

UNCT NEWSLETTER

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FAO BRINGS AGRICULTURE TO THE AIRWAVES With ZIRAA TANNA PROGRAM By Sudan Regan Tut, FAO



“Hello, and welcome to Ziraa Tanna,” has become a familiar greeting heard on radio airwaves across South Sudan every Friday evening.

Ziraa Tanna means Our Farm in Juba Arabic, and the radio program bearing that name has been broadcast on Eye Radio, Radio Miraya and several regional radio stations since 2020.

The radio show is produced by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security.

Every episode of Ziraa Tanna starts with a weather report, followed by expert advice for agricultural producers according to the weather, climate or seasonal conditions. Before the end of each broadcast, listeners also hear from other farmers, livestock keepers and fisher folk who share their experience and best practices.

Weather information allows communities to enhance their decision-making process, including regarding the repositioning, type and timing of inputs. For example, advice given on Ziraa Tanna can help farmers know when the best time is to plant their crops, and which crops are best suited to current conditions.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ FAO brings agriculture to the airwaves with Ziraa Tanna program
- ◆ Radio plays a key Role in Peace Building
- ◆ South Sudan hosts first ever international conference on Women Transformational Leadership
- ◆ Ensuring a clean environment in Bentiu IDP camp
- ◆ UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa Director Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa visits South Sudan
- ◆ Seven months old baby boy reunited after release by abductors
- ◆ Perspectives from young people on youth, peace and security agenda: working together for the South Sudan we want.





RADIO PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN PEACE BUILDING

By Paul Night, UNESCO



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Participants pose for a group photo during the World Radio Day celebration in Juba. Photo UNESCO/Paul night

On 13th February 2023, South Sudan joined the rest of the world to commemorate World Radio Day under the theme: Radio and Peace.

Hundreds of stakeholders joined the celebration hosted by UNESCO in partnership with National Press Club South Sudan, University of Juba, Association for Media Development in South Sudan, and the Ministry of Information, Communication, Telecommunication and Postal Services.

Speaking at the event, UNESCO’s Education Specialist Mr. Tap Raj stated that “Radio is a key pillar in conflict prevention and peacebuilding when it is independent from political and commercial influence, it can tackle both root causes and triggers of conflict and stimulates democratic debate (dialogue) with listeners. In this context editorial independence is essential as it shows the ability of radio stations to bring news free of influence from political, ideological, or business spheres.”

On his part, Hon. Yath Awan Yath, Undersecretary, National Ministry of Information, Communication and Telecommunication, encouraged journalists and politicians to use the radio to promote peace.

Journalists were also tasked to conduct research about the country and communities to better report on issues affecting the citizens. The media should also offer guidance on possible ways of addressing some of the challenges that they identify in the communities.

Radio is the most widely relied on medium of mass communication in South Sudan. It makes it possible for messages on peace and other development issues to reach large numbers of people.

It’s accessible and affordable compared to other mediums of communication. It is a prime source for accurate information and plays a major role in preparing the public for major events such as civic education, census, elections and health emergencies.



FAO BRINGS A GRICULTURE TO THE AIRWAVES With ZIRAA TANNA PROGRAM

“Access to information about weather events and climate information is crucial in addressing the vulnerability of farming communities and in enhancing the capacity of communities to manage weather and climate-related events and hazards in South Sudan,” says Meshack Malo, FAO Representative in South Sudan.

Particularly in the face of climate-change related weather conditions, Ziraa Tanna also gives tips on the actions farmers and cattle keepers should undertake to reduce risks to their livelihoods and maximize their production.

For example, when vast swaths of South Sudan were affected by flooding, Ziraa Tanna gave information on crops which are well-suited for wet conditions and provided advice on how to take advantage of the extra moisture to plant in areas where the flooding had recently receded. When flooding is a predictable risk, Ziraa Tanna gives advice on how to build dykes and when to move livestock to higher ground.

Eye Radio Program Manager, Koang Pal Chang, says the show has been well received by the listeners.

“The Ziraa Tanna program is both educative and informative to farmers in the country,” he notes.

“It gives timely updates of the weather forecast for the week in addition to vital information on farming in general such as crop handling, harvesting and storage, irrigation and soil fertility, and fish ponds among others.”

Mike Okello is a listener of the program. He says he listened to Ziraa Tanna on Radio Miraya and learned about urban gardening— even if someone has only a small space, they can still plant vegetable seeds.

“I have understood which types of seeds can be planted in a vertical gardening,” explains Okello.

He says Ziraa Tanna has helped farmers improve their production, adding that he was also trained last year on home gardening.

“I want to thank you for what you have spoken over Eye Radio and Radio Miraya. I was moved because the agriculture information is very vital to our community.”

Since Ziraa Tanna debuted, it has fallen under projects funded by various donors. Right now, Ziraa Tanna is produced in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security under projects receiving support from the World Bank and the African Development Bank. Tune into Ziraa Tanna on Eye Radio, Friday evenings at 17.40 hours and rebroadcasts on Radio Miraya and community radio stations across the country.





SOUTH SUDAN HOSTS FIRST –EVER INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

By UN RCO, Poni Allen Ladu



#GuwaMara
"Strength of a Woman"

Participants at the Women Transformational Leadership. Photo: Sawa Media

Dubbed "GuwaTamara", the strength of a woman, the conference presented a unique opportunity for women to share experiences and learn from each.

Over 430 women representing all the states of South Sudan and African women leaders from more than 15 countries, including Ghana, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Liberia, Zambia, Mauritius, Central African Republic, Egypt, and the United States of America, gathered in Juba, South Sudan for a three-day inaugural International Women Conference on Transformational Leadership. The conference took place on 13-15 February.

The conference was hosted by H.E Rebecca Nyandeng De Mabior, Vice President of the Republic of South Sudan responsible for the Gender and Youth Cluster, Ministry of Gender, Child and Social welfare, the National Transformational Leadership Institute (NTLI), and the United Nations.

Dubbed "GuwaTamara", and translated as the strength of a woman, the conference presented a unique opportunity for women to share experiences, learn, deepen, and expand regional and international networks to catalyze learning in support of South Sudanese women in advancing women peace and security, and gender equality.

In his opening remarks, President Salva Kiir Mayardit acknowledged the importance of providing women with a conducive environment to meaningfully participate in the political arena and other aspects of life.

"This conference not only recognizes the role and potential of women in our country but also gives them support to create an enabling environment for equal participation in all aspects of our society," President Kiir said.

He noted that the Government of South Sudan allocated a 35% quota for women inclusion and participation in all aspects of society. I am aware that there is still a lot of outstanding work on women empowerment, he said, recalling the 35% quota endorsed by the Revitalized Peace Agreement of 2018.

The UN Resident Coordinator, Sara Beysolow Nyanti, co-convenor of the conference, called on all stakeholders to put all efforts together to ensure the implementation of all recommendations, urging them to work together to support South Sudanese women walk on a path to development and peace.

"This is about action, taking the strength of women and putting it into action. We shouldn't stop here," Ms. Sara emphasized.

The Resident Coordinator said UN entities in South Sudan are committed and will continue to support the government and the women of South Sudan to ensure the achievement of gender parity at all levels.

On her part, Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa, the Assistant Administrator and UNDP Regional Director for Africa, highlighted the words of Pope Francis during his visit to South Sudan in early February.

"Women, mothers who know how life is generated and safeguarded needed to be increasingly involved in political life and decision-making processes. Women must be respected, for anyone who commits an act of violence towards women commits it towards God".

Vice President H.E Rebecca Nyadeng De Mabior noted that the experiences shared by women leaders are very inspiring. She encouraged women to persist while "looking at the big picture."

While closing the conference, First Vice President Dr. Riek Machar advised women to utilize the relative peace in the country to make gains toward addressing issues affecting women. He also encouraged South Sudanese women to support girl child education, noting that illiteracy is one significant structural causes of inequalities.

The conference provided space for women leaders to reflect on their personal leadership journeys, share perspectives, and recommend forward thinking strategies on women leadership and decision-making across peace, security, governance, climate change, and intergenerational pathways to leadership.

Participants deliberated on actions and strategies to strengthen women's participation in decision-making. They further expanded networks for shared learning nationally, regionally, and internationally to build strong women's movements for transformative change and advance gender equality in a digital age.





ENSURING A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT IN BENTIU IDP CAMP

By *Jale Richard*



IOM transports an average of 300 metric tons of solid waste per week to the landfill for disposal. Photo: IOM/Jale Richard.

When solid waste collection in Bentiu Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp came to a halt in February 2021 due to funding constraints, waste started piling up across the camp, with garbage littering everywhere.

With limited space capacity within the camp perimeter, the situation became increasingly unbearable.

“We experienced a big challenge since garbage collection stopped at the beginning of 2021,” says Mary Nyalok whose shelter in Sector 3 Block 13 is near the sanitation corridor.

Here, sometimes, open defecation was practiced, while communities continued piling garbage on the corridor.

“We could see garbage piling and yet there would be no collection,” she recalls.

The 56-year-old mother who lives with her family came to Bentiu IDP camp with her seven children and her husband in 2014, to find safety and to restore her life since they had lost their livelihoods during the civil war that started in 2013.

The garbage posed a big challenge to the entire IDP community. Cases of diseases such as Hepatitis E were reported, including other acute watery diarrhea diseases, affecting mainly children, elderly people, and pregnant women.

In response to such a dire situation, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) resumed collecting garbage from each of the camp’s five sectors and disposing of it at the dumping site—away from the camp.

Mary Nyalok is one of the garbage collectors. She was first selected in 2015, as one of IOM’s garbage collectors at the sector level.

Now, she is helping to drive the scaling-up of solid waste management activities across the camp.

“Life was not easy when we came here, considering the means of livelihood were interrupted by the conflict,” says Nyalok. “But I was lucky to be selected as a garbage collector in Sector 3 Block 13 by IOM and I now can get something (money) for my family.”

Nyalok is among those garbage collectors who are committed to keeping the IDP camp clean. She believes the spirit of creating and maintaining a clean, safe, and healthy environment is a duty of everyone across the camp.

I am aware that when people keep the environment clean, it prevents the outbreak of diseases such as typhoid and also Hepatitis E. That’s why we are also creating awareness in the community so that everybody participates in maintaining their environment clean,” she adds.

With the coordination of other partners, IOM is responsible for the disposal of solid waste across the IDP camp.

In every sector, there are garbage collectors under Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) partners responsible for the collection of garbage within each block of settlement. The garbage is then taken to the block’s central collection points where IOM collects for disposal at the garbage landfill.

To further support this initiative, IOM combined these activities with a regular environmental cleaning campaign and Hygiene Promotion messaging through its network of 55 Community Hygiene Promoters, which also disseminated information about the safe disposal of garbage.

“Our work with the garbage cleaners and hygiene promoters is not only to safeguard the environment but also to make sure they earn some money to support their families which plays a pivotal role in improving the community living standards and reducing poverty,” says Sherman Mutengu, IOM WASH Officer in Bentiu.

Read the full story online: <https://bit.ly/40QfRoB>



Bags of garbage collected awaiting disposal to the landfill in Bentiu. Photo: IOM/Jale Richard





HOW SCHOOL MEALS ENCOURAGE GIRLS TO STAY IN SCHOOL

Lunches facilitated by UNICEF and the World Food Program are providing an incentive for students to keep turning up to class.

By Eulalia Berlanga, WFP



With the cost of a plate of food up 70 percent since the start of the Ukraine war, school meals are a lifeline for children in Torit. Photo: WFP/Eulalia Berlanga

The day starts early at the Grace community school in Torit, Eastern Equatoria. At 6:30 am, well before students arrive, a fire is lit to prep for lunch. Even though it's still early, the grains and pulses will cook slowly through the morning with cooks stirring the huge pots containing enough for the 403 lunches that will be served.

From 7:30 am, the happy chatter of students builds as the children arrive. Jennifer is among them. She is in her late teens and in her final year of primary school with grand ambitions to work in healthcare, preferably as a midwife so she can help mothers.

"My favorite subject is science. I really like the teacher and I think that's why I want to continue in that field," she says.

Waking up each morning and attending class, as Jennifer does, is something many in the world take for granted. But here in South Sudan, every day in attendance is a victory.

The country has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world and 2.8 million children are out of school. Girls are especially at risk of not finishing their education due to early marriage with 40 percent of girls being married before the age of 18 in South Sudan. The impact on education is tremendous, in 2018, more than 156,000 girls were enrolled in the first year of school but just over 5,000 were enrolled in the final year.

Students like Jennifer refuse to become statistics though.

"I don't see any benefits with early marriage," she says. "Education is important to understand what is best for your family and not falling for tricks believing in superstitions. Many families have problems because the parents didn't finish their education, and they don't how to help their children later."

A key ingredient to keeping students in school is the school lunch that's provided through WFP's School Feeding programme. In Torit this is as part of a joint WFP-UNICEF project in urban areas of South Sudan to improve resilience, school attendance, and nutrition.

For many students, this single meal provides a lifeline. Without it their lives would be vastly different. The lunch is often the only nutritious meal students receive each day and provides incentive for parents to send their children to school.

For ambitious students like Jennifer, receiving this support is invaluable and will have a ripple effect, providing positive contributions for their immediate family and community.

These school meals are made possible thanks to funding from the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, through KfW, the German Development Bank, which has provided resources to WFP and UNICEF to jointly support 550,000 people in urban centres of South Sudan for four years.

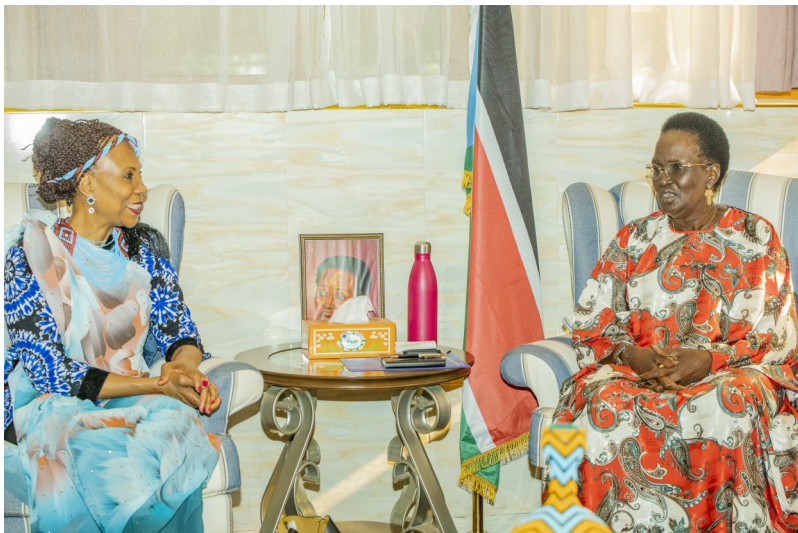




UNDP REGIONAL BUREAU FOR AFRICA DIRECTOR

Ms. AHUNNAEZIAKONWA VISITS SOUTH SUDAN

By Amos Agiro, UNDP



Ms. Ahunna in a meeting with Vice President Madam Rebeca Nyandeng Demabior. Photo: Amos Agiro UNDP

UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa Director Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa visited South Sudan from 12 to 16 February 2023 to attend the International Women's Conference on Transformational Leadership. The event was hosted by Her Excellency Rebecca Nyandeng De Mabior, Vice President of the Republic of South Sudan, for Gender and Youth Cluster, Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare, in partnership with the National Transformational Leadership Institute - NTLI, and the UN.

The international women's conference, dubbed Guwa Ta Mara, presented a rare opportunity for women to share experiences and deepen and expand regional and global networks to catalyze learning in support of South Sudan's women in advancing women's leadership in the peace and security arena.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Ahunna spoke passionately on the need for transformational leadership in South Sudan alluding to the words of Pope Francis, who recently visited the country.

"We must be guided by his words – and I quote—women, mothers who know how life is generated and safeguarded, need to be increasingly involved in political life and decision-making processes. Women need to be respected, for anyone who commits an act of violence towards a woman commits it towards God." She said.

The UNDP Regional Director also emphasized on the importance of empowering women and girls for economic growth of South Sudan.

"When more women work, economies grow, kids go to school and stay in school, and their health and nutrition are secured."

Amplifying Ms. Ahunna's sentiments, His Excellency the President of the Republic of South Sudan Salva Kiir Mayardit reassured the delegates of his government's commitment to supporting women's rights in South Sudan.

"The protection of women's rights is important to us in government. Our country cannot afford gender-based violence, as it hinders peace and development. Let us keep working towards a better day for women and girls," said the President. The conference concluded with a raft of recommendations to bridge the gap in women's empowerment.

These include capacity building for the university, CSOs, community groups, media, institutional development, research, policy and legislative advocacy, and gender awareness, among others.

DEEPENING PARTNERSHIPS

The visit also presented an opportunity for the Regional Director to interact with key partners including Ambassadors, Donors, Government counterparts, and local partners on UNDP's Strategic Vision and multi-dimensional support to foster peace and development in South Sudan. Speaking at a meeting with the Donors, Ambassadors, and other international partners, the Regional Director reiterated the importance of service delivery to the people of South Sudan:

"Giving agency to ourselves instead of giving it to the people is the wrong approach to development. We must promote the idea that the people must be in the driver's seat of their own development. They must be responsible for their own development, especially the leadership. It must be made clear that we are here to accompany and support, not to take over." She stated.

Meeting with Government counterparts, Ms. Ahunna echoed the importance of implementing the Peace Agreement to facilitate upcoming critical political processes, strengthening public service reform and capacity building of key institutions, improving social cohesion and community reconciliation, Empowering youth and women and supporting local service to the people.

BOLSTERING COLLABORATION

During her interactions with the UN Country Team and the head of UNMISS, SRSG - Nicholas Haysom, Ms. Ahunna reiterated the importance of cooperation amongst the UN agencies in South Sudan as well as with UNMISS.

Despite the strong partnership & coordination demonstrated by the UN family through the UNCT & the establishment of an impact-focused integrated office, the Regional Director called for the reinforcement of the collaboration to better serve the people of South Sudan towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.





SEVEN MONTH OLD BABY BOY REUNITED WITH MOTHER

AFTER RELEASE BY ABDUCTORS.

By Mure Moses Waigo, UNICEF

Nyandit* shed tears of joy when she reunited with her seven-month-old baby boy. Nyandit is a victim of recent inter-communal violence in Pibor, after she was abducted and suffered injuries due to abuse resulting from beating and separated from her baby by the perpetrators.

In early January, the Greater Pibor Administrative Authority and Jonglei Administration coordinated with the armed youth groups involved in the conflict to release abducted women and children, as well as mobilize the urgent return of the women and children to Pibor safely.

Nyandit was abducted by armed groups when her community was attacked on Christmas eve, 2022 and was abducted along with hundreds of other women and children. Nyandit escaped from the abductors, but she could not free her baby who was in the hands of the abductors.

“My little baby was captured and taken by the abductors and stayed with them until the Government was able to negotiate for the recovery and release of the abductees from the youth” Nyandit, Mother

In the weeks following the attack and abductions, some abducted children and women were released. So far, 100 women and children have been released, but many more remain missing.

Officials from the Greater Pibor Administrative Area and the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare shared the message of the recovered children and women with the affected communities after they were transported back to Pibor. Nyandit suspected that her child would be among those released.

She set off on foot to Pibor from Gumuruk, a journey she did without food or water.

I was struggling to stay mentally stable with all the depression, bad thoughts, and dreams impacting me.

Nyandit, Mother.

Upon arriving in Pibor she was directed to the compound where abductees were hosted and supported by UNICEF partners and the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare.

At the compound, she found UNICEF and the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare’s partners – Grass Roots Empowerment and Development Organization (GREDO) and Save the Children, and were providing shelter, individual and group psychosocial support and trauma counselling, and initiating family tracing processes by directing relatives and caregivers arriving to the Interim Care Center (ICC) to identify loved ones.

Nyandit was linked with social workers from GREDO. She was referred to the only seven-month-old baby at the ICC. Nyandit cried upon seeing her baby.

She immediately moved into the ICC to care for her baby while the administrative formalities of reunification took place.

“There were men, women, and children - I can still remember - who were abducted from their houses and taken away by the abductors, raped, women were re-abducted, some of them probably killed and children separated from their families, and nobody knows what happened to these girls and boys,” she said.

“I still can't believe how some people can see this happening and can keep quiet. Nobody raises their voice against this. You have women in your own family...why don't you speak up? Why didn't those men stop doing this sort of thing?”

Nyandit is now home and continuing to receive health care and case services for herself and her baby as they heal.

The abduction of women and children has severe consequences on the physical and psychological well-being of children, their families, and communities, with long-term consequences.

UNICEF condemns the recent abductions of women and children, rape, sexual violence, physical beatings, and gross deprivations inflicted upon women and children.

There is no justification not in any culture and not in any law, for such violence. Past atrocities are no excuse.

UNICEF commends child protection partners and social workers, acting in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, to ensure rapid family tracing and reunification processes are initiated for the affected families. This is the first step in what will be a long journey of reintegration and healing.

UNICEF is committed to strengthening responses to child protection violations through effective case management, family reunification, psychosocial support and trauma response programs



Photo: Mure Moses Waigo/UNICEF



PERSPECTIVES FROM YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE YOUTH, PEACE, and SECURITY

AGENDA: WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE SOUTH SUDAN WE WANT

By Juma DELU, UNFPA

Peace and stability are essential for South Sudan to prosper and develop. Despite considerable progress towards peace with a reduction in direct conflict between parties, sub-national and localized violence continue to occur in many parts of the country which continues to severely affect the country's progress.

It is noted that securing a lasting peace is the responsibility of all generations in the country particularly with the participation of the young people who under the age of 30 constitute 73.6 percent of the population according to UNFPA State of the World Population Report 2022 estimates.

Like in most countries, young people in South Sudan are faced with many challenges including lack of employment, education, and limited participation in decision-making as they are systematically excluded due to their age and assumptions that they are inexperienced. Such a situation has led to frustration among youth and has contributed to youth engaging in violence including armed conflict.

In 2015, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 2250, the first resolution that specifically, addresses the role of young people on matters of peace and security. This ground-breaking resolution on Youth, Peace and Security recognizes the positive role young people can play in conflict prevention, the prevention of violence, and the promotion and consolidation of peace. In this regard, the government of South Sudan has committed to advancing the Youth Peace and Security agenda in the country.

UNFPA together with the University of Juba organized a series of intergenerational dialogues with the youth, bringing together officials from the government, private sector, activists, and people with disability in the spirit of leaving no one behind. The discussion centered around the role of young people in youth, peace, and security while tackling issues of reproductive health and rights.

This follow-up dialogue was held to specifically discuss openly the role of young people on matters of youth, peace, and security and explore solutions to address the challenges.

Hon. Pia Philip, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Peacebuilding, in recognizing the positive role young people play in conflict prevention, the prevention of violence, and the promotion and consolidation of peace, stated that "The vibrant discussions and contributions by young people in peacebuilding presents hope, together with the joint efforts of youth organizations, the UN, and government working

together. The young people have a big role to play, they are the biggest percentage of this country's population, and the solution lies in their hands. The Government with its limited resources will do the best it can".

The Under Secretary commended the initiative by UNFPA and efforts by the young people as it is critical to have a dialogue

with youth and adults to foster a greater understanding on the Youth Peace and Security agenda of South Sudan.

The panel was made up of Precious Ankangelo who is living with a disability from the Youth Advisory Panel, Anna Maneno a Youth gender advocate, Achai Kuol representing the Private Sector, a representative from the Ministry of Youth, Hon. Pia Philip Michel, Under Secretary, in the Ministry of Peacebuilding and moderated by Dr. Ademola Olajide, the UNFPA Resident Representative.

The intergenerational dialogue brought together around 250 students from the University of Juba, the University of Upper Nile, and other universities. They discussed perspectives, challenges, and priorities to support the active participation of men, women, and young people, considering their diversity in conflict prevention, social cohesion, conflict transformation, local and national peacebuilding, and reproductive health and rights touching on cultural practices that hinder access



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