

InFOCUS



A magazine of the UN in South Africa

Vol. 2, Issue 1. May-August 2019



**Women's Month:
Successes and
challenges**

**Technology to fight
fall armyworm**

**Durban xenophobic
attack victims
assisted**



6 UN working with government to make gender equality a reality by 2030

also in this issue...

- 4 Refugees suffer from xenophobic attacks
- 6 UN working with government to make gender equality a reality by 2030
- 8 Car charging stations launched in Pretoria
- 9 UNICEF urges employers to allow breastfeeding at work
- 10 Ban Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems
- 12 Fighting the fall armyworm with IT
- 13 Improving collaborative governance in Northern Cape
- 14 Building a green economy by promoting eco-entrepreneurship
- 15 Third PAGE Ministerial Conference calls for greener and inclusive growth
- 16 Unlocking opportunities for women-owned businesses
- 17 National Action Plan to combat racism launched
- 18 Boosting dialogue on the Fourth Industrial Revolution
- 19 UN pledges support to floods victims
- 20 SADC report on population and development launched
- 21 Young people advocate for sexual and reproductive health and rights
- 22 United Nations pledges support to a Human Rights Plan on HIV/AIDS
- 24 South Africa Learns to Love Forests
- 25 Go-Goals SDG board game: Fun meets education
- 26 UNIDO launches SADC Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Status Report
- 27 Agreement to step up cooperation on forced displacement signed
- 28 A healthier learning experience for children
- 29 Workshop on the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
- 30 Staff Profiles
- 31 UN encourages mental health care of staff and their families

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EDITORIAL NOTE

In this edition of *InFocus*, a magazine of the United Nations system in South Africa, we feature some of the major events and activities that dominated the UN's calendar over the past few months. We reprint an op-ed penned by Nardos Bekele-Thomas, the UN Resident Coordinator in South Africa and Anne Githuku-Shongwe, the UN Women South Africa Multi-country Office Representative, to commemorate the beginning of the women's month (August) in this country. Among some of the activities was the visit by a UN team led by the Resident Coordinator to flood victims in KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape provinces. The UN donated food and non-food items and offered to assist the affected communities to engage in sustainable self-help projects. We also feature a piece by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, on its efforts in assisting more than 50 refugees who were left homeless and without any support following recent xenophobic attacks in Durban. To highlight the importance of breastfeeding, we run a story on a media roundtable discussion organized by UNICEF, the Department of Health and the University of Stellenbosch to raise awareness among employers on the need to support mothers to breastfeed. These and several other stories from UN agencies give a synoptic view of the organization's work in South Africa in collaboration with partners from the government, civil society and the private sector. Please feel free to send us your feedback. 🌍

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Refugees suffer from xenophobic attacks



Matabishi Kasese (left) and Robert Mafikiri (right) were affected by the xenophobic attacks in Umlazi township in Durban, South Africa.
© UNHCR/Pumla Rulashe

Left homeless and without any support, 53 refugees who faced recent xenophobic attacks in a Durban township are struggling to rebuild their lives writes UNHCR's Pumla Rulashe.

When 26-year-old Esperance Zawadi opened the door to loud, insistent knocking in the early morning on the last day of March, she had no idea it was the start of a sequence of events that would change her life and that of the refugee community in Umlazi Township's Philani section in Durban. A group of over 20 men and women ordered her husband to the door. "I immediately felt faint with fear," she recalls. "The attitude and anger they

demonstrated meant big trouble!" A series of questions ran frantically through the Congolese refugee's mind: what do they want from my husband? What has he done? What could have happened to bring all these people to my door so early in the morning?

The men jostled for positions to take a good look at Zawadi's husband as he came to the door. Zawadi explains that they were looking for a short, dark-skinned, dreadlocked foreign national who had allegedly murdered a member of their community the previous night.

"Their leader announced that it wasn't my husband but as foreigners, we

would know who they were looking for," she says, adding that she and her husband were then forced out of the house.

Their Congolese neighbor, Matabishi Kasese, 29, was also confronted with the same accusations and then bundled into the boot of a car with his brother before being driven off to an unknown location. Zawadi managed to escape and ran towards a nearby taxi rank.

"I didn't want to leave my husband, but he forced me to leave for the safety of the city," she says adding that he promised to find her if he survived. Zawadi's husband, Kasese and his

brother say they were subjected to beatings punctuated with orders to reveal the whereabouts of the man the attackers were after.

A breakaway group of the irate mob would continue their search and seizure of refugees and asylum seekers in Philani. They rushed towards Robert 'Gift' Mafikiri's barbershop. The Congolese refugee took one look at the approaching mob and ran for his life. Short, slim, dark-skinned and dreadlocked, he fit the profile of the wanted man they were looking for. Eventually cornered and captured, he was beaten unconscious and dumped in a remote location on the outskirts of Umlazi.

News of the attack spread fast forcing 53 Congolese and Burundian refugees, including eight school-going children, to flee to the Refugee Social Services (RSS), which works with UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency in Durban. Both organizations carried out the verification of the displaced refugees, drawing in the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) to assist with the re-issuance of permits lost as they fled.

"Refugees and asylum seekers have often been targeted in South Africa amid an economic downturn as communities blame their struggles on foreigners," says Madalena Hogg,

UNHCR's Senior Operations Manager in Durban. "Their protection rests primarily with the South African Government."

She adds that part of their protection includes the issuance of Section 22 and 24 asylum seeker and refugee permits respectively, both of which grant the holders of these documents the legal right to work and study, as well as the protection of their fundamental human rights which are enshrined in the South African constitution.

UNHCR and several other humanitarian organizations are using community-based meetings with key government departments, including the Department of Homes Affairs, the Department of Arts and Culture, Community Safety, the South African Police Services and the KwaZulu-Natal Council of Churches to re-engage on the importance of a sustained public education campaign on the plight and rights of refugees.

"Strong commitment and a concerted effort to address the problems giving rise to xenophobic violence is required from all stakeholders in general, particularly the Government," adds UNHCR's Ms. Hogg.

To help the survivors of the attacks get back on their feet, UNHCR is sourcing financial support for the implementation of a reintegration package which

includes a contribution towards payment of rent for a limited period. It also includes the provision of income generating equipment such as scissors, hair and shaving clippers which were lost during flight. Families are receiving between US \$240 (R3,400) and US \$520 (R7,300) depending on the number of children.

UNHCR has spent close to US\$3,000 (R42,000) on the refugees' immediate needs with the reintegration package "most likely to run into the thousands," says Ms. Hogg.

Since the attacks, refugees have been accommodated at Haven of Hope, a shelter in Durban's central business district. They are adamant that they will not return to Umlazi township and many are looking for affordable accommodation elsewhere.

"We are too traumatized," says Mafikiri, who adds that people he has met from Philani after the attacks are shocked to see him alive.

"Others jeer at us from taxis and buses, telling us that if we return, they'll be waiting for us," he laments. "I can't in all honesty be expected to return there after I stared death in the face." 🌍

“
If we don't come together to support our displaced brothers and sisters, who will?
”

2Baba

LUQU TRIBE **UNHCR**

UN working with government to make gender equality a reality by 2030

By NARDOS BEKELE-THOMAS AND ANNE GITHUKU-SHONGWE



Nardos Bekele-Thomas



Anne Githuku-Shongwe

“WE SHALL not rest until we have won for our children their fundamental rights of freedom, justice and security.”

These are the last words of the petition delivered by the thousands of women who marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria in 1956.

During Women’s Month, as South Africa marks 25 years of democratic freedom, it becomes evident that it takes a committed generation to make a difference for the ones to come.

It also takes committed partners – government, civil society, the private sector and development partners – to make bold decisions that will transform the lives of women and girls.

As the UN, we are working closely with the government to make gender equality a reality by 2030 – the year by which countries are expected to have achieved Sustainable Development Goals.

With compelling evidence that gender inequality extracts enormous economic and human development costs, our first big solution is to ensure all government planning, spending, investment and accountability processes are geared towards gender equality and women’s empowerment.

The government’s approval in March this year of the Framework on Gender Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring Evaluation and Audit, means Parliament and provincial legislatures must include performance,

and expenditure, on women’s empowerment and gender equality within their oversight functions.

It also means increased public investment in gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Women bear the brunt of poverty, unemployment and inequality. The most recent quarterly labour force survey from Statistics SA confirms this picture: 31.3% of women are out of work compared to 27.1% of men.

The higher unemployment rate for women is further compounded by the fact that many women do unpaid work as caregivers in the home and work in informal sectors, both of which leave women vulnerable to unfair wages and discriminatory practices.

It is critical that the institutions and structures that perpetuate gender inequality and injustice within the economy are transformed. For example, public procurement expenditure alone amounts to approximately R1.2 trillion yet less than 10% of that goes to women-owned businesses.

Imagine what changes we could see in job-creation, GDP growth, and investment if women accessed procurement opportunities equally.

We must also direct our attention towards building the capacity of women entrepreneurs – especially micro-entrepreneurs – so they can participate in critical value chains such as agriculture, energy, infrastructure and manufacturing. In South Africa, for example, the agricultural sector contributes nearly 30% to GDP but less than 1% comes from women farmers.

Yet research from the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation shows that if women farmers had the same access to resources as men, the number of hungry people in the world could be reduced by up to 150 million.

Equally important is that we must continue to emphasise the need to prevent and end violence against women and girls. The UN is encouraged that following the National Gender-based Violence Summit in November last year resulting from #TheTotalShutdown a year ago,

implementation of the summit's outcomes has begun.

Addressing negative norms and stereotypes must be at the core of prevention strategies, in addition to rapid response to new and ongoing cases.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda aspires to peaceful, just and inclusive societies to underpin sustained development. In South Africa forms of insecurity threaten women and girls daily, including sexual and domestic violence, human trafficking; food insecurity; forced internal migration; harmful cultural practices (including child marriage and forced marriage); and targeted violence and discrimination against (non-heterosexual) LGBTIQ communities.

The UN has supported the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security to address these challenges and ensure that women participate and lead in peace-building.

All our efforts must put young people at the fore – young people are the reason for the push for equality now. They constitute a tremendous and essential asset worth investing in to secure a future where inequality does not exist. At the same time, girls and young women face incredible and disproportionate challenges, including access to quality education, health care or decent work. By harnessing our collective efforts and

combining them with the ingenuity of young people, we can co-create opportunities to empower young people.

Co-ordinated investments in adolescent health and well-being, in education and in appropriate skills development are among the best investments to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and to provide high economic and social returns.

In June, the UN launched Generation Equality, a campaign to mark next year's 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 5th anniversary of the Sustainable Development Goals. The campaign calls for urgent and well-resourced action from governments, the private sector and civil society to close the gender gap.

We have seen what South Africa has been able to achieve in 25 years.

As we head for 2030, let us meet the campaign's demands: equal pay, equal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work, an end to sexual harassment and violence against women and girls, health-care services that respond to women and girls' needs, and equal participation in political life and in decision-making in all areas of life.

The UN stands ready to support South Africa in accelerating its efforts to realise equality in this generation.

We cannot rest until we have won for our children an equal future. 🌍

This piece was first published in The Independent and The Saturday Star on 2 August 2019.

Bekele-Thomas is the UN resident co-ordinator in South Africa and Githuku-Shongwe is the UN Women South Africa Multi-country Office representative.

5 GENDER EQUALITY

The UN stands ready to support South Africa in accelerating its efforts to realise equality in this generation.

Car charging stations launched in Pretoria

Two new electric vehicle charging bays were recently installed at the municipal headquarters of the City of Tshwane in Pretoria. The charging bays, sponsored by the United Nations Development Organization (UNIDO), were launched by the Executive Mayor, Councillor Stevens Mokgalapa, at an event which coincided with the city's celebrations of Earth Hour under the theme, Change the Way We Live.

As part of its membership of the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, the City of Tshwane signed the Clean Bus Declaration, which commits it to having 40% of its bus fleet converted to clean technologies by 2020. To achieve this, the city is in the process of installing charging stations throughout the city.

In his address at the launch of the parking bays, Cllr. Mokgalapa explained that the intention was to have charging points throughout the city and particularly at locations such as shopping centres where parallel activities can take place while commuters charge their vehicles. The city already has two solar charging stations, one at the Centurion Municipal Complex in Lyttelton and the other at the Police Station in Bosman Street. These charging stations are open to the public as part of the city's commitment to facilitating and implementing electric vehicle infrastructure.

UNIDO's Conrad Kassier congratulated the City of Tshwane on its proactive role in introducing electric vehicles to demonstrate the positive



Officials from UNIDO and the City of Tshwane at the launch of the two UNIDO-sponsored electric vehicle charging bays at Tshwane municipal headquarters.

impact of this mode of transport on the environment.

He explained that UNIDO's sponsorship of the charging stations was in line with the organization's partnership with local municipalities and the Department of Trade and Industry to support sustainable and clean transport policies and demonstrate technologies for the transition to a lower carbon and circular economy.

"We are here today to celebrate a partnership with the City of Tshwane through our Low-Carbon Transport Project," said Mr. Kassier. The Low-Carbon Transport project is funded mainly by the Global Environment Facility and enables UNIDO and its project counterpart, the SA National Energy Development Institute, to

address sustainable transport in South Africa and other developing countries such as China and Malaysia.

South Africa's Green Transport Strategy aims to reduce emissions in road transport, and the introduction of electric vehicles is an important contributor to achieve the country's emission reduction targets by 2050.

The widespread and coordinated installation of public electric vehicle charging infrastructure is crucial to meeting the needs of vehicle owners who travel relatively long distances. Mr. Kassier said that where electronic-vehicle installations are linked to the national grid, renewable energy technologies such as rooftop solar were a wise investment and a reliable way to charge electric vehicles. 🌱

UNICEF urges employers to allow **breastfeeding at work**



and to encourage further online dialogues. “This campaign is important because it gives advice to mothers about the first 1,000 days, which is a crucial time in the development of the child,” explained Dr. Bamford in her address.

Ann Behr, also from the health department, spoke about the Workplace Toolkit which is a guideline for organizations on breastfeeding. The toolkit is expected to help South Africa reach the World Health Assembly target of at least 50% of infants under six months of age being exclusively breastfed by year 2025. Currently the figure is at 32%. “In a breastfeeding policy review, out of 100 respondents from 32 organizations, only eleven had a workplace breastfeeding policy; while just five had a written policy providing breastfeeding breaks for six months,” noted Ms. Behr.

Lynette Daniels, a PhD student on breastfeeding at the University of Stellenbosch, presented the latest



Breast feeding campaign poster

Many employers in South Africa know little about the breastfeeding provisions as stated in the country’s law on the basic conditions of employment. The law—the Code of Good Practice on the Protection of Employees During Pregnancy and After the Birth of a Child—includes guidelines that promote breastfeeding in the workplace and makes provision for two 30-minute breastfeeding breaks.

Despite the existence of this law, few employers and workers are aware of the code, and most workplaces usually lack facilities that allow for breastfeeding or the expressing and storing of milk. Against the background, UNICEF and the National Department of Health in South Africa engaged in a media roundtable to raise awareness among employers

on the need to support mothers to breastfeed.

Dr. Lesley Bamford from the health department gave a brief background of the work by the government through their Side by Side Campaign which aims to ensure that children receive care and protection they require to reach their full potential. Supporting breastfeeding is one of the core mandates of this campaign and it provides weekly information through national radio programmes, including drama and talk-shows to millions of listeners.

This is supported by community dialogues, booklets for new parents and caregivers with a national website being promoted through all the materials. Social media is also being utilized for information dissemination

findings on support for breastfeeding in the workplace. Key to the findings was that support practices were limited and inadequate. This is mainly due to a variety of factors, such as the lack of private space and time for expressing breastmilk, as well as negative and unsupportive attitudes from co-workers and supervisors. Ms. Daniels explained that “employers do not consider breastfeeding a priority.

As a result, more focus is placed on work and targets. There is also a lack of funding to provide breastfeeding space and resources. Support for breastfeeding in the workplace is limited and there is widespread ignorance about the rights of employees.”

A roundtable discussion followed the presentations which focused

on how the workplace could be made conducive to breastfeeding, and the steps employers and colleagues could take to encourage breastfeeding. Some of these include establishing breastfeeding support groups and employers providing time and space for new mothers to nurse or express milk.



Editorial roundtable panelists pose with baby-shaped boards. ©UNICEF/Mojapelo

Dr. Alison Feeley, the UNICEF South Africa Nutrition Specialist, reminded participants that breastfeeding in the workplace must be treated as a norm, noting that many mothers know the benefits of breastfeeding but choose not to breastfeed as they need to return to work. “Returning to work should not stop a mother from initiating and sustaining breastfeeding. We need to establish how we can support the mothers who struggle to breastfeed. Workplaces are important in doing this,” she said. 🌍

Ban Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems pose a real menace to young South Africans

Tobacco kills more than 42,000 South Africans annually, either directly through tobacco-related diseases, or indirectly through exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke. Several approaches have been adopted to curb the tobacco epidemic, including regulatory, legislative and through taxes.

In several countries, alternative products, which are claimed to reduce tobacco related risks have been introduced. One such product is

the electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS), of which e-cigarettes are the most common—a 2016 South African survey reported they were used by 3% of men and 2% of women. The electronic nicotine delivery system typically heats a liquid containing nicotine and other chemicals to produce a nicotine-infused aerosol, which is inhaled by users. This delivery system contains a wide range of flavours and are attractively designed to lure younger users. This has fuelled an epidemic

among younger age groups in some countries with unrestricted access. Unless something changes, like curbing their availability to young people, this is likely to be the path South Africa will tread in the coming years.

Nicotine delivery systems are currently unregulated in South Africa and freely available, without any regulatory limitations. This must be stopped if we are to prevent youth uptake, using measures such as

those proposed in the South African government's Control of Tobacco Products and Electronic Nicotine Delivery System Bill.

The nicotine delivery system may be less toxic than conventional cigarettes, but they do pose health risks both to users and non-users, including potential effects on the developing brain and addiction from exposure to nicotine.

Recent surveys in both the USA and Europe have shown rising use of ENDS among young people, which is a serious cause for concern. Evidence shows that young people who experiment with ENDS are more likely to go on to smoke cigarettes and become nicotine addicts. Given that most tobacco use is established in adolescence and the association (not causal) between ENDS use in youths and tobacco use, everything possible should be done to deter the use of such products at the earliest stage.

Since ENDS were introduced to the global market in 2003, they have gained so much ground that global sales are expected to reach US\$26.8 billion by 2023. The tobacco industry is now actively seeking to expand sales of new products like ENDS in low- and middle-income countries. Concerned at the effects on young people, some countries that initially opened their markets to electronic nicotine delivery systems are now introducing regulatory and tax measures to prevent surges among youth in nicotine use.

Some studies link ENDS use to smoking cessation, but others contradict this and suggest they attract new users, especially the young. Currently, there is not enough evidence to support the use of ENDS as smoking cessation aids, and most people use them in addition to other



"Tobacco threatens us all" poster

tobacco products (dual use). To date no electronic nicotine delivery system has been approved for sale as a cessation aid.

Currently, around 30 countries ban ENDS globally and they are regulated in about 80 others. In South Africa and elsewhere, they remain largely unregulated.

Given the unclear evidence on harm, the increased use of ENDS by young people in some jurisdictions and the need to protect non-smokers (about 80% of the global population), a precautionary approach is justified. WHO does not recommend ENDS as a cessation aid, and instead advises smokers to use proven and approved approaches. Non-smokers, minors and pregnant women should never use ENDS.

In line with global recommendation, South Africa should consider prohibiting or regulating ENDS, aiming to protect non-tobacco consumers and bystanders, while challenging unproven health claims by the tobacco industry.

Regulation through appropriate legislative and fiscal policies is a priority, given the risks these systems may pose to future generations. WHO therefore warmly endorses efforts to press on with the government's Control of Tobacco Products and Electronic Nicotine Delivery System Bill without further delay. This legislation applies lessons learned elsewhere in the world and will help South Africa to avoid a youth epidemic by ensuring zero exposure to nicotine. 🌍

Fighting the fall armyworm with IT



Francesco Pierri (left) flanked by Winston Makabanyane, Alice Baxter and Jan Hendrick Venter from Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

With the fall armyworm wreaking havoc in South Africa and the rest of Southern Africa, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) recently handed over eleven Tablets and a box of fall armyworm kill strips to the Early Warning System Division of South Africa's Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development.

The kill strips, which were presented to the head of the Early Warning System Division by the FAO Country Representative, Francesco Pierri, are used to kill the male moths of the fall armyworm and have proven effective throughout Africa in reducing the number of the male population. FAO rolled out a mobile phone app, the Fall Armyworm Monitoring and Early Warning System (FAMEWS), to help farmers and extension workers collect and record information when scouting fields and checking pheromone traps for the fall armyworm.

The mobile application is now available for download on Google Play Store and has incorporated Nuru, a programme that uses machine learning to identify fall armyworm damage on maize leaves. The Tablets are loaded with the FAMEWS app to enhance reporting as part of surveillance efforts.

"FAO continues to help member countries to better equip themselves against this threat, monitor it, take necessary early action and draw on lessons learned from other regions," said Mr. Pierri, speaking at the hand-over ceremony. FAO, which works closely with governments in responding to pests menace, further assists in strengthening the capacity of the community

of international experts, developing regional and national plans of action and identifying the current knowledge gaps and priorities.

The Director of Plant Health at the Department of Agriculture, Alice Baxter, thanked FAO for its timely intervention which, she said, further strengthens their partnership in efforts to end hunger. The gesture would go a long way in improving understanding, and ensuring the timely reporting, of the fall armyworm detections across South Africa.

The menace caused by the fall armyworm has rapidly spread across sub-Saharan Africa, infesting tens of millions of hectares of maize, sorghum and millet. The armyworm flies nearly 1,000 miles in just 30 hours and can easily migrate to neighboring countries. The female moth can lay up to 1,000 eggs in her lifetime and in its larvae stage, can cause significant damage to crops, if not managed properly. It has a taste for maize but also feeds on more than 80 species of plants including rice, sorghum, millet, sugarcane, vegetables and cotton. In sub-Saharan Africa, over 200 million people depend on maize for food security, as it is a staple cereal grown by farmers.

The fall armyworm poses a serious threat to Africa's food security and although there are solutions, remedial action differs from region to region. So far, the infestation, which started in 2016, has been contained in some areas but none of the measures taken so far is long-term or sustainable. However, innovation and technology are crucial in finding solutions to mitigate the risk of decreasing food security in Africa. The value of small innovations, such as mobile apps, means that farmers can start tackling the issue before it's too late.

The time for eradication, however, has long passed and scientists, NGOs, and governments are now focused on control. For some, this means chemical pesticides, but these are expensive and many smallholders do not know how to safely apply the chemicals, making them a threat to human and environmental health, including the survival of other insects and their predators. In order to better control the fall armyworm, maize farmers in Africa, most of whom are smallholders and grow the crop for subsistence, need to learn how to identify the fall armyworm and its damage, a task that can challenge even trained extension workers. 🌍

Improving collaborative governance in Northern Cape

Each day South Africa is faced with graphic demonstrations of how poor service delivery affects communities. The need for constant improvement is always present. Early this year, municipal councillors gathered to attend a dialogue on collaborative governance and inclusive public participation organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The UNDP heard first hand as municipal councillors expressed concerns about their relationships with the various communities they serve in the Northern Cape Province. The dialogue was one of the national- and provincial-driven initiatives of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) aimed at supporting local structures to promote and implement inclusive public participation. Presentations outlining the different levels of public participation (inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower) set the

tone for the dialogue and served as a reminder of government's commitment to its citizens.

"Policy is a statement of intention through which we, as government, commit ourselves and tell the communities that they can hold us accountable," Collen Rammule, the acting specialist for policy and research at SALGA told participants during his presentation.

The challenges of communicating on time, delayed responses to communities' needs as well as inconsistent planning and reporting were among some of the issues raised by the municipal councillors. Members of the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature made presentations on petitions management and shared with participants the challenges they faced with delayed responses to petitions.

In an effort to identify solutions, enhance communication and



respond to challenges raised by the councillors, UNDP presented the Personal Premier, a project which uses technology to improve communication between citizens and government. The Personal Premier provides a platform for citizen-generated data which will enable municipalities to improve their communication with the communities they serve and use the data to improve planning and reporting. UNDP hopes this project will reduce the number of violent service delivery protests as the rationale behind the project is that service delivery protests are a symptom of poor communication.

The dialogue challenged the municipal representatives to explore how they can better listen to the views of young people as they improve their practice of inclusive public participation. The role of traditional leadership as an important aspect in enhancing inclusive governance and public participation was also highlighted and noted as an area that will require more discussions. UNDP is of the view that Northern Cape Province is fertile ground for testing the concept and to this end, will work closely with SALGA.



Participants at the governance workshop.

Building a green economy by promoting eco-entrepreneurship

By THOMAS MERTENS

For any country to prosper, the development of strong infrastructure is essential. To this end, the European Union launched the SWITCH Africa Green (SAG) programme, a pilot initiative to promote green economy in six African countries of Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa and Uganda. The EU-funded programme is implemented in partnership with the United Nations Environment (UNEP).

As part of the SAG programme, a joint project managed by Fetola, a local company, SkyNRG, an Amsterdam-based entity that supports sustainable aviation fuel, and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) is developing a waste-based sustainable aviation fuel industry in South Africa. The first phase of the project has shown that there are viable and sustainable biomass waste streams available to support the production of bio-jet fuel in the Sasol process.

The next phase will see the setting up of a biomass-based SAG supply chain pilot. Along the value chain,

opportunities exist for micro, small and medium-size enterprises (MSMEs) in the supply and improved economic value of waste feedstock. Towards the end of 2019, Fetola will launch a new biomass economy incubator that will aim to enable 25 MSMEs to seize the opportunities presented by this new industry.

One of its targets are the MSMEs within the building industry, where the Clay Brick Association of South Africa and EcoMetrix Africa and Partners for Innovation are implementing a SAG project to promote inclusive sustainable practices in the clay brick sector. The aim is to empower MSMEs to transform their production practices and implement sustainable building practices, including monitoring and reporting. The project will also include the informal small-scale brick-making sector that so far has not been addressed.

The second phase of the SAG programme will target three key sectors: transportation, building and agriculture so that MSMEs in these

sectors are able to identify green business opportunities.

By supporting private sector-led inclusive green growth and developing green businesses and eco-entrepreneurship, the SAG programme aims to encourage countries to transition towards an inclusive green economy. As a result, the programme also supports the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on reducing poverty, protecting the planet and promoting prosperity.

One of the expected benefits of the SAG programme is the development of a new cadre of eco-entrepreneurs in South Africa. According to head of UN Environment in South Africa and the Regional Programme Coordinator, Cecilia Njenga, “Eco-entrepreneurs are key actors for innovation, promoting resource efficiency and better productivity and generating new products and services to satisfy human needs, generate green jobs and increased incomes, while protecting the environment.” 🌍



Informal clay brick production.



Informal clay brick production.

Third PAGE Ministerial Conference calls for greener and inclusive growth

The Third Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) kicked off in Cape Town, South Africa, early this year amid heightened interest in efforts to pursue greener and more inclusive growth across the world's economies, under the theme: Advancing Inclusive and Sustainable Economies.

The ministerial conference, which was attended by more than 500 delegates representing governments, the private sector and the civil society from over 50 countries, provided a platform for conversations about how to develop inclusive green economies based on sustainable production and consumption. Delegates explored ideas on how to mainstream natural capital in policies and strategies, how to prepare for the future of work and how to innovate and promote green finance and green industries. The answers to these ideas will form the bedrock for a better and more sustainable future for all.

PAGE was launched in 2013 as a response to the call at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+20 to support countries to embark on greener and more inclusive growth trajectories. By placing sustainability at the heart of economic policies and practices, PAGE works with countries to foster economic growth, create incomes and jobs, reduce poverty and inequality, and strengthen the environmentally sustainable foundations of economies to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. PAGE brings together five UN agencies—the UN Environment, the International Labour Organization, the UN Development Programme, the UN Industrial Development Organization and UN Institute for Training and Research—whose combined mandates, expertise and networks

offer support to countries on the inclusive green economy to ensure proper coordination and to avoid duplication.

South Africa became a PAGE partner country in March 2015. Since then, PAGE continues to support and strengthen the cooperation, coordination as well as to provide the capacity that is required to implement the country's transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and pro-employment development path. In co-hosting the 3rd Ministerial Conference with PAGE, South Africa, through the Department of Environmental Affairs, became the first partner country to host the conference.

The conference outcome document “Cape Town Action Pathways Towards 2030” highlights the following:

- The need to reinvigorate our economies, shifting from linear economic models of production, consumption and investment towards circular economies;
- The importance of anchoring green strategies and policies in long-term development frameworks;
- The focus on economic, social and political inclusion to ensure that no one is left behind in accessing equitably the benefits and opportunities arising from economic, social and environmental progress;
- The element of the Future of Work in a changing climate, for which we must re-organize our economies towards a greater resource efficiency, sustainability and resilience; and
- The importance of strengthening partnerships and multilateralism to sustain a collective vision to transform economies and societies.

The Cape Town conference featured a series of global events around the Green Economy. It opened with the Green Economy Coalition Global Meeting where delegates debated and made policy recommendations to achieve equitable, inclusive, and people-focused economies. This was followed by a lively media debate under the theme “What makes your country wealthy?” organized by the Green Economy Coalition and the Green Growth Knowledge Platform in partnership with CNBC Africa.

The 3rd PAGE Ministerial Conference paid tribute to South Africa's former Minister of Environmental Affairs, Edna Molewa, who had passed away a few months before the conference. She was acknowledged for her instrumental leadership and contribution in moving environmental affairs from the margins to the mainstream of economic and social development, nationally and internationally. The conference provided an inspiring environment which saw delegates reflecting, discussing and working to solve the urgent challenges of collective concern, addressing climate change through a just transition to environmental sustainability by lifting millions out of poverty, securing decent work for all, especially young people and reducing inequality.

Achieving the goals of the conference is not going to be an easy task. But as noted Guy Ryder, the Director-General of the International Labor Organization in his keynote address quoting Nelson Mandela: “It always seems impossible until it's done”. The conference showed that it can be done as nations take meaningful action that impacts the lives of people in an inclusive manner. 🌍

Unlocking opportunities for women-owned businesses

While the South African public procurement accounts for about R1.2 trillion (US\$86 billion) of its gross domestic product, women-owned enterprises still receive only an estimated 9% of the total spend annually. While it is still slow, South Africa still performs better than the average 1% in developing countries. According to a study conducted by Development Economics in 2018—in the next five years—women-owned businesses in South Africa have the potential to unlock more than R175 billion (US\$12.5 billion) a year and create nearly 100,000 jobs.

In commemorating this year's International Women's Day, the UN Women South Africa Multi-Country Office (SAMCO) teamed up with Intsika Women Business Association in the Kwa-Zulu Natal Province to emphasize the importance of unlocking business opportunities for women. The initiative is part of SAMCO's flagship programme, Stimulating Equal Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs. Under the programme, SAMCO works with governments, UN entities, the private sector, civil society and women entrepreneurs to influence procurement policies so that they are designed to deliver on several Sustainable Development Goals. These targets include promoting development-oriented policies that encourage the growth of entrepreneurs; increasing the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship; and enhancing the use of technology to promote women's empowerment. The commemoration was in the form

of a dialogue for women-owned businesses from the district level to engage with key government departments, including the National Treasury, the Department of Social Development, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs' Local Economic Development, women business owners from KwaZulu-Natal districts and Nedbank.

"We are who we are today because of women entrepreneurs who traded in Tupperware, Avon, stokvels (savings clubs) and tuckshops," Zola Shabangu, the Chief Executive Officer of Intsika Women in Business said in her opening remarks, thanking women entrepreneurs who had paved the way for others to succeed in business. "A big applause to the millions of unsung heroes who brought us here". The discussions identified mining, the ocean economy, energy, ICT, agriculture, transport and logistics as sectors that women should explore to expand their market share. Key issues raised included the need for frequent platforms for networking and learning such as the International Women's Day Dialogue; access to finance for women-owned businesses; access to business opportunities in high revenue sectors such as renewable energy, agriculture and waste management; and ensuring women's ideas are

considered when formulating policies at both national and provincial levels. There was also an emphasis on the need for entrepreneurial activities to have an impact at community level. Some of the issues raised included localising businesses at community level; ensuring that commercial banks understand the challenges of women-owned businesses and making sure that banks' corporate social investment programmes are aligned to community challenges.

At the end of the dialogue several resolutions were adopted including a decision to have a formal protocol between Intsika Women in Business and the Provincial Treasury that would ensure women can access procurement information. Intsika Women in Business will collaborate with partners who participated in the dialogue to ensure that the resolutions are converted into concrete actions. Following the dialogue, a pledge was signed, as part of the IWD commemoration, between Intsika, UN Women, the Department of Social Development, the Department of Economic Development and Strauss Daly. All partners committed to consciously and proactively increase participation of women in the South African economy. 🌍



International Women's Day 2019 commemoration with Intsika Women Business Association in KwaZulu-Natal.

National Action Plan to **combat racism** launched

Early this year, after extensive consultations, South Africa published its National Action Plan to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. With the passing of national elections in May 2019, the new government is now expected to proceed with the planning, budgeting and costing of measures to implement

the plan in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders.

In his forward to the plan, President Cyril Ramaphosa said, “The time has come for us to shed all shackles of prejudice and discrimination so that we can fulfil the promise of building a united, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous country in which all

who live in it are not just entitled to equality, but experience equality in their daily lives.”

The plan sets out measures over an initial five-year implementation period (2019-2024), and both the parliament and the executive will have oversight roles to ensure its effective implementation. The governance structure put in place to guide the action plan is drawn widely from government departments, Chapter 9 institutions, civil society, academia/ research institutions, as well as other sectors such as media and business. Moreover, the South African Human Rights Commission has a role in monitoring and evaluating progress.

At the launch, messages of support were delivered by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner’s Regional Representative for Southern Africa, Abigail Noko, as well as the Deputy Regional Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Leonard Zulu. Both UN agencies had been active stakeholders throughout the consultation process.

The then Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, John Jeffery, delivered the keynote address and spoke of how South Africa still suffers from the division of two nations: rich, white South Africa and poor, black South Africa. The deputy minister stressed that the launch of the plan was only a beginning, and that the efforts of the entire society were needed in implementing it, including civil society, trade unions and schools among others. 🌍



STAND UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



Boosting dialogue on the Fourth Industrial Revolution



Prof. Roula Inglesi-Lotz (UP), Weza Moss (AIDC) and Lauren Hermanus (Adapt)

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) brought industry and academia experts together for a panel discussion during the 11th Africa Energy Indaba in Sandton. Focusing on the opportunities and challenges stemming from the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the discussion was another example of UNIDO's convening function in support of knowledge transfer, networking and industrial cooperation.

The 4IR will impact the way everyone works, lives and interacts, affecting industrialized as well as industrializing economies. It has the potential to enhance productivity and generate economic growth, ultimately resulting in better social welfare. However, the ability of countries to benefit from its potential will be determined by the capacity to innovate and adapt to new technologies, and there is a risk of a widening of the development gap.

In his welcoming address, the UNIDO Representative and Head

of the South Africa Regional Office, Khaled El Mekwad, stressed that innovation, knowledge sharing and multi-stakeholder partnerships are key to developing countries to unlock the potential of 4IR technologies to achieve the SDGs. He also noted that the concept of the 4IR is currently gaining momentum in South Africa, pointing to President Cyril Ramaphosa's recent State of the Nation address when he said the country had "a choice between being overtaken by technological change or harnessing it to serve our development aspirations."

"In South Africa, UNIDO has been engaging with the Department of Trade and Industry and other stakeholders on structuring interventions on the 4IR based on its expertise, experience and lessons learned from other countries," said Mr. El Mekwad.

One of the panelists at the gathering, Roula Inglesi-Lotz, an Associate Professor at the University of Pretoria's Department of Economics, said that life-long learning is crucial to adapting to the "technology tsunami" that the world is facing. She emphasized the importance

of tailoring university curricula to prepare the youth for the 4IR, saying that in addition to technical abilities, students will need soft skills, including the ability to work in heterogeneous teams.

She also stressed the importance of government, academia and industry working together to prepare the youth for the new reality. A current example is an initiative between Telkom, the local telecom company, and the universities of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg and Fort Hare, focusing on how South Africa should respond to the 4IR.

Echoing Inglesi-Lotz's thoughts, Weza Moss, the Chairman of the Board of the Automotive Industry Development Centre, called for industry to "invest in technical and vocational education and training colleges. "This will enable them to provide the youth and the unemployed with upskilling opportunities in line with the sector's current and future requirements."

"To embrace this digital revolution, policy and institutional development needs an aesthetic sensibility, or a creative, adaptive approach. The policy needs to be part knowledge-making, part art and part ethics and work not only with what has been, but with what is yet to come. This must be embedded in democracy, as ongoing engagement to reach a dynamic political consensus," said Lauren Hermanus, the Director of Adapt. "If we are successful, this digital revolution, like the industrial revolutions before it, promises jobs, increased living standards and better health for more people." 🌍



UN pledges support to floods victims

By ZEENAT ABDOOL



UN Resident Coordinator Nardos Bekele-Thomas handing over items for victims of the devastating floods in Durban.

“I visited the office briefly for the first time since my operation today thinking it would comfort me, but it didn’t,” Fatima Asmal, the owner of a local non-governmental organization, wrote in a Facebook post about 24 year-old Saleh, one of the 70 people killed in severe floods early this year Kwazulu-Natal and Eastern Cape provinces of South Africa.

“I thought of the numerous times he had come by - to fetch Amr’s (my son) gym bag when he was taking him from tuition to gym to chat. He sat there cracking one joke after the another, eating naan katai (Indian biscuits) and drinking tea. Sometimes he messaged wanting to pop by and I told him we were busy - I regret every one of those times now,” wrote Fatima. Saleh was planning to get married and often volunteered his services to the NGO based in Durban. He was known as a “friend, confidant and big brother” and met his death after the floods uprooted a pole that fell upon his home.

Saleh’s death is one of many tragic stories that a United Nations team heard about in the aftermath of the floods. The tragedy came as southern Africa’s coastline countries

grapple with the after-effects of Cyclone Idai that hit parts of Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe and South Africa. There are fears that as climate change rears its ugly head and global warming becomes a stark reality, natural disasters are bound to increase.

The UN in South Africa team visited some of the affected areas in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape provinces pledging support and solidarity with the leadership and the people affected by the floods. The organization donated sleeping mats, blankets, dignity packs and torches to the municipalities assisting those affected who are either in community shelters or have returned to what is left of their homes in the affected areas. Flash lights, though small and often deemed insignificant, were some of the necessities as families narrated how the severe rains and subsequent flooding resulted in power outages and family members were unable to locate each other. Some explained that was how children and their parents were washed away as water filled homes.



Destruction caused by floods in Durban.

The families most affected by the flooding live in already stressed socio-economic circumstances

compounded by their poorly built homes on the most vulnerable piece of land—the river banks. Though illegal, hundreds of homes are located near the banks of rivers and underlying areas which increases their vulnerability to the consequences of natural disasters. Many refused to leave despite what had happened.

“And, it’s likely to only get worse in the coming years as global warming and the reality of climate change kicks in with full force,” says Eric Apelgran from the eThekweni Municipality. He adds that “previously, the island of Madagascar would act as a buffer to the KwaZulu-Natal coastline. However, cyclones and other weather patterns are coming through the coastline and the Madagascar channel thus affecting coastlines across Tanzania, Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe and South Africa.” This doesn’t bode well for residents that reside on the river banks and vulnerable areas around rivers and streams. The Resident Coordinator of the UN in South Africa, Nardos Bekele-Thomas, says that “policies need to be developed and implemented to prohibit any housing near these volatile areas.”

The UN technical team also visited Port St. Johns in the Eastern Cape Province to assess the damage in that area that was also hard hit by the floods. A rapid needs assessment was conducted to assist the people and their leadership with to prevent further damage, despair and destruction from future natural disasters. 🌍

SADC report on population and development launched



Dr. Julitta Onabanjo and Beatrice Mutali exchanging pleasantries with Mozambique Minister of Youth and Sport Nyeleti Mondlane.

A report by the Southern African Development Community (SADC)—commissioned in 2018 by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA)—on the implementation of the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development was recently launched at the UN headquarters in New York.

In her keynote address at the launch, the then South African Minister of Social Development, Susan Shabangu, reaffirmed her country's commitment to working with fellow SADC Member States in implementing the International Conference on Population and

Development Programme of Action, as well as the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development (AADPD).

“Our regional collaboration is critically important as it ensures that we move together to build an inclusive society that is alive to the realities of all matters, including the need to address issues

relating to Sexual and Reproductive Health, gender equality and the promotion of comprehensive sexuality education,” said the minister.

The launch of the report, which was co-hosted the permanent missions of South Africa and Namibia to the United Nations, was attended by, among others, representatives from UNFPA and the SADC countries of Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa.

In his opening remarks, the Namibian Deputy Minister of Economic Planning, Petrus Van der Walt, emphasized that the launch would provide an opportunity for SADC countries to reflect on the progress attained in the region to date in implementing the AADPD.

She explained that by working together as a region, “it will ensure implementation is well-coordinated and that sustainable systems are put in place to allow for the upscaling of efforts towards empowering young people and

women to fully participate in economic, social and other sectors.”

UNFPA Regional Director Dr. Julitta Onabanjo presented key concerns that continue to pose challenges in implementation and suggested the report was an opportunity to identify ways to strengthen linkages with Sustainable Development Goals.

“Efforts to this end will ensure that those left behind, particularly disadvantaged groups, such as older persons, adolescents and youth, people living with HIV, people with disabilities, and internally displaced people and migrants are reached with services they need and are accorded the dignity they deserve,” she said. Participants also agreed to pay more attention to high levels of inequality and gender-based violence in the region. The devastation caused by the recent Cyclone Idai-induced floods in Mozambique and Zimbabwe was also discussed. It was noted that despite early warning, people in the affected areas were not well prepared from the devastation, a lesson from which the region ought to learn. A representative from Mozambique narrated the impact of the floods and expressed her appreciation for the rapid response and support her country received from the South African Government and the SADC region.

Country representatives spoke of their support for the SADC report and commended it for demonstrating the region's agreement on population and development issues. 🌐

Young people advocate for sexual and reproductive health and rights



UNFPA Programme Officer Linda Naidoo with some of the KwaZulu-Natal Youth Advisory Panel members.

Young people face many obstacles in accessing their sexual and reproductive health and rights, and they must work with government and partners to rectify this.

This was the call made by participants on a conversation on the sexual and reproductive health challenges faced by young people, which was hosted by a dynamic group of UNFPA Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) members. The event was organized to celebrate 25 years of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD25), a ground-breaking event held in Cairo, Egypt in 1994. “We know you have many challenges [such as] high teenage pregnancy and HIV rates in the area and many young mothers feeling helpless after giving birth due to inadequate sexual and reproductive health service provisions, but you can’t give up. You need to help us help you get things right,” said Uthukela District’s local ward Councillor Ernest Ndumo speaking at the event. He urged young people to stay in school and focus on the future.

The conversation was hosted at Bhekuzulu Self-Sufficient Project Hall in uThukela District, a rural area in KwaZulu-Natal Province that has distinct needs when it comes to reproductive health services. Provincial government officers and the local leadership of the ward participated along with about 150 young people.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Representative, Beatrice Mutali, traced the advances made in reproductive health since the ICPD in Cairo 25 years ago. The ICPD was a turning point for women and the world in that governments recognized that women and girls’ needs for reproductive health care, education and advancement are the key to sustainable development. Referring to UNFPA’s recently launched flagship report, State of World Population 2019, Ms. Mutali said that “significant progress has been made by countries in extending access to services and information that enable the realization of the full range of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

However, progress has been uneven and inequalities persist,” she said.

Reverend Kimish Mbalo, the director of the provincial population unit, encouraged young people to use contraceptives, including condoms, when engaging in sexual relations, as this was one of the most effective dual contraception methods that will ensure they were protected against pregnancy and HIV. A lively panel discussion touched on major gaps in access to sexual and reproductive health services by marginalized groups, including people with disabilities, LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer), rural and urban poor and young people in South Africa.

The panel discussion was facilitated by Nonkuuleko Zondo, a Youth Advisory Panel member, and the panel consisted of YAP member Zama Mthembu; Okuhle Youth Organization’s Nqobile Khumalo; the Deputy Chairperson of uThukela District AIDS Council Sakhile Xaba; LoveLife’s Masiphile Hadebe, a grade 9 learner from Bonokuhle High School; and Thulisile Buthelezi from community organization Source of Hope Youth Foundation. In tracking progress since the ICPD in 1994, it was highlighted that the commitments made in Cairo were still relevant and important, particularly as young women and girls were faced with stigmatization when visiting public facilities to access sexual reproductive health and rights services. In particular, girls fear obtaining contraceptives in clinics because they are often mistreated and judged by service providers for

Continued to Page 22

engaging in sexual relations. Youth-friendly clinics need to become a reality in the public sector and there is a need to empower health-care workers with knowledge to ensure that they create an enabling and a safe space for young women and girls.

Teenage mothers are still being left behind, and the stigma attached to teenage pregnancy negatively influences support to young teenage mothers. Most interventions are aimed at preventing pregnancy—there are few that provide support for those who are pregnant. This leaves them vulnerable and likely to fall pregnant again. Parents and the broader community were distancing themselves from issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights services, a parent and member of the community said, noting that there was a need to bridge this generational gap. Child marriage persists in rural areas and is a key driver of gender-based violence and teenage pregnancy. Girls are being deprived of the right to decide for themselves when it comes to their bodies. There is a tendency for parents to hand over their young girls for marriage for economic benefits, without considering that this is a violation of the child's rights, which subsequently limits her access to education and sexual and reproductive health services.

The continuous exclusion of the LGBTIQ community remains a major challenge, as does lack of information and incompetent provision of family planning facilities. Stigma and discrimination among society in general as well as service providers need to be dismantled. LGBTIQ communities are being mistreated, harassed and denied services outright in health-care facilities, which infringes their right to access sexual and reproductive health. Service providers are often uninformed on issues related to LGBTIQ. 🌈

United Nations pledges support to a Human Rights Plan on HIV/AIDS



UN delegates to the UN joint exhibition at the 9th SA AIDS conference, UNAIDS Country Director Dr Mbulawa Mugabe, UNFPASA Representative Beatrice Mutali, UNAIDS Deputy Executive Director Dr Shannon Hader, UN Resident Coordinator Nardos Bekele-Thomas, and UNAIDS Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa Dr Catherine Sozi.

The United Nations in South Africa joined the South African government and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in June in launching a three-year National Human Rights Plan in response to human rights and gender-related barriers to HIV and TB services.

The plan, which will run from 2019 to 2022, focuses on key and vulnerable populations. It has seven key programmes: to reduce stigma and discrimination; to sensitize and train health workers and other service providers including community workers; to sensitize law and policy makers and law enforcers; to increase legal literacy with “Know Your Rights” campaigns; to strengthen access to legal support services; to monitor, review and reform law and policy; and to reduce gender inequality, harmful gender norms and gender-based violence.

In his remarks at the launch, the Minister of Health Dr. Zweli Mkhize said that the fifth goal of the national National Strategic Plan on HIV, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted infections seeks to ground the response to these diseases in human rights principles and approaches.

“Since the advent of these infectious diseases, those infected and affected have suffered immeasurable stigma and discrimination, at home, in communities, at workplaces as well as when trying to access essential civic and health services,” said Dr. Mkhize.

The Human Rights Plan was launched in Gugu Dlamini Park, next to the Durban International Conference Centre. Ms. Dlamini was attacked and killed by a mob in 1998 after openly declaring that she was living with HIV. The park was named

in her honour as a reminder of the negative impact of HIV stigma and discrimination. Dr Mkhize led the assembled dignitaries in laying a wreath at the AIDS ribbon statue in the park in honour of all who have suffered AIDS-related discrimination.

“Every one of us must double our efforts in ensuring that no one is discriminated against due to their status,” said the minister. He called on the government, civil society, the private sector and development partners to work together to make sure that the Human Rights Plan is executed in all parts of society, including private homes, workplaces, schools and communities.

The UN Resident Coordinator in South Africa, Nardos Bekele-Thomas, told the gathering that the UN would accompany South Africa in implementing the plan. She noted that South Africa has ratified several international human rights instruments and has a progressive constitution with a bill of rights. She however cautioned that those alone were insufficient to promote and protect the rights of vulnerable and key populations.

“Human rights must be respected, protected and fulfilled through the

adoption of relevant strategies and implementation plans,” said the UN head. This, she added, could be achieved by “by refraining from limiting the enjoyment of human rights, by preventing others from interfering in the enjoyment of human rights, and by promoting human rights awareness.”

Ms. Bekele-Thomas also commended the Global Fund for supporting South Africa and 26 other countries to develop plans to eliminate human rights and gender barriers to accessing HIV and TB services.

The plan was handed over to the South Africa Deputy President and Chair of the South Africa AIDS Council, David Mabuza, before the closing of the AIDS conference. In welcoming the plan, the Deputy President said: “This Plan is a commitment as government that every public servant shall provide care with compassion and at the highest possible level of quality. This is not only a right thing to do, but a fundamental human right.”

The Deputy President said stigma and discrimination remained a challenge to South Africa reaching its targets to end the AIDS and TB

epidemics. “It is a scientific fact that HIV as well as TB, does not discriminate by age, race, gender, class and socio-economic status,” he said. “We must be compassionate and ensure that available services are provided with respect and dignity to all.”

Other participants at the launch included the Deputy Minister of Health, Dr. Joe Phaahla, the Deputy Minister of Social Development, Henrietta Bogopane-Zulu, the Deputy Minister of Justice, John Jeffery, the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, Sihle Zikalala, as well as several provincial health members of executive councils, senior government officials, the Chief Executive of the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC), members of the diplomatic Corps and the civil society. leaders and social justice and AIDS activists.

The United Nations was also represented by the UNAIDS Deputy Executive Director for Programmes, Dr. Shannon Hader, UNAIDS Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa, Dr. Catherine Sozi, UNAIDS Country Director in South Africa, Dr. Mbulawa Mugabe, and the UN Population Fund Representative, Beatrice Mutali. 🌐



Opening by the Chair of SA AIDS 2019, Prof Refilwe Phaswana-Mafuya



UN in South Africa joint exhibit with SANAC and the SA Government on “Innovating for Rights” including a virtual reality film about HIV-related stigma and discrimination.



South Africa Learns to Love Forests

By TOVE NORDBERG

But why do forests matter?

Forests are essential for life on earth: they are home to 80% of the world's terrestrial biodiversity; combat climate change; and sustain livelihoods by providing shelter, jobs and food. Despite this, approximately 12 million hectares of forest are being destroyed each year. This deforestation, together with agriculture and other land use changes, stand for about 25% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

In March 2019, the **UN General Assembly** declared the **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030** which aims to “massively scale up the restoration of degraded and destroyed ecosystems as a proven measure to fight climate change, and enhance food security, water supply and biodiversity”. UN Environment and FAO will lead the implementation of the Decade with partners in each member country by building on regional efforts, e.g. the AFR100 or African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative, aiming at restoring 100 million hectares of degraded land by 2030.

In South Africa, forest resources cover over 40 million ha of the country's land area according to Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, but the afforested area is only about 1.27 million ha (1% of total land area). Forestry provides livelihoods to 652,000 people of the rural population and employs about 165,900 workers. The department has committed to a target of 10,000 ha of net new afforestation a year.

United Nations agencies in South Africa and their partners recently marked this year's International Day of Forests—under the theme, Forests and Education—by planting trees at the University of Pretoria's new Future Africa Campus in the capital Pretoria. The objective of the theme was to showcase the level of forestry education in Africa and to encourage policymakers to prioritize the advancement of sustainable forestry management.

Present at the tree-planting ceremony were, among others, the then Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Senzeni Zokwana, and the Representative for the Food and Agriculture Organization in South Africa, Francesco Pierri. Other representatives came from the Government of South Africa, the African Union, the World Wide Fund for Nature, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations and the Africa Forest Forum.

An environmental political activist who promoted education and learning to love forests was the late Kenyan Nobel Peace Prize winner, Prof. Wangari Maathai, who once said: “Until you dig a hole, you plant a tree, you water it and make it survive, you haven't done a thing. You are just talking. In his remarks, Dr. Pierri said that one of the recommendations from the World Forestry Congress of 2003 was that education needs to adapt to new forestry practices, including social sciences and communication skills. In addition, linkages between forestry, land use and environment disciplines are needed in order to curve out the content of forestry education. This recommendation, he added, remains

valid and urged participants to take it seriously.

In his keynote speech, Minister Zokwana noted that forests play a crucial role with their rich biodiversity, but that there has been a lack of leadership and vision previously. Global phenomena such as climate change must be taken into consideration, he said, and that all the three pillars of sustainable development should be assessed when making decisions related to forestry. The Minister also emphasized that “agroforestry will be critical if we are to address food security and poverty alleviation in a sustainable way”.

Participants at the commemoration discussed—by comparing—forestry and education between South Africa and the Southern African region. Many panellists pointed out the key elements such as blended learning, the inclusion of the fourth industrial revolution, systems thinking and soft skills in combination with in-depth knowledge, that are necessary to ensure that graduates have the right skills needed to find employment. They commended South Africa for its well-resourced forest management workforce

The conclusion from the proceedings was that forestry investments need to be responsible and aim to leave no one behind. UN Environment and FAO will collaborate with governments, the private sector and the civil society in pursuing initiatives such as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 and the Principle for Responsible Investments in Agriculture and Food Systems. 🌱

Go-Goals SDG board game: Fun meets education



GO-GOALS SDG Board game: Fun meets education, Right: Go Goals Board Game

Early this year the Wildlife and Environmental Society of South Africa (WESSA), in partnership with the City of Johannesburg, ShopRite and Coca-Cola, hosted an Eldorado education and community clean up to celebrate Earth Day and Freedom Day.

Community members and young people gathered in their numbers to clean up an illegal dumping site which was environmentally hazardous for the people of Eldorado. The community replaced the dumping site with a beautiful vegetable garden and installed a gym as part of their community development initiatives. WESSA has defiantly set the example of how to turn trash into treasure.

After the clean up, the young people were led into a tent to take part in the educational activities segment of the day, where they were introduced to the Go-Goals SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) board game. The game was met with enthusiasm from the young people as they interacted and learned about the SDGs and how they could play a part in attaining them.

“The Go-Goals SDG board game helps children understand the Sustainable Development Goals, how the global goals aim to impact young people’s lives and what they can do every day to help achieve the 17 Goals by 2030,” explains Natania Botha, the head of membership at WESSA.

“Half of our youth are unemployed and if they take the goals and localize them in their communities, it will have a great impact on the community because everyone will take action,” she adds. “It is important for the youth to look at these goals and be inspired to make a difference in their community. The goal is for young people to take action in developing their community”. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has previously partnered with WESSA in its activities and as



such recognizes the important role that young people play in achieving the SDGs and sees the youth as change makers, innovators, critical thinkers, communicators and leaders. The game helps young people to understand their role in protecting the planet to build a better world for everyone and leaving no one behind. The game seems to have made a positive impact on young people as they did not want to stop playing.

Gameplay

There are 63 spaces on the board game. Players advance the number of spaces determined by rolling a single dice. Each player places their token on the Start field. Players take turns to roll the dice and move their tokens forward the number of spaces as shown on the dice. If a player lands at the bottom of a ladder, they can immediately climb to the top. If a player lands at the top of a waterslide, they immediately move to the bottom of the slide.

If a player lands on a Sustainable Development Goal field (1-17), they can draw a card corresponding to the goal number. Another player reads the card question. A correct answer from the card drawer will allow the player to roll the dice once again. The first player to arrive on the field “2030” is the winner! If a player throws the required number, they must step forward into field “2030” and then move backwards the surplus number of spaces.

The game can be played by between 2 and 10 players per board with one moderator. Number of players and it lasts between 30 and 60 minutes. 🎲

SADC Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Status launched



Kornelia Shilunga, Deputy Minister of Mines and Energy, Namibia.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) region is seeing a significant increase in the number and quality of its renewable energy and energy efficiency policies, according to a new status report launched recently at a special side event of the 11th Africa Energy Indaba in Windhoek, Namibia.

The report was prepared by the Namibia-based SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (SACREEE), in collaboration with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century and the Austrian Development Agency.

According to the report, decentralized renewable energy generation and distribution has proven to be a clean and cost-effective way of increasing energy access in remote areas. Developing the renewable energy market by utilizing the region's vast

potential to expand access to modern, reliable and affordable energy services has therefore become a key regional priority.

During the event, SACREEE Executive Director Kuda Ndhlukula noted that the report presents the region's renewable energy market development, highlights opportunities, provides perspectives and lists a pipeline of projects and investment needs.

"Understanding the SADC region's emerging renewable energy industry, market development and growth is critical to realizing the region's potential and to scaling up investment opportunities," said Khaled El Mekwad, the UNIDO Representative and Head of South Africa Regional Office, also referring to the long-standing partnership between UNIDO and SADC.

"As a regional centre, SACREEE is in a unique position to accelerate the energy and climate transformation in SADC by creating economies of scale, equal progress and spill-over effects between countries," he added. Mr. El Mekwad thanked Namibia (SADC Chair and SACREEE host country), Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho and Mauritius for signing the Inter-Governmental Memorandum of Agreement and invited other SADC countries to speed up their signatory process.

Since 2015, SADC countries have greatly increased their commitment to renewable energy, viewing it as a normal part of their energy generation planning. This includes important innovations in tariffs, increased use

of independent power producers to meet growing electricity demand, and new legislation to stimulate mini-grids and distributed renewable energy. The overall share of renewables in the region's power capacity increased from 23.5% in 2015 to approximately 38.7% by mid-2018.

Despite considerable achievements, some barriers still remain, including the continued development of traditional, non-renewable energy sources and the lack of local employment opportunities in the sector.

Officially launching the report, Namibia's Deputy Minister of Mines and Energy Kornelia Shilunga, encouraged all stakeholders to use the document as a case study and to take advantage of opportunities in the SADC region to develop a favourable environment for increasing the acceptance of clean energy.

SACREEE was established with technical support from UNIDO and financial assistance from the Austrian Development Agency. 🌍



Kuda Ndhlukula, Executive Director, SACREEE.



Agreement to step up cooperation on forced displacement

By MARKKU AIKOMUS



Officials at the signing of the memorandum of understanding at the Pan-African Parliament in Midrand, South Africa. UNHCR/ Markku Aikomus.

The United Nations Refugee Agency UNHCR, recently signed a memorandum of understanding aimed at strengthening cooperation with the Pan-African Parliament, a continental legislative body established to ensure the full participation of African people in the African Union (AU).

Under the memorandum, which was signed in May, UNHCR and the continental parliament will strengthen and prioritize their collaboration within the framework of the AU whenever incidents of forced displacement occur by including refugees and other people of concern in development plans, general preparedness and in the analysis of the root causes of forced displacement.

The two sides agreed to “collaborate, cooperate and interact through initiatives and activities on fields of cooperation” with a focus on learning and capacity building programmes for members of parliament, organizing

joint field visits, advocating for accession to the UN, the AU and the Organization of African Union (OAU) Conventions of forced displacement and statelessness, and strengthening the link between the executive and parliamentary arms of governance on issues of concern to UNHCR.

“UNHCR is very pleased with the developments that have led to this momentous occasion,” said Leonard Zulu, the Deputy Regional Representative responsible for protection. “Not only will UNHCR and the Pan-African Parliament be cooperating on matters relating to forced displacement, statelessness and refugees, but parliamentarians will also be instrumental in influencing their governments on these issues with the aim to find durable solutions for people of concern.”

Areas of cooperation between the parliament and UNHCR will include identifying focal points and champions among members of parliament on statelessness

and refugees, reaching out to national constituencies on forced displacement, co-organizing high-level events, and providing technical support to parliament committees on statelessness and refugees.

Similarly, UNHCR and the continental parliament also agreed on measures to strengthen protection and find solutions to the forcibly displaced and stateless, including promoting the goals of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness.

The memorandum of understanding was signed at the seat of the Pan-African Parliament in Midrand, South Africa by the UNHCR Representative to the AU and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, Cosmas Chanda, and the parliament President, Roger Nkodo Dang, on the sidelines of special segment of the parliament’s fifth session. The special segment focused on the AU’s 2019 theme of refugees, returnees and internally displaced people. 🌐

A healthier learning experience for children

By SUDESHAN REDDY

Rain clouds gather over the highveld as workers painstakingly mix cement, pile bricks and erect a tin roof on the grounds of Montsosi Primary School in Sebokeng, a township west of Johannesburg, South Africa.

By the end of the working day, these men would have completed the construction of a group handwashing station for the school's children—and in doing so, would have contributed to a healthier school environment.

With funding from sponsors that include Woolworths, MySchool, My Village My Planet, UNICEF, along with the Gauteng Department of Basic Education and MIET Africa, workers are constructing 20 handwashing stations at schools in Sedibeng East and West in Gauteng Province. The handwashing stations are aimed at providing under-resourced communities with a cost-effective facility to enhance the hygiene, health and education levels of learners. There is compelling evidence that regular handwashing in school contributes to healthier children and, in turn lowers absenteeism from school.

The men have been working since



Children at the handwashing station



Building a group handwashing station

8:00am and by 2:00pm, before the rain arrives, a concrete slab is complete and dry, allowing for the remainder of the construction. For the manager of the construction site, Lawrence Motswele, it is critical that the construction be completed before sunset as the new school term begins the next day—and the handwashing station should be ready for use. Mr. Motswele has been involved in the construction of these stations in the neighbouring Mpumalanga Province and speaks proudly of the positive difference that these installations make to the health and wellbeing of young lives.

In patient detail, he explains how one has to first lay the concrete foundation on which the plastic pipe will then be laid. While the concrete dries over approximately five hours,

a tin roof is erected to provide shelter from the harsh sun and rain. Once the concrete has set, the plastic piping is installed with the 16 nozzles that will allow groups of children to wash their hands and brush their teeth at the same time, thereby entrenching handwashing and oral hygiene as a habit.

To highlight the sustainability of this initiative, schools are encouraged

to grow a food garden around the handwashing station to benefit from the run-off water. The vegetables grown will be used to supplement school meals. As a result, the nutrition and overall health of the learners is further enhanced.

For Dr. Saadhna Panday-Soobrayan, the Education Specialist at UNICEF South Africa, the handwashing station is an excellent example of partnership in action. This innovative life-changing installation was devised by MIET Africa and UNICEF, based on a similar model in Zambia and tested in Mpumalanga Province.

The initiative is appreciated by Ms. Eunice Magwa from the Gauteng Department of Basic Education who commends Woolworths and UNICEF for their commitment to a healthy school environment and keeping the children in school.

Sebokeng literally means “gathering place” in the local seSotho language so it is fitting that this group handwashing station will provide a gathering space regularly for 16 school children at a time as they wash their hands and have a healthier start to their school lives. 🌍

Profile: Valentin Tapsoba



Valentin Tapsoba is the new Regional Director for the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) for Southern Africa, covering the countries of Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Republic of Congo, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and the Indian Ocean

island countries. He has worked with the refugee agency for the past 26 years in various leadership capacities at its headquarters in Geneva and several field operations in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

Mr. Tapsoba joined UNHCR in 1993 as administrative/finance officer in Somalia. He then served in the same capacity in Rwanda before being reassigned to Guinea from 1995 to 1997. In 1998, he moved to the UNHCR headquarters in Geneva where he served as senior administrative officer of the Regional Bureau for Africa until 2001.

From September 2002 to October 2005 he was the Assistant Representative in charge of Administration and Finance in

Kabul, Afghanistan. He then moved to Burundi, where he served as Deputy Representative in charge of operations from November 2005 to July 2008 and as Representative in Sierra Leone from 2008 to 2011. In March 2011 he took up a new appointment as the Regional Representative for UNHCR West Africa based in Dakar, Senegal. From Dakar, Mr. Tapsoba was reassigned to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in November 2014 as the Representative until his appointment as Director, Regional Bureau for Africa in February 2015.

As Director, in addition to his day-to-day management of the extensive programme in Africa, he also oversaw and coordinated UNHCR's response to the multiple regional refugee crises across the continent (Burundi, Central African Republic, DRC, Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan). In that capacity, Mr. Tapsoba travelled extensively to the affected regions, coordinating funding, response, donor relations, cooperation with other actors and governments, as well as assessing UNHCR's capacity and general oversight functions.

Valentin Tapsoba is a national of Burkina Faso. He holds a Masters Degree in Economics from Ouagadougou University and a Masters Degree in International Business Transactions from George Mason University in the United States. 🌍

Profile: Ayodele Odusola



Dr. Ayodele Odusola is the new Resident Representative for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in South Africa. He assumed office in his new role in Pretoria on June 2019.

Prior to this appointment, Dr. Odusola was the Chief Economist and Head of the Strategy and Analysis for UNDP Regional Bureau

for Africa team in New York. The new UNDP head is no stranger to South Africa having previously served as Senior Economic Adviser for UNDP South Africa from *** to 2009 during which he played a key role in developing partnerships on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in publishing the National and Provincial MDGs and Human Development Reports.

Dr. Odusola has supported many African countries to prepare National Development Plans and economic growth strategies. He is also the chair of the UNDP Corporate Technical team on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs). Before his

time in South Africa, he was a Senior Economist in UNDP Nigeria, supporting the preparation of fiscal responsibility legislation at national and state levels, coordinating fiscal policy project and expansion of tax database; managing local, regional and national MDGs and human development reports as well as other knowledge products. Prior to joining the United Nations, Dr. Odusola worked with the Presidency of Nigeria (1993-2015). From 1999 to 2005, he served as Head of the Research and Macroeconomic Training Programme under the President's Economic Management Think-Tank. He has worked in several African countries, served as Senior Consultant on fiscal policy management to several organizations such as the World Bank, the West African Institute of Financial and Economic Management and the West African Monetary Institute.

A national of Nigeria, Dr. Odusola has lectured in several universities in Africa and has published over 50 articles in national and international journals, editing and authoring books as well as technical reports. In 2001, he was the African Visiting Scholar to the International Monetary Fund. 🌍

Profile: Theo Sparreboom



Theo Sparreboom is the new Labour Migration Specialist at the International Labour Organization (ILO)'s Decent Work Team for Eastern and Southern Africa based in Pretoria, South Africa. He joined the team in March this year.

Prior to his appointment, Mr. Sparreboom worked for the Migration Branch, the Statistics Department and the Economic and Labour Market Analysis Department at ILO headquarters in Geneva since 2007.

He also held various technical and leading positions in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia for both the ILO and private

international agencies from 1995 to 2007. Mr. Sparreboom is the ILO lead author of a 10-country study on the economic impact of immigration on developing and emerging economies (including Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Rwanda and South Africa), which was published by the ILO and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2018. His works have been also published widely in official reports and peer reviewed journals on labour markets, migration, education and youth employment.

He holds a PhD in Economics from the Erasmus University in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. 🌍

UN encourages mental health care of staff and their families

Around the world mental health is increasingly being recognized as a growing problem that can no longer be ignored despite the cultural taboos around it. For its part, the United Nations Wellness Committee has encouraged staff members to be aware of the problem and take appropriate measures where necessary.

Addressing UN staff in South Africa at a Mental Health Awareness session held in Pretoria recently, the UN Wellness Coordinator, Sandiswa Mathiso, emphasized that it was important for staff to know their mental health status. She reiterated the sentiments of the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, to ensure that their voices were heard

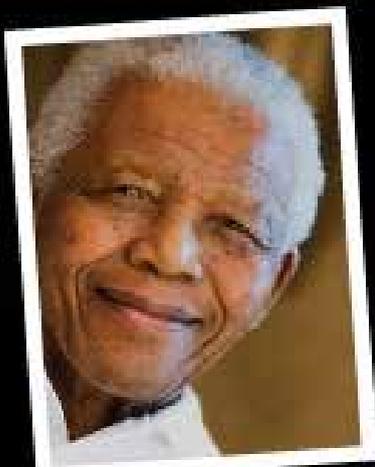
when dealing with issues relating to mental staff to seek the help they may need.

The session on depression and teen health, including depression. The staff were also informed of the launch of the UN Mental Health Strategy that was launched by Mr. Guterres last year in New York where the importance of overcoming stigma was emphasized in an effort to encourage suicide prevention was also meant to assist staff to recognize the signs should their teenagers be troubled by issues relating to depression, bullying or suicide. As part of the event, Busisiwe Twala from the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) stated that "we believe that Mental Health is a state of awareness about your mental state to a level where you are capable of not only knowing that you need help when you need it, but also capable of reaching out for it, if this state is maintained, we believe that a person is mentally healthy". 🌍



UN staff members

My pledge
to **take**
action
& inspire
change
in honour of



NELSON
MANDELA

