

## **FIRST THREE OF EIGHTEEN ONGOING DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WERE HANDED OVER BY UNDP TO ABYEI COMMUNITIES**

**Khartoum, 29 November 2005** -- The first three of eighteen recovery projects were handed over by the United Nations Development Programme to Abyei communities on Tuesday, November 20. The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General in Sudan and UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Manuel Aranda DaSilva and UNDP Country Director, Dr. Heba El-Kholy, inaugurated the completed Todaj Women Training Center, the newly rehabilitated and furnished girls' school and the equipped Humanitarian Assistance Commission / Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (HAC/SRRC) Joint Office in Abyei. Community leaders and members, paramount chiefs from both Dinka and Missiriya, SPLM leaders, National Congress representatives, HAC/SRRC representatives, UN agencies and a number of national and international agencies attended the ceremony.

"This is just the beginning of a major development drive that will distribute the dividends of peace among all Sudanese people. As a result of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement a number of recovery projects have been achieved so far and many more are in the pipeline", Manuel Aranda DaSilva said at the inauguration ceremony. The community leader of Todaj, Mr. Nyol Pagwot, commended UNDP on its continuous efforts to consolidate peace through development: "These small projects are a crucial step in the move towards much larger and long-term development programmes", he emphasized the need for an expanded development programme in the area.

The construction of Todaj Women Training center that started in 2004 with funds from the Canadian Government, has been recently completed, with additional funds from the Netherlands and United Kingdom. To empower women in the Abyei area, UNDP is providing training in various skills such as tailoring, tie-dyeing and handicrafts and providing each trained participant with start up kits to help them become self-reliant. The first round of Skills Training Programme is targeting 40 Ngok Dinka and Missiriya women in Todaj village, including returnees and nomads.

In Abyei, the rehabilitation of the only girls' school in the area and the provision of school's furniture, including desks, chairs, filing cabinets and shelves will address the increasing demand for schooling by returnees. "It's not by chance that the communities have requested that the first dividends of peace should go to the Sudan's women, girls and children. They have endured so much and hold the future of this country in their hands", said UNDP Country Director, Dr. Heba El-Kholy.

"We feel like we were in the darkness. Now there is hope to see some light", said Ms. Ajok Bulabek, Todaj women representative assuring both UNDP and donors of the

sustainability of the Center's activities. The same desire for openness was humorously expressed by another women from the community : "We do hope the project will get us some televisions and videos so that we can see what's happening outside Abyei".

The UNDP Community Recovery and Reintegration Programme in Abyei is also supporting the SRRC/HAC office by providing administrative equipment including generators, computers, office furniture , communication equipment ,motor bikes and stationary to facilitate their work in the community as well as training and capacity building.

UNDP is implementing a US \$ 6,407, 214 Programme funded by the Netherlands Government (\$ 3,150,510) and the United Kingdom Government through DFID (\$3,256,704). Most of the local population, including returnees, is expected to benefit from this Abyei Recovery and Reintegration Programme.

In addition to the projects mentioned above, the UNDP Programme is currently building Anet Market and Juljok School in Agok, three grinding mills houses in Dungap, Thithie, Abyei and Agok, improving the construction of latrines in Abyei, and rehabilitating a health clinic in Meriam, and Abyei's hospital, water yard and primary school. The Programme will also be providing Dungap, Thithie, Abyei and Agok with three grinding mills and necessary furniture to Abyei's girls school and primary school. In an effort to consolidate social peace, especially among youth, a range of sport and cultural activities are scheduled to be launched in Abyei. Rule of Law and Governance activities, including capacity building for planning, the construction of a court house, are gradually being integrated into the Programme. They will expand once a full-fledged civil administration is established in Abyei.

The Programme aims to support the sustainable reintegration of war affected population into Abyei area and their empowerment in sustaining and promoting the recovery process by focusing prompt attention on those activities identified as priorities in consultation with and endorsed by all communities.

This UNDP Programme is closely collaborating with NGOs and other UN agencies including UNICEF, WFP, IOM, FAO, OCHA and the United Nations Mission in Sudan.

For more information, please contact Mr. Sher Hussaini, Manager of Recovery and Reintegration Unit in Abyei, UNDP Sudan: + (249-83) 783820/ + (249-83) 472450; Mobile: + (249) 912158702; Thuraya: + 88 21651193426; [sher.hussaini@undp.org](mailto:sher.hussaini@undp.org)  
Or Aicha Elbasri, Communications Officer, UNDP Sudan : +249 (0) – 183 773 121. Ext. 382; Mobile: +249-(0) - 912 140 584; Fax: +249 (0) 183 773 128; or write to : [aicha.elbasri@undp.org](mailto:aicha.elbasri@undp.org)