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Bentiu kicks off celebrations for the International Day of the African Child in Sudan

The International Day of the African Child, commemorated globally on 16 June, was celebrated in Bentiu, Unity State yesterday 14 June.

A group of United Nations Volunteers serving with UNMIS in Bentiu took the initiative to organise a day-long event in Bentiu stadium, in collaboration with South Sudan Orphan's Care Organisation and Africa En Vogue, a Polish Non-Governmental Organisation, under the umbrella of the State Ministry of Social Development.

UNMIS Indian contingent coordinated the event and transformed the Bentiu stadium into a "fun" area, where some 500 children from four different schools and neighborhoods joined the celebration.

Children expressed their artistic talent by drawing African masks, played football, took part in a quiz on environmental issues and participated in other activities.

The Bentiu Youth Group performed a play carrying messages on children's rights with a focus on the child's right to education.

State Ministry officials attended the event and delivered speeches on the significance of this Day.

"It was really great to see kids' happy faces. I am also glad that we incorporated the traffic campaign and malaria awareness messages into the quiz. Not only kids had opportunity to learn, but also the adults", says Agnieszka Mikulska, UNV from Bentiu.

The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, that UNMIS is mandated to support, makes provision for children's rights and wellbeing.

The International Day of the African Child was established to honour the lives of children who, in 1976, marched in the streets of Soweto, South Africa, to protest the inferior quality of their education.

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Drama group performing for children in the Bentiu stadium



Education through drawing activities



An UNMIS military observer at the arts corner with a child drawing



A child expresses his artistic talent during the Bentiu activities of the International Day of the African Child

Photos: Daniela Bosioc/UNMIS