



**Building Consensus on Common Ground Issues:
Internally Displaced Persons
El Geneina, West Darfur**

**El Geneina, West Darfur
October 13 – 14, 2009**

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A. INTRODUCTION

In close collaboration with its partners, including the University Centers for Peace and Development Studies in Darfur and the United Nations–African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), the Darfur–Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC) is facilitating broad and inclusive consultations with key stakeholders to discuss and find solutions to the root causes of the conflict in Darfur.

In this regard, **Building Consensus on Common Ground Issues: Internally Displaced Persons, El Geneina, West Darfur** was held at the UNAMID Substantive Camp in El Geneina, West Darfur State, on October 13 – 14, 2009.

During the two–day consultation, 73 Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) from eleven West Darfur IDP camps met in El Geneina and discussed and built consensus around six common ground issues: land and natural resources, security, identity, recovery and development, administration and democracy, and reconciliation.

The participants were divided into four groups to discuss the common ground issues among themselves and then shared their recommendations with other groups. All of the participants met again to discuss points of agreement and disagreement to narrow differences and build wider consensus on recommendations by West Darfur IDP.

Key findings include:

- If proper negotiations between nomadic and settled communities are to take place, authorities should deport to their country of origin new arrivals that currently occupy disputed lands. This is an essential requirement for reconciliation.
- A genuine commitment from all parties should guide negotiations on disarmament and arms control in Darfur.
- Restoring the modes of living exemplified in the past in Darfur can help achieve a peaceful coexistence between Arab and African tribes.
- When real peace is prevalent in Darfur, IDP and refugees can safely repatriate to their areas of origin, where they can join other Darfurians and access and fully utilize natural resources and collectively contribute to meaningful recovery and development.
- The necessary pre–conditions to hold free and fair elections in Darfur include guaranteeing the participation of different groups, such as women and eligible youth, reconciliation, and security.
- Rebel groups should present a unified vision to achieve comprehensive and sustainable peace in Darfur and negotiate with the Government of Sudan accordingly.

This report provides background on the DDDC, the consultation process, and common ground issues, and findings from the **Building Consensus on Common Ground Issues: Internally Displaced Persons, El Geneina, West Darfur** consultation.

The DDDC will work towards developing consensus around common ground issues during consultations throughout North, South, and West Darfur. Working closely with its partners and stakeholders, the DDDC is feeding Darfurian views learned during consultations and other related activities into the Darfur peace process.

The DDDC would like to thank all consultation participants and is grateful for the collaboration and assistance received from the UNAMID West Sector Head of Office, Civil Affairs Department, Child Protection Unit, and others.

**Khartoum, Sudan
December 4, 2009**

B. BACKGROUND

THE DDDC

Darfur is home to a multi-ethnic population that has long experienced severe social, economic, infrastructure, and environmental challenges, exacerbated by policies that have undermined the region's potential. This, in part, led to conflict over control of power, land and natural resources, and to the outbreak of war.

Massive displacement, destruction of infrastructure, loss of life, property, and livelihoods, blockage of nomadic roots, violence, and other war-related factors fractured the social structure of Darfur and weakened traditional peace and reconciliation mechanisms.

The Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA), which aimed to end the conflict in Darfur, did not secure consensus among all parties affected by the conflict. The DPA did, however, establish the DDDC, an autonomous, inclusive, non-partisan process mandated to enable Darfurians to voice their opinions and views to achieve sustainable peace and reconciliation in Darfur.

Tasked with helping Darfurians discuss and find solutions to the root causes of the conflict in Darfur, the DDDC developed a strategy to facilitate a broad and inclusive consultation process. Working closely with its partners and stakeholders, the DDDC will feed Darfurian views learned during consultations into the Darfur peace process.

Seeking peace and reconciliation through dialogue and mediation to resolve conflict within and between communities is a deeply rooted Darfurian tradition. By engaging conflicting groups, restoring confidence, building trust, and promoting open and transparent dialogue to overcome grievances and agree on common grounds to achieve sustainable peace, the DDDC is a continuation of this tradition.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

During 2007, the DDDC engaged with Darfurians at the grassroots level to build trust among stakeholders connected to the Darfur conflict. These consultations yielded a number of results, including identifying stakeholder's priority issues and familiarizing them with the consultative process. From 2008 to date, the DDDC has expanded its outreach to include consulting with a wide variety of Darfurians underrepresented in the Darfur peace process, including tribal leaders, civil society organizations, Arabs, youth, women, IDP, and other groups.

To ensure that the consultation process is inclusive and Darfurian owned, the DDDC has partnered with University Centers for Peace and Development Studies in El Fasher, Nyala, El Geneina, and Zalingei. In addition, the DDDC has partnered with some Darfur-based NGOs and others that also help facilitate DDDC consultations. Including, for example, the Ajaweed Organization for Peace and Reconciliation.

The DDDC follows a standard format in conducting consultations. At the beginning of each consultation, participants are placed in four groups, in which all the stakeholders present are equally represented. The facilitators then present each of the six common ground issues prepared by the DDDC Secretariat. Each group then convenes separately to discuss the individual issues and prepare their outcomes, which they present to all the participants. The presentation of the findings of the four groups is followed by a discussion by the participants and with a minimum intervention by the facilitator. This sequence of steps is repeated for each of the six common ground issues. The deliberations of the individual groups and the larger meetings are fully documented.

The DDDC is currently conducting consultations on a statewide basis and in localities throughout Darfur. Security permitting, the DDDC will conduct consultations in all Darfur localities. Where security prohibits consultations, the DDDC will bring participants to respective Darfur State capitals. The DDDC will also conduct individual statewide consultations with specific stakeholder groups. The DDDC will then conduct one statewide consultation in each Darfur State. This exercise will culminate in a Darfur-wide consultation. In parallel with consultations, the DDDC has and will continue to conduct theme specific consultations and related peace and reconciliation activities.

COMMON GROUND ISSUES

The DDDC, with the support of national and international partners, engaged Darfuri stakeholders in Darfur, Khartoum, and abroad to help identify “common ground” issues with the objective of working towards developing consensus around them. The common ground issues identified are:

- Land and Natural Resources
- Security
- Identity
- Recovery and development
- Administration and Democracy
- Reconciliation

C. CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

During the two-day consultation, 73 IDP from eleven West Darfur IDP camps openly discussed and built consensus around the six common ground issues as follows:

Land and Natural Resources

1. Darfur’s nomadic and settled communities can increase cooperation and reduce competition to meet conflicting land and livelihood needs by:
 - Returning to the traditional mechanisms and systems regulating use and access to different resources.
 - Returning to a *Hawkeer* system, a traditional system of allocating land to tribes, that is revised and based on new regulations that focus on protecting historical land rights, resolving land disputes, demarcating migration routes, and allocating places for nomads, away from farming land, to avoid further conflict.
 - Enhancing the role of traditional administration.
 - Completely disarming all militias.
2. If proper negotiations between nomadic and settled communities are to take place, authorities should deport to their country of origin new arrivals that currently occupy disputed lands. This is an essential requirement for reconciliation.
3. It is possible to ensure viable migratory routes for nomads so that they can remain sufficiently flexible to meet changing ecological circumstances that is not detrimental to the livelihoods of settled populations by:
 - First implementing the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) process for the *Janjawed* and other militias. This is a requirement before settlement is possible.
 - Obtaining a general agreement between farmers and nomads on how best to simultaneously establish migratory routes and protect farmers’ interests and help pursue balanced livestock grazing programs.
 - Activating and enforcing customary regulations governing farmers – grazer relationships.
4. Innovative, environmentally sustainable, alternative livelihood strategies to pursue in Darfur include:
 - Using petroleum products as an alternative to firewood.
 - Using alternative construction materials instead red bricks, which require large amounts of wood to prepare.
 - Using modern tools instead of the traditional tools made locally from wood.

- Using electricity as an energy alternative.
 - Enforcing forestry protection laws and regulations.
5. Rationally utilizing natural resources as alternatives sources of energy can help prevent further environmental degradation in Darfur.
 6. It is possible to reform and strengthen the *Hawakeer* system to ensure that the basic needs of all people in Darfur are met by:
 - Achieving a of comprehensive peace agreement based on resolved land disputes.
 - Empowering traditional administrative leaders, such as Sultans, Fursha, Sheikhs, and Ajaweed, to resolve conflicts.
 - Ensuring that the international community supports peace initiatives that will lead to resolving the Darfur conflict.

Security

7. To help ensure the security of IDP currently living in camps and during repatriation to their areas of origin:
 - UNAMID should carry out its mandate, which includes providing security and protection to both IDP and refugees in camps, during repatriation, and in areas of return.
 - UNAMID forces should establish regular and fixed patrols and establish an adequate number of police posts to ensure IDP camps are secure at night.
 - UNAMID should guarantee security in areas of return.
 - UNAMID should help disarm militias and ensure that only legitimate police and military forces carry arms.
8. It is possible to reform and regulate the security sector in a way that ensures that it is genuinely representative, accountable, impartial, and trusted if the following arrangements are guaranteed:
 - Government of Sudan authorities cease distributing arms and other support they are providing to *Janjawed* and other militias and instead work to immediately disarm Arab militias.
 - Government of Sudan authorities should prohibit all security sectors from recruiting persons younger than eighteen–years old.
9. The roles the police, army, and national security forces should play to enforce the law include:
 - Collaborating with UNAMID to protect IDP in the camps, particularly at night.
 - Disarming militias with clear engagement of UNAMID.
 - Increasing the number of police personnel patrolling all IDP camps to improve the security situation and deploying more police and military forces in areas of IDP and refugee return and other areas where vulnerable people reside.
10. A genuine commitment from all parties should guide negotiations on disarmament and arms control in Darfur.
11. The United Nations should resume control of monitoring disarmament and arms control and put the necessary pressure on the Government of Sudan to comply.

12. The Government of Sudan must become serious about disarming Arab militia. The government policy adopted to fight the insurgency is truly against neutrality and impartiality and disqualifies it to unilaterally help resolve the Darfur conflict.
13. The Government of Sudan remains part of the current conflict in Darfur. They in fact are the reason that Arabs tribes were and are armed, remain allies, and are fighting side-by-side with the army.

Identity

14. "Darfur consensus" and "Darfur identity" have many shapes and forms, including:
 - Darfurian consensus means that all Darfurians in the Darfur region agree on critical common issues related to the current conflict in order to overcome the consequences of the conflict and develop a common ground for solid peace.
 - A general agreement on peace is possible, because there are common factors uniting Darfurians, such as one regional land, religion, and history. Therefore, consensus is a necessity since these factors are shared.
 - Despite the fact that it is possible to respect the interests of different groups in Darfur based on the common factors they share, unless the ruling regime in Sudan hands over power to a transitional government formed collectively by all political parties, a Darfur consensus is not possible.
 - To realize real peace in Darfur, the government has to stop supporting select tribes by providing them with weapons and other support.
 - Consensus in Darfur is possible if government authorities collaborate with the local administration with an emphasis on resolving the current conflict.
15. There is no single definition that captures what it means to be Darfurian and Sudanese. Being Darfurian and Sudanese includes:
 - Restoring people's rights would help reform the identity of Darfurians in a way that would contribute to reunifying efforts to achieve peace and development in Darfur.
 - The issue of identity is only a concern to some groups. However, it is still a reality and considered a contributing factor to the escalation of the Darfur conflict.
16. Darfur can contribute to the resolution of the challenge of the African / Arab Sudanese national identity by:
 - Restoring the modes of living exemplified in the past in Darfur can help achieve a peaceful coexistence between Arab and African tribes.
 - For centuries, the tribes of Darfur lived in peace and harmony, sharing available resources. The current conflict, however, has damaged the social fabric in Darfur.
17. The Government of Sudan mobilized migrants from neighboring countries, issued them identity cards, and allowed them to systematically occupy land that belongs to IDP and refugees. The government started this process with the ultimate objective of gaining votes in the upcoming general elections, planned for April 2010. These migrants are new allies to the government, supporting any initiative it undertakes regarding determining the future of Darfur. The government must take the responsibility to return these new immigrants to their home countries.

Recovery and Development

The priorities for development in Darfur in the short- and long-term are as follow:

18. Short-term priorities:

- Provide basic social services to all Darfurians, such as education, healthcare, water and sanitation.
- Provide basic social services in IDP camps, including education.
- Empower women.
- Reinforce the rule of law on the basis of equality and indiscrimination.

19. Long-term priorities:

- Improve Darfur's transportation infrastructure, primarily the construction of roads and bridges.
- Complete the construction of the *Al- Ingaz* highway, linking West Darfur with the rest of Sudan.
- Design and implement appropriate agricultural projects.
- Establish quality higher education institutions.
- Promote and provide equal access to education for every Darfurian.

20. Currently most Darfurians depend on emergency relief and the services provided by International NGO. While welcome, as a result, there are no visible signs of recovery in Darfur.

21. Development activities that can take place before the signing of a comprehensive ceasefire agreement include:

- Income generation programs to address the issue of community aid-dependency.
- Establishing vocational training centers for capacity building for youth, women, and other vulnerable groups.

22. Factors that can help change the perception and reality of marginalization experienced in Darfur:

- Infrastructure reconstruction, including educational systems, health facilities, transportation systems, water systems, and electricity systems.
- Fair and just wealth and power sharing.
- Addressing the roots of the Darfur conflict, including returning land, as designated under the *Hawakeer* system, to its legal owners, and guaranteeing people enjoy basic and fundamental rights.
- Establish a fair, just, and transparent justice system to try war criminals.
- Provide real security in IDP camps.

23. Darfurian development experts are the only people competent and capable of designing a development strategy for Darfur and should do so accordingly.

24. The peace process might and should have an impact on the lives of Darfurians if it adequately addresses the issue of access to services to meet basic human needs.

25. When real peace is prevalent in Darfur, IDP and refugees can safely repatriate to their areas of origin, where they can join other Darfurians and access and fully utilize natural resources and collectively contribute to meaningful recovery and development.

Administration and Democracy

26. Concerns over the possibility of conducting fair and transparent elections are linked to the negative practices of the current government affecting neutrality and fairness.
27. The current ruling party has created serious damage to the political party system that has led to segregationist political approaches.
28. It is possible to hold elections if they will help strengthening democracy and transparency.
29. The advantages of an elected local government include:
- Avoiding an autocratic ruling system.
 - Broadening political participation within the political plurality system.
 - All tribes and ethnic groups will engage in the process, which helps building consensus and maintain satisfaction among the population.
 - Representation of all political parties and factions, which can help wider acceptance.
 - If elections are fair and transparent, they can build confidence.
30. The disadvantages of an elected local government include:
- Confidence is destroyed if elections are conducted on the basis of tribalism.
 - Parties are excluded from participating in elections because one political party dominates the ruling regime.
31. Free, fair, and democratic elections in Darfur are only possible if:
- They are conducted in a fair and democratic manner.
 - Participation is broadened to welcome all political parties in fulfillment of power sharing.
 - Ill-values and negative practices, such as racism, tribalism, and discrimination are denounced.
 - Every eligible citizen is guaranteed the right to participate.
32. The necessary pre-conditions to hold free and fair elections in Darfur include:
- Guaranteeing the participation of different groups, such as women and eligible youth.
 - Reconciliation and security.
 - Voluntary repatriation of IDP and refugee to their areas of origin.
 - Putting in place international election supervisors and monitors.
 - Deporting of illegal immigrants to their home countries.
 - The Government of Sudan ending the practice of issuing nationality cards to illegal immigrants.

- Dissolving the current transitional regional authority and encouraging all political parties and civil society organizations to participate in the new ruling system.
- Sustainable peace to help contribute to the improvement of living conditions in Darfur.
- Disarming militias.
- Supporting native administration to uphold the *Hawakeer* land system.

Reconciliation

33. The goals and objectives of reconciliation in Darfur include:

- Paving the road to achieve a comprehensive peace agreement in Darfur and in the whole of the Sudan.
- Restoring the violated rights and dignity of communities and individuals, including IDP and refugees, impacted by the war in Darfur.
- Rehabilitating war damaged villages so that IDP and refugees can repatriate.
- Prosecuting war criminals prior to reconciliation. It is only then that arrangements could take place to achieve peace and reconciliation in Darfur.
- Facilitating the implementation of sustainable development.

34. It could become possible and appropriate for a process of reconciliation to begin in Darfur after:

- Acceptance of others and respect to their rights is restored.
- Illegal land occupants are removed from land owned by displaced persons and returned to their countries of origin.
- Militias and illegal forces are disarmed and disbanded.
- All Darfurians live in a secure environment.
- Adequate support is provided to IDP who voluntary repatriate to the areas of origin.
- Forgiveness happens.
- A sustainable development program, which includes reconstruction of war–destroyed villages, is implemented and appropriate compensation is paid to IDP and refugees to help them safely repatriate and start their lives over upon repatriation.
- The security situation in Darfur is improved.
- The most urgent issues to prepare the environment to start the reconciliation process are addressed.

35. The principals that should guide reconciliation in Darfur include:

- Acknowledgement of Darfur rebel groups’ role in reconciliation. As such, rebel groups should present a unified vision to achieve comprehensive and sustainable peace in Darfur and negotiate accordingly with the Government of Sudan.
- The participation of IDP and refugees, the groups most impacted by the Darfur conflict, in ongoing peace talks and negotiations.
- Admission by top government officials of their involvement of war crimes committed in Darfur.

- Prosecution of war criminals, supported by the United Nations and the United States of America, is a necessary condition to achieve reconciliation in Darfur.
 - Establishing justice.
36. The roles individuals, groups, governments, and the international community should play in reconciliation include:
- Supporting groups recognized by local communities in Darfur, such as traditional mediators, known as *Ajaweed*, and political and religious leaders.
 - Help create community awareness on issues related to reconciliation.
 - Religious leaders can play a significant role in encouraging people to forgive, which could contribute to the creation of social peace.
 - Religious leaders can use Islamic values to call for peace and human dignity.
 - Adopting and supporting real peace initiatives.
 - Helping with the process of disarming militias.
37. The media can contribute to reconciliation by:
- Raising community awareness about different issue related to peace and reconciliation.
 - Positively contributing to active communication among different groups.
 - Helping disseminate a culture of peace and reconciliation throughout Darfur using state and private radio outlets, national television, etc.
 - Helping educate the public, particularly youth, about their role in strengthening peaceful coexistence.
 - Providing reliable information on issues of concern to Darfurians.
 - Creating community awareness on topics such as the rule of law, peace negotiations and mediations, and best practices related to conflict resolutions.
38. The best mechanism for reconciliation in Darfur is the *Ajaweed*, traditional mediators, which have a history of efficient conflict resolution that leads to reconciliation.
39. The International community should ensure that a fair and thorough Darfur peace agreement is reached. This agreement should include addressing how to judicially handle the main aspect of the Darfur conflict related to the gross violation of human rights and war crimes.
40. The role of compensation and repatriation in reconciliation include:
- Creating the proper environment to achieve a comprehensive peace agreement in Darfur.
 - Encouraging displaced victims of the Darfur conflict to voluntary repatriate and enabling them to replace property lost or damaged during the conflict.
 - Prosecuting war criminals, paying compensation to victims, and reconstructing war–destroyed villages are actions that will directly address grievances of war–affected Darfurians and will help with reconciliation.

The DDDC would like to thank the following partners, donors, and friends:

The University of El Fasher Center for Peace and Development Studies

The University of Nyala Center for Peace and Development Studies

The University of Zalingei – El Geneina Center for Peace and Development Studies

The Ajaweed Organization for Peace and Reconciliation

The United Nations–African Mission in Darfur



The African Union Panel on Darfur

The UK Department for International Development



The World Bank



Concordis International



The Government of Japan



The Government of Sweden



The European Union



The Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund



For more information about this consultation or report, email the DDDC, info@dddc.org

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