UNMISS and Government Break Ground for South Sudan’s First Juvenile Reformatory Centre in Juba

Today, the United Nations Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General, Mr. Moustapha Soumaré, and the Minister of Interior, Hon. Michael Chienjiek Geay, broke the ground to establish South Sudan’s first Juvenile Reformatory Centre (JRC) in Juba. This project is part of ongoing technical cooperation between the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the National Prisons Service of South Sudan (NPSSS). The project will result in the conversion, renovation, and refurbishment of one of Juba Central Prison’s buildings into a fully functioning JRC. The project will be implemented by the South Sudanese NGO, Charity Aid for Development and Emergency (CADE).

For the first time in South Sudan, this JRC will allow 90 children in conflict with the law to be safely and securely housed—separate from adult offenders—while awaiting trial or serving their sentences. Providing a separate living environment for children not only complies with international best practices, but also provides a more conducive environment for children to receive the support necessary to successfully reintegrate into society.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Soumaré stated that UNMISS’ Rule of Law and Child Protection Units “stand ready to partner with the government and the NPSSS to address issues related to juvenile detention and rehabilitation”. He also promised UNMISS’ support to continue advocating for much-needed vocational skills and education training programmes that will assist the children to fully reintegrate into society. Mr. Soumaré hoped that establishing this facility in Juba will serve as a model that can be replicated to serve other children in conflict with the law in other parts of the country.

The Hon. Minister of Interior thanked UNMISS for its continuing support and underscored the importance of continuing to partner to achieve the shared vision of a safe, secure, and humane juvenile justice system. The JRC is an important milestone on this path.

As well as establishing this JRC, UNMISS’ collaboration with NPSSS includes the recent launch of a pilot project to review prolonged and arbitrary detention cases in Juba Central Prison. This project can be replicated in other prisons throughout the country to reduce cases of prolonged and arbitrary detention. In addition, UNMISS Rule of Law Unit is providing technical assistance to justice sector partners to develop legal reforms to reduce the number of persons in detention, including through exploring alternatives to detention.

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