

Building Consensus on Common Ground Issues: South Darfur Women

**Nyala, South Darfur
July 14 – 15, 2009**

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A. INTRODUCTION

In close 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: South Darfur Women, the second in a series of consultations the DDDC is facilitating with specific stakeholder groups from across each Darfur State, was held at the University of Nyala Center for Peace and Development Studies, in the capital of South Darfur State, on July 14 – 15, 2009.

During the two–day consultation, 67 women from the 15 South Darfur Localities, representing civil society, internally displaced persons (IDP), women leaders, academics, the media, and students, met in Nyala 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 heterogeneous 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 South Darfur women. Participation was inclusive, transparent, frank, and genuine.

The participants evaluated the consultation and agreed on the next steps. The South Darfur women nominated 12 participants to serve a committee to coordinate, follow–up and funnel feedback to consultation participants, the DDDC, and others moving forward.

Key findings include:

- Merging national and customary laws regulating allocation, possession, and use of land should take place to accommodate realities, concerns, and issues in today’s Darfur.
- It is necessary to strengthen the authority of native administrations and nomadic police in order to implement and sustain sensible agreements around land and nomadic routes in Darfur.
- The establishment of effective implementation, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms to hold accountable armed groups, the Government of Sudan, and other key stakeholders in the Darfur conflict is important to build trust between conflicting groups and convince them to work together toward resolving the Darfur conflict.
- “Darfur consensus” means a unified vision of all Darfurians around goals, common ground issues, priorities, and concerns, as well as the belief that Darfurians share the same religion and belong to Darfur irrespective of ethnicity, culture, experience, or background.
- Programs to develop human resource capacity, particularly women, are required in the short–, medium–, and long–term in Darfur.
- Meaningful peace, and the stability it brings, is a critical and important factor that will help sustain the resumption of services and create employment opportunities in Darfur. This can in turn encourage investment and the implementation of recovery projects that create more employment opportunities and improve livelihoods.
- All consultation participants agreed that April 2010 elections are not possible under the current challenges in Darfur.
- More than 90 percent of consultation participants believe that a federation comprised of one region with a number of states is the best model to govern Darfur.
- Darfur representation in the Presidential Council and central ministries should reflect the population density of the region. Moreover, positive discrimination is required especially regarding representation of Darfurian women in prominent government institutions.

- The principles of Islam, culture, traditions, honesty, confession, accountability and forgiveness should guide reconciliation 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 Women** 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.

**Nyala, South Darfur
August 5, 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, and Internally Displaced Persons (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 South Darfur Women's consultation, the DDDC and the University of Nyala Center for Peace and Development Studies:

1. Developed a format for consultations.
2. Finalized, in coordination with CAD, 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, 67 women from the 15 South 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. Utilizing traditional methods to facilitate negotiates around land and nomadic routes and with should honor the consensus and support of both parties. It is necessary to strengthen the authority of native administrations and nomadic police in order to implement and sustain sensible agreements.
 2. Re-opening nomadic routes and providing basic services along them. It is also important to adopt modern agriculture and animal production techniques such as mixed farming and enclosed pastures, to accommodate the needs and demands of the two groups.
- Nomadic groups that intend to settle and develop new livelihoods that will not result in new conflicts should:
 1. Unify their vision.
 2. Approach native administrations in locations they identified as in need of negotiation.
 3. Abide by deeply routed traditional mechanisms to uphold agreements negotiated.
- New environmentally friendly and sustainable Darfur livelihood strategies should include:
 1. Modernizing agriculture and animal husbandry techniques.
 2. Water harvesting and conservation techniques for agriculture, horticulture, and aquaculture.
 3. Accessing and utilizing underground water reserves to establish orchards and large-scale irrigation on farms.
 4. Investing in tourism.
- Necessary measures to prevent further environmental degradation in North Darfur include:
 1. Activate tree-planting projects
 2. Establish windbreaks.
 3. Reseed pastures.
 4. Enforce forest and natural resource protection laws to stop illegal over grazing and tree cutting.
 5. Use environmentally friendly building materials.
 6. Use plant and animals resides, biogas, solar, gas and other energy sources instead of firewood.
 7. Disseminate extension messages to protect natural resources and mobilize citizens to play a positive role in this regard.
- Merging national and customary laws regulating allocation, possession, and use of land should take place to accommodate realities, concerns, and issues in today’s Darfur.

- It is possible to improve the *Hawakeer* system, a traditional system of allocating land to tribes, by adopting the hybrid law mentioned above and with the consensus and supervision of respective native administrations, which should have fair representation of women in their structures.
- The best way to resolve conflicts around land in Darfur is to use the traditional and deeply rooted conflict resolution mechanisms such as *Godia* and *Rakoba*.
- The following is required in order for IDP to voluntary return to their villages and settle peacefully:
 1. Provision of individual and collective compensation for their losses
 2. Return of lawful ownership of their land.
 3. Security in areas of return.
 4. Financial and technical support to rehabilitate and develop war–destroyed areas.

2. Security

- To ensure the security of IDP currently living in camps and during repatriation to their areas of origin:
 1. In close collaboration and coordination, Sudanese governmental commissions, IDP leaders, IDP camp committees, and UN agencies should help recruit and implement programs to train IDP youth to serve in national security forces.
 2. The Government of Sudan should provide security in areas of IDP return.
 3. The Government of Sudan should collect illegal arms. The police, army and national security forces should retain their arms.
 4. The Government of Sudan should establish police stations in areas of return.
 5. Provide support to IDP native administrations that should help with security in areas of return.
- Active and empower nomadic police to provide security to nomads.
- Recruit nomads into security forces.
- Strengthen and empower native administration to provide security to nomads and along nomadic routes.
- To rebuild trust between security institutions and the citizens of Darfur:
 1. Security institutions must remain neutral and do their level best to provide security to all Sudanese.
 2. Retain only three security institutions; the army, police, and national security
 3. Rationalize recruitment process according to best practices and basis recruitment of all candidates on qualifications, education, work history, etc.
 4. Recruit and train women to serve at all levels in the security forces.
 5. Mandate 18 as the minimum age requirement for recruitment into security forces.
 6. Improve and modernize security personnel training facilities.
 7. Provide security personnel with the required resources and equipment to perform their duties in a professional and effective manner.
 8. Mandate that security institutions operate in a transparent, fair and accountable manner.
- The roles the police, army, and national security forces should play to enforce the law include:
 1. Protect all citizens by enforcing laws.
 2. Serve the public in a responsible, neutral, and accountable way.
- Negotiations and related programs regarding disarmament and control of weapons should include:
 1. The involvement of all stakeholders.
 2. The simultaneous collection of all illegal arms.

3. Incentives to those who relinquish illegal arms voluntarily.
 4. Rationalizing the use of weapons in regards to law enforcement.
 5. Better border monitoring to stop smuggling and illegal weapons trading.
 6. Activation of peace education and peace building activities among and between communities and supporting the role of women in this regard.
 7. Providing job opportunities and income generation projects to unemployed youth and their families.
- To rebuild trust between conflicting armed groups and convince them to work together toward resolving the Darfur conflict requires:
 1. Honest, respected, and neutral mediators accepted by all groups involved in facilitating dialogue between all armed groups.
 2. A unified vision from all armed groups.
 3. The adoption of common positions to present in peace negotiations.
 4. The establishment of effective implementation, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms to hold accountable armed groups, the Government of Sudan, and other key stakeholders in the Darfur conflict.
 - UNAMID has many roles to play in peace in Darfur, including:
 1. Providing proper and effective protection to IDP, refugees, and other citizens.
 2. Remaining neutral and transparent.
 3. Mediating peaceful resolutions to conflicts between groups and communities
 4. Widely spreading messages of peace and promoting peace education throughout Darfur.

3. Identity

- “Darfur consensus” means a unified vision of all Darfurians around goals, common ground issues, priorities, and concerns, as well as the belief that Darfurians share the same religion and belong to Darfur irrespective of ethnicity, culture, experience, or background.
- The conflict in Darfur did not change the identity of Darfurians. It is not possible to reshape or change this identity.
- All Darfurians should work together to correct the misunderstandings that arose during the conflict and that the international media widely disseminated.
- Being Darfurian and Sudanese is a source of pride, which is rooted in the rich and unique culture and traditions Darfurians have and acknowledges their high sense of nationalism as Sudanese supporting prospects and hopes of Sudan.
- Darfurians, with their mixed African and Arab composition, features, and traditions, represent an ideal model for the Sudanese national identity.
- Darfurians should treat as temporary guests the new immigrants from Chad, central Africa, and other areas in Africa who have obtained Sudanese nationalities. While living among Darfurians, new immigrants should respect and abide by local norms, traditions, and laws.
- Authorities should review for validity purposes the nationality cards and documents issued to new immigrants, as both the timing and issuing process were questionable.

4. Recovery and Development

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

- Short-term priorities:
 1. Provide security to citizens.
 2. Collect all weapons, except those used officially by army, police, and national security.
 3. Rehabilitate villages destroyed by the war.

4. Voluntary repatriation of IDP and refugees.
 5. Individual and collective compensation for IDP and refugees.
 6. Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) and income generation projects for war-affected communities and groups.
 7. Programs to develop human resource capacity, particularly for women.
- Medium-term priorities:
1. Improve and maintain basic infrastructure, particularly roads, bridges, and electricity.
 2. Restore basic social services, particularly health, water, and education.
 3. Resume rural development projects halted as a result of the war, such as such those started in Jebel Mara, Abu Nia'ama, Al Gazala, Gawazat, and Al Savana.
 4. Establish vegetable, fruit, dairy and other small-scale industries, utilizing locally available resources.
 5. Complete construction of the Al Ingaz – Al Garbi road.
 6. Implementation of development projects that specifically target women.
 7. Human resource projects that particularly focus on women.
- Long-term priorities:
1. Develop large-scale industries to utilize Darfur's natural resources, such as oil, uranium, and metals.
 2. Utilize underground water reserves to develop irrigation systems to modernize agriculture, horticulture, and aquaculture
 3. Build national and international roads to connect Darfur States with each other and to neighboring countries.
 4. Human resource development projects focusing on women.
- Darfurians at the grassroots level and target groups should participate in all stages of planning and implementing development strategies for Darfur. Darfurian experts should support, guide, facilitate, and oversee development strategy preparations and implementation. National and international experts should also appropriately participate to ensure that plans are developed and implemented according to the best international standards and practices.
- Development and peace-oriented activities that can take place before the signing of a comprehensive ceasefire agreement include:
1. Peace education.
 2. Human resource development projects that focus on women.
 3. QIPs and income generation projects targeting war-affected and poor families.
 4. Rehabilitation of basic social service infrastructure, primarily, health, education, and water, in Darfur towns and relatively secure localities and villages.
 5. Research projects to improve agriculture and animal production.
- Factors that can help change the perception and reality of marginalization experienced in Darfur:
1. Genuine power sharing and fair distribution of wealth according to the size of Darfur's population.
 2. Positive discrimination in the allocation of resources and development projects.
 3. Fair representation of Darfurians in the Office of the President, central government ministries, and in other decision making institutions.
 4. Enforcement of the rule of law.
 5. Voluntary repatriation of IDP and refugees.
 6. Compensation for IDP and refugees.
 7. Fair and sustainable development.
- Meaningful peace, and the stability it brings, is a critical and important factor that will help sustain the resumption of services and create employment opportunities in Darfur. This can in turn encourage investment and the implementation of recovery projects that create more employment opportunities and improve livelihoods.

5. Administration and Democracy

- The strengths of the native administration are:
 1. The wide acceptance and support from those they represent.
 2. Experience, knowledgeable, and wisdom to understand and deal with local challenges.
 3. Heritage and historical traditional institutions capable of solving conflicts and promoting peaceful coexistence among and between tribes and communities.
- The weaknesses of the native administration are:
 1. They are politicized.
 2. They are comprised of mostly inherited and not democratically elected administrators.
 3. Lack of training and skills to cope with modern and newly emerging issues.
 4. Selfishness and pursue of personal agenda.
 5. Tribe basis.
 6. Lack of power, authority, and capability to deal with criminals and control weapons.
 7. Appointed by the government
 8. Lack of respect from their own tribes and communities.
- For the above reasons, native administrations are presently incapable of managing their constituencies and resolving conflicts among and between tribes.
- The strengths of elected local governments are:
 1. The support of the electorate.
 2. An excellent understanding of local issues.
 3. The ability to address local challenges.
 4. The ability to establish locally appropriate laws.
- The weakness of elected local governments are:
 1. Politicization
 2. Tribe bias.
 3. Political parties elevating unqualified patrons to positions of power leadership.
 4. Inadequate resources and support from state and central government.
- Required factors to consider when establishing localities:
 1. Size of area.
 2. Population density,
 3. Available economic and human resources.
 4. Basic infrastructure.
 5. Security
 6. Peaceful coexistence between tribes and communities in the area.
- Current administrative bodies that are comprised of local leaders, IDP camp committees, Government commissions, and United Nation's agencies should manage IDP camps.
- Upon return to their areas of origin, the management of repatriated IDP should fall to the authority of their traditional native administration with assistance from civil society, particularly during the first several months of return and until a pattern of relative normalcy is established.
- The reform of government systems so that they are capable of effectively addressing the challenges of urbanization, migration, and reintegration requires the following:
 1. The adoption of principles of democracy, transparency, neutrality and accountability in its structures, policies, procedures, plans, and mechanisms.
 2. The allowance of reasonable space for citizens to participate in core planning and decision-making processes.
 3. Strategic thinking to prioritize and address the needs of the population.

4. Transparency, accountability, and professionalism needed to accept constructive criticism.
- Free, fair, and democratic elections are only possible if:
 1. Security and stability are present.
 2. Voluntary repatriation of IDP to areas of origin.
 3. A comprehensive census.
 4. A complete and accurate voter registration.
 5. Repeal of laws that restrict general freedoms.
 6. Comprehensive voter education.
 7. Independent election committees.
 8. Neutral elections monitoring.
 9. Twenty-five percent of the consultation participants recommended forming a transitional government is formed prior to the elections to oversee the entire election process.
 - All consultation participants agreed that April 2010 elections are not possible and should not take place in Darfur unless the above challenges are overcome.
 - If elections take place in favorable conditions acknowledged by all stakeholders (see the above points) and the process is fair and transparent, stakeholders will accept the results and the successful process will promote peace and stability in Darfur. If the election process is corrupt, most stakeholders will reject the results and will further fuel the conflict in Darfur.
 - More than 90 percent of consultation participants believe that a federation comprised of one region with a number of states is the best model to govern Darfur. Less than ten percent believe that multi states linked directly to the central government is the best model to govern Darfur.
 - Darfur representation in the Presidential Council and central ministries should reflect the population density of the region. Moreover, positive discrimination is required especially regarding representation of Darfurian women in prominent government institutions.

6. Reconciliation

- The goals and objectives of reconciliation in Darfur are:
 1. Healing of wounds and scars caused by the conflict.
 2. Overcoming grievances and rebuilding the Darfur social fabric.
 3. Rebuilding trust between individuals, groups, and communities.
 4. Voluntary and safe repatriation of IDP and refugees to their areas of origin.
 5. Securing and rehabilitating villages and areas affected by the war.
 6. Returning Darfur to the "good days," when it was one big home for all tribes, ethnic groups, and cultures.
- Ninety percent of consultation participants agreed that the prevalence of peace and fair mechanisms for justice and accountability are pre-requisites for reconciliation. The remaining ten percent said reconciliation could start now and continue until comprehensive peace is achieved.
- The principles of Islam, culture, traditions, honesty, confession, accountability and forgiveness should guide reconciliation in Darfur.
- The roles individuals, groups, governments, the media, and international community should plan in reconciliation are as follows:

Individuals:

1. Self-realization that reconciliation is important and good for everyone.
2. Agreement to achieve reconciliation through justice institution.
3. Rejection of tribalism and racism.
4. Abide by and honor reconciliation outcomes and decisions.

Groups:

1. Positive mediation to narrow gaps between conflicting groups, communities, and others.
2. Peace education.
3. Convincing parties in conflict to reconcile.
4. Neutrality and transparency.

Governments:

1. Neutrality.
2. Admit mistakes.
3. Reveal the facts.
4. Sponsor and support to reconciliation decisions and outcomes.

The Media:

1. Peace education.
2. Transparency and neutrality.
3. Documentation and dissemination of reconciliation processes, outcomes, best practices, and lessons learned.
4. Provide space for divergent cultures and ethnic groups to present themselves and express their views.

International community:

1. Neutral and transparent mediation.
 2. Exert pressure on conflicting groups and parties to reconcile.
 3. Support of reconciliation processes
 4. Contribute to compensation funds.
 5. Monitor local courts and justice institutions addressing Darfur issues to ensure independence and fairness.
- Three percent of consultation participants said that the international community should not get involved in Darfur reconciliation processes because their intervention is negative and will complicate the processes.
- The best mechanisms for reconciliation in Darfur are:
1. Traditional, such as *Godia* and *Rakoba*.
 2. Neutral committees respected and accepted by all stakeholders.
 3. Non-politicized civil society.
- The principles of nationalism, patience, and respect of the views and opinions of others should guide all reconciliation mechanisms.
- The role of compensation in reconciliation and promotion of peaceful coexistence is:
1. An incentive for affected individuals and groups to settle and re-start their lives.
 2. To help overcome grievances.
 3. Restore the concept of justice.
- In regard to the relationship between reconciliation and the enforcement of justice, reconciliation can take place if the below steps are followed:
1. Perpetrators of crimes confess and admit wrongdoing.
 2. Independent and fair justice institutions prosecute perpetrators of crimes.
 3. Victims of crimes decide whether to forgive or not forgive those who perpetrated crimes against them.

D. CONSULTATION EVALUATION

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

1. Participants found that the organization and facilitation of the consultation were “excellent” and that the themes discussed were important and relevant.
2. Participants suggested that future consultations should include as a topic “Darfur women and their contribution to peace making and peace building.”

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants recommended:

1. That the DDDC should assist them to widely share the consultation outcomes and recommendations with peers, organizations, grassroots, and communities throughout Darfur.
2. Expansion of the role of the media with the specific goal of helping create a favorable environment for dialogue and peace.
3. Coordinating with the DDDC to ensure that their recommendations are conveyed to mediators, negotiators, and other stakeholders involved in Darfur peace process.
4. That the DDDC and other stakeholders should support interaction of likeminded women and help them unify their vision on peace and reconciliation for Darfur.
5. Fair representation of women at the DDDC conference when organized.
6. Fair representation of women in peace and reconciliation committees at the local, state and national levels.
7. Reasonable space in the media for women to express their views and promote peace education.
8. Women from villages and localities actively participate in conferences, meetings, and committees that foster peace and reconciliation.
9. That the DDDC organize similar consultations in South Darfur localities to build wide consensus around common ground issues.
10. That a coordination committee comprised of participants from the South Darfur women’s consultation form for coordination, follow up, and other post consultation purposes.

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 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



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