

SYMPOSIUM REPORT

Sudan Civil Society Symposium

Canada, June 2000

1 Introduction

The **Sudan Civil Society Symposium** was held in **Calgary** on June 5 and in **Ottawa** on June 7-9, 2000. It was organized by the Sudan Inter Agency Reference Group (SIARG), a network of Canadian NGOs working on Sudan. Freedom Quest International and Partnership Africa Canada played major co-ordination roles in Calgary and Ottawa respectively. The organizers gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Centre for Foreign Policy Development of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and the member organizations of SIARG in making this Symposium possible.

The Sudan Civil Society Symposium provided an opportunity for views and opinions of Sudanese people to be heard with regard to Canadian involvement in Sudan, and an opportunity to discuss the effectiveness of existing activities and ideas for peace and development among invited non-combatant representatives from Sudanese civil society. The Symposium also aimed to explore and highlight appropriate responses among the Canadian public and private sectors with respect to their conduct and activities in enhancing the peace process in Sudan. In addition, the Symposium provided an opportunity to explore the role of Sudanese civil society and the international community in the promotion of peace within Sudan.

The first part of the Sudan Civil Society Symposium, **Forum I**, was held in Calgary on June 6 with more than 160 people attending. The participation of the Sudanese community in western Canada was acknowledged and welcomed. A pre-Forum meeting of the Sudanese community was very important to building relations and sharing information among its members; it was also effective in enhancing the dialogue between participants and the speakers at the Forum.

The second part of the Sudan Civil Society Symposium, **Forum II**, was held in Ottawa on June 7-9 and brought together Sudanese civil society representatives to air views on the many issues concerning the conflict in Sudan and to discuss the possibilities of strengthening the peace process. Representatives from Canadian NGOs, Sudanese community groups in Canada, the Government of Canada and the diplomatic community participated in the Forum. The Forum deepened the commitment of the participants and organizations to assisting the situation in Sudan and articulated ways to work on concrete issues together. The Forum also offered recommendations to the Government of Canada and other bodies concerning issues and policies that require urgent attention and renewed efforts to further the efforts for peace. Several additional meetings also took place in Ottawa and Toronto between the Sudanese participants and the Sudanese community in these cities.

2 Summary of Recommendations of the Sudan Civil Society Symposium

2.1 Enhancing the Role of Civil Society in the Sudan Peace Process

1. Participants endorsed the People to People Peace Process and the use of traditional methods of peace building. It is further recommended that the New Sudan Council of Churches extend its peacebuilding initiatives from south to north, engaging grassroots communities in its process with emphasis on work in the south until that work is comprehensive, but with some initiatives between north and south. Given the extent of north-south mistrust in Sudan, it is recommended that efforts be made to open lines of communication and dialogue between civil society groups in both parts of the country.

2. Interested parties should contemplate ways to put the necessary civil administration into place in the south as part of the peacebuilding and rehabilitation effort. The barriers that exist to accessing funds for such activities in SLPA-held territory must be overcome in creative and innovative ways to help maintain the gains of the People to People Peace Process.

3. Given the absence of development assistance for Sudan, all agencies should seek ways to go beyond the provision of emergency assistance and provide inputs that contribute to long term development.

4. There is a need for NGOs from IPF (IGAD Partners Forum) countries and other countries to monitor and track the IPF process. This can be done through the establishment of a shadow NGO body to the IPF with the objective of feeding NGO and civil society views into the IPF. Care should be taken within the international NGO network to encourage all NGOs involved to refrain from taking away ownership of issues and processes in Sudan from Sudanese groups.

5. Given the successes of the People to People Peace Process, clear and firm steps should be taken to disseminate information on this initiative within the north and south of Sudan. Furthermore, SIARG and other interested parties elsewhere should endeavour to find resources to support the current peace initiatives of civil society groups and NGOs.

6. Given the size of the Sudan problem and also the limited prospects for peace, action should be taken to form an international network of external groups working in Sudan. Furthermore, a particular task of this network might be to conduct international monitoring of and action on the human rights crisis in Sudan.

7. Given the limited flow of information between Canadian NGOs and Sudanese groups in Canada, and recognizing the participation of Sudanese groups in Canada, ways should be found to improve the flow of information and the contact between Canadian NGOs and the Sudanese community groups in Canada. Furthermore, Sudanese groups in Canada should be invited to engage in the peace building process going on in Sudan and to undertake training or other activities within their own community related to the peace process underway within Sudan. Efforts should be made to support better co-ordination and communication among Sudanese groups in Canada.

8. Given the Canadian Government's response to the recommendations of the Harker Mission report, Canadians should press for support for enabling the voices of Sudan to speak to the peace process and tap into the international network.

2.2 Mechanisms for Canada to Support Human Rights and Civil Society in Sudan

1. The severity of human rights abuses in Sudan, in all regions, requires more vigorous action by the international community. Systematic monitoring and consistent follow-up means that Canada should balance its office in Khartoum with equal presence to effectively monitor human rights abuses in the South. The consensus is that the Government of Sudan (GOS) only responds to strong and persistent international pressure; correcting the Government of Sudan's attempts to polish its image (dubbed the "charm offensive") with the truth about the scope and severity of human rights abuses is essential to support the Sudanese people who are fighting for their basic human rights. Identified areas requiring more international attention include:

- forced removals and inhumane conditions for displaced persons;
- bombardment of civilian centres, e.g. hospitals and schools, and denied access to humanitarian assistance;
- slavery and the inadequacy of the work by the committee appointed to eradicate abductions as a response;
- systemic violations of women's rights;
- discrimination and inadequacy in meeting the right to basic education;
- inequitable access to health care - none in many areas of the south;
- the GOS's Public Order Law as a violation of basic human rights;
- violations of the security and rights of children, which requires immediate attention;
- torture and denial of the most basic rights for people in prisons;
- systemic violations of the right to religious freedom;
- denial of civil rights, such as democratic rights, freedom of association, failure to implement rights recognized in the constitution which the GOS uses as a cover for its abuses.

2. The Government of Canada (GOC) is urged to convince the Government of Sudan (GOS) to allow international and national NGOs to help internally displaced persons (IDPs) and that planning of the IDP camps and provision of goods and services to the camps be greatly improved. The Government of Canada should do all it can to secure the right and freedom of Sudanese NGOs to help displaced people throughout the country. Of particular concern is the flow of assistance to the Nuba people and people in the Southern Blue Nile region.

3. Action is urgently required to enable Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) to resolve with the Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) all outstanding issues between these two parties with regard to

the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) so that the flow of assistance to people in southern Sudan by OLS can recommence immediately. The GOC is urged to seek, through multilateral channels, the earliest possible resolution of issues regarding the MOU and ensure the renewed flow of assistance to southern Sudan.

4. The GOC and Canadian NGOs are urged to work closely together as a matter of urgency to develop a protocol for the extension of international (including Canadian) assistance to Sudan so that support can be provided to Sudanese civil society organizations and Sudanese NGOs. Due to problematic aspects of the OLS structure and methods, particular effort should be made to ensure that assistance flows to NGOs that are autonomous of the GOS.

5. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) should convene as soon as possible a full-day consultation with NGOs which work in Sudan on all aspects related to the control and access to assistance within both south and north Sudan, including the impact of the OLS system itself, in order to ensure consistency in CIDA's policy and implementation in Sudan.

6. CIDA's International Humanitarian Assistance (IHA) division should expand its terms of reference for aid to Sudan. Other donors should be encouraged to deliver a broader range of programs to Sudan as well. Specific concern is expressed for people in prisons, for women and children, and for internally displaced people in GOS's so-called 'peace camps'.

7. The Government of Canada should vigorously pursue ways to hold Talisman directly accountable for the specific human rights violations identified in the Harker Mission report as directly linked to their operations, such as the forced displacement of people from the oilfields and violations of basic human rights committed by Talisman's security guards, who are also members of the GOS army. The unacceptably narrow terms of reference for Talisman's own human rights monitoring program should be challenged by the GOC and support given to genuinely independent and systematic monitoring of human rights abuses in the area of the oilfields.

8. The Sudan Inter-Agency Reference Group (SIARG) members should consider the results of a recent survey of NGOs in Sudan completed by Alternatives and consider ways to match interested Canadian NGOs with Sudanese NGOs for collaboration on program design, delivery and evaluation.

9. The rights of children in the war situation in Sudan and the effects of war on children are of grave concern. SIARG and multilateral bodies should raise the profile of Sudanese war-affected children on the agenda of the Winnipeg Conference on War-Affected Children and at other international conferences, wherever possible.

10. Given the discussions inside Sudan and within the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) on cessation of hostilities followed by an interim period (during which time a referendum would be held to determine the future of Sudan), Canadian NGOs should prepare for that interim period. CIDA is encouraged to provide financial support for that effort. The New Sudan Council of Churches is active on this issue and agrees to share its work with Canadian NGOs.

11. As the Government of Canada is establishing a monitoring office in Khartoum, the mandate for

that office should include the collection of information from sources other than the GOS and from sources outside of Khartoum. Furthermore, the mandate, strategies and processes of that office should focus primarily on human rights monitoring. It is strongly recommended that the office not become a Program Support Unit (PSU) of CIDA, nor a Consular Office or a Trade Office.

12. The IGAD Monitoring Committee should deal with Human Rights issues directly and explicitly. Also, the Geneva Convention must be adhered to by the GOS, with the International Red Cross or Red Crescent Society monitoring compliance, such that all POWs are identified and remain safe.

13. The GOC should encourage the GOS to ratify the Land Mines Treaty. Similarly the SPLA should be engaged in effective dialogue in de-mining activities. The GOC should also encourage the GOS to sign UN conventions, treaties and protocols, such as those on Women's Rights.

2.3 Impact of Canada's Support for Sudan's Oil Development on the Peace Process

Symposium participants drafted recommendations related to Sudan's oil development projects, and specifically, the impact of Canada's support for those projects on the peace process.

There was consensus among participants to support the continued implementation of complementary strategies aimed at forcing Talisman's disinvestment from Sudan until there is peace, including cross-sectoral awareness-raising and mobilization, a media campaign and a call to investors to divest to demonstrate their support for the people of Sudan.

For further information, please contact SIARG.

3 Forum I - Calgary

The first part of the Sudan Civil Society Symposium, Forum I, was held in Calgary on June 5. It brought together members of the Sudanese community from across western Canada with people who are actively involved in the Sudan peace process - civil society representatives from Sudan, Canadian, US and European NGOs, representatives of Talisman Energy, interested Canadian citizens and representatives of the media. It was the first exchange of such dimensions on Sudan in Calgary.

The impact of the discussion was to galvanize those interested in long term peace in Sudan on key issues, including those described below.

3.1 The International Mediation Process

The current mediation process for Sudan involving the parties to the conflict and the international community has been extremely difficult and is seen by the Forum resource persons as being in deep trouble. The Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) Mediation Committee member countries, chaired by Kenya, are currently unable to play their role due to the internal problems of the respective countries. There is a second peace initiative underway involving Egypt and Libya but the format and modalities of that process are less clear. The international community that comes together in the IGAD Partners Forum (IPF) includes Canada. However, as the IPF relies on the IGAD process, its strategy is now also experiencing difficulties.

The list of several significant issues to be resolved that have been agreed by the parties is well known. Several of the issues are discussed in this report. However these issues have yet to be resolved by the parties to the conflict.

3.2 The Escalation of the War

There is an ongoing war in Sudan being waged throughout the country, with its main effects felt by the people in the south of Sudan. The war has been ongoing for more than seventeen years. It is a war that is escalating with the recent purchase by the Government of Sudan of significant new military equipment and ammunitions manufacturing capacity. The war contrasts with the so-called 'charm offensive' also being waged by the Government of Sudan to improve its international image. Most participants and speakers understood the 'liberalization' measures being undertaken by the GOS as being strictly for appearances only.

3.3 Civil Society Voices Speak for Peace

The voices of civil society in Sudan are many and diverse. They exist in exile, and also within the country. The internal voices exist under duress due to the massive impoverishment and displacement of Sudanese citizens during the 17 year since the war commenced in 1983. Especially notable are the voices of the women of Sudan who are making a special appeal for peace and an end to war, together with special efforts to resolve differences. Also of great importance is the People to People Peace Process currently underway in southern Sudan. This process deserves additional resources and

support, given its success to date.

Participants and speakers stressed their interest in peace in Sudan and a resolution to the problems causing conflict, noting that too many people have died and too many people have been displaced to unacceptable temporary locations. The participants urged action such that the significant suffering of the people of Sudan can end, urging all parties to act in a way that will ensure significant development in the direction of peace.

3.4 The Role of Oil

The Sudanese participants felt strongly that the exploitation and flow of oil is exacerbating the war and has raised the stakes, with the clear prospects that war atrocities will increase. Speakers underlined that they had seen and felt the negative effects of oil on the people of the south. They expressed how deeply disturbed they were at the atrocities carried out by the military units of the Sudanese Army to protect the oil fields and installations, including the pipeline to Port Sudan, and the international investments that have been made. The Sudanese participants are particularly concerned by the role of the Canadian company, Talisman Energy, in oil development in Sudan. Civil society organizations in Sudan and Canadian NGOs have called for Talisman to acknowledge that its activities are exacerbating the war and enabling the war atrocities to continue, if not expand. They have called upon Talisman Energy to acknowledge the atrocities committed by its partner in the project, the Government of Sudan (GOS), and to withdraw from Sudan.

The participants felt strongly that Talisman is not dealing with the realities of the situation on the ground, or with the evidence of ongoing atrocities committed by the GOS. The participants endorsed the view that considerable pressure must continue to be applied on Talisman so that it acts appropriately and stops its support to one side in the conflict.

Talisman defended its investment and its operational involvement in Sudan and claimed that it is party to a development process for the economic good of all Sudanese. Talisman representatives admitted that Talisman "eats from the same cake as the GOS" and benefits financially from its Sudan operations. They explained Talisman's recent decisions to adopt a new approach to 'corporate responsibility'. While there were signs of dialogue and 'learning moments' between Talisman representatives and other conference participants in Calgary, a lack of trust in Talisman was expressed by many of the assembled participants. As well, the view was expressed that if Talisman were to fully adopt the current International Code of Conduct for Corporations, it would logically conclude that it must withdraw from Sudan. Many participants felt that Talisman Energy was not committed to full social and corporate accountability involving real transparency.

3.5 The Conclusions of the Harker Mission Report

The Forum heard from a member of the Harker Mission about the conclusions of the Harker Mission Report. Many participants felt that the statements of the Mission on the issue of atrocities and violations of human rights represent a clear indictment of the GOS and its partners in the oil production.

Participants were referred to the Report's reference to abductions, forced displacement and slavery in Sudan by military forces of the GOS, and those sponsored by the GOS to engage in such activities. The Mission corroborated findings of the UN Special Rapporteur. These findings conclude that all forced abductions into slavery and confined work without compensation are illegal. In today's context of the Sudan conflict, there is no difference between slavery and abductions, and all practices that result in wrongful treatment of one human being by another are illegal under international law. Specific mention was made of continuing reports of slavery among Sudanese women and the continuation of repressive laws that condone or encourage excessive brutality.

Forum participants endorsed the Recommendations of the Harker Mission Report. Hope was expressed that its Recommendations would be accepted and implemented by the Government of Canada. In particular, participants mentioned frequently that Canadians must be encouraged to demand more significant action by the Government of Canada. This action should stem the flow of oil revenue to the GOS. Canada must also play a more enlightened and pro-active role, particularly as it is also a member of the IPF.

4 Forum II - Ottawa

Forum II, held in Ottawa on June 7-9, brought together civil society voices from Sudan, Canada, the US and Europe for nearly three days to air views on the many issues concerning the conflict in Sudan and to discuss the possibilities of strengthening the peace process. Representatives of the Government of Canada and the diplomatic community were welcomed to the Forum.

4.1 Review of the Context

Participants heard of the tradition of and experience with national democratic institutions in Sudan and gained a particular appreciation of the democratic history and successes throughout the country, noting that twice in Sudan's history since independence, civil society forces have brought about periods of democratic government. Specific reference was made to the role of women in the life of the nation, their role in the history and the structures of civil society and the new role of women in search of peace - pushing the peace process from within civil society. It was also noted that undemocratic regimes and war plagued the country and the results of war have dealt Sudan a severe legacy of destruction, dislocation, uneven development and indeed underdevelopment.

In order to bring about significant and positive change in Sudan, elements of Sudanese society have attempted to bring about peace. There must be an acknowledgement of the long history of negotiation and dialogue towards peaceful settlement of issues, accompanied by great frustration and protraction of the armed conflict.

The participants heard of the recognition that should be given to the tremendous size of the problems and issues facing the people and the parties in the Sudan conflict. The details on the death and displacement of people in the Sudanese conflict are staggering and underline the call for urgent international attention to the requirements of the peace process.

There was great concern among the participants at the Forum that the Mediation Committee of IGAD is not making adequate progress. Many details of the IGAD process were described, as were ideas that can be considered by the IPF members as they discuss their next moves in the IGAD process. The parties heard a strong rationale for the IGAD process to be used as the main initiative for mediation of the conflict. Participants heard many views on the Egyptian-Libyan process and there was a view that there should be only one process at the diplomatic, international level.

There was concern by the Sudanese civil society representatives that the principle of self determination must not be abrogated, that it is of primary concern. Participants heard that the Interim Period after cessation of hostilities and the Referendum on Unity or Separation are key steps in securing an enduring peace, and that these should be taken in a context within which democratic norms must be practised vigorously.

Concerns were raised about the role of Canada in the IPF and the recent proposal that Canada establish a monitoring mission in Khartoum. Great concern was raised as to whether that office can be effective under the gaze of the GOS, and uncertainties were raised as to the procedures, operations and mandate of that office. Participants hoped that it would be effective and have integrity. Furthermore, there is disappointment that Canada has done little with the conclusions and recommendations of the Harker Mission Report. Participants called on Canada to be more proactive on the critical issues related to oil extraction and the role of the Canadian oil company, Talisman Energy, in Sudan.

The role of Talisman Energy of Calgary in exploration, extraction and financing of oil operations in Sudan is large and of great concern. There were few participants who expressed confidence that Talisman was accomplishing anything other than assisting the GOS, inadvertently or otherwise, in its efforts to maintain and extend the war in Sudan.

The participants felt strongly that the revenues from oil should not benefit the current regime and its war effort. Nor should oil revenues go only to one region of Sudan. Rather, corporations involved in oil operations in Sudan must cease operations until an agreement is made for the equitable distribution of the revenues from oil. This agreement can only be achieved in the context of, or following, a peace settlement for the whole of the Sudan.

Participants did not express support for the Government of Sudan and its policies and practices. The regime is seen as undemocratic, hostile to the interests of the vast majority of the people of Sudan in all parts of the country and serving only the interests of a few who use the mechanisms of government to do business for themselves. Participants agreed, however, that there are many severely aggrieved and disempowered persons and communities throughout the country. Participants expressed support for the dialogue on peace and the Declaration of Principles of the IGAD mediation process.

4.2 Human Rights and Civil Society in Sudan

A strong gender analysis of the human rights situation and a detailed description of the role of women within civil society came through from many speakers at the Forum. Historical notes on civil society that were presented described the structure, role and difficult operating circumstances of civil society today. The presentations were gripping and real. Women are among the most negatively affected,

though women are also 'refreshing' the peace process now by speaking out.

Women are speaking out not only about the war but also about their general role in society. There are hopes for important changes towards equality. There is, however, a particular concern about the impact of the war on women and children, especially those displaced by the war, those in so-called 'peace camps' and those in prisons. Women in Sudan are among the poorest of the poor and suffer the highest illiteracy rates. The war had made the situation for women in Sudan much worse than the impact of colonialism. Few health facilities are available in the country for women and children; access to food is skewed against women and children; and land mines severely affected women and children. In this adverse context women are struggling to be heard. Women want to ensure that in any negotiations and resolution of the conflict that women are full party to the outcomes and find a way to ensure significant moves towards gender equity in any new dispensation. Women are demanding the reinstatement of human rights and the rule of law and demand an end to the recruitment of children into the war.

With the incarceration of members of civil society by the military and police throughout the country, the concern for people in prison was raised and is of grave concern. The difficulty for groups that attempt to work in prisons was described in detail. It is complicated work and frustrating, and there is little observable effect on conditions of prisoners, especially women and children. It was noted that the vast majority of people in jails in the north are people from the south.

The situations facing a variety of specific groups within Sudan was raised. Chief among them was that of the Nuba people, particularly the military activity being carried out by the Government of Sudan in the Nuba Mountains, the lack of relief and emergency support there and the severe displacement that has resulted from both military attacks and the lack of external assistance. This issue was examined in detail with reference to the activities of the Sudan military around the oil fields and the oil pipeline.

Great concern was expressed about the expansion of military operations into Block 5 to the south-west of the Unity and Heglig oil fields. This is understood as an expansion of the war for purposes of depopulating new oil territory for the expansion of oil drilling and potential new exploitation of further oil reserves.

The aid and relief situation is of great importance in southern Sudan due to the ongoing lack of civilian administration and provision of services in the areas of health, education, agriculture (e.g. seeds) and water.

The participants and speakers dealt with the dilemma of dependency on external assistance. Concern was expressed about the way in which aid affects, often skews, the situation in the country, especially with the cessation or slowdown of aid, and the unequal distribution of aid. As well, in comparison, there is an open mind to aid and external assistance, indeed a need to collaborate with external groups in many areas of work and provision of basic services. It is hoped that more areas of Sudan can be opened up for needed relief and development assistance.

The speakers also exposed many sensitive issues and experiences of how people understood the situation from their own perspective, which, if not handled properly, will remain in effect and affect relationships in the future. The participants grappled with the need for truth about the pain and

suffering, healing and reconciliation, trust building between people, and hope for a way forward.

The People to People Peace Process being carried on in southern Sudan by the New Sudan Council of Churches is showing great promise, progress and vitality. In particular, the 1999 Wunlit Conference has brought reconciliation between several groups in the south. This process not only builds peace 'from below' but it fosters collaboration among groups as the overall situation in Sudan evolves.

The south-south dialogue, preparation for the cessation of hostilities and the Interim Period that would follow are important developments in the overall movement towards peace. The links between the People to People Peace Process, the south-south dialogue and the IGAD process, with its accompanying IPF process, were described by the speakers and were viewed as complementary processes.

The operations of the current regime in Khartoum, pose a continuing affront to the human rights of the people of Sudan. The great difficulties in daily life being faced by so many Sudanese are very real and deeply disturbing. The violations of human rights and abuses by the current regime are sufficiently documented to be of grave international concern. Yet the violations continue. The combined ability of Sudanese civil society and the international community must be raised to effectively challenge the Government of Sudan and bring pressure for a cessation to oppression, military atrocities and human rights abuses.

4.3 Civil Society and the Peace Process in Sudan

The participants heard details of the role of women in Sudan as instruments of peace. Recommendations were voiced for the further involvement of women in the peace process, especially in the north of Sudan. Within the ideas presented the participants heard of ways to further mobilize women, analysis of pressure points of the GOS, training needs for women and the potential for international linkages.

The participants also heard in more detail of the People to People Peace Process that has been going on in the south of the country. In particular the Forum heard of the events that led to the Wunlit Conference in 1999 and of the positive development since that Conference. The People to People Peace Process holds particular potential if carried out further to involve more groups and communities. Reports are that more groups are indeed becoming involved and that there are tremendous results from all the work to date. The 'bottom-up' approach is bringing civil society into the peace process despite the conflicts between military and political leaders.

The view was strongly expressed that unless south-south conflicts - the so-called tribal or ethnic conflicts - are resolved, civil society in the south will not be able to influence the peace process at the formal level involving the recognized parties to the conflict.

Details were presented to the Forum participants on the involvement of other civil society actors in the peace promotion work in the south. Participants heard of the particular role of women in the People to People Peace Process especially after the Wunlit Conference. While there was early scepticism among women, there is now a sense of change, and women have participated in the peace process

and want the world to hear about it. In the north, there is an active role among youth, women and professional groups, unions, peace researchers and activists, Muslim and Christian leaders and representatives of internally displaced peoples.

There is currently an important gap in civil society cohesion, especially recognizing that in both parts of the country people are working against a common force of oppression. The mutual mistrust between north and south cannot be ignored and must be resolved.

Issues concerning the People to People Peace Process include the following:

- How far and how fast can the process be extended and can it effectively go beyond the south?
- How can the word be spread that there is reconciliation at the community level, particularly to inform groups and people in the Diaspora?
- How can civil society from the north and the south be engaged in a common process or to share information?

Key building blocks for peace and a negotiated settlement include agreements reached already in the IGAD mediation process. These included a Statement of Principles. The main issues being debated are:

- Separation of religion and the state, and the issue of the 1998 Constitution.
- Borders between North and South, and the issue of oil in Unity State.
- Self-determination for unity or succession, and the referendum.
- Equitable sharing of power and wealth.
- Cessation of the conflict between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army and separation of forces.
- Repatriation of exiles and displaced persons.
- Humanitarian relief.
- Role of northern opposition groups in talks, and specific issues of specific groups of southern Sudanese.

Internationally, groups can be involved in several ways. These include:

- Pressure by NGOs to secure support within the IPF for the role of NGOs in the Peace Process.
- The hosting of more conferences, meetings and fora to talk strategically about the Peace Process in Sudan, keeping the Peace Process as high on the international agenda as possible.
- Pressure by NGOs and multilateral agencies on the GOS and SPLA to allow more relief

goods into the country to all peoples in all parts of the country - to help sustain the life of all individuals at this critical juncture.

- Pressure on the GOS to significantly enhance resettlement and rehabilitation work among internally displaced peoples, including the provision of education for all and medical services.

There was a strong call by speakers and participants of the Ottawa Forum to pressure the GOS and the SPLM as well as IGAD to involve civil society in the peace process. It was strongly voiced that the IPF must help bring the Sudanese NGOs and civil society groups into the peace process.

International support was requested to facilitate and encourage north-south communication between civil society organizations, including funds for meetings and information exchange. This would enable and empower Sudanese to take ownership of their problems, to organize and correct mistakes, to agree on objectives and methods of action and strategies, and to gain mutual understanding and trust.

4.4 Forum Workshops

The Forum included workshops on three areas:

- Supporting Human Rights and civil society in Sudan - Mechanisms for Canadian Assistance.
- Impact of Canada's economic role in Sudan - Oil Development and Support for the Peace Process.
- Enhancing the role of civil society in the peace process.

The Reports of these workshops brought the Civil Society Forum on Sudan to a conclusion. The recommendations reported from these workshops are included in the main set of recommendations enclosed in this report.

5. Note on consultations among Sudanese, Canadian, American and European NGOs during the Ottawa Forum

During the Ottawa Forum, NGO participants from Sudan, Canada, Europe and the United States met to explore options to improve the communication flow among regions, to develop common advocacy objectives and to better facilitate joint advocacy campaigns. Agreements were reached to redouble efforts in each of these areas.

Discussion also focused on ways in which NGOs might stay better apprised of the work of the IGAD Partners Forum (IPF), how best to link with the IPF and how to interject international NGO perspectives for consideration by the IPF.

Canadians present pledged to provide the necessary follow up on these questions during the coming months (September-November 2000).