



## **Building Consensus on Common Ground Issues: South Darfur Civil Society**

**Nyala, South Darfur  
October 4 – 5, 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.

On October 4 – 5, 2009, the DDDC and the Nyala University Peace and Development Studies Center facilitated a common ground consultation with 51 civil society representatives from South Darfur’s 15 localities. The participants included representatives from local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), civil society and human rights groups, unions, academics, women and youth groups, and religious organizations. Many of the participants, representing their respective sectors, attended previous consultations facilitated and organized by the DDDC and the African Union Panel on Darfur (AUPD) consultations and hearings.

DDDC partners and donors, including the British Ambassador to Sudan, the Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund (DCPSF), Justice Africa, and the European Communities (EC) attended the consultation as observers.

The DCPSF also conducted a session addressing its goals, objectives, activities, and its relationship with the DDDC, Justice Africa, and others. All participants received a pamphlet containing DCPSF background, guidelines, application forms, and other related information.

During the two–day consultation, the participants were divided into three heterogeneous groups to discuss the common ground issues: land and natural resources, security, identity, recovery and development, administration and democracy, and reconciliation, 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 South Darfur civil society.

Key findings include:

- To protect natural resources and reduce environmental degradation in Darfur it is necessary to mobilize citizens to play a positive role.
- Activating rural courts to enforce the rule of law and supporting the role of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) native administrations will improve security in IDP areas of return.
- Darfur consensus means a unified vision shared by all Darfurians around unity, religion, respect, equality, goals, priorities, and concerns.
- It is possible to change the perception and reality of marginalization experienced in Darfur by respecting and fulfilling promises made to Darfur and Darfurians.
- Free, fair, and democratic elections in Darfur are only possible if gaps in the census, electoral maps, voter registration, and other related administrative matters are genuinely addressed.
- The prevalence of peace is a pre requisite if genuine reconciliation is to take place in Darfur.

This report provides background on the DDDC, the consultation process, and common ground issues, and detailed findings from the **Building Consensus on Common Ground Issues: South Darfur Civil Society** 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 will feed Darfurian views learned during these consultations into the Darfur peace process.

The DDDC would like to thank all consultation participants and extend our special gratitude to Her Majesty’s Ambassador to Sudan, Dr. Rosalind Marsden, for attending and participating in the consultation.

**Khartoum, Sudan  
November 5, 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 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 South Darfur civil society consultation, 51 civil society representatives from South Darfur’s 15 localities openly discussed and built consensus around the six common ground issues as follows:

### Land and Natural Resources

1. The following steps should proceed nomadic routes and land negotiations between nomads and farmers:
  - Accurate definition and identification of the two target groups.
  - Mentally and morally prepare both groups for peaceful negotiations.
  - Engage experienced mediators that are respected and accepted by the two groups.
2. It is imperative that land and natural resource negotiations between nomads and farmers are facilitated through traditional mediation and reconciliation systems, such as the *Jodiya* and *Rakoba* systems.
3. The only possible way to achieve sensible land and natural resource agreements and implement and sustain them is by activating and strengthening the roles of native administrations and nomadic police.
4. Prior to re-opening nomadic routes, it is critical that consensus between nomads and farmers is reached and basic social services, including water, health, and education, are provided along the routes and at resting points.
5. Nomadic groups that want to settle and adopt new strategies for livelihood should:
  - Approach native administration and/or government authorities in the locations they identified, negotiate over issues of concern, and reach agreements.
  - If agreements are reached, to avoid future conflict it is necessary to provide basic social services, improve agriculture and animal rearing techniques, and offer skills training to both new settlers and host communities.
6. New Darfur appropriate living strategies that are environmental friendly and sustainable include:
  - Modernizing current agriculture and animal production techniques by introducing environmentally friendly models, such as mixed farming, enclosed pastures, and improved animal breeds.
  - Building embankments and dams and using other proven techniques to harvest and store rainwater for irrigated horticulture, fish production, and other purposes.
  - Accessing the massive reserves of underground water to establish orchards and large irrigated farms.
  - Investing in tourism.

7. To protect natural resources and reduce environmental degradation in Darfur it is necessary to:
  - Educate citizens about environment protection.
  - Disseminate extensive messages regarding the importance of protecting natural resources and mobilize citizens to play a positive role in this regard.
  - Implement tree-planting projects, establish windbreaks, clear and open fire lines, and reseed pastures.
  - Enforce forest and natural resource protection laws that govern grazing and tree cutting.
  - Use building material other than forest products, such as cement, iron bars, and iron-corrugated sheets.
  - Use plant and animal residues, biogas, solar, gas, electricity, and other energy sources instead of firewood.
  - Establish local factories to produce cement and environment friendly bricks.
8. Special legislation and laws that marry national and customary laws are required to accommodate the realities and modern day land issues in Darfur today.
9. It is necessary to revitalize the, *Hakora* system, a traditional system of allocating land to tribes. Prior to doing so the following steps are required:
  - Legalize the system using old maps and documents.
  - Improve and expand the system with the consensus of respective native administrations
  - All parties should adhere to legislation and laws mentioned above in point 8.
10. The best approach to resolve conflicts around land issues in Darfur is to use traditional and deeply rooted conflict resolution mechanisms such as the *Jodiya* and *Rakoba* systems.
11. It is necessary to complement the *Jodiya* and *Rakoba* systems by:
  - Enforcing the rule of law.
  - Activating and supporting native administrations.
  - Compensating those affected by land conflicts.
  - Bringing to justice those who break land and other related laws.
12. Before IDP and refugees can voluntary repatriate and peacefully resettle in their villages of origin or where they lived prior to the violence that caused them to flee, it is necessary to:
  - Individually and collectively compensate IDP and refugee returnees for their losses.
  - Return land to its rightful owner.
  - Provide assistance to help rebuild homes. If homes were completely destroyed, IDP and refugee returnees should receive standard housing.
  - Provide security in areas of return.
  - Create employment opportunities and/or implement programs in areas of return to help returnees improve their livelihoods.

## Security

13. IDP leaders in collaboration with camp committees, the government and UN agencies should provide security in IDP camps.
14. When IDP voluntary repatriate to their areas of origin:
  - The government should provide security in repatriation areas.
  - The government should collect arms from all groups, except the national army, police, and other legitimate security forces.
  - Activating rural courts to enforce the rule of law and supporting the role of IDP native administrations will improve security.
15. Activating nomadic police and strengthening and supporting the role of native administrations are the best ways to provide security to nomads.
16. To rebuild trust between security institutions and citizens, the following is necessary:
  - Security institutions must remain neutral, effective, accountable, and work for the good of all Sudanese citizens.
  - Rationalize the security sector recruitment process by mandating that candidates have the proper qualifications, education, and no criminal record.
  - Forbid the recruitment of children under the age of 18 – years old.
  - Provide all security forces personnel with proper training and equipment to effectively perform their duties.
17. The role of the security forces is to protect all citizens and enforce the rule of law in a responsible, neutral, and accountable manner.
18. It is possible to achieve successful disarmament in Darfur through the following:
  - Involving all stakeholders in the Darfur conflict.
  - Implementing previous and new agreements, closely monitor agreements for violations, and hold signatories accountable.
  - Simultaneously collecting all illegal arms.
  - Providing incentives to those who voluntarily relinquish arms.
  - Rationalizing and enforcing laws governing use of weapons.
  - Monitoring international borders to stop the smuggling and trade of weapons.
  - Putting in place peace education and peace building activities among and between communities, placing a particular emphasis on supporting the role of women.
  - Implementing employment and income generation projects for war-affected youth and their families.
19. To rebuild trust between armed groups it is necessary to:
  - Involve respected and neutral local, national, and international mediators accepted by all groups to facilitate dialogue between armed groups to help unify visions and stances in peace negotiations.

- Establish effective implementation, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms to hold armed groups, the Government of Sudan, and other stakeholders accountable.
20. UNAMID has a role to play in protecting IDP and other citizens in Darfur, including:
- Acting in an effective, neutral, and transparent manner in matters of security.
  - Serving as a neutral and transparent mediator to resolve conflicts between groups and communities.
  - Spreading messages of peace and promoting peace education.

### **Identity**

21. Darfur consensus means a unified vision shared by all Darfurians around unity, religion, respect, equality, goals, priorities, and concerns.
22. The conflict in Darfur did not change the identity of Darfurians, as it is not possible to reshape or change identity. It is critical, however, that all Darfurians work together to correct wrong interpretations and misunderstandings that arose during the conflict and were disseminated widely by the international media.
23. Being Darfurian and Sudanese is a source of pride. It values the rich and unique culture and traditions Darfurians have, acknowledges their sense of nationalism, and is rooted in the hope of Sudan as a “big home” for all.
24. Darfurians, with their mixed African and Arab composition, features, and traditions, represent an ideal model for the Sudanese national identity.
25. New immigrants from Chad and other central African countries, who obtained Sudanese nationalities, are Sudanese and should be treated accordingly.
26. New immigrants should abide by Sudanese laws, norms, and traditions.
27. Proper governmental authorities should review the national identity cards and supporting documentation of all new immigrants, as both the timing and process in which they were issued and are questionable.

### **Recovery and Development**

28. The priorities for development in Darfur in the short–, medium–, and long–term are as follow:
- Short–term priorities:
    - Provide security to citizens.
    - Disarm all groups, except the army, police, and national security forces.
    - Rebuild villages destroyed by the war and rehabilitate basic infrastructure.
    - Voluntary repatriation of IDP and refugees.
    - Individually and collectively compensate IDP and refugees for their losses.
    - Implement Quick Impact and Projects (QIPs) and income generation projects for war–affected communities and groups.
    - Provide training and other skills war–affected communities and groups.
  - Medium–term priorities:
    - Maintain and improve basic infrastructure, including roads, bridges, airports, and health, education, water, and electricity systems.
    - Resume rural development projects that stopped as a result of the war, including those in Jebel Mara, Abu Nia’ama, Al Gazala Gawazat, and Al Savana.
    - Establish small–scale industries to utilize locally available resources, such as leather, fruit and vegetables, and dairy and dairy by–products.

- Complete the construction of the Al Ingaz – Al Garbi road.
  - Implement specific development projects targeting school dropouts, unemployed youth, people with disabilities, and women.
  - Human resource development, especially for youth and women.
- Long-term priorities:
- Develop large-scale industries to utilize natural resources, such as oil and uranium and other metals.
  - Utilize underground water reserves to establish modern farming techniques, such as fruit orchards, irrigated vegetable farming, fisheries, mixed farming, and enclosed pastures.
  - Construct national and international roads and highways to connect Darfur with other states and neighboring countries.
  - Human resource development projects.
29. Planning and implementing in a participatory manner is the best way to approach development strategies for Darfur. Those who should participate in all steps include Darfurians at the grassroots, target groups, and qualified Darfurian experts, who should guide, facilitate, and oversee preparation and implementation of development strategies. It is also imperative that national and international experts are involved as appropriate to ensure that plans are developed and implemented according to the best international standards.
30. Development activities that can take place before a comprehensive peace agreement is reached include:
- Human resource development projects that focus on school dropouts, street children, unemployed youth, and women.
  - QIPs and income generation projects targeting war-affected and poor families.
  - Rehabilitation of basic social services infrastructure, including water, education and health systems, in IDP camps, towns, and relatively secure localities and villages.
  - Peace education.
31. It is possible to change the perception and reality of marginalization experienced in Darfur by the following:
- Respecting and fulfilling promises made to Darfur and Darfurian.
  - Sharing power and fairly distributing wealth according to the population of Darfur.
  - Equally allocating resources and development projects.
  - Ensuring that Darfurians are fairly represented in the Office of the President, central ministries, and other decision-making institutions.
  - Enforcing justice.
  - Compensating IDP and refugees who voluntarily repatriate.
  - Fair and sustainable development.
32. Peace is a critical and important factor to enable the resumption of the flow of goods and services and to initiate work opportunities in Darfur. Peace brings stability, which encourages investment and the implementation of recovery projects, both of which create job opportunities and as a result improves livelihoods.

## **Administration and Democracy**

33. Strengths of the native administration system include:

- A wide acceptance and support from those they represent.
- Experience, knowledgeable, and wisdom to understand and deal with local challenges.

34. Weaknesses of the native administration system include:

- It is politicized.
- Most native administrators are poorly trained and lack the skills to cope with modern and newly emerging issues.
- The lack of power, authority, and resources.
- It is incapable of dealing with criminals and controlling the flow and use of weapons.
- For the above reasons, the ability of native administrations to resolve conflicts among and between tribes is limited.

35. Strengths of elected local governments include:

- The support received from those who elected them.
- An excellent understanding of local issues.
- Their ability to deal with local challenges and establish laws that suit the areas they govern.

36. Weaknesses of elected local governments include:

- Politicization.
- Tribe and political party bias.
- Some elected officials are unqualified for the offices they hold.
- Inadequate resources and flow of support from state and central governments.

37. Comprehensive studies and plans should guide the establishment of localities.

38. The criteria to justify/rationalize the establishment of localities include:

- Size of area.
- Population density.
- Economic and human resources.
- Basic infrastructure.
- Prevailing security and peaceful coexistence between tribes and communities in the area.

39. The care and administration of Sudanese refugees is the responsibility of host countries and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

40. Current administrative bodies, comprising of local leaders, camp committees, government commission, and UN agencies, are responsible for the care and administration of IDP living in camps.
41. Upon repatriation to their areas of origin, the administration of returnees is the responsibility of their traditional leadership with proper assistance by government authorities.
42. The reform of government systems so that they are capable of effectively addressing urbanization, migration, reintegration, and related challenges requires the following:
  - Adopting principles of democracy, transparency, neutrality, and accountability in its structures, policies, procedures, plans, and mechanisms.
  - Providing protection to all citizens and ensuring general freedoms.
  - Providing reasonable space for citizens to participate in core planning and decision making processes.
  - Strategic thinking to address the population's needs and priorities.
43. Free, fair, and democratic elections in Darfur are only possible if:
  - Security and stability are prevalent.
  - IDP voluntarily repatriate to their areas of origin.
  - Gaps in the census, electoral maps, voter registration, and other related administrative matters are genuinely addressed.
  - Laws and legislation that restrict general freedoms are revoked.
  - Comprehensive voter education programs are implemented.
  - Independent election committees are established.
  - Neutral monitoring mechanisms are established.

It is not possible to conduct nor should the proposed 2010 elections take place in Darfur if the above challenges are not properly addressed.
44. If elections take place in favorable conditions and the process was fair and transparent and acknowledged by all stakeholders, all stakeholders will accept the results and the exercise would promote peace and stability in Darfur.
45. If elections take place and the process is corrupt, many stakeholders will reject the results and this will fuel further conflict in Darfur.
46. Approximately 45 percent of the consultation participants prefer the current model of governing Sudan, where by individual states are directly linked directly to a central system.
47. Approximately 40 percent of the consultation participants prefer a federation style of government, similar to that of South Sudan, where by one region is comprised of several states.
48. Approximately 15 percent of the consultation participants prefer a system where by Darfur is governed as one region.
49. Darfur representation in the Presidential Council and central ministries should reflect the population density of the Darfur region.

## Reconciliation

50. The goals and objectives for reconciliation in Darfur are:
- Healing wounds and scars, overcoming grievances, and rebuilding social fabrics.
  - Rebuilding trust between individuals, groups, and communities.
  - Voluntary and safe repatriation of IDP and refugees to their areas of origin.
  - Securing and rehabilitating villages and areas destroyed or damage by the war.
  - Returning Darfur to its good days when it was a “big home” for all tribes, ethnicities, and cultures.
51. The prevalence of peace is a pre requisite if genuine reconciliation is to take place in Darfur.
52. It is important that an environment that is conducive for reconciliation is present, that all stakeholders have the desire and willingness to reconcile, and that all reconciliation agreements are implemented and respected.
53. Islam, culture, traditions, honesty, confession, accountability, enforcement of justice, and forgiveness are the principles that should guide reconciliation in Darfur.
54. The roles individuals, groups, governments, and the international community should play in reconciliation in Darfur include:
- Positive mediation to narrow gaps between conflicting groups and communities.
  - Encouraging the use of religious outlets and peace education to convince those in conflict to reconcile.
  - Enforcing the implementation of reconciliation agreements.
  - Providing appropriate support to affected areas and groups so that they can rebuild infrastructure and livelihoods.
  - Remaining neutral and transparent.
55. The role the media should play in reconciliation in Darfur includes:
- Broadcasting, publishing, and promoting peace education efforts, including drama, music, speeches, poems of local poets, and singers, such as *Hakkamat*.
  - Remaining neutral and transparent.
  - Documenting and disseminating the reconciliation processes and outcomes and sharing widely sharing best practices and lessons learned.
  - Providing space for different cultures and ethnicities to present and express their views.
56. The best mechanisms for reconciliation in Darfur are:
- Traditional mechanisms, the *Jodiya* and *Rakoba* systems.
  - Neutral reconciliation committees that are comprised of local, national and international experts who are respected and accepted by all stakeholders.
  - A non-politicized civil society.

57. Compensation in reconciliation and promotion of peaceful coexistence includes is an incentive for war-affected individuals and groups to settle and re-start their lives. Compensation could also help overcome grievances and restore the concept of justice.
58. The enforcement of justice and reconciliation are related in that those who committed crimes during the Darfur conflict should confess and admit what they did wrong. Independent and fair justice institutions should then accordingly prosecute the criminals. Concurrently, victims should decide whether or not forgive the perpetrators of the crime committed. When all of these steps are completed, reconciliation should then take place.

#### **D. CONSULTATION EVALUATION**

Upon conclusion of the consultation, participants were asked to complete an evaluation form. Analysis of the evaluations indicated:

59. Participants in general agreed that organization and facilitation of the consultation were very good and that the themes discussed were important and relevant. Approximately 40 percent of the participants said that the time allocated to the group and panel discussions was not enough.
60. All participants said the recommendations of DDDC consultations should be communicated to all stakeholders and conveyed to negotiators and mediators engaged in Darfur peace process at all levels.
61. Participants recommended that countries like the United Kingdom should play a leading role in convincing armed movements to engage in peace negotiations. They also said they want the United Kingdom to sponsor meetings between civil society and armed movements to discuss and agree on genuine and practical steps to achieve fair and sustainable peace in Darfur.
62. Participants agreed that it is necessary to advance the role of women in the Darfur peace process and that more attention is devoted to training and capacity building for women civil society leaders, organizations, and institutions.
63. Participants recommended that the DDDC should implementation similar consultations in localities and for other sectors. They also suggested that forums are organization to discuss recommendations of common grounds consultations with other stakeholders. Participants stressed that the local and international media should cover such forums.
64. Participants recommended that representatives of civil society should witness and participate in meetings, briefings, conferences, negotiations, and other important forums planned to advance peace in Darfur.
65. Participants said accurate, reliable, and updated statistics about war victims, including the number of dead, injured, displaced, etc., is required and should happen as soon as possible.
66. Participants want the media, religious leaders, tribal leaders, artists, and others, to work to create a favorable environment for dialogue and to mobilize stakeholders to engage actively in peace and reconciliation processes.

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

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**The University of Nyala Center for Peace and Development Studies**

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**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**



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