

Towards Achieving the MDGs in Sudan: Centrality of Women's Leadership and Gender Equality

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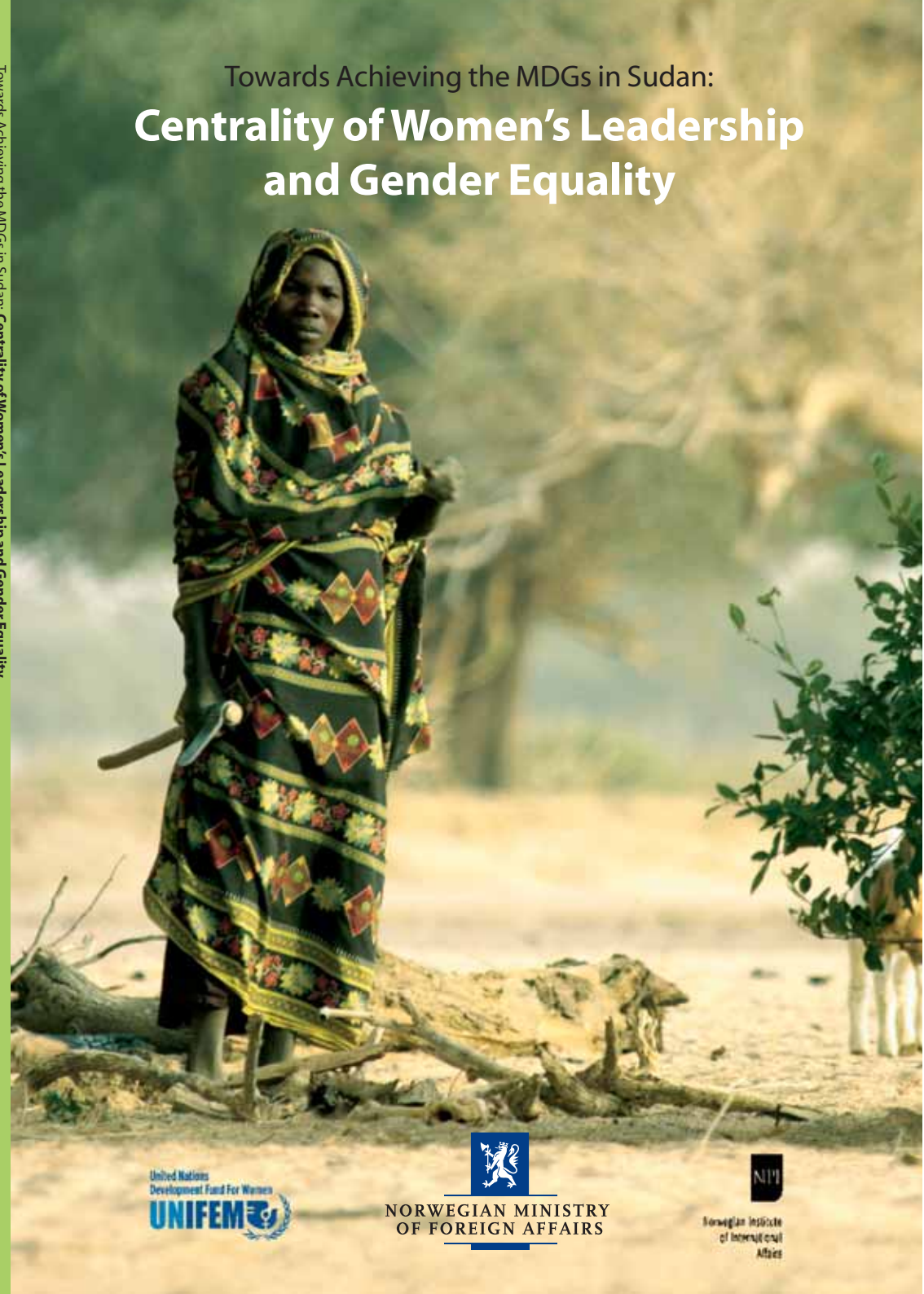


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Foreword

This publication is a compilation made possible through the support for Sudanese women's advocacy actions by the Government of Norway, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), as well as the cooperation and support from women's organizations in Sudan. It is based on the UNIFEM experience in the Joint Assessment Mission for Sudan, and the Oslo Gender Symposium and Donors' Conference of 2005. The publication is an effort to show how the Sudanese women, in their diversity and in spirit of unity, are defining the critical development agenda for the country in the coming decade.

For Sudan, and for the world at large, this is a crucial decade as the country implements the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in Nairobi on 9 January 2005. Comprehensive implementation depends on women's leadership; sustainable results depend on reducing gender inequality. The community-based reintegration efforts will primarily rest on women's shoulders. In this decade, peace must prevail in the whole of Sudan. Finding a lasting solution to the Darfur crisis is especially important. The African Union-led Abuja peace process offers a ray of hope, and must embrace the spirit and ethos of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), on women, peace and security. The coming decade is a time of commitment, through accelerating actions, toward achieving the Millennium Commitments. Gender equality, in addition to being a goal in itself, is a cross-cutting imperative to the achievement of the other goals. Furthermore, this publication is an endeavor to provide a permanent record of some of the historic actions by Sudanese women on the agenda for peace and development, within the spirit of global partnership.

As emphasized during the Oslo Gender Symposium¹, a signature on a piece of paper does not build peace; peace is built by actions – day by day. This work is far too important to be left to politicians alone; in fact peace-building will fail if it is left to politicians alone. The peace process, therefore, has to continue and become an integral part of the new government's political actions. The process should change from *making* peace to *building* peace.

1 Hilde F. Johnson, Minister of International Development Opening Statement to the Oslo Gender Symposium on Women's Leadership and Gender Equality in conflict and post conflict Sudan, 10 April 2005.

Peace-building has three important dimensions: political development; security sector reform and social and economic development. All three dimensions will need to be integrated parts in the implementation of the peace agreement. While the primary responsibility for peace-building rests with the Sudanese themselves, the international community has a role to play as well. The role of the civil society, NGOs, churches, women's groups, professional societies, farmers' groups and others, will of course be vital in the peace building in Sudan. Sudanese leaders must fully acknowledge this. The civil society, especially women's organisations, have several important roles to play:


- As watchdogs – to monitor the political process, to expose gaps between rhetoric and reality;
- As advocates – as the voice of the poor and the weak. The international community can help to amplify their message and make sure that their rights are taken into account where decisions are made;
- As actors in the field – in the delivery of development and relief assistance.

Women know the cost of war and destruction. Many women and their families are displaced, living in extreme poverty without access to clean water, energy, sanitation, a means of livelihood and education. After 40 years of suffering, peace brings new hope. But this peace is fragile. It has to be carefully nurtured and invested in. A new Sudan, a Sudan without war, needs women as leaders and as full and equal citizens. Women are central to the enormous tasks ahead and can accelerate the building of peace, security and prosperity. They are not just victims; they are part of the solution.

Women are central to reweaving back the social fabric of life, to rebuilding shattered families and communities. Women are cornerstones in nation building. Their leadership and their human rights must, however, be accorded the space, the support and the resources necessary to sustain peace and development. It is through women's leadership and gender equality promotion that progress towards achieving the Millennium commitments becomes a reality in communities². This publication affirms that *“gender equality and the promotion and protection of the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, in particular for women and children, are essential to advance development, peace and security.”*³



Hilde F. Johnson
Minister of International Development
Government of Norway



Noeleen Heyzer
Executive Director
United Nations Development Fund
for Women

² Statement by Noeleen Heyzer to the Oslo Donors' Conference on Sudan, 12 April 2005.

³ Revised draft outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly of September 2005 submitted by the President of the General Assembly, advance Unedited Version, 5 August 2005, A/59/HLP/CRP.1/Rev.2, paragraph.

Acknowledgements

This publication has been made possible by the dedication, hard work and resources of many. The commitment to peace and development in Sudan has been the common denominator. The many Sudanese women we have had the pleasure of working with, particularly within the last year, have inspired us to establish a global advocacy for women's rights in Sudan. The Sudanese delegates to the January conference «Sudanese Women in the Peace Process» called on the Government of Norway to continue supporting women as part of its efforts in Sudan, and placing women's rights on the agenda. The Sudanese women from north and south, who came together at the Oslo Gender Symposium and the Donors' Conference for Sudan, were committed to change the course of history.

Appreciation goes to the Sudanese leadership, the late Dr. John Garang de Mabior, the Chairman of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and First Vice-President of Sudan and his inspirational wife Rebecca Garang de Mabior, Mr. Ali Osman Taha, the Second Vice-President of Sudan, who have led the peace process for Sudan. As leaders, they came to the Gender Symposium in Oslo and affirmed their commitment to gender equality and women's leadership. We also thank the many officials of the Government of Sudan, who have provided guidance and facilitated the women's agenda. Special appreciation goes to Ambassador Mohammed Eltom in Norway, Mr. John Duku, SPLM representative in Europe, Ms. Khadiga Abu El Gassim Hag Hamed in Ministry of Social Services, Khartoum, and Mama Kezia Nicodemus and her team at the SPLM Women's Commission.

The solidarity and support of motivating African women have nurtured this process and have inspired this publication. Zanele Mbeki, South Africa's First Lady and chairperson of the South African Women in Dialogue, has continually shown her commitment to Sudanese women and the peace process. Phoebe Asiyu, UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador for Africa, has provided extensive diplomatic support for the women's agenda in Sudan and in the region. Atsedo Zerfu, the Gender Programme Manager at the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), who, through the IGAD platform, has facilitated implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) within the peace process. Rosemary Okello, in her media work continues to amplify the voices of Sudanese women.

We are thankful for the partnership that we have with UNIFEM, a partnership that is truly reflected in this publication. A special thanks goes to Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director; Joanne Sandler, Deputy Director; Nyaradzai Gumbonzvanda, Regional Programme Director for East Africa. We would also like to thank the UNIFEM team, particularly Maha Muna, Aina Iiyambo, Ruth Kibiti, Grace Okonji, Faith Njama and Junius Thara.

The commitment of NUPI is equally important to this publication. I acknowledge and appreciate Kari Karamé and her team, who have taken time to focus on Sudan and have facilitated the January and April consultations here in Oslo.

The consultations would have not been possible without the dedication within the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Special thanks goes to the staff at our embassies in Nairobi and Khartoum and to the Sudan team here in Oslo. We also appreciate Executive Officers Iselin Danbolt and Julie Meinich's dedication. Furthermore, the continual support by the Minister of International Development, Hilde F. Johnson and her passion for peace in Sudan inspire us to continue to strive for achieving the MDGs through women's leadership and gender equality.



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Abbreviations

AU	African Union
CCG	Core Coordinating Group
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DD&R	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DDRRR	Disarmament and Demobilization, Repatriation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration
DPKO	United Nations Department for Peace Keeping Operations
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GOS	Government of Sudan
GOSS	Government of Southern Sudan
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
JAM	Joint Assessment Mission
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDTF	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
MFA	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NUPI	Norwegian Institute of International Affairs
SC Resolution 1308	UN Security Council Resolution 1308 (2000)
SC Resolution 1325	UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)
SC Resolution 1590	UN Security Council Resolution 1590 (2005)
SFS	Norwegian Support Group for Peace in Sudan
SPLM/A	Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNMIS	United Nations Mission in Sudan
WHO	World Health Organization

1 Introduction

Sudanese women like everyone else aspire towards achieving the commitments made at the Millennium Summit in 2000. What are the odds, for a country and a people in a complex conflict and post-conflict situation? The ethos of the Millennium Declaration and its emphasis on women's rights, participation of all citizens, gender equality and peace, profoundly captures the reality for women and their families in Sudan. Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Sudan demands creative and extra-ordinary measures centered on women's leadership, reducing gender inequalities in all governance, service provision, and resource management while fostering strategic partnerships. Sudan is a country of multiple realities for its communities. Sudanese women and people are continuing to smile with one eye, while crying with another eye. They are living between the joys and commitment to sustain the peace ushered by the CPA and crying in search of peace in the Darfurs!

The publication derives from the commitment, consistency and resilience of Sudanese women in their quest for peace, safe and secure living environment; freedom from poverty, discrimination and marginalisation. It is informed by the strategic and creative partnership created between the Government of Norway, UNIFEM and NUPI in creating space for women's voices in the international processes in support of the post-conflict reconstruction of Sudan. The Oslo Gender Symposium and Donors' Conference are cases in point. It is a simple and clear message that links peace, security and development and women's human rights, from the perspective of women's leadership in the struggle for inclusion and empowerment.

The Joint Assessment Mission for Sudan (JAM) supported by the World Bank and the United Nations System provided the technical analytical basis and prioritization of key actions for the post-conflict reconstruction of Sudan. This carries forward the commitments made in the CPA signed between the Government of Sudan and the SPLM on 9 January 2005 in Nairobi, Kenya. UNIFEM provided the lead in mainstreaming gender issues into the JAM process. The methodology adopted included attachment of gender experts to the JAM teams in the north and south; development of a gender mainstreaming checklist to guide the various cluster

teams; participation in consultative meetings with various stakeholders; mobilization and facilitation of women's participation; and, gender auditing of the draft cluster reports. In this publication therefore, we bring a synopsis of the key JAM recommendations on women's empowerment and gender equality.

As the world reviews the five-year progress towards the achievement of the MDGs, this publication echoes the messages that Sudanese women continue to say in multiple spaces and opportunities. The centrality of women to the reconstruction effort for Sudan calls for critical support and investment in actions to promote and protect their rights as well as strengthen women's leadership at all levels. Women remain the pillars of community driven and participatory development. It is primarily on Sudanese women that the reintegration effort for returning displaced populations: refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and demobilized combatants rests. The massive reconstruction effort in the areas of education, health, infrastructure and development demands consciousness of the roles, responsibilities and situation of women. The current data shows that Sudanese women, especially from the south, continue to live in extreme conditions of poverty, compounded by high levels of illiteracy, limited access to basic social services, including health care, food and water services. These messages were encapsulated in the Oslo Women's Priorities and Recommendations for post conflict reconstruction as formally presented by Khadiga Abu El Gassim Hag Hamed and Abuk Payiti to the Oslo Donors' Conference on 12 April 2005.

The JAM process, the Oslo Donors' Conference, the continued efforts of women's organizations and networks, the visible commitment of the national machineries for gender and women within the Government of Sudan and the SPLM, have evolved in a critical direction that could enable Sudan to accelerate efforts towards achievement of the MDGs.

First, Sudanese women's priorities and recommendations as espoused in the JAM and the Oslo Women's Recommendations are central to sustaining the addressing gender equality issues and women's participation in the implementation of the CPA. As Rebecca de Mabior equipped burying her husband Dr. John Garang⁴, "The vision must live on, peace must prevail. We must implement the CPA together with women... The legacy of Dr. Garang was to fight for the rights of women and the children". Rebecca said, "If they are mistreated I will be a lioness"⁵.

Second, women and families must live in safe and secure environments, free from violence and abuse. The continued violent conflict in Darfur and its accompanying violence on women and girls militates against actions to achieve the MDGs. Every effort must be made towards accelerating the Abuja peace talks with full participation of women within the spirit of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the African Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality (2004), and the African Union Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003). Such peace and security must also exist with Sudan's neighbors, especially noting the spillover impact of the northern Uganda conflict on Sudanese communities.

Third, the principle of gender sensitive resource allocation must be applied within the various mechanisms established for resource management, especially for post-conflict reconstruction. The Sudanese women set a new global threshold, with criteria for gender-responsive budgeting to ensure an 80% accountability to women, young people and poor war-affected and marginalized communities. Such a principle must be centered on concrete actions of securing and protecting the rights to live, empowerment through literacy, building future generation based on investing in young people, and especially girls, and facilitating direct access to existing resources by women's organizations and community based groups. As Noeleen Heyzer stated:

*"The challenge ahead is to ensure that these funding mechanisms, such as the Multi-Donor Trust Fund, be accompanied not just by a women's window, but by a women's door for accessing the funds. The needs are too great.... The best way to measure commitment to women is to follow the money and to make sure that the money works. Gender-responsive budgeting can be put in place to guide Sudan's reconstruction. UNIFEM has already assisted 30 countries in this area, and could provide technical support towards such an initiative"*⁶.

⁴ Dr. John Garang, the SPLM Chairperson and First Vice President of Sudan, died in a tragic plane crash in August 2005. He was a strong advocate for women's participation and economic empowerment, and expressed this commitment to the women during the Yei Women's Conference, March 2005, Oslo Gender Symposium, 10 April 2005, and the New Site Women's Leadership Training, 7 July 2005. The SPLM Constitution has 25% affirmative action.

⁵ <http://allafrica.com/stories/200508070275.html>

⁶ Statement delivered by Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director of UNIFEM to the Oslo Donors' Conference on Sudan 2005. See Appendix III.

Fourth, achieving the MDGs in Sudan demands women's leadership and effective participation. Participation of women is a target measure for achieving the Millennium Development Goal on gender equality. In Sudan, the notable step of including an affirmative action clause in the Interim National Constitution is a positive step. This commitment to women's leadership must be translated into practice as the country establishes its new governance institutions in line with the CPA. The new government of Southern Sudan has even a greater opportunity for applying this principle as it reinforces the existing 25% quota that is enshrined in the SPLM constitution. Women's experiences, perspectives and voices must be at the decision-making tables in the constitutional commissions/committees, human rights and land commissions, structures for reconstruction in education, in health, and in disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, reintegration and resettlement (DDRRR), among others.

Lastly, it is the people of Sudan and the governance institutions that must take the lead in achieving peace, security and development. More than half of these citizens are women and girls, with rights, entitlements and commitments. The country must build on this human resource base, in a global partnership with other actors. Non-participation of women, non-reduction of gender inequalities will effectively mean lost chances for Sudan to make strides towards its global commitments towards reducing poverty and securing a future for its people. Making progress towards achieving the Beijing Platform for Action on Women, Peace and Development means substantive progress towards the 2015 goals.

2 Promoting effective participation of Sudanese women in the peace process

Kari Karamé⁷

*"It is normally said that one hand cannot clap alone. That means that we need both sexes to reconstruct this very vast land."*⁸

Introduction

Before the International Donors' Conference for Sudan initiated by the Norwegian government in Oslo, Norway in April 2005, a conference and a symposium had already been held on the inclusion of Sudanese women in the peace process. Both these events were initiated by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) as part of Norway's longstanding, wide-ranging involvement in Sudan. Norway's commitment to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) as an important element of Norwegian support for peace and reconstruction in conflict areas, is shown through these initiatives. The resolution calls for women's equal participation and full involvement in all areas and at every level in peace-building processes. It also stresses that all peace processes should be locally owned. These two principles formed the basis for the two women's conferences.

The first conference, entitled "Sudanese Women and the Peace Process", brought women from South Sudan to Oslo in January with the purpose of giving them a platform where they could define their priorities and recommendations for women's inclusion and empowerment. The conference was organized and facilitated by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI). It took place just a few days after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Nairobi on January 9, and one of the main recommendations which arose out of the conference was to hold a meeting with women from South and North Sudan immediately prior to the planned Oslo Donors' Conference.⁹

⁷ Where no other source is given, this paper is based on my own notes and observations as one of the organisers and facilitators of the conference in January and the symposium in April 2005 in Oslo, Norway.

⁸ Quotation from one of the South Sudanese delegates at the January conference.

⁹ For a complete presentation of the outcome of the conference, please see Kari Karamé (ed.) 2005: Sudanese Women and the Peace Process, Oslo, NUPI. Also available at www.nupi.no/development.

The symposium entitled “Women’s Rights and Leadership in Post-Conflict Sudan”, took place on April 10, which was the day before the Donors’ Conference for Sudan (April 11-12), an event that gathered delegations from 60 states and international organizations. The symposium brought together 50 women from North and South Sudan, and was a joint arrangement between MFA, UNIFEM and NUPI. One of the intended results of the symposium was the establishment of a common statement expressing the women’s shared priorities concerning women’s rights and leadership. This statement was to be presented at the Donors’ Conference.

Norway’s engagement in Sudan

Norway’s involvement in peace efforts in Sudan has taken a number of different forms, ranging from emergency relief and humanitarian and development assistance by Norwegian NGOs, academic co-operation from the 1960s, to the participation of the Norwegian authorities in the peace negotiations.

Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA) and the Support Group for Peace in Sudan (SFS) have been working in Sudan for several decades, and were later joined by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). Much of the work of these organizations has focused on the situation in South Sudan, but they have also been active in the North, mainly among internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the southern parts of the country. Norwegian branches of international organizations are also involved in projects in Sudan. These organizations normally work in co-operation with local organizations and partners.

During the seven years prior to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, Norway had been involved in the peace negotiations between the Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the Government of Sudan, seeing its role as that of a facilitator in bringing the parties together. The Norwegian Minister of International Development, Ms Hilde F. Johnson, was one of the signatories to the CPA. She was also the only woman at the table. But the role of Sudanese women during, and their impact on, the peace negotiations should not be underestimated, even though their contribution was usually of a more informal nature.

This involvement, political, humanitarian, and academic, has resulted in close formal and personal relations between many Norwegians and

Sudanese, at every level, and in a broad awareness in Norway of the situation in both North and South Sudan. Norway’s role as facilitator in the peace process was therefore based both on political will on the Norwegian side and on the trust of the parties involved in the war, a trust that had been built, step by step, over the years.

The January conference: Sudanese Women and the Peace Process

Both war and peace are gendered experiences, and women and men will usually have different priorities and expectations in a peace process. Sustainable peace can therefore only be achieved if both women and men are heard. In her opening speech at the January conference, Ms Johnson conveyed to the audience that men had dominated both the war and the peace negotiations in Sudan, but that the successful implementation of the peace agreement depended on active participation of all groups, including women.¹⁰ The purpose of the conference was therefore to organize a platform where women of South Sudan could define their own and their organizations’ priorities, and formulate proposals for women’s empowerment and inclusion in order to achieve a sustainable peace in their country. The conference is intended to be the first in a series.

Women representing different organizations and districts of Sudan were to be invited, and national and international networks, together with the main Norwegian NGOs active in the area, were used to compile a list of pertinent women. This proved to be a time-consuming task, since some of the women were rather difficult to contact. One reason for this was that the conference coincided with the preparations for the peace negotiations, and many of the women were engaged in these or related efforts. However, thanks to the work of local employees of Norwegian NGOs and the Norwegian embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, the conference, initially planned for the end of November 2004, could finally take place in January 2005. Twelve women, representing all parts of South Sudan except for the Southern Blue Nile attended. Some of them were members of SPLM, others worked within independent NGOs, and some lived in South Sudan, whereas others were refugees in neighboring countries. Whether this

¹⁰ From the Minister’s opening speech at the January conference. See Appendix I.

group was politically and/or geographically biased is of course debatable, but the meeting could not be delayed any further, given the aim of presenting priorities and proposals to the Donors' Conference in April.

Also present were the regional director of UNIFEM in East and Horn of Africa, an expert from UNIFEM headquarters, and representatives from the main Norwegian NGOs and research institutes involved in South Sudan, the Norwegian Foreign Ministry and the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation. Finally, two members of SPLM Norway and some Sudanese women refugees who live in Norway also attended the meeting.

An unexpected result of the delay was that the conference took place just a few days after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Consequently, the atmosphere among the participants was marked by hope, a cautious optimism and an awareness of the tremendous challenges posed by the reconstruction – or rather construction – of the southern region and by the reconciliation process. To quote one of the delegates, “This is not the end, but the beginning of a long journey”.

The conference was held at Voksenåsen Conference Centre, which is situated on a hill and in the woods overlooking Oslo. This provided pleasant surroundings for common reflecting on serious and even painful matters. When people from different situations in life meet together as these women did, the setting can have an important influence on the interaction within the group. The first afternoon and evening were spent in getting to know each other and on preparing for the discussions of the following day.

International Development Minister Hilde F. Johnson, who had returned from the signing ceremony in Nairobi a few days earlier, opened the conference and hosted the dinner on the second evening. Her message to the participants was that “The war is over, now you have to win the peace”, and she emphasized the importance of including women in the peace process. The delegates had been asked to prepare a short presentation of their priorities, based on their own experiences, situation, and that of their organizations. They were also asked to present their views on ways in which the work of the international community can facilitate their inclusion in the reconstruction and reconciliation processes. Their main priorities were in the following areas: girls and women's education; women's economic, political and legal empowerment; capacity building; health, including HIV/AIDS; and the building of more women's resource centres. They

pointed out that most women, and also most men, did not know the actual content of the peace agreement, and asked for translations into some of the native languages and for help in distributing the text. Security was hardly mentioned, probably because of the signing of the peace agreement only a few days before. On the other hand they expressed deep concern about the situation in Darfur.¹¹ They expressed a desire to meet with women from North Sudan, and urged the Norwegian government, as host of the Donors' Conference, to make gender issues a specific item on the agenda.

Preparing for the symposium on women's rights and leadership in post-conflict Sudan

The symposium was a direct response to the conclusions of the women's conference, and was organized by UNIFEM, NUPI and MFA, on April 10 2005. Although the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement had been a landmark event, women's participation in the peace negotiations, as mentioned above, had been marginal, and very few of them are aware of the content of the agreement and its protocols.

In this context, the UN/World Bank Joint Assessment Mission for Sudan (JAM) has been very critical in preparing the priority actions organized around eight clusters (Institutional Reform and Capacity Needs Assessment; Governance and Rule of Law; Economic Policy; Productive Sectors; Basic Social Services; Infrastructure; Livelihoods and Social Protection; Information and Statistics). The Core Coordinating Group (CCG) of the mission has adopted a gender mainstreaming approach, in which UNIFEM has provided technical leadership.¹² The JAM report formed the basis of the Donors' Conference under the leadership of the Government of Norway.

The objectives of the gender symposium were to bring together the women of North and South Sudan to define shared priorities for interventions on issues of women's rights and leadership (as defined in the JAM); to advocate for donor support for actions promoting gender equality and women's rights; to encourage a coordinated response; and to strengthen

¹¹ For further reading see the conference report. *Supra* note 9.

¹² Grace Okonji, Ruth Kibiti (no date): Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender in Joint Assessment for Sudan. Nairobi, UNIFEM Regional Office for East and Horn of Africa.

partnerships for promoting and protecting women's rights through women's leadership in post-conflict Sudan. The outcome was to be presented at the Donors' Conference as a basis for a formal substantive and financial commitment to supporting actions for women's empowerment, their inclusion in post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction, and gender equality.

Around 50 Sudanese women participated in the symposium, the majority from the north. They included representatives from civil society, women's organizations in North and South Sudan, and academic institutions, as well as women delegates from the Government of Sudan (GOS) and the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS). The delegates were locally appointed, without any intervention from the organizers. Although most of these women could hardly be said to represent the average Sudanese woman, they acted as spokespersons for promoting the inclusion of women all over the country in the peace process.

The women who came to Oslo had never met before. They had very different backgrounds, and very different experiences of the war, sometimes even conflicting experiences. There are great disparities between the realities of women in Sudan: in Khartoum there is normality of a kind; in Darfur the conflict is ongoing and women have not yet achieved a voice of their own; in the devastated South the concern is about construction rather than reconstruction. There is extreme poverty and underdevelopment, and the return of enormous numbers of refugees and internally displaced is causing massive problems. The delegates to the symposium were therefore likely to have different priorities for the peace process, and this had to be taken into account.

Thus, the first introductions were crucial for the course and outcome of the symposium. The delegates came together for the first time on 9 April, the day before the symposium, at a lunch hosted by Women Waging Peace, which was also attended by, among others, UNIFEM Executive Director Noeleen Heyzer, South Africa's First Lady, Mrs Zanele Mbeki, and the Hon. Phoebe Asiyo from Kenya. In addition to the introductions, the purpose of the lunch was to build bridges and encourage a forward-looking attitude.

In order for the participants to get to know each other, everyone was encouraged to sit next to a person they had never met before and to make a short presentation of this person to the rest of the guests. Two senior women members of the ANC accompanied Mrs Mbeki, and together they

talked about their experiences from the reconciliation process in South Africa: "We do not have all the answers, but we can share our experiences." The gender focal point of the UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations, Ms Comfort Lamptey, gave a presentation on UNSC resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and resolution 1590 on the establishment of a United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). She assured the participants that never before had so much attention been paid to the inclusion of women and women's issues in a peace process. Resolution 1325 is in fact mentioned several times in resolution 1590, as well as the special needs of women and child combatants, the role of women in reconciliation and peace building processes, and affirming that there will be a zero-tolerance policy of sexual exploitation and abuse of any kind in all UN Peace Keeping Missions.

In the evening the Sudanese delegates to the symposium attended the closing dinner of the Sudan Civil Society Forum, which took place on 8-9 April. The forum was hosted by a committee consisting of representatives from three Norwegian NGOs, Norwegian Church Aid, Norwegian People's Aid and the Support Group for Peace in Sudan, and was attended by around 50 delegates from different organizations and parts of Sudan, around half of them women. Consequently, there was a strong physical presence of Sudanese women in Oslo in the days just before the Donors' Conference, which reinforced the importance of including women as well as men in all efforts to achieve a sustainable peace.

Proceedings of the symposium on women's rights and leadership in post conflict Sudan

Through the rather informal gatherings during the previous days, the ice was broken when the women met for the symposium, which was opened by Ms Johnson and the Executive Director of UNIFEM, Dr Noeleen Heyzer. The Regional Director of UNIFEM presented the "Gender mainstreaming of the JAM" guide, and this was followed by presentations by delegates from North and South of the views of governmental organizations and civil society. The presentations were intended to prepare the delegates both for the discussions at the afternoon session and for drafting a joint statement to the Donors' Conference. It also provided an opportunity to ask questions about the role of the international

community and the kind of support the women of Sudan could expect from this quarter. One conclusion was that the international community cannot make more demands than the Sudanese women can themselves, and that gender parity issues must be raised within the country.

The delegates agreed that because of the tightly packed agenda only one speech would be given by each delegation during the plenary session. The delegation from North Sudan identified four target groups for interventions: IDPs and refugees, who have many problems in common; the people who have migrated to urban areas; the rural population, who have been particularly hard hit by the war and its consequences. All of them live in extreme poverty, and there is a general lack of access to water, sanitation, education and health services. The delegation from the South pointed to four areas where the gender gap must be addressed: education, the legal system, governance, and livelihood. Both short-term and long-term projects are needed in all these areas. Common areas of interest emerged during this session.

The discussion began after lunch, and all the delegates focused on national issues and solutions, even though the situation in the South is far more precarious than that in the North. Inputs also came from the audience, from men as well as women. By the time the symposium was over, early in the evening, the delegates had negotiated and agreed on a joint statement to be presented at the Donors' Conference, although it had not yet been decided when and how this was to be done.

Before the closure of the symposium, the Minister of International Development returned, this time accompanied by the First Vice President of Sudan, Mr Ali Osman Taha, and the Chairman of the SPLM, Dr John Garang de Mabior, both of whom addressed the participants and stressed their support for the involvement of women in the peace process.

The atmosphere in the hall was electric when the two men entered. The Sudanese community in Oslo was widely represented among the audience. To see Mr Taha and Dr Garang side by side, and to listen to them both talking about a peaceful future, was like a concrete proof of better days ahead. The two leaders were, of course, accompanied by a large press corps, and the coverage in Norwegian, Sudanese and international media was beyond all expectation.

Obtaining seats at the Donors' Conference

The organizers of the symposium were conscious of the fact that an international conference of this kind is a very formal event, and worked hard to obtain seats in the conference hall for at least some of the women. On the first day both the Civil Society Forum and the Gender Symposium were each given two seats. Each delegation were to speak once and only for a few minutes. The issue of how the joint statement was to be presented – by the symposium delegates or by another delegation – had to be decided. This required a certain amount of diplomacy but the matter was pragmatically and adequately resolved.

The symposium delegates were staying at the same hotel as the conference delegates, which proved to have a very positive effect, as they were able to meet and talk informally with representatives of the international community. Together with the participants in the Civil Society Forum, all the symposium delegates were invited to the opening reception for the Donors' Conference. The Hon. Ms Phoebe Asiyo, who has long experience of lobbying, advised each woman to approach at least three men and tell them about the outcome of the symposium, thus preparing the ground for the presentation.

Although, after hard work and lobbying by the organizers and the women themselves, a number of the symposium participants were a part of the official delegations of both North and South Sudan, there was little focus on women and women's inclusion in the peace process in the statements delivered by either the hosts or the delegations. Of the small number of delegations headed by women, some addressed the issue, others did not. Although the Norwegian Prime Minister mentioned women's rights and inclusion in his speech, many of those who did seemed to regard women as victims rather than as potential actors, and spoke more about protecting women than about according them a role in the peace-building and reconciliation process. In fact, Mr Taha and Dr Garang were among the speakers who talked most about this issue, mentioning women and women's empowerment in particular. On the second day the U.S. delegation declared that they were especially pleased to see the role played by women's organizations in Sudan, and the delegation from Kenya referred to both the Gender Symposium and women's roles in the various phases of the peace process.

Some of the international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNAIDS focused on women's reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and the special needs of women in the transitional phase. A delegation from UNIFEM was taking part in a donors' conference for the first time and in their statement they advocated for women's participation and the inclusion of gender equality issues in the peace process in Sudan¹³.

Thus, the Donors' Conference ended up having an unprecedented focus on women's situation, their special concerns and needs during reconstruction and societal reconciliation, and their role as actors and as a resource during such processes, in order to lay the foundation for a sustainable peace for the whole of society, young and old, male and female.

Addressing the International Donors' Conference

*"Here we stand together as women from South and North united."*¹⁴

It was a moving, symbolic moment, not only for women's involvement but for the peace process itself, when two women – one from the North and one from the South – made their way through the audience and up onto the podium. Standing next to each other, one of them read the statement and the other handed the text over to the chair.

In their statement the women proposed the following minimum urgent priorities and actions for reconstruction during the interim period: governance and the rule of law; gender-based violence; capacity building and institutional development; economic policy and management; livelihoods and productive sectors; basic social services for health and education. They urged the donors to commit themselves to following the principle of gender responsive resource allocation, which in this context would mean that at least 80 per cent of the budget support and resource allocations to Sudan's reconstruction would meet at least three of the following criteria: combating HIV/AIDS and decreasing maternal mortality; reducing gender inequalities in law, policy and practice; directly benefiting young people, especially girls, in disadvantaged communities; targeting rural areas. (For the full text, see Appendix V.)

¹³ See Appendix III for the full text of the statement.

¹⁴ From the women's common statement presented to the Donors' Conference, please see Appendix V.

The statement clearly expressed the problems of human security that the majority of the population is facing, and got an enthusiastic response, also from the predominantly male delegations from North and South Sudan.

Concluding remarks

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with these women, first from the South, then from both the North and the South. Feeling the force and the warmth of their commitment to a peaceful future for their country, it is difficult to see how – and above all why – they should not be fully included in the peace process, in accordance with the Security Council Resolution 1325.

These women from South and North Sudan are strongly engaged in the efforts to ensure a peaceful future for their country. They have showed their ability to build bridges between the North and the South after decades of war and division. Within the short space of one day, without ever having met before, they were able to agree on a joint statement on the key priorities to be proposed to the Donors' Conference. They had elegantly sidestepped the obstacle created by the rules of international events of this kind, which allow only one person to read a statement. And finally they met the pressure from the international media as a single group with a shared vision. Realizing the vision means looking ahead and working for peace and reconciliation. But in these tasks they will need comprehensive support, political and technical as well as financial, from the international community.¹⁵

¹⁵ My thanks to Lillian Prestegard and Anita Haslie, student fellows at NUPI, together with several persons at the Norwegian MFA, for valuable comments on previous drafts.

3 Conclusion & Recommendations: The Centrality of Women's Leadership and Gender Equality to the MDGs in Sudan¹⁶

Nyaradzai Gumbonzvanda

The Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) for Sudan provided an opportunity for the Gender Equality Goal to be integrated in the planning process as a crucial factor in attaining sustainable peace. It provided opportunity for gender analysis of the rehabilitation and transitional recovery needs focused on the next two years, and outline a framework for reconstruction and recovery through 2010, oriented towards the Millennium Development Goals. Gender analysis, as a methodology for the JAM, began at the level of the households, that is, a consideration of the ways in which women and men participate differently in the household economy and society. It also sought to identify structures, institutional, political, socialization, empowerment policies and practices, which act to perpetuate patterns of women's and men's disadvantages and inequalities, both during and pre conflict situation. As the UNIFEM Annual report states:

A Sudanese woman is much more likely to die in childbirth than to finish eight years of school. She is fortunate when she is one of 16 young women, out of a group of 100, who can read and write. Her income is on average 68 per cent lower than that of men and she earns it mainly in the informal sector. She is also much more likely than a man to be among the millions of Sudanese who had to flee their homes during the internal armed conflict, bearing the brunt of a war that has ravaged the country for decades. Yet, as in so many other countries, her needs were largely ignored when peace was negotiated to end the fighting between the North and the South¹⁷.

¹⁶ The section derives from the contributions of Grace Okonji, Ruth Kibiti (UNIFEM) and Agnes Lasuba (SPLM) gender experts technical papers in the JAM. Its also informed by extensive exchange and guidance received from Jon Benneth, UN JAM Team Leader. It also draws from lessons learnt UNIFEM programmes on MDGs and on Gender Responsive Budgeting.

¹⁷ Message from Noeleen Heyzer, UNIFEM Executive Director, 2004 UNIFEM Annual Report.

The MDGs do provide the scope, the tools and the mechanisms for accelerating the progress towards gender equality and women's leadership. The seeds of such an effort are found in the JAM and the women's engagement with the international community through the Donors' Conference.

Women's leadership is central, as citizens, as mothers and daughters, community and national leaders, as persons with experiences and with insight. Women's leadership embraces participation, representation, decision making and technical expert knowledge and experience. In order to promote women's leadership, reduce gender inequalities and ensure empowerment of Sudanese women within the spirit of the MDGs and the Beijing Platform for Action, it is important to focus on promoting accountability and an enabling policy and legal environment. This must be accompanied by actions to increase options, choices and capacities of Sudanese women as individuals and as groups and networks.

The following are the critical and strategic action areas for accelerating achievement of the MDGs *with* women and *for* women and communities:

Financing modalities for the reconstruction

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement for Sudan did set up the framework for the financing modalities for the reconstruction agenda, both in terms of the national domestic resources¹⁸ as well as external financial support. The Oslo Donors' Conference confirmed this approach with a major commitment to funding through the Multi-Donor Trust Funds as the major vehicle for support. This effort will contribute to existing instruments like the Capacity Building Trust Funds. These approaches further and implement the Paris principles on donor coordination, harmonization and simplification. For the United Nations System, the annual UN work plans, which

¹⁸ The Wealth Sharing Agreement (of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement) provides a framework for resource allocation and sustainable decentralization, establishing comparative underdevelopment and war-affected status as the key criteria for prioritization of public revenue allocations. The Agreement assigns a share of oil and non-oil revenue to the South, as well as the right to collect additional domestic revenue and external assistance, and the right to have its own banking system within the framework of the Central Bank of Sudan, JAM Synthesis Report, Page 12.

are MDG-aligned, provide the space for internal coherence and coordination within the system, and a systematic interface with Sudanese institutions and communities, as well as the international development and donor partners. It is this matrix of relationships that is grounded in Goal 8 of the MDGs (on global partnerships) that women's rights issues and women's participation must be integrated. The Sudanese women's call during the gender symposium and the subsequent meetings¹⁹ with some donors, recommend a concrete and practical methodology towards mainstreaming gender equality principles in these financing mechanisms.

First, the Sudanese women asserted that such financing mechanisms must be committed to gender equality and women's participation. Women went further to set the criteria to guide decisions around resource allocation, policy and prioritization. At least 80% of all funding to a project must be able to fulfil at least three of the following: i) priority is given to marginalised and war-affected poor communities. It is in such communities that gross gender disparities exist, women have less opportunity for self-empowerment, access to basic social services for women and their children is marginal and the main reconstruction effort will be on women's shoulders, ii) support actions that reduce maternal mortality, prevention of HIV & AIDS, sexual and gender-based violence, especially among women and girls. Achieving the MDGs demands securing the right to life for all citizens, a life with dignity for women and girls will ensure building a human resource base for reconstruction, iii) investment integrates actions for reducing gender inequalities and disparities. For instance, decisions on infrastructure rehabilitation such as road and water services must take into account women-specific roles and responsibilities in communities. In training, parity principles should also be applied, while acknowledging the disparities in literacy among women and men at various levels; and iv) resources must also be targeted at young people and especially girls, to ensure that the Sudan of tomorrow and the women of the future are fully equipped, empowered and skilled to carry forward the peace and development agenda. The girl's quality of life tomorrow is the real measure of the Millennium commitments.

Second, gender experts and Sudanese women's participation must be integrated at all levels of the governance structures and mechanisms of

the financing mechanism to be put in place. A closer analysis of the proposed structure of the Multi-Donor Trust Funds is a case in point. The submission to the World Bank Board recommended

“a three-tier governance structure is proposed for the MDTFs. The World Bank would be the Administrator of the MDTFs managing a Technical Secretariat (TS) which would receive and review proposals and make recommendations to the Oversight Committee regarding allocation of resources. An Oversight Committee (OC) would exercise the programmatic and allocational responsibility for MDTF operations. Finally, a Sudan Consortium (SC) would meet once or twice a year during which past performance as well as future priorities and funding needs would be discussed. The Consortium would comprise all donors, the NG/GoSS and representatives of civil society and the private sector”²⁰.

It becomes important that the Technical Secretariat's brief and composition include gender competencies and guidelines; the Oversight Committee equally has representation of women, while civil society and the diversity of women's organizations also engage through the proposed consortium. The same principles and approach to integrating gender equality must equally be applied across the board in both the domestic financing arrangement, the UN technical assistance support as well as other donors' initiatives such as the Joint Donor Initiative²¹.

Strengthening Mechanisms for Accountability to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Accelerating the achievement of the MDGs demands positive and strong constitutional, legal and institutional mechanisms that promote gender equality and women's empowerment at all levels and across sectors. The MDG target related to representation of women in decision-making is a quite doable achievement within the Sudanese context.

The Sudan Interim National Constitution, recently adopted commits to affirmative action and women's participation. In addition, the 2005 Interim

¹⁹ SIDA's Mission to Nairobi (June 2005).

²⁰ <http://www-wds.worldbank.org/>

²¹ Netherlands presentation to the Paris meeting on a possible joint donor office in southern Sudan for Netherlands, Norway, UK and Sweden.

National Constitution of Sudan recognizes women's human rights, with explicit language around women's political participation through affirmative action.²² However, it does not make provision for a quota for women's representation – either in line with the AU parity clause or the 30 percent quota adopted in the Beijing Platform for Action. The Constitution also recognizes the rights of women in marriage and is exemplary for its abolition of forced marriage and setting the age of consent for marriage at eighteen years. In a country with many girls being forced into marriage, this is a major development. The Constitution also provides for recognition of women's civil, political, economic and cultural rights within the Bill of Rights chapter. Despite these positive commitments, the Constitution maintains the dual legal systems. Chapter 1, Article 5 (1) and (2) of the Interim National Constitution stipulates: “(1) *Nationally enacted legislation having effect only in respect of the Northern states of the Sudan shall have as its sources of legislation Islamic Sharia and the consensus of the people*” and (2) *“Nationally enacted legislation applicable to Southern Sudan shall have as its sources of legislation popular consensus, the values and the customs of the people of the Sudan, including their traditions and religious beliefs, having regard to Sudan's diversity.”*

Sudanese women ascribed to the African Union Gender parity principle of 50% but agreed to proceed on an understanding of the socio-cultural and political context. As Sudan moves with devolving the constitutional reform processes to the sub-national level, this is a window of opportunity for securing women and children's rights through constitutionalism. Women's effective representation and participation in the structure, committees or commissions that will be undertaking this effort is central. Achieving the MDGs in Sudan calls for a critical support of the implementation of the existing constitutional commitments through positive legislation and policies.

The Joint Assessment Mission analyzed that as a result of the decades of war, the Sudanese legislative, judicial and law-enforcement institutions have suffered from capacity deficits and lack of adequate training. In southern Sudan, the physical infrastructure of the courts system is practically absent and, therefore, people have limited access to justice. In areas administered by the SPLM, there are no fully functioning courts; higher courts

²² Article 32 (2) of the Sudan Interim National Constitution relating to the “Rights of Women and Children” stipulates that “The State shall promote woman rights through affirmative action”.

in towns lack windows and other basic structures; and traditional justice is still administered under a tree. At the time of the JAM, southern Sudan only had 22 trained judges and less than 5,000 police officers. While judicial structures are more developed in the north, the independence of the judiciary needs to be reinforced by the appointment of more qualified judges, attorneys-general and law officers. Women also need to gain access to seek justice and appeal decisions within existing laws.²³

Capacity Building for women's Organising and Policy Influencing

Building Sudanese capacities at both community and national levels has been a central theme in the JAM across sectors. Institutional capacity building for promoting and facilitating the gender equality goal of the Millennium commitment is at the core. The socio-economic situation of the women of Sudan remains one of the worst in the region and in the world.

The JAM and Sudan's national reports on the Millennium Development Goals provide vivid insights. Maternal mortality is among the highest in the world with 1,700 per 100,000 live births for southern Sudan and 509 for northern Sudan. Illiteracy is also very high, particularly in southern Sudan which has the lowest ratio of female to male primary school enrolment in the world, with three times as many boys as girls attending school, and a female youth illiteracy rate (ages 15-24) of 84 percent. It is estimated that 90 percent of women in southern Sudan are illiterate.²⁴ Nearly half (46 percent) of girls aged 6–16 years in Sudan's rural northern states have never attended school. However, the levels of literacy among women vary widely between regions, and between urban and rural areas. Female literacy varies from 24 percent in Western Darfur to 68 percent in Khartoum.²⁵ Water and sanitation is especially limited in the south where safe water access is estimated at 25-30 percent in rural areas and around 60 percent in towns. In the north, approximately 40 percent of urban and 60 percent of rural populations do not have access to a minimum of 20 liters of water per person per day within a distance of 1,000 meters.²⁶

²³ UNDG-World Bank, Sudan Joint Assessment Mission: Cluster Reports, Volume III, 18 March 2005, pages 49 and 57.

²⁴ UNDG-World Bank, Sudan Joint Assessment Mission: Synthesis, Volume 1, 18 March 2005, page 22.

²⁵ UNIFEM, Report on Gender Situation and Priorities: North Sudan, January 2005.

²⁶ UNDG-World Bank, Sudan Joint Assessment Mission: Synthesis, Volume 1, page 21.

With such a situation, the national institutions for policy, planning and service delivery must have internal capacities and resources for gender based planning, programming and monitoring and evaluation. The key MDGs may not be achieved in such a complex and highly urgent reality of poverty, disparities and insecurities unless such a commitment to gender equality and women's leadership becomes the driving force for reconstruction and healing. For this to happen, the national institutions and mechanisms for gender equality such as the Ministries, Commissions or sectoral focal points must be prioritized for capacity building, for resourcing (human and financial) and must equally be strategically positioned within the national and sub-national governance structures that have maximum or optimum opportunity to influence internal policy and planning directions. Gender-response or pro-poor budgeting principles and approaches must be integrated in both principle and in practice towards the achievement of gender equality outcomes. Training and human resource development is a critical dimension for gender interventions towards achieving the MDGs in Sudan. Approaches to training and skills building must have a conscious focus on women's inclusion as well as integration of gender content. This must be supplemented by a strong investment on supporting community and women's groups, networks and expert associations. This is the outreach and community infrastructure that will deliver the goals in each household in strategic partnership with public sector institutions. Especially in Southern Sudan, such an approach is bound to galvanize and catalyze transformation towards development and healing.

Women and Peace – Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)

Achieving total and lasting peace for Sudan is the real action that will propel the country forwards with confidence to walk the path towards improved livelihoods, secure and safe living environment, rights enjoyment for all and a life with hope and dreams for women, children and poor communities. Sustaining the Comprehensive Peace Agreement for Sudan, achieving positive outcomes for the Darfur and promoting democratic governance will facilitate the country's achievement of the MDGs.

Guided by UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on Women's Rights in

Africa (2003)²⁷ and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, demands an active involvement of women in peace building, conflict resolution and peace negotiations in Sudan. Women must be part of the critical institutions that are involved in the implementation and monitoring of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Such involvement of women as well as integration of gender equality concerns must go beyond the social sector usual emphasis, but build equality focus on security sector reform, including issues of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, resettlement and rehabilitation. Peace building demands a focus on women's rights issues and protection of the same, during displacement and return. Ensuring that women and girls are protected from gender-based violence and a zero tolerance approach to sexual abuse does not perpetuate impunity. Women's direct involvement in community peace building initiatives and conflict early warning mechanism will ground the values stated in the Millennium declaration.

Achieving the MDGs in Sudan therefore demands extraordinary actions that place women's participation, promotion of women's rights and empowerment of communities, among the multiplicity of actions and responses.

²⁷ Sudan is yet to ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on Women's Rights in Africa.

APPENDIX I

Sudanese Women and the Peace Process, January 14-16 2005

Opening statement by Hilde F. Johnson – Minister of International Development

Dear friends,
Welcome to Oslo!

I am very happy that you are here. I am even more pleased to know that you are here at a time when the civil war is ended and there can be peace in all Sudan.

The war is over! A new era is about to begin in Sudan, after 50 years.

Only five days ago, Sunday, I stood at Nyala Stadium in Nairobi and witnessed the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. I was honored to be invited to sign the agreement, as the only woman as a matter of fact, and delighted to be able to address the audience at such an historic event. And I was even more honored to have women come up to me afterwards and thank me for giving the men a rather clear message – that war has ended, but the real work has just begun.

Vice President Ali Osman Taha and SPLM Chairman John Garang, have shown great courage and determination in delivering this peace agreement. They now have to bring about a new Sudan – a Sudan of hope, of justice, of unity, of opportunity. It will not be easy, and they cannot do it on their own.

They cannot bring about this new Sudan without the involvement of you, the women of Sudan.

In my speech in Nairobi, I emphasized the fact that the most difficult work is just about to begin. A signature on a paper does not make peace. An agreement is only a first step. An agreement must be followed to the letter. Agreement must be followed by action, a new reality that benefits all Sudanese. The celebrations in Nairobi signaled the end of a long and difficult negotiations process, and the beginning of another, maybe even more challenging one: The process of creating peace and prosperity on the ground.

So far, the peace process in Sudan, like most other peace processes around the world, has been run by men. Women have been excluded.

Successful implementation will demand more – from everyone. It will demand the active participation of women. Women must be at the table, must be able to voice their concerns, must be equal partners when issues are discussed and decided.

Women must be empowered and included.

This will take work. A lot of work. The struggle for an equal voice in society does not come easy anywhere in the world.

Some of you may know our former Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, most recently head of the World Health Organization. She says that «Women will not become more empowered merely because we want them to be, but through legislative changes, increased information and redirection of resources».

I hope this conference will provide an opportunity to address issues that will be important to creating lasting peace in Sudan: How to make sure women take their rightful place in this process. This is mostly up to you, the women of Sudan. But I believe that there are things we here in Norway could do as well – to assist you in the process.

This conference may serve several purposes. It is an opportunity to discuss issues and set strategic and tactical goals. It provides a chance to connect with us in the ministry and other interested parties in Norway, such as NGOs and women's groups. It is a forum where you can advise us as to

how we best can assist in safeguarding women's rights and concerns in Sudan in the months and years ahead. And it is an excellent way to network with relevant people for further co-operation in the future.

We know there is much work to be done.

The following statements about women's rights and situation were given to a team from National Democratic Institute, when they interviewed people about their expectations for peace in Southern Sudan last autumn:

«Give them rights. They can be elected (and) go to meetings.»
(Jikany Nuer chief, Mading)

«Maybe women can be leaders, but they suffer from lack of education.»
(Old Muslim man, Julud)

«All girls should go to school.»
(Jikany Nuer chief, Mading)

But:

«Some people think that girls will become prostitutes if they go to school.»
(Toposa woman, Kapoeta)

«Garang needs women and youth advisors – All of his advisors are men over 50.» (Young diaspora woman, Nairobi)

Their report concluded, based on a number of interviews all around in Southern Sudan and in the diaspora, that there seems to be a willingness to afford women greater political rights in the political arena. At least in theory. But women have great difficulties securing equal rights in their private lives, as in the public sphere.

We know equality is far from here – in social and domestic matters, in marriage, with regards to children, and ownership of cattle and income. Education for girls is accepted politically, but still many, many girls face problems in the family and in their local communities.

We also know that women in Southern Sudan desire and deserve more rights, both in the public and in the private arenas. All the women interviewed by the research team considered education the key to changing their society. Many expressed a strong desire for education for their daughters as well as adult education for themselves.

Education is key to girls' and women's rights.

Women's starting point is the daily life in the family and in the local community. Many women have had to take on great responsibility locally during the war. Their position has been fragile and difficult. But in the absence of men they have developed a more significant political position, more independence, more influence.

Now, when peace is coming to Sudan, many will expect that, daily life will return to normal. Soldiers will come back home, a new political system will be established, local politics and the management of the family and villages may slip back to normal – which means a society largely run by men.

We cannot allow this to happen. The peace agreement signals a new era for Sudan. Human rights for all – not only for half of the population. It must also signal a new era for the women of Sudan.

How will it be possible to secure women's rights when establishing new political institutions – both nationally, at the regional level and locally? How can women's concerns be addressed in the formulation of the new policy for development? What are the right mechanisms to interact with, internationally and in Sudan, to secure such concerns? What should we from the international community do to help? These and other questions must be discussed in the coming weeks and months.

The JAM process, the Joint Assessment Mission, is now entering its last phase. The gender perspective is an overriding theme in all the different themes and reports in the JAM. The last phase will include several meetings and discussions with the Sudanese and other stakeholders before the reports are finalized. The reports must be scrutinized to make sure that the gender perspective is appropriately addressed.

Women must play an active role in this process – as the voice of the families, of the villages, of the grass roots society. You must demand it. Your daughters must demand it. We as donors must demand it.

Let me say a few words on education before I turn the floor over to you. Education is the key to safeguarding women's rights and concerns in the future Sudan. That is one of the reasons why the Norwegian government will stress education in our future development co-operation with Sudan, especially in the marginalised areas such as the south and Nuba Mountains and the Southern Blue Nile. We have given support to schools in the south through UNICEF and NGOs for several years now, and will continue to do so.

It will be particularly important to ensure equal support to girls' education and not limit the support to primary schools only. Special attention must be given to the critical years at the youth stage and higher education, where many girls fall out of the system. Our scholarship programme to higher education for girls and young women from the south, active for several years already, will be important also in the future.

I assure you that my government and I will do what we can to assist you on your way to full and equal partnership in the future Sudan.

Because a New Sudan cannot be built without the active participation by those we all know to be the backbone of local communities: The women.

In my speech in Nairobi, I called on the men behind the peace agreement to be the driving force in translating the agreement into concrete measures. Among other things, I said to them that

«We count on you to bring about reconciliation in local communities, and to include marginalised groups, such as women, in the political processes. We count on you to ensure peace and stability, and put an end to all fighting, by all actors.»

Well, my friends, fellow women – now we count on you to hold the men to their word, to make sure they stick to their promises – we know only you can do.

To quote Gro Harlem Brundtland again:

«*Women's power is a formidable force.*»

Use your force, and use it well.

The future of Sudan will depend on it.

Thank you.

APPENDIX II

Sudanese Gender Symposium, Sunday 10 April 2005.

Opening statement by Hilde F. Johnson, Minister of International Development

Excellencies,

Check against delivery

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to Oslo. It is wonderful to see you.

Over the past seven years, I have followed the peace process closely, and I have met many Sudanese leaders. They had different ideas, they came from different parts of the country, they had different affiliations. Some were young, some were – eh – less so. But they all had one thing in common: they were men.

These men have negotiated a historic peace agreement. They have taken the first decisive step towards a new and better life for all Sudanese people. We applaud their achievement.

Their job was hard. What lies ahead will be even harder.

Because now the words of the peace agreement must be translated into a better life for all Sudanese: men, women, children.

This cannot be done without the women of Sudan.

This is why I am so pleased to be able welcome all of you to this Sudanese Gender Symposium. I would like to extend a particular welcome to the participants from Sudan, and to the First Lady of South Africa, Mrs Mbeki.

The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement by the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in Nairobi on 9 January may prove to be the most important event in modern Sudanese history. It ended one of the longest and bloodiest conflicts in Africa – a conflict that has had serious consequences for the population in general, and women and children in particular.

The war has been dominated by men. The peace negotiations have been dominated by men. Now it is time for women to take their rightful place as equals, and to make sure that their voices are heard in the implementation process. Not just because it is the right thing, but because it is the only way to ensure that the agreement is accepted and acted on in the local communities.

Women must take part in political decisions, in development debates – at national level, and at local level. If they – you! – Are not part of the process that lies ahead in Sudan, I fear that lasting peace may still escape us.

This is why it is crucial that you address these issues here, today.

We hope that this symposium will be a forum for exchanging information and ideas that may serve as input for all of us at the Donor's Conference tomorrow and Tuesday. That's why we made sure you got here early – before the men! Because when the international community sits down together to discuss the new Sudan, we must be sure we are talking about all of Sudan – not just the male half.

We know there are challenging weeks and months ahead.

A workable solution for Sudan requires a new form of nation building based on the sharing of power and wealth between the centre and the regions. A workable solution must take into account all the cultural, ethnic, religious and historical issues.

The sustainability of the peace agreement is dependent on the goodwill of the entire population.

It has to be owned by all, accepted by all, acted on by all.

We know this is only the beginning.

The peace agreement is in place, but food, shelter and support for the millions of people who are returning to their devastated homes is not. The promise inherent in the peace agreement will only be fulfilled if the Sudanese people experience two things: the speedy implementation of what has been agreed, and the concrete support of the international community. This means immediate action to alleviate the humanitarian crisis, both in Darfur and in the South. The vast majority of the returnees and IDPs are women, and this makes our commitment to humanitarian support even more important.

The success of the implementation will depend on the parties. It will require political will and determination. But it will also depend on the level of support from the international community – an active and firm international community.

Certainly there are enough challenges to go round. I see three immediate ones for the Sudanese leadership:

First, making the Comprehensive Peace Agreement truly national.

This means widening the political ownership of the agreement. This can only be done by including other political parties and forces in Sudan in the constitutional process and the new government of national unity. It means South-South dialogue. It means involving militia and civil society groups in the process and the new political set-up. It means including women at all levels and in all phases.

Second, implementing the peace agreement.

Here the first stage is the most critical. Swift implementation will bolster both support for the agreement and its sustainability. After a few delays, new institutions have now been established in accordance with the protocols. The Joint National Transition Team of the two parties has been constituted and is now representing Sudan at this conference.

What remains to be completed is the National Constitutional Review Commission, which will include other political forces in the country. A key question here is how women's rights and gender issues will be addressed in the new constitution. Another challenge will be to secure a satisfactory number of women in the new government.

The Government of National Unity will be formed towards the end of the pre-interim period, most likely in June. July marks the start of the six-year interim period, during which both the national coalition government and the Southern regional government will have to prove that they can and will deliver basic services to the population.

How many women will participate in the new governments, both centrally and in the South? How many will participate in the local governments?

The SPLM has decided on a quota system where 25% of their representatives must be women. This is encouraging, and we encourage other groups to follow their lead.

Third, taking responsibility for building peace in all parts of the country.

This is especially important for Darfur, the East. The Naivasha agreement provides a blueprint for resolving the conflicts. The two parties, the Government and the SPLM, must co-operate to find good solutions for these areas as well. Otherwise these tensions and conflicts could hamper the overall implementation of the peace agreement.

Violence against women has been widespread, in Darfur and in the South. A recent reminder is the Medecins sans Frontieres' report on rape in Sudan.

Women deserve our special attention now – in the peace process and in the efforts to heal the country. The parties and the international community must follow closely the recommendations of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (on women, peace and security).

There is no easy shortcut to a political solution for Darfur: the solution will have to address vital political, security and economic issues as well as

environmental and ethnic problems. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement has been accepted by both sides as the framework for a solution. Thus the autonomy and sharing of power and wealth granted in the Agreement could serve as a model for Darfur, the East and possibly other areas.

The AU mission to Darfur is doing a good job, but lacks sufficient personnel, equipment and financing to stabilize the situation in the whole of the region and protect all the citizens. We know that women need particular protection. The mission must be strengthened immediately.

We know that implementation of the new agreement will not be easy.

The new unity government will have the main responsibility for the implementation. But they cannot do it alone. You, the women of Sudan, must be part of this as well:

- As *watchdogs* – to monitor the political process, to expose gaps between rhetoric and reality, to make sure that women’s interests are protected.
- As *advocates* – to amplify the message from the women who may not be in a position to speak themselves. You can make sure their rights are taken into account where decisions are made.
- As *peacemakers* – to show people in the local communities that peace pays.

The donor conference that starts tomorrow will demonstrate a broader and deeper level of support for Sudan than we have ever seen before. Representatives from more than 60 countries and organizations will arrive today and tomorrow, and we look forward to generous pledges from as many as possible.

Because there is so much that must be done in Sudan. Estimates indicate that the country will need 7.9 billion dollars for reconstruction and rehabilitation in the first two years alone. Sudan is prepared to cover most of this.

The international community has been asked to contribute 2.6 billion dollars. I hope and believe pledges will be on the table by Tuesday night.

It will be necessary to monitor these pledges – and make sure enough of the money benefits women. It may be that women would make different choices than men. Indeed, in some cases, men and women live in different worlds – and men may not know enough or care enough about the concerns of their mothers, wives, sisters and daughters.

It is your job to make them – and us, the donors – aware of your concerns, your ideas, your demands.

We promise to pay attention. We pledge our support.

The former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said that

“If you want anything said, ask a man. If you want something done, ask a woman.”

My friends, in Sudan, much has been said. Now much must be done. I urge you to play an active part in the rebuilding of this great country – to make sure that peace has come to stay – to make sure the children of Sudan will have hope for the future.

Together, I believe we can do it.

Ladies: Let’s get to work – now.

Thank you.

APPENDIX III

Statement delivered by Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director of The United Nations Development Fund For Women (UNIFEM), to The Oslo Donors' Conference on Sudan 2005, April 12.

Madam Chairperson,

It is an honor to speak today on how we can support the women of Sudan. Let me first thank the Government of Norway for your leadership and for hosting this conference. I also want to congratulate the leaders and people of Sudan for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Women know the cost of war and destruction. Many women and their families are displaced, living in extreme poverty without access to clean water, energy, sanitation, livelihood and education. They have watched their men killed, and they and their daughters are exposed to violence every day. After 40 years of suffering, peace brings new hope. But this peace is fragile. It has to be carefully nurtured and invested in. A new Sudan, a Sudan without war, needs women as leaders and as full citizens. Women are central to the enormous tasks ahead and can accelerate the building of peace, security and prosperity. They are not just victims; they are also part of the solution.

Women are central to weaving back the social fabric of life, to rebuilding shattered families and communities. They are key to nation building. Their leadership and their human rights must, however, be accorded the space, the support and the resources necessary to sustain peace and development.

In recent months, UNIFEM has consulted extensively with women in the Sudan to understand their priorities and needs and to reflect these in the JAM process. The consultations have also culminated in the Gender

Symposium organized with the Government of Norway and the Norwegian Institute for International Affairs, just two days ago. A powerful agenda for action has emerged and has just been shared with you by the Sudanese women themselves. So I would like to highlight three key priorities for UNIFEM in supporting women's leadership and participation in Sudan's peace-building and reconstruction process.

The first is security: Security does not just mean the end of war. It must mean the ability to go about your life knowing that you and your family will be safe. However, we know that gender-based violence still continues and atrocities are still taking place, especially in Darfur. We will work and advocate on issues of gender justice for a security sector reform that includes women's human rights, protection and the link between HIV/AIDS and violence, and the prevention of HIV/AIDS based on gender equality and partnership with men. We will engage with DDR from a gender perspective to include women combatants and non-combatants in fighting forces and wives, widows and other dependents of ex-fighters.

The second priority is governance and the rule of law: Country after country where we have assisted women, we have seen how women's participation in legal reform, in rule of law institutions, in the drafting of the Constitution, in elections, as leaders and as voters, are so important for sustainable peace and accountability. Support to women cannot wait. The capacities of Ministries and women's organizations at the community level must be strengthened; a women's coalition must be built and nationwide networks fostered; information must be shared with rural and urban women alike through media and other means; and experience-sharing and exchanges with many African women from different countries on peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction must be supported.

The third priority is economic security and rights: This is where the peace dividend comes. Swift implementation of livelihood programmes and of inclusive economic policies and strategies would move people from engaging in the economies of war to the economies of peace. An urgent step must be to support women's land rights and to deliver development assistance in partnership with women's organizations and businesses. Of immediate importance is access to basic services. Rural women and girls spend

most of their time collecting water, firewood, and caring for other household members. Because of this, they may never make it to school or benefit from new opportunities, even if given a chance. That is why water, energy, feeder roads, health and education are fundamentally gender issues.

We have had generous commitments and discussion of funding mechanisms over the last two days. The challenge ahead is to ensure that these funding mechanisms, such as the Multi-donor Trust Fund, be accompanied not just by a women's window, but by a women's door for accessing the funds. The needs are too great. I would also like to mention the UN Trust Fund on the Elimination of Violence against Women, established by the General Assembly and managed by UNIFEM, as an existing modality to address gender-based violence that is available for multi-donor support to countries such as Sudan.

The best way to measure commitment to women is to follow the money and to make sure that the money works. Gender-responsive budgeting can be put in place to guide Sudan's reconstruction. UNIFEM has already assisted 30 countries in this area, and could provide technical support towards such an initiative.

At the end of the women's symposium, our two leaders have said that women were the most marginalised people in Sudan. Both of them said they would support economic and political participation by women. By doing so, they have acknowledged Sudan's most under-recognized resource and the need to involve women as full partners in peace building and reconstruction. Women now need your support so they can contribute fully to a new future, free of violence and poverty.

I thank you.

APPENDIX IV

Sudanese Women's Priorities and Recommendations to the Oslo Donors' Conference on Sudan²⁸

10 April 2005

We, the Sudanese women delegates from all regions, comprising representatives from the Government of Sudan, the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), civil society and academic institutions, met in Oslo on 10 April 2005 with the objectives of defining our priorities in advocating for donor support for gender equality and women's rights in post-conflict Sudan. We met under the auspices of the Government of Norway, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). This effort was also supported by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union, South African Women in Dialogue, the UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador for Africa and other United Nations agencies.²⁹

Guided by UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, the African Union Protocol on Women's Human Rights, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, the IGAD Gender Policy, as well as other existing commitments, principles, goals and actions set out in the various national, regional, continental and international instruments on women's human rights

²⁸ These recommendations are an outcome of a consultative process culminating in a Symposium on Women's Rights and Leadership in Post-Conflict Sudan, held in Oslo 10 April 2005, under the auspices of Government of Norway, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

²⁹ Mrs. Zanele Mbeki from South African Women in Dialogue; Hon Phoebe Asiyo, UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador for Africa; and Atsede Zerfu, Programme Manager Gender Affairs/IGAD; the JAM team; DPKO; UNFPA; UNICEF; UNHCR; and UNDP.

Cognizant of the huge impact of war on women and women's human rights, the erosion of capacities of women and the fundamental divisions that war creates;

Deeply concerned by the continued existence of conflict in some parts of Sudan, especially the Darfurs, and its impact on women and children; *Recognizing* women's role in peace-building, peacemaking, reconstruction and sustaining families and communities amidst the ravages of war, poverty and HIV/AIDS and women's fundamental human right to be full and equal partners in all sectors and at all levels, from local through national, but bearing in mind the different status of women in the different areas of Sudan;

And *lauding* the effort made to mainstream gender throughout the JAM, while underlining the importance of women-specific programmes and projects;

We the women delegates do recommend the following minimum urgent priorities and actions for reconstruction during the interim period:

I. Governance and rule of law

- Adhere to equal citizenship rights and obligations for women and men.
- Recognizing the principle of 50% equal representation for women and men as enshrined in the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality and the IGAD Gender Policy, but cognizant of the context, situation and issues at stake, we recommend 30% as a minimum threshold for women's representation at all levels and in all sectors. This includes:
 - Immediate inclusion of at least 30% representation by women in the Constitution-making and review processes.
 - A minimum representation of 30% for women in decision-making positions at all levels, including transitional institutions and all commissions established under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

- Support urgent legislative reform in the area of political, economic and family rights.
- Support urgent programmes for addressing negative customs and practices, which continue to foster women's marginalization and exclusion in all spheres of life.
- Support and enhance women's effective political participation and leadership at all levels, including within political parties with a strong and urgent support to capacity building for women's leadership.
- Ensure the representation of women in the monitoring mechanisms of the CPA and all peace missions.
- Ensure women's full participation in the Darfur peace process in compliance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the African Union Protocol on Women's Human Rights.

II. Gender-based violence

- Ensure the protection of women and girls in terms of safety from sexual and gender-based violence, especially in war-affected areas.
- Create and strengthen institutional mechanisms so that women and girls can report acts of violence against them in a safe and confidential environment.
- Enact legislation to protect women from sexual and gender-based violence and to end impunity for perpetrators thereof.
- Increase ease of access to support services for survivors, including psychosocial counseling and ready availability of post-exposure prophylaxis kits.
- Recognize the importance of HIV/AIDS in relation to human security as outlined in Security Council resolution 1308 (2000) and ensure adequate education and awareness-raising, prevention and treatment on HIV/AIDS, specifically in connection with gender-based violence.

- Collect and consolidate research and data on the impact of gender-based violence on women and girls, including as a result of armed conflict.

III. Capacity building and institutional development

- Establish a Ministry of Women and Gender Equality with full resources, as provided for in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and create gender divisions in all other sectors.
- Establish a women's fund within the Multi-donor Trust Fund (MDTF) for women-specific programmes, and ensure a formal role for women's organizations in the management and disbursement of funds.
- Enhance capacity of women and women's organizations to provide support services, engage in policy and be fully involved in the reconstruction effort.
- Strengthen capacity of all national institutions of gender equality/equity (at all levels of development)
- Establish women's resource centres for refugees, internally displaced women and returnees at state, provincial and district levels.
- Build capacity for gender planning; gender analysis and gender-responsive resource allocation in all institutions and at all levels.

IV. ECONOMIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

- Formulate pro-poor economic policies and poverty eradication and wealth creation strategies that adequately address the needs and rights of women and girls.
- Ensure women's economic empowerment through access to entrepreneurship and loan programmes, economic opportunities and marketing, and by facilitating access of women-owned small and micro-enterprises to advisory services, appropriate technology and micro-finance.

- Support women's associations in the various economic sectors, with a special focus on agriculture and pastoralism.
- Formulate and implement laws for meeting women's ownership and access to property, especially land income and employment opportunities.
- Provide access to information on business opportunities in the reconstruction period, including by enhancing the capacity of women's organizations to implement donor contracts and by giving them priority as contractors.
- Cancel debt and ensure that the benefits of such cancellation benefit women, children and communities.

IV. Livelihoods and productive sectors

- Provide appropriate knowledge, technology and support in women's efforts for food security and economic empowerment.
- Provide alternative financial farm credit to women and men (farming implements/ materials: fertilizers, seeds, hoes, wheel-barrow, ox-ploughs, and tractors, among others), and give priority to women farmers in view of the fact that they have a key responsibility of providing for their families.
- Supporting women's business and farmers' associations.
- Involve and grant full access to women combatants in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) processes, in line with Security Council resolution 1590 (2005).
- Prioritize allocation of targeted programmes to support the reintegration of women associated with the war within the framework of DDR.
- Within the context of security sector reform, and particularly the police services, increase recruitment of women and establish special police units to deal with gender-based violence crimes and crimes against children.

V. Basic social services

Health

- Provide access to safe drinking water.
- Support programmes to halt the spread of communicable diseases and other public health issues, including the impact of environmental degradation on health.
- Enforce and/or enact laws to eradicate all harmful traditional practices that have an impact on the health of women and girls.
- Provide free comprehensive reproductive health services in every state, with at least one maternity hospital, well equipped with facilities and at least one ambulance for emergency cases.
- Support and facilitate the introduction of mobile outreach clinics and establish community-based pharmacies, to be managed and owned by the communities.
- Strengthen gender-responsive HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and access to antiretroviral drugs, including by establishing voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) centers at the community level and strengthening HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns throughout the country.

Education

- Provide free and compulsory primary education to all girls and boys.
- Support reform of the education system, including curricula (gender mainstreaming), training, feeding programmes and improved school environment.
- Reduce gender disparities in education enrolment and dropout rates for primary, secondary, tertiary and post-graduate levels, with priority given to war-affected and marginalised areas.

- Provide education and training for adolescent girls.
- Establish a special scholarship and bursary fund for the education of girls, especially those from families with limited resources, widows and war orphans.
- Establish special education programmes and schools for children with disabilities.
- Promote and support accelerated adult education, adult literacy programmes and functional literacy that directly target women, particularly in South Sudan.
- Introduce and support vocational training opportunities for adult learners, targeting women in particular.
- Support multi-media information and communication strategies, especially radio services, for communities with high levels of illiteracy and limited access to communication infrastructure.

In conclusion

We call upon this donor conference to commit to principles of gender responsive resource allocation so that at least 80% of budgetary allocations and resource support to Sudan's reconstruction meet at least three of the following criteria:

- Directly benefiting women, contributing directly to women's empowerment and increasing women's capacities, opportunities and access to resources;
- Reducing gender inequalities in law, policy and practice;
- Directly benefiting young people, especially girls, in disadvantaged communities;
- Targeting rural areas.

We also call on the donor community to provide financial support towards the hosting of an all-inclusive Sudanese Women's Conference that would define a coherent, long-term agenda and strategy for accelerating women's empowerment and gender equality/equity. We call on the support of IGAD, the African Union, the United Nations and especially UNIFEM to facilitate the hosting of such a conference. Such a conference should prioritize inputs from grassroots communities through Regional Preparatory Conferences, and must include the private sector, civil society, non-governmental organizations, diaspora, returnees, refugees and IDPs, professionals and international personalities.

We call on the United Nations to engage women's organizations in support of the newly established UN Peace Keeping mission in Sudan, particularly with regards to awareness-raising and education about the role and mandate of the peacekeeping mission, UN codes of conduct, including disciplinary measures that govern behavior of peacekeepers and about community strategies and safeguards to prevent any possible incidences of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers.

We call for dedicated funding to support an independent women's watchdog mechanism that will monitor implementation of the above recommendations.

And finally, we do appreciate the support provided by the Government of Norway and its institutions, the United Nations and especially UNIFEM in mainstreaming our participation and our concerns in this process and call for the recognition of institutions such as UNIFEM and IGAD in their capacities and mandates towards women.

APPENDIX V

Statement delivered on behalf of the women delegates to the Sudanese women's Gender Symposium to the Oslo Donors' Conference on Sudan 2005, April 12.

Madam Chairperson, Your Excellency, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Here we stand together as women from South and North united. On behalf of the Gender Symposium delegates, we would like to extend our gratitude to the Government of Norway, with special appreciation for the effort of Her Excellency, Ms. Hilde Johnson, for affording us the opportunity to present the priorities of our Symposium.

We would like to highlight the main points of the immediate and top priorities identified by the Symposium. We register special thanks to UNIFEM, NDI, UNICEF, UNHCR and IGAD for technical support towards this historic gender forum process.

We the women delegates of the Symposium do recommend the following minimum urgent priorities and actions for reconstruction during the interim period:

In regard to governance and rule of law:

- Adhere to equal citizenship rights and obligations for women and men.
- Immediate inclusion of at least 30% representation by women in the Constitution-making and review processes.
- A minimum representation of 30% for women in decision-making positions at all levels, including transitional institutions and all commissions established under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

Under gender-based violence:

- Ensure the protection of women and girls in terms of safety from sexual and gender-based violence, especially in war-affected areas.
- Recognize the importance of HIV/AIDS in relation to human security and ensure adequate education and awareness raising, prevention and treatment on HIV/AIDS.

Under capacity building and institutional development:

- Establish a Ministry of Women and Gender Equality with full resources, as provided for in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and create gender divisions in all other sectors.
- Establish a women's fund within the Multi-donor Trust Fund for women-specific programmes, and ensure a formal role for women's organizations in the management and disbursement of funds.
- Establish women's resource centres for refugees, internally displaced women and returnees at state, provincial and district levels.

Under economic policy and management:

- Formulate pro-poor economic policies and poverty eradication and wealth creation strategies that adequately address the needs and rights of women and girls.
- Ensure women's economic empowerment.
- Cancel debt and ensure that the benefits of such cancellation benefit women, children and communities.

Under livelihoods and productive sectors:

- Provide appropriate knowledge, technology and support in women's efforts for food security and economic empowerment.
- Prioritize allocation of targeted programmes to support the reintegration of women associated with the war within the framework of DDR.

Under basic social services, for health:

- Provide access to safe drinking water.
- Support programmes to halt the spread of communicable diseases and other public health issues, including the impact of environmental degradation on health.
- Enforce and/or enact laws to eradicate all harmful traditional practices that have an impact on the health of women and girls.

- Provide free comprehensive reproductive health services in every state, with at least one maternity hospital, well equipped with facilities and at least one ambulance for emergency cases.
- Support and facilitate the introduction of mobile outreach clinics and establish community-based pharmacies, to be managed and owned by the communities.

And for education:

- Provide free and compulsory primary education to all girls and boys.
- Support reform of the education system, including curriculum, training, feeding programmes and improved school environment.
- Reduce gender disparities in education enrolment and dropout rates for primary, secondary, tertiary and post-graduate levels, with priority given to war-affected and marginalised areas.
- Establish special education programmes and schools for children with disabilities.
- Promote and support accelerated adult education, adult literacy programmes and functional literacy that directly target women, particularly in South Sudan.
- Support multi-media information and communication strategies, especially radio services, for communities with high levels of illiteracy and limited access to communication infrastructure.

In conclusion, we call upon this donor conference to commit to principles of gender responsive resource allocation so that at least 80% of budgetary allocations and resource support to Sudan's reconstruction meet at least three of the following criteria:

- Combating HIV/AIDS and decreasing maternal mortality
- Reducing gender inequalities in law, policy and practice;
- Directly benefiting young people, especially girls, in disadvantaged communities;
- Targeting rural areas.

Thank you for listening.