



UNMIS Press Release

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UNMIS Held Initial Consultative meeting with the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission Today

UNMIS held today its initial introductory meeting with the recently formed Southern Sudan Referendum Commission as a whole at the Mission's Headquarters in Khartoum.

The meeting was attended by the Commission Chairman, Mr Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil and members of the Commission. The UN's team, headed by Mr Haile Menkerios, the United Nations Secretary- General's Special Representative for Sudan (SRSG), included his Deputy for Political Affairs, Mr Jasbir Lidder Singh, UNDP Country Representative Mr Claudio Caldarone, Director of the UN Headquarters' Electoral Assistance Division Mr Craig Jeness, representatives from the Mission's Electoral Assistance Division, as well as representatives from other Mission substantive units tasked to support the conduct of the Southern Sudan Referendum.

The meeting, which took place in a positive and constructive atmosphere, aimed at exchanging preliminary views between the United Nations and the Commission as to the UN's support to the Commission. The two sides discussed ways in which the UN Can support the newly established commission which is the independent national body tasked with organizing and conducting the January 2011 referendum.

In his welcoming remarks to the Chairman and Commission Members, Mr Menkerios stated that "We are here to support you within the mandate given to us by the Security Council, and there is no time to lose", the SRSG said.

On his part, the chairman of the SSRC, Mr Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil expressed his appreciation for the SRSG and UNMIS for organizing this meeting; pointing out the importance of coordination and collaboration between the Commission and UNMIS in the upcoming period, to ensure the timely conduct of the referendum.

Both sides agreed at the end of the meeting to meet regularly in order to enhance collaboration and to discuss issues pertaining to the preparation, organization and conduct of the referendum; and to move quickly to operations.

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