



## SEARCHING FOR A PATH TO PEACE

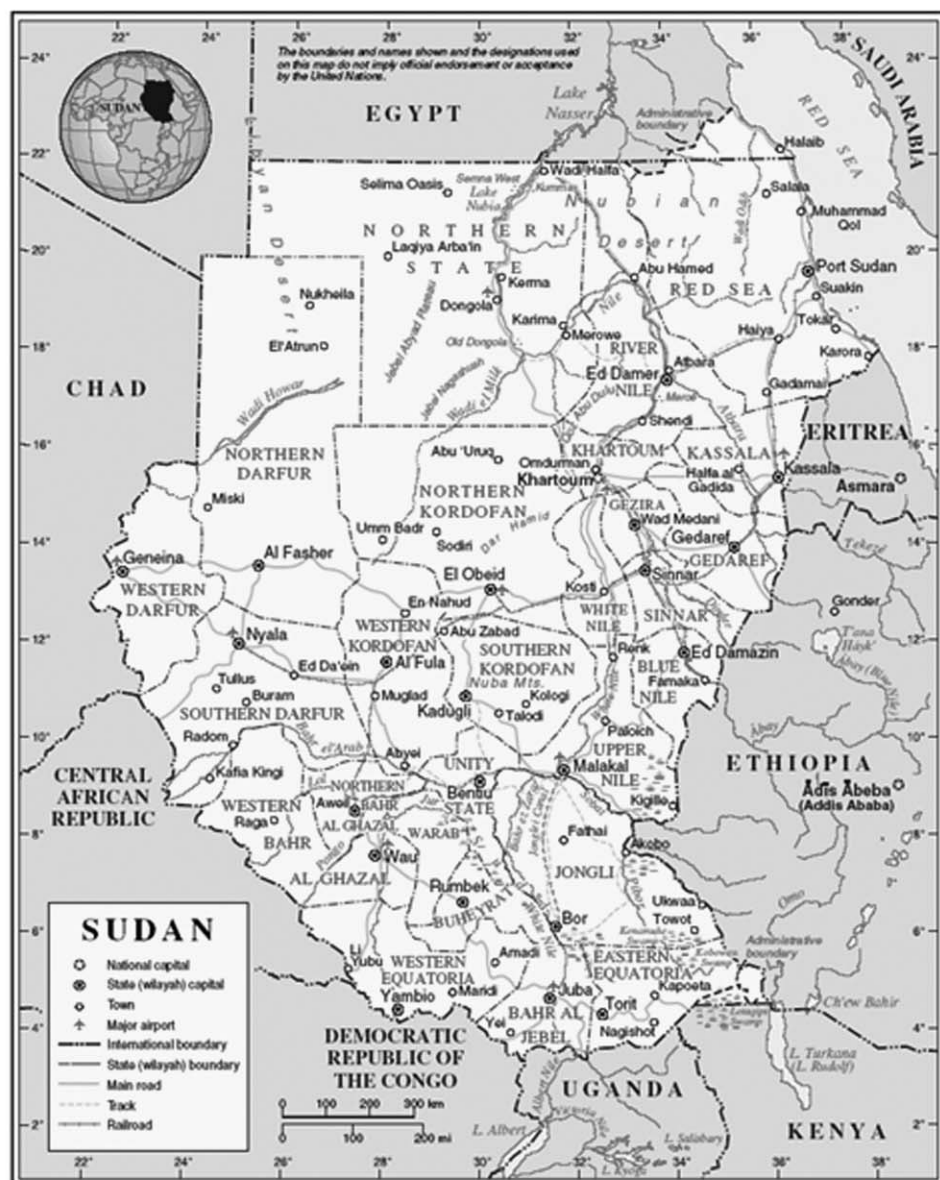
REACTION TO THE DEATH OF JOHN GARANG  
AND ONE YEAR OF THE CPA

Findings from Focus Groups with Men and Women  
Across Southern Sudan and the Three Areas  
Conducted November 16-December 10, 2005

By Traci D. Cook

April 12, 2006

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs



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## NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing democratic values, practices and institutions. NDI works with democrats in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections and promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

Democracy depends on legislatures that represent citizens and oversee the executive, independent judiciaries that safeguard the rule of law, political parties that are open and accountable, and elections in which voters freely choose their representatives in government. Acting as a catalyst for democratic development, NDI bolsters the institutions and processes that allow democracy to flourish.

***Build Political and Civic Organizations:*** NDI helps build the stable, broad-based and well-organized institutions that form the foundation of a strong civic culture. Democracy depends on these mediating institutions—the voice of an informed citizenry, which link citizens to their government and to one another by providing avenues for participation in public policy.

***Safeguard Elections:*** NDI promotes open and democratic elections. Political parties and governments have asked NDI to study electoral codes and to recommend improvements. The Institute also provides technical assistance for political parties and civic groups to conduct voter education campaigns and to organize election monitoring programs. NDI is a world leader in election monitoring, having organized international delegations to monitor elections in dozens of countries, helping to ensure that polling results reflect the will of the people.

***Promote Openness and Accountability:*** NDI responds to requests from leaders of government, parliament, political parties and civic groups seeking advice on matters from legislative procedures to constituent service to the balance of civil-military relations in a democracy. NDI works to build legislatures and local governments that are professional, accountable, open and responsive to their citizens.

International cooperation is key to promoting democracy effectively and efficiently. It also conveys a deeper message to new and emerging democracies that while autocracies are inherently isolated and fearful of the outside world, democracies can count on international allies and an active support system. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., with field offices in every region of the world, NDI complements the skills of its staff by enlisting volunteer experts from around the world, many of whom are veterans of democratic struggles in their own countries and share valuable perspectives on democratic development.

## SOUTHERN SUDAN CENTRE FOR CENSUS, STATISTICS AND EVALUATION

The Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan has provided for the establishment of Southern Sudan Centre for Census, Statistics and Evaluation as an autonomous statistics bureau authorized, *inter alia*, to (i) collect, compile, analyze and publish all official statistical information on economic, social, demographic, environmental and general activities and conditions of the people of Southern Sudan; (ii) conduct all censuses and surveys that are carried out throughout Southern Sudan; (iii) monitor and evaluate social impacts of public policies, projects and programmes; and (iv) monitor the progress of poverty alleviation and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in Southern Sudan. The Constitution has also provided for the appointment of a Board of Directors as the highest policy-making body of the Southern Sudan Centre for Census, Statistics and Evaluation.

The SSCCSE provides expertise in data collection through surveys and assessments, information dissemination and, importantly, the provision of capacity building for the Centre's stakeholders. In Southern Sudan, the Centre works in collaboration with public institutions such as the Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry, Education, Science and Technology, Finance and Economic Planning, Environment and Wildlife Conservation, Mining and Industry, Health, State, and county authorities, as well as civil society institutions such as farmers' associations, chambers of commerce, professional associations, non-governmental organizations, women and youth groups, and research and international institutions. Currently, SSCCSE collects and analyzes information on agriculture and crop yields, climate and market prices, and health and education, among others. The Centre also plays a critical role as a point-of-reference on statistical methodology and standards in Southern Sudan.

## PREFACE

The death of Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) Chairman, President of the Government of Southern Sudan and Sudanese First Vice President John Garang on July 30, 2005, sent shockwaves throughout Sudan and the international community. Riots that occurred immediately following his death raised fears that the peace process would collapse, but the SPLM successfully stabilized the situation by reinforcing its commitment to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which had been signed just seven months earlier. Nevertheless, many challenges remain, and Southerners continue to wrestle with what Garang's passing means for their future. As the one-year anniversary of the CPA approached, NDI and the SSCCSE undertook this research to better understand the response of ordinary men and women to the events they have witnessed over the past year. This report is based on a series of 32 focus groups conducted in 14 locations across Southern Sudan and the Three Areas between November 16 and December 1, 2005. An additional two groups were conducted among Sudanese Diaspora in Nairobi on December 10. In total, 349 Southern Sudanese participated in the 34 groups in 15 locations.

**Focus Group Results and Usage.** Focus groups are semi-structured group discussions directed by a moderator and following a pre-set guideline. Unless otherwise noted, the conclusions presented here represent views commonly, and repeatedly, cited during the groups. The interaction between participants in a focus group setting provides insight into how citizens think and feel and is an even more powerful means of understanding why these attitudes exist. Information gathered in this way takes into consideration citizen values and needs and is critical to helping decision-makers test their assumptions and incorporate the will of the people into policy-making.

**A Snapshot of Public Opinion.** Any research, including focus groups, is only a snapshot of public opinion at the moment it is undertaken. Public opinion is dynamic and evolves as people experience and react to major events, as was demonstrated in this research by the change of attitudes since the death of SPLM Chairman John Garang. Therefore, the conclusions reached in this report can only be said to represent opinions in late 2005. NDI and SSCCSE are conducting focus groups in Southern Sudan approximately once every six months, and so focus group research will continue to capture any change in attitudes and measure that change against baseline information from previous research.

**A Qualitative Research Tool.** Focus groups are a qualitative, not a quantitative, research tool. Although focus groups are a superior research method in teasing out the meanings behind commonly-held attitudes, the total number of participants in focus group research is always relatively small and thus, it is not statistically representative of the larger population. This report reflects the opinions of the 349 citizens from Southern Sudan and the Three Areas who participated in the focus groups. General terms, such as "people," "citizens," "Southerners" and "Southern Sudanese," are used throughout as a convenience to represent the attitudes of these participants; however, the Focus Group Participant Demographics chart as well as the Methodology Notes appearing at the end of the report should be consulted by all readers to understand the sub-set of Sudanese interviewed for this research.

**Location of Groups.** The focus groups outlined in this report were conducted in locations inside Southern Sudan, the formerly opposition-held territories of the Three Areas and in Nairobi. Thirty-two of these group discussions were carried out across 14 locations in formerly-named regions of Bahr el Ghazal, Equatoria, Upper Nile and the Three Areas<sup>1</sup>. The fifteenth location was Nairobi, where two groups were conducted. (See Appendix A for a list of focus group locations.) References concerning the attitudes of 'people in the Three Areas' or 'citizens in the Three Areas' relate only to Sudanese in the formerly opposition-held territories and not to those areas as a whole. In addition, no groups were conducted in refugee camps outside of Sudan, and although Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) may have participated in some groups as individuals, no groups were conducted in areas known as IDP camps.

**Composition of Groups.** Focus groups are organized to be as homogeneous as possible to ensure that participants are comfortable in expressing their opinions and to determine whether perspectives differ based on the type of participant in the group. The focus groups in this report were stratified by gender, ethnicity, age, religion and education. Single ethnicity groups were convened among four sections of Dinka, two sections of Nuer, Shilluk, Luo and Kakwa. In areas where several ethnic groups live in close proximity and interact with each other frequently, we conducted multi-ethnic group discussions. These included groups in Juba, Maridi and Nimule in Equatoria, Wau in Bahr el Ghazal, Kauda in the

<sup>1</sup> The Three Areas are Abyei, South Kordofan and Blue Nile State. The focus groups were conducted in formerly opposition-controlled parts of the Three Areas, and so the terms "Nuba Mountains" and "Southern Blue Nile" are used here to indicate that the views cited are from these areas as opposed to representing the whole of South Kordofan or Blue Nile State.



Nuba Mountains, Kurmuk in Southern Blue Nile and the Diaspora groups in Nairobi. (See Appendix A for a further information on participant demographics.) In this report, if the participant quoted is from a single ethnicity focus group, this is duly noted. If the participant quoted is from a multi-ethnic focus group, only gender and location are used to identify the participant.

NDI's ongoing citizen participation program in Southern Sudan is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) through a multi-year grant. The inclusion of regular focus group research in NDI's wider Sudan initiative is intended to help Southern Sudan's policy makers better understand the views of its citizens, as they take important decisions that will shape the lives of their constituents. NDI and the Southern Sudan Centre for Census, Statistics and Evaluation (SSCCSE) would like to acknowledge the USAID officials in Nairobi, who provided substantive and critical assistance to the focus group questionnaire by offering guidance on appropriate subjects and sharing their intimate knowledge of Southern Sudan's unique political situation.

NDI's local partner in this effort was the SSCCSE, an organization that has been involved with the focus group work since its inception. A local partner provides valuable insight into indigenous cultures and languages, which in turn improves the quality of data. As such, the Centre and its then-Executive Director, Dr. Luka Biong Deng, were a key part of the successful completion of these groups. The Executive Director provided objective and professional advice on the drafting of the questionnaire and reviewed the chosen focus group locations to ensure an appropriate distribution of ethnicities in the groups. In addition, the staff of SSCCSE provided logistical and administrative assistance to the project and played a significant role in organizing and conducting the focus groups in Rumbek. The entire staff of SSCCSE in Rumbek deserves our thanks. NDI also owes a debt of gratitude to the local and international NGOs that assisted with staffing, accommodation and transportation in each location. Without the hospitality offered by these groups, the research would not have been possible.

Several NDI staff contributed to the focus group research and this report. NDI Sudan Resident Representative Kym McCarty directed all planning and preparation for the groups and oversaw the development and approval of the moderator guideline. NDI Sudan Program Officer Mary Kagunyi recruited Southern Sudanese moderators from the Nairobi Diaspora, led logistical preparations and supervised focus group moderators in three locations. NDI Sudan Program Officer Susan Stigant supervised the focus groups in one location. Joseph Andrews and Jim Della-Giacoma of NDI's Washington office joined the team in Southern Sudan, supervising focus group moderators in one location each. Traci Cook, an experienced opinion research consultant, designed the research framework, drafted the focus group guideline, trained the focus group moderators, supervised the research in the field and authored this report.

This is the third in a series of bi-annual focus groups NDI and SSCCSE will conduct during the next three years. The first Southern Sudan focus groups conducted in late 2004 investigated citizen attitudes toward peace and governance, and the second round in early 2005 focused on citizen input into constitutional principles and protections. This latest research is a return to a general exploration of opinions on peace and governance, but, instead of simply commenting on these as concepts, this time around participants evaluate their real-life experience with the implementation of the CPA and the establishment of the Government of National Unity and the Government of Southern Sudan.

By comparing the 2004 results to the latest data, this research can offer some measure of how attitudes have changed in Southern Sudan over the past year. While this comparison reveals that the shock of John Garang's death has contributed to a significant decline in hope for the future, the desire for peace and prosperity has not diminished. Through this research, the voices of the citizens of Southern Sudan and the Three Areas can be heard as they diligently search for a way forward and call upon their leaders to guide them so they do not "remain in the darkness."<sup>2</sup> NDI and SSCCSE are pleased to have this opportunity to contribute in a small way to the ongoing dialogue between the citizens of Southern Sudan and the Three Areas and their leaders.

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<sup>2</sup> Full quote: "We are still crying, for we remain in darkness." (Woman, Mapel)

## THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

As Southern Sudanese and people of the formerly opposition-held parts of the Three Areas struggle to recover from the devastating loss of their leader, they welcomed the opportunity to give voice to their thoughts and fears about what the future may hold. Below is a sampling of quotes from this focus group exercise:

- *We feel lonely because we lost our only father [John Garang] who would have held our lives carefully like an egg.*
- *It [Garang's death] wasn't an accident because all are keeping quiet...*
- *They [SPLM leaders] did a good job by not fighting over that position of John Garang after his death...It was peaceful.*
- *We believe there is a lot of Garang left behind that can continue from where he left [off]. For he died, but his vision is still alive.*
- *Since the death of Garang, things are going slow...They [SPLM leaders] aren't taking care of the CPA.*
- *Peace is just like a slogan. Most of the things in the CPA are not being implemented.*
- *Peace will work because the international community is there with us.*
- *Kiir got his experience from the late Dr. Garang...he will be a good leader since he will not make any step out of Garang's vision.*
- *He [Kiir] is courageous and a man who keeps his promises...he is a strong man...a man of trust...a man of principles.*
- *There is nothing bad about him [Kiir], but he has become unreachable unlike Garang's case.*
- *It [the GONU] is a unity government in theory only.*
- *If not backed by Bashir, why do they [the LRA] still exist?...Bashir must be backing Kony.*
- *Why do they talk about South and North? They should talk about blacks and Arabs. Where does Nuba belong?*
- *We will vote for separation [in the 2011 referendum] even if it will take away our peace.*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. **Hope that many placed in the CPA to bring social and economic change is quickly fading as few tangible signs of progress - particularly in development and security - are visible in local communities.** Attitudes have shifted in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas since the NDI/SSCCSE study in the region in late 2004<sup>3</sup>, when participants were confident that the region was heading in a direction that would not only bring peace but would also measurably improve their lives. Just over a year later, Southerners<sup>4</sup> and people of the Three Areas<sup>5</sup> are now much more likely to say that there are mixed signs - some positive and some negative - about the region's future or that the region is unequivocally on the wrong track. The perception that "nothing has changed" - a common refrain from participants - explains why many have begun to question the worth of the CPA.

2. **With John Garang's death, Southerners and people in the Three Areas believe that they have lost not only someone great and important for their cause, but also a leader who possessed irreplaceable talents and abilities.** The incredible grief and pain many feel over Garang's death cuts across all ethnic groups - including the Nuer, Shilluk and various tribes in Equatoria - and there is a widespread belief that his death represents a great and tangible loss that the South and the Three Areas will have to struggle to overcome. Much of the loss of hope that the CPA will bring about change can be attributed to concern about a future without him. Participants believe that John Garang possessed unique leadership abilities and thus had placed great faith in him to deliver on the promise of peace. In his absence, almost all feel that the implementation of the CPA has stalled and that the pace of development has slowed. Although few signs of progress were apparent prior to his death, there is a powerful sense that, if Garang were alive today, the South and the Three Areas would have made greater strides toward peace and development.

3. **There is a widespread belief that John Garang's death was a deliberate act perpetrated by "Arab" interests, and the silence of the SPLM and the international community on the cause of Garang's death has contributed to this belief.** Almost every aspect of the fatal flight and its aftermath is highlighted as suspicious: questions about the 'black box,' condition of the plane, rumors of extra passengers on the flight, the delay in the announcement of the death and timing of the death, among others. For some, there is simply no explanation that makes sense other than John Garang's death was the result of a deliberate act. Beyond these issues, however, participants also feel they have been purposely kept in the dark about Dr. Garang's death and view the silence about the event, particularly from trusted sources such as the SPLM and the international community, as validation of their beliefs.<sup>6</sup> The pervasive belief that the "Northern government" was somehow involved in Garang's death has significant implications for the population's confidence in the CPA and long-term peace.

4. **Southerners and citizens in the Three Areas are impressed with the smooth transition of power orchestrated by the SPLM following John Garang's death, and say that Dr. Garang's work and vision will continue to show them the way forward.** Participants understand the necessity of getting beyond the loss of their "great leader." What gives them the will to move on is a strong belief that John Garang had set them on the right path before his death and that by being true to his legacy, they can achieve what he had envisioned. Participants express a degree of pride, and relief, over how SPLM leaders responded to Garang's death. In particular, the SPLM is applauded for its quick and peaceful succession in leadership and, above all, its commitment to keeping the movement united. The SPLM's success at negotiating those difficult days made believers of many that the SPLM represents something greater than just one man.

5. **Confidence in the peace process is waning, with most saying that Garang's death, North-South history and CPA violations mean the current peace will be short-lived. Instead of saying "if peace lasts," participants are much more likely today to say, "peace will not last."** The likelihood of peace becoming permanent is something that

<sup>3</sup> See the December 2004 NDI/SSCCSE report, *On the Threshold of Peace: Perspectives from the People of New Sudan*.

<sup>4</sup> This report reflects the opinions of the 349 citizens of Southern Sudan and the Three Areas who participated in the focus groups. General terms, such as "people," "citizens," "Southerners" and "Southern Sudanese," are used throughout as a convenience to represent the attitudes of these participants; however the Preface to this report as well as Appendix A: Focus Group Participant Demographics chart and Appendix B: Methodology Notes appearing at the end of the report should be consulted by all readers to understand the sub-set of Southern Sudanese and people in the Three Areas interviewed for this research.

<sup>5</sup> Any references to 'people of the Three Areas' in this report relate only to citizens in formerly opposition-held areas of the Three Areas, not the areas as a whole.

<sup>6</sup> An official report into the circumstances surrounding John Garang's death was released following this research, but it is unclear to what extent the results of that report have been communicated to people in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas.

Southerners and people in the Three Areas have expressed uncertainty about in past studies.<sup>7</sup> In the past, while all hoped for peace, most were only willing to talk about it in conditional terms. Now, that uncertainty has largely turned to pessimism. John Garang's death and the resulting loss of knowledge and relationships with the international community and Khartoum officials are a primary reason for this pessimism, but past history and perceived violations of the CPA also feature prominently in the opinions of those who say peace will not hold. While pessimism was the predominant feeling among participants, there is a significant minority who still believe there will be lasting peace in the South. For these participants, faith is placed almost exclusively in the SPLM leadership and the international community to protect and enforce the CPA.

**6. Salva Kiir garners overwhelming support as the rightful, legitimate leader of the SPLM and the South because of his past role as Garang's deputy and the process that led to his appointment. However, some express concern that he does not communicate with the same frequency as did Garang.** The vast majority of participants in this study do not question the right of Salva Kiir to assume the leadership posts that became vacant following John Garang's death. Not only do Southerners and people of the Three Areas accept Kiir as their legitimate leader, but they see him as the correct choice for the South at this moment in time. Participants say Kiir knows Garang's ways and will faithfully follow in his footsteps. Other important reasons underlying the support for Kiir are his unquestionable loyalty to the SPLM and the fairness of the process that elevated him to his current position. Participants believe the rules of succession were honored and that his election by top SPLM leaders is a tacit stamp of approval for his leadership abilities. As long as he is faithful to the CPA and surrounds himself with capable political advisors, participants say they are confident that, in the language of one, "Salva Kiir will rule well."<sup>8</sup> There is one consistent complaint, however, about Kiir and his leadership style that cuts across all ethnicities - Kiir is gaining a reputation for being "unreachable" because of a perception that he does not communicate with regularity to ordinary citizens.

**7. People are happy that the SPLM is following the direction set out by John Garang, but the Movement's reputation also suffers in comparison to what people believe would have been accomplished had he lived.** The commitment of the SPLM to remain true to the vision of John Garang is appreciated by participants. However, the memory of Garang's past accomplishments is also negatively impacting perceptions of what has been accomplished since his death. Garang was a larger-than-life figure and, with his passing, people ascribe to him abilities of mythic proportions. Whether or not John Garang could have at this point resolved significant problems facing Southerners is unknown, but the perception that he would have succeeded in doing so is strong.

**8. Among knowledgeable participants, the Government of National Unity is largely viewed as ineffective and only symbolic.** Because the concept is relatively new, there is only limited understanding of the Government of National Unity (GONU), its purpose or its goals. In fact, very few people mention the GONU unprompted and instead maintain old divisions when speaking of government or political parties. Among those who have some grasp of the GONU, the reviews are not generally positive. Participants believe that the "National Unity" part of the government is in name only and does not represent a true division of power - or true equality - between the North and South. Participants believe that the GONU accomplishes little and so express their feelings about the GONU in conditional terms - "it will be good if..." Furthermore, some participants react negatively to the GONU simply because of its name. To them, a GONU signals a future committed to unity with the North, something which many are not willing to accept.

**9. The pace of development since the signing of the CPA has not met the expectations of Southerners and people in the Three Areas, who are anxious for development to begin in earnest. Education and health remain top priorities.** Participants are disappointed that the CPA has not brought improvements in development. The profound underdevelopment of the region leaves many almost desperate to see progress in key areas this year. As in past studies<sup>9</sup> in the region, education and health top the list of development priorities for Southerners and people in the Three Areas.

**10. The signing of the CPA has not dampened the desire for self-determination or, according to most, its eventual outcome: separation from the North.** The NDI and SSCCSE 2004 Southern Sudan research<sup>10</sup> revealed strong sentiments among Southerners for separation from the North. Although the CPA had been in place for almost one year when this study was conducted, support for separation has not weakened, instead appearing to have slightly increased. There is near total support for the right of self-determination; the conclusion to which the vast majority of participants believe is separation from the North. Nothing appears to shake Southerners from the conviction that separation is their best, and

<sup>7</sup> See the December 2004 NDI/SSCCSE report, *On the Threshold of Peace: Perspectives from the People of New Sudan*, and the June 2005 NDI/SSCCSE report, *A Foundation for Peace: Citizen Thoughts on the Southern Sudan Constitution*.

<sup>8</sup> Quote is from the Dinka Agar younger men's group in Rumbek.

<sup>9</sup> See the December 2004 NDI/SSCCSE report, *On the Threshold of Peace: Perspectives from the People of New Sudan*, and the June 2005 NDI/SSCCSE report, *A Foundation for Peace: Citizen Thoughts on the Southern Sudan Constitution*.

<sup>10</sup> See the December 2004 NDI/SSCCSE report, *On the Threshold of Peace: Perspectives from the People of New Sudan*.

perhaps only, choice. Neither direction from the leadership, the promise of more development, nor the possibility of re-igniting the conflict is enough to deter participants from the belief that, come 2011, they will be voting for separation.

**11. While some report a decrease in ethnic clashes among Southerners since the signing of the CPA, there are still conflict hotspots where fighting is fueled by perceptions of favoritism, scarcity of resources and the proliferation of arms.** In some areas, the CPA is clearly contributing to a reduction in inter- and intra-tribal skirmishes, and some semblance of government and law and order is beginning to take hold. Still, ethnic conflict remains a problem in parts of the South and the Three Areas, and, according to participants in this study, it is particularly acute in Equatoria and some parts of Upper Nile. Perceptions of favoritism and asset issues, such as land and cattle, appear to be the primary drivers of local conflict in Equatoria, while comments from Upper Nile participants suggest that local conflict in that area is more about resources (food and water) and civilian ownership of guns, in addition to cattle rustling.

**12. Southerners and people in the Three Areas hold largely positive views of SPLA soldiers, and there is little trepidation about demobilization, although several key steps are seen as crucial to the peaceful re-introduction of soldiers into the community.**<sup>11</sup> The sacrifices SPLA soldiers have made and the protection they still provide are greatly appreciated by the vast majority of participants. As a result, almost all participants say they will welcome the return of soldiers to the community. Participants, however, do realize that problems may occur and so request three things be done before the demobilization of soldiers: disarmament, social sensitization training and, most importantly, payment of salaries.

**13. Silence about continuing attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Equatoria and the lack of any "Northern government" reaction to them feed the belief that the LRA is supported by "Khartoum."**<sup>12</sup> With the frequency and scope of LRA attacks increasing in the Equatoria region, participants are perplexed that no action has been taken to remedy the situation. For them, support from the "Khartoum government" is the only plausible explanation for the LRA's continued existence inside Sudan. Otherwise, they believe, President Bashir<sup>13</sup> would be talking about the problem and working to chase the LRA out of Sudan. Equatorians are anxious for anyone who is willing to address the problem; the SPLA, the Government of Southern Sudan and the international community are all called upon to relieve their suffering.

**14. Although there is continuing concern about potential problems with land, health and the clash of "different cultures," there are no major problems reported with IDPs or refugees returning to their home areas in the locations visited.** In the areas covered by this study, participants report returnees coming back to their areas at mostly manageable rates and say they foresee no major problems caused by their return. In fact, many believe it is important for people to return with knowledge and skills - particularly Diaspora - to develop their home areas. Despite the predictions for peaceful co-existence with returnees, participants point to several areas that give them cause for concern. The most commonly cited is a fear that IDPs, refugees and Diaspora will return with different cultures that are not compatible with local mores and thus could spark conflict. Problems over land do not appear to be an issue at all in some areas, but are clearly a concern in others, such as larger towns in Equatoria. Finally, although references to the spread of HIV were made in only four focus groups, each of these groups represents four different communities in four distinct areas: one each in Bahr el Ghazal, Upper Nile, Equatoria and Nuba Mountains. This suggests concerns about HIV transmission are possibly becoming widespread.

**15. People in the Three Areas are mostly pessimistic about their future because they feel they lost a champion in Garang and are witnessing purposeful delays in the implementation of the CPA.** Participants in the Three Areas are not happy with their current situation and have little hope that it will improve. The loss of John Garang, who many viewed as a spokesman for their cause, as well as delays in the implementation of the CPA, which are read as deliberate, are largely responsible for the significant pessimism found in these areas. Contributing factors are the presence of troops near the Three Area borders, which participants interpret as an implicit threat, and a general uncertainty about where the Three Areas fit within the overall plan for peace. Participants in all the focus groups in the Nuba Mountains and in Southern Blue Nile are under the mistaken impression they will be voting with Southerners in the 2011 referendum.

<sup>11</sup> Since this research was undertaken, partial payments have been made to SPLA soldiers and other payments are expected, but it is unclear if the extent of these payments will be sufficient to allay the fears of communities that live in close proximity to soldiers or that will be welcoming demobilized soldiers back into their areas.

<sup>12</sup> Focus group participants use varying terms to describe political forces in North Sudan. These include "Arabs," "Khartoum," "Northern government," "the North," and "the Khartoum government." While the Government of National Unity now includes SPLM members, participants continue to refer to the national government using only these terms. These terms are retained here to better reflect the true opinions of the participants.

<sup>13</sup> Subsequent to this research, President Bashir commented publicly about the LRA and denied that any government support was being provided to the group. In addition, the Government of Southern Sudan undertook a lead role in organizing talks between the LRA and the Ugandan government.

## PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

The unexpected death of SPLM leader John Garang in mid-2005 was a cataclysmic event that presented the possibility of significant destabilization to the peace process. While the immediate danger to the CPA has now passed, the leader's death continues to have significant ramifications for the future of the South, the Three Areas and for Sudan as a whole. Further, while Garang's death was by far the biggest shock, it was not the only event that Southern Sudanese and people of the Three Areas had to absorb and adapt to in a year that also brought the establishment of the GONU and the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) and a start to the return of IDPs and refugees to their home areas. In addition, as the one-year anniversary of the CPA approached, citizens began assessing its impact on their lives. This set of 34 focus groups across a wide range of Southern Sudanese communities and people in the Three Areas provides insight into how the population is responding to and coping with these many changes.

1. **Hope that many placed in the CPA to bring social and economic change is quickly fading as few tangible signs of progress - particularly in development and security - are visible in local communities. New-found freedoms brought by peace are appreciated, but are not, by themselves, sufficient proof that the CPA is being implemented.**

There has been a major shift in attitudes in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas since NDI and SSCSE's study in the region in late 2004.<sup>14</sup> On the verge of a new peace agreement, participants in that study were full of hope that the region was heading in a direction that would not only bring peace but would also measurably improve their lives. Barely a year later, few participants in this research have such a positive outlook. Southerners and participants from formerly opposition-held territories of the Three Areas<sup>15</sup> are now much more likely to say that there are mixed signs - some positive and some negative - about the region's future, or even that it is on the wrong track altogether. To ordinary citizens, the lack of visible, tangible progress in their communities is tantamount to failure, at least thus far, of the peace. Many participants have begun to question the worth of the CPA, stating plainly that, "nothing has changed."

*There is no achievement [of the CPA] that we can evaluate ourselves...things haven't changed since the CPA was signed.*  
(Dinka Gok Younger Man, Rumbek)

*Things are going in the wrong direction because there is nothing showing that there is peace.* (Man, Kauda)

*At the moment for us the Shilluk, there is nothing good. We are still suffering despite the fact that peace has come.*  
(Shilluk Woman, Nyilwak)

*People are saying peace is there, but we don't see the implementation of it.* (Dinka Rek Woman, Alek)

*Most of the people are having a doubt about this CPA. If the peace agreement was signed in January [2005], then we should have seen it on the ground, but so far nothing...It [the CPA] is just a signature on a piece of paper. It has no meaning for us in the South.* (Two Men, Wau)

For many participants, frustration with the CPA seems to center on two issues: security and development. With peace, Southern Sudanese assumed, came security. Still, more than a year after the signing of the agreement, peace has yet to come to many communities in Southern Sudan; local conflicts continue to fester, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) - a Ugandan rebel group - has increased its activities in parts of Ekuatoria, and law and order have yet to take hold. While the CPA promised peace, people perceive a reality that is much different, and this discord has created a sense of disenchantment with the CPA's ability to bring security to the region.

Even more widespread is a feeling of bewilderment that there has been no development since the CPA was signed. While the positive aspects of peace are acknowledged (e.g., no bombs, the ability to settle and people returning to their home areas), it is clear that most participants define peace in much broader terms. People expected peace to pay dividends beyond the simple cessation of violence, and economic development was principal among these. Without signs of

<sup>14</sup> See the December 2004 NDI/SSCSE report, *On the Threshold of Peace: Perspectives from the People of New Sudan*.

<sup>15</sup> All references in this report to opinions held by "people in the Three Areas" relate only to people in formerly opposition-held territories of the Three Areas.

development in their communities, participants simply do not believe that the CPA is fulfilling one of its primary purposes.

*Things are not good. We are in trouble here in Nimule. We have no food, no medication; also tribalism is increasing...we fight each other, tribe against tribe, section against section, clan against clan. (Woman, Nimule)*

*Things aren't going in the right direction since the CPA is signed. It makes no difference now from the time before when the CPA was not signed. For example, there is still killing of innocents. Sometimes one is even killed in her own house. (Kakwa Woman, Yei)*

*It [Southern Sudan] is not going in the right direction because there still exists inter-tribal conflicts...This peace is not the type the people wanted. (Two Women, Maridi)*

*Things are going in the right direction because we are able to meet our relatives who are away for so long, but the wrong direction is those people [LRA] who are still killing our people. (Woman, Juba)*

*There is no sign of attraction that there is peace...Where is the rapid development? It seems there is a hidden agenda. (Chief (Man), Juba)*

*Peace brought us some good things because we have rested from shootings and bombs, but we are still suffering in one way because since peace came, we have not seen any changes. We still have the problem of water...there are mines and our roads are very rough. (Woman, Kurmuk)*

*The only thing which is good is that we have settled down now...but we are still suffering, the problem is that we are still struggling. (Shilluk Man, Nyilwak)*

*I think things are going on well because our peace is signed, but on the other hand things are not good in Motot. We have no hospitals, schools, clean water and are still fighting among ourselves. (Nuer Luo Woman, Motot)*

2. **Southerners and people in the Three Areas, regardless of ethnicity, feel deep pain and grief at the passing of John Garang and believe they have lost someone great and important for their cause. Many feel that the qualities and abilities Garang possessed are simply irreplaceable, and so they are disheartened by his death and what it indicates for the future of the South.**

Shock, dismay and disbelief are all feelings participants say they experienced, and are still experiencing, following the unexpected death of SPLM leader John Garang. The incredible grief and pain many feel about Garang's death cuts across all ethnic groups - including the Nuer, Shilluk and various tribes in Equatoria - and there is a widespread belief that his death represents a great and tangible loss that the South will have to struggle to overcome. Southerners and people in the Three Areas liken Garang's death to the loss of a parent, and there is an overwhelming sense that his passing has left them vulnerable in many ways.

*It [Garang's death] is sad and painful to us. He is among those who tried to unite southerners to face a common enemy. His death left a big gap that we have not yet covered. (Diaspora Man, Nairobi)*

*His [Garang's] death was so painful...We never thought that something bad like that would happen. The president [Garang] arrived in Khartoum very well, only to hear after a few days that he is dead. (Two Shilluk Chiefs (Men), Nyilwak)*

*We feel lonely because we lost our only father [John Garang] who would have held our lives carefully like an egg. (Man, Mapel)*

*We feel sad because Garang had opened the way for our education, for our church, for our rights. But we shall remember him all the time. He brought to us our freedom. (Nuer Nyong Man, Ganyiel)*

*We are very sad about the death of Garang...We lost a great leader and a hero. (Two Nuer Luo Women, Motot)*

*Southern Sudan has lost the vision of John Garang. John Garang is our father. It is like when the father of children died leaving them behind with their mother. That is a great loss to us. (Woman, Nimule)*

John Garang's death continues to weigh heavily upon Southerners' minds, and much of the lost faith in the CPA stems from the uncertainty about its future without him. Participants believe that John Garang possessed unique leadership abilities and placed great faith in him to deliver on the promise of peace. In his absence, almost all feel the implementation of the CPA has stalled and that the pace of development has slowed. Although few signs of progress were apparent prior to his death, there is a powerful and pervasive sense that, if Garang were still alive today, the South would have made greater strides toward peace and development.

*The death of Dr. John Garang has brought confusion because people think they are not going to achieve their goals.* (Man, Maridi)

*The absence of Garang has made us lose the hope for peace.* (Dinka Rek Woman, Alek)

*If John Garang was alive, they would have developed the areas quickly.* (Luo Woman, Mapel)

*The death of Dr. Garang is a big setback for the CPA and even the vision of the South. Sudan is in a dilemma...there will be no progress in the implementation of the peace.* (Two Dinka Gok Men, Rumbek)

*We are not happy, and we miss him [John Garang]. He helped us with this peace. That's why we say there is slow implementation of peace.* (Man, Nimule)

*If he [Garang] was still alive, from July up to now we could have seen NGOs coming to help us with development. Now all the things are already stopped because there is no one they trust like Garang.* (Man, Wau)

Particularly concerning for some participants is what John Garang's death means for the South's relations with the ruling party. Based on his success at negotiating the CPA, some are convinced that he alone possessed the skills necessary to stand up for Southerners' rights, and that he alone was the person who garnered respect and instilled fear "in the Arabs."

*Many problems will arise again because of John Garang's death. The Government of Sudan will not keep the peace agreement. They will only mislead Southerners for a short period of time as it was in the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement. I was in Khartoum this year, and I saw Arabs mistreating Southerners. If Garang had continued as the leader, they [Arabs] might have respected the peace agreement.* (Nuer Luo Man, Motot)

*It appears he [John Garang] was well-known, but after his death the Sudan Arabs are taking us for granted.* (Man, Nimule)

*It seems that Garang was the one they [the Khartoum government] feared.* (Man, Nimule)

*He [John Garang] knew how to trick the northern party.* (Diaspora Man, Nairobi)

*The death of John Garang has lowered the implementation of CPA. That is to say, there are some parts which were signed by him alone. Salva Kiir and others were not there, like the ministries of oil and energy, which the Arabs grasped away from the SPLM.* (Man (Youth), Juba)

3. **There is a widespread belief that John Garang's death was a deliberate act perpetrated by "Arab" interests. The silence of the SPLM and the international community regarding the cause of Garang's death has contributed to this belief, which has larger implications for public confidence in a long-term peace.**

The reasons participants cite for their belief that John Garang's death was a deliberate act are numerous, and almost every aspect of the fatal flight and its aftermath is highlighted as suspicious. Among the areas that participants say prove the death could not have been accidental<sup>16</sup> are:

- **Questions About the Black Box** - *To me, it [Garang's death] is suspicious because at first they mentioned the black box, but up to now, we don't know much about it.* (Man, Nimule)
- **Condition of the Plane** - *It [Garang's death] was a deliberate act. The plane was in good service, and it was proven for bad weather...If it was an accident the plane should have broken into pieces, but that plane was not broken.* (Man, Kauda)

<sup>16</sup> The areas cited are in no way meant to suggest the opinions offered by participants are fact. Instead, they are a reflection of the various reasons given by participants for their belief that John Garang's death was a deliberate act.



- **Extra People on the Flight** - *The extra passengers later found out after the plane crashed is a clear indication that it was not an accident but a planned thing.* (Man, Maridi)
- **Delay in Announcement of the Death** - *You see the big man [John Garang] died on Saturday, and his death was not announced until three days later on Monday. Why?* (Shilluk Man, Nyilwak)
- **Timing of the Death** - *It was caused by a deliberate act because he had been with us in the bush [for years] without any accident. Therefore, he was killed purposely.* (Dinka Rek Man, Alek)

*His is not a normal death because he [John Garang] has just been in his position for three weeks.* (Youth, Juba)

*He had been using planes since before the signing of the CPA, and there was no accident. Why only after the signing of the CPA?* (Kakwa Woman, Yei)

- **Unanswered Questions** - *My feeling particularly as my sister said about Dr. John Garang's death, there are questions. Why did they give him a different plane? Why didn't he return with his own plane? That is what I am feeling.* (Woman, Nimule)
- **No Other Possible Explanation** - *Garang was killed by somebody. That death, it was not from God.* (Shilluk Man, Nyilwak)

Beyond these issues, however, there is an additional reason Southerners and people in the Three Areas are left with the impression that John Garang's death was deliberate: lack of information.<sup>17</sup> Participants feel they have been purposely kept in the dark about the investigation into Dr. Garang's death and view the silence about the event, particularly from trusted sources such as the SPLM and the international community, as validation of their beliefs.

*There has been no proper explanation... There is no proper information on his death, especially the investigation. They are concealing something.* (Man, Nimule)

*It is not an accident. He was from Khartoum to Uganda and his death is without proper information from both Arabs and Ugandan leaders. Therefore it is a deliberate act.* (Man, Mapel)

*Moreover, [the death was deliberate because] there is no SPLM leader who has come to enlighten the community about it.* (Woman, Maridi)

*It [Garang's death] wasn't an accident because all are keeping quiet, including the international community.* (Dinka Agar Older Man, Rumbek)

Just as there is little doubt in participants' minds that John Garang's death was no accident, there is also little doubt among most about who is responsible for his death. For participants, all signs point to "Arabs," defined both broadly and more narrowly as the "Northern government" itself. At various times, others seen as complicit in the death are the Ugandan government and the LRA. Women, feeling less informed, are less likely to assign specific responsibility for Dr. Garang's death.

*When peace was signed between us and the Arabs, they were not happy about it because they want us to remain their slaves. This peace was not acceptable for Arabs, [so they killed Garang].* (Shilluk Man, Nyilwak)

*I can assure you that the death of Garang was not an accident. Arabs killed him. They are the ones who sent him to Uganda... The Sudan government paid money to Uganda to kill Garang.* (Man, Kauda)

*We believe he was killed by the government of Sudan. They used to try to kill him, but there was no way. When he went to Khartoum, they had a chance to do so.* (Dinka Ngok Man, Agok)

*Garang's death was caused by a deliberate act. Arabs of the North are the people who planned for the death of Dr. John.* (Nuer Nyong Man, Ganyiel)

<sup>17</sup> An official report into the circumstances surrounding John Garang's death has now been released, but it is unclear to what extent the results of that report have been communicated to people in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas.

*I was in Loki and the first thing that came to my mind was that it was the LRA backed by the Sudan government because John Garang had said the first thing he would do was get rid of the LRA and all militias. (Diaspora Man, Nairobi)*

Belief that the "Northern government" was somehow involved in Garang's death leads to questions among participants about the sustainability of the peace. Following the death of their leader, Southerners speak of a broken trust between the North and South, say that there is no longer common ground between the North and South, and even declare that the current peace between the North and South is a façade. All of which have significant implications for the population's confidence in the CPA and long-term peace.

*Do you think that we can relate very well with the Arabs? It's because of things like this [Garang's death] that will not help us relate with them. (Shilluk Man, Nyilwak)*

*If the death of Garang was an accident, why doesn't Bashir come and meet us? We are Southerners. We don't see the peace existing. (Dinka Rek Woman, Alek)*

*In short, the death of Garang has brought a situation whereby we Southerners have no peace. We can say there is no peace because we [North and South] do not trust one another. (Man, Wau)*

**4. Southerners and people in the Three Areas are generally impressed with the actions of SPLM leaders and the smooth transition of power following John Garang's death. Although they continue to mourn his death, participants say that the South must soldier on and that Dr. Garang's work and vision will continue to show them the way forward.**

Participants understand the necessity of getting beyond the loss of their "great leader." Maintaining the peace, implementing the CPA faithfully and realizing their rights all remain high priorities to Southerners and people in the Three Areas, and they want to continue to progress toward these goals. What gives them the will to move on is a strong belief that John Garang had set them on the right path before his death and that by being true to his legacy, they can achieve what he had envisioned.<sup>18</sup>

*Even if Garang is dead, his legacy will live. Furthermore, he has a successor. We cannot die all because of one person's death, but we shall dearly mourn him. (Chief (Man), Nyilwak)*

*An architect designs a house, but others build it. (Diaspora Man, Nairobi)*

*He [Garang] did his part because he left everything written [in the CPA]. If Salva will follow it, then his mission and vision will still remain with us. (Woman, Wau)*

*We believe there is a lot of Garang left behind that can continue from where he left [off]. For he died, but his vision is still alive. (Woman, Kurmuk)*

*We have not lost something because he signed the peace, and his vision is still alive. Only his body is lost. (Nuer Nyong Woman, Ganyiel)*

Participants recognize that the days following Garang's death were a tense and potentially dangerous time for the SPLM. With a past split in the Movement, they understand what could have been and therefore express a degree of pride, and relief, over how SPLM leaders responded. In particular, the SPLM is lauded for their quick and peaceful succession in leadership; their adeptness at moving ahead quickly; their ability to maintain calm among soldiers; their skill in communicating that the CPA remained paramount; and, above all, their commitment to keeping the Movement united. The SPLM's success at negotiating those difficult days made believers of many that the SPLM represents something greater than just one man.

*They [SPLM leaders] have done a good job because the successor took over the same day and implemented the same [as Garang]. (Dinka Agar Older Man, Rumbek)*

<sup>18</sup> As demonstrated in the later discussion on self-determination, when speaking of Garang's vision, participants are not usually referring to a unified Sudan.

*They [SPLM leaders] did a good job by not fighting over that position of John Garang after his death. They all agreed to give it to Salva Kiir. It was peaceful.* (Nuer Nyong Woman, Ganyiel)

*According to me, they [SPLM leaders] did a good job as they advised the soldiers to be calm.* (Youth, Juba)

*The SPLM leaders communicated with us about the peace agreement between the South and the North after the death of Garang. They also talked to us about [not letting] the death of Garang spoil the CPA.* (Dinka Rek Man, Alek)

Of all the people who spoke out publicly in the days following John Garang's death, the one who appears to have had the most influence among regular citizens is his widow, Rebecca Garang. She is credited with helping keep the SPLM leadership unified and helping maintain calm by urging all to remain committed to the CPA.

*Rebecca's encouragement during Garang's death made our leaders do a good job and remain united.* (Woman, Kurmuk)

*Rebecca Garang said what he [Garang] has done must be put into practice. She said she would weep for her husband if the CPA is not implemented.* (Man, Wau)

*The riots were due to the anger of the Southerners about the death of Garang. It was even involving women. We were expecting the fighting not to stop, but the response of Rebecca Garang cooled down our hearts.* (Dinka Rek Woman, Alek)

*She [Rebecca Garang] is good because she stood with people and advised them not to lose patience and urged them to keep peace.* (Shilluk Man, Nyilwak)

5. **Confidence in continued peace and stability is waning. Although some believe the international community and the SPLM leadership will be able to protect the CPA, most expect that because of Garang's death, North-South history and CPA violations, the current peace will be short-lived. Instead of saying "if peace lasts," participants today are much more likely to say, "peace will not last."**

The likelihood of peace becoming permanent is something that Southerners and people in the Three Areas have expressed uncertainty about in past studies.<sup>19</sup> In the past, while all hoped for peace, most were only willing to talk about it in conditional terms. Now, that uncertainty has largely turned to pessimism. Instead of saying "if peace lasts," participants today are much more likely to say, "peace will not last."

Nevertheless, the *desire* for peace among people in the Three Areas has not diminished. As a Shilluk woman said, "It is peace that we want; we are not happy without peace because we are tired of suffering." Increasingly, though, participants say the odds for maintaining a lasting peace are not in their favor. John Garang's death and the resulting loss of knowledge and relationships with the international community and Khartoum officials are a primary reason for this pessimism, but past history and perceived violations of the CPA also feature prominently in the opinions of those who say peace will not hold.

*They [Bashir and NCP] will not honor the peace because Garang is dead. They could fear him but after they killed him, who do they fear?* (Nuer Nyong Man, Ganyiel)

*They [Northern government] will not honor the peace agreement. Dr. John had a vision that the North feared and respected.* (Man, Nimule)

*It [the CPA] is not the first time peace has been signed between the South and the Arabs, and all were violated as they have shown in the formation of the GONU.* (Man, Maridi)

*Now there is mistrust between South and North. When there was the peace agreement of 1972 between Joseph Lago and the Northerners, Nimeiri said in the end, 'What has been signed is neither the Bible nor the Koran. We can break it at any time.' Now, the present government has said the same.* (Man, Wau)

*Peace is just like a slogan. Most of the things in the CPA are not being implemented.* (Dinka Agar Older Man, Rumbek)

<sup>19</sup> See the December 2004 NDI/SSCCSE report, *On the Threshold of Peace: Perspectives from the People of New Sudan*, and the June 2005 NDI/SSCCSE report, *A Foundation for Peace: Citizen Thoughts on the Southern Sudan Constitution*.

*This agreement between SPLM and the government of Sudan will not last because what was supposed to be given to the Southerners will not be provided. For example, the Ministry of Energy and Mining and the Ministry of Finance, neither was given to Southerners. (Nuer Luo Man, Motot)*

An interesting side note is that in about one-fifth of the groups, participants also mentioned that President Omar Bashir's failure to visit the South since the CPA was signed is proof positive that prospects for peace are not good.<sup>20</sup>

*Since peace was signed I never saw Omar Bashir in Rumbek. Is it really peace? Why can't he come to the South, because he is president? (Dinka Agar Younger Man, Rumbek)*

*Bashir is not going to honor the CPA. If he was going to honor it, by now he would have come to visit the South after the death of Garang. (Kakwa Woman, Yei)*

While pessimism was the predominant feeling among participants, opinion was often mixed within groups. Rarely did everyone in a group agree on their predictions for peace, and there is a significant minority who still believe there will be lasting peace in the South. For these participants, faith is placed almost exclusively in the SPLM leadership and the international community to protect and enforce the CPA.

*They [Bashir and the NCP] are going to honor the CPA because of the pressure from the West. (Man, Maridi)*

*Peace will work because the international community is there with us. (Nuer Luo Man, Motot)*

*The SPLM leaders will honor this peace and have honored it since their leader was killed. They remain calm and patient. (Dinka Gok Man, Rumbek)*

*It will last because Garang made it, and we have confidence in Salva Kiir that he will follow what Garang made. (Luo Man, Mapel)*

Participants who express some positivity about a long-term peace, however, also recognize that it is not a one-sided proposition. As a result, although they maintain a hopeful outlook for peace, many revert to conditional language, prefacing many statements with "if." In all cases, that 'if' refers to one thing only: the actions of those in the North.

*SPLM leaders will make it [the CPA] work if the Arabs will honor it, because they are the ones who spoil the peace always. (Nuer Luo Man, Motot)*

*If the CPA is not implemented by the [Northern] government, it will break the peace...Equality, development and justice must be real for the peace to stay. (Man, Wau)*

*They [SPLM leaders] will keep the peace, if the Arabs will not kill them one by one in plane crashes. (Nuer Nyong Woman, Ganyiel)*

6. **Salva Kiir garners overwhelming support as the rightful, legitimate leader of the SPLM and the South because of his past role as Garang's deputy and the process that led to his appointment. Kiir is viewed as having both strengths and weaknesses, and although some feel it is too early to judge his leadership, others express concern that he does not communicate frequently.**

The vast majority of participants in this study do not question the right of Salva Kiir to assume the leadership posts that became vacant following John Garang's death. Not only do Southerners and people in the formerly opposition-held parts of the Three Areas accept Kiir as their legitimate leader, they also see him as the correct choice for the South at this moment in time. The reasons for this are three-fold. Most important is Kiir's past relationship with Garang. Participants say he knows Garang's ways and will faithfully follow in his footsteps. Sentiments expressed by one participant reflect the feelings of many, saying "We want him to be like Garang." Other important reasons underlying the support for Kiir are his unquestionable loyalty to the SPLM, and the fairness and legitimacy of the process that elevated him to his current position. Participants believe the rules of succession were honored when Kiir moved up from the number two spot in the SPLM and took over the presidency of the South. Finally, the simple fact that Kiir was elected by his fellow SPLM leaders is viewed as a stamp of approval for his leadership abilities and lends credibility to his ascension.

<sup>20</sup> Subsequent to the completion of this research, President Bashir made a visit to Southern Sudan.

*Kiir got his experience from the late Dr. Garang...he will be a good leader since he will not make any step out of Garang's vision. (Dinka Gok Man, Rumbek)*

*He [Kiir] is a good successor to Garang because he was his deputy in the SPLM, so he has a lot of information about the SPLM and knows whatever Garang was doing militarily and socially. (Woman, Kurmuk)*

*Salva Kiir did not elect himself. It was the SPLM members...this means he is having some of the qualities of leadership. (Dinka Agar Younger Man, Rumbek)*

*The commanders met and blessed his leadership. This is trust. They did it immediately. They know him, and we do not. (Man, Wau)*

*He will make a good leader because he has been consistent in what he does. Unlike others, who have defected several times...his loyalty to the Movement is a big credit. (Woman, Maridi)*

Participants see many positive traits in their new leader. His military background is respected and is valued as something that still may be important. Southerners also associate Kiir with positive personality traits - consistency, courage and integrity among them. A number of participants also mention his style of leadership as noteworthy. By their measure, Kiir is an inclusive, democratic leader for the South.

*Salva Kiir is not a dictatorial leader...he formed an inclusive government in Southern Sudan. (Dinka Agar Younger Man, Rumbek)*

*[Kiir's strength is] his policy of consultation in cases of need, which shows the spirit of democracy. (Man, Maridi)*

*He [Kiir] is a good successor to Garang as he is working against terrorists, and they need a military approach. (Man, Nimule)*

*He [Kiir] is a person who doesn't fear battles and always finds his way out. (Shilluk Man, Nyilwak)*

*He [Kiir] is courageous and a man who keeps his promises...he is a strong man...a man of trust...a man of principles. (Four Women, Kurmuk)*

According to participants, there are only two major drawbacks to Kiir's leadership. First, and most concerning, is his lack of political experience. Less of an issue, but still reported by a number of participants, is what some participants perceive as Kiir's lack of patience, for example, with the North. Both are cited as areas which may cause problems in the future. However, as long as he is faithful to the CPA and surrounds himself with capable political advisors, participants say they are confident that, in the language of one, "Salva Kiir will rule well." Beyond that, many feel it is too early to judge his performance as a leader.

*Militarily, he is okay, but the challenge is we are becoming a party, not a rebel movement. (Diaspora Man, Nairobi)*

*Salva Kiir is a good military leader but there is a bit of skepticism because he is more a military person than political, which might cause problems. (Man, Maridi)*

*The only problem is that he [Kiir] is short-tempered and could easily fight with Omar [Bashir] if he feels offended. (Shilluk Man, Nyilwak)*

*If he leads with the same conditions [as negotiated in the CPA], then he is the leader for us. If he does not change the position, we will follow him. (Man, Wau)*

*Though weak in politics, he can be guided and will make a good leader. (Man, Maridi)*

*It is too early to judge. A headmaster does not grade his student before he has taken the test. (Chief (Man), Juba)*

Even though his reign is young and people are reluctant to judge, there is one consistent complaint about Kiir and his leadership style that cuts across all ethnicities - the perception of some that Kiir is "unreachable" and does not communicate regularly with ordinary citizens. This notion is contributing to an opinion among a few participants that Kiir is not addressing key issues, such as the LRA.

*Salva Kiir does not talk to people about the ongoing CPA...[there is] no good communication like Garang was doing...no big meetings held like Garang was doing. (Luo Woman, Mapel)*

*John Garang was good at communication, and, Salva, we have not seen him since he has been a leader. (Nuer Luo Man, Motot)*

*There is nothing bad about him [Kiir], but he has become unreachable unlike Garang's case. (Kakwa Woman, Yei)*

*Salva Kiir's weakness is that he did not come and see his people on the ground...He does not talk to the community encouraging us about the government. (Dinka Agar Woman, Rumbek)*

*His [Kiir's] weakness is that rebels [the LRA] from another country are entering our country, and yet nothing is being said or done. (Man, Maridi)*

Southerners and people of the Three Areas are aware of Salva Kiir's duties as First Vice President of Sudan, but there are mixed feelings about him spending time in Khartoum, not unlike the feelings people had of Garang being there. Some participants think it is necessary to understand national policies and promote peace, but others want him to remember his role in the South and express fear that living in the North will place Kiir in great danger.

*It is not a good thing that Salva should be [First] Vice President of Sudan because Garang was killed in that position. That is a designed way of killing Southern Sudanese leaders. They [the North] accepted peace just to kill Garang. (Dinka Agar Woman, Rumbek)*

*Let him [Kiir] be there [in Khartoum] near the Arabs so that he knows about their policies towards the Southerners. (Woman, Juba)*

*It is right for Salva to be in Khartoum because that place is a foundation of peace. All roots are there. (Dinka Ngok Man, Agok)*

*Yes, we know Salva was sworn in as First Vice President, but he should not spend all his time in Khartoum because he is the President of the South. (Nuer Nyong Man, Ganyiel)*

Looking ahead to the 2009 Southern Sudan presidential election, most participants say that if the vote was held today, Salva Kiir would be their choice<sup>21</sup>. The general feeling, reflected in the comment of one female participant, is, "I will vote for Salva Kiir because being a successor of Garang, he will represent us well." Compared to a similar exercise conducted in previous NDI/SSCCSE research, Kiir's support, while significant, is less overall than John Garang's. This is due primarily to a weaker showing for Kiir in Equatoria, where some participants chose to "vote" for James Wani Igga and in two of the Rumbek groups, where Nhial Deng Nhial received "votes." Among Nuers, Riek Machar is the top presidential choice, as he was in the 2004 NDI/SSCCSE study, and Shilluks express support for both Lam Akol and Salva Kiir, similar to their support for John Garang and Lam Akol in the previous study. The only other SPLM leader who received more than one "vote" in any group was Rebecca Garang, although she did not come close to "winning" in any single group.<sup>22</sup>

In gauging support for the SPLM leadership, participants were also asked about the appointment of Riek Machar to Vice President of Southern Sudan and the resulting possibility that he could one day move up to the presidency. Opinions are very mixed on this subject. Often there was no clear consensus on the issue within groups, and even when consensus was reached in a group, the other group held in the same location usually came to the opposite conclusion. For example, women in Yei feel that Machar did not deserve his position as Vice President, but men in Yei feel his appointment is a good thing. There are also no clear ethnic divisions on this question, except among Nuers, who overwhelmingly support Machar. Overall, participants are somewhat more supportive of Machar's appointment to Vice President than they are about the possibility that he would move up to the presidency should Salva Kiir for any reason not be able to continue as President of the GOSS.

<sup>21</sup> Participants in the focus groups were asked to participate in a mock voting exercise in which they were presented with a list of possible 2009 presidential candidates. If a participant's presidential choice did not appear on the list, they were allowed to name any other person for whom they wished to vote. The vote was taken verbally with each participant indicating their choice to the group.

<sup>22</sup> Abdel Aziz received three "votes" in the Kauda men's group, but that area will not be participating in the 2009 election.

The support for Machar's appointment as Vice President has little to do with Machar himself (except among Nuers). Instead, it is almost exclusively based on people's belief that the system of succession as set up by the SPLM, and importantly John Garang, must remain sacrosanct. Participants who are opposed to Machar describe him as an educated man and a skilled politician but feel that his past association with the Khartoum government disqualifies him to serve as Vice President or to possibly replace Kiir as GOSS President.

*He [Riek Machar] was the deputy of John Garang and then Salva. So when this guy died, it [Machar's appointment as Vice President] should be that way. That was his turn, according to rank and file.* (Shilluk Man, Nyilwak)

*It [Machar's appointment as Vice President] is good. When Garang was alive, Salva was one, Riek two, so it's a system.* (Man, Nimule)

*Riek can be [moved up] if Salva Kiir steps down as it is the system.* (Dinka Rek Man, Alek)

*If following the system, Riek can take over [the presidency].* (Luo Woman, Mapel)

*It [Machar's appointment as Vice President] is not a good thing to do because Riek has not been consistent with the Movement. He betrayed the Movement by defecting to the Arabs.* (Woman, Maridi)

*It [Machar's appointment as Vice President] is not a good thing. Riek doesn't deserve the position because he had defected to the Arabs. Why was James Wani Igga not put as the Vice? He has been together with Garang throughout.* (Kakwa Woman, Yei)

7. **People are happy that the SPLM is following the direction set out by John Garang, but the Movement's reputation also suffers in comparison to what people believe would have been accomplished had he lived. A major complaint is lack of communication, though some say, "give them time."**

The commitment of the SPLM to remain true to the vision of John Garang is appreciated by participants. However, the memory of Garang's past accomplishments is also negatively impacting perceptions of what has been accomplished since his death. Garang was a larger-than-life figure, and with his passing people ascribe to him abilities of mythic proportions. Whether or not John Garang could have, in reality and by now, resolved significant problems facing Southerners is unknown; but the perception that he would have succeeded in doing so is strong.

*The SPLM are still following Garang's mission, and they are doing a good job.* (Woman, Kauda)

*After the death of Garang, the SPLM leaders are doing a good job, and they are following in the footprints of Garang.* (Dinka Rek Man, Alek)

*The SPLM leaders are not doing a good job, because there are many articles which were mentioned in the peace agreement and are not implemented. If Garang were still alive, implementation would have taken place. Now there are no salaries for soldiers, no demobilization of soldiers, fighting between tribes, sections, clans and groups is continuing, etc.* (Nuer Luo Man, Motot)

*We have not seen what the new government has done like [the things] Garang has done. We are yet to see it.* (Woman, Yei)

*Since the death of Garang, things are going slow. More things need to be done after the death of the Chairman. They [SPLM leaders] aren't taking care of the CPA.* (Man, Nimule)

Other than slow implementation of the CPA, the primary complaint against the current SPLM leadership is the lack of communication. Taken as a whole, the data from the focus groups suggests that there is a lack of consistent communication between GOSS leadership and citizens. More people report that "communication is not up to date," but a few also say they are pleased with the communication efforts of the Movement. Still others believe more time must pass before a fair evaluation of the SPLM without Garang can be undertaken.

*The [SPLM] communication is not up to date because there has been no rally held to inform people about the death.* (Dinka Agar Older Man, Rumbek)

*We have no communication with the leaders of SPLA either with us or our leaders. We just hear by rumors.* (Nuer Luo Man, Motot)

*There is no proper communication between us and them [SPLM leaders].* (Woman, Maridi)

*Their [SPLM's] communication is good and understood, for they made meeting with us and the local community and also through radio and messages.* (Man, Mapel)

*We can't say they [SPLM leaders] are doing a good job or bad. For example, if you have been displaced from your house and you come back later, it takes you time to fix everything that has been destroyed. So we can't talk about them now. They were just from bush the other day. Let's give them time.* (Woman, Wau)

Regardless of their judgment of the SPLM's performance to date, all participants share a desire to hear more from their leaders. Overall, people feel left in the dark about important issues, and, in particular, are thirsting for more information about the implementation of the CPA and progress in development.

*The important issue that I want the leaders to communicate with us or with our leaders about is the implementation of the CPA.* (Dinka Agar Younger Man, Rumbek)

*Somehow they [SPLM leaders] do everything there without consulting us...We want to hear about development...about implementation of peace in Sudan.* (Three Luo Men, Mapel)

*We need them to communicate with us about food, schools, water and houses.* (Woman, Wau)

*Everything that happens there [in government] should be communicated to us, good or bad.* (Kakwa Woman, Yei)

**8. Among knowledgeable participants, the Government of National Unity is largely viewed as ineffective and only symbolic. Opinions are mixed about the SPLM process for appointment to the unity government and the Government of Southern Sudan.**

Because the concept is relatively new, there is only limited understanding of the GONU, its purpose or its goals. In fact, very few people mention the GONU unprompted and instead maintain old divisions when speaking of government or political parties. It is always the "Khartoum government" or the "Northern government" versus the SPLM and the "Southern government." People aren't sure where this new entity could or should fit within that paradigm. Knowledge of the GONU is especially low among women.

Among those who have some grasp of the GONU, the reviews are not generally positive. Participants believe that the "National Unity" part of the government is in name only and does not represent a true division of power - or true equality - between North and South. Furthermore, some participants react negatively to the GONU simply because of its name. To them, a GONU signals a future committed to unity with the North, something which many are not willing to accept.

*It [the GONU] is a unity government in theory only...The arrangement is not balanced...It is a national Islamic government dominated by Arabs.* (Man, Maridi)

*It is a not good thing because [the] number of blacks and Arabs is not the same. The Arabs have many positions.* (Nuer Luo Man, Motot)

*Every Southerner is expecting change, and our expectation is equality, justice and development, which is not happening now. How can we form the Government of National Unity?* (Man, Wau)

*They [the Government of National Unity] were appointed, but doing nothing. They are like a symbol.* (Nuer Nyong Man, Ganyiel)

*National unity is not good with us because we were fighting for freedom...They may take us back to slavery.* (Two Luo Women, Mapel)



Some participants are willing to look past the GONU name and accept that there are at least some beneficial aspects to it. However, most participants believe that the GONU accomplishes little and so express their feelings about the GONU in conditional terms - "it will be good if..." Women are more likely than men to express unqualified positive feelings about the GONU.

*It [the GONU] is a good thing. It proves that there is peace.* (Woman, Wau)

*The coming together [in the GONU] is really a good thing because we used to be separated and now we are like twins. Whatever is brought to one is also given to the other.* (Woman, Kurmuk)

*It can be a good thing if I am not treated like a second-class citizen...if they do not undermine us...if they give me my share.* (Three Men, Kauda)

*We wanted to see that unity is made attractive by Northern Sudan because we had been in the bush. We have not been together with them. Therefore we will see what will bring unity between us, if they follow the CPA or not.* (Dinka Rek Man, Alek)

Relatively few participants felt comfortable expressing an opinion about the appointments process to either the GONU or the GOSS. Of those who did, opinion is evenly split on whether the process had been fair or unfair. Those who feel it was unfair primarily cite some sort of favoritism, whether it is tribal, regional or state. Those who feel it was fair tend to refer to geographical diversity and its participatory nature as its strengths.

*When they were appointed to mix with the Arabs [in the GONU], Chollo [Shilluk] were very few. That was not good.* (Shilluk Man, Nyilwak)

*The GOSS is not appointed well. Nuer is the second largest tribe in the South, and we were only given three positions after struggling together with the Dinka who have 26 positions.* (Nuer Luo Man, Motot)

*The GOSS will do good things for the South but the criteria for the appointment of ministers was wrong, and in the formation of the cabinet, the formula was wrong. Other states are dominating.* (Kakwa Man, Yei)

*It [GONU appointment process] was fair because all the counties were represented.* (Dinka Agar Younger Man, Rumbek)

*Appointments were formed on consensus.* (Man (Chief), Juba)

*There is a bit of fairness since governors are appointed from each state. In Western Equatoria state, we have a representative governor as well as MPs from each state.* (Man, Maridi)

**9. The pace of development since the signing of the CPA has not met Southerners' expectations, and they are anxious for development to begin in earnest. Education and health remain top priorities.**

Participants are disappointed that, in their view, the CPA has not brought improvements in development. That disappointment is directly related to a loss of confidence in long-term peace for the South. It is hard for participants to believe in and support a peace that brings them no benefits. The profound underdevelopment of the region leaves many desperate to see progress in key areas such as health and education this year.

*Time is losing. Eleven months and nothing [no development] has taken place!* (Man, Wau)

*We don't see any confidence in peace because there is no development.* (Luo Woman, Mapel)

*They said there is peace, but where is development? When are they going to develop the South to look like the North?* (Woman, Wau)

*If possible begin [development]...tomorrow. If the government is ready, let them begin even today.* (Two Shilluk Chiefs (Men), Nyilwak)

*We need to see the process of development right now...Even if you come at night and tell us that you want to start development, we will light for you a candle and welcome you.* (Two Women, Kurmuk)

As in past NDI/SSCCSE studies in the region, education and health top the list of development priorities for Southerners. In both an open discussion of development issues and in a ranking exercise, participants attribute essentially equal priority to education and health. This is a change from previous findings when education far out-ranked other issues, including health. In addition, participants rank road construction among their top three priorities. This is the first time the issue of roads has risen to such a high level of prominence in our research. This may be a result of the locations studied or an effect of recent road construction work in the region. Finally, participants now say clean, safe drinking water is a higher priority than food security. This is likely a seasonal result, as the focus groups were undertaken in the dry season.

**10. The signing of the CPA has not dampened the desire for self-determination or, according to most, its eventual outcome: separation from the North.**

The NDI/SSCCSE 2004 Southern Sudan research revealed strong sentiments among Southerners for political separation from the North. Although the CPA was close to a year old when this current study was conducted, support for separation has not diminished, instead appearing to have slightly increased. There is near total support for the right of self-determination; the conclusion to which the vast majority of participants believe is separation from the North. As one participant asked incredulously, "Is there anybody who will vote for unity?"

Nothing appears to shake Southerners from the conviction that separation is their best, and perhaps only, choice. Participants in the study were presented with several scenarios designed to make unity a more attractive option and were then asked if any of these could possibly alter their opinion about how they would vote in the 2011 self-determination referendum. For most, neither direction from the leadership, the promise of more development, nor the possibility of re-igniting the conflict is enough to deter them from the belief that - come 2011 - they will be voting for separation.

*If they [SPLM leaders] want us to be with the North, we better tell them to step down from leadership and anyone from South who wants separation can lead us. (Nuer Nyong Man, Ganyiel)*

*Will they [SPLM leaders] be near the ballot box? I will go and vote for separation. (Man, Wau)*

*No, they [the North] will go with their development. We shall vote for separation. Even if he [a Northerner] is the one who gave me these clothes which I am wearing now, I shall remove them and walk naked, and I will be okay. (Shilluk Man, Nyilwak)*

*We do not want the Arabs or their development. We will vote for separation. (Nuer Luo Woman, Motot)*

*Even if it re-ignites the war, we will not vote for unity. (Dinka Rek Woman, Alek)*

*We will vote for separation [in the 2011 referendum] even if it will take away our peace. (Nuer Nyong Woman, Ganyiel)*

A handful of participants are more open to the possibility that voting for unity in five years may be an appropriate option, although this appears to be slightly fewer than in the 2004 study. These participants either place faith in their leaders to correctly judge the situation at that time, or they are willing to entertain the possibility that the interim period may result in unity becoming attractive.

*The interim period will determine [how we vote]...If [unity is] not made attractive, the vote will go for separation. (Two Dinka Agar Older Man, Rumbek)*

*If they treat the CPA correctly, then there is no problem [with voting for unity], but if not, we will be separated. (Luo Man, Mapel)*

*If the SPLM decides to join the GOS then we don't have anything to say [against that] because they are like our father. (Woman, Wau)*

*I will follow what my leader says. If he says vote for unity, I will vote for it and if separation, I will also vote for it. (Dinka Agar Younger Man, Rumbek)*

11. **While some report a decrease in ethnic clashes among Southerners and in the Three Areas since the signing of the CPA, there are still conflict hotspots where fighting is fueled by perceptions of favoritism, scarcity of resources and the proliferation of arms.**

In some areas, the CPA is clearly contributing to a reduction in inter- and intra-tribal skirmishes, and some semblance of government and law and order is beginning to take hold. However, ethnic conflict remains a problem in the South, and, according to participants in this study, it is particularly acute in Equatoria and some parts of Upper Nile. Perceptions of favoritism and asset issues such as land and cattle appear to be the primary drivers of conflict in Equatoria, while comments from Upper Nile participants suggest that conflict is more about resources (food and water) and civilian ownership of guns, in addition to cattle rustling.

*The conflict between the tribes, sections and clans has decreased because there is government.*  
(Dinka Ngok Woman, Agok)

*[Ethnic conflicts] are decreasing because of the peace in South Sudan.* (Luo Man, Mapel)

*Conflict between us remains the same. Why? No disarmament has been made by the local government. Proliferation of small arms still continues.* (Dinka Gok Man, Rumbek)

*The only conflict in this area is between Dinkas and the rest of the tribes...the reason for the conflict is cattle and the Dinkas claim to be superior.* (Two Women, Maridi)

*There is still tribal conflict, even now people are in our neighborhood... [Causes] are lack of enough food, excessive arms and lack of law and order...cattle issues and illegal marriage.* (Three Nuer Luo Men, Motot)

*Tribal conflicts are increasing which comes as a result of oppression or favoritism. For example, Dinkas are being treated special compared to other tribes.* (Kakwa Woman, Yei)

12. **Southerners hold largely positive views of SPLA soldiers, and some report that progress has been made in controlling the misbehavior of recruits. There is little trepidation about demobilization, although several key steps are seen as crucial to the peaceful re-introduction of soldiers into the community.<sup>23</sup>**

The sacrifices SPLA soldiers have made and the protection they still provide are greatly appreciated by the vast majority of participants. In some areas, the recent efforts to organize the SPLA appear to have paid off, as there are multiple reports of a reduction in disturbances caused by soldiers. In other areas, however, participants say that SPLA soldiers are still to be feared at times, and, as such, they want soldiers confined to barracks except when on duty. During the focus groups, reports of problems with soldiers were most common in Rumbek and in the areas visited in Equatoria.

*The SPLA is positive because they fought for us and delivered us from darkness...We feel safe because they are helping us against the enemies. They are working day and night to protect us.* (Two Youth, Juba)

*Soldiers stopped disturbing the civilians after peace was signed.* (Man, Motot)

*The kind of trouble that used to happen here and there [with soldiers] has stopped completely.* (Man, Wau)

*Sometimes they [soldiers] can ask for something and if it is not given, they can use their guns...they should be located in a different place from civilians.* (Kakwa Woman, Yei)

The consistent view of soldiers is that they are part of the community who left only to defend a noble cause. As a result, almost all participants say communities will welcome the return of their own. Although there is no great fear of soldiers returning to the community, participants do realize problems may occur and so request three things be done prior to the demobilization of soldiers: disarmament, social sensitization training and, most importantly, payment of salaries.

*The community will not reject them [soldiers] because they are people from the community. They fought for 22 years.*  
(Dinka Gok Man, Rumbek)

<sup>23</sup> Since this research was undertaken, partial payments have been made to SPLA soldiers and other payments are expected, but it is unclear if the extent of these payments will be sufficient to allay the fears of communities that live in close proximity to soldiers or that will be welcoming demobilized soldiers back into their areas.

*They [SPLA soldiers] are our brothers. The street will be full welcoming them back. We will be happy to have them.* (Man, Wau)

*They [soldiers] are welcome and they can try their best in the communities, but their guns must be collected.* (Nuer Luo Man, Motot)

*[Demobilization] is a good idea but they [soldiers] first have to be re-trained. Otherwise, they will misbehave thinking they are still in the army.* (Man, Maridi)

*The SPLA is unpaid. This is a very dangerous aspect. How do you feel when I eat in front of you, and you have no food? When are they going to pay the soldiers?* (Chief (Man), Juba)

*If Bashir refuses it [soldiers' salaries] completely and the Americans don't [pay soldiers], it will be a big problem if soldiers are laid out without their salaries. Those guns will be used for robberies.* (Diaspora Woman, Nairobi)

**13. Silence about continuing attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Equatoria and the lack of any "Northern government" reaction to them feed the belief that the LRA is supported by "Khartoum." All feel strongly that the LRA must be driven out of Sudan.**

With the frequency and scope of LRA attacks increasing in the Equatoria region, participants are perplexed that no action has been taken to remedy the situation.<sup>24</sup> For them, support from the "Khartoum government" is the only plausible explanation for the LRA's continued existence inside Sudan. Otherwise, they believe, President Bashir would be talking about the problem and working to chase the LRA out of Sudan.

*If not backed by Bashir, why do they [the LRA] still exist? ...Bashir must be backing Kony. Otherwise, why operate in Sudan?* (Two Dinka Agar Older Men, Rumbek)

*The LRA is an Arab back-up...Bashir has not, one time, talked of the LRA when they are killing his people.* (Dinka Gok Man, Rumbek)

*It is the government of Sudan who is backing the LRA to come here, so they can hold hands together with the Mboro<sup>25</sup> to destabilize the area now that there is peace.* (Woman, Maridi)

*Western Equatoria...why is there no solution? The LRA has come in and the government is quiet. They just want to destroy the South.* (Diaspora Woman, Nairobi)

Recent attacks have caused numerous deaths and increased insecurity to intolerable levels, according to participants. Equatorians are anxious for the LRA to be chased from Sudan and want anyone who is willing to address the problem. The SPLA, the Government of Southern Sudan and the international community are all called upon to relieve their suffering.

*We are not pleased about Kony. First, he is not our citizen. He is to be smashed out of our land or taken for court.* (Kakwa Man, Yei)

*LRA are charged with terrorism so the international community should issue a warrant of arrest...The international community should act the same as dealing with the Taliban.* (Two Chiefs (Men), Juba)

*We ask the Government of South Sudan and the international community to be diligent about the LRA and what is happening in Western Equatoria, especially the LRA and Mboro.* (Woman, Maridi)

*What are they [the LRA] doing on our land? If they want something, let them go to Uganda. These rebels need to be removed from this land...SPLA soldiers should remove them.* (Woman, Nimule)

<sup>24</sup> Subsequent to this research, President Bashir commented publicly about the LRA and denied that any government support was being provided to the group. In addition, the Government of Southern Sudan undertook a lead role in organizing talks between the LRA and the Ugandan government.

<sup>25</sup> Mboro is the local name for militias not from the immediate area. Participants believe that the Mboro are sent from Chad and areas in Sudan, such as Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Darfur, and liken them to the janjawiid.

14. **While communities look forward to welcoming back those who bring skills and knowledge, there is continuing concern about potential problems with land, health and the clash of different cultures. However, no major problems are reported thus far with IDPs and refugees returning to their home areas, as the rate of return appears modest in the areas visited.**

In the areas covered by this study, there are very mixed reports about the scale of return of IDPs and refugees. Some areas have seen an increase in returnees, but according to participants, this has been mostly at a modest rate. In addition, those who return do not always stay because of land issues and the lack of services. As a woman in Nimule said, "Some [returnees] come but they don't have a place, so some return back." With the number of returnees reported at mostly manageable rates, participants insist that they will welcome people back into their communities and say they foresee no major problems caused by their return. In fact, many believe it is important for people - particularly in the Diaspora - to return with knowledge and skills to develop their home areas.

Despite the predictions for peaceful co-existence with returnees, participants point to several areas that give them cause for concern. The most commonly cited is a fear that IDPs, refugees and Diaspora will return with different cultures that are not compatible with local mores and thus could spark conflict. Problems over land do not appear to be large in some areas - as a woman from Alek commented, "there will be no conflict over land because everyone knows his place" - but it is clearly an issue in other areas, such as larger towns in Equatoria. Finally, although references to the spread of HIV were made in only four focus groups, each of these groups represents four different communities in four distinct areas: one each in Bahr el Ghazal, Upper Nile, Equatoria and Nuba Mountains. This suggests that concerns about HIV transmission are possibly becoming widespread.

*There will be no problem [with returnees] for they will come with full knowledge and skill for our nation.*  
(Dinka Gok Man, Rumbek)

*IDPs and refugees will also cause some chaos. They will come with different cultures.* (Chief (Man), Juba)

*Returnees will come with some diseases, like HIV/AIDS, that may kill the community.* (Luo Woman, Mapel)

*We shall stay well [with returnees] except for the problem of land, which has been occupied by different people.*  
(Kakwa Woman, Yei)

15. **People in the Three Areas are mostly pessimistic about their future because they feel they lost a champion in Garang and are witnessing purposeful delays in the CPA. Participants in all four focus groups in the Nuba Mountains and in Southern Blue Nile are under the impression they will be voting with Southerners in the 2011 referendum.**

Participants in the Three Areas are not happy with their current situation and have little hope that it will improve. The loss of John Garang, who many viewed as a spokesman for their cause, and delays in the implementation of the CPA - which are believed to be deliberate - are largely responsible for the significant pessimism found in these areas. Contributing factors are the presence of troops near the borders of the Three Areas, which participants interpret as an implicit threat, and a general uncertainty about where the Three Areas fit within the overall plan for peace.

*Now we see there are no good things which are going on. Every place got peace, but we people of Abyei have been left behind.* (Dinka Ngok Man, Agok)

*I have no hope for peace...Nuba will stay mistreated by Arabs...It is like we are in a funeral waiting for what may happen.*  
(Three Men, Kauda)

*I don't think peace will last in Southern Blue Nile because the Arabs are still cheating us [out of resources] like gold, wood and Gum Arabic.* (Woman, Kurmuk)

*I confidently say that this peace will not last. I say that anything can happen within the coming month if not days.*  
(Man, Kurmuk)

- A. **Loss of a Champion** - Participants believe that, with Garang's death, no leader of national stature is speaking for their cause or paying attention to their problems.

*If Garang were alive, everything agreed upon during the CPA concerning Abyei would have been kept. But now that Garang is dead, even Abyei's administration is not being wholly considered by the Government of Southern Sudan. (Dinka Ngok Man, Agok)*

*Many things are going in the wrong direction because we are neglected since Garang died. (Woman, Kauda)*

*Things changed after Garang died. The SPLM leaders are not considering anyone the way Garang used to do. (Man, Kauda)*

*When we fought we didn't have a divided government. There was no government of the South and government of Southern Blue Nile. We had one vision and one leader who was Dr. John Garang. When he died, he didn't die as a Southerner but he died as our leader. (Woman, Kurmuk)*

**B. CPA Delays and Violations** - Various delays and violations of the CPA have participants concerned about their future.

*The CPA gave clear cut guarantees of our rights, but it has been clearly violated by the government of al-Bashir...All the arrangements which concerned the state have been altered. New measures have been introduced. (Two Men, Kurmuk)*

*Things are not moving right especially in Abyei because if you critically look at it, there is not even a proper police force put into place...No proper administrative unit is in place, and because of all these, there is still fear that things can go wrong anytime before six years even. (Dinka Ngok Man, Agok)*

*The government of the National Congress Party is not able to implement the peace agreement fairly because until now the process of appointing the state government has not finished, and that delay is from them. (Woman, Kurmuk)*

**C. Presence of Troops** - Participants say there is nothing but malicious intent behind the presence of government troops near their borders.

*The government has been recruiting a new force, the so-called National Defense Service. This purported force will be used later as militias to harass, intimidate, kill, destabilize the situation and possibly ignite the war. (Man, Kurmuk)*

*Peace will not last because up to this moment there is a group of soldiers known as Shahama who are being brought to the border by the Sudan government. They are brought there so that if the South disagrees with someone from the North on something, then they can immediately come in with violence. (Dinka Ngok Man, Agok)*

*It [the CPA] has not been implemented fairly because the government of Sudan are still bringing the Public Defense soldiers, which was supposed to be stopped after the peace agreement has been signed. (Woman, Kurmuk)*

*They [militias] will be used by the government to destabilize the area, as we have seen now in Darfur, so soon it will be here...The falata cattle herders are being recruited and trained for these purposes. (Man, Kurmuk)*

**D. Uncertainty About Status** - There is confusion about almost every aspect of the CPA as it relates to the Three Areas, particularly Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile. Participants are unsure about where they fit into the CPA and don't understand why everything is defined in terms of North and South.

*If the Arabs agree on the issue of the Three Areas, that is Abyei, Southern Blue Nile and Nuba Mountains, then peace will last but if not, we are ready for war. (Woman, Kurmuk)*

*Nothing is clear yet to us here on whether peace was for North and South or Nuba was involved as well. (Man, Kauda)*

*Why do they talk about South and North? They should talk about blacks and Arabs. Where does Nuba belong? (Woman, Kauda)*

*There is no communication between us and the SPLM...it's very important to have continued contact to enable us to take a unified political stand and prepare to discuss all matters of concern in order to avoid loss of direction. (Man, Kurmuk)*

Even with respect to the most well-known aspect of the CPA, participants in the Nuba Mountains and in Southern Blue Nile are confused. All participants in all four groups conducted in the two areas mistakenly believe that they will have the opportunity to vote in the 2011 referendum, and, therefore, will also have the opportunity to vote for separation from the North.

*We will go for [the] referendum.* (Man, Kauda)

*I know peace will bring the election and I will vote for separation...Every Nuba will vote for separation, and we want to be with the South, not with North or we go for war.* (Woman, Kauda)

*We will help the South to vote for separation [in the referendum].* (Man, Kurmuk)

*We will vote with the Southerners because we fought for our rights together...We will never come together with the Arabs. We will only agree with Southerners because we have been agreeing for 21 years now.* (Woman, Kurmuk)

## CONCLUSION

John Garang's death was a demoralizing blow for many in Southern Sudan. Southerners and people in the Three Areas are now more pessimistic about where the region is headed and what their future holds. There is a pervasive sense that peace will not last. This outlook is driven, in large part, by the perception that the CPA is not being implemented. The lack of tangible progress, particularly in the areas of development and security, has many believing that the peace agreement is just an empty promise. As one focus group participant said, "We are tired of hearing about peace, peace. We can't see it; touch it; feel it. What kind of peace is that?"<sup>26</sup>

Even though confidence in the peace has waned, it is clear from this research that Southerners and people in the Three Areas have not lost all hope. People still very much desire peace and want to find a way to move forward even in Garang's absence. They continue to view the late SPLM leader's vision for the South as their guiding light, and trust the SPLM and Salva Kiir to be faithful to his legacy. The job of the SPLM and Kiir now is to use that trust as a foundation to begin re-building citizen confidence in the CPA and faith in the GOSS to bring about real change in the South.

As noted in the Preface, the conclusions set forth in this report represent a snapshot of public opinion in late 2005. The death of John Garang, the arrival of returnees and attacks by the LRA will all continue to cause reverberations in the South for the foreseeable future. In response to these and other issues, public opinion will shift over time. For now, however, the opinions and attitudes expressed by the 349 people who participated in the focus group research suggest that the following actions will help Southern Sudan's leaders and those invested in protecting the peace address the concerns of Southerners and people in the Three Areas:

**Address Questions Related to the Causes of John Garang's Death.** The belief that John Garang's death was not an accident and the conclusion that "Arabs" must have killed him both have grave implications for people's confidence in a long-term peace. Many ask how they can believe in peace when, "It looks like we are still at war."<sup>27</sup> Participants feel that the SPLM and the international community have been mute on the issue of Garang's death, and regard that silence to be proof of malfeasance. While the official report of the investigation into Dr. Garang's death has been released, there has been little official comment on its results and little guidance for how citizens are to interpret the report's findings. Since illiteracy rates are high in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas, people will draw their conclusions about the report primarily from rumors. While there should not be an expectation that citizens will immediately believe the death was an accident even if told that is the result of the report, maintaining silence only fans the flames of discontent with the peace and further feeds the overwhelming feeling of distrust in the motivations of the "North."

**Build Upon John Garang's Legacy but Begin to Step Out of His Shadow.** Although people feel they have lost someone important for their cause, they are comforted by the fact that Garang's vision remains with them. SPLM leaders can reassure Southerners by speaking of Garang's legacy and by demonstrating their continued commitment to upholding that vision. This will be particularly important in the near term as the SPLM builds confidence in its leadership. At the same time, the GOSS needs to begin to highlight what it has accomplished, what it is accomplishing and what it plans to accomplish without the legendary leader. Comments about the state of the South frequently begin with "if Garang were alive," and end with various declarations that things would be better in any number of areas. The GOSS should make a stronger effort to communicate consistently with Southerners, highlighting its plans and its successes in meeting those plans, and demonstrating that it is working to foster progress in the region.

**Improve Confidence in the Peace by Communicating about Implementation of the CPA.** Without communication, people in villages across Southern Sudan have no way to judge the CPA except by what they see, or - more accurately - what they don't see, in their communities. People express great uncertainty about what expectations they should have for the CPA, question whether the "North" is honoring the CPA, and wonder what value the CPA has if it does not improve their lives. In short, the lack of visible change at the local level leaves the impression that the CPA is not being implemented. To raise confidence in the peace, ordinary citizens must be educated about the CPA. GOSS officials should explain the implementation process and communicate progress toward fulfilling the agreement's mandates. It is equally important to communicate lack of progress and the reasons for it. Likewise, any deviations from the CPA will need to be explained to the public immediately or they will be interpreted as violations of the agreement. The GOSS should also begin to communicate a reasonable timetable for reaching each of the CPA's goals in order to manage expectations.

<sup>26</sup> Quote is from the women's focus group in Wau.

<sup>27</sup> Quote is from the women's focus group in Maridi.



**Raise the Public Profile of Salva Kiir.** Southerners accept Salva Kiir as their legitimate leader, but because his previous role was primarily a military one, most are waiting to assess his abilities as a politician. As a result, Kiir does not command the same level of trust among the people that Garang enjoyed (due to his over 20 years as their leader) and will need to demonstrate his skill as a leader. The current perception from his first few months in office, however, is that Kiir is inaccessible to those he is meant to serve. As one participant said, "There is no proper communication between him [Kiir] and the community about what is happening up there."<sup>28</sup> Apart from his own political standing, Kiir's failure to reach out to the general population has implications for people's support for and confidence in the peace. As President of the GOSS, Kiir is the first person people look to for guidance and reassurance. When there is only silence, they feel lost, confused and hopeless. Any efforts that raise the profile of Kiir and increase his communication with the public are worthy. People would be most happy if Kiir toured within the South so they could see him in person, but consistent (and less complicated) communication mechanisms should be developed as well. A weekly radio message from the President about pressing issues would be a good start.

**Communicate Plans and Timetables for Development.** There is growing impatience over the pace of development. For the ordinary citizen, peace and development are inextricably linked: "Without peace there is no development and without development there is no peace."<sup>29</sup> Yet, during this research the one-year anniversary of the CPA was approaching, and most reported seeing absolutely no improvement in their personal situation or that of their communities. This calls into question the value of the CPA, as people wonder why they should support the agreement if there is no benefit to them. Explaining the protocols and the agreement's purpose will help the GOSS begin to disconnect the CPA and development. It is even more important, though, for officials to communicate plans and timetables for development. The worst thing is not that development has yet to reach ordinary citizens, but that they do not know when it might. This, in turn, causes them to lose faith in the CPA and their representatives. While people want development to begin immediately, simply demonstrating that there is a plan will increase the level of confidence in the peace and trust in the government significantly.

**Address Insecurity and the Threat of the LRA.** The LRA is a significant problem in Ekuatoria, and inter- and intra-tribal conflict continues to cause insecurity in Ekuatoria and parts of Upper Nile (based on the areas visited). This is driving several opinions about the peace, the North and even the SPLM in those areas. It is difficult for anyone to accept that there is peace when people are still dying around them. Failure to act decisively in conflict between tribes fosters a belief that the SPLM is either practicing favoritism or is incompetent. In the case of the LRA, failure to address the issue leaves people feeling that the SPLM is not in touch with their problems and drives a belief that President Bashir and the National Congress Party are supporting the LRA attacks. Obviously, the latter does not contribute to the idea that there will be a lasting peace. The recent talks between the LRA and Ugandan government officials, which were initiated by the GOSS, are a major step toward reassuring Southern Sudanese that the problem is being taken seriously by their government. However, to fully gain the confidence of its people, the GOSS needs to demonstrate consistent action in addressing the LRA and other security issues and engage in an ongoing dialogue with citizens residing in insecure areas.

**Clarify what the CPA Means to the Three Areas.** People in the Three Areas are even more pessimistic about peace than people in Southern Sudan. Delay in the formation of their new governments is one reason for the pessimism, but people also feel very unsettled about what the CPA means to them and somewhat abandoned by the SPLM since the agreement was signed. Further, in the Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile, the participants believe they will have the opportunity to vote in the 2011 referendum and choose to become part of the South. Educating citizens on what the CPA means for the Three Areas, and in particular for the Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile, should begin immediately to prevent a potentially explosive situation from developing over inaccurate beliefs about their ultimate fate.

<sup>28</sup> Quote is from the men's group in Maridi.

<sup>29</sup> Quote is from the men's Diaspora group in Nairobi.