



UNCT NEWSLETTER

5 GENDER EQUALITY



16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GBV CAMPAIGN- LAUNCHED IN JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN

By Poni Allen Ladu/UNRCO



“Stop Gender based violence, it’s a crime against humanity, stop, stop Gender based violence” were the lyrics from the music that ushered the excited participants to Nyakuron Cultural Center Auditorium to witness the launch of the 16 days of Gender Based Violence organized by the Ministry of Gender, Child, and social welfare with support from United Nations, and other partners. Participants pledged to challenge every form of violence against women and girls.

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an annual international campaign that kicks off on 25th November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) and runs until 10th December (Human Rights Day). It is an international campaign to fight violence against women and girls.

This year’s campaign global theme “Unite! Invest to prevent Violence against women and Girls”. South Sudan adopted a local theme: Act now! Prevent and Respond to Violence against women and girls.”

The theme aims to bring together civil society and women’s rights organizations, as well as the UN system, and government partners, to advocate for inclusive, comprehensive, and long-term strategies, programs, and resources to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ 16 days of activism against GBV campaign launched in Juba
- ◆ Threatened but not deterred in the quest to end GBV in Lakes State: a day in the life of Athian, a GBV response officer
- ◆ South Sudan commemorates World AIDS Day.
- ◆ ILO, Ministry of labor and partners initiate discussions for the development of the employment policy.
- ◆ Emergency Health services offer relief to South Sudanese returnees
- ◆ From Juba to the world, Josephine’s journey with UNHAS
- ◆ UNESCO supports capacity building training on environment policy in South Sudan
- ◆ Harmonizing hope: the Flamingo band uniting South Sudan through music





16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GBV CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED IN JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN

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Delivering the keynote address on behalf of the minister for Gender, Child, and Social Welfare Hon. Angelina Teny, the Minister of Interior said violence against women and girls continues to be a barrier to gender equality in most countries around the world including South Sudan, despite the numerous ongoing programs and interventions. The adverse consequences of GBV on women and girls in relation to their health, psychological and emotional well-being she said compromise and undermine their development.

She noted further that violence against women and girls is not a women issue, stressing that it is a societal issue that affects everyone. "let's all pledge to work together and prevent violence against women and girls. We should all work together to ensure that every girl is safe from GBV" She stressed.

The acting Under Secretary Ministry of Gender and Social Welfare Joseph Loro in his welcome remarks noted that GBV is deep rooted in South Sudan and has been exacerbated by social imbalances that hinder women's economic empowerment. "a lot has been done but more effort is required both at policy and community level, let's work together to ensure that GBV is no more" he said. He called on all stakeholders to prioritize funding, and to strengthen existing mechanisms to prevent and respond to GBV.

Speaking on behalf of the UN Resident Coordinator, Dr. Ademola Olajide, called on stakeholders to rally around the global theme to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls. "Violence against women is a hindrance to well-being, peace, security, & sustainable development. It is time to scale up investments in policies and programs to eliminate all forms of violence & root out negative social norms" said Ademola.

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an annual international campaign that kicks off on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and runs until 10 December, Human Rights Day.

The campaign was started by activists at the inauguration of the Women's Global Leadership Institute in 1991. It is used as an organizing strategy by individuals and organizations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.



Minister of Interior Hon. Angelina Teny, delivering her keynote speech at the Launch of the 16 days of activism against GBV campaign. Photo Credit: RCO, Allen Poni



Dr. Ademola Olajide delivering remarks at the launch of the 16 days of activism against GBV campaign in Juba. Photo Credit: RCO, Allen Poni





THREATENED BUT NOT DETERRED IN THE QUEST TO END GBV IN LAKES STATE; A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ATHIAN, A GBV RESPONSE OFFICER

By JUMA DELU/ UNFPA

Naome Athiang Mayor is 32 years old and is the face of the International Rescue Committee (IRC). IRC is a UNFPA implementing partner to end Gender-Based Violence in Rumbek, Lakes State. **Naome works as a** GBV Response Officer at the organization's Family Protection Center. Her mobile phone doesn't rest, it buzzes with calls 27/4, responding to cases and coordinating referrals to ensure ending GBV in far and wide the vast territory of Lakes State.

Naome says all the efforts she and her team are putting in don't come on a silver platter. It is a game of hide and seek, and her life and that of the team are at risk, saying in most cases they end up being beaten and humiliated for nothing but the quest to protect women and girls in the hands of abusive partners and harmful traditional cultures.

She recalls a harrowing ordeal early last year when the IRC offices were besieged simply because they had three survivors under their protection. They were surrounded by the parents of the survivors demanding their release. In their custody were three young girls, whom they rescued following a phone call from the survivors. Sensing danger, she quickly called the Special Protection Unit (SPU) of the South Sudan National Police Unit in Lakes State. The police responded by sending armed police to go and disperse the irate relatives.

"It was an unpleasant situation, but I am not going to surrender in my quest to help the women of South Sudan and see a South Sudan free of GBV. Our lives are in danger, but we shall pursue this course till the last minute." she says.

Mid-October, while in a donors meeting, the visibly disturbed Naome ends up canceling the meeting as she responds to an emergency. This was a referral from as far as Cueibet, about 52 kilometers away from the capital Rumbek. This particular case was rape, she quickly dispatches the driver.

"You see, this is how my day is punctuated, she says. I vividly recall how our vehicle was waylaid and put at gunpoint and a survivor was taken out. This occurred when we were on our way from picking up a survivor. When I questioned why they were taking the girl out, their response came with a threat, 'Do you want to be dead or alive?' Left with no option, we left the helpless girl, but still, we reported the matter to the Special Protection Unit-SPU and the State Ministry of Gender Child and Social Welfare" she reveals.

Threatened by gun-wielding GBV perpetrators thrice this year, she says the situation is tough and she doesn't anticipate it getting any better, attributing it to consistent and sustained awareness. Naome says the community has woken up from sleep and is beginning to claim their rights, as they are becoming more aware of GBV services IRC with funding from UNFPA are offering. She points out another harrowing situation when a young South Sudanese-Australian girl's case came to OSC, who had refused a forced marriage when she visited South Sudan last year.

The girl in question **Rose Aluel** (not her real name) was to be married off to an old man who was prepared to pay hundreds of cows, but Aluel stood her ground and refused the marriage. Naome narrates, 'on hearing about me, she ran up to our office IRC and handed herself to me.' Naome through her network made use of the GBV sub-cluster and IOM to coordinate Aluel's rescue and subsequent departure from Rumbek.

"All these negotiations did not come easy. The young men from the cattle camp were everywhere looking for me until my husband got frightened. He asked me to leave the GBV response job, but I stood my ground and said, NO one will support the women of South Sudan wherever they are. I will go and pick them to give them support. Their cry is my cry. if I don't stand with them No one will."

The soft-spoken Naome says her phone is like a call center. She receives calls until she goes to bed. Thanks to her supportive partner, she says women call on her and she then transfers the calls to the GBV hotline for Lakes State she says. 'This is how my daily life goes, but am now used to it, it comes with challenges', says Naome.

"I conduct counseling on the phone. I refer cases on the phone. I am used to it. I have no time, because am committed to seeing a GBV-free South Sudan, due to the awareness on our toll-free hotline- 0922556262 women come forth to report. On a daily basis between three to four women come to report GBV cases. Most of the clients who call are women and girls from different directions of Rumbek. Women come to thank us for having helped them out. When we get this heart-warming feedback, it gives me joy". said Naome.

The South Sudan National Strategic Action Plan on elimination of Child Marriage (SNAP) aims to end child marriage by 2030.

Last year, the Lake state legislative Assembly passed customary laws to enable it to aggressively tackle child and forced marriages in its jurisdiction. The State Governor, Gen. Rin Tueny Mabor distributed the by-law to traditional chiefs to ensure no girl-child is married off early and forcefully.





SOUTH SUDAN COMMEMORATES WORLD AIDS DAY

By Poni Allen Ladu/ RCO



Band performances to welcome the guest of honor. Photo: Poni Allen/ RCO

The colorful event included a procession by school children, men and women in uniform, cultural and drama performances, and a candle-lighting ceremony. Messaging from the music and performances portrayed an urgent reminder of the global struggle to end HIV-related stigma, an opportunity to honor those we have lost, and a rallying cry to commit to working toward a day when HIV is no longer a public health threat.

Representing the UN Resident Coordinator at the event, the Acting Country Director of UNAIDS, Mr. Mahboob Aminur Rahman informed the gathering that since 2010, the country has managed to reduce the number of new HIV infections by 35% and AIDS-related deaths by 42%, however the progress is slow compared to other countries in the region.

“Let us recommit ourselves to the goal of ending AIDS in South Sudan. Let us embrace the Global vision of a world where AIDS is no longer a threat. It is through the unity and determination of our communities, alongside the collaborative efforts and support of the government and development partners that we can make this vision a reality” He noted.

World AIDS Day is a global movement to unite people in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Since 1988, communities have stood together on World AIDS Day to show strength and solidarity against HIV stigma and to remember lives lost.

The United Nations in South Sudan in partnership with the South Sudan AIDS Commission organized an event to commemorate the World AIDS Day in Nyakuron Cultural center Juba. The commemoration occasion anchored on the theme of **“Let communities lead”** attracted people from various backgrounds including school children, women, and men in uniform among others. HE Hussein AbdelBagi, the VP, attended as Chief Guest of Honor while UN Resident Coordinator a.i. represented the UN.

The theme celebrates the role that communities play in the HIV response across the world and in the country. Communities of people living with HIV or at risk of HIV are the unsung heroes in the fight against AIDS. They are the drivers of progress, connecting people to health services, building trust, innovating, and holding service providers accountable.

In his keynote speech, the Vice President- service cluster H.E Hussein Abdelbagi reiterated the government’s commitment to continue providing an enabling environment for the civil society organizations, network of people living with HIV and communities to play their respective roles in the fight against HIV through the close collaboration with South Sudan HIV and AIDS Commission.

“We aspire for the inclusiveness and leaving no one behind in the fight against HIV and AIDS, and this is what I have witnessed during this celebration” he said.

The Director of South Sudan Network of People Living with HIV (SSNeP+) noted that the day’s celebration offers an opportunity for people to reflect on the successes gained and impact of the virus, calling to action all stakeholders to support communities in the fight to wipe out HIV. “





ILO, MINISTRY OF LABOR AND PARTNERS INITIATE DISCUSSIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE EMPLOYMENT POLICY

By Poni Allen/RCO



In his keynote speech, the Minister of Labour, Hon. James Hoth Mai stated that given today's fast changing economic landscape, it is crucial that the employment trends are evaluated regularly. "The gathering provides us with a unique opportunity to engage on the employment policies as they shape the way we work". Said Hon. James Hoth Mai. He encouraged participants to actively participate in exploring ways of enhancing South Sudan's employment policies to better serve the nation.

The development of this employment policy contributes directly to the SDG Target 8.3: **Promote policies to support job creation and growing enterprises**, as well as the Output 2.1 of the 2023 UNSDCF Joint Workplan that calls UN Agencies to support government authorities to develop, operationalize and monitor market-oriented and gender transformative policies, plans and programs in support of decent work, sustainable economic growth, integration, and diversification.

It is also complementary to the set of interventions included in the ILO Decent Work Country Program that has been signed last October 16th, 2023, between ILO and its tripartite constituents.

On 6th December 2023, the Ministry of Labor in collaboration with the International Labor Organization (ILO) held a two-day workshop to initiate discussions and develop a road map for the formation of an employment policy.

The workshop, attended by over 50 participants, representing National Government Ministries, Employers and Workers organizations, namely the South Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation (SSWTUF), Employers Association of South Sudan (EASS), Foreign employers and investors, UN Agencies, World Bank, African Development Bank, and other multilateral financial institutions, deliberated on key issues and challenges that hinder the promotion of full, productive, and freely chosen employment in South Sudan.

Representing the UN Resident Coordinator at the opening of the 2-day workshop, the Head of RCO and Strategic Planner Mr. George Otoo underscored the importance of government leadership and ownership throughout the policy development and implementation processes.

He noted that employment problems are complex and multidimensional, resulting from the nature of growth, demographic trends, the structural transformation of economies, access to and quality of education and training, the effects of a fast-changing world, and thus the process of developing an employment policy should be inclusive bringing all expertise and stakeholder's voice on board.

At the workshop, participants reviewed existing and upcoming interventions from government and development partners and identify structural barriers and sectoral growth opportunities for private sector development. They also agreed on a coordinated institutional approach and roadmap towards the formulation of an employment policy, that is coherent with other labour related policies.





By Atem John /WHO



Aboja Malual Chol lives in a transit center for South Sudanese returnees who have fled the conflict in neighboring Sudan. Living conditions in the center near Palouch airport in Melut County in northern South Sudan are tough for its 6000 residents who are awaiting to travel to other parts of the country.

Basic services such as water, hygiene and sanitation at the transit center are inadequate and close living quarters heightens the risks of infectious diseases spreading. Malaria, acute respiratory infections, and acute watery diarrhea are the common causes of ill health among the returnees. Palouch is served by three health facilities, one hospital and two clinics, but they are too far from the transit centre for the returnees to travel. "When they brought us here, before the doctors came, it was very difficult to get medicine. Our children contracted measles," says Chol. "We have lost children during this time."

To provide accessible health services to the returnees, Relief International, and Medair, a Swiss humanitarian organization, have established a clinic next to Palouch airport with support and collaboration from World Health Organization (WHO), other UN agencies as well as international and national nongovernmental organizations. "Now we can get medicine," says Chol. "We thank the health workers. They are trying their best."

The ward at the clinic can admit patients for 24 hours and if the case is complicated, the patient is transferred to a hospital around 30 kilometers away. This has given the country health department some relief, says Joseph Saka, County Health Director. "We at the county have gotten some help and can now rest," he says. "The partners bring medicine and treat the returnees in a professional way. It is better than before."

On average, health workers at the clinic see around 130 clients a week. To date, 20 children have been admitted to the nutrition stabilization center for mild and severe acute malnutrition. While most children were discharged after treatment, 35% remain as in-patients.

"When my children get sick, I bring them to this hospital for treatment because it is the hospital we access," says mother-of-two, Nyabol Chol, another returnee who resides in the camp.

Since the crisis started in mid-April 2023, with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), WHO has distributed over 44 metric tons of medical supplies and equipment to the value of US\$ 400 000 that can serve almost 230 000 people. In September, the Organization coordinated an integrated measles and polio vaccination campaign that reached more than 26 000 under-five children respectively in Renk and Melut counties.

The Ministry of Health, with support from WHO, continues to coordinate response of 33 health partners in counties receiving refugees and returnees. WHO has supported the Ministry to strengthen integrated disease surveillance and response reporting and capacity building and has deployed teams to conduct health-related rapid assessments, capacity building and provide medical support in critical areas with high numbers of refugees and returnees.

"WHO has been working with the Ministry of Health, State Ministry and the County Health department. They are our technical support, they advise us and work with us," says Mr Saka.

More than seven months into the Sudan crisis, there are no signs of the war abating, says Dr Fabian Ndenzako, WHO Representative in South Sudan. "We expect the returnees and the refugees to continue coming. So, we are really doing all this work and making sure that the health services to returnees are there."

This response was made possible with funding from the United States Government, through USAID. The agency has contributed US\$ 5 million to World Health Organization (WHO) to support an integrated health response for communities affected by crises and acute food insecurity across South Sudan.





FROM JUBA TO THE WORLD, JOSEPHINE'S JOURNEY WITH UNHAS

By Eulalia Berlanga /WFP



Aviation is a predominantly male-dominated field, particularly in South Sudan which has no aviation school and only a small commercial aviation sector. This means the journey towards an international career can seem daunting for women like Josephine. However, after a few months in Juba, she started to think about making the international jump. "I wanted to experience how other UNHAS operations work," she remembers.

It was in July 2023 when she got the opportunity to join UNHAS in Kananga in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where WFP facilitates flights from the capital Kinshasa to connect to other locations.

"It is a busy operation and I finish exhausted every day, but I enjoy the work because I was prepared earlier by the operation in Juba," says Josephine.

Her story is an inspiration for the new generation of national female aviation officers in UNHAS South Sudan who are making the most of opportunities, including dedicated UNHAS internships for South Sudanese women studying aviation, providing them with a unique opportunity to rotate through different aviation departments to learn all about the industry for four months.

"This generation is changing what women are able to do and this scares some men, but I believe women are very good leaders and their managerial abilities should not be underestimated," says Josephine.



Josephine Abak started her aviation career with WFP UNHAS in South Sudan and now works in the Democratic Republic of Congo, becoming the first South Sudanese international aviation officer working with UNHAS.

Josephine Abak was born in Rumbek, South Sudan, but in 1999 conflict forced her and her family to flee to Kenya where she lived and studied for the next 18 years. She went to University in Nairobi and later joined the school of aviation in South Africa, but she still had a close connection to her homeland and would return home to South Sudan during her holiday breaks.

"Growing up I had two big dreams that seemed incompatible at the time: work for a humanitarian organization and work in the aviation industry. But then I applied for a position at [the WFP managed United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)] in Juba and saw that I could achieve both," says Josephine.

She started working with UNHAS in 2022 as an aviation assistant and quickly learnt how the air service keeps the humanitarian community moving across South Sudan, moving staff to and from 59 regular destinations each day and providing ad hoc air services upon request from humanitarian organisations.

"I would start my days at the airport at 6am, checking in passengers, dispatching the flights, receiving passengers... I was also the focal point for people in the field, making sure all the contacts were up to date and staff were properly trained and briefed," Josephine says about her role in Juba.



UNESCO SUPPORTS CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY IN SOUTH SUDAN

By Doreen Loboka/ UNESCO



Participants at the three day workshop .
Photo credit: Doreen Loboka/ UNESCO

UNESCO Juba Office in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry recently organized three-days environmental policy training workshop for decision makers and senior general officials from the 10 states and administrative areas’ ministries of Agriculture, Environment, and forestry.

The purpose of the workshop was to provide technical support to adopt and implement the National environment policy; that provides inputs for the development of action plans for environmental management in the States.

To discuss key environmental problems and share knowledge and best practices on addressing environmental problems. To train the senior officials for responsibility to manage directorate of environment in the states. Among other things this policy will address is the reality Climate change and its mitigation, solid waste management, biodiversity and wetlands conservation, environmental pollution.

Over 45 participants attended the training on environmental policy including line ministries of petroleum, transport, Live stock and fisheries, Wild life conservation and Tourism; and the Ministry of Peace Building as well as representative of the specialized committee in the national parliament on environment, civil society organizations.

the workshop discussed synopsis of existing national Environment policy, environmental challenges, role of states in environmental governance, public engagement and awareness, approach to policy implementation.

Elaboration of poli-

cies is important for a country like South Sudan and requested to ensure its implementation for service delivery to the public said Mr. Tap Raj, UNESCO officer-in-charge.

The trend of environmental management in this country requires a joint effort at all levels with a massive awareness raising and education of the public on the negative impact of mismanagement of environment, added Mr. Tap Raj. in his opening remarks, Hon. Joseph Africano Bartel, the undersecretary of Ministry of Environment and Forestry, he highlighted that this is the first of this kind in the country bringing government officials from the states to disseminate a national environmental policy to be adopted by the states.

He further attributed great importance linking the 10 States and the 3 administrative areas to the center. This initiative should raise awareness on Environmental Policy, educate stakeholders to enhance their understanding and knowledge. Added Hon. Africano

He further addressed the significance of nominating the Sudd wetlands as a biosphere reserve. it is one of the largest wetlands systems in the world known for its rich biodiversity and ecological significance.

However, it faces various threats such as climate change, habitat destruction and unsustainable resource use, Hon. Joseph concluded.





THROUGH MUSIC

By Blessing Samuel Phumisa/UNMISS



The Flamingo band, entertaining guests at the UN Day celebration in Juba. Photo Credit: Poni Allen/RCO

This mandate encompasses the protection of civilians, fostering conditions for humanitarian assistance, supporting the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement and the Peace Process, and monitoring, investigating, and reporting on violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of human rights.

A more immediate preoccupation of the Mission is the request from the Government for the provision of electoral support, as the country prepares for elections scheduled for December 2024.

In South Sudan, the world's youngest nation, the cacophony of ethnic tensions has long dominated the headlines, producing a discordant narrative of conflict and division. But amidst the noise and frustrations, a remarkable ensemble of young individuals, drawn from diverse ethnic backgrounds, is quietly crafting and delivering different melodies—anthems of unity, peace, coexistence, tolerance, and nation-building.

They are the Flamingo Band, a harmonious collective, operating under the Community Outreach and Advocacy Unit within the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Comprising nine young and talented souls, they traverse the South Sudanese landscape, singing songs of peace that resonate with the very heartbeats of a nation yearning for durable peace. In the remotest corners of the country, where the print and electronic media rarely reach, the Flamingo Band is able to generate harmony among communities and inspire co-existence.

For the past two years, these musical messengers of peace have been on a journey, crisscrossing the expansive terrain of South Sudan with a clearly defined purpose: employing music to communicate messages of peace, reconciliation, unity, and togetherness, including the promotion of the UNMISS mandate.

During the recent commemoration of the International Day of Peace in Juba, the capital city, the Flamingo Band had the privilege of performing before the First Vice President, Riek Machar. The spectacle they presented left a profound impression on an appreciate and grateful Michael Pia Phillips, the Undersecretary for the Ministry of Peace Building. With an effervescent smile, he exclaimed, "This is the most beautiful thing. Here are young people drawn from different backgrounds and tribes in South Sudan coming together to sing for peace."

Leading the group is Silver Kenyi Raymond, who understands the power of music in shaping South Sudan's history just too well. "Music," he asserts, "has always defined South Sudan through its lowest and highest moments. It is only fitting that we incorporate it as a vessel of disseminating messages of peace."

For Silver, true contentment emerges when he witnesses individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds joining together in dance and song at community outreach and advocacy events, with no regard for differences. He fondly remembers the remarkable turnout of enthusiastic crowds in Aweil,



the capital of Northern Bahr el Ghazal state, gathered to witness the Flamingos' impactful peace event. It's a dance of unity that he envisions could be extended one day beyond the stage, reaching the realms of power and communities, promoting a peaceful future for the world's youngest nation.

Hana Taban Philip stands as a unique presence within the band, the sole female member. Whenever she graces the stage with her performance, she carries with her the dreams and desires of countless South Sudanese women who have endured tough and harsh realities of conflict and are steadfastly advocating for their rightful place and voice in the pursuit of peace.

Hana describes her role as that of an ambassador for all South Sudanese girls and women. Through her melodious voice, she not only sings but also speaks on their behalf, articulating a collective vision for South Sudan.

"It's a vision of a future that embraces inclusivity and peace, a vision that resonates not only with my band's audience but even those we are yet to reach," she says.

More than seventy-five percent of South Sudan's population consists of young people under the age of 30, and this demographic context lends a special significance to Bol Deng John Akot's role as the band's sound engineer and keyboardist at the age of 22. Bol, who was just ten years old when South Sudan gained its independence in 2011, stands tall as a symbol of a generation that did not experience the struggles for independence and self-determination but strongly desires a peaceful and prosperous nation.

He emphasizes the profound connection between a country or community's culture and its music. Bol believes that young people can forge a link to their cultural heritage and foster a sense of pride and belonging by immersing themselves in music that promotes peace and national unity.

"Music that champions peace and nation-building possesses the potential to shape the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of young individuals, enabling them to become proactive agents of positive change within their communities and beyond," Bol asserts.



Flamingo band performing at a staff get together event to celebrate UN Day. Photo Credit: Poni Allen/RCO





SOUTH SUDAN TAKES A STEP TOWARDS MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

By Loyce Nabie/ IOM



South Sudan faces diverse migration and mobility challenges, as it is both a country of origin and destination. It is also a country of migration-transit, as some people enter South Sudan only temporarily with the prospect of moving to other final destinations. Transit migration in the country is intertwined with human trafficking, as the country is situated along the Southern route with migrants entering from Ethiopia as well as migrants taking the western migration route to Libya.

Ministers who were present during the summit that led to the signing of the communique. Photo: Nabie Loyce/ IOM

To address South Sudan’s migration challenges, 10 Government ministers convened in the capital Juba and signed a Communique on Migration Governance as part of efforts to promote human and dignified migration.

“The Government of South Sudan takes migration governance seriously as it’s affects us directly or indirectly considering our own fragilities as we continue to receive migrants from neighboring countries who have their own fragilities,” said Dr. Elia Lomuro, the Minister of Cabinet Affairs. He added that “this Inter- Ministerial summit is a great milestone for the government,” saying that the government would add it into its annual report as part of the achievement. it would be added to the government’s annual report as part of its achievements.

The Communique calls on the government of South Sudan to ratify and domesticate United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its supplementary protocol as well as to improve border management, labor migration, forced migration and diaspora engagements.

The Communique has 15 action points taking note of the gaps in migration governance along the thematic priorities of border management and facilitating free movement of persons, labor and forced migration with emphasis on returnees, internally displaced persons, and victims of trafficking in persons for the line ministries to implement during the calendar year 2023/2025. The Inter-Ministerial summit brought together technocrats, experts, and policy makers from the Ministries of Interior, Labor, Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Commission of Refugee Affairs, National Bureau of Statistics, Security services and academia/thinktanks for a three-day dialogue to deliberate and come up with the action points to feed into the Migration Governance Policy in South Sudan.

“Migration, despite often being perceived negatively, is an intrinsic aspect of human existence. People often migrate in search of opportunities, fleeing natural calamities or due to circumstances created by human actions,” said Hon. Angelina Teni, South Sudan’s Minister of Interior.

Under the regional Better Migration Management (BMM) program, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) continues to support the efforts of the Government of South Sudan to put in place a system that will promote humane and orderly migration in the country. The program, co-funded by the European Union Trust Fund for Africa and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and managed by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) was developed to improve migration management, and, to address Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants from and within the East and Horn of Africa region.





SOUTH SUDAN TAKES A STEP TOWARDS MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

“The European Union (EU)’s approach to migration governance is whole of government and whole of society approach, and in this endeavor, the EU Commission has earmarked € 46 million to foster dialogues on Migration such as the Khartoum process for the benefit of all” said H.E. Timo Olkkonen, the Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of South Sudan.

South Sudan is a beneficiary of Better Migration Management’s third phase co funded by the German Office of International Development (BMZ) and managed by GIZ through implementing partners such as IOM and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

“We are happy that through this gathering, the government of South Sudan has come up with remedies to tackle migration challenges within the country,” said Dr. Bjorn Niere, German Deputy Head of Mission.

“IOM has been providing technical support and will continue to assist the National Coordination Mechanism on Migration to support the government’s response to migration management. This way, we will ensure there is a safe, orderly, and humane migration for all,” John McCue, IOM South Sudan’s Acting Chief of Mission noted.

“This assistance is in the provision of technical support and facilitation of NCM through coordination meetings and strategic planning, supporting taskforce on counter-trafficking in persons monthly and strategic intervention, awareness raising sessions with parliamentarians on legal gaps related to combating trafficking, and developing a border security strategy” John McCue.

The Better Migration Management is implemented by IOM, UNODC, CIVIPOL and the British Council.



EARLY WARNING FOR ALL INITIATIVE LAUNCHED IN SOUTH SUDAN By Poni Allen/RCO



This initiative was officially launched in South Sudan on 20th November under the theme: Together accelerating Investment for multi-hazard Early Warning System by enhancing preparedness, accomplish anticipatory actions for community resilience and leaving no one behind.

Speaking at the opening of the launch ceremony, the Minister of Humanitarian affairs and disaster management, Hon. Albino Akol Atak, stressed the importance of coordination and work together since climate change consequences affecting every body.

Climate change has accelerated the onslaught of natural hazards, and South Sudan is particularly vulnerable. Early Warning Systems are one of the most proven and effective disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation measures that save lives and livelihoods, providing a tenfold return on investment.

In March 2022, UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, announced a new global initiative, Early Warning for All (EW4All), to ensure every person on Earth is protected by early warning systems within five years.

Coordinated at the global level by UNDRR and WMO, the Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative aims to accelerate investment and action in support of national capabilities across the four pillars of multi-hazard early warning systems (MHEWS) .

The Initiative is built on a solid partnership structure, where UNDRR leads work under Pillar 1 on Disaster Risk Knowledge; WMO leads Pillar 2 on Observation, Monitoring, and Forecasting; ITU leads Pillar 3 on Communication & Dissemination and IFRC leads Pillar 4 on Preparedness to Respond.





To mark International Rural Women's Day in the year 2023, UNOPS and UN Women launched a campaign to call for action to empower women in rural areas so they are better equipped to contribute to food security and climate change adaptation in their communities.

The month-long joint campaign in coordination with the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare led to the commemoration of International Rural Women Day on the 25th of October 2023 to underline the contribution of rural women to development in Africa and highlight the importance of investing in gender-sensitive infrastructure that will allow them to better contribute to food security and climate adaptation.

One key objective of the campaign is to call policy and decision-makers, societies, and international partners to action to support gender-responsive infrastructure in Africa that can empower rural women to access productive resources and opportunities, accelerate their socio-economic mobility, and boost gender contribution to climate adaptation and food security.

The campaign comprised joint activities in several African countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, and Zimbabwe, among others. These events were supported by a social media campaign in UNOPS and UN Women regional and national channels across Africa.

In South Sudan, UNOPS and the UN Women in coordination with the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare commemorated the International Rural Women's Day under the national theme "**Advocate for women living in Rural Areas to own land and produce more food**" a theme meant to highlight the importance of investing in gender-sensitive infrastructure that will allow women to have equal access to land as well as benefit from informed decision-making processes in local development prioritization for an effective and sustainable contribution to food security and climate adaptation.

UNOPS Director a.i. for Africa Region, Dalila Gonçalves, said: "*Gender-blind infrastructure limits women's access to financial resources, land, education, health, and other rights and opportunities. Also, it limits their capacity for coping with and adapting to climate change impacts. Women can play an active role as change-makers and educators in embedding sustainability within different infrastructure sectors. Supporting the empowerment of rural women through gender-responsive infrastructure, UNOPS helps low and middle-income*

countries across Africa in their journey toward the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals."

UN Women Regional Director for East and Southern Africa and Regional Director a.i for West and Central Africa, Maxime Houinato, said: "Rural African women's pivotal role in bolstering regional economies and combating poverty is irrefutable. Yet, they grapple with pronounced challenges in securing vital agricultural resources, restricting their agricultural productivity, and impacting their adaptability to climate change. UN Women studies reveal that gender disparities in agriculture have a direct impact on the economic growth of countries ranging from 13 to 28 percent of GDP, equivalent to annually elevating 80,000 to 238,000 individuals above the poverty line per country. We must advance programs and policies that increase financing for rural women's access to labor and time-saving equipment and services, fostering gender equality and improving rural women's economic security."

According to [UN Women](#), women make up more than 50 percent of Africa's population and 80 percent of them reside in rural areas. The [International Labour Organization](#) states that giving women the same opportunities as men could raise agricultural production by 2.5 to 4 percent in the poorest regions and reduce the number of malnourished people by 12 to 17 percent.

The UNOPS Report, '[Infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women](#)', stated that in rural areas inadequate infrastructure services disproportionately affect women's time use because they bear the burden of household tasks, like collecting water and firewood, cooking, cleaning, and providing child-care. This limits the time available for pursuing educational, economic, or social activities. Women also face disadvantages when it comes to land and livestock ownership or equal pay which hamper their productivity and growth, resulting in weak rural economies, and impacting the local and global food systems and climate adaptation capacity.





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