UNMISS Head Stresses Need to Create Conditions for Displaced People to Return Home in Jonglei

There is an urgent need to remove any obstacles preventing people displaced by conflict in Bor from returning to their homes to live safely and with dignity, says the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, David Shearer.

Mr. Shearer recently visited Bor in the Jonglei region to look at ways that the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) can work with humanitarian partners and local authorities to create a safe and supported environment outside the UN Protection of Civilians (PoC) site so that people can return home.

The protection site in Bor was established by the UN in December 2013 to protect civilians from physical violence, at the onset of internal conflict. It provides sanctuary to more than 2200 internally displaced people.

“There are a number of problems that discourage people from leaving the site such as a lack of resources, fear of insecurity, the provision of more humanitarian assistance inside the protection site than outside or their homes being occupied by other families,” said David Shearer. “These are all obstacles that we need to address.”

The youth leader within the PoC site, Kejokejo Dual Machar, said people were tired of living in the camp.

“The dreams of people living outside are different. They are dreaming of a good education. But living in the PoC, our dreams are only the Kalashnikovs (AK47) and bombs, bombs,” he said.

“We need a peaceful atmosphere. We need our situation to improve, and we need to resume our education. We, the youth of South Sudan, especially, will not accept being used as a tool of war. We will be the tool of peace.”

The Jonglei Governor, Philip Aguer Panyang, said there was a strong desire among people in the area for a return to normalcy.

“We consider Jonglei to be in a post-conflict situation because we don’t have any political conflict here,” he said. “We hope the next phase will open up the return of internally displaced people for their rehabilitation, for their reintegration into society — and that needs support — so that they can start the process of agriculture in peace, the process of resettling, and the provision of services like water and education.”

UN Women celebrates International Women’s Day under the theme “Time is Now: Press for progress to transform women and girls living in Rural Areas

The International Women’s Day celebrations in South Sudan on March 8, 2018 was marked with pomp and in color with the Government of South Sudan, led by the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, with support from UN Women and other partners, including the UN Mission to South Sudan.

During the celebration in South Sudan’s capital Juba, the Vice President His Excellency Taban Deng Gai acknowledged the contribution of UN Women in coming up with the 2018 theme, “Time is Now: Rural and Women’s Activists Transforming Women’s Lives.” He gave special appreciation to UN Women Executive Director Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka for her contribution in addressing the challenges faced by women globally, and to UN Women in alleviating the challenges often faced by women, most especially in conflict affected countries.

He further stated that International Women Day should not be a one
UNESCO supports streamlining technical and vocational education in South Sudan

UNESCO is supporting South Sudan in streamlining its technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector. TVET has historically been the least funded education sub-sector in the country and largely ignored due to efforts on life-saving initiatives. Both national and international stakeholders now see the value of TVET as it provides youth opportunities for economic engagement and deters involvement in armed conflict.

“Job employment lets us reduce crime and promote peace” says Samuel Imma, Acting Director General of Vocational Education at the Ministry of Labour, Public Services and Human Resources Development (MoLPSHRD).

The TVET sub-sector faces great fragmentation with many partners operating in silos with separate policies, curricula and programmes. To address this, UNESCO convened the TVET working group to streamline interventions and maximum cost and impact effectiveness and minimize fund wastage.

The meeting, which will meet regularly moving forward, was held at MoLPSHRD on 6 March 2018. Key discussions included rapid and labour market assessments conducted by both UNESCO and the EU DEVCO TVET and Civil Society Organization Consortium project, the need to improve teacher training, for forward-thinking skills development in alignment with the labour market and more. The assessments will help guide TVET stakeholders in making more impactful results and streamline interventions.

“TVET skills will take South Sudan to global-thinking of competitiveness” says Taban Kozo, Assistant Director for Quality Standards in TVET within the Ministry of General Education and Instruction.

Garang Manyok of Israel Aid also said, “The streamlining of TVET and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) activities together will ultimately help youth and women.”

“Coordinating TVET interventions in South Sudan will not only help with better and cost effective results, but provide educational and economic relief to everyone in the country – including youth,” said Hai Tiet, Education Project Officer at UNESCO.

UNESCO’s TVET programme in Juba, South Sudan is implemented through UNESCO’s Capacity Development for Education (CapED) programme, which is supported by the Government of Norway, Finland, Sweden and Dubai Cares.

A woman’s battle and eventual triumph after returning to her country

On the outskirts of Aweil town, some 876 km north-west of South Sudan’s restive capital, Juba, nestled in the hinterland is the small village of Kuom. The place resembles an island of peace, allowing development partners to support longer-term work to improve communities’ self-sufficiency and food security in areas not directly affected by the conflict. This is the story of how a widowed returnee received help from a UK-aid funded project, allowing her to take the first steps out of the hunger trap.

Nyankeich Wieu returned to South Sudan in 2016, having been a refugee in Khartoum, Sudan, for several years. Just four months after her return, her husband passed away, leaving her as the sole provider for their five young children.

“After my return to South Sudan, life was difficult — I tried to work as a casual labourer in my neighbours’ homes, but even getting this type of work was difficult,” explains Nyankeich Wieu. “I decided to go and tell the chief of my [village] that my life was unbearable as a
returnee and that [I preferred] to go back to Sudan to be a refugee again.”

But with a little help from her community, Nyankeich remained in Kuom and does not regret the decision.

“When the project came I was selected as one of the beneficiaries and I was allocated [some land] and we received seeds,” she explains. With farming tools and some training in agriculture, Nyankeich is now growing her own food.

Nyankeich is just one of more than 16,000 farmers in the country who are benefiting under the second phase of the project Building Resilience through Asset Creation and Enhancement (BRACE II), jointly implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and cooperating partners such as Joint Aid Management, with financial support from the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID). Farmers are taught to grow their own food so that they can better support themselves over time, while receiving cash to meet their immediate food needs for the time they are enrolled on the project.

Partners sat with community members in Kuom to identify the most vulnerable households in the community. Priority was given to women-headed households such as Nyankeich’s, households with no one gainfully employed, families with members living with disabilities or taking care of malnourished children.

Farmers established a demonstration plot to allow them to learn new farming techniques such as row planting, crop spacing and intercropping. Nyankeich says that she learned new ways to plant that have helped increase her yields.

“I am thankful to the people and the government of the United Kingdom — our thanks is really to all of them. We have survived the severe hunger period.” says Nyankeich, referring to the lean hunger months between May and July last year — the hiatus between food depletion and new harvests.

Chronicles of ordinary hopes: seeking peace by bridging divides in South Sudan’s cattle camps

Life in the Duk Padiet area of South Sudan has not been easy lately. The county, located in Jonglei State, has witnessed regular tribal clashes between Nuer, Dinka and Murle, including ambushes to steal cattle, attacks on civilians, and instances of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

Despite these challenges, the communities are taking steps to build bridges: a series of dialogue meetings were convened between Dinka and Nuer chiefs in May 2017, and among the community leaders and governors from the larger former Jonglei State in November 2017 to resolve conflict and insecurity issues, with a view to finding ways of transcending the past and charting a better future.

Many people from the Dinka and Nuer communities in Duk Padiet speak both tribal languages. As an outcome of the previous meetings, the communities have created joint cattle camps in an attempt to move towards sustainable peace. UNDP supports the local peace initiatives through its Peace and Community Cohesion project.

“There is a need for people that the joint cattle camps remain safe. Migrations are always dangerous for cattle, but I am happy to see that there is a growing unity between Nuer and Dinka in Duk Padiet” says Dr Yath, UNDP Representative and native son of Duk Padiet.

The most recent Duk Padiet peace dialogue included over 100 youth from Gawaar, Lou, Hol and Nyarweng communities who are residing in cattle camps and looking after their cattle at the Toich Swamp area. They agreed to resolutions to stop cattle thefts and ambushes, share pastures and water points, and create a Joint Peace Committee.

In addition to this peace dialogue, UNDP interviewed several people from the local market to get their views about the impact on their daily life of such initiative: Roda, the only woman cattle trader in Duk Padiet; Ding Awan, Bol chol and Deng Dut, cattle traders; and Deborah, tea trader for 18 years.
UNICEF works to avert maternal and child deaths across South Sudan by training midwives, deploying community-based home health providers, supporting access to basic lifesaving health service and providing clean delivery kits, comprising a plastic sheet, soap, a two-sided clean razor blade, cord ties, and pictorial instructions on how to deliver a child, in regions that are unable to access health facilities.

**IOM, partners continue vaccination campaigns in South Sudan, reaching over 144,000 people in March**

In April, IOM will begin the second round of an oral cholera vaccination campaign in Malakal and Wau. The first round in March reached over 60,400 people above one year of age.

Also in March, IOM led an eight-day reactive measles vaccination campaign in Aweil East, reaching over 83,700 children following an outbreak that began in February. IOM’s health rapid response team worked in close partnership with WHO, UNICEF, the State Ministry of Health, the International Rescue Committee and other health agencies. Measles is a highly contagious disease that can become life threatening if complications, such as pneumonia, arise. The campaign, which involved over 117 teams of five people each, targeted children aged six to 59 months.

“Children are extremely vulnerable to outbreaks of measles and other contagious diseases, particularly in areas such as Aweil East where health conditions are further compromised by severe food insecurity and poor living conditions,” explained Derebe Tadesse, IOM Migration Health Officer. “The measles vaccine will save lives. With just one dose, 85 percent of children over nine months and 95 percent of children over twelve months of age are immune.”

Protracted displacement, access constraints and poor health and water and sanitation infrastructure have contributed to yearly cholera outbreaks in South Sudan since the crisis began in 2013; the longest lasted from June 2016 to February 2017, killing 436 people.

As a preventive measure, IOM completed the first of a two-round oral cholera vaccination campaigns in Malakal and Wau, reaching approximately 24,300 and 36,100 individuals respectively in late...
March. The second-round campaigns are slated to begin in both locations in April. The campaigns target both internally displaced persons within the Malakal and Wau protection of civilian sites and displaced and host communities in Malakal and Wau towns.

In 2017, IOM completed oral cholera vaccination campaigns in Unity, Warrap and Eastern Equatoria, reaching more than 469,800 people with the vaccine.

As the country endures the fifth year of a humanitarian crisis, an estimated 5.1 million people are in need of emergency health care assistance. IOM teams work across the country, in displacement sites, remote locations and host communities, to provide aid to the most vulnerable people affected by the conflict.

IOM’s health rapid response teams are supported through the USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance and the Government of Japan.

Ministry of Agriculture and UN agencies launch 2018 agriculture campaign

The Minister of Agriculture and Food Security launched the agriculture campaign in Yambio, alongside the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP), highlighting the importance of the upcoming planting season in improving the food security situation in South Sudan.

This event will be replicated in all the states in the coming weeks. The campaign aims to encourage farmers to return to their fields for the main planting season, and if possible, increase the area of land under cultivation to avoid another round of worsening food insecurity next year.

The launch ceremony included speeches from the Minister, WFP Deputy Representative, Simon Cammelbeeck, and FAO Deputy Representative, Pierre Vauthier, followed by a meeting with people receiving FAO and WFP assistance.

Speaking at the ceremony, Hon. Nyikwec noted the close relationship between FAO, WFP and the Ministry and reiterated his appreciation of the continued support from the agencies in re-establishing livelihoods for the people of South Sudan.

“FAO and WFP’s continuous efforts to assist vulnerable South Sudanese families, who depend entirely on agriculture for their food security and livelihood is greatly appreciated,” he said.

FAO emphasized the need to continue helping farmers to be able to produce their own food.

“It is critical that we continue helping vulnerable farmers, fisher folk and herders to build stronger, more resilient livelihoods and become more self-sufficient in food production. Agricultural livelihoods play a critical role in ensuring national food security and economic growth and contributing to future peace and stability,” said Pierre Vauthier, the FAO Deputy Country Representative.

WHO supports response to the suspected meningitis outbreak in Torit County

Insecurity notwithstanding, the World Health Organization (WHO) has moved to support a rapid response to investigate reports of suspected meningitis deaths in Kor Mush, Nyara East and Nyara West villages located in Imurok and Iyire payams in Torit County, former Eastern Equatoria State.

So far, a total of 34 suspected cases with 15 community deaths have been registered, of which 23 cases and 9 deaths were reported in Iyire Payam, and 11 cases and 6 deaths in Imurok Payam. These two locations have largely been inaccessible because of insecurity. More alerts have been received in the last 24 hours and these are being investigated by the response teams and vetted against the standard case definition for meningitis.

WHO is supporting the Ministry of Health efforts in strengthening overall coordination of the response at state and county level, technical personnel have been deployed to scale up case investigations and active surveillance, sample collection, case management, Infection Prevention and Control, and risk communication. At state level, the task force has been reactivated with the support of WHO and partners to manage the suspected outbreak.

WHO prepositioned medical supplies including antibiotics, investigation kits and other case management supplies to Torit County. So far three samples have been collected and are being tested at the National Public health laboratory in Juba. WHO is supporting the state Ministry of Health to conduct a detailed epidemiological investigation and risk assessment to guide the response strategy and plan.

Dr Guracha Guyo, the WHO Emergency Coordinator, stressed that Torit County is one of the high-risk states that remain vulnerable to meningitis outbreaks. It therefore critical to ensure that these suspected cases are thoroughly investigated, tested and control/ risk mitigation measures instituted.
South Sudan like the other twenty-six Countries in the ‘meningitis belt’ of Africa, remains prone to major meningitis epidemics that have claimed many lives and causing serious strain on health services. The last meningitis outbreak in South Sudan was in May 2013 in Malakal. A preventive MenAfric Conjugate A vaccination campaign was conducted in Eastern Equatoria state in April 2016. Torit County was among the counties that scored a suboptimal coverage of 83%, which was below the desired coverage of 95%. Other counties that had low coverage include Ikotos (55%), Kapoeta East (79%), Kapoeta North (77%) and Magwi (73%). The implication is that there is sufficient pool of susceptible individuals in Torit and neighboring counties (especially Magwi and Ikotos) and this can lead to further transmission of the disease.

Thanks to Gavi Alliance with whose support the MenAfricvac campaigns have been made possible*, said Mr Evans Liyosi, WHO Representative a.i. to South Sudan. The mass vaccination campaign which started in April, 2016 when completed this year will protect over 5 million South Sudanese. The vaccine is meant to protect people between 1-29 years against the Neisseria meningitidis A serogroup for ten (10) years. It will protect children as young as one; and it is expected to both protect children from the disease for significantly longer periods as the vaccine will reduce infection and transmission and in turn protect the larger community, including family members and others who have not been immunized.

Global and regional best practices on climate information services and development of metrological strategy workshop conducted in Juba

A three days interactive national workshop on Global and Regional Best Practices on Climate Information Services and Development of Metrological Strategy for South Sudan was successfully conducted in Dembesh hotel, Juba, South Sudan from February 27th to March 1st, 2018.

The workshop was organized by UNEP South Sudan Office under the “Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters” (BRACED) project funded by UKAID. The workshop drew seventy seven (77) participants from government line ministries, UN agencies, NGOs, academia, the media and other development partners. It was facilitated by regional and international experts who shared their vast experiences, best practices and lessons learnt in metrological information services with the participants. Hon. John Luk Jok, minister for Transport was the chief guest of honor.

He asserted the commitment of his ministry (under which the Meteorological Department sits) to support Meteorological services and information dissemination. UNEP Country Director reiterated that sectors such fisheries, tourism and agriculture depend on weather and climatic conditions; therefore, could greatly be affected by poor Meteorological services and thus result in further deterioration of livelihoods, making South Sudan to be at the bottom of development.

UNEP is therefore exerting efforts in developing climate change adaptation and resilience programmes committed to addressing climate change and environmental issues in the country. In this regard, UNEP is planning to address Climate Change, biodiversity conservation, wetland management and capacity development; most importantly working with grass root communities.

The workshop’s output was a draft strategy to strengthening meteorological services in South Sudan. As identified in the workshop, the Meteorological Department needed urgent attention especially in the areas of equipment/instruments and human capacity development to enable it provide efficient and reliable meteorological services to people of South Sudan while also meeting its international obligations and standards as laid down by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).
The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) handed over fish smoking ovens to women at the fish market facility in Nimule Town. The people living in Nimule have largely benefited from fishing as a food source and household income generating activity.

The Ale Zoka Fulla Women’s Association is one of the women groups involved with small scale businesses in the fishery sector. The women in this group have been supporting their families mainly through income received from selling fresh and processed fish.

However with limited resources, the fisher folk have not been able to provide a high standard smoked fish and have faced challenges with post harvest losses that reduce their overall profit-affecting their livelihood.

The new fish smoking ovens are easy to use and will contribute to improving the quality and quantity of fish sold to the people living in Nimule and neighboring communities while increasing their household income.

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