



UNITED NATIONS SOUTH SUDAN



HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Displaced yet again: The plight of South Sudanese fleeing Sudan.
- ◆ United for connectivity: Interagency & Private partnership boosts mobile & Internet Access for Refugees.
- ◆ South Sudan launches the Women charter in Juba : Empowering women's voices for constitutional inclusion.
- ◆ South Sudan receives 645000 doses of the fastest Malaria Vaccine, boosting the fight against the deadly disease.
- ◆ South Sudan's Central Equatoria state strengthens disasters & emergency preparedness response capacities.
- ◆ Strengthening capacities for infection prevention and control: huge push towards reduced outbreaks.
- ◆ The lives of more than 700,000 vulnerable South Sudanese have been transformed as ECRPI, a World Bank –funded project ends in July 2024.
- ◆ Violence prevention and reduction, creating trust among Youth & Adolescents labelled as gangs.

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Nyakoang waits to receive her voucher from an IOM staff to allow her to board the boat from Renk to Malakal. IOM/Elijah Elaigwu

Displaced Yet Again: The Plight of South Sudanese Fleeing Sudan

By Loyce Nabie/IOM

“When conflict broke out in my hometown in Bentiu, South Sudan, in 2015, we lost everything. I struggled to get my family out of the country. We moved to Sudan, which was safe and peaceful,” recalls Nyakoang Gai. “I found a job in the capital, Khartoum, and I was able to put my children in school.”

Eight years later, it did not occur to Nyakoang that she would have to leave Sudan and return to Bentiu for the very same reasons she left.

Nyakoang is one of over half a million people who have arrived in Renk, Upper Nile State, in South Sudan following the ongoing fighting in Sudan, that erupted in April last year. She’s originally from South Sudan and had been living and working in Sudan when the conflict there started.

“We would hear gunfire on a daily basis very close to our house. Armed men would regularly break into people’s homes and start looting everything. Things simply got worse over the last few months. Major water shortages, no electricity, no food in the market, no functioning hospitals. I knew if we stayed, we would be killed or die of hunger. Therefore, I had no choice but to try to return home.”

Nyakoang embarked on a two-month long journey to return to South Sudan. Her story is similar to that of thousands who have returned to the country. Their return is clouded by sour memories of the past as it is not the first, in some cases not the second, time they have been displaced. Many of the South Sudanese who have returned originally fled conflicts at home in Bentiu, Malakal, and other parts of South Sudan between 2013 and 2016, when the country was plunged into its own civil war. Many South Sudanese ended up living as refugees in Sudan. Some fled their homeland because of poverty and others were driven out by the effects of climate change, including floods. Many found work, peace and security in Sudan.

Their lives have all now been shattered, and they are having to re-live the trauma of fleeing violence and conflict over again.

Nyakoang is being assisted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). When she and many thousands like her arrive at the border, with the help of other organizations, they are registered and given medical attention, including vaccinations, but most importantly for them, transport to continue the journey home.

This is one of the most critical needs of thousands arriving and who might be stuck at the border between the two countries. IOM has mounted one of the largest and most complex logistical operations to help people like Nyakoang and her family, and others, get back to their communities and places of origin across South Sudan. Starting from the border town of Joda, IOM provides transport to reach the nearby Transit Centre in Renk. After a few days in Renk, for Nyakoang specifically, IOM will provide boat transport on the River Nile to Malakal, where she and others will start the final leg of their journey back home.

There is such little infrastructure in South Sudan, and the cost of transport is high. Transporting the many thousands of those who have returned by boat is one of the most efficient ways to get the high volume of people arriving from Sudan, home. Over 1,200 flights have been organized and over 26,000 people have been helped to get home by road.

“When we started our journey, we truly had no idea how we were going to reach Bentiu. We had no money. On the way, we were robbed several times and completely stripped of all our belongings. I was wondering whether we were actually going to make it to South Sudan, but by God’s grace we did,” says Nyakoang. “I was very surprised to find people (IOM) at the border ready to help us and give us free transport. We are extremely grateful.”

By the time Nyakoang reaches Bentiu from Renk, she and her family would have spent 75 hours traveling over 1,600 kilometers.

IOM will provide Nyakoang and others returning USD 20 each for final-mile transportation.

“I did not expect to find myself going back to Bentiu after all these years in Sudan. I’m worried because I know that there are lots of problems here in South Sudan and there is a lot of poverty, and I am not sure whether there is peace in Bentiu. I hope so.”

Right now, she is grateful to be to be back in South Sudan amidst the challenges and ready to start her life over again.

Her extended family – who have not seen her for many years – will be waiting to receive her. Without the transport support, she may not have made it back to Bentiu. This help is critical for the many thousands who are arriving and want to reach their places and communities of origin.

IOM’s response activities are supported by the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), United Nations Emergency Response Fund (UN CERF), European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), South Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SSHF), Germany Federal Foreign Office and Global Affairs Canada.



Nyakoang and her family wait for their turn to board an IOM bus to go to the river side where they will take the boat on the River Nile to Malakal. Photo: IOM/Elijah Elaigwu



Nyakoang’s daughter and grandchild wait for their turn to board an IOM bus to go to the river side where they will take the boat on the River Nile to Malakal. Photo: IOM/Elijah Elaigwu

United for Connectivity: Inter-Agency and Private Sector Partnership Boosts Mobile and Internet Access for Refugees

By EULALIA BERLANGA/WFP

In the chaos of conflict or disaster, one item provides a life-line: the mobile phone. It's not just a device; it becomes a vital connection between loved ones and a gateway to crucial information on safety and services available to people in emergencies.

Most people fleeing Sudan carry nothing more than the clothes on their backs. Yet, many who have crossed into South Sudan since the start of the conflict have found solace in one crucial possession: a mobile phone.

Many cross the border into South Sudan clutching their mobile phones, connecting them to essential safety information and where to find necessary resources. However, South Sudan has limited mobile and internet connectivity. Only [35 percent of the South Sudanese](#) population have access to a mobile connection, and around 15 percent of the population have access to the internet.

At the start of the crisis in Sudan, high points along the Sudan-South Sudan border became crowded with people desperately seeking a signal to send text messages to their loved ones still trapped in Sudan.

Recognising the urgency and importance of connectivity for the families that fled Sudan, WFP's TEC Unit in South Sudan got to work with UNHCR as part of their humanitarian response to expand mobile communication services at the border crossings of Joda and Gerger.

The National Communications Authority (NCA) authorised the agencies to send the materials needed to set up the communications infrastructure and to use the tower locations. WFP's Logistics Cluster and UNHAS transported the telecom equipment, generators, tower cross-sections, solar power equipment, and cables to the remote areas.

After they were delivered, MTN and Zain, the country's two major Mobile Network Operators, established communications infrastructure, extending mobile coverage to the Sudan border. Refugees and returnees can now contact their loved ones and receive vital updates, improving the community's connectivity.

This success story of inter-agency collaboration and private sector support provides critical services to those in need and sets the stage for future partnerships.



South Sudan receives 645,000 doses of the latest Malaria Vaccine, boosting the fight against the deadly disease

By Jemila M. Ebrahim/WHO and Garang Abraham/UNICEF



In a historic step towards safeguarding children's lives and alleviating the high incidence of malaria in the country, the first consignment of the R21 malaria vaccine arrived in Juba today. The Ministry of Health received over 645,000 doses, which will be distributed to 28 counties with the highest malaria burden as plans continue to scale up nationwide.

Malaria is the biggest killer of children in South Sudan. The country grapples with one of the highest malaria incidence rates in the region. In 2022, South Sudan had an estimated 2.8 million cases and 6680 deaths. The country has one of the region's highest rates of malaria incidence with an estimated 7630 malaria cases and 18 people dying of the disease every day.

"Malaria is a major concern for our country. We are committed to reducing the impact of malaria and improving the health outcomes for our children," said Honourable Yolanda Awel Deng, Minister of Health "The continued use of this vaccine, alongside other preventive measures such as insecticide-treated bed nets and timely access to medical care, will be instrumental in our efforts to eliminate malaria in South Sudan."

The joint efforts of The Ministry of Health, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, UNICEF, WHO, and health partners demonstrate the shared commitment to integrating these life-saving vaccines into the national immunization program. The endorsement of the R21 vaccine by the WHO, following the introduction of the RTS,S vaccine elsewhere on the continent, marks a turning point in the malaria elimination program and will ensure a more robust supply of the vaccines for malaria-affected countries particularly in Africa.

These vaccines have proven safe and effective in protecting children from malaria, potentially saving countless lives. With support from Gavi, UNICEF is working to procure enough vaccines to immunize over 45 million children worldwide in the coming years.

"The expanded availability of malaria vaccines heralds a new chapter in combating this deadly disease. Governments' proactive engagement and health systems' preparedness are pivotal in facilitating the successful rollout of the immunization program. Training, communication strategies, and robust cold chain infrastructure are essential components in ensuring the widespread distribution of these important vaccines to protect the children of the country," said Hamida Lasseko, UNICEF South Sudan Representative.

This milestone not only signifies progress in the battle against malaria but also underscores the collective commitment to safeguarding the health and well-being of children in South Sudan and beyond.

"Malaria remains a leading cause of illness and death in South Sudan, particularly among young children. The inclusion of the malaria vaccine in the routine immunization program represents a crucial addition to the existing arsenal of malaria prevention and control measures. "The introduction of the malaria vaccine is a pivotal development in our fight against malaria," said Dr Humphrey Karamagi, WHO Representative for South Sudan. "This vaccine provides an additional, effective intervention to protect children and reduce the burden of this devastating disease. Its integration into routine immunization will enhance our ability to deliver comprehensive malaria prevention to those most at risk."

South Sudan's Central Equatoria State Strengthens disasters and emergency preparedness response capabilities.

By **Jemila Ebrahim/WHO**



South Sudan's Central Equatoria State strengthens disasters and emergency preparedness and response capabilities. Photo: WHO/Jemila M. Ebrahim

In a world where emergencies and disasters can strike at any moment and anywhere, the importance of proactive preparation cannot be overstated. Central Equatoria State in South Sudan is pioneering a groundbreaking initiative to bolster its resilience against potential hazards, through the development of hazard-specific contingency plans at the county level, the State is taking proactive steps to mitigate the impact of emergencies and disasters on public health and safety.

"The County contingency plans anticipate hazards in locations like Yei River County and ensure a fast and efficient response using hazard-specific plans, potential response scales, scenarios and a multi-hazard core response mechanism," said Ms Agnes Nyoka, Primary Health Care Supervisor, Yei River County.

Central Equatoria State faces a diverse scale of threats ranging from armed conflict to infectious diseases and environmental challenges. Recognizing the need for tailored responses to these hazards, the State conducted its first sub-national risk assessment and profiling of hazards in October 2023. The findings highlighted a spectrum of risks, including malaria, Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), and road traffic accidents, among others, each presenting varying degrees of danger to the state's population.

The State embarked on a comprehensive approach to preparedness by developing hazard-specific contingency plans at the county level. Kajo-keji, Morobo, and Yei River Counties were selected for this initiative due to their unique geographic characteristics and susceptibility to specific hazards.

The objectives of the hazard-specific contingency plans include anticipating potential threats, and vulnerabilities and minimizing their impact on public health through proactive measures; identifying specific needs associated with each hazard and outlining mitigation actions tailored to address them effectively; developing detailed plans for the implementation of mitigation actions, including resource allocation and time estimates; identify and mobilize the necessary resources, including personnel, equipment, logistics capacities, and supplies, to support response efforts and continuously monitor progress in plan implementation to assess effectiveness and adapt strategies as needed.

By adhering to these objectives, the State aims to not only enhance its capacity to respond to emergencies and disasters but also to build a culture of resilience within its communities. Through proactive planning, monitoring and coordination, the State seeks to minimize illness, death and disability caused by emergencies and disasters, ultimately safeguarding the well-being of its population.

"South Sudan has taken proactive steps to address public health challenges. As a result, the national and subnational levels have implemented decentralized risk profiling and emergency plans while establishing Task Forces and multidisciplinary Rapid Response Teams at the State and County levels," said Mr Yona Kenyi, Surveillance Officer, Central Equatoria State. "Our approach prioritizes community involvement in identifying potential hazards and ensures that county-level, hazard-specific contingency plans are developed and fully understood."

The development of these contingency plans involved a collaborative effort, engaging stakeholders from diverse sectors and partner organizations. This participatory approach ensured that the plans were comprehensive, incorporating insights and expertise from various fields and sectors. By involving, the State aimed to foster ownership and commitment to the implementation of these plans.

"Thanks to the generous contribution of the European Union for Humanitarian Aid, the significance of Central Equatoria State's initiative extends beyond its borders, serving as a model for other States grappling with similar challenges. By prioritizing preparedness, disaster risk reduction, and collaboration, the State demonstrates that proactive measures can mitigate the impact of even the most daunting hazards, ensuring a safer and more resilient future for all", said Dr Humphrey Karamagi, WHO Representative for South Sudan.

South Sudan launches the Women's charter : Empowering women's voices for constitutional inclusion

By Sadia Shah/UN WOMEN

On May 29, the Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare (MGCSW) in collaboration with the Ministry of Peace Building and UN Women launched the South Sudan Women's Charter in Juba. This landmark event was followed by a dissemination conference on May 30-31. The Charter aims to enable women and girls to engage meaningfully with the Reconstituted National Constitutional Review Commission (R-NCRC) and influence the Permanent Constitution-making process. Moreover, it will be a great tool for advocating for a gender-responsive electoral process and equal representation in political parties.

The launch was attended by prominent figures including Hon. Mary Nawai, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs; Hon. Aya Benjamin Warille Libo, Minister of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare; Hon. Pia Philip Michael, Undersecretary, Ministry of Peace Building; H.E. Marjan Schippers, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands; Ms. Kiki Gbeho, DSRSG/RC/HC; Ms. Sarah Hendriks, Director of Policy, Program and Intergovernmental Division at UN Women HQ New York; Dr. Maxime Houinato, Regional Director at UN Women ESARO; Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, UN Women Country Representative South Sudan; alongside other government officials, UN agency representatives, women leaders, civil society members, and the media.

The Women's Charter consolidates the demands, priorities, and concerns of women and girls across twelve thematic areas, including political participation, education, family rights, property ownership, health, economic and social welfare, equality, protection against GBV, access to justice, environmental security, and public finance management reforms. The Charter serves as a crucial tool to enshrine gender equality, eliminate discrimination, and ensure a 50 percent gender quota for women's participation across all government levels.

The Charter is the result of extensive consultations at both national and state levels with diverse stakeholders, including women's groups, civil society organizations, legal professionals, parliamentarians, schoolgirls, chiefs, persons with disabilities, elderly women, women in business, and government officials. Ms. Sarah Hendriks, Director for the Policy, Program, Intergovernmental Division highlighted the Charter's significance, stating, "The Charter is timely and one of the most appropriate strategies to enhance the participation of women and girls in the constitution-making process. UN Women is hopeful that the Charter will empower women and girls to engage meaningfully with the National Constitutional Review Commission, addressing their diverse concerns collectively."



Sarah Hendrick Deputy Director UN Women Regional Director Maxime Houinato, UN Women Rep, Paulina Chiwangu, Minister of Gender Aya Benjamin and the Minister of parliamentary affairs Mary Nawai pose for a photo: UN Women/ Sadia Shah

Hon. Mary Nawai, Minister for Parliamentarian Affairs, "launch of the Women's Charter represents a vital step in empowering women in politics and leadership. Developed through extensive consultations, the Charter consolidates the priorities and demands of women and girls for inclusion in the permanent constitution. Empowerment entails providing the necessary resources, skills, and a supportive environment to ensure women's meaningful engagement in the constitution-making process and beyond."

Ms. Anita Kiki Gbeho UN Deputy Special Representative and Resident & Humanitarian Coordinator, remarked, "The South Sudan Women's Charter is a significant milestone in advancing women's rights in our country. Congratulations to all the women and men who generously contributed to its development, consolidating the priorities of women and girls in the constitution-making process."

Hon. Pia Philip Michael Undersecretary Ministry of Peacebuilding stressed "The Women's Charter aims to amplify the voices of our women, ensuring their contributions are meaningful. I urge our government and international partners to turn these voices into actionable realities. The Charter tackles crucial issues such as marriage and family, prepares our girls and boys for the future, and ensures that men are not left behind."

H.E. Marjan Schippers expressed confidence that the Charter would ensure a gender-sensitive and inclusive permanent constitution.

Following the launch, the Charter will be disseminated at the subnational level to raise awareness and encourage women's participation in the constitution-making process. The MGCSW plans to submit copies of the Charter to the leadership of the R-NCRC, NEC, and PPC to ensure women's concerns are considered in the permanent constitution, electoral process, and political party regulations. Through this initiative, South Sudan takes a significant step toward gender equality, empowering women and girls to shape the future of their nation.

Strengthening capacities for infection prevention and control: a huge push towards reduced outbreaks

By Atem John AJang/WHO



Water samples were collected and tested for physical, bacteriological, and essential chemical parameters. Photo WHO/Atem John

In an effort to protect communities from diseases resulting from environmental and health setting contamination, the Ministry of Health, supported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and other partners, has embarked on an ambitious mission. Supported by funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), EU Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), and Resolve to Save Lives, the initiative aims to upscale infection prevention and control (IPC) and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) measures in healthcare facilities to minimize the risk of infection transmission and water-borne related outbreaks.

Since 2020, South Sudan has been grappling with heavy rainfall and rising water levels along the White Nile, which have led to massive flooding in many parts of the country. This has had a profound impact on the healthcare system, affecting nearly one million people and subsequently resulting in widespread disruption to normal patterns of life in the affected locations.

In response, WHO has intensified its support to the Ministry of Health, focusing on implementing effective IPC/WASH measures. This comprehensive strategy encompasses water quality testing, hand hygiene promotion, healthcare waste management, and the implementation of IPC guidelines through multimodal strategy improvement and standard operating procedures. Additionally, attention is given to addressing healthcare-associated infections and antimicrobial resistance, recognizing their significance in the current context.

Despite the challenging circumstances, WHO has successfully trained over 648 healthcare workers from 2023 to March 2024, showcasing the resilience and dedication of the healthcare system. These workers have been instrumental in bolstering the healthcare system's resilience and deploying laboratory experts and public health officers nationwide to strengthen water quality surveillance and sanitary inspection efforts, including conducting onsite water quality tests.

As part of the intervention, a total of 967 water samples were collected and tested for physical, bacteriological,

and essential chemical parameters, the test was conducted onsite and at the National Public Health Laboratory in Juba. Findings revealed that 581 samples tested positive with fecal Coliforms (*E. coli*), representing 60 percent of the contamination rate of water points across the country. In response, WHO has taken swift action, procuring and distributing over 1521 assorted IPC/WASH supplies, including color-coded waste bins, disinfectants, and water quality testing equipment, to several hotspot locations and counties.

Reflecting on the challenges ahead, Dr Humphrey Karamagi, the WHO Representative for South Sudan, said, "In our efforts to reduce infection and needless death due to infections, we place infection prevention at the Centre stage of all our health interventions."

Dr Karamagi underscored WHO's commitment to strengthening IPC programs, including water quality surveillance, and supporting the development and implementation of national IPC guidelines across all levels of healthcare facilities.

As part of strengthening the IPC Programme, WHO is implementing measures to ensure continuous technical support to the Ministry of Health by building the capacity of healthcare workers through refresher training, job mentorship, and giving strategic direction for attaining the minimum requirements for IPC Programs. WHO is also working closely with WASH and Health Cluster Partners to improve WASH in health facilities and promote the implementation of Multi Modal Improvement Strategies and integrate IPC into existing health structures. This will go a long way in improving patient outcomes and ensuring healthcare Worker protection. IPC must be institutionalized and taken as an everyday quality process in healthcare and not only as an outbreak response measure.

The Lives of more than 700,000 vulnerable South Sudanese have been transformed as ECRP I, a World Bank –funded project ends in July 2024.

By Aidah Khamis/UNOPS



The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of South Sudan through the Local Government Board, is pleased to announce the official closure of the Enhancing Community Resilience & Local Governance Phase 1 Project (ECRP I), a \$45 million project funded by the World Bank after being successfully implemented by UNOPS and IOM on behalf of the Government of South Sudan.

The implementation of ECRP I was launched in August 2020, covering 20 selected counties across the country, and is expected to officially end in July 2024 with a handover of one of the 31 well-furnished health facilities to the Government in Lokiliri Payam of Juba County, in Central Equatoria state. The handover ceremony took place on Tuesday, 25 June, followed by a grand end-of-project closure event on Wednesday, 26 June, at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Juba. Both events will garner donors, key development partners, the government, and all stakeholders who have played a crucial role in the project completion to share their experiences and celebrate the project's success in South Sudan.

The project results have brought about significant positive change, benefiting over 700,000 community members in all of South Sudan's ten states. Improved access to basic infrastructure, strengthened community institutions, and transformed livelihoods in the communities have transformed the lives of the people. The 20 counties so far reached with this project include Pi-bor, Leer, Rubkona, Pariang, Wau, Raja, Jur River, Maban, Renk, Fashoda, Baliyet, Kapoeta North, Rumbek Centre, Wulu, Aweil East, Aweil North, Tonj North, Ezo, Ibba, and Juba.

“The completion of the different physical infrastructures has left impactful traces of services and development in many communities across south Sudan. I really want to thank UNOPS, IOM and the World Bank for making this possible, most of the communities in the target areas have access to agricultural farms, education, health, clean water, economic transformation, and employment”, said **Mr. Malony Anei**, Acting Chairperson of the Local Government Board in South Sudan.

According to Firas Raad, the former World Bank Country Manager for South Sudan, the project has addressed the immediate need for essential services and strengthened local institutions' capacity across the country.

The project has also contributed to supporting the Sustainable Development Goals, mainly by responding to the impact of multiple and interlocking crises facing communities across South Sudan.

Despite some challenges, John Nyerenda, the overall Senior Project Manager from UNOPS, said the ECRP 1 project met its set objectives and handed over **345** complete physical infrastructure to the government, benefiting thousands of community members in the 20 South Sudan locations, mostly women. Nyirenda stressed that UNOPS and IOM completed the construction of 33 primary school blocks, 31 health facilities, 258 water facilities, 11 market sheds, nine community access roads, and four community youth centers and built the capacity of 453 Development Committees at Boma and Payam level.



After completing each project in every location across the country, UNOPS and IOM handed over all projects to the Government at different intervals. To complement ECRP I project it comes to an end, the Government of the Republic of South Sudan has unveiled the South Sudan Enhancing Community Resilience and Local Governance Project Phase II (ECRP-II) as a successor project which is a five-year \$120 million Government led project that will benefit as many as 920,000 people in 12 of the country's 79 counties with improve access to basic infrastructure and to strengthen community Institutions, and to enhance flood resilience.

UNOPS marks a significant milestone by handing over 14 new Toyota land cruisers to the Ministry of Finance and Planning.

By Aidah Khamis/UNOPS

May 22nd, 2024, marked a significant day for UNOPS South Sudan as it demonstrated its crucial support role in sustainable procurement. In April 2023, UNOPS was entrusted by the National Ministry of Finance and Planning to procure 14 Toyota Land cruisers for the government of South Sudan. These vehicles are instrumental in supporting the **'South Sudan Public Financial Management and Institution Strengthening Project' (PFMIS)**, significantly enhancing the country's financial management capabilities. Despite encountering unforeseen challenges, such as a change in the importation route due to the war in Gaza, the UNOPS team remained steadfast in their commitment. The 14 new Toyota land cruisers were delivered to the Ministry of Finance and Planning in South Sudan within six months.

Mr. Maxwell Mellingasuk Loboka, the Director General for Macroeconomic & Debt Management and the Program Director at the Ministry of Finance and Planning has praised the enduring and fruitful partnership between the government and UNOPS. The Ministry, in particular, strongly believes in the institution's procurement capabilities, a testament to UNOPS's quality and reliability.

"UNOPS, we don't doubt you; the Government of South Sudan started working with you in 2006. By then, UNOPS was the first UN agency to provide furniture and office equipment for the whole government of Southern Sudan. We don't doubt your service, and I am happy that the awaited vehicles are already here. Thanks to all the parties involved in the procurement process," Mr. Maxwell Mellingasuk Loboka, the Ministry of Finance and Planning Program Director, stressed.

Ms. Petronella Kasaka Halwindi, UNOPS Country Manager in South Sudan, expressed her deep appreciation to the Government of South Sudan, particularly the Ministry of Finance and Planning, for their unwavering trust in UNOPS as a reliable partner in the procurement process of the PFMIS project. She reiterates that their faith in UNOPS is a source of inspiration and that UNOPS is fully dedicated to maintaining this successful collaboration.

UNOPS' partnership with the Ministry of Finance and Planning has been consistent. Since last year, UNOPS has procured 28 Land Cruisers for different projects in South Sudan. Four were for the Enhanced Community Resilience Project (ECRP II), 14 for the Public Financial Management and Institution Strengthening Project (PFMIS), and four vehicles were given to the government upon the successful completion of the ECRP I. UNOPS will continue to offer its expertise in public procurement, among other service lines, to all development partners, including the government of South Sudan.

Violence prevention and reduction, creating trust among youth and adolescents labelled as gangs. By Mure Moses/UNICEF

A story of a passionate case worker helping gangs in Rajaf detention Centre .

As South Sudan continues to emerge from decades of war and conflict, inter-group and gang violence is a major concern, particularly within Juba and other urban Centers across the country. Increasing gang violence including physical attacks resulting in injury and death, rape, and sexual violence, looting and other forms of harassment have increased as gangs have grown in prominence. The severity of this violence and its impact on civilians must be taken seriously as part of a holistic and proactive protection response.

Peter, a case worker deployed by GREDO, a UNICEF Child Protection partner was identified due to his wealth of experience in working with disadvantage groups.

While at the Rajaf detention Centre in Juba, he and other case workers have provided individual case management support to over 500 youth and adolescents arrested and detained recently.

In November 2023, there was a mass arrest of more than 500 youth and adolescents across Juba thought to be associated with gangs. This has caused a state of fear among youth and adolescents in the capital. Since then, many of those arrested remain in custody awaiting individual decisions from authorities at the police training centers in Rajaf. These arrests were carried out by police at the national level after directives to address the growing issues with gang violence in Juba. With an absence of livelihood opportunities for youth in South Sudan such as employment, education, or productive engagement with the community, many



youths will continue to rely on gangs as a source of belonging and social support as well as basic daily subsistence from criminal activities. Many gang members also continue to struggle with substance abuse. "Continued dialogue between gang members, youth, police, community leaders/members and provision of case management and psychosocial support services is paramount" Brendan Ross, UNICEF South Sudan Chief of Child Protection.

"UNICEF was engaged directly by the SSNPS to help deal with this particular case as well as wider protection programs for former gang members in Juba and other parts of the country." the

UNICEF South Sudan chief of Child Protection added.

To ensure quality case management and mental health psychosocial support services are provided, Peter, the dedicated case worker was deployed and leads a team of social workers and case worker responding to the gangs members detained at Rajaf Centre. Peter worked tirelessly to support the young individuals involved in gangs while they were in detention. He understood the challenges those young people faced and was determined to make a positive impact on their lives. Read more: [Violence prevention and reduction – Creating trust among youth and adolescent labelled as gangs | UNICEF South Sudan](#)

Government, Global Fund, GAVI, UNDP and partners renew partnership for health in South Sudan

By Mubangizi Michael /UNDP



The Vice President and Chair of the Services Cluster H.E Hussein Abdelbagi Akol, officials from the Ministry of Health, the Global Fund, Gavi Alliance, UNDP and Partners on the occasion of signing the framework agreement. UNDP has been a Principal Recipient of the precious Global Fund investments in what is now South Sudan since 2004. **Photo credit: Michael Mubangizi/UNDP**

The Government of South Sudan, the Global Fund, the GAVI Alliance, UNDP and partners have reiterated their commitment to continue cooperation and partnership to strengthen the response to HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and immunization coverage to save lives, improve health outcomes and quality of life in the country.

This was one of the highlights of the Global Fund – GAVI Alliance – High-Level Mission to South Sudan held between 10 and 14 June 2024. During the visit, the Government, Global Fund, GAVI and UNDP signed a declaration of commitment and joint collaboration to fight HIV, TB and malaria, and strengthen immunization and health systems. Other signatories to the framework agreement are UNICEF, South Sudan AIDS Commission (SSAC), the World Health Organization (WHO) and a representative of civil society organizations.

In the framework agreement, the signatories commended the Government of South Sudan for the progress in the fight against HIV, TB and malaria, improved immunization coverage and in the establishment of resilient and sustainable systems for health. They also expressed concern that, in spite of the progress made, challenges remain, hindering the country's development, peace and stability.

Improving the country's health sector

The occasion was presided over by the Vice President and Chair of the Services Cluster H.E Hussein Abdelbagi Akol who welcomed the framework agreement, saying, "It signifies our shared commitment to improving the health sector in the country."

Citing investments in medical supply chains, health systems strengthening, capacity building of health care workers and support for health administration, the Vice President said the Global Fund investments have played a pivotal role in the country's development, "On behalf of the country, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Global Fund for their unwavering support and dedication to improving health care in South Sudan."

The Vice President also commended health care workers, "who are tirelessly serving their communities under serious challenges including the long delay in salaries payment."

Speaking during the signing ceremony, Dr. Harley Feldbaum, Head of Strategy and Policy at the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, congratulated South Sudan for the successful negotiation and signing of the Grant Cycle Seven (GC7), “under the leadership of the Ministry of Health and CCM which brought in a record \$144 million for implementation over a period of three years.”

Dr. Feldbaum also thanked the Ministry of Health for the strong leadership and coordination of the health response, “Under the leadership of the Ministry of Health, the coordination of government agencies and development partners has vastly improved. We encourage this transparent, open and productive relationship to continue.”

He reiterated the Global Fund’s support for the health sector transformation plan and urged other partners and stakeholders to rally behind it given its potential to foster country ownership and a more coordinated health response.

Increasing domestic health funding

Dr. Feldbaum also called for increased domestic funding for health, noting, “The funds we allocate to South Sudan can only be and are meant to be complementary to the Government’s financing of health.”

During the visit, the Global Fund – GAVI Alliance delegation met with officials of the Ministry of Finance and Planning on increasing domestic financing for health to 10% and progressively reach the 15% target set by the Abuja Declaration in due course.

This call was reiterated by Ms. Amy LaTrielle, the Director Fragile and Conflict-Affected Countries at GAVI Alliance. She said, “South Sudan’s domestic health financing is currently just below 2%. We appeal to the Government of South Sudan to prioritize the health of its population and to increase this to at least 10%. We know this can be done.”

Ms. LaTrielle also commended South Sudan for the strides made in health services delivery, including increasing immunization coverage to 73%, and reduction in the number of children who have never received a single vaccine by 22%. She also repeated GAVI’s commitment, funding and support for the vaccine’s rollout, including the scheduled roll-out of malaria vaccines alongside the massive distribution of mosquito nets offered by the Global Fund to prevent malaria. “Increasing current vaccines coverage combined with new vaccines introduction are excellent opportunities to save lives, improve health and ensure long-term prosperity,” she said.

UNDP & Partners launch \$33 million project to enhance climate Resilience and strengthen Sustainable Development in South Sudan

By Maureen Omwanda



Group photo with different stakeholders at the Launch event of WACRESS in Juba, South Sudan. Photo Maureen Omwanda/UNDP

On the 15th of May 2024, The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) spearheaded the launch of a groundbreaking project titled “Watershed Approaches for Climate Resilience in Agro-pastoral Landscapes” in South Sudan. This initiative marks a significant step towards strengthening the country’s resilience to climate change impacts while promoting sustainable development and economic empowerment among vulnerable communities. Funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by World Vision South Sudan in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, the project is designed to restore ecosystems, strengthen market linkages, and support gender-responsive, climate-smart agricultural practices. Through a participatory watershed-based approach, the project aims to address the root causes of vulnerability and build resilience among agro-pastoral communities, particularly in the face of prolonged conflict and escalating climate change.

In a significant move to reinforce partnership and commitment, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), along with World Vision and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of South Sudan, convened on **May 2, 2024**, for the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the project which was a precursor to the launch.

The launch event attended by key stakeholders including government officials and development partners, emphasized the project’s significance amidst the challenges posed by climate change and conflict. UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, Titus Osundina, emphasized the project’s objective of enhancing livelihoods and building resilience among vulnerable populations.

With a budget of \$33million, the project aims to reach over 75,000 individuals and bring 15,000 hectares of land under improved practices, contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals such as Zero Hunger, Gender Equality, and Climate Action. This significant initiative, aims to tackle the pressing issues of food insecurity and environmental degradation in South Sudan. With the majority of the population relying on climate-sensitive natural resources, the combined effects of prolonged conflict and climate change have severely impacted agricultural and pastoral sectors, highlighting the urgent need for sustainable solutions.

Josephine Napwon, Minister of Environment and Forestry, highlighted the urgency of addressing climate change and reiterated the government's commitment to mitigating its impacts. She emphasized the project's potential to introduce smart agriculture strategies and transform agricultural practices, ultimately improving community resilience and livelihoods.

Dr. Mesfin Lola, World Vision Country Director, concurred at the importance of collective efforts in building resilience to climate change risks and restoring ecosystems. He highlighted the project's focus on strengthening local protection mechanisms and enhancing sustainable development in South Sudan.

According to World Food Program, the situation in South Sudan is dire, with approximately 7.7 million people facing severe food insecurity. Four consecutive years of unprecedented flooding have caused widespread displacement, destruction of livelihoods, and loss of arable land, severely impacting food production and increasing hunger. The livelihoods of 95 percent of South Sudan's communities and its economy depend heavily on climate-sensitive natural resources and agriculture. The ongoing conflict and insecurity have disrupted these livelihoods, making recovery and sustainability challenging.

A significant proportion of South Sudan's population comprises vulnerable groups, such as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and persons with disabilities, who are particularly affected by the food insecurity crisis. Agricultural production in South Sudan is highly dependent on rainfall, with variability in rainfall being the greatest determinant of agricultural output. This variability causes both droughts and floods, accounting for nearly 70 percent of the variation in cereal and grain production. To address this crisis, it is crucial for communities in South Sudan to adapt to climate change by adopting climate-smart agricultural techniques and technologies that are locally relevant to effectively rebuild and sustain livelihoods. The Watershed Approaches for Climate Resilience in Agro-pastoral Landscapes is designed to resolve for such problem statements.

The launch of the "Watershed Approaches for Climate Resilience in Agro-pastoral Landscapes" project represents a significant milestone in UNDP's commitment to supporting South Sudan's journey towards climate resilience and sustainable development. Through collaboration, innovation, and inclusivity, the project aims to empower vulnerable communities, enhance livelihoods, and build resilience to climate change impacts, ultimately contributing to a more sustainable and prosperous future for all. The project's pilot will be in Northern Bahr El-Ghazal, Aweil East & Aweil Centre.



Give us our space at the decision making table, a humble appeal from the youth of Upper Nile.

By Juma Delu



"The youth are not a problem, the youth are agents of change" These were the words of Brian Williams, the head of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) to the youth in Upper Nile who converged for the Youth Leading Project validation workshop. Mr. Brian, a member of the visiting PBF delegation visited Upper Nile to assess the impact of the project UNFPA and UNESCO are implementing through partners.

While interacting with the youth Mr. William admonished them to be prepared for the challenges ahead of them, "there are going to be a lot of challenges, ahead of

Participants at the validation workshop. Photo: Juma Delu/UNFPA

you, there is going to be elections, and it is during this time that you need to put aside your differences" he noted, stressing that elections are about ideas and there will be disagreements in ideas during that period during the youth to manage different opinions and ideas during elections.

The participating youth voiced concerns about being excluded in the decision-making process of the country saying they need to be given a platform to actively participate in making decisions in the affairs of South Sudan as well as called for the passing of the Youth Policy

Ambassador Stephane Rey from Switzerland, also a member of the UNSG's peacebuilding Fund Advisory group, pledged to pass the concerns and voices of the youth of South Sudan to the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

"You the young people of Malakal and South Sudan in general, you are the leaders of today, not tomorrow, and you are our peace ambassadors everywhere you go, so lead by example, the language of revenge should be no more, we depend on one another, desist from useless fights, do not allow to be used fighting other people's wars" These were also words of caution to the youth, by the Under Secretary, Ministry of Peacebuilding Hon. Pia Philip to the youth stressing that wars to not move communities and countries forward but backward.

He thanked the donors for their generous contribution towards the Peacebuilding fund, **"these little coins you have invested in South Sudan will not go in vain, the stability you are seeing so far is as a result of the donations you made"** he noted

Nyadeng Aketch 23 and secretary to the State Minister of Gender, Child Social Care, thanked the organizers for the workshop, saying it changed her perspective on so many things, **"Going forward, I will love my neighbors, preach and spread the message of peace in my community, I will no longer put tribalism first"** While 19 -year old Anna Nyawal Mathew said her takeaways from the workshop is about women empowerment, noting that it was an eye opener as she learned about gender-based violence and effects of negative cultural norms were girls are often times married off young, she pledged to champion and advocate for the education of the girl-child, but sadly she is a form two drop-out whose academic future doesn't look bright.

The Peace-Building Fund project, under the "Youth Leading Peace" aims to establish participatory and inclusive local and national mechanisms for the implementation of the Youth Peace and Security (YPS) Agenda in South Sudan and institutionalize youth participation in peacebuilding processes by facilitating young women and young men-led designing of costed National Strategy on YPS.

The project employs an innovative, participatory, and institutionalized approach to meaningful engagement of young women and young men in peacebuilding processes that encompass strategic partnerships and consultations with the youth and their organizations; capacity building of young women and young men on understanding UNSCR 2250, 2419 and 2535.

It is implemented Jointly by UNFPA and UNESCO, through partners like Search for Common South Sudan and Hope Restoration South Sudan, so far the ten states of South Sudan and the three administrative areas of South Sudan have been transferred with the training, In Upper Nile, the State Legislative Assembly members also benefited from the workshop.

South Sudan has been dogged by a circle of violence for a long time, including the 2013 and 2016 conflicts, in addition to the inter-communal violence perpetrated by cattle rustling as well as revenge killings.