

New Sudan Organizations Network (NSON)

Narrative Report Sudan Peace Caravan 16 December 2006/ 16 January 2007

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1. Project Basic Information:

Name project holder: New Sudan Organizations Network (NSON)

Project title: Sudan Peace Caravan

Project No.: 137

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2. Prelude

Diaspora and development are currently hot topics that have gained a top priority on the agenda of international, national institutions, mainstream development agencies and civil society organizations. This means that Diaspora and development issues are reflected and discussed at different levels for different purposes and interests.

Migration and development have been a terrain in which Diaspora groups and organizations have gained accumulative experience, albeit in an informal manner. Diasporas are considered as chief agents and a viable driving force in bridging the gap between migration and development. Diaspora groups maintain viable trans-national networks linking their social, political and economic endeavors with the countries of origin. This is the reason why diasporas living in the Western world are currently considered as the .fourth development aid actors. after international organizations, governments and mainstream development agencies. The role of Diaspora in peace building, a prerequisite for development is often unexplored and often less visible in the homelands. The living experience shows how much this role is needed and encouraged from grassroots organizations as well as international development agencies. NSON has built, since its inception, on the potential of Sudanese Diaspora in development as worked hard to make it visible, accessible and eventually practically utilized. In the last four years we have undertaken several activities based on the Diaspora component to enhance peace and coexistence among Sudanese in the Netherlands and in the homeland.

2. Introduction:

The late 2004 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A has brought up new hope for peace and development in our country. The ongoing conflict and human rights violations in Darfur teach us that Sudan still has a long way to go.

The Sudanese Diaspora in the Netherlands has succeeded in organizing itself better than in the late 1990.s. This has resulted in the set up of the New Sudan Organizations Network in 1999 and lately the Sudan Forum in 2005 which brings together a large number of Sudanese self-organizations and individuals.

The Netherlands represents a new home for about 7000 Sudanese coming from the conflict torn Sudan. This fairly large and diverse Diaspora community has a great strategic potential to encourage peace-building activities in their country. In order to fulfill this potential, NSON has explored the role that could be played in peace-building both within the Diaspora community, and back home. This has required the further development of knowledge, skills and abilities to enable the community to better deal with the consequences of conflict on themselves and the society they come from, as well as the transformation role they can play in such conflicts.

Late 2005, NSON initiated a program on peace building in the Sudan. This program started with the formation of multiethnic peace talk groups, in which Sudanese men and women shared experiences, their flight from Sudan, the ongoing contradictions in their country, and

their role as Diaspora in enhancing peace and coexistence among themselves. The peace talks came out, therefore, as a direct response to the needs signaled out by Sudanese Diaspora organizations for enhancing the peace-building capacities of their community to be able to play a more active role in society, both in the Netherlands and in the homeland.

The Sudan peace talks groups have provided a significant outlet for Sudanese Diaspora organizations in the Netherlands to realize the importance of bringing peace to grassroots level. The initiative has created a climate for change, encouraged individual responsibility, built supportive networks, and encouraged Sudanese men and women to exchange with each others what they have learned.



The peace talks groups were followed immediately with Sudan Diaspora Peace conference in April 2006. The main objective of the conference was to promote dialogue on peace in Sudan among stakeholders involved: Sudanese in Diaspora and their organizations, Dutch NGOs and the Dutch government. Sudan Diaspora conference has outlined the need for more intensified exchange among the Diaspora, both inside the Netherlands and internationally. NSON as well as Sudan Civil Society Forum could fulfill this role/task. It has further emphasized that the potential of partnerships should be investigated.

Following the Sudan Diaspora conference, NSON began with the project of Sudan peace caravan. The Peace Caravan Trail was a Sudanese Diaspora initiative aiming at raising awareness to peace building in the Sudan. The Trail was also set to encourage a bottom-up approach in working for issues of social justice, community development and sustainability; a precondition for peace building in the Sudan. The peace trail was composed of men and women from the Sudanese Diaspora in the Netherlands. The peace caravan left in mid December 2006 from Amsterdam to Khartoum.

3. Preparations for the Caravan in the Netherlands and the Sudan:

As earlier mentioned the initiative of the peace caravan was a follow up to earlier projects realized in the Netherlands with regard to peace building in the Sudan. To implement this project, NSON started contacting several local NGOs inside Sudan for partnership. Mid 2006 there was a meeting with Dr. Mowaia Shadad, Sudanese Environment Conservation Society (SECS) in the Hague who came to Holland upon an invitation from NOVIB at the time. We have exchanged ideas and plans regarding the project and reached finally a memorandum of agreement regarding the project of the peace caravan. SECS is a reputable Sudanese NGO working inside the Sudan and has age-old traditions with regard to peace building and development in the Sudan. We have agreed that SECS will help in the preparations to the peace caravan, come up with a program and help defining the route. They would also facilitate the trip and provide members to join the caravan. In order to follow the preparations closely NSON has delegated Mrs. Sara Hassan to coordinate the preparations in the Sudan and acts as contact person for the program. Mrs. Hassan was later joined by Mr. Ismat Izat to help in the preparations. Both members were given the assignment to network and inform as many NGOs and officials about the mission of the peace caravan in order to help creating a conducive atmosphere for the arrival of the caravan. The mission of the peace caravan is by all means multifaceted and its success is dependant on the cooperation of the above-mentioned stakeholders. It is a mission revolving around raising awareness to peace, CPA dissemination, building partnerships with local Sudanese organizations and exploring the potential of Diaspora in peace building. The preparations for the peace caravan were partially supported by IOM the Netherlands.



NSON. members in Sudan have made use of the network, contacts and facilities of SECS in Sudan to help marking a reliable route and to arrange the logistics for the caravan. In order to decide the route a trip was organized to explore the areas to be toured by the caravan. A mini peace caravan has left from Khartoum to Nuba Mountains. On the way to Nuba mountains, NSON's members stopped at places where the caravan will visit and hold some activities. An inventory was also made of the needs and agreements were made regarding logistics and the program.

As far as the program is concerned, there were several meetings held between NSON members and SECS in order to set up some governing guidelines to the peace caravan. The preparatory committee agreed finally that the caravan should tackle the following issues and themes:

- Peace building.
- Sustainable development.
- Poverty reduction.
- The role of women in building the community.
- Protection, preservation and conservation of environment.

3.1 Deciding the route and the program:

After holding several meetings with SECS and the peace committee of the Environment protection organizations, an exploratory trip was organized to north and south Kordofan. The trip started from Khartoum, passing by Jabel Awlija, Algiteena, Kosti and Umruwaba, Aldeleng and ending up in Kadogli. In Umruwaba a meeting was held with representatives of a local organization and Save the Children. In these meetings, NSON's members have exchanged information about the mission of the Peace Caravan and explored possible cooperation with regard to peace building and development. In cooperation with SECS and the Association of Nuba Mountains Women for Education and Development, a workshop was organized on land and natural resources issues. Land issues have been always the source of many conflicts among residing tribes in the region. Another objective of the visit was to explore the route of the peace caravan and to meet with partners working within the development field in this area.



In the workshop there were so many issues discussed ranging from development issues of the region to exploitation of the existing natural resources in order to help enhancing peace and development in the area. The workshop has moreover witnessed lengthy debates on the land ownership issues after CPA. There were also discussions on ratification of customary practices as valid mechanism for solving conflicts around land ownership issues, exploitation of agricultural land and regulation of grazing passages for pastoralists. Connecting to these local practices would help to mitigate tension and conflict among inhabitants of the region and enhances peaceful coexistence in the region.

In the workshop there were a number of papers presented, to name a few: legislation on land ownership after CPA and the position of SPLM on land ownership and development in South Kordofan and upper Nile. The attendees of the workshop have participated actively in the different sessions of the workshop. The workshop has concluded with a number of recommendations with regard to dissemination of peace culture and development, and has proposed a mechanism to implement these results.

As far as the preparations for the Peace Caravan are concerned, NSON's coordinator of the program met with a number of SPLM officials and met also with the commissioner of South Kordofan state, and Mr. Juma Bala, the representative of NRRDO (a prominent local NGO in the region), with which a meeting is held to explore possible means of realizing the goals of the Peace Caravan in the region. The meeting has decided to prepare a study paper in which suggestions will be made regarding the program and the activities of the peace caravan in the region. The meeting has also elected Mr. Juma Bala as a contact person for the project. The exploratory trip has achieved the under mentioned results:

- The route of the peace caravan is explored and mission tested on the ground.
- Co-ordination mechanism is formed with local governments in north and south Kordofan regions .
- A report was prepared on the route of the caravan from Khartoum till south Sudan in which concrete help and assistance is promised by local governments and grass roots organizations in the area.
- The needs of the local population along the route of the Caravan were explored with regard to education and health services
- A network with local organizations in north and south Kordofan was established.
- The grassroots organizations in Kordofan solicited the help of NSON in rehabilitating schools and clinics in the area.

3.2 Media coverage in the Netherlands:

Before the departure of the peace caravan we have contacted a freelance journalists, those who well know as friends for the Sudanese community to write some articles on the mission of the peace caravan as well as helping with issuing a newsletter on the preparations phase. One of those Journalists was supposed to travel with the peace caravan to Sudan and make a radio documentary on the trip. For unforeseen reasons, the Sudanese authorities abstained from issuing visas to non-originally Sudanese passport holders who are traveling with the caravan. The newsletter on the preparations of the Caravan was issued shortly before the departure of the Caravan and was distributed widely among community members, Dutch NGOs, concerned ministries and concerned persons in the Sudan

3.3 Caravan's route:

The members of the peace caravan arrived to Khartoum on the 15th of December 2006. They were received by NSON.s coordinator and some members of SECS. After a short stay in Khartoum caravan members have left to Nuba Mountains in South Kordofan where they have carried out activities in Dilling, Kadogli and Kawda. Subsequently they toured a number of cities and villages such as al-Obied, Umruwaba and Kosti, in their return trip to Khartoum.

On Thursday 4 Jan. the Peace Caravan proceeded further to Juba, south Sudan. On Monday 8 Jan. they returned back to Khartoum where they intensified their efforts on networking and meeting partners. On 10 Jan, a press conference was organized in the Al-Shariga Hall in

which Sudanese NGOs and media were given the chance to discuss the achieved results of the peace caravan. In the press conference we also announced the end of the mission in Sudan.

4. Activities of the caravan:

Upon the arrival of the caravan members to Khartoum on the 15 th of December, members of the peace caravan experienced for the first time the reality of Khartoum after CPA. For the most members that was quite shocking since they have not been back to Sudan for many years. Khartoum has changed enormously in their eyes and the scene of militia groups cruising in pickup trucks in the streets of Khartoum was too many a frightening experience. The bulk of the members of the peace caravan come originally from conflict areas where extreme human rights violations took place. The project managers had to call from The Netherlands and talk hours-long in order to get the whole picture and try to bring participants to calmness. NSON's coordinator in Sudan has organized the following day a meeting with Dr. Moawia Shadad chairman of SECS. Dr. Shadad received the members of the caravan and discussed the departure of the caravan logistics and details regarding the route. Members of the caravan were invited to an activity on Aids awareness organized by the SECS the second day of arrival, in which .The children of the Nile. performed an artistic show portraying the dangers of AIDS. The core of the activities of the Sudan caravan was embodied in a series of workshops, lectures, meetings, musical shows, theatrical and folkloric and artistic demonstrations.



The delegation of peace caravan consisted of NSON and SECS have conducted and perform accurately through workshops and seminars are as follows:

- CPA dissemination.
- Visit to IDPs camps
- Sustaining development and building peace.
- Living peacefully and in harmony.

4.1 Peace caravan begins in Kouda:

Due to unforeseen reason the Humanitarian Affairs Commission (HAC) was not able to provide a security license for the departure of the peace caravan, as a result, members of the Caravan have decided to start their mission in Kouda, Nuba Mountains and not as proposed in

Khartoum. It was a huge security risk we have taken in the hope that with less media attention, we could go our mission without been interrupted or hindered.

4.2 Kouda: A visit to IDP Camp in Kouda and a lecture on peace building and peaceful coexistence

Darfur IDPs in Kouda:

Victims of the war in Darfur fled the war in early 2004 to Kouda, Nuba Mountains. There are 600 children 300 of them were already enrolled in Schools. There are 260 women and 153 men. The IDPs in the camp came from different tribes and ethnic groups. The displaced Darfurians face the following problems: Lack of shelter and blankets, malnutrition and lack of health services

4.2.1 Lecture at Gabadi School: center for new Sudan for revolutionary and intellectual studies.

In this workshop the following organizations have participated:

Peace caravan members, Sudanese Network for Poverty Reduction, NRRDO, Sudanese Human Rights Network, ORBAB, Artist Institute for African performance and training of Artistic cadres.



This lecture took place at Gabdi School for intellectual studies. Gabdi School was established in July 2004 by Abdel Aziz Alhilo, the secretary of SPLM in Nuba Mountains at the time.

Members of the peace caravan presented information and shared their vision with regard to the mission of the peace caravan. They have explained the difficulties faced in the preparation, change of routes and why started in kouda. In the presentation information was given on the organizations participating in the peace caravan and NSON. Members of the peace caravan gave also a presentation on the role of women in peace building and the suffering of women during the war. Afterwards there was a vivid discussion on issues of peace building and peaceful coexistence. The following themes were highlighted in the discussion:

Problems faced the advancement of peace in the area is conflict over land issues and oil. Peace building and development should be based on equitable distribution of oil and other existing resources.

Problems rising from the implementation of Abeyie protocol should be timely addressed

Active participation of local NGOs in the development of the area is a necessity.

The participants in the meeting recommended the following:

- The use of arts/ music and theater in disseminating peace
- CPA dissemination to raise awareness on the rights of citizens
- Educating children and youth on the importance of peace
- Capacity building of leaders in the areas to help enlightening the community on their rights

4.3 Kadogli: Workshop on sustainable peace and peaceful coexistence

Participants: Bigao Singal, political advisor of SPLM, NSON, SECS, Network Human Rights, ORBAB, Pasigat Organization for Development and Reconstruction, Sudan 8, Sudan human rights Network, leaders of native administration and leaders of civil society. The group was received with traditional dances of kampla in which elders and youngsters have participated. At the outset of the workshop, members of the peace caravan explain their mission and introduced themselves to the public, and gave information about the activities on peace building undertaken by Sudanese organizations in the Netherlands. Members of the peace caravan emphasized that they are willing to cooperate with Sudanese grassroots organizations to create mechanisms to enhance peace in the Sudan through supporting CPA, respecting human rights, solving problems of land, water and pastures in the region.



The participating Local Sudanese NGOs in the workshop have emphasized the importance of devising educational curriculums that enhance peace building and peaceful coexistence. Also the use of local cultures and traditions to promote peace culture, human rights and respect of others. The participants in the workshop acknowledged the need to expertise of the Sudanese Diaspora in development. There is obviously a brain drain in the area and in some sectors one is faced with the lack of qualified manpower to provide the needed services. Another important aspect which is highlighted during the workshop is the involvement of the private sector in the strategic planning for post conflict era.

4.3.1 The role of women in peace building after CPA:

The workshop discussed the potential of women in reconciliation and conflict resolution. In this regard the participants signaled the following working terrains to enhance the role of women in peace building:

Raising the capacities of women in negotiations. Awareness on women rights and their role in peace building and development Traditions from local cultures which commemorate peace should be incorporated in programs on peace culture.



4.3.2 Regarding CPA dissemination:

There are only 50 copies of the CPA distributed in the whole state. The regional state should do more to disseminate the CPA

4.3.3 Challenges to peace building in South Kordofan State:

- Illiteracy;



- poor infrastructure which is considered the basis for peace building;
- the existence of small arms which is needed to be collected in order restore peace;
- stability and an active role of NGOS in order to enhance peace;

- encouraging voluntary settlement of those who left their villages and cities during the war; lack of social services; e.g., schools, clinics, water and public health in conflict areas (for instance in kouda there are no clinics; schools are built of straw and children study there under shadow of trees);
- Spread of HIV and lack of awareness campaigns and disparity in education opportunities of boys and girls.
- The CPA has given a minimum representation of 30% for women in decision-making positions and other different leading positions; this has not yet been achieved.
- Psychological rehabilitation of victims of the war is a precondition for peace building and development

4.3.4 How to build peace culture:

- Solidarity among members of the community
- Building trust among different communities and tribes
- Building partnership between local NGOs and work on neighborhood level
- Native administration should be neutral and void of political affiliations
- Creating job opportunities to the youth to avoid temptation of joining fighting militias

- Consolidating transparency and accountability practices in all levels
- A ministry of peace to coordinate and issue policies conducive to sustaining peace in the Sudan
- This workshop was quite pioneer and was the first to be held in the south Kordofan state on CPA awareness.

4.3.5 How to bring CPA down to grassroots level:

- Security arrangement
- Withdrawing arms from militias
- Strategic planning to implement the CPA
- Reactivate native administration law
- Enhancing trust between the different tribes
- Native administration should represent truly the masses and not be appointed from above
- Cultural and artistic activities to explain what CPA is.
- Encouraging intermarriages between different tribal groups in the areas .
- Organizing joint activities (seminars, workshops, agricultural schemes between members from different ethnic groups) .
- Combating message war culture as manifested in the local cultures.
- Citizenship as the basis for rights and duties.
- Respect of human rights Including the rights of coming generations in resources
- Reformulating land law.
- One of the main development challenges faced in the area is the danger of desertification faced at the eastern mountains of South kordofan. The People in the area have noted the importance of environment conservation as necessary condition to help reduce the destruction and rehabilitate degraded and marginalized areas. This is should be done through the restoration of gum-bush cultivation cycle. In addition, the promotion of different tree planting activities, particularly on farm-tree planting, complemented by the introduction of income generation opportunities is expected to reduce the pressure off the forest.

In the past many programs were launched to tackle the issue of conservation and rehabilitation of degraded areas, unfortunately many of these projects stumbled and faded away. This could possibly be due to the following:

- lack of coordination among implementing institutions;
- lack of resources, skills and knowledge to implement forest and natural resources conservation legislation;
- lack of community participation in the management and conservation of the forests;
- lack of alternative on farm income generating activities besides the normal daily farming .
- Inappropriate selection of the appropriate extension method, channels and extension messages for dissemination of information.

The workshop organized by the peace caravan was shown in the evening TV news and was praised highly by officials who recommended continuity of this activity in the future.

4.4 Other activities in South kordofan state:

- Meeting with the governor of the state and high officials and SPLM leadership.
- Meeting with local organizations working in the area and exchanging information about work interests and possibilities of cooperation and partnership. On the eve of the x-mas the governor of the state invited members of the peace caravan to a celebration held at his home to which also ministers and notables were invited.

4.5. Alobied:

Members of the peace caravan stopped in Alobied and visited the government of North Kordofan, UN logistic center, and care-Alobied, plan-Sudan, South kordofan and IFAD center. Members of the peace caravan have been introduced to the different projects components of care Alobied, especially to their development interventions in water provisions and agriculture, pilot community-based for villages, marketing and micro-financing. Caravan members informed these organizations about their mission and got acquainted with programs and activities carried out in the area.

4.6. Umruwaba:

The members of the peace caravan met with the youth in the city and explained their mission. Later there was again visits and meetings held by NSON coordinator with local organizations in the area. The area witnessed in the last 15 years a massive transformation in its demographic structure. IDPs from Nuba Mountains and South Sudan fled to the area and are now fully integrated in the community. Meetings were held with IFAD, save the children, and Umruwaba association for social services with which a memorandum of cooperation is signed.

4.7. Kosti: Workshop on CPA awareness, peace building and peaceful coexistence In Kosti the caravan members went to **Goz Alsalam IDP camp**. In cooperation with SECS chapter in Kosti a workshop was organized. In the workshop members of the caravan listened to experiences from the leaders of the camp, talked with women and held a painting workshop for the children. Members of the peace caravan have introduced themselves and discussed with IDPs about the conditions for sustaining the peace as embodied in more awareness with their rights and providing the necessary social services and infrastructure to the people.

Experiences from Holland were shared with the IDPs; the respect of human rights and consultation in place of fighting as effective mechanism for solving conflicts.



In the discussions with IDPs the issue of voluntary repatriation is extensively discussed:

Preconditions for repatriations are the prevalence of infrastructure and the choice of the individual to leave or stay. The conditions for repatriation must be carefully considered; deciding the needs in each area, opportunities for work and the provision of social services and prevalence of peace.

The administration of the camp should work on enhancing awareness to the rights of the IDPs..

IDPs in the camp are encouraged to form a committee that would represents them and look after their interests.

The camp lacks schools and clinics and water. Members of the camp faced difficulties in apply for a piece of land. There is no cooperation from the land department in Kosti and difficulties were faced in granting land to those who would like settle down. There is a need to transform the camp into a village en relocate the land and provide the needed services
The government should facilitate voluntary repatriation IDPs have mentioned that NSON was the first Sudanese Diaspora organization to visit them in the camp.

4.8. Juba:

Although the coordination between the concerned parties was not optimal before the Caravan arrived at Juba, the trip was an other success. The Caravan toured the city for 5 days . The Caravan participants have met with different concerned people and held many discussions on the issues of development, reconstruction and peace building. The Caravan participants have been invited to attend many cultural and social events in Juba. Also which coincidentally especial, that the caravan members met with the former member of Sudan Forum in The Netherlands, Mr. Nelson Mono Luka, who is currently working as a director of a local NGO in Juba. He introduced members of the caravan to the projects his organization is conducting

in Juba area and the work of other local NGOs. Also the caravan members met with the executive member of Sudan Forum in The Netherlands, Mr. Denial Soro Habakoko, who was visiting Juba by the time. He visited the caravan members at their living place and discussed with them all possible matters of concerns.

At the end the Caravan participants visited the grave of the late Dr. John Garang and paid their tribute to him.

4.9. Back to Khartoum:

Once the Caravan arrived in Khartoum, efforts were exerted to contact Sudanese media in order to cover the mission of the peace caravan. There were some interviews made and articles written about the Caravan in the Sudanese press. Members of the peace caravan participated in the celebration organized by the German Cultural Center in Khartoum in collaboration with the Sudaneseonline.com, celebrating the initiative of a Darfurian woman journalist who managed with little resources to portray the suffering of the victims of the war in Darfur. The journalist has published her newsletter for many years on a stem of a tree next to her home.. Caravan members joined other civil society organizations to celebrate this initiative and conveyed their support and solidarity to the victims of the war in Darfur.

The Caravan members met with some officials in the GOS including Mr. Yasir Arman, the chairman of the SPLM fraction in the national assembly. Sudanese parliament, and gave a review on the mission of the Peace Caravan and future projects of Sudanese Diaspora in the Netherlands. They have also discussed possible support from GOS and GOSS and means of incorporating initiatives of Sudanese Diaspora in the strategic planning for development in post conflict Sudan. At the end of the mission of the peace caravan a press conference was held in Alshariga Hall at University of Khartoum, in which NSON's coordinator presented the results of the peace caravan to all possible Sudanese local NGOs and the press.

Local organizations which have attended the press conference were: SECS, HERLN, NUBA Net, together Art and culture center, SCOVA, Aladwa Newspaper and several freelance journalists. In the press conference background information was given about NSON and activities of the Sudanese community in the Netherlands with regard to peace building and development. Also detailed information about the activities of the peace caravan was presented. The coordinator of the peace caravan has also conducted a radio interview with the main Sudanese radio station about Sudan peace caravan.

The Caravan toured many areas around Khartoum, and the participants enjoyed with their families and friends lots of social and cultural events throughout the days of the Eid Al-Adha, before they returned back to The Netherlands.

4.10. Workshop in The Hague:

After return of members of the caravan, NSON has started with the preparations for a workshop. Members of Sudanese self organizations, migrant organizations as well as partners and concerned would be invited. Presentations would be provided on how we have experienced the Sudan Peace Caravan, lessons learned and results achieved.

We had planned this workshop to take place in mid February 2007, but for technical reasons we were not able to hold it at the proposed time. Now, the workshop is again scheduled to take place in the mid of May 2007 in order to visibly illustrate the results of the peace caravan.

4.11. Posting on peace caravan on a Sudanese web site: www.sudan-forall.org

After arrival of the peace caravan to the Netherlands a posting was written on the peace Caravan in a reputable Sudanese website. There were more than 6000 hits to the post so far and there is a considerable participation from Sudanese in the Diaspora in the discussion regarding this unique initiative. For more details see link:

www.sudanforall.org/forum/viewtopic.php?t=1304&sid=91e2397f1ca2413b255cfd53d69c902f

5. Monitoring and evaluation:

Objectives of the evaluation:

- To ensure accountability for the donors
- To examine weak and strong aspects of the initiative and to draw lessons.

During the preparations and the realization of the peace caravan, monitoring was permanently evident. The peace caravan was followed closely by the organizing committee. There were regular correspondence and daily telephone contacts from the Netherlands with the coordinator in Sudan about the progress of the project. After arrival of the members of peace caravan to Sudan, there were daily contacts with the caravan members with regard to their safety, problems faced in cooperation, program and assignments.

NSON held several evaluation meetings during and after the realization of the project. These meetings were held to reflect on the progress of the project, to address the difficulties in the organization, the planning and the follow up. At the end of the peace caravan an evaluation meeting was held with the members of the Caravan after their arrival. In the meeting members of the peace caravan reflected on the mission and shared their experiences with NSON. Three evaluation meetings were held with NSON's coordinator upon her arrival to the Netherlands with regard to the narrative and financial report. There was also an evaluation meeting held in with our partner in Sudan on the project, lessons learned, future cooperation and follow up.

The organizing group has further shared the conclusions and the recommendations of the peace with the Sudan Forum in The Netherlands.

Finally, a workshop is planed in mid of May in order to officially present the results of the peace caravan to donors and other concerned organizations and institutions, Diaspora groups and the Sudanese community in the Netherlands.

6. Peace caravan revisited: success and failures:

6.1 positive aspects:

- The activities of the peace caravan were successfully performed.
- The target groups have extensively participated in the discussions on peace building and have shown sincere commitment to the mission.
- Caravan participants/ and of course NSON, have realized the urgent needs of development in the areas visited.
- NSON and caravan members came out with good recommendations that will really help to develop areas visited by the peace caravan.
- NSON and caravan participants came to understand the traditions and cultures of the local communities with regard to enhancement of peace and coexistence.
- The harmony and cooperation among caravan members at the end was optimal and have led eventually to the success of the mission.

6.2 Negative aspects:

- Problems in coordination among the group members from the Netherlands and those from Sudan, especially at the beginning of the mission have led to a delay in the activities of the caravan.
- The artistic and musical program of the Caravan was relatively meager due to increase in expenditure in other items of the budget such as transport and accommodations of caravan members.
- Insufficient coordination with SECS chapter in Juba which has resulted in partial failure of the program in Juba.

7. Achieved results:

- The Peace Caravan has raised more attention to the situation of the IDPs and other victims of war in the Sudan.
- It highlighted the also the role of Sudanese Diaspora in sustaining peace in the Sudan and in disseminating CPA awareness.
- The peace caravan has developed a sense of collective responsibility towards maintenance of peace in the Sudan.
- There is more awareness raised amongst the Diaspora, local Sudanese and the Dutch public in regard to peace building in the Sudan.
- Peace caravan has helped in creating partnerships and strengthening local networks with individuals and organizations working in the field of peace building in the Sudan.
- Peace caravan has raised the voice of the Diaspora and made it heard as a key player in enhancing peace, development, democratization and rehabilitation of post conflict Sudan.
- 7 members from the Sudanese community in the Netherlands supported by a similar group from inside Sudan have toured several cities and villages preaching peace and coexistence in the Sudan.
- There is a working cooperation between Sudan Diaspora organizations in the Netherlands and indigenous organizations with regard to issues of peace building in the Sudan.
- Peace caravan has managed to build a Diaspora constituency, create partnerships and strategic alliances among Diaspora organizations for peace building in the Sudan.
- Peace caravan has improved collaboration between Diaspora organizations and development agencies with regard to peace building in the Sudan.
- The Sudan peace caravan was received warmly in all areas visited and the initiative was widely celebrated by the local communities visited during the tour of the caravan. This confirms our deep-rooted conviction in an active role to be played by Sudanese Diaspora in peace building and development.

- The diversity of the caravan members has virtually led to the acceptance of the mission and contributed eventually to the success of the mission.
- The good preparations done by NSON's members in Sudan for the arrival of the caravan have resulted in concrete projects for peace building and development for the citizens in the areas visited by the caravan.
- Building up the culture of peace is a necessity and should take place through the corrections of wrong doings that take place in the past, new methods should be created to deal with political and economical rights.
- The exact and real activities, small or big, is the main gate way to get part of the local communities living in displaced camps or conflicted areas out of the misery way they lived.
- We believe that the caravan has demonstrated a considerable capacity for integration. The caravan participants engaged the local communities, IDPs and civil society leaders in consultations regarding means of sustaining peace building in the Sudan. Discussions and debates have been extensively taken place to listen to their experiences, concerns and input with regard to peace building and sustaining peace in the Sudan.
- In the newsletter of USAID the project of the peace caravan was noted as the most exceptional initiative to be carried out by a Diaspora group in Sudan

8. Recommendations and follow up:

8.1 Recommendations

- The local organizations in the Sudan and our partner (SECS) have recommended the implementation of the program with the same activities in Darfur as well as eastern part of the Sudan, where tribal affiliations and political ethnicities played an increasing role in the ongoing conflict, especially in Darfur region.
- Building schools and female education are a considered a necessity for peace building in areas affected by the war.
- Building and rehabilitating health clinics is also highly needed in the areas visited by the peace caravan; a precondition for sustaining peace in contested areas.
- The environmental hazards in northern and central Kordofan region must be seriously addressed in order to curb drastically population migration to urban centers.
- Civil society organizations are encouraged to set up projects regarding public health in cities and big towns, whereby citizens are encountered to threats of epidemic diseases.
- Health care and awareness campaigns about Aids are highly needed in order to maintain peace and to develop these areas.
- More attention is required to the situation of IDPs.

8.2 Short term follow up:

USAID Sudan has proposed to support the same program of the peace caravan in different parts in the Sudan. NSON appreciating the initiative of the US AID Sudan to conduct the same program with emphasis on the situation of IDPs; CPA dissemination, power and wealth sharing protocols; protocol on resolution of Abiey conflict CPA (chapter IV), the resolution of conflict in the two states of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile and the security arrangements CPA (chapter V and VI).. The short follow up term at the end is USAID Sudan own initiative.

8.3 Long term follow up:

NSON would like to establish a .Sudanese Diaspora Focal Point. to coordinate the initiatives of Sudanese Diaspora and local organizations with regard to peace building and development in Sudan. NSON has currently a wider network of Sudanese Diaspora organizations in the Netherlands, Europe, US and inside the Sudan. Sudanese civil society organizations could play a crucial role in peace building, if they join hands and cooperate effectively around issues of development, reconstruction and peace building. The existence of such a focal point and building of a Sudanese Diaspora constituency would result in making the role of Sudanese Diaspora visible and well-heard. GOS and GOSS would be then approached to include in their strategic planning the input of the Diaspora in the rehabilitation process of conflict areas in the Sudan.

9. Risks and challenges:

Some serious problems confronted the Caravan. The security situation in the Sudan has influenced adversely the activities of the Peace Caravan. Two non-Sudanese candidates for the peace Caravan were denied access to the Sudan for some reason or another. In the capital of South Sudan (Juba), members of the Caravan, especially those initially from the North felt uncomfortable walking in the streets of Juba, it might be as result of the increasing tension in the relation between the government of Khartoum and the SPLM. The Humanitarian Affairs Commission (HAC) has also abstained to provide the organizers of the Peace Caravan with a go-on license, it might be due to their faulty interpretation of the mission of the Caravan. The road followed to certain areas especially in South Kordofan was quite risky and dangerous; there were mines buried in the road; yet thanks to the local guide(s) we have got from the local authorities, the Caravan's members made it safe to the areas proposed to be visited. We believe that the unlimited cooperation of the concerned people of the Nuba Mountains and the local authorities has led to the enormous success of the mission.

To realize the project as a unique Sudanese Diaspora initiative was not easy job, from the starting point till the end:

It took us 7 months to convince our partners (Oxfam NOVIB, ICCO and Cordaid) in order to fully support the project, since we did not have an other choice, by the time. We wrote about 600 messages and received 370 messages during the period of April 2006 and January 2007. The whole exchange is about 1.000 .a4. pages, all around the project.

We have answered around 170 questions came from different concerned parties, mainly in regard to the expected results of the project.

The organizing committee met around 36 times during the period of the preparations, including 7 times with representatives of our partners, together or separately. At the beginning stage almost every body is doubting about the results of the Caravan, not that only but many

concerned people and organizations believed that the project proposal is not doable. That is also why we failed to raise any extra fund, as we had a plan to rehabilitate some schools and clinics by the Caravan route.

10. Performance indicators:

10.1 Relevance:

The initiative encouraged debate on peace building and has set the stage for better understanding among different Sudanese groups; a prerequisite for sustainable peace in the Sudan. The initiative is found relevant to Sudanese Diaspora due to its incorporation of local communities in active debates on the issues of sustainable peace and development in the Sudan. The encouragement of each Sudanese to explore capacities in peace building and individually take his/her responsibility has resulted in more engagement of migrants to peace building in the homeland.

10.2 Effectiveness:

The peace caravan has proved to be effective in building a broad-based movement for sustaining peace in the Sudan; and being aware of the importance of Sudanese organizing themselves to make a difference. The peace caravans was more than successful in brining Sudanese from the Diaspora in contact with local communities to talk and make concrete plans about how to operationalize the CPA and make peace sustainable. The peace caravan has led to forming partnerships with local organization in diverse parts in the Sudan.

10.3 Efficiency:

NSON has used the allocated fund to this project creatively and aimed foremost to increase the participation of Sudanese community in the activities of Sudan peace caravan. The results achieved from the initiative were paramount in accordance to the corresponding budget. The initiative has reproduced itself in other areas in the Sudan.

10.4 Impact

The initiative has resulted in an active engagement of Sudanese Diaspora in peace building in the Sudan. The initiative has shown an increasing readiness from the members and leaders of the Sudanese community to envisage their role and capacity, to act both in conflict and conflict transformation. As a result of the project and the cooperation with IOM in the preparations we have already secured the extension of the mission of two members of NSON to the Sudan in order to follow up the results of the peace caravan.

11. Project management:

The objective of the evaluation is needed for the following:

- Examine how the management of the project dealt with challenges of acceptance
- and cooperation from different parties and political factors?
- How is the peace caravan organized?

The coordinators of this project have encountered several obstacles regarding the realization of this initiative. The project of the peace caravan is about awareness to the importance of peace in the Sudan; we have faced lots of difficulties to convince our partners about the applicability of the project and to secure their confidence in NSON in its first project to the Sudan. It took us almost a year to reply and answer all the questions of the partners with regard to the results and activities of the project. The selection of the group was not an easy task given the nature and content of the project. We had to consider that the selection is inclusive, and gender balance is maintained in the selection. We have also selected members

from an African migrant organizations and a Dutch journalist. The project was also the first initiative to be carried by NSON inside the Sudan. The project managers of the peace caravan have to look for a partner and see to it that the cooperation is optimally realized. The caravan members had felt unsafe several times during the trip of the Caravan and the managers of the project had to do their best to reassure their security by all possible means. Writing of narrative and financial reports took so much time from NSON, because there were diverse documents written in three languages (Dutch, English and Arabic). The story of the Caravan was also told repeatedly in the different reports and needed to be thoroughly filtered.

12. Bibliography:

List of names of Caravan participants and organizers

Press releases

News letter

NSON Project Proposal Sudan Focal Point .long term follow up. and,

Other related documents

Final Report Sudan Peace Caravan

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