



DDR must move forward, says Taye-Brook Zerihoun

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) stakeholders must move forward to implement DDR objectives in Sudan, UNMIS Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General Taye-Brook Zerihoun said in Khartoum on 17 February.

"As the DDR effort and our own collaboration turns a new page, we need to move forward together ... most importantly, we must move now from the conceptual to the practical," Mr. Zerihoun told the 2008 inaugural session of the National DDR Coordination Council.

He stressed, however, that DDR timelines must be realistic. "We cannot declare demobilization without the necessary resources to provide benefits, whether they be goods, money, training or jobs", he said.

Praising the National Coordinating Council for recently adopting the DDR Strategic Plan, the Deputy Special Representative said the next step under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was for the parties to begin the process of downsizing their armies.

He noted that reintegration projects should precede demobilization of ex-combatants. "Without successful demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, sustainable peace and the accompanying social and economic development will not be possible," he said.

UNMIS is playing a leading role in coordinating UN system support for DDR with the help of the UN Development Programme, UNICEF, the UN Population Fund and the World Food Programme.

UNMAO to hold 'Landmine Victim Assistance' photo exhibit

The UN Mine Action Office (UNMAO) in Sudan held a 'Landmine Victim Assistance' photography exhibit at the Rashid Diab Arts Centre in Khartoum from 19 to 22 February. The exhibit focused on challenges faced by victims of landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW), their reintegration into Sudanese society and the importance of human security.

Landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) present physical, psychological and social threats to human security in 19 of Sudan's 26 states. While the exact number of victims is unknown, the UNMAO managed Information Management System for Mine Action has identified 4,035 landmine/ERW casualties in the country.

The exhibit featured the work of Giovanni Diffidenti, who in December 2007 photographed UNMAO's Victim Assistance related projects in Juba, Yei, Wau, Kassala and Khartoum.

HEARD on RADIO MIRAYA:

On the Joint Defence Board establishing a fact-finding committee to investigate the security situation in Abyei ...

"This committee is traveling to investigate who is responsible for the closure of roads. In the meantime, SAF deny [their] involvement in the issue ... [within] one week, the committee will finish its work."

Bior Ajang
JDB Member
20 February

On the signing of an agreement on accountability and reconciliation between the Ugandan government and the LR ...

"This crucial agreement will allow the victims and the communities affected by the conflict to participate in justice, reconciliation, and [the] healing process."

Riek Machar
GoSS Vice-President and
Peace Talks Chief Mediator
20 February

On Pagan Amun calling for a review of 'power-sharing' in the CPA ...

"If the partners [the NCP and SPLM] decide to review the agreement, then that's another thing. I believe that

UN and Partners shift to recovery and development

Recovery transition and development will share the focus of humanitarian efforts throughout the whole of Sudan in 2008, UNMIS Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ameerah Haq said at the Khartoum launch of the 2008 UN and Partners Work Plan for Sudan on 19 February.

Ms. Haq was joined at the launch by Sudanese Minister of International Cooperation Al Tijani Saleh Fidail. She noted that when it came to Southern Sudan and Southern Kordofan, up to 75 per cent of the humanitarian needs would be directed to recovery and development. "This is a considerable shift in a brief period of time," she said.

According to the Work Plan, some \$ 2.29 billion was needed for humanitarian assistance, early recovery and development projects in 2008. Over 20 per cent of the designated amount has been secured.

Turning to Darfur, Ms. Haq stated that "tangible progress remains slow", as insecurity and lack of access continued to compromise work on the ground. As a result, humanitarian needs remained a priority in Darfur, with \$825 million required for assistance, she said.

Noting that this was the last annual Work Plan, Minister Fidail pointed out that next year would mark the switch to a national strategic five-year plan reflecting the shift in Sudanese needs from humanitarian towards recovery and development. "This plan is complemented by a joint UN and government process to develop a UN Development Assistance Framework for Sudan, covering the period 2009 to 2012," he said.

Parties to LRA talks sign accountability agreement

Marking a significant step forward in the peace process, parties to ongoing talks between the government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army/Movement (LRA/M) signed an agreement on accountability and reconciliation in Juba on 19 February.

The agreement allows LRA members charged with war crimes to be tried in the Ugandan justice system, rather than the International Criminal Court. This means that victims and communities affected by the conflict can now participate in seeking justice, reconciliation and healing.

In a joint press statement issued after the signing ceremony, the two parties expressed their commitment to justice and reconciliation as prerequisites to attaining lasting and sustainable peace in northern Uganda.

Now that an agreement has been reached on accountability and reconciliation, there is growing hope among members of both parties that a final comprehensive peace agreement might be signed by the end of February deadline.

the agreement is a part of the constitution now, so could the constitution be reviewed? In principle, any talk that would contribute to accelerating the peace process in Darfur is appreciated. But if the issue is just a mere political statement, then it would be doubtful that it will be implemented."

Omar Adam Rahma
NCP member
19 February

From Miraya FM's exclusive interview with Muhamed Al-Ansari on proclaiming himself as Wali of Abyei ...

"Our basic reference is not the legitimacy which Edward Lino depended on in establishing a government in Abyei ... when the movement [SPLM] breached the Abyei protocol, and established a government headed by Edward Lino, and [also] when its army violated the 1956 borders."

Muhamed Al-Ansari
Head of the Abyei
Liberation Front
19 February

CPA still on track, says Ashraf Qazi

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) had remained on track, but could be undermined by mistrust between the two parties, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan Ashraf Qazi told the Security Council on 19 February.

Briefing the Council for the first time since he assumed position as head of UNMIS, Mr. Qazi said “the peace process has reached the halfway mark and a number of critical benchmarks are fast approaching”, including demarcation of the 1-1-56 border line, the census, national elections in 2009 and the Abyei issue.

The Special Representative noted that Abyei had remained a potential flashpoint area for the resumption of conflict. He said UNMIS had advised the parties to consider a two-pronged approach -- providing basic services to the people of Abyei and encouraging reconciliation on the ground.

Addressing the humanitarian situation, he said that Southern Sudan and the Three Areas continued to progress towards early recovery.

Concluding, Mr. Qazi emphasized that peace in Sudan was indivisible. Should implementation of the CPA succeed, prospects for an end to the humanitarian crisis and a peaceful resolution of the Darfur conflict would brighten.

MIRAYA HIGHLIGHTS

Live Debates and Call-ins

Mother to Child HIV Transmission: LT. Martin Taban, SPLA HIV Secretariat (13 February).

Project on Private Sector Development: Dr. Kenyi Spencer, World Bank Consultant, and Mr. Albano Adak Othow from the Micro Finance Unit, Bank of Southern Sudan (18 February).

Social/Community Forest: Kenyi Bullen and Angelo Okenyi from the Agro Forestry Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries, GoSS (19 February).

Features and Interviews

Feature: In many parts of Southern Sudan, health services are rare. There is an acute shortage of medicine, wards and medical staff. The biggest medical institute in Southern Sudan, the Juba Teaching Hospital, is no exception.

Interview with Kenyan Consul to Southern Sudan: Kenyan Consul to Southern Sudan, Ambassador Joseph Kiplagat, discusses possible solutions for the post-election crisis between the Kenyan government and its opposition.

Darfur: The Road to Peace

Performances highlighting peace and reconciliation by the Geneina-based artist collective, Dar Andoka.

UN Mirror

Child Protection Special: An interview with Dr. Samira Amin of the Child Protection Unit, UNICEF. The programme also included a report on the five-year plan for child protection, as proposed by the National Council for Child Welfare, as well as a profile following the lives of displaced children.