

Building on the Naivasha Protocols to Establish Long-Term Peace in the Sudan

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Concordis International facilitated two consultations in August 2004, to encourage inclusive dialogue on how the Naivasha Protocols may be built on to establish a peaceful future for all regions of the Sudan. Concordis International has been involved since 1999 in facilitating low-profile, inclusive research-based dialogue in support of the formal peace process and these two consultations were a continuation of that work. Participants in both consultations, who attended in their personal capacities, represented a comprehensive range of key Sudanese civil society, political and regional groups and the private sector.

Participants of both consultations viewed the Naivasha Protocols not just as a limited agreement between North and

South, but rather as an explicit vision for the political and constitutional future of the Sudan. They were generally positive about the Protocols, as representing the best potential for long-term peace in the Sudan. This is because the negotiating parties agreed that cessation of hostilities should be seen in the context not simply of allowing humanitarian access but of examining the causes of the war and of the widespread internal displacement of people. The Naivasha Protocols also were seen to represent a potential for long-term peace because they envisage decentralisation and the devolution of power. Despite the positive aspects of the Naivasha protocols, such as the right of self-determination, security, wealth-sharing and the ability of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) for the first time to raise taxes and development assistance, the participants highlighted a number of weaknesses. The agreement is too complex but there is a history on both sides of broken agreements and so implementation cannot depend on good faith. Also, many forces are not party to the agreements and must somehow be included.

The participants felt, however, that even if doubt remains about the political will to implement the Protocols – and to resolve such issues as security, land, banking, secularisation, prisoners of war and the status of Khartoum – the people of the South have suffered enough and it is they who will provide the momentum to implement the agreement. They felt that the focus should be on conflict resolution, on dialogue with local communities to pave the way for the rehabilitation of returning IDPs and refugees, and on practical development, so that people feel the impact of the peace agreement across the country.

The participants agreed that the crisis in Darfur shows that ordinary people across the country do not feel that they are actively engaged in or own the peace process. Darfurians believe that the Protocols apply to the North and South, but not to East and West, which continue to face political marginalisation.

Participants noted that a number of constitutional issues remain that may present problems, most notably the questions of whether Sudan is an African or an Arab country, and whether the Vice-President will be satisfied with a position directly beneath a *shari'a*-imposing Northern President. Participants also noted that political and economic decentralisation should be pursued, but not too much too quickly.

The participants agreed on the need for extensive political reforms, including the establishment of a clear system of checks and balances, a fair judiciary independent of the executive branch and a bottom-up approach to democracy. Participants agreed that it was also vital that corruption be stamped out in Sudan and stated that if there is to be any halt to the currently entrenched system of patronage, there must be an independent, transparent statistical office, a fair distribution of wealth, a review of the privatisation programme. They also highlighted the need for reform of the banking sector and the collection and spending of oil revenue. The need for development of the agricultural sector and for private sector growth were also seen as key to Sudanese development. They felt that a sensible development plan must be formed if development is going to occur.

Despite all parties having some fears regarding the implementation of the Naivasha protocols, the participants agreed that if properly implemented, the Protocols should move Sudan towards openness, trust, transparency and inclusiveness. The participants highlighted that as Concordis International has no political agenda, it is well placed to help the peace process in Sudan.