



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE 2020

THE UNITED NATIONS WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH SUDAN TO “SHAPE PEACE TOGETHER”

“I was born in war. I grew up and gave birth in conflict. It is painful. We want real peace and to live in freedom. When I say freedom, I don’t mean relative peace for me and my loved ones. I want a true ‘normal’ freedom for all South Sudanese so we can live without fear in our hearts.”

That is the inspirational message from 28-year-old hairdresser and Mother Esther Siama from Yambio. Her passionate plea comes as we celebrate the International Day of Peace in South Sudan and around the world on **21 September**.

This month also marks the second anniversary of the historic signing of the Revitalized Peace Agreement. Two years ago, thousands of people gathered at Juba’s Freedom Square, filled with excitement, as they officially celebrated the peace deal after five years of civil war. It was a poignant moment as President Salva Kiir Mayardit and Opposition leader Dr. Riek Machar came together in a gesture of peace and unity. “Peace has come, and it is here to stay”, promised the President.

In February 2020, another important step was taken with the formation of a transitional government. Throughout the crisis and subsequent peace process, the United Nations has provided much-needed support to communities by protecting vulnerable civilians, providing humanitarian and development assistance, and supporting reconciliation and peacebuilding activities.

International Peace Day is an opportunity to reflect on, and be proud, of the positive progress that has been made. But it is also a reminder that

there is still much work to be done as delays in implementation of the agreement frustrate many citizens. While the ceasefire is largely holding and political violence has reduced significantly, many communities are still suffering huge harm from subnational violence in places like Jonglei and Warrap.

This conflict, on top of devastating flooding in communities along the Nile, has worsened the existing humanitarian burden. Humanitarian agencies are working incredibly hard to help people living without shelter, healthcare, food, water, and sanitation in the middle of the rainy season. But their commitment comes at a cost with nine aid workers tragically losing their lives this year and another 144 evacuated because of the violence.

Thousands of families have lost loved ones and suffered displacement. They just want the chance to rebuild their lives – to live in communities that are at peace with each other, for their children to go to school, and to be able to support themselves.

International Peace Day is a chance to breathe new life into the peace process so that the agreement is fully implemented as soon as possible. That will pave the way for elections to be held so all South Sudanese citizens can exercise the democratic right they fought so hard for when they won independence.

This year’s Peace Day theme is “Shaping Peace Together”. It perfectly captures the commitment of the UN to work in partnership with the people of South Sudan to build durable peace.

ACHIEVING PEACE THROUGH FOOD SECURITY



Debora Apui inspects her harvest. Photo Credit: WFP

Food security saves lives and maintains livelihoods, but it also has an integral role to play in maintaining peace. It combats deeply entrenched inequalities in society, promotes economic empowerment especially for women, assuages stressors that cause ruptures within communities, enhances social cohesion and addresses the root causes of conflict.

WFP's commitment to alleviating acute suffering and saving lives in South Sudan is as steadfast as ever. The breadth of our vision goes beyond emergency relief. Our livelihoods programmes contribute to long-term peace and development by enabling communities to grow their own food and maintain their livelihoods.

Through our resilience programmes such as Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) and Smallholder Agriculture Market Support (SAMS), the number of people assisted by FFA has grown by nearly 40 percent since 2016. At the core of such programmes is our aim to achieve durable and sustainable solutions to the food security of the people of South Sudan.

Debora Apui is one of the thousands of FFA participants WFP supports. Like many others, she bears testament to the power of the programme to transform lives.

"Now that I have farming skills, I believe I can sustain myself. When you produce your own food, you have access to it whenever you want it — as opposed to food which is given to you: you can only get it if the owner brings it.", she notes.

Participants like Debora Apui used to survive off greens and tamarind from the bush. Thanks to FFA, not only were her current food needs met, but she also learned how to farm.

Through SAMS, WFP bolsters the livelihoods of people that make up the bulk of those living in poverty: mainly smallholder farmers. Specifically, we help them prevent post-harvest losses, promote effective agricultural methods to increase crop yields, buy food from farmers themselves and link them to markets.

Promoting a life out of subsistence farming to produce surpluses allows them to feed their families and sell excess in the market thereby helping to grow the local economy.

Any solution to lasting peace will require concerted efforts at the grassroots level which empower communities and transform their livelihoods.

Food security must be achieved if we are to find a solution to the social stressors and economic deprivation that undermine peaceful coexistence. Only then can we hope for the societal harmony we crave.

A POEM ON PEACE WITTEN BY NYALUN JOCH MAI GATWECH DURING A POETRY WORKSHOP FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ORGANIZED BY UNICEF

Peace is a world without guns and bombs, Peace is a world without locks and alarms

Peace is fresh water flowing down rivers and streams, Peace is sleeping without bad dreams

Peace is a life without seven deadly sins, Peace is a world where everybody is a true friend

Peace is no such thing as upper middle or lower class, Peace is a tall tree fresh air and green grass

Peace is when sickness and disease doesn't exist, Peace is when there is no temptation to resist

Peace is children laughing and playing without worries, Peace is light wind raindrops and snow flurries

Peace is sunny and starry skies, Peace is seeing you later and no more goodbyes

Peace is the harmonious sounds of nature, Peace is cloud mountains and glaciers

Peace is the calm after the storm, Peace is when babies are born

Peace is never too late, Peace is living in a world without hate.

**NYALUN JOCH MAI
GATWECH**



PEACE, JUSTICE AND ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT CRITICAL TO ADVANCING DEVELOPMENT

As we move towards the final months of 2020, nurturing peace, justice and economic management institutions is integral to advancing development. No country can develop without peace, and peace will be difficult to sustain without building community-level resilience and inclusive economic development.

For South Sudan to move forward, rule of law and access to justice is needed to confront its past and chart a path for the future.

Initiated by UNDP and the South Sudan Peace and Reconciliation Commission, the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index (SCORE) for South Sudan in development is part of wider peacebuilding efforts to identify the drivers of conflict between South Sudan's communities and understand the points where targeted peace and development actions could make a difference.

UNDP's peacebuilding work focuses on the interconnectedness of conflict actors, causes and issues. At state and national levels, our efforts support the formation of just, equitable and accountable institutions to provide services which respond to the needs of the citizens.

In five conflict cluster locations, community members are working in local peace committees and using economic interdependency as a tool to foster community cohesion and prevent local conflict.

In Jonglei, Kabarthe women's group is spearheading grassroots women-to-women dialogues, bridging the communal divide amongst the Murle, Nuer, and Dinka ethnic groups.

"Peace has been a commodity we have been longing for...we are now enlightened on how to handle our differences in a nonviolent way," said Nyang Deng, one of the women representatives in Kolnyang, Bor county, during a recent peace committee training.

A just, inclusive, and sustainable peace cannot be achieved without equal participation of women and youths in defining the peace they want. In this regard, UNDP is focused on nurturing inclusive processes which elevate the voice of a plurality of South Sudanese into local and national deliberations.

Bi-annual dialogues on seasonal movement of cattle for pasture and water have improved sharing of available resources during dry seasons amongst Lou Nuer, Gawaar, Hol and Nyarweng communities. To consolidate social cohesion, UNDP constructed a community radio station in Duk Padiet to enable sharing of vital peace messages and to reduce harmful rumors amongst Nuer, Dinka and Murle ethnic groups.

The National Dialogue demonstrates that the voices of the people are powerful when given the chance and space to express and contribute. For UNDP, the forthcoming national conference of the National Dialogue is not a one-off event. Civil society and citizens have an active role to play.

MEDIATION PROCESS TO END JONGLEI CONFLICT BEGINS AT PEACE CONFERENCE HOSTED BY UNMISS



The SRSR and DSRSG/RC/HC chatting with the Governor of Jonglei state during the opening of the peace conference.

Photo credit: UNMISS

Thousands of families have had their lives devastated by a vicious cycle of fighting that is plaguing the Jonglei region of South Sudan. More than 600 people have been killed in six months, women and children abducted, villages and homes torched, and thousands of cattle stolen.

To help end the conflict, UNMISS brought together political leaders at the national and state level as well as community elders, civil society and other key stakeholders at a special peace forum in Juba.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, David Shearer, said the Mission is committed to providing political and logistical support for ongoing peace talks, deploying peacekeepers to monitor buffer zones between the groups if needed, increasing the capacity of local police and helping develop infrastructure, such as new roads, schools, and water points. "It's important that people come together and reach agreement because we know that the fighting wasn't just happening on the ground in isolation to what was happening here in Juba," said David Shearer.

"There were others who were supplying weapons and things that were fueling the conflict so we need to reach an agreement that can be taken out around Jonglei so that people can move forward in peace."

The participants reached agreement on a ceasefire and to increase reconciliation efforts. But to secure durable peace, the Jonglei Governor said that support was needed from donors, humanitarians and the United Nations. "We feel that, if we get the logistical, financial and political support needed, we should be able to solve this problem," said Governor Denay Chagor. "But if we don't, the catastrophe of it will be so great that it would mean the entire country of South Sudan would go back into a war. We don't want that to happen."

NEWS FROM UN AGENCIES, FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

RE-SHAPING CULTURAL POLICIES IN SOUTH SUDAN

UNESCO and the European Union are supporting the Ministry of Culture, Museums and Natural Heritage in South Sudan with the development of the cultural and creative industries sector through two new activities, which were launched in a three-day workshop in Juba with national stakeholders.

The complementary projects are bringing together key actors in the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in South Sudan as a national team to participate in the national review of policies and measures to support the CCIs as well as in the development of a national copyright policy to support the CCIs.



Participants at the UNESCO workshop in Juba, 26 to 28 August 2020

Photo credit: UNESCO

SOUTH SUDAN LAUNCHES THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN ON VIRAL HEPATITIS TREATMENT AND CARE GUIDELINES



WHO Country Representative speaking at the launch. Photo Credit WHO

YOUTH HELPING YOUTH DURING THE PANDEMIC

The restrictions in movement and closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic have negatively impacted young people’s access to sexual and reproductive health services, raising fears that this could lead to a rise in teen pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections among young people.

Shabab Le Shabab Health Alliance, a network of organizations supported by UNFPA to work on adolescents and youth programme in South Sudan, is mobilizing its members exactly for such reason – to reach out to young people and ensure that they continue to have access to sexual and reproductive health information and services amidst the pandemic.

Read more at: <https://bit.ly/2FPMWfg>



Young girls receive UNFPA dignity kits during a community outreach activity by youth volunteers. Photo Credit: Shabab Le Shabab Health Alliance

The strategic plan is for halting hepatitis transmission while ensuring access to safe, affordable and effective prevention, care and treatment services towards elimination of viral hepatitis as a major public health threat in South Sudan by 2030.

“Hepatitis is a public health threat in South Sudan. Hepatitis B comprises over 80% of the hepatitis burden”, said the Honorable Minister of Health, Elizabeth Acuei Yol. “Thanks to WHO and other partners, who are in this fight with us”. “This is an important plan to fight against the disease.”

Hepatitis infection is the most common infection in the first month of life, and this can be prevented with hepatitis B birth-dose vaccination in the first 24 hours of life.

ON THE PATH TO LONG LASTING PEACE FOR SOUTH SUDAN, ITS PEOPLE CONTINUE PLAYING A CENTRAL ROLE

To mark the International Day of Peace, we celebrate the people who are working to empower their own country and breaking down the walls between communities. This is certainly the case of Salwa Athoo, a 37 years old mother of seven.

Salwa is a tailor and has no formal education. Before settling in Don Bosco in 2014 after losing her husband and home to the civil war, she lived her whole life in a small, rural village where she was taught “a woman had no right to speak before men.”

But today, she’s proud that she can look after her community. Nine years after South Sudan’s independence, seven years after the start of a bloody civil war and two years after the parties to the conflict signed a peace agreement, much remains to be done in the world’s youngest country to ensure a safe, stable future for its people. Read more: <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2020/7/5f06078d4/south-sudan-turns-nine-its-people-remain-committed-peace.html>.



Salwa Athoo, 37, helps advance women’s rights as a community leader in the internal displacement site where she lives in Juba, South Sudan.

Photo Credit: UNHCR

UNESCO FACILITATES MEDIA ONLINE TRAINING ON EARLY AND UNINTENDED PREGNANCY

Media practitioners from print and broadcast media houses participated in a two-day Capacity Building Online Workshop on Early and Unintended Pregnancy (EUP) from 19 to 20 August 2020 in Juba.

The training aimed at equipping media personnel with knowledge and skills on reporting about EUP issues and establish a EUP media group.

The capacity building workshop is one of the activities designed by the UNESCO Regional Office in Harare, Zimbabwe, to support country offices to roll out the EUP campaign in eastern and southern African countries.

The “Let’s Talk” campaign is founded on three pillars mainly education, health and rights. Education ensures adolescents have the right to access correct knowledge to make informed life choices and delay pregnancy.

The health dimension intends to increase access to non-judgmental and non-discriminatory sexual reproductive health services.

The rights aspect ensures that all adolescents know their rights and are empowered to make decisions regarding sexuality, health and education that will allow them to reach their full potential.



(Let’s Talk Logo/UNESCO) Photo Credit: UNESCO

UNMAS REMOVES ANTI-TANK MINES TO PROTECT COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN MANGALA, CENTRAL EQUATORIA

“Even though we know that mines exist in this area, we need to continue planting and harvesting crops as well as grazing cattle in the hope that nothing would happen to us,” said Mr. Joseph Clement, a local farmer in Mangala, Central Equatoria, when he reported an anti-tank mine in his field to an UNMAS team working in the area.

Since the beginning of August, UNMAS has resumed proactive clearance operations with teams now adapting working and living protocols to mitigate COVID-19.

The team responded swiftly to the report by removing and destroying the explosive item in Mr. Clementi’s field. “We are very happy that you are removing the mines here. Now we can continue planting groundnuts without fearing the detonation,” stated Mr. Clement.



An UNMAS Community Liaison Officer delivered door-to-door explosive ordnance risk education to a family in Mangala, Central Equatoria.

Photo Credit: G4S/UNMAS South Sudan

NYAPUKA DEFEATED HUNGER AND NOW GROWS HER OWN FOOD IN A REMOTE VILLAGE IN UNITY STATE

It is 2 PM and 34 degrees Celsius in Mayendit County, Unity State and Nyapuka Manguany Kuic, an energetic woman of 33, is getting ready to go fetch water for her family. She can’t wait until it cools down, because she needs to be home before sunset as the area is unsafe for women walking alone in the dark.

She woke up early to go to the farm and procure food and non-food items for her nine children. She is very happy now.

“I would do anything for my five boys and four girls, I want them to be safe, eat well and be healthy”, she says as she picks a few maize cobs from the garden to prepare lunch.



Nyapuka Manguany Kuic holding the maize cobs she picked to prepare lunch. Photo Credit: FAO

Read the full story: <http://www.fao.org/south-sudan/news/detail-events/en/c/1308199/>

SOME THINGS ARE NOT FIT FOR CHILDREN: MARRIAGE IS ONE OF THEM

Linked to the International Day of the Girl Child celebrated on 11 October, UNICEF is launching a campaign against child marriage in South Sudan. In South Sudan, 52 per cent of all girls are married before 18 years of age, depriving them of their basic rights and some even their lives.

Marriage is not a good fit for children. It harms children, especially girls, and it must end now. UNICEF is urging everyone, especially community influencers, to take advantage of the increased focus on child marriage around the International Day of the Girl Child to speak up and act against child marriage. For more information, see www.unicef.org/southsudan