



Events Report

Commemorating International Women's Day

2023

March 8



#IWD2023

Striving for ZERO unmet need for family planning



#IWD2023

Striving for ZERO FGM



#IWD2023

ZERO preventable maternal deaths



#IWD2023

Striving for Gender Equality

Introduction

International Women's Day is a global event that celebrates the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. It also marks a call to action for accelerating gender equality. The day has been observed for over a century and has been an essential platform for highlighting the ongoing struggles that women face in achieving equal rights and opportunities. It is a reminder of the need to promote women's empowerment and work towards a more equitable society. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) recognizes the significance of International Women's Day and its role in advocating for gender equality, and it is committed to supporting and empowering women in Somalia.

In Somalia, women face significant challenges that impede their social, economic, and political participation. Challenges that are only made worse by the chronic conflict, climate crisis and resultant mass displacements. UNFPA Somalia has been working tirelessly to address these challenges and support women's rights and empowerment.

In commemoration of International Women's Day 2023, UNFPA Somalia organized a series of events, in a bid to provide a platform for women to engage in meaningful discussions, and network with stakeholders. These events were carefully designed to address the key issues that Somali women face and promote their empowerment. By providing a platform for Somali women to discuss their challenges, as well as opportunities for women, and advocate for peace, the events aimed to contribute to the overall efforts of achieving gender equality in Somalia. Through these events, UNFPA demonstrated its continued dedication to empowering Somali women and promoting gender equality in Somalia.

By providing a platform for Somali women to be seen and heard, UNFPA Somalia hopes to continue to support the efforts of Somali women towards achieving gender equality and a better future for all.

The events included panel discussions on gender equality and opportunities for women, an art gallery showcasing the works of Somali women, a march for peace by Somali women, and community outreach events aimed at ending harmful practices, advocating for peace, and promoting girls' education. UNFPA Somalia also collaborated with partners to distribute dignity kits at IDP camps, providing essential hygiene supplies to support women and girls. The events received extensive media coverage, shining a spotlight on UNFPA Somalia's dedication to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Message from The Representative



On this International Women's Day, let us celebrate the achievements of women and girls around the world, particularly in Somalia. Despite the many challenges they face, I am filled with hope and passion as I witness firsthand the incredible strength and resilience of Somali women and girls who strive for their rights, progress, and change in their communities.

Somali women and girls have faced tremendous obstacles, such as prolonged drought, displacement, and the horrific prevalence of female genital mutilation (FGM). Nevertheless, they have demonstrated time and again their ability to overcome adversity and achieve great things. At UNFPA, we remain committed to ending FGM in Somalia and supporting women and girls affected by it. We firmly believe that every woman and girl has the right to bodily autonomy and the freedom to make choices about their bodies and lives.

We at UNFPA are dedicated to working with our partners to empower women and girls in Somalia to access the information and resources they need to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. Whether through our efforts to provide reproductive health services or to assist survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), we believe that every woman and girl has the right to live free from fear and violence.

Looking forward, I am filled with hope for what we can achieve together. I am inspired by the young Somali women and adolescent girls who are pushing boundaries and breaking down barriers, from enrolling in ICT courses to using social

media to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

UNFPA is committed to supporting the government and all stakeholders in establishing legal frameworks to combat GBV, including rape. We also recognize the devastating impact that climate change is having on women and girls in Somalia, and as UNFPA, we stand ready to deliver immediate humanitarian assistance to drought and conflict-affected areas to ensure that women and girls have their health and hygiene needs met, and that they are safe from GBV.

On this International Women's Day, let us celebrate the achievements of women and girls in Somalia, and recommit ourselves to the work of building a more just and equitable society for all. Let us renew our resolve to end all forms of violence against women, including intimate partner violence. Let us work together to provide survivors with the support they need to heal and recover, and to create a world where every woman can shine and access equal opportunities.

Together, we can create a brighter future where every woman and girl has the opportunity to thrive. Let us celebrate the achievements of women and girls today, and let us continue to work towards a world where their contributions are fully recognized and celebrated. With renewed commitment to Somali women and girls, I remain hopeful for the future.

Niyi Ojuolape
Representative, UNFPA Somalia

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1

The Grand Inauguration

General Kahiye Police Academy,
Mogadishu

The Grand Inauguration at the General Kahiye Police Academy was organized by the Central Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development (MOWHRD) as part of the 8-day women activism from March 1st to March 8th.

The objective of event was to commemorate the International Women's Day by showing solidarity to the women in Somalia and to celebrate their achievements in all spheres of life. The event also aimed to create awareness of cyberbullying and online digital harassment, which has become a trending issue in the country. More women have been subjected to online harassment by their trusted partners, and it was documented that cases of suicides have taken place. The event was an opportunity to showcase UNFPA's contributions to the overall wellbeing of women and girls in Somalia through the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV) by all possible means and by providing resources to the

government to make laws that will not only criminalize GBV but also punish perpetrators of violence.

Addressing the grand event, the Prime Minister of Somalia, H.E. Hamza Abdi Barre, acknowledged the strength and productivity of women when they are trained and empowered. The Prime Minister emphasized the importance of supporting women in areas liberated from Al-Shabaab by providing essential services such as health, education, and food.

The event brought together government and non-government partners, academia, CSOs, community groups, and VIPs from the government, including the Prime Minister H.E. Hamza Abdi Barre. Officials from UN agencies, fund and programs, namely UNFPA, UNDP, UNSOM, and UNWOMEN, were also in attendance. Other key guest speakers included UNWOMEN Country Manager and the head of UNSOM Human Rights and WPE.

UNFPA Country Representative Mr. Niyi also addressed the guests, and highlighted the vital role of women in building a more just and equal world, and recognized the progress made towards their emancipation and protection. He urged the government and stakeholders to invest in improving the social standing, protection, and capacity of women to enjoy and claim their rights. He also emphasized the importance of digital innovation and technology in advancing women's rights and empowering them to achieve their full potential. He called for the establishment of legal frameworks to combat gender-based violence, including rape, and the support of female activists in addressing the impact of climate change on women and girls. He closed his speech by renewing UNFPAs commitment to creating a world where every woman can shine and access equal opportunities, and called for the recognition and celebration of women's contributions.

During the event, the PM recognized Mme Asha Haji Elmi, a veteran politician and women's rights champion, as a hero for her role in peace and reconciliation efforts during the civil wars and as the person behind the 30% quota for women in public offices.

As part of the income generation efforts by the Ministry and a form of encouraging local production by small-scale businesses run by women, women selected from districts in Banadir were brought together to demonstrate basketry. The basketry also encourages conservation of the environment by using non-plastic products that are not hazardous to the environment.

The Somali government has also taken concrete steps to empower young girls in Al-Shabaab liberated areas by recruiting 3,000 school teachers to reach out to them. This

initiative will go a long way in improving access to education for girls, thereby enhancing their prospects for a better future. The government is committed to creating an enabling environment for women and girls to thrive and contribute to the development of Somalia.



2

UNSOM Townhall

Mogadishu

As part of the International Women's Day, UN Somalia organized a townhall panel discussion for members of the UN Gender theme group (GTG). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, SRSG office, organized the event, and Anita Kiki Gbeho, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) for Somalia, highlighted the importance of ICT in shaping women's future. UNFPA was invited to participate in the townhall.

Country Representative UNFPA Somalia, Niyi Ojuolape, was a panel member for the discussion on the effect of online digital violence. During the discussion, Niyi Ojuolape emphasized the need to establish a cyber tribunal to trial offenders of cyberbullying and encouraged more women to join tech spaces. He also stressed the importance of empowering women and adolescents against cyberbullying, educating them on how to respond to such incidents, and training children to protect themselves against cyberbullying. Additionally, he highlighted the need for internet regulatory frameworks, the collection of evidence in partnership with internet intermediaries, and the establishment of censorship in the cyber market to prevent the propagation of negative images in cyberspace.

UNFPA Somalia's response to internet violence includes investing in legal frameworks against GBV, including SOB, providing ICT courses for young people (with 700 of them being young adolescent girls), sensitizing adolescent girls against blackmailing, and highlighting that digital space is not only bullying but also a liberating platform.





3

International Women's Day at Banadir Hospital Mogadishu

The International Women's Day (IWD) event was held on March 8, 2023, at the Banadir Hospital, Mogadishu. The event aimed to raise awareness about gender equality, reproductive rights, and violence against women. The Ministry of Health (MOH), World Health Organization (WHO), and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) organized the event to promote maternal and child health and reduce maternal mortality in Somalia.

The event was attended by several dignitaries, including the Minister of Health, H.E Dr Ali Haji, WHO Representative, Dr Sk Md Mamunur Rahman Malik, UNFPA Chief Health, Kamlesh Giri, and Banadir Hospital Director, Ms Fartun Sharif. The event started with a presentation by an obstetrician, who highlighted that 33 maternal deaths occurred in Banadir Hospital among 7,000 live births, indicating the urgent need to improve maternal health and ensure quality services.

The launch of Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR) was a significant highlight of the event. MPDSR is a model of continuous surveillance that links the health information system and quality improvement processes from local to national levels to identify, notify, quantify, and determine the causes and avoidability of all maternal and perinatal deaths. The objectives of MPDSR are to provide information that effectively guides immediate and longer-term actions to reduce maternal mortality and to count every maternal death, permitting an assessment of the true magnitude of maternal and perinatal mortality and the impact of actions to reduce it.

The event received wide media coverage, including Somalia National TV, social media, and web news outlets. The event was a joint collaboration with MOH, WHO, and UNFPA, who are working together on maternal death surveillance and response. No challenges were faced during the event, and the lessons learned were to reaffirm the commitment to improving maternal health and reduce maternal mortality in Somalia.

The day's mottos were "Every woman and newborn counts," "Better data, better decisions, better outcomes," and "No women should die while giving life." The event was highly organized by the Maternal and Reproductive Health Division of the Family Health Department, Ministry of Health. The event successfully raised awareness and highlighted the need to prioritize maternal and child health in Somalia.





4

Somalia Through my Eyes Art Exhibition, Nairobi

UNFPA Somalia hosted an art exhibition to celebrate International Women's Day, showcasing the works of Somali artists. The event was a tribute to the strength, resilience, and creativity of Somali women and girls, highlighting the challenges they face and the progress made toward gender equality. Organized by the UNFPA Somalia Country Office in collaboration with the Tribal Art Gallery, Xavier Verhoest from Art2Be, and Sagal Ali from Somali Arts Foundation. The event was attended by representatives from Embassies, donor organisations, partner organizations, and UNFPA staff.

As the primary purpose of the event was to create a refreshed momentum amongst the donor community and heads of development/humanitarian agencies to support women and girls in Somalia affected by drought and increase funding for the UNFPA Somalia CO, the event was organised in Nairobi, Kenya. There were two main components of the event: a panel discussion with Somali women leaders to raise awareness on women and girls' issues in Somalia and success stories on women's empowerment, and a Somali Art Gallery to raise awareness on the situation for women in Somalia.

Ms. Nkiru Igobkwe then opened the event on behalf of Somalia's country representative, Niyi Ojuolape. She gave a detailed overview of the event's agenda and welcomed all donors and guests. Hawa Abdullahi moderated the panel session of the IPS/Beneficiaries of UNFPA



The panel consisted of three accomplished women: Amina Osman, former Minister of Women Affairs in Puntland; Anisa Mohamed, a youth activist; and Ayaan Khalif, program manager of the EU-funded Dalbile project. They discussed various topics, including the barriers to achieving women empowerment in Somalia, strategies needed to achieve gender equality, and the impact of UNFPA and its donors on their lives and communities. The panelists mentioned cultural and social norms, structural barriers, forced or early marriage, illiteracy, lack of technology knowledge, low pay in the informal sector, political exclusion, and internet insecurity as some of the barriers to women's empowerment in Somalia. Amina Osman suggested addressing specific issues affecting different age groups, such as providing free girl child education and policies that support women's inclusion in civil society or the private sector. Ayaan Khalif shared her experience of how UNFPA and its donors changed her life, her family's lives, and the lives of young women and girls in her community. She emphasized the importance of technology in empowering women, especially busy mothers. Anisa Mohamed shared her journey of gaining experience and knowledge through trainings and innovation projects funded by UNFPA. The moderator concluded the panel by highlighting the impact of UNFPA and its donors on the lives of women and girls in Somalia, including the midwifery project. The audience had an opportunity to ask questions and share comments and recommendations with the panelists, including the role of technology adoption in the progress of women's empowerment in Somalia.

The art gallery featured a diverse range of artworks, including paintings, photographs, and installations, that explored various themes related to women's empowerment. From depictions of everyday struggles to expressions of hope and resilience, each piece offered a unique perspective on the experiences of women and girls. Guests were invited to attend the exhibition, either in person or through [a virtual tour](#). Through this digital medium, the exhibition reached an even wider audience, making it possible for people who were unable to attend in person to experience and participate in the celebration of Somali women's achievements.

Attendees found the event to be "*a moving and inspiring tribute to women and girls everywhere*". Through the power of art, the event celebrated the progress made towards gender equality and advocated for further advancements in the fight for Somali women's rights and empowerment. [Explore Digital Platform...](#)





5

IDP Camps & Host Community Celebrations Dollow, Southern Gedo.

On 8th March 2023, the International Women's Day was celebrated with women in Dollow district IDP camps and the host community. The event was organized by SEDHURO, a UNFPA implementing partner, who were doing social mobilizations in the region. The team conducted GBV awareness raising sessions in Kaharey IDP camp, where they provided menstrual hygiene kits to 100 women and girls, and dignity kits to 25 vulnerable women.

During the awareness sessions, SEDHURO team identified the challenges faced by the women in the camp. The women complained about the lack of vocational skills centers, insufficient latrines, inadequate protection from weak shelters, attempted rape cases, and traditional harmful practices such as FGM. The women from Kaharey community also requested for vocational training opportunities.

SEDHURO team also joined other protection and humanitarian partners in commemorating the day at Ladan IDP camp in Dollow district, where they planted 95 trees in community gathering points. Over 100 women from Ladan and other IDP camps attended the event. SEDHURO had a close working relationship with women groups from the host community, who conducted a separate event to celebrate the day. SEDHURO provided full packages of dignity kits to 25 vulnerable women from the host community at the request of the district chairlady.

Overall, the IWD celebrations in Dollow district IDP camps and host community provided an opportunity to raise awareness about gender-based violence, provide menstrual hygiene and dignity kits to vulnerable women, and most importantly, help identify the challenges faced by the women in the region. The event also highlighted the need for vocational skills training centers and better protection for women and girls.



IWD event at Ladan IDP camp in Dollow district organized by protection cluster members.

IWD GBV awareness in Kharey IDP camp by SEDHURO FCDO project team





6

Making All Spaces Safe

Garowe, Puntland

UNFPA organized an event in Garowe, Puntland, to highlight the importance of protecting the rights of women and girls in digital spaces and addressing online and ICT-facilitated gender-based violence. The event was attended by 100 participants, including high-level dignitaries from the Ministry of Women Development and Family Affairs (MOWDAFA), Ministry of Justice & Religious Affairs (MOJRAR), Ministry of Youth, Labour and Sports (MOLYS), and the Executive Director of Puntland Media Association.

Ms. Mariam director general MOJRAR, underlined gender-responsive approach to innovation, technology and digital education can increase the awareness of women and girls regarding their rights and civic engagement. Ms. Mariam from Hawo feminist gave a digital security presentation, emphasizing digital risks and online threats that women face, common weaknesses, and the consequences of online violence towards women and girls. Mr. Kamal Abdukadir from UNFPA presented technology facilitated-GBV and UNFPA body right campaigns, emphasizing the definition of TFGBV, characteristics of TFGBV, who experiences the impact, and profiling of TFGBV perpetrators.

Participants had the opportunity to ask questions and raise issues of concern, such as the coverage of technology facilitated-GBV in the sexual offense bill. The panelists and participants agreed on the need to advocate for making all spaces safe for women and girls, and emphasized the importance of gender-responsive approaches to innovation, technology, and digital education to increase awareness of women and girls regarding their rights and civic engagement. The event was attended by in-school young boys and girls between the ages of 15-25, emphasizing the importance of engaging youth in the fight for gender equality.



7

Ministry of Women Celebrate IWD Dhusamareb, Galmudug

The Ministry of Women, Galmudug, supported by UNFPA organized an International Women's Day commemoration in Dhusamareb, Galmudu. The event celebrated the achievements of women and to reflect on the progress made towards gender equality. The theme of this year's event was not specified in the available information.

The main objectives of the event were to celebrate the contributions of women in Galmudug and to raise awareness about gender-based violence (GBV). The Ministry of Women in Galmudug is working on developing anti-GBV laws at the state level to combat gender-based violence.

The event was attended by the Minister of Women, H.E. Ubah, who noted the Ministry's efforts to develop anti-GBV laws and to partner with Men and Boys to combat cyber harassment that many women have been victimized on. The event was successful in highlighting the importance of women's contributions and raising awareness about gender-based violence. The Ministry of Women's efforts to develop anti-GBV laws and partnership with Men and Boys to stop cyber harassment were commendable.



8

International Women's Day Celebration

Baidoa, Southwest State.

On Wednesday, 8th March 2023, over 200 participants gathered at the Ruun Jinaad conference hall in Baidoa for the 2023 International Women's Day celebration. The event was sponsored by UN Women, UN, UNFPA-READO, IRC, DRC, SCI, New Ways, SWDC, GREDO, WORLD VISION, and Taakulo, and organized by the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development (MWHRD) of Southwest State (SWS) in Somalia. The event's theme was "The development of women today to find a brighter future tomorrow. Women are the backbone of peace."

The event started with a recitation from the holy Qur'an, followed with opening speeches from MWHRD's General Director, a representative from the ministry, and the chairlady of the Bay Women organization. The AMISOM commander encouraged Somalia to end violence against women, integrate women in justice and peace processes, and promote their participation in politics and governance. Entertainment performances followed, with Jinaawkey musicians singing a song in Ethiopian highlighting the presence and importance of AMISOM women in Somalia, especially in SWS, and a short drama addressing gender-based violence (GBV).

Other speakers included a presidential consultant, a representative from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and a Minister of Education who congratulated the women of Baidoa and across the globe on International Women's Day. The lead of marketing for Hoormud Foundation shared investment opportunities available to the women of Baidoa. Finally, Libaan Muse Said from IRC WPE Manager spoke on behalf of all the sponsor organizations.

The main speaker, H.E. Minister Fahima, of the MOWHRD of SWS, delivered a speech emphasizing the impact of droughts in Southwest State, which has resulted in many women and children being displaced and losing their livelihoods. She called on donors to continue supporting vulnerable people in the state and pleaded with well-wishers to provide essential lifesaving services to avert famine in SWS.

Minister Fahima also stressed the importance of women's participation in society's development and progress. She urged the government of SWS to prioritize the development of policies and programs aimed at ending GBV and improving the safety of women living in Baidoa. She concluded her speech by congratulating the women of Baidoa and across the globe on International Women's Day and encouraging them to continue striving for gender equality and empowerment.

The event's digital theme was well-received, with participants seeing it as a capacity-building opportunity for women. The presence, commitment, and contribution of the sponsors and participants to the event's success solidified their support for women and the issues that affect them.



Representatives from different ministries



Fahima Osman- minister of MOWHRD



AMISOM



Jinawakee Group



9

The Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs, & Family (MESAF) Event

Hargeisa, Somaliland

This year's global theme is "DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality," and the Somaliland government chose its local theme to be "Promote peace through women in technology and social media." MESAF organized the event at the Jees Hotel in Hargeisa, which was attended by line ministers, directors, senior government officials, civil society organizations, media, and international community members, including the UN and donors. The day's activities included discussions and debates focusing on women and technology, drama and role plays on the role of women in advancing peace through innovation and technology.

The event aimed to honor, celebrate, and appreciate women for their contributions to their families, communities, and country, recognize women's achievements, raise awareness for women's equality and participation, dialogue on the barriers that hinder women's progress, agree on a joint call to action to eliminate obstacles that hinder women's

advancement, lobby for accelerated gender parity, stress the benefits of having more women in technology, and highlight women's critical role in peacebuilding through technology and innovation.

The event was attended by members of the GBV Working Group, senior government officials, civil society, women-led organizations, international and local partners. Speeches were delivered by representatives of various organizations, including line ministers of the Somaliland government, UN partners, and donors. Representatives from UNICEF, UNHCR, IOM, and UNFPA spoke with powerful messages related to the global and local themes. The event focused on the role of women in promoting peace as the local theme in Somaliland was "promote peace through women in technology and social media."

The event was attended by influential women and men from local and international organizations involved in advocating gender equality and supporting actions to end gender-based violence. Representatives from the UN attended the event, and media coverage was provided by Somaliland National TV, Horn Cable TV, and MM Somali TV. Attendees gained knowledge on the current status of women in Somaliland and the government's commitment to achieving gender parity and ending all forms of gender-based violence.

UNFPA was acknowledged as a partner that supported MESAF both technically and financially. MESAF had a follow-up workshop on the status of the FGM Policy, and UNFPA participated and financially supported the success of this activity.



Gender director for MESAF, UNFPA and UNHCR Gender team representatives



women walk back after receiving dignity kits and attending GBV awareness session at Kabassa IDP Camp

10

Distribution of dignity kits at IDP camp Kabassa, Dollow

On March 8th, 2023, Human Development Concern (HDC) commemorated International Women's Day (IWD) by distributing 100 dignity kits to women and adolescent girls and raising awareness of gender-based violence (GBV) at Kabassa IDP in Dollow District. HDC is currently implementing a project, supported by UNFPA, to provide life-saving emergency sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and GBV services to drought-displaced and vulnerable women and girls in the region.

The distribution of dignity kits and GBV awareness-raising activities aimed to help women and girls in the IDP center maintain their dignity and protect themselves from GBV during the humanitarian crisis caused by the ongoing drought. HDC selected women, adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women, and GBV survivors with extreme poverty and other vulnerabilities to receive the dignity kits. The kits contained culturally appropriate clothing, personal hygiene items, and menstrual hygiene products.

The distribution exercise was conducted in collaboration with the local authority, community elders, IDP camp leaders, and community women leaders. The beneficiaries were selected through community targeting, and individual beneficiaries were registered in a pre-distribution list. The distribution exercise involved verifying each beneficiary and demonstrating how to use the items in the dignity kit. During the awareness sessions, HDC also raised awareness about the dangers of GBV and how to mitigate them in the community through grassroots mobilization and awareness.

According to Shamsa Bare, a beneficiary of the distribution exercise, the unique needs of women and girls in IDP settings are often overlooked. She emphasized that women require protection from gender-based violence and have unique health and hygiene requirements, including access to menstrual hygiene products, which are often not addressed. The distribution of dignity kits and GBV awareness-raising activities by HDC is an essential step towards addressing these overlooked needs.

In conclusion, HDC's distribution of 100 dignity kits and GBV awareness-raising activities on International Women's Day at Kabasa IDP in Dollow District is a crucial intervention to support vulnerable women and girls during the ongoing humanitarian crisis caused by the drought. The project is aligned with the theme of the IWD, "digitALL: Innovation and Technology for gender equality," and highlights the importance of using innovative approaches to address the unique needs of women and girls in humanitarian crises.



UNFPA and HDC staff conducting the dignity kit distribution event during International Women's Day

Photo: Women at the commemoration of International women's Day (IWD) at Kabasa IDP Camp social hall.





Distribution of Dignity Kits

Qansaxlay IDP Camp, Dollow, Jubaland

On March 8th, 2023, Action for Relief and Development (ARD) celebrated International Women's Day in Qansaxlay IDP camp, Dollow District, Jubaland State of Somalia. Despite the tension in Dollow District due to recent fighting and instability, around 60 community members attended the celebration, including community leaders, elders, women's groups, and youth. The event began with a drama play, which enlightened the audience about FGM and the harmful effects of girls' circumcision. The community welcomed the message of the play, and it was well-received.

ARD staff took the opportunity to sensitize the community about intimate partner violence (IPV) and FGM, two of the GBV present in the community. The importance of safeguarding women and children and eliminating violence against them was discussed. All participants in attendance pledged to take interest in the discussion and shared experiences and resolve against GBV, especially FGM.

Two members, one representing the women's group in the camp and the other representing the community, were given time to express themselves. They emphasized the importance of fighting against violence against women and thanked ARD for organizing the event, as it was the only celebration held in the camp.

Despite the challenges faced in the region due to prolonged drought, loss of livestock, and a scarcity of water and food, the celebration was marked with tangible outcomes. The event highlighted the importance of empowering women and providing them with access to lifesaving services.

The celebration ended with participants receiving refreshments and drinks. ARD documented the event with photos, showcasing the resilience and bravery of Somali women.



12

IWD with Ministry Of Women

Kismayo, Southern Lower Juba

The International Women's Day event was held on March 8, 2023, at the Hotel Rotano in Kismayo. The event was organized by the Jubaland Ministry of Women, UNFPA, and Partners. The theme for the event was "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality," which is in line with the upcoming 67th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW-67) priority theme. The event aimed to celebrate the achievements of women in society and reflect on the progress made towards gender equality.

The event began with verses from the Quran recited by Sheikh Bashir, who elaborated on the rights of women in Islam and the high-ranking status given to them. Gender Director Mr. Mohamed Muhumed Mohamed emphasized the aim and purpose of the day and the event's theme. He highlighted the ministry's efforts to establish a women development center in Kismayo with support from GIZ and provide campaign materials, information, and networking on violence against women.

Mama Barrey, the District chairlady, spoke about the importance of the day for women to discuss different issues and share their experiences. Mama Faduma Katela, the chairlady of the Jubaland state government women's group, emphasized the role of women as the backbone of society and role models for many. She also expressed the hope of achieving more in the coming year.

Miss Halima Farah Godane, the executive director of Women Lead Organization, raised concerns about the practice of FGM among young girls, especially in IDP settlements, and urged the government to scale up its commitments and activities against FGM. Dr. Abdullahi, UNFPA, gave a speech about IWD, the theme of this year, and the need to strengthen legal frameworks to combat gender-based violence, including rape.

UNFPA and the Ministry organized a panel discussion bringing together women from different backgrounds to discuss how to invest in digital innovation and technology for women and girls, the negative impact of drought on women and girls, and ways to tackle all forms of GBV. The Minister of Women, Adar Ismail, in her closing remarks, expressed her commitment to investing in digital innovation and technology to empower women and



girls and achieve their full potential. She also condemned all forms of violence against women and reiterated the need to work on pending legal frameworks.

The event had partners and collaborators included UNWOMEN, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR, and GBV sub-cluster partners in Kismayo. The media coverage was by Jubaland TV.

In conclusion, IWD 2023 highlighted the impact of the digital gender gap on economic and social inequalities. The event emphasized the importance of protecting the rights of women and girls in digital spaces and addressing online and ICT-facilitated gender-based violence. The Minister expressed gratitude to all participants and partners who contributed to the success of the event.





13

Dignity Kit Distribution

El-Jaale IDP settlement & new Kismayo,
Kismayo, Southern Lower Juba

On International Women's Day, the UNFPA and its partner organization SOLO, came together to distribute dignity kits to the women and girls of El-Jaale IDP settlement and new Kismayo in Kismayo district. The event was marked by the dissemination of crucial knowledge and sensitization sessions on the pervasive issues of gender-based violence (GBV), female genital mutilation (FGM), and early marriage.

In an effort to empower and educate the women of the camp, UNFPA and SOLO organized an informative session, where the participants were enlightened about the grave dangers and risks associated with FGM. The attendees were also sensitized on seeking care and safe spaces in case of experiencing GBV.



This event was a significant step towards ensuring the protection and well-being of women and girls, who are often the most vulnerable and marginalized members of society. By providing them with necessary resources and education, UNFPA and SOLO aim to create a safe and inclusive environment where women and girls can thrive and reach their full potential.



14

NUSOJ

Call to sensitize digital violence against women journalists, Mogadishu

The National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ) highlighted the continuing challenges faced by women journalists in Somalia and Somali women in general, on the occasion of International Women's Day. Women journalists in Somalia are reported to suffer discrimination at work, sexual harassment, and gender-based violence both in their workplaces and homes. While the number of women journalists in the newsroom has been increasing, they reportedly earn less pay than their male counterparts for the same output, and many media houses lack gender policies that speak to the unique needs of women.

The theme for this year's International Women's Day, "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality," underscores the potential for women's participation in shaping public opinion through their work in the media. However, women journalists in Somalia face many risks on the digital highway, including online harassment, bullying, and stalking.

NUSOJ has been working to address the challenges women face in the media and at the workplace through advocacy and training. They call on the Somali government to strengthen the protection of women through rule of law and to leverage advances in technology to make the world a better place for women.





15

Peace March Mogadishu

On International Women's Day, a peace march was led by the Minister Honorable Khadija M Diriye, of the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development of the Federal Republic of Somalia, and Deputy Commissioner of Police, General Zakia Hussein. The event was marked by the laying of a wreath in remembrance of Somali women activists who lost their lives while fighting for women's rights and equality.

The march was a symbolic gesture of solidarity and an expression of the unwavering commitment of the Ministry of Women & Human Rights Development, and its partners, including UNFPA, to strive for women's voices, rights, and equality. The event aimed to raise awareness about the challenges faced by women and girls in Somalia and to mobilize support for their cause.

By honoring the memory of the brave women activists who gave their lives for the betterment of Somali women, the march sought to inspire a new generation of women leaders to continue the fight for gender equality and women's rights. The event was a testament to the resilience and determination of Somali women, who have been the driving force behind many positive changes in their country.

UNFPA Somalia, Mogadishu, Somalia

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