

News

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon Stresses Women's Leadership and Security during First Visit to Africa

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Nairobi — The incoming United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon concluded his first visit to Africa with a strong message on promotion of women's leadership and zero tolerance for sexual violence and exploitation. Mr. Ban started his visit to Kenya with a visit to the Kibera shanty towns yesterday afternoon where he deplored the extreme poverty people are living in. He expressed concern about sanitation and disease and stated that the United Nations must invest in community programmes that empower citizens to change the mindsets of the community to improve their own situation.

At a meeting with the UN Heads of Agencies in Kenya, UNIFEM Regional Programme Director Ms. Nyaradzai Gombonzvanda applauded the UN Secretary-General for the appointment of women to high positions since he took office, especially the appointment of Dr. Asha Rose Migiro as Deputy Secretary-General. Ms. Gombonzvanda briefed the Secretary-General on women's poverty in Kenya, which has led to increased risk of HIV and sexual and gender-based violence. She also highlighted UNIFEM's commitment to Millennium Development Goal no. 3, especially the target of increasing the number of women in leadership through the multi-donor gender and governance programme in Kenya.

The UN Secretary-General emphatically stated that violence against women and sexual exploitation is unacceptable, and that the United Nations must have coordinated interventions and responses. He stressed further his commitment to moving forward the gender recommendations of the report of the High Level Panel on Systemwide Coherence, as well as paying primary attention to the One UN approach. He equally indicated his commitment to gender parity in UN staffing, recognizing meritocracy.

The Secretary-General was in Kenya for two days following his visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo and the African Union, where he attended the Africa Union Summit.

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