



Building Consensus on Common Ground Issues: North Darfur Women

**El Fasher, North Darfur
July 29 – 30, 2009**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. INTRODUCTION	3
B. BACKGROUND	4 - 5
1. Darfur – Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC)	4
2. Consultation Process	4
3. Common Ground Issues	5
C. CONSULTATION OUTCOMES	5 - 10
1. Land and Natural Resources	5 - 6
2. Security	6 - 7
3. Identity	7
4. Recovery and Development	7 - 8
5. Administration and Democracy	8 - 9
6. Reconciliation	9 - 10
D. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	11

A. INTRODUCTION

In collaboration with the University Center for Peace and Development Studies in North, South, and West Darfur, and in coordination with the United Nations–African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) Civil Affairs Department (CAD), 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.

Building Consensus on Common Ground Issues: North Darfur Women, the fourth in a series of statewide consultations with specific stakeholder groups that the DDDC is facilitating in each Darfur State, was held at the University Center for Peace and Development Studies, in El Fasher, North Darfur, on July 29 – 30 2009.

During the two–day consultation, 85 women from all North Darfur localities, representing civil society, internally displaced persons (IDP), Darfurian movements, the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA), women’s unions, Arab nomads, and youth, met in El Fasher 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, making certain that factions were amply represented in each group, 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 North Darfur women.

Key findings include:

- Maintaining already established “old” routes of migration in agreement between native administration of nomads and farmers and communities can secure nomadic routes in a manner that accommodates changing environmental conditions without violating rights and property of settled farmers.
- Establishing a mechanism for women to approach armed rebel groups to encourage them to unite can help foster and secure trust among these groups.
- The war in Darfur produced the Arab – *Zurga* (black) dichotomy.
- Participation of Darfurians, especially women, in the decision–making process on Darfur matters can help change the perception and reality of marginalization experienced in Darfur.
- Women should have full representation in current IDP camp management and in any form of local administration upon IDP repatriation.
- Utilizing *Hakkamas*, the traditional women singers and poets in Darfur, can stimulate values of reconciliation and coexistence in Darfur communities.

This report provides background on the DDDC, the consultation process, common ground issues, and detailed findings from the **Building Consensus on Common Ground Issues: North Darfur Women** consultation.

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

**Khartoum, Sudan
September 4, 2009**

B. BACKGROUND

1. 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.

2. CONSULTATION PROCESS

During the past 18 months, the DDDC engaged with a broad range of Darfurians at the grassroots level to build trust among stakeholders connected to the Darfur conflict. These consultations yielded a number of results, including identifying stakeholders, relevant priority issues, and familiarising stakeholders in the Darfur conflict about the consultative process.

The DDDC, however, was unable to reach and engage with all groups. Moving forward, the DDDC expanded its outreach to include consulting with Darfurians underrepresented in the Darfur peace process, including tribal leaders, civil society, youth, women, IDP, and others. The DDDC is now also expanding its reach and facilitating Darfur statewide consultations with specific stakeholder groups.

To ensure that the consultation process is inclusive and Darfurian owned, the DDDC partnered with the University Center for Peace and Development Studies in Darfur. Working in close collaboration, the two bodies planned and designed a consultation process by which stakeholders could peacefully discuss and come to consensus on solutions to the root causes of the conflict in Darfur.

In regard to the North Darfur Women's consultation, the DDDC:

1. Developed a format for consultations.
2. Finalized participant selection in line with the DDDC principle of inclusivity.
3. Designed facilitation techniques.
4. Planned and structured individual consultation sessions.
5. Grouped and managed diverse participants.
6. Established documentation and reporting mechanisms.
7. Facilitated common ground consultations.
8. Evaluated consultation process.
9. Communicated consultation process and outcomes to Darfurians and other stakeholders.

The consultation process was designed and implemented to promote confidence of participants to contribute to peace in their communities and greater Darfur and increase capacity of Peace Center staff to conduct similar consultations in the future.

3. COMMON GROUND ISSUES

The DDDC, with the support of national and international partners, engaged Darfurian 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, 85 women from the North Darfur localities openly discussed and built consensus around the six common ground issues. The consultation outcomes are:

1. LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

- **Darfur’s nomadic and settled communities can increase cooperation and reduce competition to meet conflicting land and livelihood needs by:**
 1. Opening nomad migration routes.
 2. Keep settled farmers clear of the routes.
 3. Revive old traditions and norms that governed the relation between nomads and farmers prior to the current conflict.
 4. Mutual acceptance and respect.
- **In order to secure nomadic routes in a flexible manner to accommodate changing environmental conditions without violating the rights and property of the settled farmers:**
 1. Maintain already established “old” routes of migration in agreement between native administration of both sides and communities.
 2. Treat equally all tribes and sub-tribes.
 3. Arrange through native administration the return of stray animals.
 4. Strictly adhere to the agreed schedule of the *taleeq*, the system according to which nomads’ herds are allowed to graze on farmland after a harvest is complete.
 5. Young men of both the nomads and farmers should commitment to avoiding friction as much as possible.
 6. Provide water sources in areas designated for nomad’s short-term temporary settlements along migration routes.
 7. Nomads should not carry arms while passing through farming communities along migration routes.
- **Nomadic groups that intend to settle and develop new livelihoods that will not result in new conflicts should:**
 1. Settle in areas that are not claimed as *hakooras*, a traditional system of allocating land to tribes, by any tribal farming group.
 2. Keep their herds away from farming areas and farmers’ settlements.
 3. Recognize and respect laws and norms of the communities already settled in the area.
- **New alternative, environmentally friendly, and sustainable Darfur livelihood strategies should include:**
 1. The adoption of a system of mixed animal/crop farming.
 2. The provision of basic social services.
 3. The design of income and employment generating projects.
 4. Special projects, education, and training to improve the social and economic status of women.
 5. Connecting production areas and consumption areas/markets by a network of paved roads.

- **Necessary measures to prevent further environmental degradation in North Darfur include:**
 1. Planting of green belts and prohibiting the environmentally damaging removal of trees and shrubs.
 2. Development and use of alternative sources of energy, such as natural gas and electric power, and environmentally friendly stoves.
 3. Reactivation and strict application of the laws governing forests and natural reserves.
 4. Systematic training of women to use energy efficient and environmentally friendly stoves.
 5. Gradual replacement of wood, straw, and grass by alternative material in housing construction.
 6. More use of organic matter in soil fertilization.

- **It is possible to clarify the relationship between statutory and customary land law, including the question of the necessity of a Darfur specific land tenure statute by:**
 1. Supplementing with public laws, statutory laws, which are normally verbal and based on traditions.
 2. Base any new land tenure laws on the spirit of the statutory law.
 3. The group agreed that there is absolutely no need to replace the *hakoora* land tenure system with any other new one. It is necessary, however, to make sure that friendly mutual relations and peaceful coexistence among various tribes and communities.
 4. Revoking the 1970 Land Ordinance and basing the land tenure system on the traditional *hakoora* established before 1970.

- **The best way to resolve conflicts around land in Darfur:**
 1. Dialogue and negotiation between the parties to the dispute and the willingness of both sides to give concessions.
 2. Both parties should abide by established principles of traditional reconciliation.
 3. Involvement of the international community as a mediator.
 4. Compensations and reparation.
 5. Return of seized land to original owners with compensation.

2. SECURITY

- **To ensure the security of IDP currently living in camps and during repatriation to their areas of origin:**
 1. Collect arms from outlaws and *Janjaweed*.
 2. Control the trade of arms.
 3. Recruit young IDP and refugees for security forces.
 4. Maintain neutral security forces.
 5. Women should participate in providing security.
 6. Recruit nomads for a special nomad security force that is supervised by official security forces.
 7. Secure and protect villages of IDP and refugee return.
 8. Nomads should stay on their known migration routes.
 9. Nomads should not settle in areas under use and control of farmers.
 10. After repatriation, recruit a joint security force comprised of the Government of Sudan, communities, native administration, and the international community.
 11. Participants were clearly divided on whether IDP camps pose a security threat or not.

- **To involve citizens in security:**
 1. Recruit IDP, refugees, and nomads into security forces.
 2. Citizens should fully cooperate with security forces.
 3. Citizens should participate in security planning and organization.
 4. Train social groups in community security and policing.
 5. Engage citizens in community patrolling.

- **Official security forces have the following roles:**
 1. Maintain law and order without abusing their authorities and power.
 2. Remain neutral and do not use violence against citizens.
 3. Promptly responding to emergencies.
 4. Regularly patrolling of roads and communities
 5. Apply the law and justice indiscriminately.
- **Principles of disarmament should include:**
 1. Participants agreed that it is difficult for disarmament to take place before a comprehensive peace agreement is in place and honored and there is no longer a need to carry arms.
 2. Native administration, *Judiyya* mechanisms, and UNAMID collecting illegal arms.
 3. Establishing a neutral disarmament commission.
 4. Compensation for those who voluntary surrender weapons.
 5. Protection for those who provide information on illegal arms.
 6. Prevalence of peace and security before disarmament.
 7. Rejection of narrow tribalism and ethnic affiliation.
 8. Unification of objectives and ranks and leadership of armed rebel groups.
 9. Reform of official security forces.
- **To establish and maintain trust among armed rebel groups:**
 1. Armed rebel groups should understand that the cause of Darfur is for all the people of Darfur.
 2. Mutually accept and respect others.
 3. Establish a mechanism of women to approach armed groups to encourage them to unite.
 4. An inclusive Darfur-Darfur dialogue that falls under the auspices of neutral bodies.
- **UNAMID and security in Darfur:**
 1. Participants unanimously agreed that UNAMID is playing no role whatsoever in securing Darfur.
 2. Participants stated that the Government of Sudan protects UNAMID.

3. IDENTITY

- Darfurian identity changed after its annexation to Sudan in 1916 and deep interaction took place with the rest of Sudan.
- The war in Darfur produced the Arab – *Zurga* (black) dichotomy.
- The war in Darfur has tremendously impacted Darfurian identity. New cultures appeared and others disappeared and self-perceptions of identity are becoming more “tribalized.”
- A “Darfurian consensus” means the unity of the people and the alliances of Arabs and non-Arabs around the common causes of Darfur.
- A “Darfurian consensus” after the Darfur conflict is over means the maintenance of a sustainable peace.
- Darfur as a mix of Arab and non-Arab blood and could provide the rest of Sudan with a model of identity.
- Participants agreed that it is impossible for Darfur to absorb and accommodate “newcomers” from Chad, Niger, and other neighboring countries because they have been brought in and settled by the Government of Sudan for political purposes.

4. RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

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

- **Short-term priorities:**

1. Maintenance of peace and prevalence of security.
 2. Rehabilitation of villages for IDP repatriation.
 3. Implementation of small Quick Impact Projects (QIPs).
 4. Provision of basic social and other services.
 5. Education and capacity building for women.
- **Medium-term priorities:**
1. Compensation and reparation for IDP and refugees.
 2. Establishment of small-scale savings and social development banks.
 3. Spread a culture of peace.
 4. Exploitation of potential natural resources in Darfur.
- **Long-term priorities:**
1. Generation of electric power.
 2. Development of large-scale agro-industrial projects.
 3. A Darfur region-wide grid of paved roads.
 4. Completion of the *Ingaz* Western highway.
 5. The design and implementation of a viable strategy of development priorities
 6. Full participation of Darfurian communities in development planning.
- **Development and activities that are possible under the current conflict situation include:**
1. Anti-illiteracy and public awareness raising campaigns.
 2. Infrastructure improvement.
 3. Employment generating programs.
 4. Vocational training for women.
 5. Making financing available for small QIPs.
 6. Development in areas that are relatively secure and least affected by the ongoing conflict.
- **Factors that can help change the perception and reality of marginalization experienced in Darfur:**
1. Equal access to power and wealth.
 2. Participation of Darfurians, especially women, in the decision-making process on Darfur matters.
 3. The implementation and honoring of all agreements.
 4. The implementation of feasible and relevant development projects.
 5. Reaching a comprehensive peace agreement that accommodates the aspirations of all people.
 6. Affirmative action in development.

5. ADMINISTRATION AND DEMOCRACY

- **It is possible to strengthen native administration by:**
1. Democratically selecting native administrators instead of political appointing them, as is currently the practice.
 2. Maintaining political neutrality vis-a-vis the government.
 3. Gaining acceptance by the young generation
 4. Reforming it to accommodate social and economic changes.
- **The weaknesses of the native administration are:**
1. Its subjugation to control by the government and political forces in Khartoum, which is the root cause that makes current native administration completely ineffective in managing tribal affairs.
 2. An educated young generation that is rebelling against existing native administration because of its domestication by the central government.
 3. Its ineffectiveness in resolving tribal disputes, as had been the case in the past.

4. Massive displacement throughout Darfur, which has resulted in the emergence of new leadership in IDP camps.
 5. Multiplicity and duplication of members, titles, and jurisdiction as a result of politicization.
- **In order for the administrative system to properly perform its functions, it should undergo the following reforms are required:**
 1. Avoid narrow tribalism.
 2. Establish a free democratic system based on the will and aspirations of the grassroots.
 3. Commit to justice and equality.
 4. Respect all cultures.
 - **The organization of IDP in camps and during their potential repatriation should occur as follows:**
 1. The responsibility of their organization in camps should fall to native administration.
 2. Reinstatement their native administration upon IDP repatriation to their villages of origin.
 3. Women should have full representation in current IDP camp management and in any form of local administration upon IDP repatriation.
 4. IDP camp community organizations should be involved in camp management and repatriation planning.
 5. Joint committees comprising of IDP, community organizations, the Government of Sudan and the international community, should oversee the repatriation process.
 - **The following preconditions are required for free and fair elections:**
 1. The prevalence of peace and security in Darfur.
 2. Return of IDP and rehabilitation of their villages of origin.
 3. Rethinking of all laws of emergency and all laws that restrict public liberties.
 4. Conduct a new, genuine, and accurate national census.
 5. Develop a new and genuine electoral register.
 6. Newly demarcate constituencies.
 7. Full neutrality of all the election commissions and autonomy of the judiciary.
 8. Disarmament and justice, including trials for perpetrators of crimes.
 9. Form a transitional government to conduct elections.

Participants were of the opinion that there is no way to conduct elections in Darfur until the above conditions are met.

6. RECONCILIATION

- **The purpose and objectives of reconciliation in Darfur are:**
 1. Peaceful coexistence.
 2. To repair damage to the social fabric.
 3. Prevalence of security and diffusion of accumulated anger and grudges.
 4. Sustainable development and justice in development.
 5. Forgiveness.
- After a meaningful peace settlement has been reached, an appropriate reconciliation process can begin.
- **The following principles should shape reconciliation in Darfur.**
 1. Tolerance, flexibility,, and peaceful coexistence among tribes.
 2. Reinstatement of the role of native administration as a neutral and non-politicized institution
 3. A DDDC.
 4. The reflection of the DDDC output in peace negotiations.
 5. At least 30 percent representation for women in peace negotiations.
 6. Compensation and reparation.
 7. Fair trials and punishment of the guilty should precede reconciliations and then forgiveness should follow as an outcome of reconciliation.

8. Dealing with some crimes as part of the reconciliation process itself.

➤ **The roles of individuals, groups, the media, and governmental officials in reconciliation are as follows:**

1. Awareness raising and mutual trust building.
2. Use of *hakkamas*, the traditional women singers and poets in Darfur, to stimulate values of reconciliation and coexistence in their communities.
3. Spread a culture of peace and mutual respect.
4. Neutrality and transparency on behalf of officials involved in reconciliation.
5. Selecting an appropriate time for reconciliation.
6. Equal treatment of all groups with no discrimination.
7. For the media in particular, spreading values of reconciliation in an absolutely neutral manner.

➤ **Specific mechanisms for reconciliation in Darfur are:**

1. Open dialogue and negotiation.
2. The traditional methods of *Judiyya*, *Rakooba*, and *Duwana*
3. Native administration.

➤ **The role of the international community in reconciliation includes:**

1. Facilitation and funding.
2. Training and capacity building for those involved in reconciliation.
3. Providing a secure and conducive reconciliation environment.
4. Monitoring the implementation of reconciliation outcomes.
5. Monitoring the implementation of justice and verdicts against those found guilty of crimes.

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