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**NOTE TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**  
(through Ms. Malcorra)

DPI Weekly Press Review

This week's press review examines coverage of your official visit to Nigeria and France, where the focus was largely on climate change and Boko Haram, and international reaction to the South Sudanese peace agreement that was finally signed by the country's President Salva Kiir.

In Abuja, there was outsized press interest in your visit, which was framed by many outlets in the context of the country's recent elections and what was viewed as a critical moment for Nigeria. Boko Haram was another key element of both the reporting and the analysis, particularly after another attack by the group shortly before your arrival.

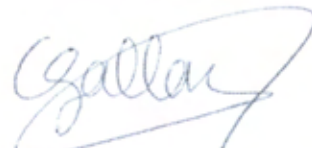
In Paris, climate change was the clear focus as momentum builds there towards the negotiations to be held in early December. International coverage of this issue is likely to spike further next week when President Barack Obama travels to Alaska to highlight his own action plan and the impact of global warming.

On South Sudan, your statement in the wake of the peace deal was widely reported, especially the remark that it is time to ensure that the pact translates into meaningful results on the ground. Most commentators, however, remained highly sceptical that the deal would be adhered to by either of the main parties.

As the week wore on, the treatment of refugees and other migrants dominated front pages following twin tragedies in an abandoned truck in Austria and in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea. While those tragedies generated sympathetic coverage, many media outlets worldwide continue to fan xenophobic or anti-migrant sentiments.

Your personal statement today was thus timely and forthright, and a reminder of the moral leadership that the United Nations can bring to this issue. The Department of Public Information is disseminating the statement as quickly as possible to a global audience. The Department is also working with your office to coordinate communications on the broader issue of migration ahead of the high-level meeting on 30 September.

Thank you.



Cristina Gallach  
28 August 2015

cc: The Deputy Secretary-General / Mr. Feltman / Mr. Khare / Mr. Kim / Mr. Ladsous / Mr. O'Brien / Ms. Mohammed / Mr. Amdur / Mr. Dujarric

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## PRESS REVIEW

Friday, 28 August 2015

Produced by News and Media Division, Department of Public Information

### SECRETARY-GENERAL'S TRAVELS: NIGERIA AND FRANCE

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's official visit to Nigeria and France this week received widespread coverage from both international and national media outlets. With the adoption of the new sustainable development agenda just a month away and December's climate conference looming on the horizon, the issue of climate change featured prominently in the reporting, particularly on the Paris leg, while it shared space in coverage of the Abuja leg with terrorism and other domestic challenges.

#### *Nigeria's 'crucial moment'*

Media reports on the United Nations chief's arrival began even before his plane landed in Abuja. South Africa's **ENCA**, Zimbabwe's **Chronicle** and the Philippine news portal **Inquirer** were among those that pointed to the timing of a Boko Haram attack on a Nigerian army convoy just hours before the UN chief's arrival. **Al Jazeera** also noted the timing, saying Ban was "due to arrive... to commemorate the fourth anniversary of a deadly attack on the UN by Boko Haram in the capital Abuja." Nigerian daily **Leadership** reported that the Secretary-General laid a wreath to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the attack on the UN, while **AFP** highlighted that he had hugged relatives of victims of the 2011 bombing, and praised "the extraordinary fortitude and determination of the survivors." According to **Voice of America**, Ban was in Nigeria to talk about "terrorism and other vital issues" with President Muhammadu Buhari. **AP** reported that Ban promised Buhari solidarity in the new leader's fight against insecurity, unemployment and corruption.

The Nigerian press paid close attention to the visit. **This Day** was among many outlets carrying the Secretary-General's commendation to the Nigerian people for the "peaceful, free and fair election," which he said had earned the country the respect of the world. **The Punch** featured Ban's comment that Nigeria was passing through "a crucial moment," during which the UN stood ready to help. **NAN** news agency called the visit "a good omen" for Nigeria, while the **Daily Post** ran a seven-page spread highlighting the UN chief's activities in photos, ranging from addressing UN staff to immunizing a child at a health-care site. The **Daily Trust** pointed out that "almost every waking moment" of the visit was occupied with activities. On US-based news portal **Sahara Reporters**, Wumi Akintide professed pride when Ban spoke "so glowingly about Nigeria and her potential to be the leading economic powerhouse in Africa," but despaired that the Nigerian National Assembly lacked "the serious business of making laws and shaping government policies... [to] make a difference in Nigeria." In **This Day**, Precious Kalamba Gbeneol, MDG adviser to former leader Goodluck Jonathan, credited the visit with serving to "further inspire the country to stay committed to invest in pro-poor project and programmes."

#### *Chibok Girls – 500 days and counting*

Ban's demand, made at a joint press conference with Buhari, for the unconditional release of the so-called Chibok girls, along with other Boko Haram abductees, was picked up by numerous agencies and newspapers, from **Reuters** to **Daily Post** of Lagos. According to **This Day**, the Secretary-General stressed that no efforts should be spared to find and reintegrate the abducted girls into society, while **Deutsche Welle** quoted Ban as saying it is "intolerable that their lives have been interrupted in this way." Local news portal **NAIJ** reported that the UN announced it would sponsor 500 Boko Haram violence victims to acquire vocational skills – such as hairdressing, tailoring, shoe-making, and computer studies.



At the same time, the media noted that Ban was unable to meet with the #BringBackOurGirls Group. Online newspaper **Premium Times** said the group sent out e-mails inviting media houses to cover the proposed meeting, "but about 45 minutes after the scheduled time," it learned Ban could not attend, and group members "who thronged the Abuja hotel... left dejected." Nigerian-based portal **360 NoBS** reported that the UN chief "snubbed" the group, preferring dinner with Buhari. **Leadership** ran the story under the headline "Security Report: Ban Ki-moon fails to meet BBOG group."

### *Climate change: looking ahead to COP21*

Ban's stance on the environment echoed broadly in the African media, from the **Cameroon Tribune** to Uganda's **New Vision**. **NAIJ** reported that he emphasized the importance of climate change – adding that the Sustainable Development Goals may not be realised without tackling the phenomenon. **Information Nigeria** flagged that Ban underscored to Buhari his hope of a strong UN partnership with the country on climate. The **Daily Post** highlighted his praise of Buhari's "leadership on environmental reform" and promised UN support to help restore Ogoniland, which faces oil-related environmental problems. **Pulse Nigeria**, **Premium Times** and **Channels Television** were among those reporting on Ban's lunch with the business community, with its focus on the SDGs and climate. Selam Kidane opined in **Addis Fortune** that the Paris talks would be especially important for Africa, which is "currently experiencing the impacts of climate change more than in previous years."

In Paris, the UN leader's meeting with French President François Hollande garnered wide attention, partly for the fact they discussed the upcoming climate conference. Kuwait's **KUNA** news agency, **Xinhua**, India's **IANS** news agency, and Azerbaijan's **APA** were among those to focus on that aspect of the meeting. **AP** and **AFP** underscored that Ban encouraged world leaders to "accelerate" negotiations ahead of the conference, while **Reuters** highlighted his call on countries to "to look beyond their national interests." According to an interview with **Le Monde**, Ban was particularly worried about the level of ambition, the agreement's legal nature, the issue of responsibilities and the problem of financing. **The Irish Times** noted in its own article that in the interview the Secretary-General had voiced concern about the level of ambition. French radio **RFI** reported that Ban hoped for permanent and long-term commitments, including that companies invest in renewable energy.

In **The Guardian** (UK), European Climate and Energy Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete warned that "painfully slow" negotiations must accelerate to seal a meaningful pact in Paris after "sharp interventions from the UN Secretary-General." **Reuters** reported that Cañete said the EU would only support a UN deal if the agreement was legally binding and included regular reviews to ensure words were translated into deeds. According to Sweden's **Dagens Nyheter**, the UN warned that the world must prepare for sea levels rising by up to 90 centimetres before 2100. In the **Ottawa Citizen**, Peter McKenna noted that "there have been very few attempts, thus far, to apply an international human rights framework to address the negative impacts from anthropogenic climate change. That needs to change." Sylvestre Huet asserted in **Libération**, that, at best, a COP21 success would still fall a step short. In **The Hindu**, Sujatha Byravan and Sudhir Chella argued that in the lead-up to Paris, "developing countries should focus on sustainable development targets, rather than legally binding commitments to reduce emissions."

### **SOUTH SUDAN'S CIVIL WAR: BEGINNING OF THE END?**

At least eight ceasefire agreements have come and gone since the start of the conflict in South Sudan in December 2013. The peace deal signed this week by President Salva Kiir was therefore given an extremely cautious welcome by the media, with reports that both sides to the conflict had trepidations. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon generated a raft of press coverage, particularly his emphasis on the



need to translate words into action. While the overall tenor of coverage was gloomy, a few reports exhibited some optimism.

After the deal was signed, **Reuters**, the **Irish Times**, **Xinhua** and Nigeria's **The Nation** were among a throng of media featuring Ban's statement: "Now is the time to ensure that this agreement translates into an end to the violence, hardship and horrific human rights violations witnessed throughout this conflict." **L'Agence de Presse Africaine**, Kuwait's **KUNA** news agency and the **Sudan Tribune** reported that Ban stressed that the UN stood ready to support the parties in implementing the agreement. Adding their voices to that call were former US Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice, Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and AU Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma in reports found in **The Guardian** (UK), **DPA** and **Sudan Tribune**, respectively.

#### *A reluctant signatory*

The most common view was that Kiir signed very reluctantly amid the threat of UN sanctions, as noted in **Al Jazeera**, **Nigeria News** and Turkey's **World Bulletin**. The leader's reticence was also highlighted by the **Wall Street Journal**, which reported that "Salva Kiir makes clear he doesn't view [the] deal with rebels as final." **AFP** said that before signing, Kiir warned of the risk of failure, saying there were "so many things we have to reject" in the deal, and that "such reservations, if ignored, would not be in the interests of just and lasting peace." According to **The Guardian**, Kiir said at the ceremony that he had faced intimidation during the peace process, adding that negotiations were handled "carelessly" by regional and world leaders. **Mail & Guardian Africa** noted that "the international diplomatic tone has clearly changed – these are very tough days for President Salva Kiir, despite signing peace deal this week." **AFP**, meanwhile, reported that Juba's list of reservations undermined fundamental pillars of the accord.

**The BBC** observed that any sense of optimism had already started to wane in Juba, with renegade generals not signing on, and adding that "there's little here that would make the 1.6 million displaced people in South Sudan rush home." A **Bloomberg** editorial called the deal a "triumph of exasperation over experience" that did little to tackle South Sudan's underlying tensions. The **New York Times** reported that clashes between the warring factions were continuing around the country "even as the latest accord was completed," while a **Reuters** dispatch said both sides accused each other of attacks for the second time this week, "this time barely a day after President Salva Kiir signed a peace deal that looks increasingly fragile." Noting that Kiir "grudgingly" signed the deal under the threat of sanctions, Colum Lynch and Siobhán O'Grady wondered in a **Foreign Policy** analysis whether the agreement was "worth the paper it's written on."

More positively, Egypt's **Al-Ahram** and Uganda's **New Vision** reported that SRSF Ellen Margrethe Løj called the deal a first step in ending the brutal conflict even though many hurdles remained. The **Sudan Tribune** carried an analysis by Justine Fleischer, of the Enough Project, who underlined that while the agreement did not resolve South Sudan's multiple crises, it provided a starting point for the parties to sit together to begin rebuilding their nation. Simon Allison concluded in an analysis for South Africa's **Daily Maverick** that "while sceptics are right to wonder if his signature is anything more than a PR stunt, the truth is that peace doesn't come easy – and this is as good a place to start as any."

#### *Security Council flexes its muscles*

The Security Council was thrust into the headlines when it warned of immediate action in the form of sanctions if the peace deal was not signed. A sample of headlines included: "No respite: Nigeria-led UN Security Council hands South Sudan leader new ultimatum" (**Mail & Guardian**); "UN Council to 'act immediately' if S. Sudan peace deal not signed" (**New Vision**); and "UN Security Council gives South

Sudan President until September 1 to lift peace deal reservations” (India’s **NDTV**). The threat of sanctions was also reported in the **Sudan Tribune**, **AFP** and global news channel **Vice News**.

Nigerian Ambassador – and this month’s Council President – Joy Ogwu garnered her share of the press, including in **New Vision**, which carried her assertion: “We will take immediate action if he [Kiir] does not sign, or if he signs with reservations.” After Kiir signed, and with a 1 September deadline to get fully behind a peace deal, **AFP** reported her as saying “he has room to play.” Ogwu was also quoted in **Xinhua**, in her national capacity, as saying that “an arms embargo would go a long way in alleviating the situation,” while noting that there were already numerous illicit weapons inside South Sudan.

USG Stephen O’Brien’s comments on the humanitarian situation in South Sudan were also picked up, with the **BBC** reporting that he had heard multiple accounts of atrocities, whose scope and level of cruelty “suggests a depth of antipathy that goes beyond political differences.” **Reuters** and **DPA** said that O’Brien recounted horrendous human rights violations that had been reported, including “rampant killing, rape, abduction, looting, arson and forced displacement” as well as burning people inside their homes. The **New York Times** noted O’Brien’s comments on the targeting of aid workers, sometimes on ethnic grounds. Separately, **The Guardian** reported that UN aid agencies have responded to Kiir’s signing with “cautious optimism.”

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