

UNAMID BULLETIN

International Day of Peace Celebrated in Darfur

On 20 September, to celebrate the International Day of Peace, UNAMID's Communications and Public Information Division (CPID), in collaboration with El Fasher University's Centre for Peace, Development and Human Rights Studies, facilitated an event consisting of a symposium, a photo exhibition and a music concert by popular Khartoum singer Ms. Sham-oos.

The occasion provided an opportunity for university students, academics, religious leaders, civil society representatives and government officials to come together and discuss ideas for promoting peaceful coexistence. In a speech delivered at the beginning of the symposium, Acting Joint Special Representative Aichatou Mindaoudou highlighted UNAMID's efforts to promote peace in Darfur and expressed support for the symposium,

which provided a forum to deliberate on how to promote a culture of peace.

"I encourage you to debate and discuss this issue with passion aimed at learning so as to enrich yourselves and others," said Ms. Mindaoudou. "Remember, your greatest asset is your mind; please nourish it, for you are the future of Darfur, of Sudan and indeed Africa."

The Acting JSR went on to say that there can be no sustainable peace without a pervasive culture that supports it. "The best method for achieving and disseminating that culture of peace is when all Darfuris work together toward a common goal," she said.

CPID organised similar events in Nyala, South Darfur, and Zalingei, Central Darfur. In Nyala, a symposium provided university students with the opportunity to discuss violence, peace agreements and the way forward. And in Zalin-



On 20 September 2012, in El Fasher, North Darfur, Acting Joint Special Representative Aichatou Mindaoudou walks through a CPID photo exhibition at the Centre for Peace, Development and Human Rights Studies at El Fasher University. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

gei, Central Darfur, the local community and UNAMID staff observed the Peace Day with cultural performances, recitation of peace-related poetry and a peaceful march.

The International Day of Peace is celebrated worldwide each year on 21 September. In his message for the day, UN

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called for all people everywhere to observe a minute of silence, to honour those who have lost their lives, and those who have survived but must now cope with trauma and pain. "I call on combatants around the world to find peaceful solutions to their conflicts," he said. ■

Darfur's Justice and Equality Movement Calls for End to Using Child Soldiers

One of the largest armed movements in Darfur, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), affirmed its commitment prohibiting the recruitment and use of child soldiers. JEM issued the official command order following consultation held in July in Stadtschlaing, Austria, between the Movement and UNAMID's leadership.

The talks, hosted by the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR), resulted in JEM agreeing to establish an operational mechanism to identify children, associated with its forces, for demobilization and reintegration.

The order instructs all mem-

bers of JEM to "fully adhere to the international and local laws governing the protection of children in armed conflict" and calls upon its field commanders to disseminate the document. The recruitment and use of children is considered a serious crime under International Law and the Sudan Child Act of 2010.

"Child soldiering is detrimental to peace and to children who are the future of Darfur," said UNAMID Acting Joint Special Representative Aichatou Mindaoudou. "The Mission applauds JEM's commitment to protecting children and appeals to all members of armed groups and forces to do the same." ■

JEM is among seven armed movements in Darfur, including the Sudan Liberation Army / Abdul Wahid, to have made such commitments. In July, the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) issued a similar order. To help solidify LJM's commitment, UNAMID conducted a workshop in El Fasher, North Darfur, for more than 50 LJM field commanders.

UNAMID held the one-day workshop on 20 September to discuss children in armed conflicts and determine concrete steps to implement the formal action plan submitted by LJM to the United Nations on 10 May 2012. The signed plan indicates the Movement's com-

mitment not to recruit or use child soldiers.

"This kind of workshop comes as an important step to educate and enlighten LJM's field commanders about the national laws and international conventions that prohibit the involvement of children in armed conflicts," said Colonel Abdul Salam Kateer, the LJM child protection focal point, in an interview. "Our children in Darfur have already suffered a lot during this war, and they deserve a better future."

UNAMID's Child Protection personnel are planning to conduct similar workshops for LJM members in Nyala, Zalingei and El Geneina. ■

UNAMID Continues to Address Water Scarcity in Darfur

On 23 September, UNAMID commissioned a water borehole that is expected to benefit the Mission and the surrounding community in El Fasher, North Darfur, by providing approximately 3,600 litres of potable water per hour.

The Mission's Ethiopian Engineering Unit drilled the 97 meter borehole as part of the Mission's ongoing efforts to address the scarcity of water in the region. One of the goals of the new borehole programme, in addition to facilitating water access for Darfuris, is for the Mission to be more self-sufficient with its water supply.

The 2011 International Water Conference focused on addressing water scarcity in Darfur and how to determine

the equitable use and management of this limited resource to help build peace in the region. As part of the strategy that emerged from the conference, UNAMID has been partnering with UN agencies, international organisations and Sudanese institutions in mobilizing resources needed to implement an integrated water resource programme.

"The commissioning of this borehole is a significant event in many ways," said Mr. Mohamed B. Yonis, UNAMID's Deputy Joint Special Representative. It will add to our efforts to provide water to the surrounding local community and to UNAMID personnel and it demonstrates the Mission's capacity and



On 24 September 2012, Deputy Joint Special Representative Mohamed Yonis inaugurates a new borehole at UNAMID headquarters in El Fasher, North Darfur. The borehole is expected to benefit the Mission and the surrounding community by providing approximately 3,600 litres of potable water per hour. Photo by Albert González Farran, UNAMID.

intention to replicate these efforts to provide this rare but important commodity to all sectors."

The Ethiopian Engineering Unit is expected to start drilling another borehole soon; it will be used by El Fasher University. ■

Mellit Sports Event Promotes Peace in North Darfur

On 15 September in the North Darfur town of Mellit, UNAMID sponsored a music concert and football and volleyball tournaments to encourage peaceful co-existence among the area's many tribes, which had gone through violent clashes in August. Organized by UNAMID's Communications and Public Information Division (CPID), the event drew thousands of people from different tribes and communities in the area.

Captain Francios Sass, the Head of UNAMID's South African Protection Force in Mellit, and also Team Site Commander, described the Mellit event as a way to motivate the area's residents to live in peace and harmony. "The tournament showcases the skills of the Mellit youth

and creates an atmosphere for the people and UNAMID workers to socialize in the spirit of peace," said Captain Sass.

Also speaking at the event was Mellit's Commissioner, Mohamed Osman Ibrahim, who thanked UNAMID for organizing the tournament and concert, which he said encouraged peace and friendliness in the locality. "These games are important in urging young people to work for peace and stability in Mellit," said the Commissioner.

The Head of Mellit Football Association, Mr. Elfatih Ibrahim Abakr presented the winners of the football matches and volleyball tournaments with trophies, sporting apparel and other souvenirs.

A concert by the popular Sudanese female musician,



Organized by UNAMID's Communications and Public Information Division, a 15 September 2012 outreach event drew thousands of people from different tribes and communities in the Mellit area. The event including football and volleyball sports matches, along with a music concert from popular Khartoum singer Ms. Shomoos. Photo by Abdullahi Shuaibu, UNAMID.

Ms. Shomoos, added colour and glamour to the event. Ms. Shomoos entertained the crowd at the Mellit stadium, and danced in the Sudanese style of clicking fingers in the air and shouting "Salaam" ("Peace"). ■