On 19 and 20 December 2016, UNESCO held a forum for national conservation stakeholders to discuss the promotion of community livelihoods in the fight against illicit wildlife trafficking and how communities may contribute to wildlife conservation in Kenya. The forum follows recommendations of a UNESCO field study funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID-UK) to identify existing and alternative livelihoods opportunities around Tsavo National Park and assess sources of human – wildlife conflicts.

The forum, held at Lake Naivasha aims to implement various activities to enhance community livelihoods through capacity building in entrepreneurship as well as raising awareness of the significance of the Tsavo National Park conservation areas and existing legal frameworks to regulate the conservation of wildlife in Kenya’s National Parks. The project proposal also aims to support Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) in their mandate to improve the human-wildlife relationship.

The proposed project includes the participation of the Ministry of Sports, Culture and the Arts through the departments of Culture and National Museums, and aims to establish community cultural centers, home-stays and village bandas (Village shops where cultural wares, art and crafts can be displayed for sale to tourists), as ways of ensuring the communities living around Tsavo National Park directly benefit from sustainable tourism opportunities.
to improve their incomes and reduce poverty levels.

The project proposal also includes the establishment of a Community Cultural Centre in Taita Taveta County, which would be part of the Ministry of Sports, Culture and the Arts’ ongoing plans for the establishment of cultural centers at the county levels.

As the National Museums of Kenya has the overall responsibility for heritage sites and national monuments in Kenya, the museum will also be actively involved in the project. Moreover, their expertise will be useful in setting up a ‘snake park’ information centre within the proposed community cultural center as a way of addressing the problem of snake bites, which was widely reported during the field study survey.

The forum recommended the formation of a multi-sectoral technical team comprised of representatives from the Kenya Wildlife Service, the Kenyan Ministry of Sports, Culture and the Arts, Taita Taveta County Government, Taita County Commissioner’s office, Kenya National Commission for UNESCO and other representatives from the ground that will see the planning, resource mobilization, implementation and monitoring of the proposed project. The UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa would ensure a coordination role at the project’s inception.

This proposed project is one of the outcomes of a 3-year joint United Nations DFID-funded programme for wildlife conservation in Kenya. For this programme, UNESCO carried out awareness-raising campaigns about illegal wildlife trade on radio and social media, undertook the above-mentioned alternative livelihoods survey in Tsavo National Park and conservation areas, and launched an innovative new partnership with the private sector to rally corporate and international support for conservation issues in Kenya. The model for the latter offers opportunities for duplication in other African countries facing poaching, human-wildlife conflicts and other critical conservation issues.

UNESCO is currently seeking partnerships with bilateral and multilateral donors to mobilize necessary resources for the implementation of the proposed project document in Tsavo National Park. The lessons learned from this pilot project could then be implemented in the other national parks affected by human-wildlife conflicts in Kenya, across Africa and around the globe.

UN-Habitat seeking harmonious integration of host communities and refugees in Turkana

Through strengthening the county urban planning function and the preparation of an integrated settlement plan for Kalobeyei Refugee Settlement in Kenya, UN-Habitat is demonstrating sustainable approaches to human settlement development and harmonious integration of refugee populations and host communities.

UN-Habitat has been working on a series of analyses that will create a better understanding of the specific relationship between refugee and host communities in order to enhance the potential for integration through spatial planning.

Last year, a socio-economic research and mapping team conducted a socio-economic survey and mapping in Kalobeyei, Kakuma and environs. The outcome of this work will shape a well-
Kenya kicked off its 2017 immunization effort with a polio campaign in January that covered 15 counties considered on higher risk and vulnerable and situated in remote, hard-to-reach and border areas.

The campaign held January 18-22, was launched in Isiolo County and vaccinated about 3 million targeted children below five years. The 15 counties included Isiolo, Samburu, West Pokot, Turkana, Marsabit, Garissa, Tana River, Wajir, Lamu, Bungoma, Busia and Uasin Gishu, Trans Nzoia, Nairobi and Mandera.

Speaking at the national launch in Isiolo County, Director of Health Services Dr Jackson Kioko said there was need to vaccinate children in this campaign in order to improve the overall population immunity especially in areas informed planning for Kalobeyei New Site and improvement of Kakuma, as well as provide the county government, UNHCR and development partners with information for planning other development interventions in the area.

In partnership with UNHCR, UN-Habitat organized a two day stakeholder meeting in Kalobeyei and Kakuma to share the key findings for a large scale mapping and socio-economic survey. The research is an important pre-requisite for the physical planning process since it will provide a sound foundation and guidance to the key stakeholders and other thematic working groups. Overall, it will feed into the short-term, intermediate and the long-term objectives envisaged in the project as well as setting a vision from the host and the refugee communities for the new settlement and its hinterlands.

On the first day of dissemination, the research consultants presented the key findings to members of the host community, representatives of the county assembly and local administration. UN-Habitat experts conducted a group discussion where the participants were allowed to make contributions to the results of the survey. This was an important part in the participatory process and on one hand it proved to be very useful in achieving effectiveness, equity and transparency while on the other hand it increased the sense of ownership among the intended beneficiaries.

“As a community we would like to urge all the other partners in the Kalobeyei project to approach the community like UN-Habitat and Peace Winds Japan before doing any project in the host community’, said the area Member of County Assembly.

The second day of dissemination gathered all organizations and UN agencies involved in Kakuma-Kalobeyei area, delegates of different ministries from the Turkana County Government, as well as representatives from the National Government but also representatives of the host community including youth, women, elders and elected officials.

The survey consultants presented the identified settlement systems, the assessment of the humanitarian and development needs of both the refugees and host communities, including existing housing typologies, patterns of the settlements of the host communities, residential systems and topographical maps of the new site and the wider area. Key stakeholders and county government officials made recommendations and comments related to the spatial organization of the settlement and human activities in relation to topography, agriculture, hydrogeology and environment to augment the results and the final survey report.

The threat of polio: three million children vaccinated

Dr. Iheoma Onnekwusi WHO EPI Lead Kenya vaccinate a child at polio launch. (Photo by WHO)
where routine vaccination coverage was low. He said the outbreak in Nigeria last August had put children in Kenya at risk.

WHO Country Representative Dr Rudi Eggers said that until poliovirus transmission was interrupted in all endemic countries, all countries including Kenya still remained at risk of importation of polio. “This is particularly true of vulnerable countries (including some of Kenya’s neighbours) with weak public health and immunization services and travel or trade links to endemic countries”.

He said due to the low polio vaccination coverage rates found in some counties, there were many children left vulnerable to the disease even in Kenya.

He called on the need for a comprehensive approach in which all eligible children (0-2 years) are reached with all the life-saving routine immunization vaccines (BCG, Measles, Pentavalent, Rota, Yellow Fever, IPV and others), regardless of where they are born, who they are or where they live.

The threat of a polio importation is real given the pattern in the last few outbreaks which emerged from the West African region. The last outbreak in 2013 also originating in Nigeria found its way into Kenya through Somalia.

The last Horn of Africa Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meeting in September called on countries to avert any re-importation of polio. Dr Jean-Marc Olive, the chair of the TAG, said that given the population movement pathways from West Africa to the region, the immunity surveillance gaps and declining routine immunization and previous history in Horn of Africa countries, the region was vulnerable to an importation of the virus.

“After polio virus was identified in Borno state in Nigeria, we have to ask ourselves if there could be a Borno-like situation in our countries in the Horn-of-Africa, where we are missing transmission for a long period,” he said. Each country needed to find its ‘weakest point’ that they would focus on, he added.
UNIC Nairobi in partnership with the Israeli Embassy in Kenya brought together 730 students from 17 Kenyan Universities to commemorate the 2017 International Holocaust Remembrance Day, at the United Nations Offices at Nairobi (UNON). The students were joined by over 100 diplomats accredited to UNEP and UN Habitat.

Dr. Aisa Kirabo Kayıira, the Deputy Executive-Director of UN Habitat represented the UN and read the UN Secretary-General’s statement at a somber ceremony where six candles were lit at the start of the event. All attending received a white rose that were all laid at the dais representing a wreath in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

The German Ambassador, Mrs. Jutta Frasch, the Israeli Ambassador, Yahel Vilan and the European Union Ambassador, Stefano A. Dejak spoke at the event to give perspective of what happened and what we should learn from the horrors and tragedies out of the Second World War. The Kenyan Ambassador to UN Habitat spoke on behalf of the Kenyan Government to conclude the first phase of the event.

The second phase was led by the Israeli Deputy Ambassador, Micheal Baror following screening of a documentary that was followed by an hour of intense interactive session. The European Union Ambassador joined the highly informative discussion. Students from various campuses asked relevant questions that were competently and comprehensively answered by the two distinguished diplomats.

The Israeli embassy and UNIC mounted an exhibition which was on display for a week. The event was well attended and all expressed satisfaction with the organization and the proceeding thereof.

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Holocaust Remembrance Day Observed in Nairobi - 27 January 2017

UN Resident Coordinator, Siddharth Chatterjee lays flowers during Holocaust
© Tirus Wainaina, UNIC Nairobi

Different cultures had something to share during the Holocaust. © Tirus, UNIC

European Union Representative and UN Resident Coordinator follow the proceedings during the Holocaust Day. © Tirus Wainaina, UNIC Nairobi

Newton Kanhema, UNIC Deputy Director addressing the participants.
© Tirus Wainaina, UNIC Nairobi

Michael Baror, Deputy Ambassador, Israel Embassy in Kenya addressing participants. © Tirus Wainaina, UNIC Nairobi

Some of the students who attended the event. © Tirus Wainaina, UNIC Nairobi

A diplomat laying a flower in remembrance of the Holocaust victims.
© Tirus Wainaina, UNIC Nairobi

Some of the participants laying flowers in remembrance of the Holocaust victims.
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