The Church of Ireland Sudan Partnership Group – Fact Sheet



Background

On January 9 2011, Southern Sudan will be given the opportunity to vote to become the world's newest state and acquire independence from the North. The Referendum is a key part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in 2005 bringing an end to two decades of civil war that resulted in almost two million deaths and four million people being displaced. Under the terms of the CPA, the South was given autonomy for six years, after which a referendum was to be scheduled.

Church of Ireland interest

- The Church of Ireland Dioceses of Connor and Down and Dromore both have partnerships with dioceses of the Church of Sudan, namely the Diocese of Yei and the Diocese of Maridi.

- The Church Mission Society Ireland (CMSI) has fostered a relationship between the Church in Sudan since the first mission partners arrived from Ireland in 1933 and active partnerships have been in place since 1975.

- CMSI has committed £3.05 million (€3.5 million) to projects in Southern Sudan to be spent in the period 2007-2011. Of this £500,000 (€590,000) has been raised directly by Church of Ireland parishes and individuals. Other sources of funding include: The Basic Services Fund (£1.3million, financed by the British, Norwegian, Dutch and Canadian governments); the UN Sudan Recovery Fund ($818,000); Irish Aid Civil Society Fund (€857,000).

- Since 2003, the Church of Ireland and CMSI have also provided and financed mission-partner personnel to work alongside the Sudanese Church enabling the delivery of these projects. There has also been a programme of CMSI exchange visits with members both Church of Ireland dioceses visiting and establishing working relationships in Southern Sudan.

- The Episcopal Archbishop of Sudan, the Most Rev Daniel Deng, visited the UK and the US during October raising awareness of the ongoing issues. The Archbishop of Armagh and All-Ireland Primate, the Most Rev Alan Harper, has called upon the international guarantor governments, signatory to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005, to ensure full implementation of the agreement including free and fair elections.

More follows….

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Outstanding issues

1. The National Security Laws have not been repealed as they should have in line with the CPA.
2. Only a proportion of the oil revenue owed to the south has been paid to the Government of Southern Sudan each year since 2005.
3. The Government in the North has not implemented development projects in the South or opened up jobs in the North to Southerners as promised in the CPA.

Concerns of the Episcopal Church of Sudan

1. The registration of voters will not be carried out in a fair way. Official records show only 500,000 Southerners living in the North, the church believes that figure should be four million.
2. People in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile will not be accorded full rights of self-determination.
3. The borders around Abyei are still not demarcated on the ground, despite it being over a year since the International Court of Arbitration in The Hague ruled on the issue. Without demarcated borders, there can be no free and fair referendum in Abyei.

Ends