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At UN, robot Sophia joins meeting on artificial intelligence and sustainable development

Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed has a brief dialogue with Sophia at the “The Future of Everything – Sustainable Development in the Age of Rapid Technological Change” meeting. UN Photo/Manuel Elias

11 October – Artificial intelligence has the potential to accelerate progress on global development goals, but also poses a range of complex challenges, including ethical questions, human rights issues and security risks, speakers told a United Nations event today that featured a robot as one of the panellists.

A moment that drew big applause during the day-long event, ‘The future of everything – sustainable development in the age of rapid technological change,’ came when Sophia, a humanoid robot, had brief interaction with UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed.

To Ms. Mohammed’s question about what the UN can do to help people in many parts of the world who have no access to the Internet or electricity, Sophia said “the future is already here. It’s just not very evenly distributed [...]” quoting renowned science fiction writer

William Gibson. “If we are smarter and focused on win-win type of results, A.I. [artificial intelligence] could help proficiently distribute the world’s existing resources like food and energy.”

Sophia is Hanson Robotics’ latest and most advanced robot. Sophia has also become a media sensation, having given numerous interviews to multiple media outlets, performed in concert, and even graced the cover of one of the top fashion magazines.



In her opening speech, Ms. Mohammed warned that despite profound potential for accelerating progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), if technological progress is not managed well, it risks exacerbating existing inequalities.

“The influence of technology on our societies should be determined by the actions of us, humans, not by machines,” she said. “Technology is here for us to explore and use for the benefit of all.”

The meeting was co-organized by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the UN General Assembly’s main economic and financial body (Second Committee).

ECOSOC President Marie Chatardová said that the long-term consequences of the deep technological changes underway, for economies and societies at large, are unknown.

“We are only starting to see the benefits, but we do need to assess the risks of these technologies,” she said.

Sven Jürgenson, of Estonia, Second Committee Chairman, said that AI-based solutions are taking his country’s digital society to the next level.

He said the Government is working on a full legal and cyber-risk management framework for using fully autonomous vehicles in regular road and traffic conditions. And door-to-door robot transport will reshape how goods are shipped and delivered locally.

“Today, Internet access is a social right in Estonia. Every Estonian resident has an electronic ID and nearly all public services are accessible online, including i-Voting in Estonian Parliamentary elections,” he said.

“The development of e-Estonia has not happened in one day – it took us 17 years to start from changing legislation and creating our first e-solutions,” he added.

Cutting greenhouse gases, reducing disaster risk, vital for sustainable development – UN envoy

11 October – A new United Nations report has underscored the importance of a “risk-informed” approach to sustainable development and called for integrating global agreements on disaster risk reduction and climate change into national socio-economic planning.

Presenting the report’s findings Monday to the General Assembly’s main economic and financial body (Second Committee) Robert Glasser the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction said that the failure to include such risks in investments have resulted in rapidly rising disaster-related costs.

In his briefing, Mr. Glasser noted that over the past two decades, more than 1.35 million lives and in excess of \$2.5 trillion have been lost to disasters.



Coping with severe floods in Pakistan. UN Photo/WFP/Amjad Jamal

“In the light of this disturbing picture,” he said, “delivering on the promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will only be possible if we cut greenhouse gases as rapidly as possible in line with the Paris Agreement and reduce climate and disaster risk in accordance with the ambitious global targets agreed [...] in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.”

The report, *Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, also warned that the developing world remains at particular risk from disasters, which have resulted in annual average loss of more than 20 per

cent equivalent of social expenditure.

According to the report, by 2050, urban populations exposed to hurricanes will increase from 310 million today to 680 million. Urban assets vulnerable to sea level rise and flooding could reach \$35 trillion by 2070 – 10 times more than the current levels.

To overcome the challenges, the report urged, UN Member States to prioritize and resource the development of inclusive national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020, as a key element of efforts to reduce climate risk and disaster risk more broadly.

It also called on them to identify and seize opportunities to coherently incorporate the Sendai

Framework and the Paris Agreement into social and economic planning and investments within the context of the 2030 Agenda.

The report comes ahead of the International Day for Disaster Reduction, to be marked this Friday. The 2017 theme of the International Day, *Home Safe Home: Reducing Exposure, Reducing Displacement*, seeks to raise global awareness about effective actions, policies and practices taken to reduce exposure to disaster risk at the community level, thereby contributing to saving homes and livelihoods.

'EmPOWER' girls before, during and after crises, UN says on International Day of the Girl Child



Students attend class at a public school in Taliko, a neighbourhood of Bamako, Mali. UN Photo/Marco Dormino

11 October – The world's 1.1 billion girls are a source of power, energy, and creativity – and the millions of girls in emergencies are no exception, the United Nations said on the International Day of the Girl Child, which kicks off a year-long effort to draw global attention to and action on the challenges and opportunities girls face before, during, and after crises.

“Because of entrenched gender inequalities, disasters and conflict can make a bad situation even worse for girls,” said UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem, in a statement marking the International Day, which this year is on the theme, ‘EmPOWER Girls: Before, during and after crises.’

“They and their families, struggling to survive, are left with few choices, leaving girls even more vulnerable to child marriage, sexual- and gender-based violence, including trafficking, rape and sexual slavery,” she added.

According to the Organization's main entity on gender issues, UN Women, due to growing conflict, instability and inequality in 2017, 128.6 million people are expected to need humanitarian assistance, and more than three-quarters of those forced to flee are women and children.

“No society will flourish and no peace agreement will be lasting without empowering girls in peacebuilding and reconstruction,” said Irina Bokova, Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). “It is time to put this imperative at the heart of all of our efforts in addressing fragility, conflict and violence.”

Our special photo story on the International Day examines the challenges girls face during emergencies and highlights the critical role they play in building a better future for themselves and their communities.

Attacks against Rohingya 'a ploy' to drive them away; prevent their return – UN rights chief



In September 2017, newly arrived Rohingya refugees from Myanmar walk through paddy fields and flooded land after they fled over the border into Cox's Bazar district, Chittagong Division in Bangladesh. Photo: UNICEF/Brown

11 October – Brutal, well-organized, coordinated and systematic attacks have been carried out against the minority Muslim Rohingya community in Myanmar, with the intention of not just driving them away but also preventing their return, a new United Nations human rights report has revealed.

Based on on-the-ground interviews in Cox's Bazar, in Bangladesh, where hundreds of thousands of Rohingya have sought refuge, the report also draws attention to a strategy to “instil deep and widespread fear and trauma – physical, emotional and psychological” among the Rohingya population.

“The [UN human rights] team documented consistent accounts of the Myanmar security forces surrounding or entering villages or settlements, sometimes accompanied by Rakhine Buddhist individuals firing indiscriminately at Rohingya villagers, injuring some and killing other innocent victims, setting houses on fire, and announcing in other villages that the same would befall them if they did not comply with the order to immediately abandon their homes,” notes the report, issued Wednesday by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

It also cites testimony from witnesses that security forces committed extrajudicial and summary executions, rape and other forms of sexual violence, torture and attacks on places of worship.

Specific attacks particularly targeted the educated in the Rohingya society such as teachers, business men, religious and community leaders – “people with influence” – in an effort to diminish Rohingya history, culture and knowledge, said OHCHR in a news release announcing the grim findings.

“Credible information indicates that the Myanmar security forces purposely destroyed the property of the Rohingyas, targeting their houses, fields, food-stocks, crops, livestock and even trees, to render the possibility of the Rohingya returning to normal lives and livelihoods in the future in northern Rakhine almost impossible,” it added.

UN rights chief urges authorities to end the 'cruel' security operation immediately

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, who described the Government operations in northern Rakhine state as “a textbook example of ethnic cleansing,” also urged the Myanmar Government to immediately end its “cruel” security operation.

By denying the Rohingya population their political, civil, economic and cultural rights, including the right to citizenship, he said, the Government's actions appear to be “a cynical ploy to forcibly transfer large numbers of people without possibility of return.”

More than 500,000 Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh since the Myanmar security forces launched an operation in response to alleged attacks by militants on 25 August against 30 police posts and a regimental headquarters.

The report, however, suggests that the “clearance operations” started before that date – as early as the beginning of August.

UN agencies, meanwhile, are working to assist the hundreds of thousands in Cox's Bazar and other locations in Bangladesh where conditions for the refugees are extremely challenging, including little protection against the elements, limited food, water and sanitation facilities, and the risk of outbreak of disease.



Youth obesity increases 10-fold in four decades, UN-backed study reveals

11 October – The number of obese children and adolescents aged five to 19 years worldwide has risen tenfold in the past four decades, and if current trends continue, there will be more obese children and adolescents than those moderately or severely underweight by 2022, a United Nations-backed study shows.

“These data highlight, remind and reinforce that overweight and obesity is a global health crisis today, and threatens to worsen in coming years unless we start taking drastic action,” Fiona Bull, programme coordinator for surveillance and population-based prevention of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) at the World Health Organization (WHO), said Wednesday in a news release.

The study led by Imperial College London and WHO was published in *The Lancet*, ahead of World Obesity Day on Wednesday. It looked at body mass index (BMI) from weight and height measurements of nearly 130 million people, including 31.5 million youth aged five to 19.

Obesity rates in the world's children and adolescents increased from less than 1 per cent – equivalent to five million girls and six million boys – in 1975 to nearly 6 per cent, or 50 million girls, and nearly 8 per cent, or 74 million boys, in 2016.

Combined, the number of obese five to 19 year olds rose more than tenfold globally, from 11 million in 1975 to 124 million in 2016. An additional 213 million were overweight in 2016 but fell below the threshold for obesity.

“These worrying trends reflect the impact of food marketing and policies across the globe, with healthy nutritious foods too expensive for poor families and communities,” said lead author Majid Ezzati, a professor at Imperial's School of Public Health.

He said that the trend predicts a generation of children and adolescents growing up obese and at greater risk of diseases, like diabetes, stressing the need to make healthy, nutritious food more available at home and school, especially in poor families and communities, as well as the need for regulations and taxes to protect children from unhealthy foods.

More youth will be obese than underweight by 2022

The authors say that if post-2000 trends continue, global levels of child and adolescent obesity will surpass those for moderately and severely underweight youth from the same age group by 2022. In 2016, the global number of moderately or severely underweight girls and boys was 75 million and 117 million respectively.

In conjunction with the study, WHO is publishing a summary of the plan that gives countries clear guidance on effective actions to curb childhood and adolescent obesity. WHO has also released guidelines calling on frontline healthcare workers to actively identify and manage children who are overweight or obese.

“Countries should aim particularly to reduce consumption of cheap, ultra-processed, calorie dense, nutrient poor foods. They should also reduce the time children spend on screen-based and sedentary leisure activities by promoting greater participation in physical activity through active recreation and sports,” Ms. Bull said.



Health workers measure and record the height and weight of Erlan Bernouperinev, 3, at his home, in Kindik Uzyak Village in the Konlikul District, Republic of Karakalpakstan in Uzbekistan. Photo: UNICEF/Giacomo Pirozzi

Despite progress on voter registration, DR Congo faces challenges on election timeline – UN envoy



Maman Sambo Sidikou, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the UN Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), addresses the Security Council. UN Photo/Cia Pak

11 October – The notion that elections would most probably not be held before the end of 2017 has regrettably led to the re-emergence of a climate of political uncertainty and tensions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), a United Nations envoy for that country told the Security Council today.

“As this Council is aware, challenges related to the implementation of the 31 December Agreement have unfortunately persisted in recent months,” said Maman Sidikou, UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for DRC, in a briefing to the 15-member body.

He explained that the broad consensus achieved among key political actors with the signing of the 31 December 2016 Agreement has not been maintained consistently throughout the year, specifically as this relates to a transitional oversight mechanism, implementation of confidence-building measures, and the electoral timelines.

The Agreement envisioned the holding of elections by the end of 2017.

He reported that as of mid-September, the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) had registered over 41 million voters, with women representing 48 per cent of them.

In early September, voter registration commenced in the Kasai and Kasai Central provinces, the last remaining provinces to undergo this process. However, uncertainty persists regarding the registration of members of the Diaspora, the mode of voting and the timeline for the adoption of critical legislative enactments.

And regrettably, the financial resources required to ensure sustained progress towards the holding of elections are not yet forthcoming. The CENI remains under-funded, and the multi-partner basket support fund managed by the UN Development Programme remains funded at only six per cent of the estimated \$123 million required.

The creation of conditions conducive to the holding of elections rests largely on the implementation of confidence-building measures, the opening of political space, and the full respect of human rights, including the freedoms of opinion, expression and peaceful assembly.

The UN is concerned that journalists, political opponents and civil society activists remain subject to intimidation, harassment and violence, mostly in connection with their activities and expression of their opinions in relation to the political process.

He went on to highlight the deteriorating security situation in several regions of the country, including targeted attacks against the national security forces by the Mai-Mai group in North Kivu.

“The impact of the deterioration of the security situation on the lives of civilian populations is clearly visible,” Mr. Sidikou said, noting that between June and August this year, the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) reported 1,329 cases of violations and abuses of human rights.

Armed groups carried out 533 attacks, while state actors were responsible for 769 violations, of which 27 percent were attributed to the armed forces and 24 percent to the national police.

Turning to the deteriorating humanitarian situation, he said that about 8.5 million people – including 5.5 million children – are currently in need of humanitarian assistance while the number of internally displaced persons reached 3.8 million, and

more than 621,000 Congolese sought refuge in the subregion.

In the face of budget cuts, MONUSCO has continuously adjusted its machinery and presence to better adapt its footprint to priorities set out by the Council, Mr. Sidikou noted. The mission will soon complete the repatriation of 1,687 military personnel, and is also in the process of introducing a new strategy, particularly in areas affected by the closure of MONUSCO bases, that provides the mission with a flexibility in fulfilling its mandate to protect civilians.

UN launches innovative plan to significantly cut new HIV infections

11 October – Despite a 50 per cent drop in AIDS-related deaths since the peak of the epidemic, new HIV infection declines among adults are lagging, prompting the United Nations to launch a 10-point plan that lays out immediate, concrete steps countries can take to accelerate progress.

As part of global efforts to end AIDS as a public health threat, the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and other partners launched on Tuesday the HIV prevention 2020 road map at the first meeting of the Global HIV Prevention Coalition to reduce new HIV infections by 75 per cent by 2020.

“Scaling up treatment alone will not end AIDS,” said Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS, in a statement.

“We need more energy and action put into HIV prevention – stronger leadership, increased investment and community engagement to ensure that everyone, particularly people at higher risk of HIV, can protect themselves against the virus,” he added.

While new HIV infections among children have fallen by 47 per cent since 2010, new HIV infections among adults have declined by only 11 per cent.

In 2016, in the UN Political Declaration on Ending AIDS, countries committed to reduce new HIV infections by 75 per cent – from 2.2 million in 2010 to 500,000 in 2020. The new road map will fast-track countries to achieve this target.

“In many places, lack of access to education, lack of agency and lack of autonomy over their own bodies keep adolescent girls from claiming their human rights,” UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem added.

“And the poorest girls have the least power to decide whether, when or whom to marry and whether, when or how often to become pregnant. This lack of power makes each one of these girls extremely vulnerable to HIV infection, sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy,” underscored Dr. Kanem.

Source: HIV Prevention 2020 Road Map

The HIV prevention 2020 road map contains a 10-point action plan that lays out immediate, concrete steps for countries to accelerate progress, such as conducting up-to-date analysis to assess where maximum impact opportunities lie; developing guidance to identify gaps and actions for rapid scale-up; and addressing legal and policy barriers to reach the people most affected by HIV, including young people and key populations.

It identifies factors that have hindered progress, including political leadership gaps, punitive laws and a lack of HIV prevention services in humanitarian settings, and highlights the importance of community engagement to advocate for service delivery and accountability.



Malawi teen, Martha, was born with HIV. Now a mother herself, she has defied the odds and her son, Rahim Idriss, is part of Malawi's AIDS-free generation. In this picture, she awaits the results of Rahmin's HIV test. After two months of waiting, she finds out the Rahmin, now 8-months old, is HIV negative. Photo: UNICEF/HIVA201500101/Scherbrucker

“UNAIDS is urging commitment and leadership for measurable results,” said Mr Sidibé. “Leadership to address sensitive political issues and leadership in mobilizing adequate funding of HIV prevention programmes.”

Cutting new infections by 75 per cent will require a focus on HIV prevention, combined with scaled-up HIV testing and treatment. A location-population-based method for efficient planning and programming along with a people-centred approach for those at higher HIV risk will be critical.

Concerted efforts will be needed, including to reach adolescent girls, young women and their male partners; to increase the availability and uptake of condoms; and to ensure that preventative medicines are available to people at higher risk of HIV.

The road map encourages countries to develop a 100-day plan for immediate actions, including setting national targets, reviewing progress made, reassessing national prevention programmes and taking immediate remedial action.

UN chief proposes \$5.4 billion budget for 2018-2019 biennium



Flags outside the UN Secretariat building. UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

11 October – United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today presented the Organization’s proposed programme budget for the 2018-2019 biennium, amounting to just under \$5.4 billion, to the UN General Assembly’s main administrative and budget committee.

The proposal (before re-costing) is about \$200 million – about four per cent – below the appropriation for the current biennium, and reflects an overall net decrease of 92 posts compared to the current budget.

“In taking the oath of office last December, I promised to work with the Member States to reform the UN thoroughly and continuously,” Mr. Guterres told the General Assembly’s Fifth Committee.

“Reform is for the people we serve and, indeed, for everyone who serves under the UN flag or is part of the enterprise of building a better world for all.”

In formulating the proposal, explained the UN chief, ways to make the Organization more nimble, responsive and effective in managing its staff and resources, and in supporting its Member States were explored.

An extensive review of our internal policies and administrative instructions is under way to remove duplication, reduce fragmentation and streamline procedures, he added.

In his briefing to the Committee, Mr. Guterres spoke of the new UN strategy to combat sexual exploitation and abuse, strategy on gender parity, strengthening whistle-blower protection, the new counter-terrorism office and strengthening the development pillar of the Organization.

As part of the reforms, the Secretary-General noted that he is delegating managerial authority to programme managers and demanding greater accountability from them for mandate delivery; proposing changes to the UN management and support structures; and proposing measures to streamline and improve the planning and budgeting processes; measures to improve his ability as the chief administrative officer to redeploy resources within parts of the budget to better support the implementation of mandates.

“The reform proposals will not affect the budget proposal for the biennium 2018-2019,” he said.

The UN chief also noted that for the new management structure, a breakdown of functions and a costed proposal for the two new departments in 2018 will be provided. Some of the changes will be reflected in the support account for 2018/2019, and others will be accommodated within the approved staffing table for the regular budget.

The changes to the planning and budgeting cycles and documentation will come, if approved, into effect in 2020.

New allegation of sexual abuse surfaces at UN mission in Central African Republic

11 October – United Nations Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric said Wednesday that the UN Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) reported it had received an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor that took place in Bambari by UN peacekeepers.

“The alleged victim was immediately referred to our humanitarian partners on the ground for appropriate medical and psychological assistance,” said the Spokesman, adding that the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services has carried out a verification of information inquiry and preserved evidence, which will lead to the matter being referred to the Member State for further investigation and action.

Last month, during a high-level event on the margins of the UN General Assembly’s annual general debate, Secretary-General António Guterres announced the appointment of Jane Connors as the first-ever UN Victims’ Right Advocate, who, he said would develop system-wide mechanisms and policies to promote reliable gender- and child-sensitive processes for victims and witnesses to file complaints.

He also announced the creation of a ‘Circle of Leadership’ for Heads of State and Government to demonstrate resolve and commitment at the highest political level to eradicate sexual exploitation and abuse.



Spokesman for the Secretary-General, Stéphane Dujarric. UN Photo/Evan Schneider (file)

FEATURE: A woman’s strength is unlimited, says award-winning UN peacekeeper



Annah Chota, UN Police Officer serving with the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). Photo: UNPOL

11 October – “Being a girl child, I dreamt of occupying a powerful position to influence and create change in the community. It was the segregation of women that I experienced in my childhood that gave me the strength to add my voice in everything I did.”

These are the words of Annah Chota, who last month was honoured as International Female Police Peacekeeper for her service and achievements with the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

Growing up in Harare, Zimbabwe, Ms. Chota’s awareness of the inequalities that existed between girls and boys began at an early age. The way society groomed boys for professional careers and steered girls towards domestic chores led her to start dreaming of a more equal world.

“My father had originally been disappointed by having only girl children [the four daughters were later followed by sons], but then he began to appreciate us more through the discipline and tenacity to succeed displayed by myself and my sisters. At the time of his death in 2007, he had sacrificed all to ensure that we were educated and, as he used to say, we did not need to depend on a man for survival,” she told *UN News*.

Through her life, Ms. Chota fought to “remove the fixed stereotype on the limitations of women and girls.” She left Zimbabwe to study accounting in South Africa, but had to drop out of university at the end of her second year because her father could no longer afford the fees. She was then encouraged to join the Zimbabwe Republic Police by her brother-in-

law, because that would give her the opportunity to work and fund her education.

Since 2006, Ms. Chota has been developing her passion for policing. In 2014, having graduated with a degree in Business Administration, she started leaning towards gender mainstreaming. And in November 2016, she was deployed to Sudan, where she was appointed as head of the Gender and Children Affairs Unit in the police component of UNISFA.

“When I arrived, there was no institutions or a government that would make the work of advancing gender equality easier, so we had to look for initiatives that would allow us to have the support of the communities, not only to promote gender equality but also to help us with prevention and protection of women from gender-based violence,” she recalled.

Through training workshops and campaigns with local communities, Ms. Chota contributed to a shift in how communities deal with rape, domestic violence, child marriage and forced marriage, by recognising marital rape as a criminal offence.

“The biggest obstacle for gender equality is the absence of laws because it doesn’t give women the support they need to report cases of gender-based violence,” she said.

That was the reality confronting Assistant Inspector of Police Annah Chota when she got to Abyei to take up her post. In response, she helped to start a new network that would allow women to speak out. The idea of creating that network came with Ms. Chota from Zimbabwe, where “women also had to find a way of disseminating the message of equality.”

Since she arrived in the field, her main concern was always to protect women and girls and that is what motivated her to start lobbying to find support. “We needed to create a space for women to speak to their leaders. We needed to empower them, through community dialogues, to report and record the crimes,” she added.

Today more women are reporting gender-based violence, and in the absence of a police service, community protection committees can now record and recognise sexual and gender-based crimes.

“The success story of Abyei is that community policing models such as the problem-oriented approach and involvement of the community in policing have really helped to build confidence in the society to report cases of sexual and gender-based violence.”

Ms. Chota was recognised for her key contributions towards restoring the public’s trust in the police and encouraging children, women and men to become partners in preventing and detecting crime.

In her opinion, gender equality is not an issue that only Abyei has to deal with. “Issues of gender equality are global. The world at large is male dominated, and without empowering women, gender inequality remains solidified in the society.”

Ms. Chota is the first police officer from Zimbabwe to receive the award, which recognises the outstanding accomplishments of female police officers serving with the UN and has been bestowed annually since 2011.

“To be honest, representing my country is a dream,” she said. “When people watch athletes or world leaders representing their nations, they have this feeling that they want to also do something to raise the flag of their country high. I aspired to do it.”

Upon receiving the award, Ms. Chota said that it underscores “the value of hard work, professionalism, teamwork and discipline, which every peacekeeper must exhibit.”

The UN is working to attract more policewomen to join the 1,098 female police officers from 69 countries, who are currently serving in UN peacekeeping missions. In 2009, the world body launched the “Global Effort” and has worked with Member States and national police services to recruit more female police officers into UN operations. The goal is to reach 20 per cent women in the UN Police by 2020.

Zimbabwe provides 85 police officers to UN operations in Abyei, South Sudan (UNMISS), Sudan (UNAMID), and Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), 31 per cent of whom are women.



Ms. Chota called on other women to join her in the fight for gender equality. “Strength within women is unlimited. As women, we already play multiple roles, which indicates that also in peacekeeping we can do it and we can do more. What’s important is to believe in yourself, because if we advance women, everyone will succeed.”

“Peacekeeping gives unmeasurable feelings of joy when you are able to put a smile on the face of someone whose life was ravaged by war, abuse and poverty,” she added, noting that this is what keeps her going when she misses her husband and two small boys.