Kenya Governors make landmark commitment to save lives of women and girls

FIFTEEN governors have made a commitment to reduce the high rate of maternal deaths in their respective counties. The initiative was led by the Ministry of Health with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Kenya and the Kenya Red Cross Society.

A communiqué to this effect was signed by the Governors of Mandera, Turkana, Wajir, Migori, Nakuru, Siaya, Kisumu, Nairobi, Homabay, Kakamega, Garissa, Marsabit, Taita Taveta, Isiolo and Lamu, the fifteen counties with the highest burden of maternal deaths in the country, contributing 98.7% of the total.

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Garissa Governor, Nathif Jama Adam (L) with the Cabinet Secretary of Health, James Macharia displaying the communiqué to end maternal deaths ©UNFPA 2014
maternal deaths in Kenya.

The commitment which was signed on 27 August, 2014 in Nairobi is a major milestone for Kenyans as the county leaders pledged to increase efforts to reduce the maternal mortality in the country. The binding communiqué was endorsed following a high level consultative forum with the Council of Governors on the status of maternal health in Kenya.

"The Council of Governors agrees with the First Lady, Her Excellency Mrs. Margaret Kenyatta, that no more women should die while giving life," said the Governor of Bomet County and Chairman of the Council of Governors, Isaac Ruto, at the official opening ceremony of the consultative forum.

"Health being a devolved function, Governors are today responsible for the promotion and protection of the wellbeing of its citizenry and, as a result, we must ensure that the right to life for every man, woman and child is safeguarded," Governor Ruto added.

The UNFPA Representative, Mr. Siddharth Chatterjee, emphasized that the County Governors must be at the vanguard leading the efforts to accelerate the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 5 and reduce the unacceptably high maternal deaths in Kenya.

The signing ceremony was overseen by the Cabinet Secretary of Health, Mr. James Macharia, the UNFPA Representative to Kenya, Mr. Siddharth Chatterjee, and the Kenya Red Cross Society Secretary-General, Dr. Abbas Gullet. Also witnessing this momentous occasion were heads of agencies from the World Bank Group, USAID, UKAID, DANIDA, German Development Cooperation, UNICEF, World Health Organization (WHO) and many other delegates.

With Kenya’s maternal mortality rate being significantly high at 488 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, the communiqué was a welcome move towards drastically improving maternal health in Kenya and saving the lives of thousands of women and girls.

“We therefore declare today that as the first elected Governors of Kenya, we shall embrace and jointly own the Beyond Zero Campaign in all our respective counties as the First Lady launches mobile clinics nationwide to increase the chances of life for majority of our mothers,” declared Governor Ruto on behalf of the county governors. “Today’s meeting is not the beginning but rather a strengthening of partnerships between the Council of Governors and the Ministry of Health, the First Lady’s Beyond Zero Campaign, UNFPA and other stakeholders, including international organizations and the private sector, to implement measures and strategies that will significantly reduce maternal deaths in Kenya,” he added.

The key elements of the communiqué that the fifteen governors signed are as follows:

1. Recognize that Kenya has made substantial progress to achieve the MDGs with the exception of MDG 5 (maternal health). We are concerned that the maternal mortality ratio for Kenya of 488 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births has not shown any improvement over the last two decades.

2. Recognize the urgent need for scaled-up action and targeted interventions by improving access to quality healthcare for women, newborns and child health, particularly in the high-burden counties but subsequently to be rolled out across the country — in order to accelerate progress on MDG 5.

3. Recognize that maternal, newborn and child health, and the survival of mothers and their newborns are central to development; the empowerment of women to make informed choices are critical to improving the health of women, families and communities; and that adolescent girls have a higher chance of dying in pregnancy and childbirth and face grave barriers to life-saving information and services.

4. Recall the Consensus Statement of the Global Country Consultation on Targets and Strategies for Ending Preventable Maternal Mortality (EPMM) of April 2014 in Bangkok, Thailand, that recognized EPMM is within reach, and that necessary acceleration of progress can be achieved by positioning maternal survival in the context of every woman’s right to healthcare and the highest attainable level of health across the lifespan.

5. Recall the World Health Assembly Resolution of May 2014 on the Global Newborn Action Plan (WHA67.10) that commits to end preventable newborn deaths, and preventable stillbirths, through investments in high-quality care before, during and following childbirth.

6. Recognize the urgent need to scale up action by improving access to quality healthcare for women, newborns and child health irrespective of the geographic location.

7. Build on the momentum of the First Lady’s Beyond Zero Campaign that is about saving lives of Kenyan mothers and children.

8. Recognize that adolescent girls must be at the center of our policies and programmes; and we have the largest youth generation and we must empower them to become agents of change.

9. Share innovative and best practices implemented across countries and key strategies that County Governments need to undertake to accelerate the reduction of maternal and newborn deaths. We commit to collectively scale up support to, and strengthen reproductive, maternal and newborn health systems in our respective counties where needs are greatest and reemphasize our commitment to stay focused on this ‘unfinished’ MDG 5 agenda and reach those with least access — the most marginalized, disadvantaged populations, including women and girls.

10. Enhance high-level advocacy and reorient local authorities on the urgency to improved and equitable access to maternal, newborn and reproductive healthcare, including the elimination of harmful traditional and cultural practices.

11. Increase county-level investments in healthcare and ensure adequate human and financial resources towards maternal and newborn health.

12. Uphold the principles of equity, human-rights, gender equality that guide the provision and access of high-quality maternal and newborn healthcare for all.

13. Improve the healthcare infrastructure to support the delivery of emergency obstetric and newborn care services.

14. Strengthen data collection, analysis, documentation and information use...
THE First Lady of the Republic of Kenya, Mrs. Margaret Kenyatta, has urged the Government to intensify its efforts in protecting the lives of women and girls at childbirth. She said it was “unacceptable” that in this day and age, about 6,000 Kenyan women lose their lives each year while trying to give life.

“Too many women and newborns are dying unnecessarily,” she noted as she officially opened the high level Governors Consultative Forum on Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 5 (on maternal health) in Nairobi on 27 August, 2014.

“In this country we lose over 5,500 mothers every year; a statistic too hard to comprehend in this age of development and 50 years post-independence. These statistics indicate that we will have lost 18-20 mothers by the end of today, which is equivalent to an 18-seater minibus with pregnant women crashing and killing all the passengers every day!” the First Lady lamented.

Organized by UNFPA Kenya, the high level Governors Consultative Forum on MDG 5 (on maternal health) aimed to put the spotlight on Kenya’s high maternal mortality rate, which statistics place at 488 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. Of particular focus were fifteen counties (out of a total of 47 counties) that, together, contribute 98.7% of the total maternal deaths in Kenya.

“Childbirth should be a joyous moment for families and communities,” observed Mrs. Kenyatta. “Sadly, many times in Kenya and around the world, it becomes a period of loss and mourning. This is unacceptable! Most of these deaths are avoidable and indeed preventable. With less than 500 days remaining, Kenya is clearly off track to achieving MDGs 4 and 5 on maternal and child health. There are opportunities to reverse these trends and I appreciate the efforts the Government is making through free maternity services and improving the skills of health workers.”

With the launch of the Beyond Zero Campaign, the First Lady galvanized the nation into mobilizing resources to save the lives of women, girls and children. To date, the initiative, which plans to provide all the 47 counties with at least one, fully equipped mobile clinic, has handed over five mobile clinics to Taita Taveta, Narok, Samburu, Homa Bay and Baringo counties.

“I have demonstrated through the Beyond Zero Campaign that public–private partnerships can go a long way in supporting improvement of the health status of our women and children,” said the First Lady. “Reducing maternal deaths requires concerted multi-sectoral investments, hence the other social determinants that we must address include education, especially of girls, gender equality, roads infrastructure, sanitation and clean water, among many others.”

Under the clarion call “no woman should die while giving life”, the First Lady reiterated the need for greater investment in the health sector to meet the increasing demand and save more lives.

“In so doing,” she emphasized, “the goal should always remain to reach every woman, every child, every adolescent and young person.

Kenya’s First Lady decries high maternal deaths

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In whatever we do, we must continue to be accountable to families and communities. Our health systems must deliver for our mothers. We must, therefore, prioritize maternal and newborn survival and mobilize resources at all levels.”

The high level meeting which was beamed live across the country by the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), was endorsed by many leaders across the country and beyond, including the UNFPA Executive Director, Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, the wife of former UK Prime Minister, Mrs. Cherie Blair, the former US Global AIDS Coordinator (PEPFAR), Ambassador Eric Goosby, the Secretary-General of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Mr. Elhadj As Sy, and Global Lifebuoy Social Mission Director, Dr. Myriam Sidibe.

At the conclusion of the meeting, governors from the fifteen counties with the highest burden of maternal deaths, namely Mandera, Turkana, Wajir, Migori, Nakuru, Siaya, Kisumu, Nairobi, Homabay, Kakamega, Garissa, Marsabit, Taita Taveta, Isiolo and Lamu, boldly appended their signatures to a communiqué that bound them to place heightened attention on ending preventable maternal and newborn deaths in their specific counties, ultimately accelerating the attainment of MDGs 4 and 5 in Kenya.

The Cabinet Secretary of Health, Mr. James Macharia, applauded the Governors for their commitment and termed the meeting a success as it would translate into the saving of lives. He also thanked UNFPA for having initiated and worked hard to ensure the success of the meeting.

Health services to be improved to avoid maternal mortality

A high-level consultative meeting on accelerating the attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 and 5 in Kenya has revealed critical gaps in the provision of health services for expectant mothers and newborns. The Nairobi meeting brought together governors, executive members responsible for health, and health managers and experts from fifteen counties to discuss the status of maternal mortality in Kenya. It was revealed that approximately 6,000 women die annually due to pregnancy-related causes. The deaths occur mainly due to post-partum hemorrhage (26%), pregnancy-post and delivery (19%) abortion/miscarriage (17%), puerperal sepsis (15%), antepartum hemorrhage (8%), eclampsia (8%) obstructed labour (5%) and rupture (2%).

Half the women die within 24 hours following delivery, one quarter during pregnancy, 20% die within 2-7 days after delivery, while 5% die 2-6 weeks after delivery. Making the presentation at the meeting, the Director of Medical Services, Dr. Nicholas Muraguri, also said 108,000 children die annually before their fifth birthday, 40% of them newborns, within the first month after birth.

The highest number of maternal deaths occurs in Mandera (1,454)
Turkana (509) and Wajir (416), where mothers have limited access to antenatal care and have to travel long distances to reach health facilities. Cultural and religious inhibitions like taboos related to being handled by a male nurse/doctor also hinder some women from accessing health services. Delivering under the care of unqualified health personnel such as traditional birth attendants also contributes to the high number of complications and deaths.

Other counties with high mortality include Nairobi, Migori, Nakuru and Siaya. Based on data from the 2009 population census, the counties with the highest mortality ratio include: Mandera 3,795 (out of 100,000 live births), Wajir (1,683) and Turkana 1,594. This is in comparison to the national average of 488/100,000 live births.

Presiding over the meeting, First Lady Margaret Kenyatta said that these deaths were unacceptable, preventable and avoidable. Citing her Beyond Zero Campaign as an example for support and improvement for maternal and child health services, she called for concerted multi-sectoral investments, including education, especially of girls, gender equality, sanitation, clean water and roads infrastructure to alleviate the problem.

“Our health systems must deliver for our mothers,” she said. “We must therefore prioritize maternal and newborn survival and mobilize resources at all levels.”

Other interventions include focusing on quality care during labour, birth and the day after birth; prioritizing high coverage of identified high impact interventions, accountable leadership, political commitment and adequate financing.

The meeting was organized and supported by UNFPA, WHO and UNICEF, among other partners.

**UNFPA Executive Director applauds Kenya for bold move to end maternal deaths**

With just under 500 days left to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), countries around the world have been urged to step up efforts to reach targets. In this regard, the UNFPA Executive Director, Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, commended the Ministry of Health, the Council of Governors and the First Lady of the Republic of Kenya who, with the support of UNFPA Kenya, hosted a high level Governors Consultative Forum aimed at reducing maternal deaths and achieving universal reproductive health, under MDG 5.

“I commend the bold leadership of the First Lady, the Ministry of Health and the Council of Governors to accelerate action on MDG 5 in this final stretch of our MDGs marathon. Your work, together with the UN family, the World Bank Group, USAID, DFID and other development partners, is exactly the kind of robust collaboration needed to tangibly improve the lives of families and communities,” said Dr. Osotimehin. “As a physician and a former Minister of Health, I know that only a broad-based effort mobilizing a wide range of partners across sectors and national, county and local levels can tackle the scale and burden of maternal and child deaths in Kenya. That’s why it is so important that you have brought together your leaders, political drivers and thinkers today to collectively reflect on progress and challenges. The Beyond Zero Campaign is about saving the lives of mothers and children, and the leadership of County Governors is essential.”

With Kenya’s high maternal mortality rate, which statistics place at 488 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, the Governors Consultative Forum that was held from 27 -28 August, 2014 in Nairobi, was a timely initiative that is bound to save the lives of thousands of women and children.

“No woman should die giving life. We know what to do. We know where to do it. And we know how much it will cost to prevent these needless tragedies,” stressed Dr. Osotimehin. “Political will is key. I commend the Government of Kenya for adopting its free maternity services policy and allocating Kshs. 4Billion towards maternal...
Delivering as One on gender equality and women’s empowerment

The Government of Kenya and the United Nations held a strategic planning workshop on 7 August 2014, aimed at Delivering as One on gender equality and women’s empowerment. The workshop was attended by professionals from all Government Ministries and fourteen UN agencies. It introduced the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) strategic results framework and its alignment to the Medium Term Plan II of the Vision 2030 for the period 2013 – 2017. The full day workshop commenced with remarks from Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas, the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, who reiterated on the need for the Government and the United Nations to work in unity towards prioritizing gender equality and women’s empowerment.

“The nature of gender inequalities in Kenya, calls for a multi-dimensional and multi-stakeholder response,” said Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas. “In this context therefore, Delivering as One becomes a crucial strategy, enabling us to address the multi-faceted barriers that contribute to gender inequalities in Kenya, by bringing together a wide range of partners and effectively utilizing available resources.”

Engineer Peter Mangiti, the Principal Secretary for Planning in the Ministry of Devolution and Planning, in his opening speech noted: “This meeting brings together the Ministry of Devolution and Planning, Gender officers from line ministries and gender specialists from all United Nations agencies”. The joint efforts between the Kenyan Government ministries and the UN highlighted in detail the national priorities for the advancement of gender equality and women’s empowerment, which are documented within Kenya’s Constitution.

The strategic planning workshop was convened and moderated by the Gender
sustainability, land management and human security, representatives from both the Government and the UN reviewed and agreed on priority activities for 2014/2015, while gaps in resources were noted.

There were, among many, varied views adding weight to the priority areas which required the Kenyan Government and the United Nations to deliberate and consult jointly. These areas were comprehensively looked into during the latter sessions of the workshop, where presentations were done, questions asked and inquiries clarified. Furthermore, the priorities annexed the political will to address the significant gaps in policy frameworks and the way forward.

The workshop set the tone for achieving national priorities jointly through collective efforts from the ministries and the United Nations Agencies. The GoK-UN joint work plan for 2014/2015 will be used for resource mobilization and as a performance plan for all the involved parties.

Pursuit for prevention of domestic violence

UN WOMEN, in partnership with Africa UNiTE Kenya, supported civil society organizations to convene a consensus building meeting on the Protection against Domestic Violence Bill (PADV) with legislators from both the National Assembly and the Senate.

Over fifty members drawn from the Justice and Legal Affairs Committee, Parliamentary Human Rights Caucus, the Kenya Young Parliamentarians Association (KYPA) and the Kenya Women Parliamentarians Association (KEWOPA) came together to mobilize support for passing of the Protection against Domestic Violence (PADV) Bill. Also represented at the meeting were the Directorate of Gender, National Gender and Equality Commission, Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, various civil society organizations and the media.

“The first step of cooperation should be to develop common vocabulary and share messages that articulate reform issues in a consistent and straightforward way. Additionally, we must point out that this Bill covers all members of the family and is not only for women,” Mr. Agostino Neto, Member of Parliament for Ndhiwa constituency explained.

Domestic violence in Kenya has traditionally been associated with physical violence and to a much lesser extent, sexual violence. Increasingly however, domestic violence is being recognized as capable of manifesting as psychological and economic violence and further encompassing not only violence within conventional marriages but also violence meted out by cohabiting partners, family members and intimate partners or spouses, irrespective of whether they lived together.
The Nairobi Women’s Hospital Gender Violence Recovery Centre says that 20% of reported cases are domestic violence related. Moreover, according to the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, 39% of the women surveyed said they were abused by a husband or partner. News reports suggest a substantial increase in domestic violence cases in both rural and urban areas, a situation exacerbated by the rising poverty levels.

The meeting brought together survivors of domestic violence who shared their experiences and spoke to both its causes and consequences. “I lost my self-esteem and was unable to go to work. I became a laughing stock in my community. All this because I am not educated,” said a female survivor.

Two organizations, Masculinity Now and MenEngage Kenya, which engage men and boys in the prevention and response to Gender-Based Violence, stated that the importance of including men in the discourse cannot be understated. A male survivor of domestic violence narrated how his wife abused him physically and emotionally but despite this, she was never held accountable for her actions due to the lack of an enabling legal framework.

Mr. Isaac Mwaura, a nominated Member of Parliament and human rights activist opined that the reason why the Bill had been received negatively was because, at face value, it seems to protect women at the expense of men. He noted the importance for all stakeholders to dialogue in order to ensure the inclusion of all affected persons and stressed the need to provide for alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. In addition, Dr. James Nyikal, Member of Parliament for Seme constituency outlined the way in which domestic violence affects children and its economic cost to the state.

It is important to note that the PADV Bill is premised on the notion that the family is the fundamental unit of the society and as such, is a piece of legislation that seeks to operationalize Article 45 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010. It addresses domestic violence through the provision of protection orders at the instigation of the courts and other law enforcement agencies. The Bill is the last of the “family bills” still to be passed, with the other two, Marriage and Matrimonial Property Bills, having since been passed into law.

Since the tabling of the Bill before the House, it has undergone substantial amendments which have watered down the gains it was intended to provide. In its current state, which has been informed by the Justice and Legal Affairs Committee report, the Bill omits key provisions, therefore curtailing efforts of various state and non-state agencies towards the prevention and response to domestic violence. The sections at stake include clause 4 which defines a domestic relationship and clause 11 which narrows down the persons who can apply for a protection order. The latter sidelines key stakeholders such as the Director of Children Services, the police and social welfare officers, all of whom are currently involved in child protection at national and county levels.

KEWOPA members led by Ms. Cecily Mbarire appreciated the support given towards lobbying for the passage of the Bill by the Kenya Young Parliamentarians Association and called on all other Members of the National Assembly to raise awareness in their constituencies on the Bill, rather than leave it for the media. Ms. Mbarire stressed that members should engage in continuous dialogue to resolve contentious issues that may undermine the passage of the Bill in order to develop a common understanding.

The meeting concluded with Members signing a petition reiterating their full commitment to passing the Bill.
UNESCO YouthMobile Initiative for Sustainable Development

UNESCO’s YouthMobile Initiative recently concluded the 3rd round of workshops in Nairobi, Kenya, for forty young people, on mobile application development. The training is part of a seven-round series of workshops hosted in partnership with the Dev School of Kenya.

The series of intensive training workshops on mobile application development for youth for sustainable development in Kenya have been ongoing in Nairobi within the framework of the new and innovative UNESCO YouthMobile Initiative in partnership with the Dev School and Kenya National Commission for UNESCO.

The UNESCO Eastern Africa Office provided extensive assistance to the training initiatives.

The YouthMobile Initiative aims to empower youth with the high-level skills and confidence to create mobile apps that are locally-relevant and contribute to the reduction of chronic youth unemployment. The global objective is to engage at least 25,000 young people and sell at least 5,000 mobile apps by 2017.

At a time when the world is looking for new ways to build peace and sustainable development, encouraging innovation and creativity of youth of the world will be vital in effectively addressing these challenges.

The Nairobi workshop was held in partnership with the Dev School, a start-up from Kenya with aspirations to introduce coding to youth across the nation.

Founded in 2013 by a young Kenyan, Ms. Martha Njeri Chelesimo, the Dev School has now successfully run two rounds of training in Nairobi. In these workshops, students are able to extensively study programming languages, mobile platforms, web application frameworks, front end development, writing and entrepreneurship.

The forty young people who participated in this workshop were taught mobile app development from the MIT App Inventor curriculum. The students were guided by peer trainers in building Android applications and focused on creating apps that would solve specific local problems.

Mr. Linus Onyango, Chairperson at the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO Youth Forum, said: “The Mobile Application Training has been the most exciting and innovative undertaking related to ICT in which the UNESCO Youth Forum Kenya has participated. The mobile application training has been on for six weeks now and the attendance has been amazing, the class is always full and the trainers have been great in giving the learners an introduction to mobile apps development. I would like to thank UNESCO’s Regional Office, the Dev School, the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO and the Kenyan youth for making Nairobi YouthMobile a success.”

Since the Dev School’s inception, the number of students participating in workshops has been steadily increasing. Graduating students have had great success in finding employment within the growing IT industry in Kenya.

Anita, a member of the Social Sciences Committee at the UNESCO Youth Forum Kenya, marvels: “I have never known that tech can be so much fun. Doing the YouthMobile training has made me so eager to complete my final project!”

A hackathon has been scheduled for September, where students will be required to fully develop their final mobile applications for presentation. In the hackathon, the students will build Android applications in the following areas: education, unemployment, culture, water and sustainable development.

To find out more about the UNESCO YouthMobile Initiative, please follow the Twitter handle: @YouthMobile or visit the website: www.youthmobile.org.
Somali Prime Minister visits Dadaab Refugee complex

The Prime Minister of Somalia, Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed visited the Dadaab refugee complex on 22 August 2014.

The Prime Minister who was accompanied by the Somali Minister of Interior and Federalism, Abdullah Godah Barre was in Dadaab to meet and listen to Somalia refugees residing in the camps. Also present were Kenya Government officials, UNHCR Kenya Representative, Raouf Mazou, and UNHCR Somalia Representative, Alessandra Morelli.

The visit comes at a time when preparations are continuing to commence a pilot project to support ongoing spontaneous returns.

The Prime Minister met with refugee representatives including religious, minority and youth leaders. He also met with refugees who have expressed interest in going back home. He toured a hospital and a school in one of the five camps and promised that he would prioritize refugee return and reintegration in setting up recovery programmes.

“Twenty three years in exile is such a long time,” he said. “I hope you will be able to come back home and join us in rebuilding our motherland.”

He thanked the Government and people of Kenya for their continued support to the Somali refugees.

Addressing the Prime Minister, the refugee leaders expressed their happiness about the visit. “You are the highest ranking Somalia Government official to visit Dadaab in the last 24 years,” noted one of the refugee leaders.

In his remarks, UNHCR Country Representative, Raouf Mazou expressed UNHCR’s commitment to support spontaneous return movements. He emphasized that repatriation would be voluntary.

Mr. Alessandra Morelli stressed the historical nature of the visit and UNHCR’s efforts in Somalia to support the creation of conditions for sustainable returns.

Most of the refugee population in Dadaab is of Somali origin, the majority of whom are from South and Central Somalia. The volatile situation in these parts of the country has hindered the refugees from considering a return home. In the recent past, however, many of them have expressed an interest in going back and are following the political and security situation closely. Earlier in the month, UNHCR organized a visit to Kismayo for nineteen refugee representatives from the five Dadaab camps to inform themselves about the economic and socio-political realities in the region. Upon their return, the refugee delegates shared their experiences with the camp residents.

Most Somali refugees fled as the country was plunged into anarchy by the collapse of the Siad Barre government in 1991. There are currently 427,812 Somali refugees in Kenya, 244,340 in Ethiopia, 233,723 in Yemen, 19,799 in Djibouti and 18,534 in Uganda.
In July 2014 the UN Secretary-General appointed Said Djinnit of Algeria as his new Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region, succeeding Mary Robinson of Ireland, who took the responsibilities of UN Special Envoy for Climate Change.

In his new capacity, Mr. Djinnit will be focusing on working with stakeholders in the region and international partners on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. Immediately following his appointment, Mr. Djinnit embarked on a series of trips to the different capitals of the Great Lakes region in order to engage leaders and other stakeholders on the PSC Framework and the implementation of his mandates.

Mr. Djinnit started his journey with a courtesy call to the Kenyan authorities in August 2014. “As soon as I received my appointment, I thought it would be appropriate to come and introduce myself to you, and seek your partnership and support for the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework agreement,” Mr. Djinnit told Deputy President William Ruto in Nairobi on 22 August. “I would like to build on the achievements of my predecessor, Mary Robinson, and promote a strong partnership around the Framework agreement also known as ‘Framework of Hope’.”

The Special Envoy then travelled to Addis Ababa and met with the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. Their discussions focused on ways to provide greater support to the efforts of the countries of the region and the implementation of the PSC Framework.

On 29 August, the Special Envoy met with President Joseph Kabila of the DRC and a whole range of national dignitaries to discuss the ongoing challenges facing the region, especially the FDLR disarmament, the repatriation of former M23 combatants from Uganda and Rwanda, and the need to sustain momentum around the implementation of the PSC Framework.

Mr. Djinnit also intends to travel in the coming days and weeks to the capitals of other signatory countries of the PSC Framework, where he will meet with the respective authorities and regional representatives.

Prior to his appointment as Special Envoy for the Great Lakes, Mr. Djinnit served as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA).

Mr. Djinnit previously served as the first African Union (AU) Commissioner for Peace and Security, after holding various positions in the Organization of African Unity (OAU), including as Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

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7. Protects and promotes human rights on site and through some 80 treaties/declarations
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9. Advances democracy, assisting some 30 countries a year with their elections
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