



Cross-Border Relations Beyond the Referendum Challenges and Opportunities

State Workshop Summary, Renk, Upper Nile State, Southern Sudan, 20-22 May 2010

Building Consensus in Upper Nile State

This three day meeting brought together traditional authorities, government officials and civil society representatives, such as leaders of women and youth associations and religious leaders, from the Payams of Renk, Mabaan and Manyo Counties in Northern Upper Nile State, which are adjacent to the 1/1/1956 border between Northern and Southern Sudan. The workshop was an opportunity for border communities to articulate principles and proposals to help inform the management of the border and cross-border relations; and help ensure that it works in the interests of a sustainable Sudanese peace over the long term.

Project Aims:

- ◇ Build trust and understanding between border communities within and across border states;
- ◇ Develop consensus on principles for how the border should be managed peacefully;
- ◇ Develop proposals for development initiatives to support peaceful coexistence at the border;
- ◇ Introduce principles and proposals to relevant national and local peace processes, such as negotiations on post-2011 arrangements, and to inform donor policy to reflect local needs.

Visions and Aspirations

Participants expressed their aspirations for the North-South borderlands in the post-referendum period. First of all, they would like the border to be demarcated according to the 1/1/1956 map and dispute the recently conducted demarcation. As border communities, they wish to be engaged by the authorities when it comes to decisions regarding the border, especially demarcation, because, they say, traditional chiefs have historical knowledge of the location of the border and experience of managing cross-border relations with neighbouring tribes. Representatives of the border communities aspire to maintain good cross-border relations with their neighbours in White Nile State and improve relationships with their neighbours in Blue Nile State.

Opportunities and Challenges

Challenges identified included: 1) Border demarcation; 2) Civilian disarmament; 3) Redeployment of forces away from the border to create a military-free zone; 4) Underdevelopment.

Opportunities included: 1) Enhancement of trade relationships; 2) Development of animal grazing corridors; 3) Improvement of relations with neighbouring communities through dialogue; 4) Free movement across the border, regulated by law.

Scenarios and Expectations

Participants expected and expressed strong support for the secession of Southern Sudan. However, they foresaw the risk that the North would close the border, preventing freedom of movement for people and goods, disrupting essential supplies to Northern Upper Nile, damaging social and economic relations, contributing to conflict and instability. Nevertheless, participants expressed hope for interaction and cooperation between all levels of government and society from both sides of the border.

Principles and Proposals

Participants agreed a number of recommendations, relevant in either referendum scenario, for governance of the north-south border and development in border regions. Their conclusions are summarised overleaf and detailed in the full event report.

CROSS-BORDER RELATIONS PROJECT

Concordis International is working in Sudan in partnership with the Centre for Peace and Development Studies (CPDS) of the University of Juba to facilitate a research-based dialogue project aiming to inform local and national peace and development processes, supporting cooperative, secure and economically viable relations across Sudan's North-South border beyond 2011.

APPROXIMATE TIME FRAME:

December 2009-February 2010

Initial engagements in border states and development of methodology

March-August 2010

State workshops in Unity, Upper Nile, Abyei, Southern Kordofan, White Nile, and Blue Nile.

September-October 2010

Regional workshops bringing together communities from both sides of the border.

July-November 2010

Policy briefings and national level conferences.



General Recommendations of Principles and Proposals to Inform Policy Making on Cross-Border Relations, Border Governance, and Post-2011 Arrangements for Sudan, as agreed by participants:

The following recommendations will support development and peaceful coexistence along the border between Northern and Southern Sudan. They will be beneficial in both referendum scenarios, i.e. whether Sudan remains united or if the south opts for secession:

Security

- ◇ The armed forces SAF and the SPLA should withdraw away from the border and there should be a demilitarised zone along the border. The SPLA should move at least as far South as Renk and Kaka and the SAF at least as far North as Jebelayn and al-Rawat.;
- ◇ The military should not be present in civilian areas. Only the police should be responsible for security in the areas along the border;
- ◇ Demilitarisation of the border areas will reduce tensions, improve security and facilitate investment and development.;
- ◇ Disarmament of the communities in the border areas should be done to improve security and reduce tensions and the likelihood of conflict. However, nomadic pastoralists are unwilling to give up their arms and would need strong guarantees of how their herds would be protected, were they to consider disarmament..

Justice and management of disputes

- ◇ Courts should be established at the border posts to assist in the settlement of disputes between the communities living near the border. Joint committees of traditional leaders from both sides of the border should be involved in court proceedings;
- ◇ Mediation services should be made available to assist disputes between border communities;
- ◇ Adjacent local governments, traditional leaders and police services from both sides of the border should work together develop joint administrative arrangements to uphold the rights of communities on both sides of the border;
- ◇ Protocols should be established between farmers and herders, distinguishing between agricultural and pastoral land and identifying which agricultural land may be grazed once harvests are completed.

Movement, Rights and Citizenship

- ◇ All Northern and Southern Sudanese should have the freedoms to move, reside, trade and own property on either side of the North-South border, whatever the outcome of the referendum;
- ◇ Movement of people and goods should be free across the North-South border;
- ◇ Existing land ownership entitlements should be recognised and upheld however the border is demarcated. Individuals should not lose their property or investments if the North-South border is drawn between them and their assets;
- ◇ Border communities should be free to interact socially with one another. Inter-marriage should be encouraged to support social and economic relations between the border populations. Sports and social programmes should be supported to promote community relations across the border.

Trade and economic relations

- ◇ Cross-border trade should be promoted;
- ◇ Taxation should be reduced or removed for goods crossing the border;
- ◇ Multiple taxation should be prevented;
- ◇ Jointly organised cross border markets should be established at border points. They should be promoted by traditional leaders. The police should provide security to the markets so that traders can access them freely and bring their goods to them without fear of robbery or banditry.

Infrastructure and services

- ◇ Roads are needed to connect areas along the border and to connect areas on either side of the border. Good roads will facilitate communication and social relations between communities. They will also enable the transportation of goods and trade, and will reduce the cost of goods on the market by making transportation more efficient. Bridges and river transport should also be enhanced for these purposes. All transport infrastructure needs to be safe and secure;
- ◇ The border areas are in need of electricity supplies to improve quality of life and support development and investment;
- ◇ Irrigation systems and reservoirs are also needed in the border areas to improve cultivation and support animal resources. Possibly by diverting streams, if accepted by affected communities;
- ◇ Farmers in the border areas need technical support, enhanced storage facilities, fertilisers and farming equipment to enhance their livelihoods and ensure their survival;
- ◇ The border areas require the provision of basic, academic, vocational, technical and agricultural education. Such schools should be built. Hostels should be made available to students and teachers in schools and colleges;
- ◇ There is a need for health promotion and the provision of health services including medicines and clinics in the border areas. Veterinary services are also required;
- ◇ All such services should be made available to the populations from both sides of the border;
- ◇ Graduates and qualified people from the border areas should be employed in the border areas and given priority for local employment and local positions of authority and responsibility;
- ◇ A joint cross-border committee of traditional leaders should be established to promote unity;
- ◇ The border communities should be consulted in any negotiations concerning the post-referendum status of the border.

A full report with further details on the participants' recommendations will soon be available from the Concordis website.