

# International Women's Day 2014

## Equality for Women is Progress for All



## UNDP South Sudan and gender equality

The promotion of gender equality is central to the mandate of UNDP and intrinsic to its development approach. Gender equality, rooted in human rights, is not only a development goal on its own but also vital to accelerating sustainable development for all.

In line with UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 and in close consultation with national, state and county government as well as with development partners, UNDP South Sudan works to mainstream gender equality into core governance functions, economic growth, service delivery, community security and access to justice and rule of law.

The crisis that erupted in mid-December 2013 poses an immediate threat to people affected by violence and has further exacerbated gender inequality in the country. By 31 January 2014, thousands of people were killed and over 740,000, mostly women and children, are internally displaced as a direct result of the conflict. Among other threats, women and children have been significantly exposed to Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) with limited access to protection services<sup>1</sup>.

UNDP remains committed to supporting the Government of South Sudan in addressing the most urgent needs of women, children and other vulnerable groups who are affected by the ongoing conflict by focusing on gender sensitive policy formulation and implementation, capacity development, and service delivery.

## Key statistics

- 3.9 million, 48% of the population in South Sudan, are women (SSCCSE, 2011)
- While global gender parity in primary education has officially been achieved, in South Sudan only 37.1% of enrolled primary school students are girls (SSSY, 2011)
- Risks of pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death for girls aged 15 to 19 in developing countries (WHO, May 2012). South Sudan has the highest maternal mortality rate in the world at 2,054 per 100,000 live births (SSHHS, 2006)
- Morality, gender and marriage related crimes constitute the third highest reported crime in South Sudan (SSNPS, CSR, 2012 and 2013)

<sup>1</sup> UNMISS Interim Report on Human Rights Crisis in South Sudan, Report Coverage 15 December 2013 - 31 January 2014

## UNDP South Sudan Gender achievements in 2013

### Fostering gender equality into core governance functions

Through the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Regional Initiative for Capacity Enhancement, UNDP has supported the deployment of 199 qualified civil servants from neighboring IGAD countries, who spent two years in South Sudanese institutions working alongside national counterparts.

These Civil Service Support Officers (CSSOs) provide day-to-day support at state and national levels helping to build and maintain embryonic government functions in health, education, finance and public administration sectors through coaching and mentoring counterpart

“twins”. Around 30% of the CSSOs were women who were deployed entirely on a par with their male colleagues and a considerable number of women were deployed as midwives.

The IGAD Initiative has promoted a strong role for women in the civil service, as noted by independent external assessment of the programme. The presence of female CSSOs in the ministries reduced the gender gap, supported female ministers and civil servants, and provided role models for younger female civil servants<sup>2</sup>.



A South Sudanese civil servant working at the Ministry of Labor interacts with her IGAD colleague, Juba, Central Equatoria state, 2011  
©UNDP/Brian Sokol

### Promoting policy dialogue on women’s economic empowerment and livelihoods

UNDP has supported the Government to draft the South Sudan Microfinance Policy, which lays a framework for allowing vulnerable population groups, especially women, to participate in economic activities and ultimately increase their household incomes. Having a policy framework in place is a positive advance towards ensuring women’s involvement in economic development.

With UNDP’s technical support, in 2013, South Sudan joined the Global Environmental Facility and acceded to international Environmental Conventions and Treaties, including those on Biodiversity, Climate Change and Combating Desertification. South Sudan’s accession

to these Conventions and Treaties, if supported by compliance with internationally-approved environmental management guidelines, will benefit all the people of South Sudan. The poor communal farmers, who are mainly women and usually the most affected by environmental hazards, will benefit directly from environmental conservation. In addition to limiting the potential adverse effects of climatic change, environmental conservation also preserves the ecosystems from which most female farmers derive the majority of their livelihoods.

<sup>2</sup> Danish Institute for International Studies, *Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of a Crisis*, May 2013

## Strengthening gender responsive health service delivery

As the Principal Recipient for Global Fund resources in South Sudan, in 2013 UNDP has constructed/rehabilitated eleven antenatal clinics/maternity wards, three community centres and supported drug supply and diagnostics testing for TB & HIV/AIDS. These health facilities directly benefited at least 566,000 pregnant mothers who previously had no access to modern and improved health care facilities<sup>3</sup>.

In addition, the construction of one teaching institution in Juba for health personnel has also been completed.

This teaching institution provided an opportunity for aspiring female health care providers to be trained and graduate with the necessary skills for their chosen profession.

Further to this, independent reviews of the IGAD initiative point to increased skills and performance

of South Sudanese civil service personnel in targeted institutions, including health care centres. This, together with an increased number of nurses and midwives graduating from teaching institutions, resulted in a more gender responsive health service delivery and will contribute to reducing maternal and child mortality rates in the long term.



Female laboratory technician testing blood sample at Juba Teaching Hospital, Central Equatoria state, 2013 ©UNDP/Marguerite Nowak

## Improving women's security and women's participation in peacebuilding processes

The South Sudan Recovery Fund UN Joint Stabilization Programme constructed 326 km of roads improving access to remote and conflict-prone areas, as well as four county headquarters, seven county courts, eleven police stations and one prison- all contributing to the extension of state authority and service delivery.

Following the construction of police posts, local government officials relocated to the areas adjacent to the police posts, further boosting local confidence. Women representatives

from the communities who were interviewed during internal and external monitoring and review missions reported that the improved security brought about by having the "Government near them" meant that their freedom of movement had increased, and that they were more confident about venturing further afield for farming activities.

Further to this, UNDP's Community Security and Arms Control Project provided support to the South Sudan Bureau for Community Security and

Small Arms Control to facilitate conflict sensitive development projects in 23 counties of Warrap, Unity and Lakes states. Community consultations carried out to identify the roles of various stakeholders in the planning, implementation and mediation of conflicts examined the roles of women and promoted the development of gender-sensitive solutions. For instance, the role of women in encouraging and praising cattle raiding for dowry payments was considered in the design of interventions discouraging cattle raiding.



Women and men reviewing local conflict map, Bentiu, Unity state, 2012 ©UNDP photo

<sup>3</sup>Danish Institute for International Studies, Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of a Crisis, May 2013

## Enhancing women's access to justice while strengthening the capacity of the Government to provide legal services to women

An additional South Sudan National Police Service Special Protection Unit (SPU) was set up in Northern Bahr el Ghazal in 2013 with UNDP's support, bringing the total number of functional SPUs in South Sudan to six. Personnel trained on gender and child issues, including SGBV, were deployed to the SPUs.

The SPUs received 2,403 cases in 2013: 89% (2140) cases were effectively investigated and 30% (657) of investigated cases were passed on to courts for redress. 423 women and 178 juveniles (135 male, 43 female) were released from places of detention

through the involvement of the functioning SPUs.

UNDP's Access to Justice and Rule of Law Project supported the construction and equipping of three female dormitories in Rajaf, which can accommodate up to 240 female police trainees providing proper living standards, ablutions and an environment conducive to training. This is expected to encourage more women to join the police service and to complete training at the Complex, ultimately increasing the number of female SSNPS personnel.



Female police attending personnel registration process, Juba, Central Equatoria state, 2012 ©UNDP photo



Female police officers attending the inauguration of female dormitories at Dr. John Garang Unified Police Training Complex, Rajaf, Central Equatoria state, 2013 ©UNDP photo

## Moving forward

While responding to the current crisis, UNDP will work to ensure gender equality is integrated across all programme areas. In particular, our focus will be on:

- Supporting gender responsive legal service, both for statutory and customary courts, with particular reference to women victims or survivors of SGBV
- Facilitating women's participation in the peace and reconciliation process
- Ensuring women's engagement in the transitional milestones, including elections and constitutional review

**UNDP** is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. UNDP is on the ground in 177 countries and territories, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges.

United Nations Development Programme: UNDP Compound, P.O. Box 410, Juba, South Sudan.

[www.southsudan.undp.org](http://www.southsudan.undp.org) Email: [communications.south.sd@undp.org](mailto:communications.south.sd@undp.org)