugee communities, to design innovative solutions to the challenges they face.

The thirteen solar-powered schools include six primary and three secondary schools, as well as four vocational skills centers. Safaricom, Vodafone’s affiliate in Kenya, is providing connectivity across all the schools, while the telecommunications equipment company, Huawei, has donated 235 tablets to the programme.

Teachers at Dadaab have been trained in a range of tablet-based education programmes, providing pupils with information they would have otherwise been unable to access because of a scarcity of education resources.

The tablets also provide pupils with a link to life outside of the refugee camps. As part of their studies, pupils will use the technology to make contact with school children and professionals in other countries. UNHCR and Vodafone Foundation have partnered with a number of organizations in Dadaab, including CARE, Islamic Relief Kenya, Lutheran World Federation, Windle Trust Kenya and the Norwegian Refugee Council.

“We are happy with this partnership, which brings technology to our education system. Education is central in the lives of refugees since it is the most important thing that they can carry home. We are committed to ensure the success of the project,” said Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP: “For the last twenty years, Jibrell has mobilized local and international resources to protect Somalia’s pastoral way of life and the fragile environment upon which so many livelihoods depend. In particular, Jibrell has fought tirelessly against the charcoal trade, which has decimated ancient acacia trees in Somalia”.

The Champion of the Earth is this year celebrating its 10th anniversary, and over the past nine cycles, fifty eight laureates have been distinguished in the categories of policy, science, business and civil society for their actions and leadership on the care of the environment and in pursuit of sustainable development as a whole. Only five winners have emerged from Africa before Fatima Jibrell.

Fatima has previously won two other awards - the National Geographic/Buffet Award for Leadership in African Conservation in 2007 and the Goldman Environmental Prize - the most prestigious grassroots environmental award - in 2002.

The Champions of the Earth is the United Nations’ flagship environmental award that recognizes outstanding visionaries and leaders in the fields of policy, science, entrepreneurship, and civil society action. This award honors men and women whose actions and leadership have made a positive impact on the environment. Whether by helping to improve the management of natural resources, demonstrating new ways to tackle climate change or raising awareness of emerging environmental challenges, Champions of the Earth should serve as an inspiration for transformative action across the world.
UNHCR Representative in Kenya, Raouf Mazou.

Safaricom’s Chief Executive Officer, Bob Collymore, has since visited the Dadaab camps to follow up and witness how the innovative learning technology works. During his visit on 8 October, he met students and teachers in their instant network schools. He observed the immediate value of the project and expressed Safaricom’s keenness to have it expanded.

Michael Mutinda, a teacher in one of Dadaab’s primary schools, shows his pupils how a tablet computer works. (Photo by D. Mwarcha/UNHCR 2014)

Teachers from Tana River County attend a training workshop on Learning to Live Together

The teachers from Tana River County who attended the workshop. (Photo by Masakazu Shibata/UNESCO 2014)

TWENTY FOUR teachers from Tana River County have attended a week-long Learning to Live Together (LTLT) facilitator training workshop. The workshop was led by the Kenya Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, with the support of the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa in Nairobi, and Arigatou International.

At the end of the workshop teachers were expected to return to their schools and pilot the LTLT programme for a period of six months in a total of six schools and twelve classes in the Tana River County, an area of Kenya where inter-ethnic conflicts have led to violence and disruption, particularly affecting the school lives of children. During the pilot, teachers will implement a number of activities aimed at promoting intercultural and inter-faith understanding. Mainstreaming of the project to a national scale is envisaged as one of the follow-up actions to the pilot.

Learning to Leave Together is one of the seven themes of UNESCO’s work. It encompasses efforts for social transformation, intercultural dialogue, democracy and global citizenship, building peace, sport and anti-doping, and health education.

“Educating for peaceful coexistence is aimed at improving the education quality, thus addressing one of the key components of Education for All,” said Vick Ikobwa, National Programme Officer for Education and focal point for Peace Education at UNESCO in Nairobi.

UNESCO and UNICEF have supported and endorsed Arigatou International, a Tokyo-based foundation committed to ethics education and the enhancement
of children’s innate ability to make positive contributions, to strengthen the programme on Learning to Live Together. In the words of Arigatou International, ‘Learning to Live Together is a programme for educators (teachers, youth leaders, social workers) to nurture ethical values and spirituality in children and youth that will help them strengthen their identity and critical thinking, give them the ability to make well-grounded decisions, respect and work with people of other cultures and religions, and foster their individual and collective responsibilities in a global community’.

Learning to Live Together complements life skills education which was introduced in 2009 in Kenya to promote psycho-social competencies and values among learners in primary and secondary schools. “However,” observed Mary Kangethe, Assistant Director of Education at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology “the implementation of the curriculum has been faced with challenges as teachers concentrate on examinable subjects. The Learning to Live Together programme equips teachers with the capacity to employ participatory and experiential methodologies in the delivery of life skills education”.

Strategic partnership to make the supply chain work for children and women in Kenya

IN a world where far too many children die from treatable diseases, an efficient and timely supply of essential medicines and nutrition provisions is a matter of life and death. The supply chain is therefore vital to the survival and development of children.

Foreseeing the need to ensure that life-saving health and nutrition supplies reach the children and women who desperately need them, UNICEF and the Kenya Medical Supplies Authority (KEMSA) have, for the first time, launched a strategic partnership.

UNICEF Kenya Acting Representative, Pirkko Heinonen, and KEMSA Chief Executive Officer, Dr. John Munyu, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to synergize supply strategies and strengthen child survival interventions in the country.

“Delays in the supply chain are no longer acceptable,” says Ms. Heinonen. “Reaching the unreached is a good and necessary investment for Kenya. This is why it was important for UNICEF to identify strategic partners that would offer complementarity, synergies, efficiency and effectiveness in programme delivery for mothers and children.”

KEMSA plays an important role in managing the essential medicines and medical supply chain in the country. It also has a strong medical supply chain network across the country, enabling it to deliver essential medicines from the manufacturers to almost all health facilities in Kenya’s 47 counties.

Dr. Munyu recognized UNICEF’s valuable contribution to the partnership saying: “Partnering with UNICEF will bring the global experience in medical logistics and supplies for women and children. We are therefore raising the bar to deliver for Kenyans”.

The momentous event took place at the KEMSA Embakasi Operations Centre in Nairobi. The Director of Medical Services from the Ministry of Health, Dr. Nicholas Muraguri, presided over the ceremony which was attended by UNICEF and KEMSA staff members, alongside development partners.

“We can only get the health outcomes that we need by making sure that the commodities required by a doctor to provide quality services for mothers and children are available in every corner of the country,” says Dr. Muraguri.

UNICEF expects to offer KEMSA
US$5 million of essential medicines and nutrition supplies annually, including medical equipment for maternal and neonatal care, diagnostic kits, treatment for HIV/AIDS, insecticidal bed nets, therapeutic food, and much more. UNICEF will also leverage to KEMSA another US$3 million through procurement services for essential medicines from development partners.

KEMSA and UNICEF, working closely with the Ministry of Health, are committed to forging a stronger partnership to share knowledge, and optimize capacity to build a better and more efficient supply chain, not only in Kenya but ultimately the region.

THE UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) have made separate donations of material to the Visitors’ Service of the UN Information Centre (UNIC)- Nairobi.

UNICEF donated its standard response in emergencies, the “School-in-a-Box” kit. The kit ensures that children facing emergency situations can continue their education within 76 hours and contains classroom supplies for a teacher and up to 50 students. UNMAS, on the other hand, donated a demining helmet, brochures and pencils.

To enhance the visitors’ experience, the Service is constantly looking for new material to upgrade the tour route as well as engage visitors, and wishes to collaborate with many more UN agencies to achieve this.

Receiving the promotional material with appreciation, the Visitors’ Service Chief, Marian Aggrey, said the display of the items was an excellent channel for UN funds, programmes and agencies to provide visual aids and information for visitors while on tour, to learn more about the Organization’s work. Visitors participating in tours are as diverse as the UN itself. However, the majority are students from various primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions in the country.

During the tour, visitors see the two main Conference Rooms (Conference Rooms 1&2), indigenous trees planted by Heads of States and other dignitaries, various artwork donated to UNEP and UN-Habitat, the newly constructed office blocks commonly
referred to as the “NOF” (new office facility) and the Memorial Garden with its “Peace Pole.” Tour guides also provide visitors with information about the history, structure and current activities of the United Nations, its funds and programmes.

Following a UN General Assembly’s resolution, the Visitors’ Service was established on 1 January 2012 to organize a guided tour operation at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON). The Service is mandated to generate income in the same manner as the other three headquarter operations in Geneva, New York and Vienna.

The tour is offered for a fee on Mondays through Thursdays, between 9AM and 2PM and on Fridays 9AM to 12PM. If interested in a tour, please send an e-mail request to: un.tours@unon.org; call 0207622034; for those with valid UN ground pass, visit the UNIC-Nairobi Office to book one.

Assorted materials donated by UNICEF in a box. (Photo by UNIC 2014)

First UNV Kenya, Somalia and Uganda Regional Retreat sets pace for peer-to-peer learning innovations.

THE first UNV Kenya, Somalia and Uganda Regional Retreat kicked off on 5 to 8 November, 2014 in Lukenya, Kenya.

The retreat brought together UNV teams from the three countries with more than 150 people to exchange experience, share their knowledge and ensure dynamic interaction for team-building and networking. It was officially opened by the UNV Regional Manager for Africa, Mr. Tapiwa Kamuruko, and graced by UNDP Kenya Country Director, Ms. Maria-Thrse Keating, as well as the UNDP Somalia Deputy Country Director for Programmes, Mr. David Akopyan.

The overarching theme of the retreat was: “Vision, Voice, and Volunteerism”, reflecting the following: Vision – Inclusive Participation in Peace and Development; Voice – Knowledge Sharing and Networking; Volunteerism – Voluntary Service to Nations and Communities.

The event provided a unique opportunity for interactive networking and knowledge-sharing through peer-to-peer learning. It was also an efficient communication platform for consideration and discussion of the development priorities in the regional context by better collaboration between the teams for the benefit of the hosting agencies. The retreat also marked substantive contributions of UN Volunteers to the promotion of peace and development through the awarding of prizes for the best practices and results achieved by

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20
The regional retreat included a number of creative and innovative activities on peer-to-peer learning and knowledge-sharing between, not only UN Volunteers themselves, but between UN Volunteers and their senior managers from the UNV Headquarters in Bonn, as well as UNDP Kenya and Somalia.

The gathering was characterized by sessions where Ms. Keating, Mr. Kamuruko and Mr. Akopyan shared their personal volunteer experiences and career development journeys to motivate and inspire the UN Volunteers. The participants had an opportunity to take part in the online interaction with colleagues from UNV Headquarters, where Ms. Rosemary Kalapurakal, UNV Deputy Executive Coordinator, warmly welcomed the UN Volunteers and briefed them about the UNV Strategic Framework for 2014 – 2017.

The UN Volunteers were also taken through an online volunteering presentation (www.onlinevolunteering.org) by Ms. Annika Diederich who encouraged them to share with colleagues and friends the information and opportunities to volunteer online. She also categorically mentioned that Kenyans were the leading numbers of online volunteers on the portal. The innovative and dynamic methods supported the peer-to-peer learning sessions during the retreat, where the participants were encouraged to use their creativity, imagination and inspiration by introducing team experiences in the priority thematic areas of youth, environment, community resilience for disaster risk reduction, peace building, working with refugees, gender mainstreaming and effective communications.

“It is only in volunteering that we are allowed to make mistakes and to learn from them. Volunteering is an opportunity for you to hone your skills and experiences as you prepare to join more professional prospects globally,” noted Ms. Keating.

Following the tradition, the International Volunteer Managers Day, was celebrated on 5 November. Participants at the retreat, led by the UNV Regional Manager for Africa, UNDP Somalia Deputy Country Director for Programmes and UNDP Kenya Country Director, planted trees at the Maanzoni Lodge. This symbolized the solidarity and inspiration of the volunteer family all over the world in marking the 15th anniversary of the International Managers Day.

The retreat ended with an awarding ceremony, where the winners of this year were appreciated for their outstanding service and contribution to volunteerism for peace and development.
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