On my first day as Secretary-General of the United Nations, one question weighs heavily in my heart.

How can we help the millions of people caught up in conflict, suffering massively in wars with no end in sight?

Civilians are pounded with deadly force. Women, children and men are killed and injured, forced from their homes, dispossessed and destitute. Even hospitals and aid convoys are targeted.

No one wins these wars; everyone loses. Trillions of dollars are spent destroying societies and economies, fueling cycles of mistrust and fear that can last for generations. Whole regions are destabilized and the new threat of global terrorism affects us all.

On this New Year’s Day, I ask all of you to join me in making one shared New Year’s resolution:

Let us resolve to put peace first.
Let us make 2017 a year in which we all – citizens, governments, leaders – strive to overcome our differences.
From solidarity and compassion in our daily lives, to dialogue and respect across political divides… From ceasefires on the battlefield, to compromise at the negotiating table to reach political solutions…
Peace must be our goal and our guide.
All that we strive for as a human family – dignity and hope, progress and prosperity – depends on peace.
But peace depends on us.
I appeal to you all to join me in committing to peace, today and every day.
Let us make 2017 a year for peace.

Thank you.
Message on Youtube: https://youtu.be/Tgu8SDIvbVo
World AIDS Day 2016: HIV Prevention for young people in Kenya

W
orld AIDS Day 2016 commemorations in Kenya were dedicated to young people with the theme: Engage, Prevent, Celebrate and were led by the First Lady, Margaret Kenyatta at the Nyayo National Stadium in Nairobi.

Young people, in thousands, joined the first lady to celebrate the end of a presidential campaign to end HIV stigma among adolescents and young people. The national wide campaign dubbed “Kick out HIV Stigma” leveraged the power of football to mobilize young people to access stigma free HIV counseling and testing services and one to one HIV messages. The innovative campaign engaged the 47 Counties (sub-national government units) in a competition to provide HIV testing to young people aged 15-24, HIV messages through the football league.

Margaret Kenyatta was joined by UNAIDS Deputy Executive Director, Luiz Loures. She presented trophies to best performing girls’ and boys’ football teams, County Governments that recorded exemplary performance in the campaign. The First Lady also flagged off a HIV Prevention Concert which engaged Kenyan popular artists to mobilize young people to test for HIV.

HIV is a significant health threat among young people in Kenya. As per 2015 estimates, 35,800 new HIV infections and 3,850 AIDS-related deaths occurred among young people aged 15 to 24. HIV-related stigma remains a significant barrier to many young people accessing HIV counseling and testing, as well as lifesaving HIV treatment.

In seven months, the “Kick out HIV Stigma” Campaign reached an estimated 15 million people with HIV messages, provided one-on-one mentorship to 3,867,913 young people and HIV counseling and testing to 818,236, while linking those who tested positive to treatment.
Boda Boda and Matatu Association Members Stand For Gender Equality

“We are HeForShe, We are HeForShe” Boda Boda and Matatu Association representatives chanted in unison after signing up to be HeForShe Champions on 19th November 2016. The sign-up which comes two years after President Uhuru Kenyatta officially launched the campaign in Kenya was very significant since in 2014 just before the President launched the campaign, there had been a series of assaults against women and girls in the country which was been conducted by matatu operators. In November 2016, incidents had occurred in Nairobi and Mombasa where women have been stripped naked in public spaces, filmed and posted on social media because of their dress orientations.

“We are launching an amazing campaign #HeForShe today. All our efforts are meaningless unless YOU and ME take responsibility” said the President while calling all Kenyans, men and women to stand for gender quality during the 2014 launch. “You and I have a responsibility, to safeguard the rights of women as we are all equal”, he added.

Some 54 percent of nearly 400 women interviewed by Kenyan advocacy group Women’s Empowerment Link (WEL) (2015) said they had experienced gender based violence, defined as physical, sexual or psychological harm, while using public transport which is dominated by men. “There are more than 170,000 bodaboda riders in Kenya who are between 15-35 years” said the Principal Secretary State Department of Gender Zeinab Hussein. The BodaBoda association’s chairman Isaac Kalua says on average about 14.4 million people are riding boda bodas every day signifying the importance of Bodaboda in the transport industry.

The bodaboda and Matatu Association launch graced by Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Public service youth and gender affairs, Mrs. Cecily Kariuki, PS State Department of Gender Zeinab Hussein, and UN Women Deputy Director Karin Fueg among other government officials took place a few days before the start of 16 Days of Activism on Gender Based Violence.

“GBV is not a women’s affair but an issue that affects both men and women in the society.” Highlighted CS Ministry of Public service youth and gender affairs Mrs. Cecily Kariuki. The CS applauded the leaders of the Bodaboda and Matatu associations for standing up for empowerment and urged them to sign up as champions of gender equality. “I expect you to sign up as champions, reporting GBV cases whenever they occur around you, display the jitokezee 1195 message while at work and undertake customer care training for your members explained

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4
Mrs. Cecily Kariuki. She reiterated that any culture that diminishes women in any way should be banished and discouraged. UN Women Kenya Deputy Director Ms. Karin Fueg in her remarks challenged the audience by saying that more still needs to be done to end gender inequality. “Gender equality is not just a women’s issue but rather an issue that concerns everyone in the society,” reiterated Karin Fueg. She explained that by signing, the associations join the global campaign towards ending gender inequality and reaching out to boys and men as change agents of gender equality.

Matatu Owners Association Chairperson Mr. Dickson Mbugua pointed out that the sign up marks the continuity of the association in fighting against GBV and echoed the associations full support to the campaign and its course to achieve gender equality. He however pointed out the need for adequate funding of partner organizations for the campaign to be successful.

PS State Department of Gender, Mrs. Zeinab Hussein before leading the champions to sign up expressed the efforts of state department to turn the members of the associations into champions of gender equality and use them to end GBV in the society. “If GBV is shunned, ladies would venture into the transport industry,” she reiterated.

Mrs. Zeinab highlighted the need to educate the members of the associations to end GBV sand added that road courtesy would bring down carnage on the roads. “Abusive language in the transport sector lays an emphasis of GBV in the country and therefore it should be discouraged at all costs,” she urged the members of the associations present.

“Bodaboda association has rolled out a training programme for members to end GBV,” highlighted BodaBoda Association of Kenya Chairperson Mr. Kevin Mugadi. Mr. Mugadi highlighted that GBV is orchestrated verbally in many instances in the sector before promising the associations commitment to the seven principles of the campaign through signing up as a champion. Mr. Mugabi nominated his excellency the president to be the patron of the bodaboda association.

UNESCO in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO launched the 2016 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report. The participants present at the launch were drawn from a wide array of the education sector, stakeholders and education development partners and line ministries such as the Ministry Planning and Devolution.

The report calls on countries to heighten the achievement of the SDG 4 among other SDGs. These include: the urgent need for new approaches in view of policies, political willingness and innovation in creating effective cross-sectoral partnerships, change to the thinking and premium attached to education and its key role in human well-being and global development; Education has a responsibility to foster the right type of skills, attitudes and behavior that will lead to sustainable and inclusive growth.

While presiding over the launch and on behalf of the Principal Secretary, Basic Education, the Director General for the Ministry of Education Mrs. Leah Rotich, noted that the report was very persuasive and empirical hence forms a basis for a strong case for education in terms of contributing to all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As she highlighted the key roles Kenya has been playing in the 2030 Education Agenda, notably taking part in the extended Education for All (EFA) Steering Committee and more recently as member of the Education 2030 Steering Committee and Chair of the UNESCO Africa Working Group on Education, she appreciated UNESCO for facilitating the National SDG 4 consultations in the month of October, 2016 alongside other UN SDG co-conveners, education development partners, civil society organizations and other stakeholders. She assured that the recommendations will be used to inform the national roadmap on implementation of the SDG 4 processes as well as informing policy at the upstream level.

Training in Kenya boosts deployment of female military officers for peacekeeping

For Captain Grace Ajierh, joining the army was a dream come true. “It started with the love of the uniform and with the responsibilities that came with it,” she reminisces about her motivation to join the armed forces. “When I wear the uniform, I feel at home.”

Captain Ajierh, from Kenya, is among 41 female military officers from 31 countries undergoing the fifth edition of the Female Military Officers Course co-organized by UN Women and the International Peace Support Training Center (IPSTC) in Nairobi, Kenya, from 28 November – 9 December. The training provides opportunities for professional advancement to the immensely talented women in the armed forces and encourages the deployment of more women from troop-contributing countries, particularly for protection related tasks.

Captain Ajierh is currently in charge
of Legal Affairs at the Kenyan defence headquarters. She had served in the UN mission in South Sudan, first as a legal officer, then as a Platoon Commander of an all-women platoon.

Kenya is ranked first in the world, among troop-contributing countries that essentially make up the UN peacekeeping troops, for the deployment of female military officers. More than 19 per cent of the Kenyan peacekeeping troops deployed in the field, including military experts, are women, followed by South Africa at 18 per cent. Sixteen years since the landmark UN Security Council resolution 1325, which called for women’s participation in peacebuilding, and in spite of the growing recognition of women’s pivotal role in securing lasting peace, they constitute only three percent of the UN peacekeeping operations, overall.

The all-female platoon in South Sudan UN peacekeeping mission, where Captain Ajireh served, was a rarity. “We were able to come up with a platoon strength of only female peacekeepers in the mission, which is not something that you get every single day,” stresses Captain Grace Ajerh. She is proud that Kenya is ahead of most in terms of deployment of female peacekeepers.

The training was officially opened by the Kenya’s Ministry of Defence Policy and Strategic Planning Director, Ms. Alice Kiari; Counsellor, Gender and Governance at Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Ms. Riikka Raatikainen; UN Women Country Director, Ms. Zebib Kavuma and the Director of International Peace Support Training Center (IPSTC) Brigadier Patrick Nderitu.

“The Course is very effective. I am coming from a mission in South Sudan and everything that I was charged to do there is relevant to what I am learning now. These are gender-related issues, women’s issues, looking at the aspects of how vulnerable groups are affected and how I can be effective in my role as a peacekeeper,” said Captain Ajerh about the training. She is confident
that the training will help her in future deployment and she is better equipped to train female peacekeepers on gender-related issues.

Major Catherine Kipngok, a personnel officer in charge of personnel services at the Kenya Defense Forces has previously been deployed in two peacekeeping missions in South Sudan and in Central Africa Republic and sees this training as an eye opener in future peacekeeping engagement.

“In both situations, I wish I had attended this course before going there as I have learnt that there is a lot that I could do as a female military officer that I should have done if I had this knowledge prior to being deployed in peacekeeping missions.”

200 female military officers from all over the world have participated in this two-week course, that this initiative has been supported by the Netherlands, Finland, Australia, and Norway, and hosted by the governments of South Africa, India, China, and now Kenya.

In her opening remarks at the training, UN Women Country Director, Zebib Kavuma noted: “Women, men, girls and boys experience violence before, during and after armed conflicts differently and have different vulnerabilities, insecurities and coping mechanisms. However, the reality remains that women and girls continue to pay a high toll, given the gender roles assigned by society and their vulnerabilities. Therefore, the policy frameworks and response efforts should include gender equality as one their guiding principles.”

Recently, more than 60 countries, including Kenya, committed to double the number of women in the military in peacekeeping operations by 2020 and to reach at least 15 per cent of female representation among military experts. UN Women in Kenya has supported the Ministry of Defence to develop its first-ever gender policy to integrate gender concerns into the work of the Ministry.

Training of 1,740 Community Health Volunteers on Maternal and Newborn Health in Garissa County

The Garissa County Health Management Team (CHMT) together with UNICEF and UNOPS, launched the seven-county wide training of 1,740 Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) on 31 October 2016. The trainings covered 87 community units that had 20 CHVs in each community unit. The six tranches training sets will run for 6 weeks until 9 December 2016, with 63 Community Health Extension Workers and 50 Sub County Health Management Team as the facilitators. The CHMT sent out two teams of supervisors who visited the sites and a team of quality assurance from the Ministry of Health Nairobi for the training checks.

UNOPS field unit in Garissa directly assisted the CHMT in planning and implementing the trainings. The team deployed training materials to the sites, sent out teams for allowances’ disbursement, and successfully arranged for the M-pesa (mobile money) payments for the participants and the facilitators.
A groundbreaking ceremony by UNOPS to mark the official commencement of the Italian funded rehabilitation and expansion works in Xooga Hospital, Mogadishu took place in November 2016. The event which took place at the hospital compound was attended by H.E. Abdulkadir Sheikh Ali Dini, Minister of Defense; H.E. Carlo Campanile, Italian Ambassador to Somalia; The Somalia Chief of Defense Forces as well as other partners involved in the project such as management and personnel of the hospital. UNOPS was represented in the event by a team from the project personnel headed by Arjan Weerstand, Head of Implementation.

Rehabilitation of Xooga Hospital is part of the infrastructural intervention of the Novation Health Project in Support of Health Delivery Systems in Somalia funded by the Italian government. The scope of work include the construction of a separate new building to accommodate the Surgical, Accident & Emergency Departments, and the rehabilitation of one part of the existing hospital to accommodate the X-Ray Imaging and Laboratory Units, in addition to a new Septic and integrated Generator & Solar power Electrical System.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Arjan Weerstand, stated that the proposed new outlook of the hospital is expected to guarantee improved health service delivery, thereby substantially improving quality of services provided and most importantly, ensuring the safety of the hospital’s patients and visitors.
17 Sustainable Development Goals to Transform our World by 2030

1. No Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Well-Being
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean Water and Sanitation
7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
10. Reduced Inequalities
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Responsible Consumption and Production
13. Climate Action
14. Life Below Water
15. Life on Land
16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
17. Partnerships for the Goals

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9. Advances democracy, assisting many countries a year with their elections
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