



## Cross-Border Relations Beyond the Referendum Challenges and Opportunities

Workshop Summary, Agok, Abyei Area Sudan, 15-18 June 2010

### Building Consensus on Abyei

This three day meeting brought together traditional authorities, local administrators, Abyei Area Administration officials and representatives of civil society, such as leaders of women and youth associations from Dinka Ngok communities in the Abyei Area. The workshop was an opportunity for border communities to articulate principles and proposals to help inform the management of the border and cross-border relations; and help ensure that it works in the interests of a sustainable Sudanese peace over the long term.

#### Project Aims:

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

### Visions and Aspirations

Participants said they want good relations with their Misseriya neighbours and a culture of peace and dialogue to prevail over the area. Key to this vision of the future is a peaceful referendum accepted by all parties and supported by the international community; and the peaceful border demarcation for the Abyei Area. Whether there is secession or not, participants said their hopes for the border included: Peaceful and managed migrations; vibrant cross border trade; investment which benefits communities; and working systems for cross- border justice.

### Opportunities and Challenges

Identified opportunities include: 1) Properly conducted referendum; 2) Latent respect between the communities; 3) National negotiations; 4) Sharing water and other resources; 5) Investment in the border areas.

Major challenges identified include: 1) Politicisation of the conflict by national elites; 2) Loss of authority of traditional leadership over elements of society (particularly youth); 3) Weak or non existent rule of law; 4) Weak international peacekeeping; 5) Other armed groups; 6) Unemployment; 7) oil; 8) propaganda in the media; 9) resettlement; 10) cultural differences; 11) managing migration; 12) border demarcation.

### Scenarios and Expectations

Participants said that southern secession is likely whether through the referendum or a Unilateral Declaration of Independence. Secession will be associated with conflict and could negatively affect the livelihoods of Dinka Ngok and Misseriya communities through, for example, displacement or cutting off trade or migration routes. Abyei could become a battleground over oil and access to livelihood resources.

### Principles and Proposals

Participants agreed a number of recommendations which could lead to relations around the Abyei Area resembling more closely their hopes for the future.

The conclusions are summarised overleaf and detailed in the full event report.

#### CROSS-BORDER RELATIONS PROJECT

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

#### December—February 2010

Initial engagements in border states and development of methodology

#### March-June 2010

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

#### August-September 2010

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

#### July-November 2010

Policy briefings and national level conferences.



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

The following recommendations will support development and peaceful coexistence along the border between Northern and Southern Sudan. They will be beneficial in both referendum scenarios, i.e. whether Sudan remains united or if the south opts for secession (a full report will soon be available on the Concordis website):

- ◇ For cross-border relations between the populations on the northern and southern sides of the Abyei boundary to be peaceful and stable there is a need for agreements to be implemented in good faith, and there is a need for guarantees to be provided to ensure the confidence of populations that cooperation is desirable and that it can work.
- ◇ There is a basic need to establish and develop all basic state services and infrastructure in the Abyei area. This will be in the interest of stability in the area and will facilitate the resettlement of displaced populations.

**Security**

- ◇ In order to establish law and order, civilians should be disarmed through coordinated cross border DDR.
- ◇ Police stations should be established where cross-border movements are particularly concentrated.
- ◇ The police of both sides should liaise to coordinate their activities as necessary, especially when a crime crosses the border.
- ◇ After referendum, there will be a need for an international presence to support peace and security.

**Justice**

- ◇ Courts should be established at the populated locations along the border in the Abyei area.
- ◇ Traditional courts administered by Chiefs and criminal courts administered through official state structures are both required. Traditional courts are also needed along pastoral migration routes.
- ◇ The traditional leaders of the tribal groups from both sides of the border should develop and build upon the existing traditional mechanisms for liaison and coordination regarding matters pertaining to traditional justice and social relations.

**Economy and trade**

- ◇ Markets and trading centres should be established along the border to facilitate cross-border trade, which will be beneficial to communities on both sides. All levels of state authority as well as local communities and NGOs, from both sides of the border, should support these markets.
- ◇ Cross-border trade will facilitate peaceful coexistence, and structures to support peaceful coexistence will emerge in order to facilitate trade arrangements.

**Rights, Movement, Citizenship**

- ◇ There should be freedom of movement without restriction across the border. This will support trade and benefit both sides.

- ◇ Systems regulating movement should be coordinated and administered by national, state and local authorities from both sides of the border

**Infrastructure, Services and Development**

- ◇ Construction of roads, communications infrastructure, basic and secondary education, health centres, veterinary services and water systems are all necessary in the Abyei area. Service provision will support stability.
- ◇ Social services such as water points, medical and veterinary services should be available to the populations living in Abyei permanently and those who move through it or stay temporarily.
- ◇ Boarding schools should be established.
- ◇ Roads should be built connecting the populated areas along the border. The construction of roads will facilitate communication, trade and governance of the border areas.
- ◇ Agricultural schemes and projects are necessary for development and to establish food security. Government should support the establishment of cooperatives which could eventually become commercial enterprises.



Participants and Facilitators