

April 2021



## MINE ACTION ORGANIZATIONS IN SOUTH SUDAN COMMEMORATED THE 2021 INTERNATIONAL MINE AWARENESS DAY (IMAD) IN APRIL

On 8 December 2005, the United Nations General Assembly declared that 4 April of each year shall be observed as the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action.

For 2021, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) coordinated with the mine action organizations in South Sudan to commemorate this important day through a media campaign promoting the global theme “Perseverance, Partnership, Progress” within the national context.

In 2020, UNMAS and mine action partners cleared over 3.7 million m<sup>2</sup> of land, and removed and destroyed more than 36,000 explosive devices, including landmines, cluster munitions, and other unexploded ordnance improving the safety and security of communities across South Sudan. This is equivalent to clearing one and a half football pitches and destroying over 100 explosive items every single day of the year. Explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) was delivered to over 245,000 South Sudanese civilians, more than half of whom were children.

This means women, men, boys and girls have increased knowledge in distinguishing between safe and unsafe practices; moreover, after EORE they know how to report hazardous items in their communities. COVID-19, floods, insecurity, the year 2020 challenged everyone, but UNMAS persevered in its efforts to continue making South Sudan safe for all by working with mine action partners, the national authorities, and community members across the country.

In 2021 the path to move forward remains difficult as flooding, food insecurity and ongoing violence continue as well as the disruptive impact of COVID-19. Nevertheless, UNMAS seeks out opportunities to advance development efforts across South Sudan, including the following:

### HIGHLIGHTS

- ✚ Dear Teacher
- ✚ New Special Representative of the UN Secretary General Expresses strong hope for lasting peace in South Sudan
- ✚ UNICEF upgrades its compound in Pibor
- ✚ UNESCO launches two digital library initiatives



- In December 2020, UNMAS initiated survey and clearance of a road and its surrounding areas for explosive hazards near Gita-Junubi which connects to three villages outside Malakal, Upper Nile. To date, over 125,000 m<sup>2</sup> of land, equivalent to 17 football pitches, has been cleared. As operations progress, community members living in proximity to the cleared road began to cultivate sweet potatoes, maize, millet, and sorghum alongside it, while an increase in vehicular traffic has been also observed.
- From mid-February to mid-March, UNMAS delivered EORE to 2,881 South Sudanese, including 1,521 children, who were displaced from their homes and temporarily settled in Mogiri, Central Equatoria. As they established their lives in this new area, the community were at risk from explosive ordnance when they searched for firewood and to collect building materials. Since UNMAS commenced EORE, six explosive items were reported, and later on removed and destroyed; furthermore, the EORE has enabled the community members to identify, avoid, and report explosive hazards they may encounter in any environment they travel, work or live.

South Sudan should be free of landmines by 2026. To meet this goal, UNMAS will continue to survey, clear, and destroy explosive ordnance alongside mine action partners.

With sustained international support and lasting peace in the country, step by step, we can clear all the remaining minefields, cluster munition strikes, and former battlefields in the coming five years.

To report a suspicious object, please contact UNMAS at its 24-hour hotline: 0920001055 or via email at [unmas.ss.ops@unops.org](mailto:unmas.ss.ops@unops.org)



*An UNMAS deminer used a detector with ground penetrating radar to search for anti-tank mines in Malakal, Upper Nile. Photo Credit: G4S/UNMAS*

Established in 1997, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) works to eliminate the threat posed by mines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices by coordinating United Nations mine action, leading operational responses at the country level, and in support of peace operations, as well as through the development of standards, policies and norms.

## DEAR TEACHER

"I miss my teacher, I miss being able to ask questions when I don't understand, I miss learning new things." This is what we heard over and over when we spoke to children out of school due to the COVID-19 closure, and how the idea to our new campaign 'Dear Teacher' was born. Most schools in South Sudan have been closed since March 2020, putting at risk children's physical and mental wellbeing as well as their academic learning. While students due for their final exams, approximately 110,000 children, could resume in October 2020, close to two million children are still out of school due to COVID-19. This comes on top of the 2.8 million children out of school before the pandemic. Schools in South Sudan must reopen now.





## NEWS FROM UN AGENCIES FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

### UNICEF IS UPGRADING THE PIBOR COMPOUND

UNICEF's compound in Pibor has sheltered humanitarian colleagues the past two flood seasons, as most NGO and INGO offices and guesthouses have been flooded.

At times, the place has been quite cramped with humanitarian colleagues resorting to tents as accommodation and services such as water access have been under severe pressure due to the number of users.

In preparation for the upcoming flood season and in support of the scale-up plan for areas with high food insecurity, UNICEF is making several improvements in the compound that will benefit all humanitarian actors operating out of Pibor.

### UNESCO LAUNCHES TWO DIGITAL LIBRARY INITIATIVES IN SOUTH SUDAN

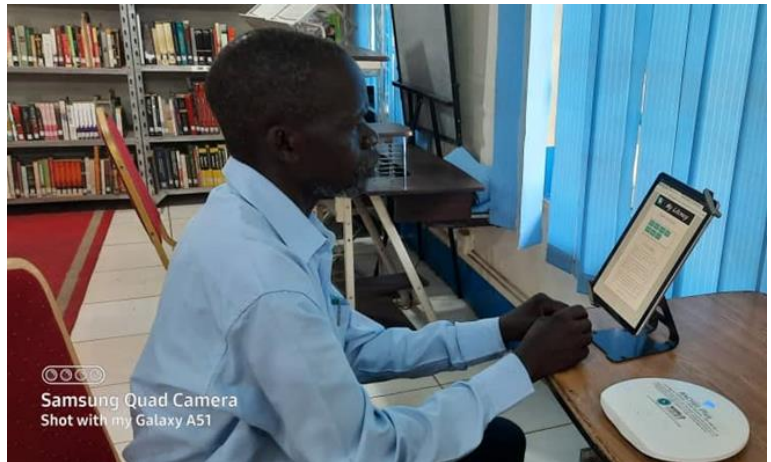
The ongoing implementation of the UNESCO Digital Library Initiative focusing on "Building a culture of reading and research through digital media" saw a launch in two learning institutions in Juba, South Sudan, on 31 March 2021.

The University of Juba and the Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative (WPDI) Community Learning Centre were the beneficiaries.

The launch event was held virtually and presided over by the Dean of Libraries, University of Juba, Dr. Michael Baffoka, representing the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. John Akec, and the Undersecretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Hon. Adil Athanazious.

This initiative aims to gradually build the culture of reading and self-learning using research on available materials in digital Libraries.

The Digital Libraries powered by a device called Remote Area Community Hotspot for Education and Learning (RACHEL), contains a combination of freely available software and content modules that make it easy to bring online educational materials into places with limited or no internet access and power.



*Dean of Libraries, University of Juba exploring the Digital Library*  
Photo Credit: UNESCO

### NEW SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL EXPRESSES STRONG HOPE FOR LASTING PEACE IN SOUTH SUDAN

The United Nations is strongly committed to working with the people and leaders of South Sudan to secure stability and eventual prosperity for the world's newest nation, said the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Nicholas Haysom, on his arrival in the country.

"South Sudan is entering a new phase and people's expectations are high. There is real hope for progress in the implementation of the peace agreement and, ultimately, achieving a more durable peace," said Mr Haysom.

"As partners in that process, the UN will continue to work with South Sudanese as well as regional and international partners to provide stability and, ultimately, secure prosperity for all citizens."

Nicholas Haysom arrived in Juba on 25 April to take up his role as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

As an international lawyer with expertise in reconciliation and peace processes, democratic governance, and constitutional and electoral reform, Mr Haysom has a long history of supporting South Sudan, including assisting the negotiation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. "It is a privilege to continue my relationship with South Sudan by serving as SRSO and leading UNMISS in its peacekeeping and peacebuilding work," he said.

## NEWS FROM UN AGENCIES, FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

“Our priority is to support all efforts to push the peace process forward with a focus on key areas such as constitution-making, security, justice and economic reforms, and assisting preparations for elections. I am very much looking forward to serving and supporting the people of this country so that they can enjoy the much brighter future that they deserve.”



The New SRSG on arrival at Juba International Airport.

Photo Credit: UNMISS

### POPULATION ESTIMATION SURVEY LAUNCHED IN SOUTH SUDAN

For the first time since its independence, South Sudan is undertaking a hybrid census, the Population Estimation Survey, to update the country's demographic profile. The survey also prepares the groundwork for a full census to be conducted in the next two years.

At the launch of the survey, South Sudan Vice President for Economic Cluster James Wani Igga acknowledged that insufficient data is a major challenge to evidence-based planning and programming in the country, especially in the context of the protracted crisis where the needs are great but resources are limited.

“The data to be generated from the PES will be very important for all of us so that we can make our resources more efficient and ensure that our interventions are what is needed by the people,” he said.

Full story: <https://bit.ly/3gD2yD4>



Vice President James Wani Igga at the launch of the 2021 Population Estimation Survey. Photo Credit: UNFPA

### NEARLY 100,000 POOR AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN JUBA START RECEIVING CASH PAYMENTS

Nearly 100,000 vulnerable people (15,500 households) in Juba started receiving much needed support through the World Bank funded South Sudan Safety Net Project (SSSNP), in the form of cash transfers. The UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in partnership with the Government of South Sudan are managing the cash transfers.

Launched in July 2020, the SSSNP aims to support some 430,000 low-income and vulnerable individuals across 10 counties in South Sudan (Juba, Pibor, Bor, Kapoeta East, Torit, Tonj South, Gogrial West) with cash assistance to meet their urgent needs and invest in their household welfare. The target beneficiaries include vulnerable members of society including women headed households, children, people living with disabilities, and the elderly.

Specifically, the project provides beneficiary households USD 40.5 per month for a period of nine months. Since the launch of cash transfers in March 2021 about USD 2 million has been transferred to the targeted poorest and most vulnerable households.

Preparations are also underway to extend the program and start cash payments in Bor, Torit and Gogrial West that are experiencing acute food insecurity due to multiple shocks including floods and the locust invasion.

70-year-old Kelida Wilson, a recipient of the cash assistance noted that “It has not been easy for my family these past months. Things have become worse with COVID-19. With the financial support I have received from this project, I am going to stock the house with food and other basic needs.” As head of her family, she has been struggling to meet the needs of the family, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The project is implemented in a COVID-19 sensitive manner to respond to increasing vulnerabilities and mitigate contagion risks. It will prioritize Juba because of the disproportionate impact of Covid 19 on poor and urban households”. Said Dr. John Ogoto Kanisio, the Under Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security during the launch of the cash distribution in Juba.

Mrs. Esther Ikere Eluzai, the Undersecretary in the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, added that “the project will facilitate a shift in gender relations and

## NEARLY 100,000 POOR AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN JUBA START RECEIVING CASH PAYMENTS UNDER SOUTH SUDAN SAFETY NET...

attitudes by making women in the primary beneficiaries of cash assistance, and this will contribute to improved nutrition, health and education to all members of the households.”.

“The SSSNP is critical to address economic vulnerabilities in South Sudan and the cash distribution is expected to make a real contribution towards strengthening the resilience and supporting the livelihoods of the neediest and most deserving households in South Sudan.

The Project is one of our flagship interventions through which we are uniquely positioned to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus as well as the foundational building blocks of the social safety net system in South Sudan.” said Husam Abudagga, World Bank Country Manager for South Sudan.

Since May 2020, the UNOPS has been working with the South Sudan’s Ministries of Agriculture and Food Security; Gender, Child and Social Welfare; and Finance and Planning to implement the project over the next two-and-a-half years.

“UNOPS will continue the cash payments with the same momentum and scale up to the other locations in our bid to reach our target of 65,000 beneficiary households. As we scale up to the other

locations, in consultation with the Government and World Health Organization (WHO), we will explore the commencement of COVID compliant public works activities to enhance community assets for flood controls and other natural resource management above the cash that will be provided.” said Peter Mutoredzanwa, UNOPS Country Director and Representative in South Sudan



*A resident of Juba receiving her cash support.*

**Photo Credit: UNOPS**

## AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK AND WHO ENHANCE COVID-19 CASE MANAGEMENT



*The Juba COVID-19 ICU unit. Photo Credit: WHO*

The African Development Bank and WHO have delivered essential medical supplies, including 12 ICU beds, over 5 000 infection prevention and control items, 20 oxygen concentrators, 71 blood pressure monitoring machines and over 250 boxes of various essential medicines to the

Ministry of Health to treat COVID-19 patients across 18 prioritized treatment facilities as well as support home isolation intervention.

The supplies were procured with funding from the African Development Bank.

“The African Development Bank’s generous contribution will strengthen the response to tackle the negative impacts of COVID-19, including the protection and safety of health workers” said Dr Richard Lako, Incident Manager at the Ministry of Health.

African Development Bank Country Manager for South Sudan, Benedict Kanu, said “Until a safe, effective and affordable coronavirus vaccine is available, the risk of infection will continue, particularly given South Sudan’s high level of vulnerability to the pandemic.”

Dr Fabian Ndenzako, WHO representative for South Sudan said the supplies were procured based on prioritized needs to bolster the country’s COVID-19 response.