Addressing the United Nations General Assembly, the Foreign Minister of Sudan on 27 September urged the international community to do more to support cooperation between his country and South Sudan, as well as to lift unilateral sanctions that are undercutting efforts to achieve sustainable development.

Ali Ahmed Karti opened his address by informing the Assembly that he was deeply disturbed to report that the United States Government denied a visa for the President Omar Al-Bashir to attend to proceedings in New York. This action violates the Headquarters agreement, he declared.

He said that President Bashir is known throughout Africa as a man of peace; the man ended a bloody war in Sudan that had been a residual from the days of colonialism. The unprecedented and incomprehensible action taken by the United States to deny a visa for the President Omar Al-Bashir to attend to proceedings in New York. This action violates the Headquarters agreement, he declared. He said that President Bashir is known throughout Africa as a man of peace; the man ended a bloody war in Sudan that had been a residual from the days of colonialism. The unprecedented and incomprehensible action taken by the United States to deny a visa for the President Omar Al-Bashir to attend to proceedings in New York. This action violates the Headquarters agreement, he declared.

He said that he was pleased to report that there had been significant improvement in the relations between Darfur and Khartoum. Humanitarian needs are being met in Darfur based on agreements reached with UN agencies, including UNICEF.

As for relations with South Sudan, he said the period following that country’s independence was filled with some tension because of unresolved issues. Yet, the two countries were able to sign a slate of agreements to resolve some outstanding issues and had signed further agreements to address pending matters. “We will spare no effort to ensure good relations with South Sudan,” he said.
At the initiative of the RC/HC, a Joint UN/Government of Sudan High-Level mission to the New York United Nations Headquarters took place from 7-11 October 2013 to create a mutual understanding of the environment in which both the UN and Sudan operate and to generate additional high-level dialogue on humanitarian and development issues alike. The Sudan Government delegation was headed by the Minister of Interior, H.E. Ibrahim Mahmoud, accompanied by the State Minister of Finance & National Economy H.E. Magdi Yassin, the Commissioner of the Humanitarian Aid Commission Dr. Suliman Abdelrahman, the Chairman of National Elections Commission Pr. Abdallah Ahmed Abdallah and other 5 other senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Finance officials. The delegation met with senior UN officials including Ms. Helen Clark, the UNDP Administrator; Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary General (USG) for Peace-Keeping Operations; Ms. Valerie Amos, USG for Humanitarian Affairs; Mr. Taye-Brook Zerihoun, Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs; Ms. Sima Bahous, Assistant-Secretary General and Director of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States as well as other high-ranking officials at the USG and ASG levels, including the Deputy Executive Directors of UNICEF, UNFPA and UNWOMEN. The delegation also held meetings and had extensive discussions with Member States, Donors and NGO’s. The mission was supported by OCHA, UNDP and the UN Coordination Support Office.
The Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the attack in Darfur on an African Union-United Nations convoy, which resulted in the death of three Senegalese peacekeepers. According to the joint AU-UN Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), in the morning of 13 October, the Mission’s formed police unit was escorting a water convoy from El Geneina town to the Mission’s regional headquarters in West Darfur when it was ambushed by an unidentified armed group. Three peacekeepers were killed and one injured. The assailants hijacked one vehicle, which was later recovered seven kilometres from the scene.

“The Secretary-General offers his condolences to the families and friends of the fallen peacekeepers and expresses his deepest sympathies to the Government of the Republic of Senegal,” Mr. Ban’s spokesperson said in a statement. Mr. Ban said the attacks are unacceptable and called on the Government of Sudan to bring those responsible to justice. The Joint AU-UN Special Representative for Darfur, Head of UNAMID and Joint Chief Mediator Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas described the attack as a grave criminal act and commended the Sudanese uniformed services for pursuing the assailants and engaging them in a fire-fight, which reportedly led to casualties on both sides.

“Such incidents are a reminder to all of us of the great price everyone pays in the absence of peace. Our peacekeepers have made the ultimate sacrifice while attempting to bring peace to Darfur,” Dr. Chambas said.

On 12 October, Mr. Ban voiced his sadness after a Zambian military observer of the joint peacekeeping mission died in an attack in El Fasher, North Darfur, by unidentified armed assailants.
Voicing “deep concern” at the large number of Sudanese detained since mass protests erupted on 23 September over fuel subsidy cuts, a United Nations special expert called on the Government to either charge them or release them immediately, while also ending heavy media censorship.

According to reports, at least 800 activists, including members of opposition parties and journalists have been arrested amid on-going demonstrations, in which up to 50 people were reportedly killed by security forces, a toll that last week prompted the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to call for “utmost restraint” from law enforcement officials.

Those detained are being held incommunicado with no access to lawyers or their families, the UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Sudan, Professor Mashood Adebayo Baderin, said in a news release. “I urge the Government of The Sudan to charge all those arrested with a recognizable offence or immediately release them,” he said. “Furthermore, the Government must allow the detainees access to their families, legal representation and medical care.”

He also called on the authorities to end censorship on media outlets and enable basic freedoms, including the freedom to demonstrate peacefully. “Civilians have a right to assembly and peaceful demonstrations under international law, and the Government of the Sudan has an obligation to respect these rights under its constitution and under international law,” he stressed.

“I strongly condemn the use of violence against peaceful demonstrators and the destruction of public property during demonstrations. I urge both the Government and the demonstrators to completely refrain from resorting to violence.”

Quoting reports from various sources that Sudanese security agencies used excessive force against unarmed protestors, including firing live bullets, Pr. Baderin called on the authorities “to conduct prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into these incidents, and to hold those responsible to account.”

The fuel subsidy protests started on 23 September in the central state of Gezira and spread to other parts of the country including Khartoum, Omdurman, Darfur and Eastern Sudan.

Independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council to examine and report back, in an unpaid capacity, on specific human rights themes.
Sudan’s Federal Ministry of Health together with WHO, UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) launched on 28 August Sudan’s National Acceleration Plan for Maternal and Child Health. Sudan is the first of the 10 high-burden countries in the Region to launch an acceleration plan on maternal and child health, in line with the commitment expressed in the Dubai Declaration, adopted in January 2013. There has been a significant decrease in the under-5 mortality rate in Sudan, which declined by 33% between 1990 and 2010. The neonatal mortality rate has also decreased by 11% in the same time period.

The Sudan Household Health Survey 2010 reflected a 60% decrease in maternal mortality per 100 000 live births, from 537 in 1990 to 216 in 2010. Despite progress, child and maternal mortality remain high; at the current rate and without more intensive efforts, the country will be unable to achieve the targets of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 and 5.

The high-level gathering in Khartoum, led by the Vice President of the Republic of Sudan Dr Al-Haj Adam Youssef brought together officials from the Government, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, as well as the country’s diplomatic corps, highlighting their commitment to mobilize resources and work towards the implementation of the plan.

WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Dr Ala Alwan, together with UNFPA Regional Director for Arab States Mr Mohammed Abdel-Ahad, and UNICEF Country Representative joined hands with Sudan as it presented the plan that has been developed to accelerate the implementation of the most effective health interventions to improve the health of mothers and children. The plan aims to reduce maternal and under-5 child mortality in order to reach the targets of the MDGs.

The work plan was prepared after analyzing the current health indicators at locality level, and the process was technically supported by WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA. During preparation, the priority was given to localities with low coverage of maternal and child health services and community-based services (midwives and community health workers), and those with high population density. The work plan will be implemented through several axes: expanding coverage of maternal and child health services to ensure equitable access for all population, strengthening the referral system at the primary health care level, raising community awareness regarding maternal and child health issues, strengthening and supporting the health system at the locality level and ensuring community empowerment to promote maternal and child health.
The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Physical Development, and international development partners organized the “Climate Change Diplomacy” Workshop which took place from 8 to 10 October.

The Workshop was supported by the UNDP project of “Enhancing Capacities and Business Processes”: A Preparatory Support to Capacity Development for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs” is targeting junior level diplomats in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in addition to officials from relevant governmental environmental institutions and civil society organizations specialized in environmental work and advocacy.

The Workshop was organized in partnership with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the Climate Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) and Ricardo AEA which is a leading international provider of analysis, advice, and data on economically sustainable solutions for global environmental challenges. The Workshop aimed at enabling diplomats and negotiators from Sudan to become informed and influential actors in international climate change negotiations. This will lead to strengthen Sudan’s voice and other developing countries’ position at the negotiations table which should ultimately respond to the challenges faced by these countries.

The Minister of Environment, Forestry, and Physical Development Mr Hassan Hilal, said “All countries tend to show an increasingly growing interest in the international agreements diplomacy (multilateral Diplomacy) through which they seek to achieve common interests and safeguard their gains. To this end, Sudan is interested in strengthening its negotiating capacities and developing its mechanisms of coordination and joint work among its national institutions concerned with these international agreements and exchange of information.” The Minister added that this specifically designed training greatly assist in formulation of national positions around international issues in such a way that helps achieve national interests and boost Sudan’s participation in international cooperation.

The climate change challenges that face Sudan necessitate more focused investments on promoting agriculture and water resources to adapt to the impact of climate change and secure livelihoods opportunities of farmers and pastoralists which are also high in the national agenda.

Amin Sharkawi, Deputy Country Director, UNDP said “This training on Climate Change Diplomacy” comes timely to assist the Sudanese delegation prudently prepare for the upcoming negotiations on climate change which will take place this coming November in Poland.

The workshop is expected to cover the science, impacts, and negotiations on climate change and will enable participants to explore how Sudan can overcome the challenges of climate change through multilateral diplomacy.” UNDP places high importance on promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation as an integral part of the environment programme which is considered as one of the main pillars in its current UNDP Sudan programming framework. In this context, UNDP in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Physical Development and the Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources, has been supporting Sudan to commit to its global environmental agreements since Rio 1991 through policy advice and developing of environmental strategic frameworks to address environmental challenges and adapt to climate change impact.
Not less than one hundred persons representing civil society organizations, social media activists, university students, government officials and the private sector in Sudan came together on Tuesday 24 September to participate in this year’s Social Good Summit. The main discussions and debate focused on the role of social media and technology in advancing the development agenda in Sudan with special emphasis on the active role of youth groups in this process. During the two hour meet up, Sudanese youth presented their experience in using technology to serve communities in Sudan through the creation and implementation of innovative ways to help those in need. Khartoum University students in collaboration with UNICEF outlined their initiative to monitor school kits distribution using simple SMS systems in Mobile phones to reach remote areas. In addition, students from Afhad University for Women presented their experience in creating traditional stoves for women that are both affordable and climate friendly using solar energy.

The second part of the debate highlighted how Sudanese youth have used social media in recent times for development purposes. An organization named “Education Without Borders” relayed its experience in mobilizing youth for the restoration of school buildings and other educational campaigns using their Facebook and twitter accounts. A similar presentation was made by Nafeer youth group who have used Social Media heavily during the recent flooding in Sudan to mobilize support for flood victims. Nafeer Facebook page have managed to gather and register 6000 volunteers to help victims via the organization of emergency and medical groups to address different needs in different locations. The event presented an excellent opportunity for all those present to find out how technology and social media were best used in Sudan to serve development goals.

Simultaneously, a virtual summit on Facebook was organized to invite thousands of Sudanese both in Sudan and the diaspora to voice their thoughts on the world they want to live in 2030.
A high level delegation of the United Nations, National AIDS Programme and civil society visited Kassala on 15 September to advocate for accelerating HIV testing and treatment as part of a national plan that aims at doubling the treatment coverage within the next 6 months. The delegation included the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan Mr. Ali Al-Za’tari, WHO Representative Dr. Anshu Banerjee, UNAIDS Country Coordinator Dr. Hamid Reza Setayesh, UN HIV Joint Team members - UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP - and representatives of the National AIDS Control Programme and civil Society.

According to government estimates, the eastern part of the country is the most affected by HIV epidemic. The delegation met with the State Ministers of Health, Finance, Social Welfare and Religious Guidance, Education, the Commissioner of Kassala and the Chair of the State Legislative Council.

The Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Mr. Ali Al-Za’tari commended the State authorities for their quest to address HIV with support from the UN. He reiterated the importance of partnership based on existing resources and skills through effective programmes that address the needs of the people of the State.

“HIV is a social issue just as it is a health issue and hence addressing it fundamentally requires additional community mobilization and awareness-raising to complement the efforts exerted at the health sector,” added Mr. Al-Za’tari.

WHO Representative Dr. Anshu Banarjee pointed out to the targets that the Government of Sudan and partners have committed to as part of a global plan to ensure zero AIDS-related death, zero discrimination and zero new HIV infections.

“Achieving these targets is now possible and the treatment considerably contributes to reduction of new infections,” he said adding that “it is the right of every child to be born free of diseases including HIV.”

UNAIDS Country Coordinator, Dr. Hamidreza Setayesh warned that “only 1 out of every 10 people who needs treatment, is receiving it in Sudan.” He added that “there is a need for all stakeholders at the local, State and national levels, including civil society, to join forces to expand testing for pregnant women and Tuberculosis (TB) patients as well as to expand programs among populations.”

Representative of the Governor of Kassala State and Minister of Health assured the required political commitment from the State government to ensure achievement of the set targets for the State.

The delegation thereafter visited a voluntary confidential counseling and HIV testing and treatment centre to assess readiness to receive more clients and discuss with the state AIDS program their social mobilization plans to create demand for testing. Besides, the delegation met with key partners in the state to discuss technical plan of action to scale up HIV-related services and increase uptake.

The delegation visited the Association of People Living with HIV to explore feasibility of implementation of a comprehensive approach to “positive health, dignity and prevention” among persons living with HIV.
Six United Nations funds and agencies – Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP) and World Health Organization (WHO) – on 24 September formalized their joint efforts to address malnutrition in Sudan by signing a Letter of Understanding. The LOU sets out the framework for achieving the overall goals of cooperation toward tackling malnutrition in Sudan.

The 2010 Sudan Household Health Survey (Summary Report published by the Federal Ministry of Health, July 2011) shows that 35 per cent of children under the age of five in Sudan are chronically stunted (low weight for age); and 16 per cent are wasted (low weight for height). Both conditions reflect malnutrition, and stunting in particular can lead to children’s irreversible, impaired development. In short, about one in three Sudanese children currently struggle with the immediate condition of malnutrition and face the prospects of its damaging, long-term effects.

The Letter of Understanding for Sudan is designed to scale up nutrition interventions and reinforce joint efforts to strengthen, coordinate and plan capacity building by national and sub national government actors. The contribution of the UN through this LOU will include support in development of protocols, guidelines, and training aiming toward prevention of malnutrition in children; including malnutrition-induced deaths. Interventions will use the latest research on child nutrition, including articles published in the Lancet Journal in June 2013, according to which Sudan is one of 34 countries accounting for 90 per cent of the global burden of malnutrition. Interventions to prevent malnutrition will be strengthened, including support for exclusive breastfeeding up to six months of age; continued breastfeeding beyond six months together with appropriate and nutritious food up to two years of age; food fortification with micronutrients; as well as micronutrient supplementation and treatment of severe malnutrition. Malnutrition is a multi-faceted problem and requires multiple interventions in several sectors. In Agriculture, ensuring adequate production of nutritious foods and supporting small-holder farms are essential elements in the fight against malnutrition. In Infrastructures, access to safe water and sanitation is critical to safeguard children’s nutritional status against diseases that could derail it. In Education, policies in support of appropriate feeding for young learners are needed. In Health, women’s own nutrition and access to quality care and services is essential during pregnancy, breastfeeding and in the first few years of a child’s life to lay his or her nutritional foundations for life-long healthy development. Similarly, young infant feeding practices as well as surveillance for malnutrition and food security are important elements in the fight against malnutrition. Ultimately, nutrition is a sound investment choice for national development. Sustained investment in nutrition-related services will have high returns in terms of a stronger and healthier population that will be more productive and better able to withstand shocks.

UN CARES

Thirty two UN Cares focal points representing eleven UN agencies from eight different field level duty-stations in Sudan attended from 7 to 10 October a training on implementation of the UN Cares 10 minimum standards using new tools introduced by UN Cares globally and focusing on emerging priorities in HIV information and services for UN employees and their families. The training was a joint effort between UNAIDS Secretariat and the UN Coordination Support Office (CSO) in Sudan. A one-year work-plan was developed by the UN Cares focal points focusing on the 10 minimum standards with emphasis on reaching 80% of employees with required information and services based on the targets set by UNCT in their annual work-plan. Special focus was put on the 5 UN Cares country priorities namely; management and access to post-exposure prophylaxis, reaching families, ensuring confidential management of personal information, a broader focus on a wellness approach & collaboration with networks people living with HIV. UN agencies are now expected to organize learning sessions around HIV to all employees with special focus on reducing stigma and discrimination associated with HIV.
Crossing a border with documentation is usually relatively simple. However, for asylum seekers - many of whom have had to decide to leave at a moment’s notice - crossing Sudan’s border is complicated and often done without documentation. The probable outcome is usually predictable: arrest and possibly deportation. Yet, through UNHCR’s capacity building and awareness raising efforts, the response of the Sudanese authorities has shown very positive changes so that asylum-seekers in the East now have greater access to asylum procedures. Raising awareness within state institutions on the right to seek asylum and the rights of refugees is crucial given that Sudan’s Eastern region is host to 74,269 persons of concern living in camps and continues to receive 400-600 monthly arrivals, mainly of Eritrean origin.

Asylum-seekers aiming to reach Shagarab camps where they would be able to access refugee status determination procedures were often arrested prior to arriving to the camp and denied access to the asylum procedures. Instead of being presented before the correct authorities, the detainee would be brought before a court and could be deported for irregular entry in application of the Sudanese Immigration Act (Article 30). Remarkably, the number of asylum-seekers being deported or arrested for illegal entry into Sudan has decreased from 67 in 2011 and 68 in 2012 to 14 up to July 2013. In July alone, 24 persons of concern facing charges under Article 30 were released from detention centres in Eastern Sudan (17 males and 7 females, all Eritreans).

In the course of 2013, UNHCR has run capacity building activities for high ranking members of the judiciary and law enforcement authorities in cities covering all states in Eastern Sudan, including Kassala, Wad Madani, Gedaref and Port Sudan. In addition, eighteen high level officials from National Security, the Police, the Prosecutor’s Office and Courts were sponsored by UNHCR to take part in workshops in Tunisia, France and Italy on Refugee Law and Human Rights Law in order to bring their enriched knowledge back to their respective institutions. In addition, UNHCR has conducted training sessions with the Non-Governmental Organization Al-Sharq, its legal implementing partner, and organised a week-long training for the protection staff of the Commission for Refugees. UNHCR has also conducted training for border authorities in Hamdayet and Wad El Hilew, in order to increase their knowledge on the importance of protection-sensitive entry systems. A total of 228 government officials have been trained by UNHCR so far this year.

Elsewhere, coordination between the different governmental departments has shown great improvement in their handling of asylum-seekers. With the opening of a new Reception Centre in Hamdayet on the Sudanese border with Eritrea, collaboration between different state entities has been enhanced as is their understanding of protection particularly border management. These measures guaranteed a secure first point of contact for asylum-seekers within Sudan where their cases are processed by COR. Asylum-seekers are provided with safe onward travel to Shagarab camp escorted by the state security forces. UNHCR will continue to collaborate positively with the Sudanese authorities with the objective of continuing to improve the situation for asylum-seekers and refugees in Sudan.
A coordination meeting between the Government and the UN on South-South Cooperation was held on 7 October at the Ministry of Finance and National Economy under the chairmanship of Ms. Munira Abougesisa, Director of Economic Regional Integration Department and the Focal Point for South-South Cooperation at the Ministry of Finance and National Economy. The meeting brought together representatives of nine Ministries, the UN Coordination Support Office (CSO), the private sector and the Secretary-General of the National Council for Strategic Planning.

The Secretary-General of the National Council for Strategic Planning Dr. Abbas Korina stated that the First-Vice president had been notified of the South-South Cooperation Initiative and a proposed workshop. The First-Vice president has also agreed to champion this initiative in Sudan. The participants endorsed the overview paper presented by the UN CSO Consultant, Mr. Ahmed Hussein, and appreciated the efforts and the leading role played by the UN in the project.
Some of Darfur’s poorest farmers are being given the chance to benefit from the growing global demand for hibiscus, with a new United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) pilot project, designed to improve cultivation techniques for hibiscus production. The hibiscus flower forms the major ingredient of many fruit teas and Sudan is known for producing high quality crops. About half of Sudan’s total hibiscus production is exported, mainly to Germany. The rest being used domestically in popular drinks such as Karkadeh, a sweetened deep red cordial made from the flower.

By introducing simply made tools that help increase production and by helping remote farmers with transport, some 1500 farmers, many of whom had given up producing hibiscus, are now growing it again.

In a survey conducted in 2011 by UNDP, it was concluded that farmers have stopped producing Hibiscus due to the lack of the necessary tools. This made expansion of production difficult and harvesting ineffective, while production by hand often caused allergic reactions to the skin.

In North Darfur, some 1500 farmers in eight villages are being given seeds, training in new production methods as well as new tools. The main new tool being introduced is a “gargara” that is used to separate the calyx from the seedpod during harvest. It prevents the flower from falling apart and the calyxes from breaking, as well as helping to prevent allergic reactions to the skin. Using the gargara will bring production practices in line with international standards as well as increase the market value of the hibiscus – both of which make it attractive to buyers and traders from Khartoum.

The gargara is inexpensive and easy to produce. UNDP trained and tasked community blacksmiths with their production so as to maximise the benefit to the communities and support private sector development in the area.

Further, communities involved in the project have been supplied with horses and carts to ensure that even farmers in remote villages can participate in the project. Lack of transportation to bring the production to the market was also cited in the UNDP survey as a reason why people did not grow hibiscus.

Alhadi Ibrahim Muhammed, a full time farmer and a member of the local hibiscus producer union in Waada village, says he had stopped cultivating hibiscus because the tools were either unavailable or too expensive. But like many of his fellow farmers, he is now hopeful about the future: “I have high expectations for this year’s production and hope the hibiscus will generate some much needed income.”
The Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap) has undertaken several monitoring missions in Sudan since the beginning of 2013 to assess the extent to which the gender marker is being successfully implemented during humanitarian interventions. The gender marker is a practical tool that aims at improving the overall quality of humanitarian interventions by promoting good design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation practices to ensure that women/girls and men/boys equally benefit from a project. In addition, this gender-based perspective enables humanitarians to draw important lessons, identify significant trends and guard against potential negative effects that could undermine future programmes. A recent monitoring mission to South Kordofan was comprised of a monitor from the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF), UNHCR protection officer and a representative from the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC). The mission helped enhance partnerships and coordination between the CHF monitoring team, relevant sectors, government counterparts and implementing partners.

The team visited 9 CHF funded projects and held meetings with seven national implementing partners at 10 locations in Kadugli, Raif Ashargi, Delling and Al Goz localities. The team met and consulted with men, women and children who the projects are intended to benefit. Most partners visited during the mission to South Kordofan were aware of gender issues. However, some of them lacked awareness regarding the gender marker and how it shapes project implementation. Consequently, GenCap will assist sector leads and partners by providing technical advice and training about gender equality programming and the gender marker.

UN Women organized a five-day meeting in Entebbe, Uganda bringing together for the first time 30 participants from the Sudan’s Ministries of Finance, Welfare and Social Security, the Central Bureau of Statistics besides representatives from the civil society, African Development Bank (AfDB) and UN Women. The workshop aimed at supporting the integration of gender in the household budget survey questionnaire and identifying entry points for the integration of gender in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

The Director of Poverty Unit at Ministry of Finance said “the workshop was very useful as it emphasized the importance of integrating gender in the PRSP process at all levels.”

The workshop discussed a number of gender related issues such as assets ownership, Economic structures, participation in productive activities and access to resources, education, health and related services, public life and decision-making.

Participants recommended that these issues should be included into the survey questionnaire. In addition, a set of guidelines and entry points for integrating gender in the PRSP process were agreed upon.

The following are the Key Recommendations:

- The household budget survey questionnaire should fully
integrate gender considerations. In addition all future surveys and census should aim to collect gender statistics;

- Provide training on gender statistics, gender concepts and gender sensitive budgeting for all stakeholders involved the household baseline survey and PRSP process;
- Support awareness raising and sensitization of decision makers including members of parliament on the importance of integrating gender in the household survey and the PRSP process;
- Ensure the representation of gender experts and civil society organizations in all the coordination mechanisms for the household survey and PRSP including the oversight committee, the steering committee and technical working groups;
- The workshop urges the Government of Sudan and AfDB to finalize and sign the protocol agreement of PFM project to allow a rapid release of the funds required to undertake the HHS.

As polio cases surge, Security Council urges Sudan to engage in vaccination campaign

Alarmed by the imminent threat posed by the spread of polio through South Kordofan, the United Nations Security Council on 12 October called on the Sudanese Government to carry out a vaccination campaign immediately to stop the spread of the disease.

In a statement to the press, Council members expressed alarm and grave concern at the imminent threat of the spread of polio in Sudan’s South Kordofan province and the continuing outbreak of the disease in the Horn of Africa and in particular they called on the Sudanese Government and the militant group of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) to urgently resolve differences over the technical plans necessary, including for safe passage, to implement the polio vaccination campaign as proposed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the World Health Organization (WHO) as soon as possible.

The two-week vaccination campaign is scheduled to go forward in South Kordofan and Blue Nile on 5 November.

The members of the Security Council reiterated their support for the UN’s work in this regard and encouraged Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to engage with both sides to ensure full vaccination in the coming weeks.

Many languages, one world’ UN launches essay contest to celebrate multilingualism

The United Nations is asking college and university students to write an essay in one of its six official languages on the role of multilingualism in a globalized world.

The contest, ‘Many Languages, One World,’ supports international education and multilingualism through the continued study of Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Information about the contest, including guidelines for submission, can be found at: UNIC Khartoum and ELS Educational Services web sites.

To qualify, the student’s native language has to be different from the one in which he or she writes, and different from the principal one at the school.

A panel of international judges, to be invited by the UNAI and ELS Educational Services, will select ten top winners in each language category who will be invited to New York by ELS to participate in a series of events in June 2014.
The UN Coordination Support Office (CSO) conducted a number of dissemination sessions in September in El-Fashir, North Darfur to promote the My World Survey. One of the sessions was organized in partnership with the Centre for Peace and Development and Human Rights of the University of El Fasher and was attended by over 500 participants (students).

The event was officially opened by the Acting Director of the Centre for Peace and Development and Human Rights, in the presence of some senior management of the University.

The CSO representative gave a presentation covering the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the post-2015 agenda, and the United Nations System. In addition, the UN Information Centre participated at the Khartoum International Book Fair from 1st to 12 September and briefed the visitors on the My World Survey and how to complete it. 600 offline ballot cards were completed and thousands of cards with link to the online survey were distributed.

Vote now for the changes that would make the most difference to your world!

YOUR voice matters
http://www.myworld2015.org
The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in collaboration with United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Save Children, Plan Sudan, Ministry of Education and the North Darfur State Council of Child Welfare (SCCW) organized an event on 9 October in El-Fashir, North Darfur State, marking the International Day of the Girl Child. Organized under the theme of Innovating for Girls Education, the event aimed at advocating for the elimination of harmful practices against females such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and bringing to the table the issue of girl education which is a core element of child development and female empowerment and protection. The event provided an opportunity for the surrounding community to amuse themselves in such harsh context with poor entertainment facilities. The event was attended by the Advisor of the Governor of North Darfur State, representatives of the State’s Ministry of Education, SCCW, National and International Non-Governmental Organizations, UN agencies, students, midwives, teachers, parliamentarians and women activists. Traditional music/songs with sensitization on female protection and girls’ education were performed besides drama sketches by female school. Speeches were delivered by the State’s Governor Advisor for Women and Children Affairs, the Director of General Education, SCCW Chairperson, the Chairperson of the Child Protection at the Ministry of Social Welfare, UNFPA and UNICEF.

On December 19, 2011, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 66/170 to declare 11 October as the International Day of the Girl Child, to recognize girls’ rights and the unique challenges girls face around the world.