



European Commission

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## **Ensuring Stability in Sudan: the Interim Period and Beyond**

**Nairobi, Kenya 25 May—27 May 2009**

This consultation was facilitated by Concordis International as part of the Sudan Peace-Building Initiative financed by the European Commission. The preparations for the event were undertaken by Concordis with the support of the Peace Department of the Council of the International People's Friendship (CIPF). Participants were invited from a number of Southern and Northern Sudanese governmental institutions mandated to contribute towards peace and security as well as from several universities and local and international NGOs seeking to contribute to the resolution of conflicts and to peace and stability in Sudan. In addition to the facilitators and international expert consultants, 26 participants contributed to the consultation in their personal capacity. Participants spoke under the Chatham House Rule in order to ensure a frank and open exchange of views on the potentially sensitive issues covered.

Concordis provided a series of expert presentations for participants, sharing principles and approaches relevant to the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Three thematic strands were addressed. One strand related to ensuring that the elections and the referendum do not become triggers for violence and instability. A second strand was designed to encourage participants to begin to consider some of the longer term questions related to how there can be a feasible, stable relationship between Northern and Southern (and indeed the rest of) Sudan over the longer term. This related directly to the question of whether there are "unvarying factors that will remain key for longer-term stability no matter the outcome of the referendum." The third strand related explicitly to security and how to "secure" stability.

Despite recognising that it is a great achievement there have been no major military incidents between North and South since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, participants highlighted that a number of major problems still remain. It was thought important not to let any lack of trust between parties lead them to approach implementing the CPA in a technical way, rather than fostering it in the spirit in which it was devised. The upcoming elections and referendum were also discussed in some depth, with participants recognising that both have the potential to help foster peace or to incite further violence. Numerous problems related to the elections were raised, such as issues of registration, the exclusion of expatriate Sudanese and refugees, the weakness of civil society in the South, the lack of knowledge about the elections and the electoral system, the effect of a controlled media and oppressive laws, and security issues in the South. The importance of Election Management Bureaus effectively managing elections and pursuing citizen diplomacy in fragile peace environments was noted.

Participants discussed the importance of achieving stable and effective regional relationships, focusing on the 'three areas' of Abyei, South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The distinction between hard and soft borders was made, with participants agreeing that, however the border between North and South is demarcated, the form of relationships across that border is just as important

Ultimately, while recognising the efforts made by the Government of the National Unity (GoSS) and the Government of Southern Sudan (GSS), participants stressed the need for civil society organisations to act as pressure groups on decision makers in order that they strictly commit to issues such as the completion of the institutional structure as stated by the peace agreements. Participants stressed the need for progress to be achieved regarding the establishment of a human rights committee, a land commission, and the demarcation of state boundaries. Furthermore, they mentioned the importance of overcoming delays in implementation of the CPA, which lead to delays in enacting election laws and implementing the commissions.

Participants agreed to work together in the future for effective CPA implementation.

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