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## South Sudan: Sudanese People Still Awaiting Tangible Peace Dividends

Progress in the implementation of the January 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed by the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army can only be consolidated if southern Sudanese in the south start enjoying tangible peace dividends.

Donor governments, which promised billions of dollars to help with the reconstruction of the south, need to make those resources available to ensure that hundreds of thousands of returning Sudanese, as well as recipient communities, gain greater access to water, medical assistance, education and sustainable livelihoods. Inefficient funding mechanisms like the World Bank managed Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) need to be improved. Donors must provide greater bilateral technical assistance and support to all levels of the Government of South Sudan in order to increase its capacity to execute reconstruction programs.

For months now, international attention and donor generosity have been focused on the ongoing conflict and related humanitarian crisis in the Darfur region of Sudan. Any success derived from diplomatic and humanitarian efforts in Darfur, however, will be temporary unless equal diplomatic and financial efforts are devoted to the steady implementation of the CPA. Based on wealth and power sharing principles, and embodying a comprehensive plan to move towards a more equitable and democratic Sudan, the agreement has indeed stumbled in fulfilling security benchmarks (see: <http://www.refugeesinternational.org/content/article/detail/10091/?mission=10016>) but has simultaneously achieved progress in other sectors like the creation of the institutions of the Government of National Unity and other technical common bodies.

Soon after the signature of the CPA, a donors' conference convened in Oslo, Norway garnered funding pledges of over \$4 billion for the post-conflict reconstruction and development of Sudan, with an emphasis on the 2005-2007 period. This included the approximately half a billion dollars that was committed to the World Bank administered MDTF, a mechanism that has thus far proved to be woefully inefficient, with only about \$80 million disbursed to date.

The basis of the MDTF was a set of overly ambitious projections made by World Bank officials in the post-war euphoria. They included unrealistic expectations of the nascent southern Sudanese civilian authorities, despite the clear lack of structural and managerial capacity in the face of immense development needs. Southern Sudanese reality has exposed some of the weaknesses inherent in the trust fund concept, and while the MDTF is a small fund in comparison with the overall bilateral pledges, as one World Bank official was quick to point out to Refugees International, blaming slow disbursement on the weak capacity of government counterparts is an attempt to deflect attention away from the Bank's strategic mistakes in setting up the fund.

Sudan's immediate post war needs are daunting. The country lacks the most basic infrastructure like roads and bridges, and requires improved airstrips and port facilities to allow for trade and the importation of development materials. It also lacks reliable communication networks, electricity, and a functioning banking system. The delivery of these priorities will take years.

But donors must not allow the immensity of the overall challenge to distract them from the imperative of making a difference in people's lives now. Rebuilding and in some cases establishing basic community services --- water and sanitation, health, education --- respond to the most urgent needs of Sudanese households and must become immediate priorities. While long-term development is clearly essential, donors must recognize the need for the massive and immediate infusion of funds to fulfill the most basic needs, and must be aware that the scale of these needs has left returnees and their host communities very vulnerable to the reemergence of humanitarian crises should service gaps in water, health, and sanitation continue to go unaddressed.

For example, recent government data show that 1,200 new safe water points need to be dug and another 700 rehabilitated per year to meet the projected need. The estimated cost for a borehole is about \$12,000, but it appears that the technology currently being utilized is far from state-of-the-art. "Donors are reluctant to invest in costly water exploration, so we are left to drill according to trial and error, sometimes drilling as many as 10 holes before we strike water," one humanitarian official told RI. Medical care is weak to non-existent with increasing pressure on very limited health personnel and supplies, and in the education sector the government is projecting a near doubling of the number of students to approximately 1.6 million pupils in 2007 alone.

Two years have gone by and high expectations have given way to thinning patience. Considerable effort has been put into the establishment of the MDTF and now that donor resources have been paid into the Fund, technical assistance and diplomatic efforts are needed to ensure that they are disbursed to allow those projects under implementation to be completed. This coming October when the Sudan Consortium, the body which monitors the implementation of the CPA, meets again to evaluate the aid and development policy lines for the 2008 – 2011 period, it will have the opportunity to make adjustments while taking stock of the lessons learned in order to make the MDTF intervention more effective.

To allow for an increase in the overall coverage of the reconstruction effort donor regulations need to reflect the realities and challenges of working in southern Sudan. Some donors have made it clear that bilateral humanitarian funding is coming to an end and that programs have to be handed over to the government, regardless of its current capacity to run them. Non-governmental organizations, which have been working on relief programs for years, are prepared to make the shift to medium-term recovery activities, but find donor policies an obstacle. A humanitarian worker told RI, "Donor rules that allow for the funding of programs will often not fund the startup or operating costs, making new programs prohibitively expensive in this sort of difficult operating environment." Another humanitarian official complained, "Donors won't allocate money for use in some areas because there are no NGOs to absorb it, but they also refuse to give money to allow NGOs to set up in those areas." One major donor has contracted with an entity that in turn subcontracts projects with implementing agencies, but the donor is funding on a cost reimbursement basis, forcing NGOs with limited independent resources to pay huge programming costs up front. Many simply can't afford to do so.

Finally, the donor cycle is not working in conjunction with the realities of southern Sudan. Construction is just one example. For building and development, in order to fully capitalize on the dry season, which starts in November and runs to the beginning of June, planning and the pre-positio-

tioning of resources must be done during the current rainy season. Funding, however, is often only made available to NGOs around the onset of the dry season, and valuable building time is wasted as NGOs scramble to procure and transport materials.

## **REFUGEES INTERNATIONAL RECOMMENDS:**

### **The Government of Southern Sudan:**

- ❑ Increase substantially the proportion of financial resources allocated to reconstruction and development as opposed to security.
- ❑ Make the development of public service sectors a priority within its policies, and strengthen its cooperation with international technical experts and NGOs, both foreign and national, in order to improve water and sanitation, primary health care and education at both the state and county levels.

### **The Sudan Consortium:**

- ❑ Revisit the 2005 development plan of the Joint National Transition Team and set more realistic and achievable targets in the recovery, reconstruction and development of southern Sudan.
- ❑ Carry out a thorough evaluation of the implementation of the MDTF and provide strategic guidance for improved disbursement capacity during the 2008 – 2011 development period.
- ❑ Monitor the planning, budgeting and execution of recovery activities by local authorities and provide advice on how and where the Government of South Sudan and donors need to intervene to fill gaps and boost service provisions. Particular attention should be paid to those states with the largest numbers of returnees.

### **Donor governments**

- ❑ Support intensive capacity building and technical assistance activities, particularly at state and county levels, to expedite early recovery activities and to help strengthen government capacity to manage its own revenues and provide services to the people of southern Sudan.
- ❑ Increase funding for urgent recovery programs, such as water and sanitation, health care posts and medical personnel training, secondary schools and teacher training.
- ❑ Establish more flexible funding rules which would permit international and local non-governmental agencies to expand existing activities and start new recovery programs.

*Senior Advocate Andrea Lari and Peacebuilding Associate Erin Weir assessed the humanitarian situation in southern Sudan in June.*