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‘Time to massively reinforce UN action’ on South Sudan, Ban says ahead of Security Council meeting

11 July – Ahead of a meeting with the United Nations Security Council tomorrow on South Sudan, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has urged the body to impose an immediate arms embargo, enact additional targeted sanctions on leaders and commanders blocking implementation of the peace deal, and to fortify the UN mission in the country, which has seen a resurgence of deadly violence in recent days.

“This is the time to massively reinforce UN action. When a Government cannot or will not protect its people, and when warring parties seem more intent on enriching and empowering themselves at the expense of their people, the international community has a responsibility to act,” the Secretary-General told reporters at UN Headquarters in New York today.

“I call on the Security Council and the entire membership of the United Nations to rise to this moment and protect the human rights of South Sudanese,” he added.

Over the weekend, Mr. Ban, along with the Council and the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) condemned the deadly violence and urged calm in the wake fresh clashes in Juba between soldiers of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the SPLA in Opposition.

Expressing his deep condolences to the families and loved ones of those who have been killed in the fighting in the capital.
city of Juba over the past four days, Mr. Ban condemned the killing of two Chinese peacekeepers and one UN national staff member.

**Renewed violence ‘another grievous setback’**

“The renewed violence is outrageous. It is yet another grievous setback. It deepens the country’s suffering. It makes a mockery of commitments to peace,” the UN chief said, adding that there are growing fears that many more people could die in another round of violence.

Despite the August 2015 peace agreement that formally ended the war – which began in late 2013 after a simmering political face-off between President Salva Kiir and his then former Vice-President Riek Machar boiled over – conflict and instability has spread to previously unaffected areas in the Greater Equatoria and Greater Bahr-El-Ghazal regions of South Sudan. This past month, deadly clashes in Wau resulted in the deaths of more than 40 people, while up to 35,000 fled their homes. Such fighting is characteristic of the trend that produced fresh refugee outflows this year, a spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said this past Friday.

The events in Juba come shortly after escalation of conflict in other parts of the country in recent weeks, disrupting lives and livelihoods. In Wau, where fighting has displaced at least 70,000 people since the end of June, the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) said it is working around the clock, together with partners, to provide assistance to children and their families.

In his remarks today, the Secretary-General said he is appalled by the “indiscriminate attacks” on civilians and peacekeepers, noting that the two compounds of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in Juba have been caught in the cross-fire and sustained mortar and heavy artillery fire.

At least two internally displaced persons have been killed in the UNMISS protection of civilians sites (PoC), and some 35 people have been injured, while thousands of civilians have fled to various locations in town, including the two compounds.

**South Sudan’s leaders have failed young nation ‘yet again’**

“Yet again, the leaders of South Sudan have failed their people. Rarely has a country squandered so much promise, so quickly,” Mr. Ban said, also asking: “What kind of leadership is it that resorts to deadly weapons and identity politics, time and again? Failed leadership.”

The Secretary-General emphasized that his message to President Kiir and First Vice-President Machar is clear: “Do everything in your power to de-escalate the hostilities immediately. Order your respective forces to withdraw to their bases,” he said.

“Let me underscore, again, to all those leading and perpetrating these hostilities that acts of violence perpetrated against civilians and United Nations and humanitarian personnel, assets and premises may constitute a war crime,” he added.

Noting that there must and will be accountability for the atrocities that have been committed in South Sudan since 2013, the Secretary-General said that it is not just the leaders who must “face a reckoning,” but all those in the chain of command.

Furthermore, Mr. Ban said that while he understood that President Kiir had issued an order to the SPLA last night to stop fighting, hostilities continue today and have spread to parts outside of Juba in Central Equatoria.

**UN mission ‘doing all it can’ to contain volatile situation**

UNMISS, for its part, is doing all it can to contain a very volatile situation, by conducting patrols within and immediately outside the protection of civilians sites. The Mission has also reinforced perimeter security to enhance protection for internally displaced people and UN staff at its two compounds, the UN chief said.

He noted, however, that freedom of movement and access outside of the UN compounds remains a challenge.
“I demand all the belligerent parties to guarantee unfettered access and freedom of movement to United Nations and humanitarian personnel engaged in life-saving activities in aid of the South Sudanese people,” the Secretary-General said.

Welcoming last night’s statement by the Security Council, which strongly condemned the escalating violence in and around Juba, Mr. Ban stressed that the gravity of the situation depends on a rapid response.

As such, he urged the Council to take action on three fronts: impose an immediate arms embargo on South Sudan, enact additional targeted sanctions on leaders and commanders blocking the implementation of the peace agreement, and fortify UNMISS with “desperately needed” attack helicopters and other material to fulfil the mandate to protect civilians.

In addition, the Secretary-General urged all countries contributing to UNMISS to “stand their ground,” emphasizing that any withdrawals would send “precisely the wrong signal, in South Sudan and across the world.”

The UN chief added that he is consulting with his team and concerned organizations regarding his participation in the African Union (AU) summit to consult with the Heads of State of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the region on how to restore and better secure the peace process and report to the Security Council within a week.

Asked by reporters whether he believes that President Kiir and First Vice-President Machar should step aside, the Secretary-General said that is not for him to comment, as they were elected by their own people.

“But they have a huge moral and political responsibility to keep their country in order,” Mr. Ban said.

Answering another question on the proposed arms embargo, the Secretary-General said that the Security Council has for some time been discussing the idea of imposing an arms embargo, but has been unable to agree.

Asked whether he is calling for a specific number of additional troops as part of a reinforcement of UNMISS, Mr. Ban said that the movement of troops, particularly in time of emergency, urgency and danger, has been restricted by the Government of South Sudan. In that regard, he urged the Government to allow the normal operation of UNMISS and all other diplomatic missions in South Sudan.

Noting that there are approximately 12,000 peacekeepers, including police, currently in South Sudan, the Secretary-General said that he will engage with the Security Council tomorrow regarding the specific number of reinforcements and other issues.

West Africa and Sahel must step up intelligence gathering, UN envoy tells Security Council

11 July – Countries in West Africa and the Sahel must expand intelligence gathering capacities to counter militant threats, such as those posed by Boko Haram, the head of the United Nations operation for that region said today.

“It was indeed the desperation from the perceived lack of opportunities, justice, and hope that contributed to the creation of a conducive climate for emergence of militant movements,” said Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative and the head of the UN Office for West Africa and Sahel (UNOWAS), in his briefing to the Security Council.

He said that militant movements seen in northern Mali and north-eastern Nigeria threaten to destabilize West Africa and the Sahel region, as well as the Lake Chad Basin area.
Across the Sahel, 4.5 million people are displaced, and six million are in need of emergency food assistance, he explained. Moreover millions cannot farm their land, and millions of children do not receive the education they need for a better future.

Boko Haram continues to change tactics, having twice overrun the city of Bosso in Niger in June, he noted. Terrorists have also struck further afield in West Africa, notably Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on 15 January, and in Grand Bassam, Côte d’Ivoire on 13 March. Traffickers, criminals, and their collaborators are seeking to benefit from lawlessness and insecurity to expand their networks.

He emphasized to Council members the need to further strengthen regional forces mobilized under the Multinational Joint Task Force, in particular in the area of intelligence gathering, and the need to augment democratic governance as an essential task in conflict prevention efforts.

In addition, efforts towards meeting the basic needs of innocent civilians trapped in this tragedy must be stepped up. “It is deeply troubling, that only 11 per cent of the UN appeal of $1.98 billion in 2016 has been received,” he said.

Warning that the subregion is increasingly threatened by violent extremism and radicalization, he said that UNOWAS organized a regional conference on 27 and 28 June in Dakar, Senegal, in line with the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

He said he is setting up a UN Regional Task Force on the Prevention of Violent Extremism to facilitate coordination and complementarity of the UN’s work in this area.

The Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, which he chairs and which works toward determining the definitive border between the two nations, remains a prime example of the benefits of foresight and cooperation, he said.

“Looking at the underlying challenges in the sub-region and beyond, we also need to think harder, how we can collectively improve international conflict prevention efforts before crises escalate beyond control,” he said. “We owe it to the people of West Africa and the Sahel, who have shown such remarkable resilience to persisting multifaceted challenges.”

Countries in the region are engaged in reviews of their foundational laws, he said. Commissions put in place in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone, are working on recommendations to adapt their constitutions to their needs as modern nations.

He said these West African and Sahel countries will hopefully emerge from these reform efforts more cohesive, better governed, and with more women taking part in decision-making. “This would in turn strengthen their resilience to withstand internal and external shocks, such as the recent Ebola outbreak,” he said.
Syria: UN airlifts bring humanitarian lifeline to northeast governorate of Al Hassakeh

11 July – The first United Nations World Food Programme-chartered flight carrying relief aid reached Al Hassakeh Governorate in Syria’s northeast over the weekend, an area cut off from food and humanitarian supplies for more than six months.

Road access into the north-eastern area from inside the country has been blocked by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) for more than two years, while the border crossings from the neighbouring countries have been closed since the beginning of 2016.

“These airlifts are a big step forward in the humanitarian response in Syria this year and bring a glimmer of hope to the people of Al Hassakeh Governorate who have survived without a lifeline for far too long,” said Jakob Kern, Syria Country Director for the World Food Programme (WFP), noting that the agency’s food stocks in the area were exhausted a few weeks ago.

The UN has said that airlifting is not the first choice of method to deliver aid because it is costly, but in the absence of ground access, more air operations have been planned in the recent weeks.

The WFP-chartered plane carried 40 tons of food including rice, bulgur, pulses, salt, vegetable oil and sugar. The agency also sent Plumpy’doz, a specialized nutrition product used to treat and prevent malnutrition in children.

It is estimated that 275,000 people living in many areas in Al Hassakeh Governorate are in need of humanitarian assistance but have been cut off from food and humanitarian supplies for more than six months. Priority is given to more than 75,000 people, mainly displaced families in shelters and unfinished buildings, female-headed households as well as some vulnerable Iraq refugee families in the Hwal camp.

Over the course of a month, the plane will fly at least 25 rotations between Damascus and the area to deliver over 1,000 metric tons of humanitarian cargo including food, nutrition supplies, medicines, as well as items from other humanitarian organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (GOPA).

Food distributions will be conducted by WFP’s partners on the ground in coordination with local relief committees in 35 distribution points around the governorate covering rural and urban areas.
Stand up for and invest in teenage girls, UN says on World Population Day

11 July – Leaders and communities must focus on and stand up for the rights of teenage girls, particularly those who are poor, out of school, exploited, or subjected to harmful traditional practices, the United Nations has said, marking World Population Day with a call to bolster the success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by investing in better opportunities for teen girls.

Despite significant gains made in reducing poverty and improving opportunity and well-being for many people around the world, hundreds of millions remain desperate for a chance of a better future, said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today in his message on the Day, celebrated annually on 11 July.

“Among those least served by previous development initiatives are girls, particularly those in their formative teenage years,” continued the UN chief, explaining that just when girls should be in school and imagining the possibilities ahead, too many are held back from pursuing their ambitions by social and cultural traps.

While a boy's options and opportunities tend to expand when he becomes an adolescent, those of a girl too often shrink. Moreover, Mr. Ban stressed, half of all sexual assaults worldwide are committed against girls aged 15 or younger. In developing countries, one in three girls is married before she reaches 18. And teenage girls are less likely than teenage boys to start or finish secondary school, he added.

Recalling that “leaving no one behind” is a central objective of the 2030 Agenda, which also includes a specific goal to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, the Secretary General urged all Governments, businesses and civil society to support and invest in teenage girls.

“Everyone deserves the benefits of economic growth and social progress. Let us work together to ensure a life of security, dignity and opportunity for all,” he stated.

In his message, UN Population Fund (UNFPA) Executive Director Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin said: “When [a teenage girl] has no say in decisions about her education, health, work or even marital status, she may never realize her full potential or become a positive force for transformation in her home, community and nation.”

Indeed, he explained, in some parts of the world, a girl who reaches puberty is deemed by her family or community as ready for marriage, pregnancy and childbirth. She may be married off and forced to leave school. She may suffer a debilitating condition, such as fistula, from delivering a child before her body is ready for it. She may be denied her human rights.

“[Yet], when a teenage girl has the power, the means and the information to make her own decisions in life, she is more likely to overcome obstacles that stand between her and a healthy, productive future. This will benefit her, her family and her community,” said Dr. Osotimehin.

He also stressed that investments are needed to protect their health, including their sexual and reproductive health, to enable them to receive a quality education and to expand economic opportunities, including those for decent work.

The UNFPA chief underscored that a teenage girl whose rights are respected and who is able to realize her full potential is a girl who is more likely to contribute to the economic and social progress of her community and nation.
PODCAST: End of AIDS within reach, but Kenneth Cole warns of reversal if treatment push lags

11 July – Ending AIDS means controlling the spread of HIV and lessening its impact on people’s lives, the Joint UN Programme fighting the epidemic (UNAIDS) has said, noting that the number of people on anti-retroviral treatment today has surpassed the number of new infections each year, and more countries are reporting that zero mother-to-child transmission of HIV is in sight.

But in the latest episode of the UN Radio podcast series The Lid is On newly-appointed UNAIDS International Goodwill Ambassador, Kenneth Cole, says that if “there isn’t a continuation of this initiative, we will see that reverse.

Rather than see an end of AIDS by 2030, “we could see AIDS back to its historical level of devastation” he emphasized.

A world renowned, New York-based fashion designer and businessman, Mr. Cole has been an influential voice in the global response to AIDS for more than 30 years. He has also been Chair of the American Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR) since 2005.

The podcast features another long-time AIDS campaigner and activist, singer and songwriter Annie Lennox, who has been a UNAIDS International Goodwill Ambassador since 2010.

Drawing on her own experience growing up in Burundi, UN Radio producer Jocelyne Sambira – who presents the podcast – said AIDS “was a death sentence when I was growing up.”

To highlight the realities of living with HIV/AIDS in Africa today, she interviews Loyce Mataru of Zimbabwe, who had just lost her mother and son to the virus, when she found out she herself was HIV positive.

She is now living a full and healthy life, and having once tried to commit suicide because of her status, she talks movingly about the stigma of living with HIV.
UN launches ‘Sendai Seven’ campaign aimed at boosting disaster risk management

11 July – The United Nations envoy dealing with disaster risk reduction today launched a new multi-year campaign that aims to reduce disaster losses, improve management of disaster risk, and save lives.

“Despite many successes there are still far too many lives being lost in predictable events because of failures to deploy early warning systems, learn lessons from past events and to grasp the growing threat of climate change and its impact on extreme weather events including storms, floods and drought,” said Robert Glasser, the UN Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The Sendai Seven campaign is an advocacy initiative to encourage implementation over the next seven years of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which was adopted by UN Member States in 2015 in the northern Japanese city after which it was named, and consists of seven targets and four priorities for action that aim for the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.

“Risk awareness among the general public is a vital theme running through this seven year campaign which is centred around the seven targets which UN Member States have agreed on. These include substantial reductions in loss of life, numbers of people affected, economic losses and damage to infrastructure,” explained Mr. Glasser.

“The Sendai Framework also has targets focussed on increasing national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020, enhanced international cooperation to developing countries and increased availability of multi-hazard early warning systems,” he added.

Specifically, the Sendai Framework aims to:

- Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower average per 100,000 global mortality rate in the decade 2020-2030 compared with the period 2005-2015;
- Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, aiming to lower average global figure per 100,000 in the decade 2020-2030 compared to the period 2005-2015;
- Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030;
- Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030;
- Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020;
- Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of this Framework by 2030; and
- Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to the people by 2030.
UNESCO names Turkish musician Kudsi Ergüner as agency’s Artist for Peace

11 July – The United Nations cultural agency, has appointed musician Kudsi Ergüner, as an Artist for Peace in recognition of his efforts to promote the universal values of music, his contribution to the protection of musical heritage support for the International Decade of the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), and his unwavering commitment to the ideals of the Organization.

Paying tribute to Mr. Ergüner, Irina Bokova, Director-General of the UN Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) said: “Your life and work have been guided by a profound passion to bring the past to life, to share the wisdom and beauty of traditions, to pass their messages of peace and dialogue to current and future generations, to share the depth of Mevlevi Sufi music, building on Persian and Turkish traditions, mixing this with poetry, literature and living arts across the region.”

The appointment ceremony was held yesterday at the Congress Center in the Turkish capital, Istanbul, following the opening ceremony of the 40th session of the World Heritage Committee.

“I’m an artist but also a man of action and I hope to share my actions in the framework of UNESCO alongside other Artists for Peace,” said Mr. Ergüner.

Born in Turkey in 1952, Mr. Ergüner is a musician, player of the ney (reed flute), composer, musicologist, teacher, author and translator. Trained by his father, Ulvi Ergüner, the last great master of the flute, he has given concerts all over the world and has collaborated with artists, such as Peter Gabriel, Maurice Béjart, Peter Brook and Didier Lockwood.

UNESCO Artists for Peace are internationally renowned personalities who use their influence and prestige to promote the agency’s programs. UNESCO is working with them to increase public awareness regarding key development issues and the role of the Organization in these areas.
UN food relief agency launches innovation project to spur progress towards ending hunger by 2030

11 July – The United Nations food relief agency launched today an initiative to identify and nurture new technologies and business models which will contribute to the global goal of ending hunger by 2030.

Based in Munich, Germany, the Innovation Accelerator combines staff of the World Food Programme (WFP) with experts and entrepreneurs from across the private sector and civil society.

“Every day, WFP and our partners work to meet the emergency food assistance needs of the world’s poorest, yet toughest people living in the most vulnerable places around the globe,” said WFP Executive Director Ertharin Cousin.

“What we do is not enough to achieve our shared goal of ending hunger by 2030. We must boldly seek new ideas, tools and solutions that make more food available, accessible and ultimately give every person everywhere the ability to feed her or his own children.”

Teams collaborate for three- to six-month periods on selected ideas that are either proposed by WFP innovators with first-hand field knowledge or crowd-sourced by engaging members of the general public.

“We must capture the benefits of new technologies and the revolution in big data. WFP’s desire to collaborate like never before ensures that by working together we will transform how we serve, and the speed at which we deliver. As a result, we will overcome the persistent challenges that even today keep generations locked in hunger and poverty,” Ms. Cousin said.

In September last year, UN Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with 17 major goals, including on eradicating poverty and hunger.

The world has made real progress by reducing the number of people suffering from hunger by 200 million since the 1990s. Yet there are still 795 million people who do not receive enough food for an active healthy life.

WFP said that the Innovation Accelerator should be a key way to help reach Sustainable Development Goal 2 on ending hunger by 2030.

Germany is currently the second-largest donor to WFP. The Accelerator is generously supported by contributions from Germany. With 12 projects drawn from WFP’s global operations currently in its portfolio, the Accelerator will both benefit from and contribute to Munich’s strong innovation and start-up community.
UN political forum opens with focus on achieving 2030 Agenda’s call to ‘leave no one behind’

11 July – Opening the first meeting of the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development since the adoption of the UN 2030 Agenda, the President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) today outlined the tasks before the body and called for stronger commitment to accomplish its mandated tasks.

“A strong Forum means faster progress towards the attainment of the 17 ambitious and indivisible Sustainable Development Goals towards inclusive, equitable, and prosperous societies for all,” said ECOSOC President Oh Joon in his remarks.

The High-Level Political Forum will be held from 11 to 20 July at UN Headquarters in New York and it will also include a three-day Ministerial Segment, from 18 to 20 July, which coincides with the High-Level Segment of ECOSOC’s annual session.

Recalling the theme of Forum, ‘Leaving No One Behind,’ Mr. Oh said that the body will assess the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, a year after its adoption.

He noted that the deliberations will focus on enhancing national ownership around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), mainstreaming it in development plans, integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development, addressing challenges in mobilizing means of implementation, and harnessing science, innovation and technology for advancing the Goals.

He further noted that the regional perspective in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda will also be explored in the discussions.

“At the same time, we will assess progress on ensuring that the 2030 Agenda delivers for countries in special situations and facing specific challenges, such as small islands developing States, [least developed countries], [landlocked developing countries] and those in conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as middle-income countries,” added Mr. Oh.

He further emphasized the Forum’s role as the central platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs is extremely important for the future of the 2030 Agenda and its long-term success.

Enumerating the main tasks of the session, he explained: “We will be charting our direction forwards in new and innovative ways to ensure the Forum is substantive contribution to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda.”

The session will include national reviews shared by 22 countries from across the world. The volunteer reviews will include the challenges and gaps they encountered.

“I firmly believe that exchanging country experiences and best practices not only benefit individual Member States, but also the long-term implementation of the 2030 Agenda,” said the ECOSOC President.

The Forum will also consider the Secretary-General’s annual progress report on the SDGs, compiled in cooperation with the larger UN system, as well as inputs from ECOSOC’s functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies and platforms.

In its work, the Forum will engage with major groups and other stakeholders in the discussions and consider the reports on
their contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Mr. Oh expressed hope that the experience gained from the present session of HLPF will be guide the development of subsequent sessions as well as the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

“A strong Forum means faster progress towards the attainment of the 17 ambitious and indivisible sustainable development goals towards inclusive, equitable, and prosperous societies for all,” he concluded.

The Forum succeeded the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2013, in line with the outcome of the landmark UN conference on global sustainability known as Rio+20. It meets both under the UN General Assembly every four years and the UN Economic and Social Council in other years with technical, ministerial and high level segments.

As part of the substantive deliberations at the Forum, Wu Hongbo, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs presented the inaugural report of the Secretary-General on Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

The inaugural report provides the first account of the current global situation relative to the 17 SDGs and it is based on the proposed global indicator framework developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, which were agreed to, as a practical starting point, at the Statistical Commission in March this year, he explained.

“The 2030 Agenda recognizes that eradicating extreme poverty is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. In the decade from 2002 to 2012, the proportion of the world’s population living below the extreme poverty line dropped by more than half, from 26 to 13 per cent,” he said, noting that while significant, there will need to be bolder actions taken in order to eliminate poverty entirely.

“Although progress is undeniable in the fight against hunger, there are still nearly 800 million people worldwide who suffer from hunger,” said Mr. Wu on the status of Goal 2 on ending hunger, achieving food security and improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture.

The report provides an overview of the progress and the challenges implementation of each of the 17 SDGs. It is produced as per a request from the Member States to inform the follow-up and review of the Goals in the context of the Forum.

**Security Council condemns fighting in Juba, demands South Sudan's leaders prevent spread of violence**

10 July – Strongly condemning the escalating violence in and around the South Sudanese capital of Juba that began on 7 July, the United Nations Security Council today joined Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in calling for an end to the fighting, while separately demanding that President Salva Kiir and First Vice-President Reik Machar do their utmost to control their respective forces.

Reading out portions of a statement to the press following a three-hour closed-door emergency session, Ambassador Koro Bessho of Japan, which holds the Council's presidency for the month, said the body's 15 members had expressed particular shock and outrage at the attacks on UN compounds and protection of civilians sites in Juba.

The Council's statement followed similar expressions of outrage by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), which both earlier today condemned the violence and urged calm in the wake fresh clashes in Juba between soldiers of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the SPLA in Opposition. They also deplored that separately, UN and diplomatic officials have been targeted, as the world's youngest country on Saturday marked the fifth anniversary of
its independence.

“The members of the Council condemned in the strongest terms all attacks and provocations against civilians and the United Nations. They emphasized the need for United Nations [civilian protection] sites and United Nations personnel to remain secure,” said the Council President, expressing sympathies and condolences to the families of Chinese and Rwandan peacekeepers who were killed or injured in the attacks.

Urging an immediate end to the fighting by all concerned and demanding that President Kiir and First Vice-President Machar do their utmost to control their respective forces, urgently end the fighting and prevent the spread of violence, the Council in its statement also urged the two leaders to “genuinely commit themselves to the full and immediate implementation of the peace agreement, including the permanent ceasefire and redeployment of military forces from Juba.”

Further to the statement, the Security Council reminded all parties, including Government security forces, of the civilian character of the protection of civilian sites in South Sudan. As such, Council members stressed that attacks against civilians and UN premises and personnel may constitute war crimes.

They also emphasized the importance of transparent investigations into these crimes and that those involved must be held accountable and could be potentially subject to sanctions as authorized under Council resolution 2206 (2015) for actions that threaten the peace, security or stability of South Sudan.

The Council expressed its support for UNMISS and its readiness to consider enhancing the Mission to better ensure that the UNMISS and the international community can prevent and respond to violence in South Sudan, the President said.

“For his part, the Secretary-General strongly urged the country's leaders to do everything in their power to de-escalate the hostilities immediately and to order their respective forces to disengage and withdraw to their bases, saying: “This senseless violence is unacceptable and has the potential of reversing the progress made so far in the peace process.”

According to the Secretary-General, UN compounds and civilian protection sites in Juba have been caught in the cross-fire. Expressing deep frustration that despite commitments by South Sudan's leaders, fighting has resumed, Mr. Ban said they must take decisive action to regain control of the security situation in Juba.

[They must also] prevent the spread of violence to other parts of the country; guarantee the safety and security of civilians, United Nations and other personnel; and genuinely commit themselves to the full implementation of the peace agreement,” he stated.

Earlier this morning, UNMISS expressed outrage at the resumption of violence in Juba, which it said was severely impacting the civilian population.

In a press statement, the Mission reported that heavy fighting in Juba town, including in close proximity to the UNMISS compounds at UN House Jebel and Tomping, had prompted approximately 1,000 internally displaced people to flee from the UNMISS protection of civilians site (PoC) 1 into the UNMISS compound at UN House Jebel.

[Civilian protection sites have been up and running in various parts of South Sudan for the past two years and according to its most recent update, UNMISS estimates that the number of civilians seeking safety in the six sites located on UNMISS bases is 169,418.]

The heavy fighting downtown Juba had forced hundreds of civilians to seek protection at UNMISS' Tomping base, the statement went on to say and added: “The United Nations is gravely concerned about reports that armed forces have prevented civilians from seeking protection.”
Both UNMISS compounds in Juba sustained impacts from small arms and heavy weapons fire, the Mission reported. “The United Nations urges all parties to respect the sanctity of the United Nations and condemns any deliberate targeting of United Nations premises and its personnel,” it added.

Meanwhile, UN peacekeepers continued to protect displaced civilians at PoC sites 1 and 3. For the safety and security of those displaced civilians, the United Nations urged all parties to respect the civilian nature of the PoC sites. UN peacekeepers also mobilized to protect UNMISS bases in UN House and Tomping.

“The Special Representative of the Secretary-General has directly called on the leadership at the highest level in South Sudan to immediately restrain their forces, to engage in dialogue to find a political solution to this crisis and to allow access to the United Nations to be able to patrol in order to reassure the civilian population,” the statement concluded.

Just two days ago, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) noted that South Sudan has spent much of its short life at war with itself, riven by a political face-off between President Kiir and his then former Vice-President Mr. Machar that erupted into full-blown conflict late in 2013. Some 2.4 million people fled their homes in fear, before an August 2015 peace deal ended the major offensives. The country marked the fifth anniversary of its independence on 9 July.

Despite the August 2015 peace agreement that formally ended the war, conflict and instability has spread to previously unaffected areas in the Greater Equatoria and Greater Bahr-El-Ghazal regions. This past month, deadly clashes in Wau resulted in the deaths of more than 40 people, while up to 35,000 fled their homes. Such fighting is characteristic of the trend that produced fresh refugee outflows this year, a UNHCR spokesperson said Friday.

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) yesterday expressed its “deep alarm” at the renewed violence and called on all parties to respect humanitarian principles and provide unrestricted access to civilians in need. After nearly three years of war, civilians are bearing the brunt of the conflict, with women and children facing the greatest dangers and hardships, the agency added.

“Children and their families in South Sudan have suffered enough from violence, displacement and killings in this brutal conflict. It is time that peace becomes more than agreements on paper, but a reality for those who are most vulnerable,” said UNICEF Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa, Leila Pakkala.

The events in Juba come shortly after escalation of conflict in other parts of the country in recent weeks, disrupting lives and livelihoods. In Wau, where fighting has displaced at least 70,000 people since the end of June, UNICEF said that the agency and its partners are working around the clock to provide assistance to children and their families.