



United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit

Communications & Public Information Office

Press Briefing

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Juba, UNMISS Compound –Tompson

Speakers: Mr. Jean-Luc Stalon, UNDP Acting Country Director
Mr. Biplove Choudhary, UNDP Senior Advisor

Facilitator – Shantal Persaud – UNMISS Acting Spokesperson

Mr. Jean-Luc Stalon- What I would like to share with you today is about reflection of peace. International Day of Peace is celebrated each year around the world on 21 September and is dedicated to world peace and the absence of war and violence. The international theme for this year's event is "The Sustainable Development Goals: Building Blocks for Peace." The national theme is "Together We Can Heal the Nation."

Peace is not just a slogan. International Day of Peace is an opportunity to reflect, strategize and mobilize for peace and to think strategically. International Day of Peace is an opportunity to reflect on global peace, as well. If you are seeing the headlines every day of refugees flowing across borders, how extremism and violence has erupted in different places, how economic systems whilst reducing global poverty have simultaneously increased inequalities and marginalized big sections of the people, you will feel overwhelmed about the turbulent times.

While it is true that the global peace is facing new emergent challenges, there are indicators to show that when compared with the 20th century, the world is a safer and more prosperous place in many ways. Over the last 25 years extreme poverty is projected to drop from 45% to 10% globally and we are likely to be the first generation ever to witness an opportunity to end to extreme poverty. What are the approaches UNDP is taking to promote peace and stability in South Sudan? UNDP works in South Sudan as part of the United Nations Country Team, which currently operates under the Interim Cooperation Framework, endorsed and in cooperation with the government. The United Nations in South Sudan works in five key areas:

- Building community resilience
- Providing basic services
- Strengthening peace and governance
- Reinvigorating local economies
- Strengthening opportunities for women and youth

At UNDP we believe there is a nexus for peace, an intersection of achieving peace if you will, between the following three interrelated areas.

- Human development,
- Human security
- Nation-building.

Human development is a concept created and advocated by UNDP as a way to strengthen how we measure the welfare of a population. Human development goes beyond using income as an indicator of how people are faring in a society and expand it to include other important measures in health and education. For example, South Sudan has comparatively high income per capita but human development indicators are some of the lowest anywhere in the world. Up to 4.8 million people in South Sudan are projected to face food shortages. More than 15 percent of the population of the country is exposed to extreme malnutrition with some areas recording more than 33 percent of malnutrition. Adult literacy is at only 27%, and less than 16% of women are literate. Approximately 70% of children in South Sudan have never set foot in the classroom and more than one million children mostly from rural areas are not in school. Maternal mortality has stagnated at 2054 per 100,000 and mortality for infants and children stands at 75 and 104 respectively.

Earlier this year, the Government of South Sudan and UNDP launched the first-ever National Human Development report with the theme of “People, Peace, and Prosperity.” The report found that the single-greatest drain on prosperity and human development in South Sudan is the absence of peace. There cannot be prosperity without peace, but neither peace without people. Peace is the connector between people and prosperity. There must be a balanced approach in South Sudan between addressing the overwhelming humanitarian needs and support on recovery and stabilization needs of the people. These are activities that need to happen simultaneously to avoid creating chronic dependence on aid and spiraling humanitarian needs.

Speaker: Mr. Biplove Choudhary UNDP Senior Advisor

What are some results of UNDP programs in peacebuilding and strengthening human development in South Sudan? As UNDP, our overall strategy is to leverage our support to secure quick and transformative wins for the peace process. We are doing this by investing in building resilient communities and empowering people. So far our support has targeted the following areas in an integrated manner. UNDP is engaged on supporting the country on building the capacity of key national institutions, ensuring rule of rule and access to justice, peacebuilding, ensuring community security and preventing conflicts, and revitalizing the economy:

1. We have contributed to resolving and managing community conflict, such as facilitating community dialogue in Jonglei and Upper Nile, and building economic infrastructure such as markets as a means to facilitate community co-existence;
2. UNDP has promoted building markets to encourage production and exchange, provided alternative means of employment by training more than 1000 people including youth and women and providing them with opportunities for earning a living through a mix of sustainable skills training, cash for work and supporting microenterprises; this helps the youth to stay productively engaged and acts as a preventive to getting involved conflict as a means of survival.
3. To help ensure citizens have access to basic public goods, UNDP is working with the Ministry of Health and supporting the strengthening of systems and capacities to enable the delivery of public services, for example, by building county support bases and providing top quality training to public servants. UNDP also supports public service health systems -- we have built 5 Ante Natal Care clinics, 5 maternity wards and 2 state laboratories which have served 239,301 mothers and contributed to the improvement of coverage for pregnant mothers to 53% in the country, up from 34% from before.

4. UNDP is brokering partnerships and ensuring that South Sudan taps into global opportunities and capacities. During the past five years we have mobilized and delivered on average \$100 million annually;

5. UNDP is currently supporting the South Sudan Peace and Reconciliation Commission to promote peace education and a culture of peace. In addition, our support for the Bureau for Small Arms is aimed at reducing the number of small arms in circulation in local communities.

Question and Answer

Question - **Dau Adau John** (*This day Newspaper*) yah my question is going to the acting director of UNDP, you mentioned that South Sudanese people are getting huge percentage per capita as per the report of World Bank, and you said in the end that people are not realizing this huge income per capita, why do you think people are not realizing that?

Jean Luc: Thank you very much, these are all very relevant questions, I don't know to which extent I will be able to give you a satisfactory response to it, but I will try my best to have a conversation about this issue. What I was saying about income is that it is insufficient to way of assessing the well-being of an individual or even a community by looking only at the issue of the income, but I was saying that the human development concept is not only about looking at the income, but also looking at income, health and education. And I was also saying that the way we calculate the income per capita is misleading because I do not think that the income per capita of the South Sudanese is this much money, because this is a mathematic calculation is a formula ,it is an econometric calculation, my colleague here is an econometrician. He will talk about that. But the real issue is that income alone is not enough to look at the well-being of the people so that is why it is very important that we also assess access to education access to health and so forth.

Biplove Choudhary - Ok thank you very much very quickly I think that question is very relevant, we have always struggled on to how to measure development. Initially what we were doing was measuring development by calculating the total of those domestic products of the national income, and dividing it by the population that Country had. Then of course we realized that this was not enough, why? Let us say Bill Gates walks into this room, so we have how many people let us say fifty people and Bill Gate walks into it, if you calculate your per capita income in this room before Bill Gate walks in maybe you have five hundred dollars per person, but if Bill Gate walks in our per capita in this room will turn into millions of dollars. It's not money in your pocket, it is money registered in average is just to illustrate. That's how UNDP brought in education, health and income to illustrate per capita. The issue of economic development how much this country has is a function of how much money you are able to put in development, so those are slightly different issues.

Question: **Junior Ali** (*Eye Radio*) My question goes to Jean Luc, as you know recently the UNHCR released a report saying the number of refugees around the region has surpassed one million and this is on the record level and recently the UN General Assembly in New York adopted the declaration of refugees and migrants, what does this mean in the context of South Sudan?

Jean-Luc - I think it's obvious that South Sudan has a big issue of refugees. There are people who are coming to South Sudan as refugees and there are South Sudanese who are going to neighboring Countries as refugees and the main agency that is dealing with the issue of refugees is UNHCR, so I won't go into the details about the refugees, but what I can tell you is that there is global agreement between UNHCR and UNDP in addressing the issue of refugees, and that is called durable solution, and the durable solution of addressing the issue of refugees is that if people don't want to return home help them wherever they are . Provide them with Socio economic reintegration package.

Question : **Phillip Wani** (*Radio Miraya*) - my question goes to Jean, you did mention that UNDP is supporting the government in order to strengthen the rule of law and issues like the legal aid and all these. Most of us know that Juba Central prison accommodates more thousands of inmates, most of whom are actually still on remand, so there is a question of lack of legal aid for the inmates, and all along you have been supporting the government in this area, how come that this challenge is still prevailing.

Jean-Luc: Rule of law is very important issue and I have to tell you that in one of the prisons here we built a vocational center inside the prison to train the inmates, so when they come out they have skills so they can get jobs. So the legal aid we have put in place a scheme, so those people who do not have money, they cannot afford a lawyer, they can their case can go to the court. But of course I am not telling you that what we have put in place is enough to address all the case load, the case load is big. I think it will take time, but we are really engaging in this area, with the ministry of Justice to provide legal aid to those who need it .What I know is legal aid and also access to justice is a big issue. You know I don't know the number but I am sure it is very high; the number of judge per population here is very limited compared to the number of the population that is why we talk about transitional justice. When the number of cases is growing, and growing the formal system cannot address it and we are will not able to address it. In the future you need to have some other means that will kick in to reduce the cases and that is what we call transitional justice .Let me give you an example in Rwanda after the genocide, the formal justice system could not address all the caseloads ,there were millions of people who needed to access justice, they had lost relatives, they had lost their assets, so the Rwandese government put in place something called "Gacaca" which was a local, traditional kind of a system adapted to our time, and they were able to really reduce the case load and that was a kind of transitional system of justice, but I don't know about South Sudan yet. But I'm sure this conversation will continue with the government to find solutions because you need to reduce the case load, and you need to help those who do not have possibility, you need to help them access to Justice. I think that is the legal aid aspect.

Question- **Atiol Emalik** (*freelance journalist*)- You have talked about international cases similar to South Sudan, especially genocide committed, why you mentioned about some genocide committed is it going to be like alarm, if people are not going well and peace is not in South Sudan it will lead to genocide? What are the challenges that UNDP has around the globe, can you compare the challenges here in South Sudan in terms of cultural diversity and culture of revenge and what are you doing exactly?

Jean-Luc - I cited the example of genocide, you see journalists sometimes they are very good at picking one word and they make their own story. I was citing those genocides as the worst that humanity had faced in the twentieth century but I did not make any connection in whatsoever. On the contrary we very much believe that we have to get away from the past, and that that will never happen again. And in terms of "Gacaca", I was talking about transitional justice mechanism when you have a huge people who are in need of justice you need to put in place a transitional system of justice because the formal system will not be able to address it, so I was talking about the discussion we were having with the government, with the ministry of Justice to have the transitional system of Justice.

Jean-Luc - I am very happy actually with the conversation and the progress we are having with the ministry of Justice on this issue, they are committed to establish a commission of reconciliation, truth and healing which is a provision of the transitional government so we are now working on the technical committee, I don't want to take too much time on the technicality, but it is going to happen and we will support it, we need to have reconciliation to reconcile the people truth, to tell the truth because without truth you will still have a misunderstanding, and healing because there are

people who want to heal. And the government has agreed to move forward and establish this commission, which is a very good move and we are very supportive of that.

Question : **Sheila Poni**, (*EBC Radio and TV*) you talked about working together with the government on development projects, when are you planning to start these projects and which parts of the Country are you going to focus on because some parts of the country have insecurity, how are you willing to get to those places ?

And you mentioned that the food program cannot be taken to people on empty stomach and yet we have 4.8 million people suffering about food issues and UNDP is focusing on peace programs, what are you going to do about this issue of food crisis?

Jean-Luc- We as the UN of course need to access all areas where we do our work, and there are incidences where we cannot access because of insecurity and that really make the beneficiaries to suffer because they are not accessing the aid. As far as UNDP is concerned we are working in different states, we are working in northern Bahr el Gazal, for example in Awiel, where we have some projects going on, from some time, for example rule of law projects, we have projects with the ministry of finance on public finance management, but we are increasing, on recovery stabilization I am happy to tell you that you will be invited soon to come to Awiel an inaugurate construction of vocational training center for youth and construction of the market especially for women to sell their vegetables. So we have advanced discussion with the government on this issue. We are working in Bor, we have a number of projects in Bor, Terekeka, in Yambio; so we are trying to be working in every corners of the country. We are not everywhere, yes, you know the food issue, is mainly addressed by humanitarian agencies, that is why I said that a plane of WFP is putting food for those people who are desperate, our job as UNDP is to make sure that once people have enough energy they can actually get seeds, they can get tools and some possibilities to go back to their land and they can cultivate so they can restart their lives. Our approach is about recovery and stabilization to compliment the humanitarian assistance, thank you very much.

Question: **Junior Ali** (*Eye Radio*) -I think you missed an aspect from my question, actually I was referring to the leaders the World leaders in the UN General Assembly, currently going on, they adopted a declaration of refugees and migrants ,what does that mean to South Sudan?

Jean-Luc- Yes, I actually misunderstood you now it is clear, we do not know the details yet, I mean the idea is you help countries to stabilize their populations so they do not go out seeking for asylum, there are countries in Africa that are very much affected by this issue, such as Eritrea for example and also some countries in West Africa , but whole idea is that an aid package to help countries stabilize their population instead of having their population running mainly to look for better life and better income and so forth.

For further information or media enquiries

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