

# ON THE THRESHOLD OF PEACE:

## PERSPECTIVES FROM THE PEOPLE OF NEW SUDAN

Findings from Focus Groups with Men and Women across Southern Sudan  
(conducted August 26 to October 15, 2004)

Prepared for the  
National Democratic Institute for International Affairs by  
Traci D. Cook and Thomas O. Melia  
with the assistance of  
Luka Biong Deng and the New Sudan Center for Statistics & Evaluation

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***Questions about the content of the document should be directed to Shari Bryan, Director of  
NDI's Southern and East Africa Division, 202-728-5642, [sharib@ndi.org](mailto:sharib@ndi.org), or Jean Freedberg,  
Director of Public of Affairs, 202-728-5527, [jfreedberg@ndi.org](mailto:jfreedberg@ndi.org).***

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## Preface

This report is based on a series of 32 focus groups conducted in 13 locations across southern Sudan (also referred to as New Sudan)<sup>1</sup> between late August and mid-October 2004, as negotiations between the Government of Sudan (GOS) and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) appeared to be winding to a successful conclusion. The purpose is to give concrete expression to the views of ordinary men and women about the future of New Sudan, as their leaders and international agencies plan for an anticipated six-year period of interim self government – and beyond. As it has done in other places emerging from devastating conflict – including Afghanistan, Cambodia and Iraq – the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) carried out this research to enhance the inclusive, participatory nature of this institution-building process.

Opinion research is one method among many to give voice to the views of citizens who may not otherwise be present in the deliberations of decision-makers, who in turn are able to test their assumptions and plans. This enables attentive leaders to combine these insights and other inputs to the policy mix in the construction of a democratic polity. Obviously, public opinion is far from immutable; it is dynamic and evolves as people learn, react, and change their minds based on news, deliberation, experience and understanding. This report, therefore, should be thought of as a snapshot of public sentiment during a particular period in 2004, and a baseline against which changes can be measured in future course.

Focus groups are semi-structured group interviews that proceed according to a careful research design. Groups are recruited to be homogeneous (in this case according to gender, age, education, economic status, ethnicity and/or religious affiliation) for two reasons: in order to clarify the views held by a particular sub-group of the population, and to enhance the comfort level of participants, so they feel they are among peers and that everyone involved is equally entitled to express his or her opinion. When done well, they are free flowing, open-ended, and sometimes unpredictable discussions.

While focus groups are not statistically representative of a larger population, they are designed to elicit a wide range of ideas, attitudes and opinions held by various small samples of recruited respondents on selected topics. In the present project, a rather large number of groups were organized, which is all the more remarkable given the difficulty in reaching most of them during the rainy season, and complicated further by the still unsettled political situation that precluded visits to garrison towns controlled by the GOS.

Thirty-two group discussions were spread across 13 locations in Bahr el Ghazal, Equatoria and Upper Nile – the three major regions of Southern Sudan – two of the three transition areas that are the subject of adjunct protocols in the negotiations between the GOS and the SPLM, and in Nairobi among Sudanese Diaspora. While a few of the groups

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of this report, the term 'New Sudan' will be used interchangeably with 'Southern Sudan', to encompass the three transitional areas – Blue Nile, Nuba Mountains and Abeyi – which have been incorporated into the South through two of the peace protocols signed between the SPLM and the GOS on May 26, 2004. During the course of the focus group research, some participants also made reference to the 'New Sudan' in this context, in areas throughout southern Sudan.

included a diversity of ethnicities, most were stratified by ethnicity to encourage greater openness and honesty. Thus groups were convened among several sections of Dinka, two sections of Nuer, as well as Shilluk, Luo, Toposa, Zande, Kakwa and Julud. In addition, several groups were constituted to bring together men or women with important shared experiences, whether as chiefs of their communities (in three cases), returned refugees or IDPs, war widows, former abductees, or former child soldiers. These groups enabled us to explore whether and in what ways perspectives differed on these bases. The result is a comprehensive examination of opinion in southern Sudan, including in transitional areas addressed in adjunct protocols to the main agreement between the GOS and the SPLM. (See Appendix A for further details on the composition of the groups, and Appendix B for more on the methodology.)

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provided the funding necessary to make this important project possible. USAID officials in Nairobi, Kenya, and Washington DC, also provided substantive input to the project and introduced the research team to a variety of critical actors.

The New Sudan Center for Statistics and Evaluation (NSCSE) was a vital partner in this effort, and Executive Director Luka Biong Deng and his colleagues in Nairobi, Lokichoggio, Rumbek, and elsewhere were a valuable part of the team that made these groups possible. NSCSE collaborated with NDI in shaping the questionnaire, contributing political and cultural knowledge that deepened the level of inquiry and ensured often-sensitive matters were approached with tact and cultural sensitivity. NSCSE staff also served as local language moderators in many locations, helped secure discussion locations across Southern Sudan and provided introductions to local authorities around the region. Without the logistical support of NSCSE the groups would not have been completed in a reasonable timeframe. NSCSE Lokichoggio staff facilitated the field team's travel throughout southern Sudan during the challenging rainy season, working fluently with the United Nations flight office and other purveyors of transportation. In Equatoria and Upper Nile, and in harder to reach areas, the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission and a variety of local NGO contacts provided advice and assistance to NDI & NSCSE. Thanks are due to many, though there is not enough space for every name.

The research team in southern Sudan was led by Traci Cook, of Oxford, Mississippi, an experienced opinion researcher who has done similar work in Africa, as well as in the United States. She spent seven weeks in August, September and October traveling in southern Sudan in extremely difficult and hazardous conditions, revising the questionnaire to suit diverse local settings, training Sudanese recruiters and moderators, monitoring the quality of the process at every stage and preparing near-verbatim notes through translators that established the foundation for this report. Mary Kagunyi of NDI's Nairobi office accompanied Ms. Cook throughout, aiding in the quality control and brokering logistical arrangements. Joseph Andrews of NDI's Washington office oversaw the project, and joined the team in southern Sudan during the first half of the field research. Thomas Melia designed the research framework, drafted the original questionnaire, and is one of the co-authors of this report.

This kind of research – listening intently to citizens in order to convey their hopes and aspirations to policy-makers, both Sudanese and international – is an inherently democratic, and democratizing, activity. We are pleased to have had the opportunity to contribute to an ongoing dialogue between ordinary men and women and those who would play leading roles in charting their future.

### The Voices of New Sudan

Below is a sampling of quotes from focus group participants, all of whom clearly enjoyed the ability to speak freely and enthusiastically about the prospects of self-governance and the changes – both positive and concerning – peace will bring.

- *“Peace is good. I built a house a year ago, and it has not been burned down like it was every year before.”*
- *“This peace of ours is like a sick man in the hospital. You don’t want to say for sure that he is going to be coming home because as long as he is in the hospital and sick, he still might die.”*
- *“The war is not over and won’t be over until our rights prevail.”*
- *“If we don’t separate, fighting will continue to the last man. We are Africans, not Arabs in all forms.”*
- *“We have a problem of tribalism among ourselves in the South. There needs to be a dialogue to unite southerners within Sudan.”*
- *“We consider John Garang to be like Moses, who took his people away from Egypt.”*
- *“Even though there are ups and downs, what [John Garang] is doing is good for the people.”*
- *“Khartoum is not our capital city.”*
- *“We want there to be equality in the household...We want men and women to work together, eat together and discuss together.”*
- *“Only educated people know about the peace agreement...Please just tell them, we don’t want people to fight.”*
- *“Sustainable peace will come only when there is education for all.”*
- *“Majority [rule] will be good in southern Sudan because we can get rid of bad leaders.”*
- *“People at the top should listen to people at the bottom.”*
- *“It is not bad to be a Black Muslim. They have nothing to do with the government in Khartoum.”*
- *“We need to go on to a new chapter.”*



## Executive Summary

1. **The people of New Sudan are optimistic, despite difficult circumstances, and support the peace process.** Citizens want the fighting to stop once and for all and are cautiously optimistic it may soon do so. They are grateful for the tentative peace they have enjoyed for the past two years, and believe that John Garang and the SPLM have negotiated a largely fair deal, though some are concerned that the negotiations are taking such a long time to finalize. They also see peace as precarious and many people refer to the imminent peace in quite conditional terms – “*if* peace comes,” rather than “*when* peace comes.”

2. **Southern Sudanese see themselves essentially as “one people,” notwithstanding inter-ethnic strife and frequently harsh views expressed about other ethnic groups.** Discussion of the need for the envisioned Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) to settle inter- and intra-ethnic disputes suggests that many people expect these tensions to rise once the unifying effect of the struggle with the North begins to diminish.

3. **People are prepared to return to war if the peace settlement fails to secure the rights they have been fighting, and suffering, so long to obtain.** For virtually all those interviewed, regardless of ethnicity or circumstance, a return to war is either necessary or unavoidable if they do not proceed to enjoy the rights they have been fighting for all these years.

Potential triggers that might propel the southern Sudanese back to a state of war, include (1) a continuing perception that the South is being treated inequitably – whether in the distribution of revenues from oil wealth, the provision of education or other investments in development, or otherwise; (2) a failure to realize the ‘separation’ many southern Sudanese see as their salvation should the vote go that way in the coming referendum; or (3) renewed efforts by Khartoum at “Arabization” in the South – enforced use of the Arabic language, Muslim proselytizing, and mosque-building.

4. **People throughout New Sudan respect John Garang as a liberator who remained true to the cause and they have great confidence in his leadership.** Although praise and support for Dr. John Garang de Mabior is more muted among some ethnic groups than others, it is still considerable and in the eyes of many southern Sudanese, he is a larger-than-life figure. The mere mention of his name elicits spontaneous cheers and dances among Dinka groups – and even non-Dinkas, while not as enthusiastic, say ‘we learned about our rights from him’ and he ‘freed the South from slavery.’ He is seen as someone who genuinely cares for the people, and many believe he has brought the international community to the region to provide aid and to resolve the conflict. Virtually everyone expects Garang will become president of southern Sudan, and virtually no opposition is expressed to that prospect.

5. **Notwithstanding the staunch and broadly expressed support for Garang and the SPLM, there are four major areas where people express qualms about the SPLM or aspects of the pending accords.** Listed in order of the fervor of the sentiment expressed, they are:

- **Favoritism.** The most frequently voiced concern about Garang and the SPLM is about favoritism, coming from non-Dinka who believe he looks after his fellow Dinka before others. Though strongest among the Nuer, the concern is shared more widely. Many believe the aid agencies he has brought to New Sudan are concentrated in Dinka areas, and that Dinka have greater access to education and travel abroad.
- **Opposition to a united Sudan.** The second major concern expressed about Garang is less widespread but potentially more serious in its implications: it concerns Garang's engagement with the north and his stated vision for a united Sudan. Because there is so little confidence that a united Sudan is viable, due to the perceived hostility and dishonesty of "the Arabs" in Khartoum, there is virtually no support for Garang's discourse relating to a united Sudan. While some see virtue in the fact that Garang "cares about Arabs, too," most believe this is (or should be) only a tactic to secure eventual 'separation.'
- **Sharing oil wealth is not fair.** Many people believe that the allocation of the revenues they have heard about is not fair, especially in Abyei and other oil producing areas. Indeed, the severe development needs in the South persuade many that the bulk of revenues should be utilized closer to home, rather than shared with Khartoum.
- **Proposed mixed governments evoke concern.** The envisioned system of inter-locking governments and parliaments, in which southerners and northerners would participate in one another's governance, prompts concern about the safety of those who would go North, worry about whether they would be co-opted or sell out, and questions about how government in the South would work.

6. **Because the people of southern Sudan see the SPLM as their legitimate representatives, there is little concern expressed about the level of consultation on the peace process.** Few complaints are raised specifically about a lack of consultation by the SPLM leadership during the negotiations, and none about the authority of the SPLM to act on their behalf. For instance, no one spontaneously said that civic groups or NGOs should have had a place at the negotiating table, although when it is asked specifically, participants in about one third of the groups note that NGOs would bring value because they are "on the ground." Ordinary men and women have little expectation that they themselves could or should have

been consulted and they generally believe their tribal or community leaders have been appropriately involved in the process. Alternatively, they say they trust Garang to do the right thing on their behalf. Dialogue between rulers and ruled is described more as a series of briefings to various constituencies, rather than a true exchange or solicitation of public input.

7. **Democracy is widely embraced, but political pluralism is not well understood or necessarily accepted as the appropriate way forward.** “Democracy” is a term and concept familiar and desirable to some people, especially those with experience in the election of chiefs or who recall past Sudan-wide elections. For most people in New Sudan, democracy is equivalent to freedom, fairness, provision of new rights, and equality. Their support for democracy does not necessarily extend to a specific system of government and many people do not understand the concept of political parties. Among those who do, support for a multi-party system is decidedly mixed. There *is* strong desire for elections and accountability. However, bad memories of personalized and conflictive Khartoum-based parties, and concern that multi-partyism could fuel ethnic strife within southern Sudan, give rise to hesitations about political pluralism.

8. **Southern Sudanese want a democratic leader who is honest, fair and responsive.** In characterizing what they want in a leader, participants repeatedly talked about democracy, honesty, fairness and transparency. Above all, however, they want someone who can unite people and who can bring development.

9. **Transitional Areas.**<sup>2</sup>

- **Abyei.** As a Dinka region historically part of southern Sudan but then annexed by the North, those who live in the Abyei area are glad that Dr. Garang and the SPLM have begun to represent them and have incorporated them into the pending peace agreement by an adjunct protocol. However, concern is expressed that the envisioned allocation of the region’s oil wealth is not fair to the natives of the area.
- **Nuba.** In the Nuba Mountains region of Southern Kordofan, where there has been much less contact with the South, the link with southern Sudan is welcomed, although people here consider themselves a distinct people.

10. **Priority Issues and Expectations regarding the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS).** There is a broad consensus on the short list of issues the GOSS will need to address urgently. Featuring highest for a majority of participants is education, followed by food, health care, clean water and security, as well as the settling of disputes among southern tribes and neighbors that many anticipate. Although many would prefer a faster start-up time, and an earlier referendum, there is also a noteworthy patience about how long it should reasonably take to get the

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<sup>2</sup> The research team was not able to access Southern Blue Nile, the third transitional area, due to weather issues.

new government up and running. Most seem to think that two or three years is not too much time.

11. **Role of Traditional Leaders and Chiefs.** Many southern Sudanese would like to see a role in parliament or government for their traditional chiefs, although there is a strong desire to have elected representatives as well. Some concern is expressed in a few groups about whether chiefs take advantage of their own people. Christian pastors are highly regarded in their communities, while opinion is divided about whether traditional healers provide useful medical assistance, or are charlatans or “cheaters.”

12. **Politics and Personalities.** While virtually everyone expects that Garang will be president of southern Sudan, the Nuer and the Shilluk, in particular, have their own leaders of stature and would cast votes for them if given the opportunity.

13. **Most southern Sudanese prefer reconciliation to vengeance.** Consistent with a general view that major political leaders who went over to Khartoum’s side and then came back should be embraced as “our own,” most everyone is ready to forgive and forget incidents of violence in the interest of moving forward. However, those who are keen for retribution or punishment are some of those who have been most directly affected by past violence.

14. **SPLA soldiers are seen as liberators.** Notwithstanding widespread dislike of the behavior of some soldiers who have taken advantage of the people they are supposed to be serving, there is a strong consensus that they deserve to be rewarded for their contributions to the struggle all these years. Most say they feel more secure with SPLA units close by, although one woman says, “we like having them around in the day, but we are afraid at night.” There is consistent support for the provision of assistance by the GOSS or donors to soldiers as part of their demobilization, along with an expectation that misbehavior should decline.

15. **Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and compatriots in the wider Diaspora are welcome to return.** There is broad acknowledgement both that those who have been dispossessed should be able to reclaim their land and property, but that difficulties will likely arise in this process (suggesting a role for the GOSS in settling disputes). With a few exceptions, Sudanese in the Diaspora are particularly welcome to return home, as they are seen to “bring skills” that are much needed.

16. **Women have support for some political rights but face large hurdles in securing equal rights.** There appears to be a greater willingness among men to accord women political rights, to vote and participate in public life. However, there is resistance to consider changes in traditional domestic relations, marriage, child-rearing and ownership of wealth (such as cattle and land). In Sudan, this may pose even larger hurdles than elsewhere because of the importance of dowries in family finance and the outsized importance of cattle as a measure of wealth and prestige. Many women are focused on the need for new laws to protect inheritance by

widows, make education mandatory for girls (and boys), and establish a minimum age for marriage to prevent girls' early removal from school.

17. **“The conflict was never about religion, but...”** Men and women alike resist the notion that the conflict has been about religion; they frequently note that African Muslims live among them without rancor or problems. They point instead to historic grievances about discrimination, in access to higher education and in the allocation of resources and government jobs. Yet animosity towards Islam and “Arabs”, particularly key figures in Khartoum, is close to the surface and flows from perceptions of Khartoum’s efforts over the years to impose the Arabic language, and to enforce or “buy” conversions to Islam. Many people say “the Arabs treated us like slaves” and “they call us dogs.” Sharia law is often summed up as the “cutting off of hands.” While there is a stated willingness to live and let live when it comes to Muslim neighbors (and southern Muslims concur that this is true), there is a widespread belief that Islam is not compatible with democracy or freedom for southerners.

18. **Mixed opinions exist about who does or should own land.** Opinion was divided within many of the groups convened about who should own land. However, by a fairly significant margin, men were more inclined to say that land belonged to the community and women to say that it belonged to the government.

19. **Darfur casts a cloud over New Sudan’s hope for peace.** With very few exceptions, most southern Sudanese empathize with the people of Darfur who appear to be suffering a fate similar to their own vis-à-vis the government in Khartoum. There is a broadly shared concern that as long as fighting continues in Darfur their own peace is not secure.

20. **Tremendous faith in the U.S. & International Community.** Southern Sudanese believe that the United Nations and the United States will keep pressure on the GOS to remain at the negotiating table. In all but two of the groups, participants said the UN and/or the US were responsible for keeping the peace in southern Sudan. A desire to have peacekeeping forces in southern Sudan, particularly in borders areas, was specifically mentioned, unprompted, in seven groups.

## Principal Findings

As final details are being negotiated for a binding peace accord between the Government of Sudan (GOS) and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), a set of 32 focus groups across a wide range of communities in New Sudan<sup>3</sup> provides insight into popular expectations – and hesitations – regarding the peace that appears finally to be at hand.

### 1. **The peace process garners broad support; people are optimistic and believe that things are moving in the right direction. Likewise, anticipation is high that the fruits of peace will soon be enjoyed by all.**

People across New Sudan are cautiously optimistic that the peace being negotiated between the SPLM and the government in Khartoum will soon come to fruition and be beneficial to them. Most think things are generally heading in the right direction. While familiarity with the details of the provisional accords varies widely – men know more than women, young people are more attuned to the particulars, and Dinka are more optimistic than others – there is broad confidence that John Garang and the SPLM have negotiated a largely fair deal for southern Sudanese. While there are several key hesitations about aspects of the accords, as discussed below, the imminent conclusion to decades of war is broadly popular.

The people of New Sudan appreciate the relative peace they have experienced in the last two years and see the bolstering of this peace as central to a positive future. Many believe things are headed in the right direction and are happy that peace has allowed them to resume a more normal life. What peace means to daily life is quite tangible. With peace, all see the future as bright, and expectations are high for what it will bring: freedom, education and schools, an end to hunger, better health care facilities, clean water and road access to local markets.

*Peace is good. I built a house a year ago, and it has not been burned down like it was every year before. (Nuer woman, 30-40, Poorer, Christian, some primary schooling, IDP from oil region, Rumbek)*

*Peace is the only thing that will make the future good. (Toposa woman, 25-40, Poorer, no schooling, Kapoeta)*

*A return to war will mean killing, loss and destruction. (Luo man, 20-30, Christian, some secondary schooling, Local, Mapel)*

The few groups that believe southern Sudan is headed in the wrong direction are either from some of the areas hardest hit by the war (particularly militia-affected areas); areas that have seen recent inter-ethnic conflict among southerners; or areas where the poorest

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<sup>3</sup> The 32 discussion groups were stratified according to gender, age, ethnicity, religion, educational attainment, economic status and, in some cases, particular shared experience – such as having been a refugee or IDP, or having been a child soldier or a war widow. See Appendices A and B for details of the composition of each group and more on the methodology.

groups of Sudanese live. These include recently returned Rek Dinka refugees in northern Bahr el Ghazal, and the Jikany Nuer, in Upper Nile, who had earlier in the year been chased from their homes by an outbreak of fighting among their Jikany leaders.

*We are always being looted. We have no houses; we can build them but enemies burn them down, so it is a waste of energy. (Rek Dinka man, 30-45, traditional faith, no schooling, returned refugee, Alek)*

*To have a baby now is tough because of so many diseases in this place. (Gawaar Nuer woman, 30-40, no schooling, local, Ayod)*

*Things are bad; peace has not come yet. (Middle aged Jikany Nuer man, Mading)*

*People in the community are fighting each other. (Jikany Nuer woman, 15-25, Christian, primary school, Chased in May '04, Mading)*

Optimism is also tempered by concern that the negotiations have taken so long.

*We are tired of hearing about peace. I don't understand the continued delay. (Middle aged Rek Dinka man, no schooling, returned refugee, Alek)*

*Right now, there is no date in the peace agreement, so it leaves doubt. We need a date to know when we will be voting! (Young Kakwa man, Christian, secondary schooling, Yei)*

In addition, some participants note that neither side decisively won the war, and many are aware that agreements signed in the past were not decisive (e.g., in 1972). Some have an understanding that the war will not really be over until a comprehensive peace agreement is implemented. The precariousness of the peace is unsettling.

*This peace of ours is like a sick man in the hospital. You don't want to say for sure that he is going to be coming home because as long as he is in the hospital and sick, he still might die. (Older Agar Dinka war widow, Rumbek)*

*The peace process is good, but we want to see the signing of the peace, the comprehensive peace. (Christian Diaspora woman, post-secondary education, Nairobi)*

*You never know. You think things are going all right, and then someone comes and attacks your house. (Older Shilluk woman, Oriny)*

*We don't want it to be like the first time there was an agreement [in Addis Ababa in 1972] and it didn't work. We need a peace that is not going to break down. If we try unity, the same thing they did to our mothers and grand-mothers will happen again. (Christian Diaspora woman, post-secondary education, Nairobi)*

The noteworthy patience exhibited by many is accompanied by anxiety that the peace they enjoy today could vanish at any moment. This tentativeness is reflected in the way almost everyone says “**if** peace comes,” rather than “**when** peace comes.”

*If peace comes, things will change. People will have a good life. (Malual Dinka, man, 30-40, Traditional faith, no schooling, Local, Marial Bai)*

*If there is peace, there will be big schools, a hospital, water. (Gamaar Nuer man, 25-25, primary school, Ayod)*

*If peace comes, hunger and health care will be solved. (Middle aged Jikany Nuer chief, Mading)*

**2. Southern Sudanese see themselves as “one people,” notwithstanding flare-ups of inter-ethnic strife and sometimes fairly harsh views about other ethnic groups.**

Frequent discussion of the need for the envisioned Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) to settle inter- and intra-ethnic disputes suggests that many people expect these tensions to rise once the unifying effect of the struggle with the North begins to fade. In the group of Jikany Nuer chiefs in Mading, for instance, a remark by one that Southern Sudan is made up of many peoples – “many, but united” – set off a long discussion that ended with the group deciding that southern Sudanese are indeed one people.

*We are one body in the South, but with differences in tribes and languages. (Young Gok Dinka man, Christian, better off, intermediate schooling, Rumbek)*

*We are one people, joined with others to fights. Different ethnic groups, but there is a defined border, so now are one. (Young Kakwa man, Christian, Yei)*

*We see ourselves as a south Sudanese people, but with different ethnic groups. (Middle aged Nuer woman, Christian, illiterate, Rumbek)*

Yet ethnicity is the principal organizing paradigm for southern Sudanese, apparently more enduring and indelible than religion, educational or economic achievement, or locale. Disparaging remarks among groups, moreover, is quite common. This suggests that tensions within communities and dispute resolution among southerners will be a major challenge to the GOSS.

*We have a problem of tribalism among ourselves in the South. There needs to be a dialogue to unite southerners within Sudan. (Christian Diaspora woman, post-secondary education, Nairobi)*

*[The GOSS] must solve tribal issues. If not, people will fight. (Middle aged Jikany Nuer chief, Mading)*

*The Equatorians are moving ahead. The Dinkas are moving ahead. And the Nuer are cheaters, so they are going ahead, too. (Older Shilluk woman, Oriny)*

*The majority [of Dinka] are bad but not all. They use tribalism, not equality. (Young Zande man, Christian, Yambio)*



*The Nuer are OK, but they are very greedy, when they hear about food. They want more than their ration. Arabs use them to come get our cattle, but they are okay because they are our people. (Older Shilluk man, chief, Oriny)*

*[The Nuer] are not full human beings because they are easily deceived. They are not a reliable friend. (Older Agar Dinka man, Christian, Rumbek)*

**3. People are prepared to return to war if the peace settlement fails to secure the rights they have been fighting, and suffering, to obtain.**

For virtually all those interviewed, regardless of ethnicity or circumstance, a return to war is seen variously as necessary or unavoidable if they do not come soon to enjoy the rights they have been fighting for all these years. There would be solid support for going back to war if it is deemed necessary. This resolve is most vividly expressed by participants from the Bahr el Ghazal region and men, but is very widely shared.

Men especially, but also many women, are well-schooled in the grievances that have animated the SPLM for more than two decades – discrimination against southerners in access to education and access to government services and positions; the exploitation of the mineral resources and the people of the south.

*The war is not over and won't be over until our rights prevail. (Young Gok Dinka man, Christian, secondary education, Rumbek)*

*If the Arabs do not negotiate in good faith, we will fight them. (Older Agar Dinka chief, Traditional/Christian, no schooling, Rumbek)*

*If they don't sign the peace protocols, we will go back to fighting. (Young Kakwa man, Christian, secondary school certificate, Yei)*

*If no freedom, we will fight. (Older Julud man, Muslim, Julud)*

*If we are united with the Arabs, we will make war again. (Middle aged Toposa woman, Traditional/Christian, no schooling, Kapoeta)*

Potential triggers that might propel the southern Sudanese back to a state of war, include (1) a continuing perception that the South is being treated inequitably – whether in the distribution of revenues from oil wealth, the provision of education or other investments in development, or otherwise; (2) a failure to realize the ‘separation’ many southern Sudanese see as their salvation should the vote go that way in the coming referendum; or (3) renewed efforts by Khartoum at “Arabization” in the South – enforced use of the Arabic language, Muslim proselytizing, and mosque-building.

**4. People throughout southern Sudan respect John Garang as a liberator who remained true to the cause and have great confidence in his leadership.**

Although praise and support is more muted among some ethnic groups than others, Dr. John Garang de Mabior is the undisputed, and in many cases, the beloved leader of the people of southern Sudan. Though there are hesitations about some aspects of his leadership, expressed even by those who are staunch supporters and plan to vote for him, he is universally recognized as the authentic leader of southern Sudan. In fact, Garang is a larger-than-life figure in the eyes of many of his compatriots. The mere mention of his name elicits spontaneous cheers, singing and dancing among Dinka groups, who are effusive in their characterizations of him. Some even have a near-mystical reverence for him. He is strongest among Dinka, in Bahr el Ghazal and also in Kapoeta in eastern Equatoria. Others in Bahr el Ghazal (such as the Luo and the Nuer IDPs in Rumbek) were not as outwardly demonstrative of their support for Garang, but he is strong among this population as well.

*He is like Jesus Christ. (Young Ngok Dinka man, Christian, primary schooling, IDP, Agok)*

*John Garang came to the Toposa tribe to explain the peace, and he brought rain. (Middle aged Toposa woman, Traditional/Christian, no schooling, Kapoeta)*

*We consider John Garang to be like Moses, who took his people away from Egypt. (Young former child soldier, primary schooling, Rumbek)*

*He knows something in your mind before you say it. (Older Agar Dinka woman, Christian, war widow, Rumbek)*

*If John Garang could be cloned 100 times, things would be great. (Young Agar Dinka woman, Christian, primary schooling, Rumbek)*

In non-Dinka areas, the support and praise is more muted, but it is still considerable, with people saying things such as “we learned about our rights from him.” He is respected as a liberator, who “freed the South from slavery,” and as someone who remained true to the cause by not fleeing, surrendering or taking money from the North. He is also seen as someone who genuinely cares and makes good things happen – such as the arrival of the international community in the New Sudan.

*He is a leader for all of Sudan. (Older Julud man, Muslim, Julud)*

*He is the father of the movement. (Middle aged Zande man, Christian, secondary schooling, Yambio)*

*Even though there are ups and downs, what he is doing is good for the people. (Older Shiluk woman, little schooling, Oriny)*

*He brought the UN and NGOs. (Older Non-Arab Muslim, intermediate schooling, Rumbek)*

*He is communicating to America to bring peace. (Middle aged Toposa woman, Traditional/Christian, no schooling, Kapoeta)*

5. **Notwithstanding the staunch and broadly expressed support for Garang and the SPLM, there are four major areas where people express qualms about the SPLM or aspects of the pending accords.**

Roughly in order of the frequency and fervor of the sentiment expressed, these topics are: concern about favoritism and nepotism in the way the SPLA and SPLM reward service or allocate resources; very broad opposition to any form of unity with northern Sudan; the proposed allocation of revenues from oil and other mineral resources on the land of the peoples of New Sudan (including specifically Abyei); and anxiety about the way the governing structures envisioned for the interim period would work in practice.

**A. Favoritism.** The most frequently voiced criticism of Garang and the SPLM comes mainly from non-Dinka who believe he looks after his fellow Dinka before others. Though strongest among the Nuer, the concern is shared more widely. In addition to citing the predominance of Dinka in the leadership of the SPLM and SPLA, many people believe that the international aid agencies he has brought to southern Sudan do more in Dinka areas, and that Dinka have greater access to education and travel abroad. Equatorians generally seem to blame a general Dinka attitude of superiority for the favoritism more than Garang personally.

*[Garang] directed the NGOs to the Dinka areas. There are none in Nuer land, no schools, no hospitals. (Young Gawaar Nuer man, Christian, Ayod)*

*[Garang] is a good man, but there is too much tribalism. Dinkas go ahead of others in military rank, and who goes for studies, and there are more NGOs in the Dinka areas. (Middle aged Zande man, Christian, secondary schooling, Yambio)*

*He sent us to war, while the Dinka were sent to America. (Young Jikany Nuer woman, Christian, Mading)*

*He keeps donors and NGOs in Dinka land only, but otherwise he is a good man. (Middle-aged Gawaar Nuer woman, Christian, Ayod)*

*Certain areas are better off because of where the leaders are from. For example, if I am the health secretary, I target the place I am from. That is the first priority. (Young Diaspora woman, Christian, post-secondary education, Nairobi)*

*He went everywhere but Nuer land. He went to Blue Nile, Abyei, New Site, Yei – he went everywhere but Nuer land. (Young Gawaar Nuer man, Christian, Ayod)*

**B. Opposition to a united Sudan.** The second major concern expressed about Garang is less widespread but potentially more serious in its implications: it is about Garang's engagement with the North and his stated vision for a united Sudan. Because there is so little confidence that a united Sudan is viable, due to the perceived intransigence, animosity and dishonesty of "the Arabs," there is great hesitation regarding Garang's discourse relating to a united Sudan. Indeed, there is outright opposition in many quarters – among the people of Abyei, and in each of the major ethnic communities, including the Dinka.

*Agreement calls for unity, but we don't want it. We will not accept it if John Garang talks of unity. If he goes to the North, we will not follow him. (Young Ngok Dinka man, Christian, Agok)*

*If we don't separate, fighting will continue to the last man. We are Africans, not Arabs in all forms. (Older Agar Dinka man, Christian, Rumbek)*

*No one would follow Garang if tried to make unity with the North. (Young Diaspora woman, Christian, post-secondary education, Nairobi)*

*If John Garang goes for unity, we will change leaders. (Middle aged Toposa woman, illiterate, Kapoeta)*

*If we try unity, the same thing they did to our mothers and grand-mothers will happen again. (Christian Diaspora woman, post-secondary education, Nairobi)*

*Khartoum is not our capital city. (Older Agar Dinka man, Christian, Rumbek)*

While some see virtue in the fact that Garang “cares about Arabs, too,” most believe this is (or should be) only a tactic to secure their eventual ‘separation.’

*[Garang] is a politician. He knows who is the enemy, even though he talks about ‘all of Sudan.’ (Older Shilluk woman, Oriny)*

*If John Garang goes for unity, it is okay because it is only for six years. (Middle aged Jikany Nuer chief, Mading)*

The only groups that see any virtue in the longer term unity of Sudan are several women’s groups who appear to *prefer* an independent southern Sudan but are concerned that such a move would renew or prolong the violence because the northerners would not abide by it.

**C. Sharing oil wealth is not fair.** Especially in Abyei, and other oil producing areas, the draft schemes for the distribution of the oil wealth do not win favor among those that are aware of them. The disparity in the levels of development is often cited as a reason the South should actually receive a greater share than the North. Even an equal division of the wealth of southern regions is not seen as fair.

*I hear the agreement calls for everything to be split 50/50, but the North is developed. Development is needed much more in the South. (Younger Christian woman, post-secondary education, Nairobi)*

*Wealth sharing is not fair. Since oil was discovered in Ngok Dinka area, Ngok Dinka should get most of the money. (Young Ngok Dinka man, Christian IDP, Agok)*

**D. Proposed mixed governments evokes concern.** The proposition that southerners and northerners would participate in one another's governance, at least during the interim six year period, prompts concern about the safety of those who would go North, and questions about how government in the South would work. While some think this will help southerners keep an eye on the North and increase the prospects that Khartoum will abide by the agreements, others are concerned about two things: what would become of those who would go live and work in Khartoum; and who would remain in the South to provide leadership, to resolve disputes and to guide the development effort.

*A good thing to have representation in each other's parliaments. (Older Agar Dinka war widow, Christian, Rumbek)*

*Wouldn't like for leaders to go to Khartoum; when Riek Machar did it we did not like it. (Middle aged Jikany Nuer chief, Mading)*

*There will be no people to rule here if they leave. (Young Jikany Nuer woman, Christian, Mading)*

*Don't like it; don't want any mixing. (Middle aged Toposa woman, Kapoeta)*

- 6. Because the people of New Sudan see the SPLM as their legitimate representatives, there is little concern expressed about the level of consultation on the peace process. However, the current lack of information about the protocols could lead to frustration or misunderstanding as these become well-known.**

Because people view the SPLM as their legitimate representatives, very few complaints are raised specifically about a lack of consultation by the SPLM leadership during the peace negotiations. With the exception of better educated groups, there is no sense overall that people feel they have been excluded from the process. Men are more likely than women to be informed of the details.

While some men in regional centers, such as Rumbek or Aweil, are well informed about the particulars of the imminent peace accord and their genesis, (such as wealth distribution; the fact that the provision for a vote in six years represents a compromise between the SPLM's preferred two years and the GOS's ten; the inter-locking federal arrangement) most people are not familiar with the details of the accord other than that they will get a chance to vote on independence in about six years.

Women are more likely to feel like they don't know what is happening, and are thus more anxious.

*Only educated people know about the peace agreement...Please just tell them, we don't want people to fight. (Older Shilluk woman, no schooling, survived militia attacks in March 2004, Oriny)*

*We are considered IDPs, so we are not told much. (Middle aged Nuer woman, IDP, illiterate, Rumbek)*

Even though ordinary men and women have not themselves been directly part of any consultative process, they believe their tribal or community leaders have been. Alternatively, they say they trust Garang to do the right thing on their behalf. Only among some better educated Diaspora in Kenya<sup>4</sup>, and some Dinka chiefs in Rumbek, are sharp complaints heard about a lack of consultation, even though dialogue between rulers and ruled is generally described more as a series of briefings to various constituencies, rather than a true exchange or solicitation of public input.

*Leadership does not go deep to pass the messages to the people. We deserve more reports from the SPLM. (Older Agar Dinka chief, Rumbek)*

*(Garang) doesn't consult. He needs to consult more. (Young refugee woman, Christian, post-secondary education, Nairobi)*

*He represents us, but he needs specifically to speak with the youth. (Young Kakwa man, Christian, secondary schooling, Yei)*

**7. Democracy is widely embraced, but political pluralism is not well understood or necessarily accepted as the appropriate way forward.**

“Democracy” is a term and concept familiar and desirable to some people, especially those with experience in the election of chiefs or who recall past Sudan-wide elections. For most people in southern Sudan, democracy is equivalent to freedom, fairness, provision of new rights, and equality. All but the most isolated and uneducated are generally familiar with the term “democracy,” or its Arabic equivalent, and also define it as the people electing representatives or a system which gives a “voice to the people.” Beyond that, people’s definition of democracy does not necessarily extend to a specific system of government and many do not understand the concept of political parties. Among those who do, support for a multi-party system is decidedly mixed. Nevertheless, some people are quite explicit about great desire for democracy, with one person saying, “We see democracy as what we have been fighting for; of course, we want it.”

*Means the rule of the people, the people have a say. (Older Agar Dinka war widow, Christian, Rumbek)*

*Heard the term, but don't know what it means. (Younger Julud woman, Julud)*

*Means freedom; then we can solve any problem without fighting. (Older Julud man, Julud)*

*I participated in elections 20 years ago. It means a box with a small hole. (Older Agar Dinka war widow, Christian, Rumbek)*

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<sup>4</sup> In general, the opinions of the Diaspora group in Nairobi diverged in many key respects from what was heard inside New Sudan. Having conducted only one focus group outside Sudan, it is not possible to assess how typical the views might be of the larger community of exiles and refugees in the Diaspora.

Likewise, there is unanimous support for elections as the appropriate way to choose leaders. In several southern Sudanese cultures, chiefs are elected by individuals lining up behind the candidates of their choice, and some participants had also participated in elections either in garrison towns or over 20 years ago. In comparing the value of elections to a system where chiefs alone make decisions, one middle aged wife of a soldier in Yei says “[Elections are] better than relying on chiefs, because the opinion of the community counts and we know best.”

*Majority [rule] will be good in southern Sudan because we can get rid of bad leaders. (Young Gawaar Nuer man, Christian, primary schooling, Ayod)*

*If we fail, we can not blame anyone but ourselves. If we succeed, we can determine our future.” (Older Rek Dinka man, no schooling, Alek)*

Most people also profess a commitment to honor a fair election.

*It will be okay if Garang fails to win because it depends on us. (Older Rek Dinka woman, no schooling, Alek)*

*If John Garang doesn't win, it is not a problem because he is Sudanese like the rest of us. (Young Luo man, Christian, intermediate schooling, Mapel)*

However, bad memories exist of personalized and conflictive Khartoum-based parties, and there is a concern that multi-partyism could fuel inter-ethnic strife among Southerners in the future. These concerns give rise to strong reservations about political pluralism. In addition, political parties are not well known and little is said about the range of parties tested, except where people could link it with the name of the leader. More often, southerners do not know the names of Khartoum-based parties.

Even less clear in most people's minds is the potential value of parties or a pluralist political system. Many, in fact, say they prefer to have just one party, as they are fearful that a multi-party system could foster conflict, which they have had enough of. In the Nuba Mountains, the prospect of more than one party in parliament is more reassuring than alarming.

*Everyone should agree. One political party is right. (Young Jikany Nuer woman, Christian, Mading)*

*More parties create more problems. (Older Agar Dinka man, Christian, primary schooling, Rumbek)*

*Multi-party is bad. A single party is best. (Young Gok Dinka man, Christian, intermediate schooling, Rumbek)*

*Don't want it because when we had it in all of Sudan, it caused problems, created a lot of enemies. (Older Agar Dinka war widow, Christian, Rumbek)*

*Need two parties in parliament; if one fails then the other will pick us up. (Younger Julud woman, Julud)*

*They can disagree (in a parliament), as long as they compromise in the end. By disagreeing they will come to the best solution. (Older Julud man, Julud)*

**8. Southern Sudanese want a democratic leader who is honest, fair, and responsive. Above all, they want a leader to unite people and bring development to the region.**

In characterizing what they want in a leader, participants repeatedly talk about democracy, honesty, and transparency. Other desired attributes are someone who is a problem solver, someone who listens to the people and, in particular, someone who treats all people fairly, “without discrimination” as one older Ngok Dinka woman puts it in Abyei.

*People at the top should listen to people at the bottom. (Middle aged Soldier's wife, Christian, no schooling, Yei)*

*We want a leader who fights for the rights of all. (Middle aged Rek Dinka man, Traditional, no schooling, Alek)*

*Listens and responds to the people. (Non-Arab Muslim man, Rumbek)*

*Gives people their rights. (Older Agar Dinka war widow, Rumbek)*

Most striking, however, is how much people talk of two wishes they have for a leader and government. Above all, they want someone who can unite people and who can bring development.

*We want a government that can unite people and overcome tribalism. (Middle aged Malual Dinka man, Marial Bai)*

*Like Nelson Mandela...a man of peace who treats people equally and doesn't encourage tribalism. (Young Kakwa man, Christian, secondary schooling, Yei)*

**9. Transitional Areas**

Residents of the two transitional areas visited are very happy to have Dr. Garang and the SPLM pleading their case in the pending peace agreements, as they share many of the same negative views about Khartoum. The Dinka in Abyei are much better attuned to the South and more committed to joining the South when they can, as part of securing separation from the North. In the Nuba Mountains region of Western Jebels, there is less determination to join the South. Elsewhere in the South, Garang and the SPLM are praised by some for bringing these territories into the southern constellation.

*[Garang] is interested in all of Sudan. He is interested in Abyei, Nuba, Southern Blue Nile. (Middle aged Jikany Nuer chief, Mading)*



*If Arabs insist on keeping Abyei, we will fight them. (Older Agar Dinka chief, Rumbek)*

- **Abyei**<sup>5</sup>

Ngok Dinka of Abyei in the village of Agok view themselves as properly part of southern Sudan and are staunch supporters of John Garang and the SPLM. They generally want a permanent separation from the North, and – for those who are aware of the details – are not pleased with the prospect of sharing with Khartoum as much of the oil wealth as is envisioned in the Protocol describing the terms of the peace to come to Abyei.

*Wealth sharing is a bad thing because [the North] already has development and we do not. So they should let us have all the revenue until we are developed and then we will share the revenue. (Younger Ngok Dinka woman, Agok)*

Those who have traveled in the North have not enjoyed the exposure to their Arab compatriots. They complain that northerners look down on them as southerners. They also hold the government in Khartoum responsible for depredations, including rape and looting visited on their communities by the *Murabaleen* associated with the People's Defence Force (PDF).

While the sample may have been somewhat skewed toward those with major grievances – one group consisted of women who previously had been abducted, another of returned refugee women, and the third of currently displaced men – there is a great deal of anger and unhappiness among these people, even while they are pleased to be starting to enjoy some of the fruits of peace, such as the arrival of humanitarian NGOs.

Men and women alike say they would like to be able to return to Abyei town, from which they are presently excluded by the lines drawn during the conflict.

Here as elsewhere, younger people seem better informed about the details of the peace protocols than the older women, although they are not satisfied that the best deal has been struck. Older women (that is, above the age of 35) are less aware of current news, and learn what they do know mainly from public meetings they attend. For the younger men and women, news comes principally from radio and by word of mouth, as well as from traveling political leaders at public meeting. While the men say they do not trust Radio Omdurman, the younger women do not express the same concern.

*We only hear things at public rallies. (Older Ngok Dinka woman, Agok)*

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<sup>5</sup> Three focus groups, two women and one men, were conducted with Ngok Dinka in the village of Agok – which is in the county of Abyei, but is not the capital town of Abyei proper (to which access was not possible due to GOS control).

The profound state of underdevelopment in the region is reflected in the fact that younger and older women alike speak about the need for grinding mills to free them from the perpetual pounding of grain.

*Women are still pounding; there are no grinding mills. (Older Ngok Dinka woman, Agok)*

Animosity toward the nomadic Misseriya people is strong, as these Ngok Dinka say the Misseriya were complicit in the abduction of children and the rapes of women in the area. Indeed, in one of the rare cases in the entire survey where the notion of “forgive-and-forget” was clearly rejected, the older women (each of whom had herself been abducted earlier in their lives) are determined to see justice exacted from those who violated them.

*People committed crimes and then they ran away. They have to be executed to minimize this problem. (Older Ngok Dinka woman, Agok)*

As with most of the other southern Sudanese, neither men nor women in Abyei want to remain part of a united Sudan. There was strong sentiment in each of the three groups for “separation” when the time comes to vote on independence, although the younger women in one group decided after some discussion that this would lead to renewed violence, so they backed off from that option.

*If we are united [with the North], the future will be bad; if we are separated, the future will be good. (Older Ngok Dinka woman, Agok)*

*Things will be good if we can separate from the Arabs; we don't want the Misseriya to cross our land. (Young Ngok Dinka man, Agok)*

*If we separate, there will be more war. (Younger Ngok Dinka woman, Agok)*

- **Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan<sup>6</sup>**

Men and women in Western Jebels are generally optimistic, grateful for the peace they have enjoyed of late, and pleased to have come under the SPLM umbrella. The people in Julud complain that travel and commerce is blocked by GOS control of the nearest main town of Dilling, though they are appreciative of a recent ceasefire, and see life as generally improving. They are clearly encouraged by a visit from John Garang in June 2004.

*Since the ceasefire, we are able to eat good food and to wear clothes. (Young Julud woman, Muslim, Julud)*

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<sup>6</sup> Two focus groups were conducted in the village of Julud in the Western Jebels part of the Nuba region, among the Julud people, who are African Muslims, though there are Christians in the area, as well. In the early 1990s, the area was subjected to campaigns by militia to drive people off what is generally recognized to be fertile land. A separate, related protocol to the SPLM/GOS negotiations addresses this territory and its people.

*In the past there was no freedom, but now the SPLM has come we have freedom, you see the school, things are going in the right direction. (Older Julud man, Muslim, Julud)*

John Garang has clearly won the support of the Julud people.

*He helps all the people of southern Sudan ... he listens to all the people. (Older Julud man)*

*If peace comes, it will be through him. (Young Julud woman)*

*[Garang] visited so he could show us the protocols ... he is a good leader. (Older Julud man)*

*He is the one who gives us patience for peace. (Young Julud woman)*

Although they share many of the grievances, people here do not think of themselves as part of the South. For instance, women and men alike say they have heard that life is better in the South, though they don't really know if this is true, while they know based on experience that elsewhere in the North people are better off. This is a quite distinct population from the southern part of Sudan, culturally and politically.

People in this area are distinctly less focused on independence from Khartoum than are other peoples encountered across the South. While some men and women are inclined to join the South should it win independence, a few men think they could live in the North. The strongest preference, however, which elicits strong agreement from the entire group of men, is to be left alone altogether.

*Want to be given a choice to be part of southern Sudan. (Younger Julud woman, Julud)*

*If we can have peace and freedom, we can do anything with the North; we can live with them if we have these things. (Older Julud man, Julud)*

*Our first choice is to be alone in the Nuba Mountains and to govern ourselves. (Older Julud man, Muslim, Julud)*

In a rare display of confidence, one young woman says about the recurring conflict, "the solution is people standing up for peace; they should go and discuss things with the Government of Sudan."

Regarding the specifics of the draft protocol on Nuba, the young women are vague about the details, and inclined to be supportive. The men are much better informed and while they are comfortable with the prospect of a regional legislature containing a majority from the NCP, they are concerned about the proposed distribution of revenue from oil exploration.

*If we are a part of it, it will be a good thing. (Young Julud woman, Julud)*

*[Allocation of seats in parliament] is good, because we are only five regions, so 45% is good. (Older Julud man, Julud)*

*That is very little [2% of revenue to be distributed to oil producing states]. All of the oil belongs to us. We need 50% before we are satisfied. (Older Julud man, Julud)*

About the provision that would permit the president of Sudan to determine military force levels in the region, one man says, “When we are democratic, we will welcome people from the North.”

Women here say they get their news “from radios” and “people who come here from southern Sudan,” while men are more specific in citing BBC, Voice of America, French service radio. Many noted that they “don’t like the news from Khartoum because you can’t trust it.”

**10. Priority Issues and Expectations for the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS): After securing the peace, Southern Sudanese place the highest premium on improving education, followed by improvements in health care and food security.**

Apart from the anxiety about what the inter-locking structure of government and leadership between North and South means for governance in the South there are large expectations and a substantial ‘to do’ list awaiting the forthcoming GOSS. Although many would prefer a faster start-up time, and an earlier referendum, there is also a noteworthy patience about how long it should reasonably take to get the new government up and running. Most seem to think that two or three years is not too much time. Many people see a strong need for a functional government in the region to address issues of land ownership (and to resolve disputes that are expected to arise) as well to tackle a clear short list of priority services and development needs, beginning with education.

Education, hunger (food security), health care, and clean water were consistently at the top of the list of critical needs. Where participants were asked to list the top three problems facing New Sudan, education and health were mentioned almost the same amount of times. Food security and clean water were the next most mentioned needs. In areas affected by Guinea worm, or where rains had not been regular, clean water was the more important than in other areas.

When participants were asked to rank what they felt should be the first priority in development, keeping the peace won out over improving education as the most important issue, with hunger and health far behind and virtually tied. However, if peace is taken as a given, the opportunity to secure better education for themselves and their children is consistently described as one of the major benefits to which people look forward, out ranking health and hunger as a priority.

*Sustainable peace will come only when there is education for all. (Young Kakwa man, Christian, secondary schooling, Yei)*

*If I have an education, I will have an understanding mind. I will understand that every person has the right to freedom, so freedom of worship won't be a problem. (Young refugee woman, post-secondary education, Nairobi)*

*Our daughters must go to school, but husbands look at them as a source of wealth. (Older Agar Dinka war widow, Christian, Rumbek)*

*The best thing about the future is that women will get education and children will get education. (Young Agar Dinka woman, Christian, some primary schooling, Rumbek)*

*The best thing is we have started education again. (Young Ngok Dinka Christian woman, Agok)*

## **11. Role of traditional leaders and chiefs.**

Many southern Sudanese would like to see a role in parliament or government for their traditional chiefs, although there is a strong desire to elect representatives as well. Some of the chiefs envision an enlarged role for themselves in a New Sudan after having been marginalized during the war. Concern is expressed in a few women's groups, and among a group of former child soldiers, about whether chiefs take advantage of their own people.

*With peace, the power of chiefs will only increase. Before, chiefs could separate fighting, but now people are armed and hostile. (Older Agar Dinka chief, Rumbek)*

*There will be no change in what the chiefs do after the peace. (Young Jikany Nuer woman, Mading)*

*MPs would be enough to represent the people. (Young refugee woman, Christian, post-secondary education, Nairobi)*

*The government should support chiefs to take care of their communities. (Older Agar Dinka war widow, Christian, Rumbek)*

*In local elections you provide beer, cows, etc. Don't know how it will work on a national level. (Older Agar Dinka chief, Rumbek)*

## **12. Politics and Personalities.**

While virtually everyone expects that Garang will be president of New Sudan, the Nuer and the Shilluk, in particular, have their own leaders of stature and would cast votes for them if given the opportunity. Discussions with many of the groups confirm that support for Garang is unanimous among the Dinka, and the smaller tribal groups. Only among the Nuer do some people prefer Riek Machar and only among the Shilluk do some people say they would vote for Lam Akol. Yet even in these communities, some in every group also indicate they would vote for Garang, as well.

*The Nuer perspective and Riek Machar*<sup>7</sup>

Riek Machar, the Nuer leader, who for most of the 1990s broke away from the SPLM and made common cause with the government in Khartoum before returning to the SPLM, is regarded as a prodigal son. While this is not a universally held view among the non-Nuer, most are glad he is back in the SPLM fold.

Nuer often say that their communities won access to education and development because of Machar's leadership, and many Nuer indicate they would vote for him to be president of New Sudan. At the same time, Garang also has visible support in every Nuer group.

Views on why Machar split from Garang and the SPLM vary. Some attribute the split to differences with Garang over the matter of a united Sudan versus secession, while others simply say that it was a bad thing he did. Still others say that he abandoned Khartoum when they did not live up to the terms of whatever deal he had made with them.

There is general satisfaction among the Nuer that Machar and Garang are back on the same team. The experience of being at odds with other southern Sudanese is something the Nuer do not want to repeat. Indeed, the aversion to conflict among southerners is so vivid that interest among Nuer in a multiparty parliament is minimal; all five of the Nuer groups conclude that a single party political system would be best.

*The split happened because Garang gave development to his people (only). With Riek, we got development. People can read and write because of him. (Young Gawaar Nuer Christian man, Ayod)*

*At the time Garang did not want peace and Riek did. (Middle aged Jikany Nuer man, traditional beliefs, Mading)*

*Riek wanted the south to be independent and Garang wanted Sudan to be united. (Middle aged Jikany Nuer man, traditional beliefs, Mading)*

*It was bad that Riek went to Khartoum, but he refused to stay, so that is good. (Middle aged Gawarr Nuer woman, traditional beliefs, Ayod)*

*But Riek shouldn't have split. The split was bad because Black people should not separate. We have been killing ourselves; that is bad. (Young Gawaar Nuer Christian man, Ayod)*

Views of Riek Machar by non-Nuer people are harsher, though most people are satisfied that – whatever the past – he is now back on the right side and should be considered “one of us.”

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<sup>7</sup> Five groups were constituted exclusively of Nuer – one in Rumbek, two of Jikany Nuer in Mading, in Latjor, and two of Gawarr Nuer in the town of Ayod.

*Not good to be a leader ... sometimes with the SPLA, sometimes with the Government. (Middle aged Julud Muslim man, Julud)*

*Confused person, sometimes with the SPLM, sometimes with the Arabs, maneuvering for position. Riek has reconciled with Garang, but not with us. (Middle aged Zande man, Yambio)*

*Better to have him as a friend than as an enemy. (Older Agar Dinka war widow, Christian, Rumbek)*

*I know of fighting between us and the Nuer, some of our people were killed and cattle were looted.. He should be held accountable. Nobody will vote for him. (Older Agar Dinka chief, Christian, Rumbek)*

### ***The Shilluk perspective and Lam Akol<sup>8</sup>***

Any mention of the name of Lam Akol evokes support and general satisfaction among the Shilluk that he has returned to the SPLM. Shilluk chiefs encountered in Oriny, in Upper Nile, point out that while Akol did join the Khartoum government for several years, he “did not help the GOS,” and “there were no forces here.” They recall fondly that there were five years of peace in their area while Akol was part of the government in Khartoum.

*A good man, he came out of Khartoum, too [with Riek]. (Young Gawaar Nuer man, Ayod)*

*He is the same as Riek. (Middle aged Julud man, Julud)*

*Same as Riek, but Riek is better because Akol...does not know the future of Sudan. (Older Agar Dinka man, Rumbek)*

When asked who they would vote for president, the two Shilluk groups expressed a first preference for John Garang as president of a New Sudan, with participants saying that they hope that Lam Akol would be a deputy or vice president to him in the government. Yet the enthusiasm for Garang is distinctly qualified. Though older women say Garang “works for us,” the chiefs note that “he needs help to use resources better.”

Another southerner with widespread name recognition is SPLM Deputy Chairman Salva Kiir, though there is both enthusiasm and concern expressed about him. In addition, he seems to personify for those in Yei, where SPLA has a significant presence, the superior attitude that is sometimes attributed to Dinka.

*Very good; the hero of the SPLM (Middle aged Julud man, Julud)*

*The deputy to Garang, he solves problems. (Young Toposa woman, Kapoeta)*

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<sup>8</sup> Two groups were composed exclusively of Shilluks, one male and one female, in the town of Oriny in Fashoda.

*Troublesome, he is tribalistic. (Young Kakwa man, Yei)*

**13. Most southern Sudanese prefer reconciliation to vengeance.**

Consistent with the high degree of willingness to forgive those who went over to the government in Khartoum but who have since returned to the SPLM fold, such as Riek Machar and Lam Akol, there is a general preference for forgiveness and reconciliation. In the aftermath of so much violence and bloodshed, remarkably little interest is expressed in “justice” or vengeance. Many southern Sudanese profess a great ability to forgive and a desire to put the past behind them and move on, and are even willing to accept people who committed crimes back into their communities if they were no longer a threat. In only five groups is there consensus that punishment for people who committed crimes during the war was necessary.

*We need to go on to a new chapter. (Middle aged Gawaar Nuer woman, Ayod)*

*Forget about the past...those people [who committed crimes] should settle down and start a new life, but they must not behave badly anymore. (Older Shilluk chief, no schooling, Oriny)*

*They should be forgiven and warned. (Young Julud woman, Muslim, Julud)*

*We should learn how to forgive. (Young Diaspora woman, Christian, post-secondary education, Nairobi)*

Some participants also support the right of victims to compensation, such as a soldier’s wife in Yei who says, “Victims should be given the right to say something and possibly be compensated.”

**14. People are mostly grateful for the sacrifices of SPLA soldiers, who are seen as liberators.**

Notwithstanding widespread dislike of the behavior of some soldiers who have taken advantage of the people they are supposed to be serving, the strong consensus expressed is that they deserve to be rewarded for their contributions to the struggle all these years. Most people said they feel more secure with SPLA units in their area, although, as one woman said, “we like having them around in the day, but we are afraid at night.” There is consistent support for the provision of assistance by the GOSS or donors to soldiers as part of their demobilization, along with an expectation that tolerance for misbehavior should decline.

*I feel safe from Arabs when soldiers are nearby, but also insecure because they loot us. (Young Ngok Dinka man, Christian, IDP, Agok)*

*Feel safer when the soldiers are around, but they should have their own base. They shouldn’t live with the people. (Young Jikany Nuer woman, Christian, Mading)*

*Sometime they protect us; sometimes they loot us. (Older Agar Dinka man, Christian, primary schooling, Rumbek)*



*When drunk, they shoot their guns. We don't like that misbehavior. (Middle aged Toposa woman, Kapoeta).*

*Soldiers take your goat and sometimes shoot at random. (Older Agar Dinka chief, Rumbek)*

*GOSS should give money, land to soldiers because they are liberators. All will be welcomed back; they are part of the community. (Young Ngok Dinka man, Christian, IDP, Agok)*

*Soldiers should be given good compensation [by the GOSS] because they were freedom fighters. (Middle aged Nuer woman, IDP, illiterate, Rumbek).*

**15. Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons, and compatriots in the wider Diaspora are almost universally welcome to return.**

There is general acknowledgement that those who have been dispossessed, whether IDPs or refugees, should be able to return home and reclaim their land and property. There is also a concern that difficulties may arise in this process, suggesting a role for the GOSS in settling disputes. A particular concern is expressed about the difficulties anticipated in reclaiming land that has been taken over by SPLM commanders.

The Diaspora in Kenya believe they will be resented in Sudan because they have escaped and enjoyed the benefits of aid programs. Likewise, participants expressed some concern that returned Diaspora will displace those who stayed behind when it comes to getting the better jobs or benefits, and a feeling that “we who suffered” should be at the head of the line when it comes to receiving the benefits of peace. Nevertheless, the predominant view is that Sudanese in the Diaspora are particularly welcome, as they are seen, in some cases, to “bring skills” that are much needed.

*The problem is anger because they were displaced. (Middle aged Jikany Nuer chief, Mading)*

*The mentality of everyone inside is that they suffered so much because they stayed with the enemy, so there is a gap between the Diaspora and those people living inside. I don't know how we are going to come together like before. (Young Christian woman, Diaspora, post-secondary education, Nairobi)*

*I think we will be able to get jobs in the community and civil society, but not necessarily government. (Young Christian woman, Diaspora, post-secondary education, Nairobi)*

*When you win something in the war, do you give it to the person who did not go to the fight? Of course not. (Older Agar Dinka chief, Traditional/Christian, Rumbek)*

*[Diaspora] should be welcomed back, but should not be given high positions in government because they did not toil with us. (Young Gok Dinka man, Christian, intermediate schooling, Rumbek)*

*They [refugees and Diaspora] can be given positions so they can help by sharing their ideas. (Older Julud man, Julud)*

*They can be given high positions based on qualifications. (Young Ngok Dinka man, Christian IDP, Agok)*

**16. There is a willingness to afford women greater political rights in the public arena, yet women face large hurdles in securing equal rights closer to home.**

There appears to be a greater willingness among men to accord women political rights, to vote and participate in public life, than there is to consider changes in traditional domestic relations – in marriage, child-rearing and ownership of wealth (such as cattle and land).

*Give them rights. They can be elected, go to meetings, etc. (Middle aged Jikany Nuer chief, Mading)*

*All girls should go to school. (Middle aged Jikany Nuer chief, Mading)*

*Some people think that girls will become prostitutes if they go to school (Middle-aged Toposa woman, Kapoeta).*

*Maybe women can be leaders, but they are suffering from a lack of education. (Older Julud man, Muslim, Julud)*

*Garang needs women advisors and youth advisors. All of his advisors are men who are over 50. (Young Diaspora woman, Christian, post-secondary education, Nairobi)*

Divisions arise over rights for women in social and family issues, such as deciding how many children to have, which children go to school and the ownership of land and cattle. Men generally share the view expressed by a young Ngok Dinka man in Abeyi that “women can not decide how many children to have, because we pay for them dearly.” Daughters are seen as a source of wealth, based on the dowries that would be paid.

Women express a general desire to have more rights. Often, however, they cannot put into words with any specificity which rights they desire if new laws were to be written for their protection. The exceptions to this were strong support for laws: (1) specifying that a widow can retain ownership over their husband’s land and cattle; (2) making girls’ attendance at school mandatory; and (3) including women in the decision on when a girl is married (and thus taken out of school). All women interviewed see education as the key to changing society and many express a great desire for education for their daughters, and adult education for themselves as well.

*We want women to be equal with men. Don’t leave women behind. (Young Zande woman, Christian, early secondary education, Yambio)*

*We want there to be equality in the household...We want men and women to work together, eat together and discuss together. (Middle-aged Gawaar Nuer woman, poor, traditional faiths, illiterate, Ayod)*

**17. “The conflict was never about religion, but...”**

The men and women of southern Sudan, predominantly Christian or adherents of traditional faiths (two overlapping identities) resist the notion that the conflict has been about religion. They frequently note that African Muslims live among them without rancor or problems. Most point instead to historic grievances about discrimination, in access to higher education, in the allocation of resources and government jobs.

Although the tolerance for Islam is relatively high, a number of people believe that non-Arab Muslims have been “mislead,” “deceived,” “forced,” or “bought” by the Arabs into practicing Islam. Some also fear that allowing Islam in the south would re-start the “Arab way” of paying people to convert to Islam, thereby re-starting the “Islamicization” of the South. Several groups said the “buying” practice must be specifically forbidden before they would be comfortable with Islam in the South. Two of the three chiefs groups also indicate they would not provide land for new mosques, although in one of those groups it was agreed Muslims could worship in old mosques. Yet, out of a total of 32 discussions, in only seven was there a preponderant view that the practice of Islam should be banned in New Sudan. Four of these were among the Nuer in Upper Nile, all of whom were strongly against having Islam in the South.

The animosity toward Islam and “Arabs” flows from perceptions of Khartoum’s efforts over the years to impose the Arabic language and to enforce (or “buy”) conversions to Islam. Many people say “the Arabs treated us like slaves” and “they call us dogs.” Sharia law is often summed up as the “cutting off of hands.” While there is a stated willingness to live and let live when it comes to neighboring Muslims, there is a widespread belief that Islam is not compatible with democracy or freedom for southerners. This view, however, is not shared by African Muslim participants, who see no contradiction between democracy and Islam.

*It is not bad to be a Black Muslim. They have nothing to do with the government in Khartoum. (Older Agar Dinka war widow, Rumbek)*

*We all worship the same God. (Young Malual Dinka woman, traditional, Marial Bai)*

*It is not acceptable to practice Islam in the South. Islam is bad because they are not praying to the God who ascended to heaven. (Middle aged Jikany Nuer chief, Mading)*

*Without the Arabs we will be able to practice democracy. (Older Agar Dinka man, Rumbek)*

*We would feel free to practice Islam if we were part of southern Sudan. We can live together because they also have Muslim and Christians like we do... everyone is free. (Older Julud man, Julud)*

**18. Mixed opinions exist about who does or should own land, though most agree there will continue to be disputes and there is a need for an authority to resolve these.**

Opinion is divided within many of the groups convened about who should own land. Among young Ngok Dinka IDP men in Abyei, for instance, while one declares the GOSS has the right to decide who gets land, another says the GOSS should simply return land lost during the war, while a third claims it can't be given back, so the people concerned must be relocated. However, by a fairly significant margin, men are more inclined to say that land belongs to the community and women to say that it belongs to the government.

*Belongs to the community. (Young refugee woman, Christian, post-secondary education, Nairobi)*

*The community owns the land. (Middle aged Jikany Nuer chief, Mading)*

*Government has the right to the land. (Young Jikany Nuer woman, Christian, Mading)*

**19. Darfur casts a cloud over New Sudan's hope for peace.**

With very few exceptions, most southern Sudanese empathize with the people of Darfur who appear to be suffering a fate similar to their own vis-à-vis the government in Khartoum. There is a broadly shared concern that as long as fighting continues in Darfur their own peace is not secure, although one of the Agar Dinka chiefs in Rumbek says that "peace in southern Sudan would help make peace in Darfur."

*Why should Darfur affect peace? That is two brothers fighting. They [Black Muslims] were against the SPLM. (Older Agar Dinka war widow, Christian, Rumbek)*

*It will not affect peace in southern Sudan. (Young Jikany Nuer woman, Christian, Mading)*

*Don't know if it will affect peace in Nuba. (Young Julud woman, Julud)*

*It proves that Bashir does not want peace in southern Sudan. (Older Agar Dinka chief, Traditional/Christian, Rumbek)*

*We need complete peace in all of Sudan; not in one part or the other. (Older Julud man, Julud)*

*Will affect peace because cannot have fighting in one part of Sudan and peace in another. (Young Ngok Dinka man, Christian IDP, Agok)*

*It wouldn't be wise to make peace in southern Sudan while another part of the country is under war. (Young Diaspora woman, Christian, post-secondary education, Nairobi)*

*What kind of government kills its own people? (Older Agar Dinka man, Christian, primary schooling, Rumbek)*

**20. There is a tremendous amount of faith in the ability of the international community, and the United States in particular, to keep the peace.**

Southern Sudanese believe that the United Nations and the United States will keep pressure on the GOS to remain at the negotiating table. In all but two of the groups, participants said the UN and/or the US were responsible for keeping the peace in the New Sudan. A desire to have peacekeeping forces in the New Sudan, particularly in borders areas, was specifically mentioned, unprompted, in seven groups.

*U.S. can make peace last if they bring peace-keeping forces. (Younger Gok Dinka man, Christian, Rumbek)*

*Need an international force to keep the peace; without it, there will be no peace. (Older Julud man, Muslim, Julud)*

President George W. Bush personifies the American commitment to help the people of southern Sudan. While a few negative comments were expressed in Nairobi about Bush and the Iraq war, there is universal praise for the American president voiced by those in southern Sudan. Indeed, the ouster of Saddam Hussein is seen by some to have contributed to the peace in southern Sudan.

*Bush is the real man for New Sudan. (Older Agar Dinka war widow, Rumbek)*

*(Bush) is the one who is going to solve all the problems. (Older Julud man, Muslim, Julud)*

*America must observe the elections. (Older Shiluk woman, Oriny)*

*We are sons of the U.S. because they have helped us so much. (Older Julud man, Muslim, Julud)*

*(Bush) is arrogant, the devil himself ... doesn't have a heart for Africa... (Young Diaspora Christian woman, post-secondary education, Nairobi)*

American and international NGOs and the UN are very popular within New Sudan due to their role as primary service providers for basic needs, such as health, education and clean water. However, in Nairobi among the Diaspora there are some complaints about whether the UN/NGOs are effective or generous or even-handed enough. Yet, the prevailing sentiment within southern Sudan is a desire to have more NGOs providing more services in more places.

*NGOs are good; they supply our needs. (Young Jikany Nuer woman, Christian, Mading)*

*In Rumbek, the best thing is more NGOs and UN agencies, more services. (Older Agar Dinka man, Christian, Rumbek)*

*NGOs are coming to help us. (Young Ngok Dinka Christian woman, Agok)*

*I would vote the UN out of Sudan. The UN takes dignity from the Sudanese; they make you beg. They take a year to renew refugee papers. (Young Diaspora woman, Christian, post-secondary education, Nairobi)*

## Conclusion

Dr. John Garang and the SPLM enjoy tremendous political buoyancy, as the negotiations with the Government of Sudan near conclusion. They command the strong loyalty of the people of New Sudan, who generally see themselves as “one people” and are happy that rifts between southern factions have been repaired. The public is broadly aware of and committed to the achievement of their rights as Dr. Garang and the SPLM have articulated them. There is strong support for the peace process, even while there is resolve to return to war if necessary. Rare, indeed, is the circumstance in which a political leader has so many stars in alignment at a critical time.

The challenges confronting the political leaders of New Sudan, as they prepare to construct the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS), are equally formidable. The development challenge is as daunting as anywhere in the world. The potential that the salience of the threat by a “common enemy” will soon diminish appears likely to give rise to enhanced ethnic tensions within a population accustomed to warfare and violence, even while many people will be seeking to reclaim lost land and possessions.

The unmistakable Sudanese thirst for democracy, even as rudimentary as their institutions and habits are, will empower more and more men and women to seek to place demands large and small on the agenda. In order to build on the stable foundation of credibility and trust that has been established as a result of the long struggle, and which is understood by people to have been waged with sacrifice and integrity, Dr. Garang and the SPLM are well-positioned to move their society forward by addressing several central themes with concrete actions.

The near universal desire for “separation” from Khartoum presents a particular challenge if public expectations in this regard are not likely to be satisfied in the near future. The fact that some key provisions of the draft agreements, as noted above, do not match popular expectations could lead to frustration or anger as the implications of the accords become better known. Communication to people about the accords, and the reasons behind certain agreements, will be necessary to defuse potential negative reactions. In addition, dialogue between rulers and ruled is currently described more as a series of briefings to various constituencies, rather than a true exchange or solicitation of public input. As people begin to enjoy more freedom and rights, they will likely demand a more collaborative decision-making process.

As noted at the outset, the snapshot of public opinion in southern Sudan during several weeks in 2004 set forth in this report does not represent the last word on the subject. It is, rather, the first word; a baseline against which future studies can compare. Public opinion is dynamic, and it can be shaped by actions and discussion, as political leaders know full well.

**Inclusion and equity.** Major steps must be taken to ensure that all the peoples of New Sudan see opportunities for advancement and benefit for their communities. Appointments to senior positions in the GOSS could provide a clear signal to some of those who have felt marginalized that they, too, can prosper in the new dispensation. A concerted effort to develop a visibly more equitable and more inclusive approach to the distribution of

available positions and opportunities – and to communicate that approach widely to the people – is urgent for the SPLM to sustain its place in the eyes of many. One key dimension of this could well come in the area of land ownership and relocation assistance. If decisions are seen early on to benefit one community disproportionately, the others will soon lose confidence in the quality of leadership.

**Inter-active public dialogue.** As the process continues to move down the road toward the development of a constitution and the creation and then the operation of the GOSS, the experience of briefings to various communities about the choices and challenges needs to be expanded to include more opportunities for public input. The leadership needs to be seen to be listening to people, as well as talking to them.

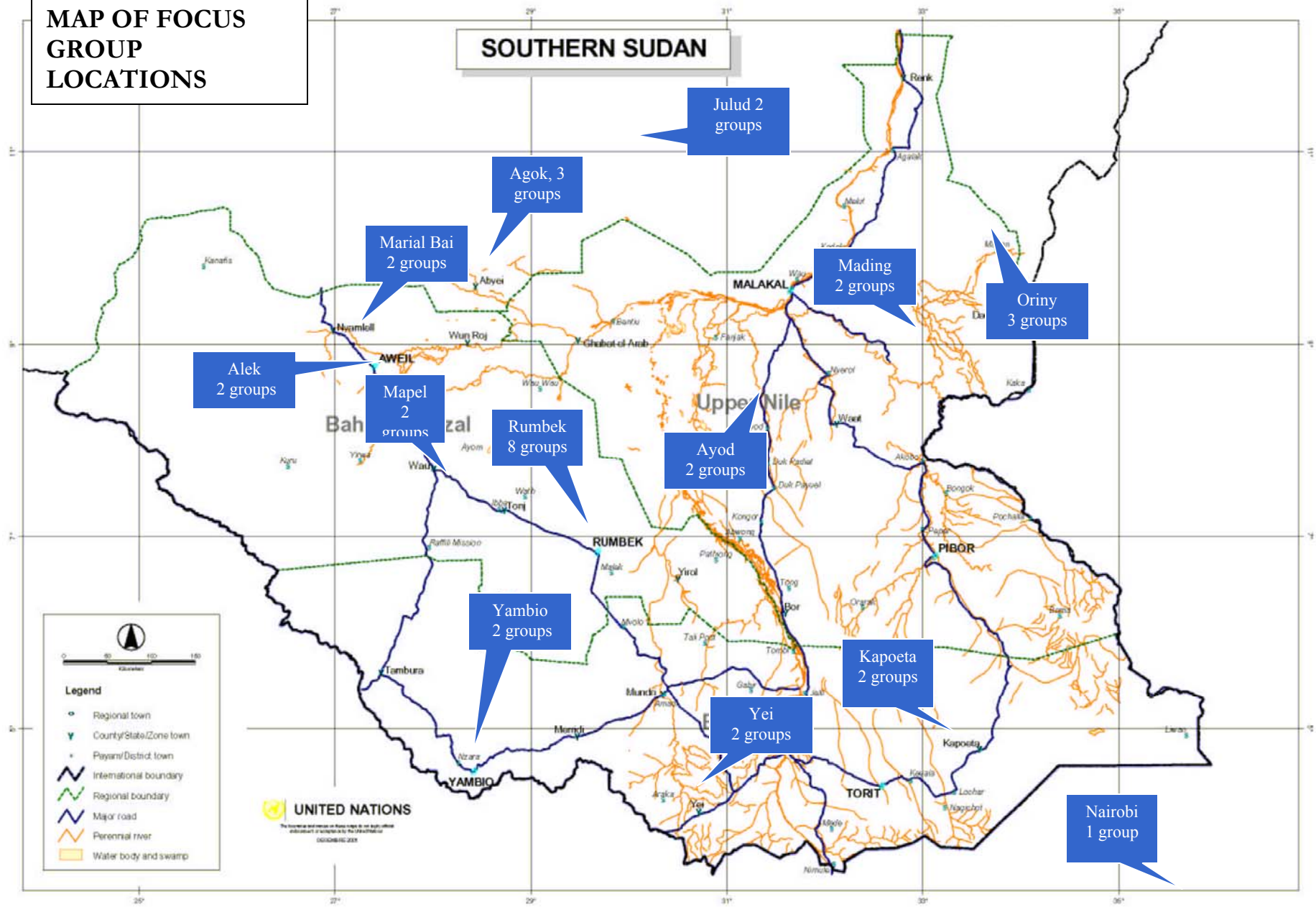
**The question of national unity.** The people of New Sudan are focused on the achievement of their rights, and have mostly given up on the possibility of attaining them in a country governed from Khartoum. For the federal arrangement envisioned for the interim period to be sustainable, its accomplishments must be presented to the people as systems that enable people to achieve their rights, time and again. Given the fervor for separation that presently prevails, a concerted public communication strategy will be necessary to convey to the public the value of any federal structures.

For instance, it would probably be worth whatever extraordinary measures are required to ensure that the southern representatives in Khartoum have a means to return often to the South and to participate frequently in public venues in which they can explain how the southern perspective is being heard in Khartoum and acted upon. This will shore up confidence that those individuals are still working for the South and provide real input into the discussion about how the connection is valuable. If it cannot be demonstrated that there is value in the federal arrangement, the results of the referendum in six years will be unanimous and the pressure for a quick secession will be very strong regardless of the desires of the SPLM leadership.

**Education is the investment that provides the most return in the most places.** In a place with so many urgent demands for action, the one area for potential investment that promises positive ripples in virtually every other sphere is elementary and secondary education. It is the necessary first step if there is to be any hope of material or political progress. It is also the way that the various peoples of the region will be able to see in every community what their new government is doing for them. It is the first demands of many women and of those who aspire to a democratic polity.



**APPENDIX A:  
MAP OF FOCUS  
GROUP  
LOCATIONS**



**APPENDIX B**

**DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF THE 2004 FOCUS GROUPS IN SOUTHERN SUDAN**

REGION/FOCUS GROUP LOCATION	DATE	SEX	ETHNICITY	AGE	RELIGION	EDUCATION	ECONOMIC STATUS	SPECIAL/ OTHER
<b><i>BAR EL GHAZAL</i></b>								
<b>Rumbek</b>								
Group 1	August 26	F	Nuer	30-40	Christian	No School-Early Primary	Poorer	IDP from Nuer oil area
Group 2	August 27	M	Agar Dinka	40+	Christian	Late Primary-Early Secondary	Better off	Local
Group 3	August 27	M	Gok Dinka	15-25	Christian	Late Primary-Early Secondary	Better off	Local
Group 4	August 27	F	Agar Dinka	30+	Christian	Late Primary – Late Secondary	Supported	War Widows
Group 5	August 28	M	Mixed	15-25	Christian	Late Primary-Early Secondary-In School	Supported	Former child soldiers
Group 6	August 28	F	Agar Dinka	20-30	Christian	No School- Early Primary	Average	Local
Group 7	August 29	M	Agar Dinka	35+	Traditional + Christian	No School	Better off	Chiefs
Group 8	August 31	M	Mixed	30+	Muslim	Late Primary-Early Secondary	Better off	Traveled (village to town)
<b>Alek, Gogrial</b>								
Group 9	September 2	M	Rek Dinka	30-45	Traditional	No School	Average	Returned 2001
Group 10	September 2	F	Rek Dinka	35+	Traditional	No School	Average	Returned 2001
<b>Marial Bai, Aweil West</b>								

REGION/FOCUS GROUP LOCATION	DATE	SEX	ETHNICITY	AGE	RELIGION	EDUCATION	ECONOMIC STATUS	SPECIAL/ OTHER
Group 11	September 7	M	Malual Dinka	30-40	Traditional	No School	Average	Local
Group 12	September 7	F	Malual Dinka	20-30	Christian	Some Primary	Average	Local
<b>Mapel, Wau</b>								
Group 13	September 9	M	Luo	20-30	Christian	Late Primary-Early Secondary	Average	Local
Group 14	September 9	F	Luo	30-40	Christian	Early Primary-Early Secondary	Better off	Returned 1998-2004
<b><i>ABYEI</i></b>								
<b>Agok, Abyei</b>								
Group15	September 4	M	Ngok Dinka	20-30	Christian	In School-Primary	Better off	IDPs from Abyei Town
Group16	September 4	F	Ngok Dinka	15-25	Christian	In School-Primary	Better off	Returned 1999-2004
Group17	September 5	F	Ngok Dinka	35+	Traditional + Christian	No School	Poorer	Former Abductees
<b><i>UPPER NILE</i></b>								
<b>Mading, Latjor</b>								
Group 18	September 15	M	Jikany Nuer	25-45	Traditional + Christian	No School-Late Secondary	Better off	Chiefs/Chased in May '04
Group 19	September 15	F	Jikany Nuer	15-25	Christian	In School-Primary	Average	Chased in May 2004
<b>Ayod, Ayod</b>								
Group 20	September 17	M	Gawaar Nuer	15-25	Christian	In School-Primary Education	Better off	Local
Group 21	September 17	F	Gawaar Nuer	30-40	Traditional	No School	Poorer	Local
<b>Oriny, Fashoda</b>								
Group 22	October 1	M	Shilluk	45-65	Traditional + Christian	No School-Early Primary	Better off	Chief/Militia Attacks, March

REGION/FOCUS GROUP LOCATION	DATE	SEX	ETHNICITY	AGE	RELIGION	EDUCATION	ECONOMIC STATUS	SPECIAL/ OTHER
								2004
Group 23	October 1	F	Shilluk	40-70 (1=2 6)	Traditional + Christian	No School-Early Primary	Average	Local/Militia Attacks, March 2004
<b><i>EQUITORIA</i></b>								
<b>Kapoeta, Kapoeta</b>								
Group 24	September 12	M	Toposa	35+	Traditional	No School	Poorer	Traveled (village to town)
Group 25	September 12	F	Toposa	25-45	Traditional	No School	Poorer	Traveled (village to town)
<b>Yambio, Yambio</b>								
Group 26	September 23	M	Zande	25-40	Christian	Secondary- Secondary Certificate	Better off	Local
Group 27	September 23	F	Zande	18-35	Christian	Early Secondary	Average	Local
<b>Yei, Yei</b>								
Group 28	September 25	M	Kakwa	20-30	Christian	Late Secondary- Secondary Certificate	Better off	Local
Group 29	September 26	F	Mixed	20-37	Christian	No School-Early Primary	Poorer	Soldiers' wives
<b><i>NUBA/ S. KORDOFAN</i></b>								
<b>Julud, Western Jebels</b>								
Group 30	October 8	M	Julud	30-45	Muslim	No Education- Primary	Better off	Local Leaders

REGION/FOCUS GROUP LOCATION	DATE	SEX	ETHNICITY	AGE	RELIGION	EDUCATION	ECONOMIC STATUS	SPECIAL/ OTHER
Group 31	October 8	F	Julud	20-30	Muslim	Mid-Primary	Average	Local
<b><i>EXTERNAL</i></b>								
<b>Nairobi, Kenya</b>	October 15	F	Mixed	Not Speci fied	Christian	Secondary Education- Diploma	Better off	Refugees (not in camps)

## **APPENDIX C**

### **NOTES ON METHODOLOGY**

#### **1. Focus Group Research**

Focus groups are semi-structured group interviews that proceed according to a careful research design. Groups are recruited to be homogeneous (according to gender, age, education, ethnicity and/or religious affiliation) for two reasons: in order to clarify the views held by a particular sub-group of the population, and to enhance the comfort level of participants, so they feel they are among peers and that everyone involved is equally entitled to express their opinion. When done well, they are free flowing, open-ended, and often unpredictable. They are designed to elicit a wide range of ideas, attitudes, experiences, and opinions held by a selected small sample of recruited respondents on a defined topic.

Focus groups are useful in helping understand the language that people use when they discuss particular ideas or concepts. They are also useful in gaining a deeper appreciation for the motivations, feelings, and values behind participants' reactions. It is a flexible form of research that allows one to probe into issues important to the research sponsors, while permitting participants to raise unprompted other issues or concerns that might not have occurred to the researchers. The group format enables participants to participate in an exchange of ideas that may not emerge in individual in-depth interviews or quantitative surveys that rely on one-on-one questionnaires.

Focus groups are first and foremost concerned with understanding attitudes, rather than quantifying them. Because of the small numbers involved, focus group participants cannot be expected to be statistically representative of the larger population from which they are drawn, and findings ought not be generalized beyond the small number of participants. They offer insight into emerging ideas and popular attitudes on key issues, but it would be unsound to extrapolate to firm conclusions about what "all" or "most" southern Sudanese (or even the residents of a particular camp or town) believe based on such a small sample of individuals.

#### **2. Special challenges of research in Southern Sudan**

Southern Sudan has virtually no institutional infrastructure available for opinion research – neither established survey research enterprises, nor even facilities in which to conduct group discussions.

#### **3. Logistics**

The logistical challenges of conducting research in southern Sudan were immense. Twenty-one years of war have left this part of the world without significant road, rail or air infrastructure. Roads that do exist are often considered unsafe due to mines. In the rainy season, during which these focus groups were conducted, flying is the only option for covering a large portion of southern Sudan. While the United Nations provides excellent air service to southern Sudan, flights within any region are usually scheduled only every two to

four days and are sometimes available only in a certain sequence. Add to this the need to string together in-country transfers from one focus group location to another and ensure local accommodation where public facilities do not exist.

The research team experienced canceled and delayed flights, was turned around mid-air twice due to weather, spent unplanned days at sites, traveled an hour by car and then an hour by boat to get to an alternate airstrip when the intended destination was rained out. In one location, the team was obliged to travel by four-wheeler through knee-high water to get back and forth between the focus group location and the team's accommodations.

Communications across many areas in southern Sudan is limited to radio service. Thus, the quality of information received and passed on to others was largely dependent upon the radio operator. This made pre-planning for the groups in each location erratic at best. At times, the team arrived in a location to find that the radio operator had not informed our local contact of our requests for assistance with accommodation, locating facilities or the recruitment of English-speaking moderators.

#### **4. Moderators**

It was very difficult to locate and train competent moderators to lead the discussions in local languages. Groups were conducted in seven languages. The educational system of southern Sudan has been completely devastated by the civil war. Virtually all schools were closed during the war. Some studies have described the southern part of Sudan as the second least literate area in Africa. While some literate southern Sudanese have returned to the area during the ceasefire, many remain in Rumbek or Equatoria and have not yet returned to their home areas. Arabic is more commonly spoken than English (except in Equatoria), although even Arabic is not particularly common in more remote areas except near the border with the North. Due to costs and logistical issues, it was decided – despite these challenges – to train and recruit moderators in each location.

The team was, in every instance, able to recruit English-speakers within a relatively short period of time, though the quality of the moderators and their English varied. This was particularly true with the female moderators. In some cases, with moderators who appeared to need more help managing the discussion and understanding the process, an NDI staff person would attend the group and provide guidance.

#### **3. Composition of the Groups**

In order to enhance the comfort level of participants, each of the thirty-two groups was recruited to be relatively homogeneous. The groups were stratified by gender, age, ethnicity, religion, economic status and educational attainment. In this manner, each participant is more likely to feel that everyone's opinion matters equally, that there is no need to defer to another person, which encourages frankness and participation. Homogeneity of each of the groups also helps us understand the diversity of opinion that may exist within certain demographic groups.

Appendix A presents a summary description of the demographics of each of these groups. However, a number of issues affected the ability to recruit with large degree of

specificity or accuracy. In general, as we moved into the more rural areas the harder the distinctions (age, economic, religious, etc.) became. Our recruiters' English skills were diminished, and their ability to recruit the type of group we had specified lessened. As a result, we had to be a little broader with the age and education categories than would have been necessary in a more urban area. Also, since no local transportation was available, we were limited to participants who could walk to the group locations.

**Randomness & Participant Selection:** The concept of random selection and target participant demographics was explained to each recruiter. However, since we were training and using different recruiters in each area, it is likely that the methodology described was not always strictly followed. For example, there were two times when we saw a participant later who worked in one instance at the airstrip and another at the international NGO. These participants could have still been randomly recruited by it is more likely that they were well-known individuals within the area.

**Age:** It was very difficult to keep the age groups consistent for two reasons. First, the recruiters didn't always bring people strictly within the group, so, for example, we sometimes had to go with groups that were 30+ and 35+ -- to get to an appropriate number of people -- instead of the originally asked for groups of 30-40 and 40+. Second, with older groups, it was clear that some people did not know their age. One participant said she was four years old and another said she was 300. During re-screening, a couple of chiefs argued about how old the other was, and the two moderators for a women's group argued over the age of several participants during re-screening, finally providing a guess based on the number of children the women had. The women themselves were unable to provide an age or year born or anything that could help pin their age down.

**Religion:** The majority of the groups conducted were among those who identify themselves as Christians and those who say they have traditional beliefs. This is because non-Arab Muslims in southern Sudan generally did not live near the areas we visited, with the exception of a small number in Rumbek. Occasionally, we would learn that a group of non-Arab Muslims lived 30-40 kilometers from where we were, but because of the rainy season and transport issues, we were not able to access them. Likewise, our traditional belief groups are relatively few because people who practice traditional beliefs only are more likely to be in the more isolated areas. A separate issue is that there is not always a definite line between those who practice traditional beliefs and Christianity. For example, we had participants who identified themselves as Christians and then spoke of using traditional beliefs, and participants who said they practiced traditional beliefs and then spoke of "Jesus." In some cases people said they practiced traditional beliefs but were "in the process of converting" to Christianity. In general, it appeared that the younger the participant the more likely they practiced Christianity solely. Older participants were more likely to practice traditional beliefs solely or some combination of traditional beliefs and Christianity. Either way, older participants always spoke favorably of Christianity and were in support of the younger generation attending church.

**Economic Status:** We attempted, through objective measures, to organize the groups according to economic status: better off than most, average, poorer than most. The measures we used included ownership of cattle, land under cultivation, condition/size of turkul, etc. While we were able to obtain a good cross-section of all economic groups



overall, splitting the findings based on economic groups proved difficult. The recruiters' skills (or lack thereof) are one reason for this, but also, there were some places, like Alek for example, that were clearly poorer than others in different areas of southern Sudan, even though the participants there were about average for the area and are categorized as "average" in Appendix A.

**Experience:** One of the successes of the groups was the number of the different types of experiences we were able to capture, with one exception. We were hoping we could conduct more groups with IDPs. However, much like the situation with non-Arab Muslims, when we were in the general vicinity of IDPs, we were often too far away due to the rainy season and transport issues to access them.

**Education:** It was difficult to recruit according to clearly defined demarcations of educational attainment. For example, among those currently in primary school, the age ranged from 6 to 30. The meaningful divisions that emerged were little or no schooling; intermediate schooling, which meant finished primary or achieved some secondary; and the rare high school graduate with in some cases additional training, which was only encountered in the group in Nairobi.

**Women's Groups:** Due to significant issues with the English skills of women available to moderate groups, we used either a sole male moderator or a male and a female moderator together to facilitate many of the women's groups.

**Muslim Group:** The one Muslim group convened in a non-Muslim majority area (the Dinka area of Rumbek) was accompanied by a great deal of suspicion among the participants, who at first did not trust the moderators.

#### 4. Gaps in the research.

Any research project, particularly one organized in such difficult circumstances as this one was, will suffer some shortcomings. There are two main perspectives missing in this first set of focus groups it is important to note, in addition to those ethnic and language groups not touched:

- **Remote peoples.** Any researchers in southern Sudan must also admit to an "airstrip" bias, particularly during the rainy season. To some degree, researchers are forced to pick available airstrips during the rainy season and once in a location are confined to choosing participants who live relatively near the airstrip due to impassable roads. We made every effort to visit a mix of more and less commonly used airstrips.
- **Garrison towns.** The team was unable to access people residing in any of the towns controlled by the Government of Sudan, some or many of whom will presumably become integrated into the society and politics of New Sudan in the near future.

## **APPENDIX D:**

### **MODERATOR GUIDELINES**

**Southern Sudan Focus Groups  
August -- October 2004)**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I work for the New Sudan Center for Statistics and Evaluation, a Sudanese organization that is trying to learn more about what the citizens of South Sudan think about important issues in our country. I am the facilitator for today's discussion.

- There are no right or wrong answers to the questions I will ask.
- Everyone's opinion is equally important. We want to hear from each and every one of you.
- If you disagree with what someone has said, that is OK.
  
- This discussion is between only those of us who are in this room.
- I have this small tape recorder, like a journalist, so that I can be sure that I capture your words accurately for the research.
- But no one will know which person said what statement.
- The other person here is taking notes in the event our tape recorder breaks down.
- Only speak one at a time, and loudly, or the tape recorder will not pick you up.

Thank you. Now let us begin.

#### **II. COUNTRY/COMMUNITY DIRECTION**

1. How are things going in southern Sudan these days? Are they going in the right direction OR in the wrong direction? Why?
2. What is the best thing about what is happening in [this area] now? Why?
3. What is the worst thing about what is happening in [this area] now? Why?
4. Do you feel things are better in [this area] than for other people in southern Sudan OR do you think other people in southern Sudan have it better than you?
  - 4a. Who are the people who have it better than you do? Why?
  - 4b. Who are the people who have it worse than you do? Why?
5. What will life be like here in [this area] in the next year or two? Why?

*[Note: In the earlier focus groups, this was asked as what will happen in the future and/or in the next six years. To get answers that were clearer, we changed the questions to ask about the more immediate future.]*

6. What will make the future good or bad?

6a. What is the best thing that could happen for the future of this area?

6b. What is the worst thing that could happen for the future of this area?

### III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

7. Where do you get news about what is happening in other parts of Sudan, outside of this area? Any others?

7b. Which of these sources of information do you trust OR not trust?

8. Who do you trust the most to provide leadership to your community? Others you trust?

8a. What person or group do you trust to lead southern Sudan? Others you trust?

9. Would you say that you trusted members of your community more OR less than before the war?

9a. Would you say you assisted others more OR less before the war?

### IV. ISSUES OF CONCERN

10. List the TOP three problems you have in [this area].

10a. What can be done about these problems?

10b. What can you do to solve this problem in [your area]?

11. I will read you a list of important issues & problems. What is the NUMBER ONE priority – the one that needs to be addressed or fixed first -- for [this area]? I know all of them are important but I want you to tell me which is NUMBER ONE.

The issues are the following:

- Ending Hunger
- Education for children
- Land rights
- Freedom to worship
- Keeping the peace
- Health care

- HIV/AIDS
- Clean water
- IDPs & refugees returning to home areas
- Demobilizing soldiers
- Having elections

## V. PERSONALITIES

12. I am going to give you the names of some important people and I would like you to say the first words that come to mind. It can be a positive or negative comment or both

- *[Note: Sometimes we used the name of a local singer as the first personality and sometimes we did not.]*
- United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan
- U.S. President George Bush
- President Omar Hassan al-Bashir
- National Islamic Front Leader Hassan al-Turabi
- Vice President Ali Osman Mohammed Taha
- Sadiq el Mahdi
- Abel Alier
- Riek Machar
- Lam Akol
- Joseph Oduho [EQT only]
- Joseph Lagu [EQT only]
- Ismayl Koney [UPN only]
- Paulino Matip [UPN only]
- Yusef Kuwa [Nuba only]
- Mauk Agar [SBN only]
- Salva Kiir
- Dr. John Garang de Mabior

13. What are the positive things that come to mind about John Garang? Anything different?

14. What are the negative things that come to mind when you think of John Garang? Anything different?

*[Note: Sometimes this was asked more along the lines of, "Is there something he could improve upon?" or "Is there anything you have heard that is not good (or the best) about him or what things he may have done?"]*

15. Does John Garang represent you and your views – in other words, does he talk about the same things you believe and think?

16. Do you think John Garang is doing the right thing during this peace for your community?

17. Is John Garang interested only in the people of southern Sudan OR in all of Sudan?

17a. **[If answered all of Sudan, then ask:]** Is it good OR bad that he is interested all of the people of Sudan?

17b. Is he interested in the Arabs too?

## VI. OTHER LEADERSHIP

18. How are problems solved in your community?

19. If peace stays, should who resolves disagreements between clans, sections or tribes change?

*[Note: Sometimes this question was skipped because we were getting the same answers to a question about a government of southern Sudan getting involved in disputes, which is later on in the questionnaire.]*

20. Should what your chief does for you change if peace stays?

21. Have you heard anything about a gathering of the chiefs at something called the New Site Conference in July?

21a. **[If yes, ask:]** Tell me what took place there.

22. What things do you think are good to have in a leader? Give me three things.

23. When I say ‘the Government in Khartoum,’ what do you think of?

24. Are the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) & Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) different OR are they the same? If they are different, how are they different?

24a. Do you feel safer when the soldiers of the SPLA are nearby OR do you feel less safe?

24b. What is the best thing about the SPLM?

24c. What is the thing that worries you most about the SPLM?

*[Note: 24c. was sometimes also asked as, “What could the SPLM improve upon?”]*

25. Has anyone here heard of the:

*[Note: Organizations that were asked about from among the following were dependent upon which were relevant to the area and which would possibly be recognized by the participants. In general, there was very low recognition of any of the organizations, so if there was a time constraint, we sometimes eliminated some or all of them.]*

- 25a. New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC)
- What have you heard about it? Good or bad?
- 25b. South Sudan Independence Movement (SSIM)
- What have you heard about it? Good or bad?
- 25c. People's Progressive Party (PPP) [EQT only]
- What have you heard about it? Good or bad?
- 25d. National Democratic Alliance (NDA)
- What have you heard about it? Good or bad?
- 25e. Umma Party
- What have you heard about it? Good or bad?
- 25f. National Congress Party (NCP)
- What have you heard about it? Good or bad?
- 25g. National Islamic Front (NIF)
- What have you heard about it? Good or bad?
- 25h. Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association (SRRA)
- What have you heard about it? Good or bad?
- 25i. Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) [EQT only]
- What have you heard about it? Good or bad?
- 25j.. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) [EQT only]
- What have you heard about it? Good or bad?
- 25k. The Equatoria Defence Force (EDF) [EQT only]
- What have you heard about it? Good or bad?
- 25l. SPLA-Nasir [UPN only]
- What have you heard about it? Good or bad?
- 25m. SPLA-United [UPN only]
- What have you heard about it? Good or bad?
- 25n. Southern Sudan Defense Force (SSDF) [UPN only]
- What have you heard about it? Good or bad?
- 25o. Sudan African Congress (SAC) [UPN only]
- What have you heard about it? Good or bad?
- 25p. Sudan People's Federal Party (SPFP) [UPN only]

- What have you heard about it? Good or bad?
- 25q. Beja Congress [SBN only]
- What have you heard about it? Good or bad?
- 25r. Tigraean People's Liberation Front (TPLF) [UPN & SBN only]
- What have you heard about it? Good or bad?
- 25s. Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) [UPN & SBN only]
- What have you heard about it? Good or bad?

## VII. OTHER ACTORS

26. Who are the friends of the people of southern Sudan in the international community and/or from other countries?

- 26a. What do you think of the United Nations?  
26b. What do you think of the Government of Egypt?  
26c. What do you think of NGOs?  
26d. What do you think of the Mechanized Farming Corporation? [SBN & Nuba only]  
26e. What do you think of [SBN & Nuba only, unless moderator also recognizes any in UPN]
- Talisman Energy
  - Arakis
  - Greater Nile Petroleum Corporation
  - Chinese National Petroleum Corporation
  - Sudapet
  - Qatari Gulf Petroleum Corporation
  - International Petroleum Company
  - The Malaysians
  - Chevron

27. Tell me quickly whether you have positive feelings or negative feelings or both about the following groups:

- 27a. Police  
27b. Soldiers  
27c. Pastors  
27d. Imams  
27e. Traditional Religious Leaders  
27f. Traditional Healers  
27g. Customary Courts  
27h. Refugees & IDPs  
27i. Black Muslims [*Note: Wasn't asked consistently until later groups.*]

- 27j. The Muslim Brothers [SBN only]
- 27k. Jonglei Canal [UPN only]
- 27l. The Dinka [UPN & EQT only]
- 27m. The Shilluk [UPN only to Nuers]
- 27n. The Nuer [BEG, EQT & Shilluk area only]
- 27o. The Uduk [SBN only]
- 27p. The Beja [SBN only]
- 27q. The Murle [UPN only]
- 27r. The Bul Nuer [UPN only]
- 27s. The Luo Nuer [UPN only]
- 27t. The Jikany Nuer [UPN only, among Gawaar & Shilluk]
- 27u. The Gawaar Nuer [UPN only, among Jikany & Shilluk]
- 27v. The Missirya [Northern BEG & Nuba only]
- 27w. The Baqqara [Northern BEG & Nuba only]

### **VIII. WAR AND PEACE**

28. What are the issues that caused the war?

28a. Is there a solution for these issue(s)?

29. Who is responsible for all the fighting? Any others responsible?

30. Did one side or the other “win” the war? If yes, who?

31. Is the war really over now?

32.. Do the people of southern Sudan consider themselves one people or a lot of separate peoples?

33. From the following list, which would be best for you and your community?

1. A government of unity with North & South staying together as one country and southerners holding high-level positions in the government in Khartoum. In this system, the south would have a lot of freedom.

**OR**

2. The holding of elections in both North & South Sudan where ALL of the people of Sudan vote AT THE SAME TIME for a new government in Khartoum.

**OR**

3. The holding of an election where the people of southern Sudan choose if they want to stay united with the North as one country or they want to separate & create a new country.



- 33a. Why do you feel this way?
34. What are the things that are listed in the peace agreement?
- 34a. **[If specifics are known, then ask:]** Do you think the things you listed in the agreement are a good idea OR a bad idea?
35. Do you think other people or groups should have been involved in the peace negotiations between Khartoum & the SPLM? If so, who?
- 35a. Should NGOs have taken part of in the negotiations?
36. Were people in your area consulted before the peace negotiations? **[If no, ask:]** Should they have been consulted?
37. If I told you the agreement provides for southern Sudanese leaders to be placed in high-level positions in the Government in Khartoum, would you think that is a good thing OR bad thing? Why?
38. If the agreement says that for the first three years after a peace agreement has been signed some southerners will be in the northern parliament and some northerners will be in the southern parliament, would that be a good thing OR a bad thing? Why?
39. If the agreement says that after a period of **SIX** years, the people of southern Sudan will have the chance to vote on whether or not to become an independent country, is that a good thing or a bad thing? Why?
- 39a. Is six years the right amount of time to wait for this vote of self-determination? *[Note: This question was not asked until later in the groups.]*
40. **[ASK ONLY OF GROUPS WHO HAVE EXPRESSED A PREFERENCE FOR SEPARATION]** If John Garang decided that a government of national unity was the best option, would you support him if he tried to make a government of national unity work OR not?
- [Note: This question was added later in the groups and was revised several times to try to make it clearer to the moderators/participants.]*
41. What is the one thing that is most likely to break the peace (to make war return) in southern Sudan?
- 41a. Whose job is it to keep the peace?
42. Do you trust the Government of Sudan in Khartoum to do what they say they will do under the peace agreement?

## IX. EXPECTATIONS

43. How long do you think it should take from now to set up a government of southern Sudan?

*[Note: Due to confusion in some groups, clarified in those groups as, "How long from the time when the final peace is signed".]*

43a. How long should it take before you see any progress (for example, the building of schools, health facilities, roads, etc. )?

44. Do you think a new government of southern Sudan will be able to provide any support or payment, whether it be money or land or something else, for your problems during the war?

44a. Do you feel there are certain groups which deserve more support or payment -- whether it is money, land or something else -- than others from a government of southern Sudan?

45. Do you think a new government of southern Sudan will settle past problems you had with your neighbors -- other clans, sections or tribes -- before or during the war?

45a. **[If yes to 45, then ask:]** What will happen if the government does not get involved in these problems?

46. Who owns the land within the south? Assume northerners/Arabs are not involved. This question is only about the south. Who owns the land within the south?

*[Note: This question was clarified in later groups due to the fact that participants would answer that the southerners owned the land, not the Arabs.]*

46a. Should people be compensated for land they lost during the war?

46b. Should IDPs & refugees be allowed to re-take the land they lost when they were displaced?

## X. REINTEGRATION

47. Will demobilized soliders (who are disarmed & returned to civilian life) be welcomed back into your community?

47a. Should they be helped by a government of southern Sudan in their return to civilian life by getting things such as money, food, land? Is this fair?

48. Will IDPs and refugees be welcomed back into your community?

48a. Should they be helped by a government of southern Sudan in their return by getting things such as money, food, land? Is this fair?

49. Will people who have lived outside of southern Sudan (for example in Uganda, Kenya or America) for most or all of their lives welcomed back into your community?

49a. Should these people be helped by a government of southern Sudan in their return by getting things such as money, food, land? Is this fair?

49b. If they are educated, should they be given positions of importance in government and the community?

## **XI. RECONCILIATION**

50. Should crimes – like rape, murder & abduction – that were committed by soldiers, militias or others during the war be punished OR it is best to move on to the future and forget the past?

## **XII. DARFUR**

51. Have you heard about the recent events in Darfur?

51a. Do you feel bad for the people of Darfur who have been driven from their homes by the *Janjawid*?

52. Will events in Darfur affect the peace here in southern Sudan?

## **XIII. DEMOCRACY AND RELIGION**

53. Are you familiar with the term ‘democracy’?

53a. **[If yes]** What does it mean to you?

53b. Will democracy work in southern Sudan?

54. What do you think is the most important thing to have in a government?

***55. Is it good for every person – no matter what their religion, tribe or clan – to have equal rights OR are there some people who should not be have full rights under the law?***

56. If I told you the peace agreement says there will be “freedom of worship & belief” is this a good thing OR bad thing?

56a. **[IF THE ANSWER IS A GOOD THING, THEN ASK:]** Is it okay for someone who wants to practice Islam in the southern Sudan to do so OR not?

[*Note: This question was added later in the groups.*]

56b. **Islam**

- i. Can Islam & democracy exist together OR not?
- ii. Is Sharia a good thing OR a bad thing?

56c. **Christianity**

- i. Can Christianity & democracy exist together OR not?

56d. **Traditional Spiritual Beliefs**

- i. Can traditional spiritual beliefs & democracy exist together OR not?

[*Note: At the beginning of the groups, there were general questions about each of the religions, but these were dropped in later groups because they became repetitive based on the answer to other questions.*]

#### **XIV. ELECTIONS**

57. Have you ever participated in an election?

57a. **[If yes, then ask]** Please tell me about the process.

58. Do you think elections are a good way to choose political leaders in southern Sudan?

59. Would a system that allowed traditional leaders to make big decisions for you **be better than having elections?**

60. If the people of southern Sudan elect a parliament, should it include only people who agree with each other OR is it okay to include people that have different views and may disagree with each other?

[*Note: Not always asked because the translation was difficult or because people did not understand parliament. Even when asked, sometimes the answers were confusing.*]

61. Should a parliament be composed of people from the same POLITICAL party OR people from different POLITICAL parties?

[*Note: Not always asked because the translation was difficult or because people did not understand parliament. Even when asked, sometimes the answers were confusing.*]

62. Should chiefs be represented in the parliament OR not?

63. Who do you think would win an election for presidency of southern Sudan if the election were held TODAY?

64. If John Garang ran and several other southerners decided to run for the presidency of southern Sudan, and John Garang did not win the election, what would happen?

[*Note: In later groups, we changed this question to a head-to-head contest between John Garang, Salva Kiir, Riek Machar and any other person the participant wanted to name. This produced much clearer answers.*]

## **XV. WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

65. Should the role of women change in the Southern Sudan?

[*Note: Due to the word "role" being confusing to some moderators, this was changed in some groups to, "Should women's lives change in the Southern Sudan?".*]

66. Should women and men be equal in:

- Decide how many children to have?
- Decide which children should go to school?
- Earn money by working?
- Be present in political discussions?
- Choose our leaders?
- Hold high-level government positions?
- Own assets such as land and cattle?

[*Note: This question was changed after the first few groups, from "Are women & men equal" to "Should women & men be equal".*]

67. Should widows be able to keep the cattle and land of their husbands?

68. Do you think it is important for all girls to go to school?

68a. When girls don't go to school, what keeps them from going?

69. Should the government pass (or write) new laws that protect women?

69a. **[If yes, then ask:]** WHAT laws should be passed?

## **APPENDIX E**

### **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

**Traci D. Cook** works as an independent consultant to several organizations, including the National Democratic Institute. An experienced opinion researcher who has done similar work elsewhere in Africa, she previously served as the senior director for strategic and corporate communications at the Women's National Basketball Association and as Vice President of Marketing Communications at Shepardson, Stern + Kaminsky in New York, where she supervised and analyzed focus group research for Fortune 500 companies. As Country Program Director in Malawi between 1993 and 1996, she also designed and conducted a series of focus groups on democracy and governance. Complementing her work in the field of international development and in the private sector is her experience as the political director for the Mississippi Democratic Party, legislative work on Capitol Hill, and research work for various U.S. House and Senate races.

**Thomas O. Melia** is Director of Research at the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, and Adjunct Professor in the School of Foreign Service, both at Georgetown University. During more than a dozen years at the National Democratic Institute, from 1988 to 2001, he held various senior positions, including Director of Programs in the Middle East (1993-1996) and Vice President for Programs (1998-2001). He has worked as a professional opinion researcher, at the firm of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner, Inc. Earlier in his career, Melia was Legislative Assistant for Foreign and Defense Policy to Senator Daniel P. Moynihan (D-NY) between 1980 and 1986, and was Associate Director of the AFL-CIO's Free Trade Union Institute 1986 to 1988. He has in recent years directed opinion research programs on democratic development issues in post-war Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as in Indonesia, Serbia, Bahrain and Northern Ireland.