

## Civil Service Reform: A High Priority

### The First Conference On The Good Governance and Civil Service Reform in South Kordofan Since The CPA Signing

**Khartoum July 24 2006** - "We inherited a weak and highly politicized civil service system lacking the basic capacities and training requirements. Because the public service uses public funds that need to be protected, it needs to be free from any kind of politicization and distortion. It also needs to rely on competent and skilled staff who have clean hands in dealing with the public funds", said the Governor of South Kordofan, Ismail Khamis Jallab, addressing the first Conference on the Good Governance and the Civil Service



Reform in South Kordofan held on July 17-19 in Kadugli. Governor Jallab stressed the need for setting appropriate boundaries between the political and administrative spheres, and reforming the civil service to improve governance.

Bringing together over one hundred participants, including state ministers, commissioners, UNDP officials, NGOs, and a panel of experts, the conference was designed to provide an opportunity for South Kordofan's top policy makers to engage in a dialogue with a panel of national and international experts to examine the current situation of the civil service and to identify ways of moving towards a comprehensive reform. It was organized by UNDP in collaboration with the South Kordofan state Ministry of Local Government and Civil Service.

"There is no single issue of greater importance to South Kordofan than building strong institutions and reforming the civil service for transparent, responsible and effective governance. I will spare no effort in taking forward the recommendations of this meeting and look forward to another gathering in one year from now to measure the achieved results. Despite this paramount challenge we have every reason to be optimistic thanks to our strong will and the support of the international community. We count on the continuous



commitment of UNDP”, said Issa Bashari Mohamed, the Deputy Governor and Minister of Local Government and Civil Service.

Over one and half years after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that granted South Kordofan autonomous status, the public service and the government institution capacities are still too weak to deliver the necessary social and economic services. The state civil service is currently composed of 22 establishments, including the Office of the Governor, the legislative council, ten ministries and nine localities. As of 2005, the state counted 19,317 civil servants covering the 1.4 million inhabitants.

The experts who addressed different aspects of the civil service reform during the three-day conference agreed that the need for such a process stems from diverse weaknesses due to the absence of appropriate laws and regulations under which the civil service functions; insufficient resources; weak budgeting and planning processes; weak institutional structure, and lack of human resources capacity.

“Reforming the civil service will not happen overnight. It’s a delicate and lengthy process that requires strong commitment and relentless efforts. UNDP is already supporting South Kordofan state in meeting these challenges. Through the Local Governance Capacity Building Programme, we will continue helping the establishment of efficient, responsible and transparent government institutions that are competent, representative, accessible and gender sensitive”, said Lealem Berhanu, speaking on behalf of UNDP.

The meeting culminated in a set of recommendations urging the South Kordofan Legislative Council to expedite the approval of the state constitution to pave the way for the state Civil Service Law and other relevant laws to organise civil service work in the state; to design clear short term , medium term ,and long term training plans for the civil service; to revise the present ministries and localities organisational structures; to construct multi-purpose training centres; and to establish a civil service data base centre.

Many of the difficulties facing the current Government of South Kordofan are linked to the fact that the Legislative Council has not been able to approve the State Constitution.

According to the CPA, South Kordofan is implementing a three-year transition period during which there will be a rotation of Governorship between Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and the National Congress Party (NCP), the two signatories to the peace agreement. During this transitional phase, south Kordofan follows a parliamentary system of government, whereby the SPLM/A and NCP share 45% and 55%



of the Legislative Council during the transitional period.

After three years of transition there will be State wide election in which leader of the political party with a majority in the Legislative Council becomes the Governor who, in turn, appoints Cabinet Ministers to head Ministries dealing with specific portfolios. Legislative powers are vested in the Legislative Council as per the CPA. Executive powers lie with the Governor and the State Cabinet.

The Local Governance Capacity Building Program in South Kordofan is a multi-year Programme with a planned budget of \$ 9 million. So far funds of \$ 1.5 million has been granted by the Government of the Netherlands and the UK's DFID.

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