



April 2010

United Nations Mission

In SUDAN

Crude wells and boreholes

Published by UNMIS Public Information Office



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IN SUDAN is published monthly by the UN Mission in Sudan. Contents do not necessarily reflect the official position of the UN or that of UNMIS. Articles and contents may be freely reproduced, with credit to *In Sudan*.

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FRONT COVER: Collecting water from a well, Southern Kordofan. Photo: UNMIS/Tim McKulka.

BACK COVER: Sorghum and other crops around homestead on the outskirts of Kuajok, Warrap State. Photo: UNMIS/Tim McKulka.

Diary

1 March: Fifteen political parties signed the Sudan Electoral Code of Conduct and the Declaration of Common Commitments. Nine independent candidates signed the Code during the Juba Summit of Political Parties.

8 March: Under the theme "Equal rights; equal opportunities; progress for all", International Women's Day was celebrated countrywide, with discussions and seminars focusing on various topics, including peace, elections, legislation and violence against women. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed that equality for women and girls was an economic and social imperative.

14 March: UNMIS expressed regret over reports attributed to Umma Reform and Renewal Party suggesting that Chief Electoral Affairs Officer Ray Kennedy had been involved in granting contracts for the printing of election ballots inside Sudan. UNMIS reiterated that the decision was taken by the National Elections Commission on its own initiative and subsequently communicated to the United Nations.

17 March: International Committee of the Red Cross worker Gauthier Lefevre, kidnapped in Sudan's Darfur region, was released after 147 days in captivity. Mr. Lefevre has dual French and British nationality.

28 March: Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haile Menkerios reiterated at an UNMIS press conference in Khartoum that elections must take place according to timelines in a conducive atmosphere to ensure a free and fair process. He further stressed that "the election in all its aspects is a totally nationally owned process". UNMIS peacekeeping forces would assist in enhancing security in areas where threats of armed confrontation could exist, but the government was responsible for providing security during elections, Mr. Menkerios said.

30 March: UNMIS Radio Miraya launched a new radio drama series to raise public awareness on various issues, including national elections slated for 11-13 April. The programme, "Tahed Shadjera Ardeb" (Arabic for "Under the Tamarind Tree"), is produced in simple Arabic and broadcast on Radio Miraya's southern and northern Sudan programming streams at 12:08 local time, with repeats in the evening. Other themes will include domestic violence, reintegration of former fighters into society and agriculture.

30 March: The International Crisis Group issued a report claiming that the National Congress Party had manipulated the 2008 census, drafted the elections laws in its favour and bought tribal loyalties, especially in Darfur. The international think-tank said the legal environment for free and fair elections did not exist, and recommended that the international community acknowledge the winner would lack legitimacy.

1 April: Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) withdrew the candidacy of Yassir Arman from the presidential race and announced it would not contest in Darfur. Other opposition parties followed the next day with boycott announcements for different election levels and areas. Five days later, the SPLM decided to boycott all elections held in the north, with the exception of those in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states.

7 April: The Umma Party, a main opposition party, announced it would boycott elections on all levels, including the presidential, legislative and gubernatorial polls, claiming that most of the conditions it had demanded, including a four-week delay and government funding for political parties, had not been met by the 6 April deadline.

12 April: Four UNAMID peacekeepers went missing and remained unaccounted for as *In Sudan* went to print. The last movement of the two male and two female police advisors from South Africa was reported at 4 p.m. on 11 April, as they departed their team site outside of Nyala, South Darfur, on a seven-kilometre journey back to their private accommodation. UNAMID was working closely with the Sudanese Government and local authorities in search of the missing personnel.

Irrigating for food

Farmers in Southern Sudan have traditionally irrigated their fields by growing vegetables, sugarcane and bananas alongside rivers or fishing dykes and diverting flood waters to them during the rainy season.

But although Sudan has an estimated 540,000 hectares of potentially irrigable land, only 16 per cent of that area is currently irrigated.

"About 90 per cent of the farmers in Southern Sudan depend on rain to grow food crops," said John Chuol Dhol, Director General for Agricultural and Extension Services in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS). "This is a risk by itself."

"We need to expand irrigation so that we can produce food whether there is rain or not," he added.

The GoSS Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation lists the lack of human and material capacity, the high cost of water pumps and other irrigation equipment as well as poor infrastructure as hindrances to the expansion of irrigation.

The ministry's 2007 Water Policy affirms the government's commitment to boost irrigation as an important step towards eventually achieving food security.

To date, perhaps the most notable intervention in this context has been the Aweil Irrigation Rehabilitation Project (AIRP).

AIRP is part of the four-year national Sudan Productive Capacity Recovery Programme model project that is being implemented by the GoSS Agriculture and Forestry Ministry.

The AIRP was created to increase

food security and boost the incomes of households in Northern Bahr El-Ghazal State by reviving the Aweil Rice Irrigation Scheme, an initiative that dates back to the colonial era of modern Sudanese history.

Located on the southern bank of the Lol River, the scheme was founded in 1944 by British officials. It passed into the hands of the newly independent government of Sudan in the 1950s.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the UN Development Program expanded the rice irrigation scheme in the 1970s and 1980s with support from the European Economic Commission.

At its peak, the scheme benefited about 1,000 tenant farmers who shared their harvest with the government. Sudanese officials in turn provided seeds, fertilizers, plough services and milling and then marketed the produce.

But the scheme ceased operations in 1986 after the outbreak of Sudan's second civil war three years earlier.

Dimo Lang Guot, 43, was one of the tenant farmers who participated in the rice irrigation scheme during the 1970s.

"I enjoyed the benefits of the irrigation project for more than 10 years," said Mr. Guot. "When the war started, everything was destroyed. I stopped farming and joined the Sudan Police Service in which I am serving till now."

The scheme was re-launched in 2007 as the Aweil Irrigation Rehabilitation Project.

It is funded by the European Union and implemented by Germany's Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (Society

for Technical Cooperation) on behalf of the GoSS.

AIRP Project Manager Guyo Okola Haro said the people have been awaiting this project for a long time. "They have been talking about this project since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed (in 2005)," he said. "They are hopeful that they will produce rice the way they did 20 or 30 years ago."

"When we started rehabilitation, the community felt there were risks of mines on the main dyke road," Mr. Haro added. "We requested the services of the UN Mine Action Office, and they cleared all the suspected mine areas in April 2009."

The AIRP today encompasses an area of 4,500 hectares. By the end of its anticipated period of operations, the project will have been extended to cover 6,500 hectares, benefiting an estimated 2,000 households.

AIRP Senior Extension Officer Kerubino Bol Anguei is optimistic that this goal can be achieved.

"When the project is fully implemented," he said, "I am sure that it will have the capacity to not only feed the 10 states of Southern Sudan, but we will (also) be able to export the produce to the other regions in East Africa."

Although he stopped farming many years ago, Mr. Guot is eager to be associated with the same project he once cherished 24 years ago.

"I will send my wives to work as tenant farmers because I have a strong interest to go back to farming," he said. ■

Hailemichael Gebrekrstos
and Negus Hadera



Guyo Okola Haro, Project Manager of Aweil Irrigation Rehabilitation Project. Photo: UNMIS/ Hailemichael Gebrekrstos



Basin of Aweil Irrigation Rehabilitation Project. Photo: UNMIS/ Hailemichael Gebrekrstos



Aerial views of Nuba mountains, east of Kadugli, Southern Kordofan State.



Drinking from a well.



Collecting well water.



Crude wells and boreholes

The rocky mountains of Southern Kordofan State offer little access to water during the dry season from November to May.

Small dams and watershed management projects have provided some relief by conserving rainwater, but these resources quickly dry up.

A limited number of boreholes are sporadically spread throughout the mountains. Crude wells, some up to five metres deep, have been carved into the stone beneath dry riverbeds.



Climbing down well for water.

Left: Heading back home after long working day.

Top left, below and right: Collecting well water.



Lacking other water sources, women may climb down into the wells and slowly collect water in calabashes. At some wells, it can take hours to fill a 20-litre jerry can.

Following significant fighting during the country's 22-year civil war, the state was left with serious development challenges, especially in the water, sanitation, health and education fields.

A 2009 International Organization for Migration (IOM) assessment of Southern Kordofan villages, highlighted insufficient access to water, especially improved drinking water, as a "major concern".

An average of 714 people shared each improved water source, which included hand pumps, tankers or bladders, the report stated. While hand pumps existed in 59 per cent of villages, 41 per cent of them were dysfunctional at the time of the assessment.

Many villagers said they were charged maintenance fees to use water from hand pumps, but spare parts and know-how to maintain and repair water sources was largely unavailable.

Alternative sources of water included unprotected wells, found in 17 per cent of villages, river water and hafirs, traditional ponds dug in the ground and mostly left uncovered. ■



One of limited number of boreholes.

Photos by Tim McKulka

Malakal's water woes

Though they live beside the banks of the Nile River, Malakal residents still find access to clean water a daily challenge.

In 2007, the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) established a unit called the Urban Water Department within the Upper Nile State government's Ministry of Physical Infrastructure to improve water supply in the city.

"We have been supplying up to 6,000 cubic metres per day to residents," said Urban Water Department's Deputy Director Peter Nhia Gai.

But the majority of Malakal residents continue to use untreated water from the river, according to UNICEF Water and Sanitation Specialist Eissa Mustafa.

"The 6,000 cubic metres of clean water are not enough for the entire population of Malakal," noted Mr. Mustafa. The 2008 Sudan Population and Housing Census estimated the population of Malakal County at 126,483.

"The distribution network is not well-established," he said. "There are so many households (without) clean water connections."

The city's Central Water Station, currently under renovation, distributes water to three points known as Dar Salam, Central Malakal and North Malakal.

Built in 1937, the station and its network supply infrastructure collapsed during the country's second civil war. The aging water station failed to resume full operations until the founding of the Urban Water Department three years ago.

The United States Agency for



Malakal girl carrying jug from water point.

"We supply on average 2,000 to 5,000 litres of water every day."

International Development provided a new pump and water treatment chemicals to the department, which now relies on government funds for its day-to-day operations.

"The funding is only enough to pay the

employees and to buy fuel to run the water station from 6 a.m. to 12 noon," said Mr. Gai of the department. "We are supposed to run it for 12 hours."

He added that the government has also been unable to provide water treatment chemicals like chlorine and aluminium sulphate.

The department charges a monthly fee for its service. "Each household with access to tapped water pays 15 Sudanese pounds per month," said Mr. Gai. "However, this amount has not been enough to cover the cost of operations."

The Urban Water Department has received support from different development partners.

UNICEF, which tried to renovate the Central Water Station in 2003, supplies water treatment chemicals to the department and runs a chlorination project that teaches local residents how to treat the Nile River water.

The UN agency supplies the city with 80,000 litres of clean water each day through two distribution points in the Upper Nile State capital, according to Mr. Mustafa.

It has also installed water distribution pipes and donated clean water tanks to schools and hospitals.

The French non-governmental organization Solidarités has opened eight water distribution points in Malakal since it commenced operations in the city in 2007. Solidarités treats the water and delivers it by truck to distribution points on a daily basis.

"We supply on average 2,000 to 5,000 litres of water every day," said Solidarités Programme Manager Julien Racary. "Each water point has a different capacity depending on the needs of the community."

When the renovation of the water station is completed, said Mr. Gai, it will be capable of supplying 10,000 cubic metres of water each day.

But there is no such thing as a free lunch, especially when it comes to H₂O. The department official says the cost of the service to consumers may more than double at that point to 40 Sudanese pounds a month. ■

Story and photos by Imelda Tjahja

Water treatment unit, Malakal.



Water for all

The waters of the Nile could be a unifying force for countries lying in its basin, but controversy over agreements to share its valuable resources has been brewing for years.

Egypt and Sudan aim to maintain their water security, while upstream countries, including Ethiopia, argue for a larger or more equitable share of water resources.

Running 6,825 kilometres from south to north, the Nile is the world's longest river and "one of the greatest wonders of nature, with unfading romance through the civilizations of antiquity," Associate Professor of Political Science and International Relations Yacob Arsano writes in his book *Ethiopia and the Nile, Dilemmas of National and Regional Hydropolitics*.

The Nile basin encompasses 10 countries – Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Eritrea – with a total population of about 160 million people, who share cultural and historical heritage, yet disagree over the river's use.

The main cause of diverse opinion is the Nile Waters Agreement, signed between the two downstream countries Egypt and Sudan in 1959, updating an initial accord between Egypt and Anglo-Egyptian Sudan in 1929.

"The colonial legacy meant a skewed water control situation in favour of the downstream countries, in keeping with the colonial interests," *Ethiopia and the Nile* states.

The Nile, Cairo.



Nimule National Park, Eastern Equatoria State.

"The two countries agreed on 'full utilization of the Nile waters'," Mr. Arsano said in an interview from his Addis Ababa home. "According to the agreement, 55.5 billion cubic metres (of all Nile waters) would go for Egypt and 18.5 for Sudan, while 10 billion cubic metres were left for evaporation."

Upstream countries argued that the 1959 agreement had excluded them, that they needed the Nile for development and to mitigate food insecurity, Professor Arsano said.

As a way of finding common ground, the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) was set up in 1999. The Initiative aims to tackle the Nile waters issue on two separate levels, said NBI Technical Advisory Committee member Salah Yousif from his Khartoum office.

"Negotiations take decades ... The nine countries (plus Eritrea as observer) separated agreeable actions and programmes to start with today" from negotiations waiting to reach a Cooperative Framework Agreement, Mr. Yousif said.

The goal of NBI's Shared Vision was to develop the river in an "equitable and agreeable way" with such objectives as efficient use of the Nile waters, poverty reduction and information sharing.

In addition, said Mr. Yousif, a large-scale Joint Multipurpose Project among Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia was in the study phase. The aim was to construct a mega hydropower dam in Ethiopia and transmit

some of the generated power to Sudan and Egypt.

"Before (the NBI was established) we saw each other as enemies," Mr. Yousif commented. "But now we work together, identify projects and try to see shared benefits."

Though the Nile basin countries seem to cooperate efficiently, negotiations on the framework agreement – which all Nile basin countries agreed was necessary – have been stalled.

According to Mr. Arsano, Egypt and Sudan "want to maintain the present and future water security, which would mean maintain the status quo". But the seven upstream nations want a larger or more equitable share of the Nile waters.

One of Ethiopia's main arguments is that its headwaters provide 86 per cent of the Nile's annual flow volume, of which Sudan and Egypt are net recipients.

At the same time, Egypt, which fully depends on the river for its water needs, refers to historical Nile water use and safeguarding river-bordering countries.

The Egyptian Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation was unavailable for comment, but its minister, Mohamed Allam, states on the body's official website that his country was focused on "preserving both the historical and acquired rights of the River Nile ... and withholding the establishment of any project that may cause harm to any of the ten basin countries".

As In Sudan went to print, the Nile Council of Ministers held a meeting in Egypt on 13 April, where Burundi, the DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda agreed on moving forward with signing of the Cooperative Framework Agreement.

According to the NBI website, Egypt and Sudan rejected this proposal, claiming that it "reflects only the views of the seven states that authored it," and Egypt suggested further negotiations to reach a comprehensive agreement. ■





Mother and sick child at MSF France Cholera Treatment Center, Aweil, Northern Bahr El-Gazal State.

Elyza Natali has been standing for more than an hour in a long queue in the paediatric section of Wau Teaching Hospital. In her arms is her sick, year-old daughter Wahida Marko.

When she finally gets to see the doctor, the diagnosis is severe diarrhoea, most likely caused by contaminated water.

The news is devastating. The 34-year-old mother of two has already lost four children to waterborne diseases. "I don't want to lose another child," she says, tears running down her cheeks.

The majority of children admitted to the hospital in the Western Bahr El-Ghazal state capital suffer from diseases related to poor sanitation, according to the infant's doctor Salma Suliman.

In remarks uttered to commemorate World Water Day on 22 March, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted that more people die from unsafe water than from all forms of violence, including war.

One in five Southern Sudanese children dies before reaching the age of five – and 48 per cent of those deaths are caused by water-related diseases.

"There are at least 26 different types of waterborne diseases found in Southern Sudan," said Dr. John Lagu, director for communicable disease surveillance and response in the Ministry of Health of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS). "We have data on cholera, dysentery, acute watery diarrhoea and acute bloody diarrhoea."

The availability of current and accurate data on the prevalence of different diseases is limited. "People may be dying of other waterborne diseases, but we may not know because we have no information about them," said Dr. Lagu.

The plague of waterborne diseases

Of 26 diseases cited by the doctor, cholera has had the most devastating impact on the Southern Sudanese population. In the regional capital of Juba alone, 74 died from cholera in 2007 after drinking polluted water from the Nile River and another 3,000 reportedly fell ill.

Northern Bahr El-Ghazal State has also recorded a high incidence of cholera, owing to floods and limited supplies of clean drinking water. The GoSS health ministry reported over 9,000 cases of acute watery diarrhoea in that state in 2008.

"There are cases where a person may die of acute watery diarrhoea, and people may conclude that the person died of cholera without confirmation from medical personnel," Dr. Lagu noted.

More people die from unsafe water than from all forms of violence, including war.

Data on the fatality rate of waterborne diseases in rural areas are limited because there is restricted access to transportation and health facilities in those parts of Southern Sudan.

Health facilities in such areas are almost nonexistent and access to transport is minimal. In the event of an outbreak, the family members of the sick patient must battle the disease on their own, according to Dr. Lagu.

Defecation in the outdoors and the drinking of contaminated water are the primary causes for the spread of waterborne diseases across Southern Sudan. The poor hygienic conditions are exacerbated by internally displaced persons and returnees who have to compete for limited sources of clean drinking water.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that over half of Southern Sudan's population has no access to safe drinking water.

In response to the cholera outbreak of 2007, the WHO identified five strategies to reduce the incidence of cholera and acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) in Southern Sudan. They include hygiene promotion, sanitation,

chlorination and improved water supply.

However, implementation of such strategies in many impoverished rural communities of Southern Sudan remains a big challenge.

"People use untreated water from unsafe sources such as contaminated boreholes and rivers," said Dr. Suliman.

The high cost of charcoal in major cities like Wau and Juba also discourages people from boiling such untreated water. "It is very difficult to boil water before drinking because 50 kilos of charcoal cost between 20 and 25 Sudanese pounds," said 25-year-old Wau resident Nadia Koul.

Despite such obstacles, the GoSS health ministry and WHO have recorded a sharp decline in fatality rates for AWD and cholera in Southern Sudan over the last three years. The 308 deaths caused by AWD and cholera in 2007 fell to only 60 for all of last year. ■

Emmanuel Kenyi and
Hailemichael Gebrekrstos
Photos by Tim McKulka



People collecting water from Nile in Malakal, Upper Nile State.



Sudanese Red Crescent volunteers handing out chlorine tablets at water gathering points along Nile.

Water from rocks

Murta village has come a long way since the 1980s, when its 2,800 residents struggled to fill their jerry cans with one hand pump or drank water from traditionally dug wells.

Now, the locale near Kadugli has a solar-powered pump with adjoining taps that even a small child can handle with ease.

According to UNICEF Project Officer Yahia Khalifa, Murta was a model village in Southern Kordofan State. Projects were also underway there on water management as well as community-based approaches to sanitation and hygiene, including a school sanitation club.

The lead UN agency coordinating water and sanitation activities in Sudan, UNICEF, aimed to introduce similar packages across the state in 2010 through Water, Environment and Sanitation (WES), a pool of governmental projects carried out under the auspices of the Ministry of Water Resources, Mr. Khalifa said.

Southern Kordofan was the only Sudanese state with its own water ministry, noted its minister, Tau Tia. The institution was sorely needed as the state was one of the most severely affected by the country's 22-year civil war.

"We haven't had as much chance to drill," Mr. Tia said, observing that the limited quantity of water continued to cause tension between nomadic and settled groups of people.

Conflicts were related to lack of resources including water, land and cattle, Mr. Khalifa said, adding that "to solve the conflict, we have to provide water" both to nomads and villagers. However, the task could be challenging.

Ministry Director General Zarig Hammed said the state's natural water supply was enough for only about 50-58 per cent of its population.

To compound matters, 30 per cent of water was supplied by *hafirs*, traditional ponds dug in the ground and mostly left uncovered, said Mr. Hammed. This meant people drank from the same contaminated water as cattle, and often washed clothes in and defecated near the water source – which could lead to diarrhoea and other water-borne diseases.

In locations where ground water was non-existent because of geological traits, however, only *hafirs* or dams could provide water, UNICEF expert Mr. Khalifa said. Much of Southern Kordofan's terrain was rocky with very little to no ground



Girl standing next to hand pump at Murta all-girls' school.

water, including those west of Dilling locality.

Another shortcoming is that a *hafir* offers a temporary solution. It gathers rain water but can dry out shortly after the rainy season by January, as happened in Abujunuk, which lacks any other water source.

Besides scarce resources, quality of water in Southern Kordofan is also a concern. As Monique Broeshart, project coordinator of the Austrian Red Cross – active in the area since 2007 – explained, "In the past we focused on getting as much clean and drinkable water to the people as possible but did not give the fluoride issue much attention."

Ms. Broeshart added that fluoride concentration per borehole tends to fluctuate throughout the year. Over the long run, fluoride can damage teeth and weaken bones.

However, if World Health Organization (WHO) standards were used, at least two of the 20 Red Cross-installed boreholes would have to be closed down in Buram locality – one of the largest returnee areas

with about 250,000 people.

In Southern Kordofan, a higher fluoride concentration (3 instead of 1.5 milligrams per litre) is allowed. While the Red Cross kept on monitoring fluoride levels, "it would not make sense to close all of the boreholes down before people have a better drinking water source," Ms. Broeshart noted.

Education about sanitation is also a key element for agencies acting in the field. "Before the school hygiene club sessions we didn't wash our hands with soap, as we didn't know it was important for health," a young girl at Murta's all-girls' school said, adding that she also advised her mother to wash vegetables before cooking.

School headmaster Alias Suleiman Kubia admitted that achieving a change in people's sanitary customs was challenging, especially trying to eliminate open area defecation, but added that attitudes had been favourably changing with the community in the lead.

As Mr. Khalifa explained, UNICEF's approach focused on community initiatives. Instead of building latrines in Murta, for instance, the agency encouraged the community to build these facilities themselves, with the help of Sheikh (village leader) Ramadan Kapsour and the health committee.

According to Sheikh Kapsour, who heads the health committee, Murta aimed at constructing 120 household latrines by the end of March, 80 per cent of which had already been completed by the middle of the month.

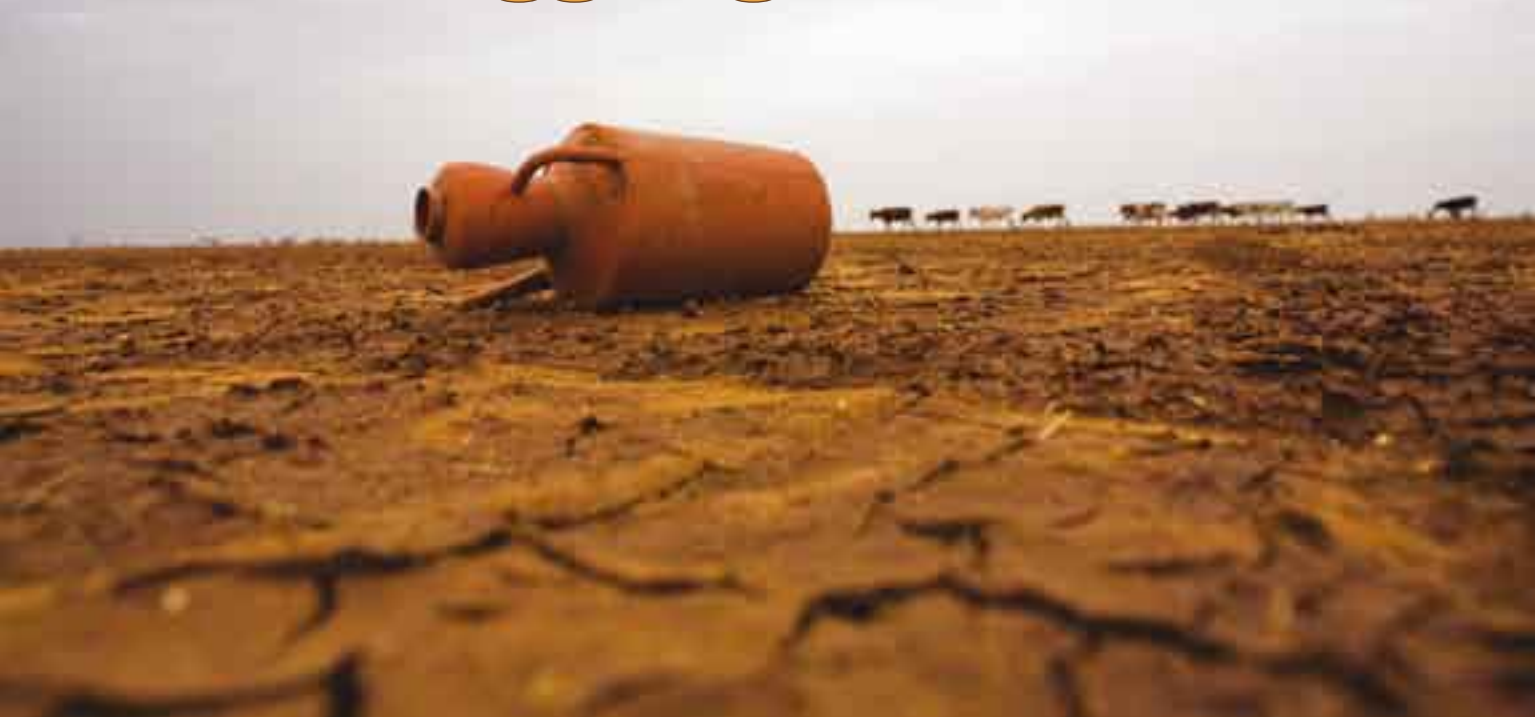
The message "build latrines before building houses", which was spread with the help of youth and women, seemed to do the trick. ■



Water dispensers at Murta all-girls' school.

Story and photos by Eszter Farkas

Struggling for water



Water can on dry soil in North Darfur near El Fasher.

Competition over natural resources has been a driving force behind local conflicts in Darfur over the past 70 years, according to UN assessments.

Struggle for land and water has sparked confrontations between several tribal groups in the region, including the Rezeigat, Dinka, Misseriya, Zaghawa and Marareit.

Natural resources became even scarcer after the arrival of people displaced from

conflict-affected areas in Southern Sudan during the civil war from 1983 to 2005.

In addition to overgrazing and deforestation, the region has experienced a considerable decline in rainfall. In northern Darfur, 16 of the 20 driest years on record have occurred since 1972.

Recurrent drought, population growth and political marginalization are among forces that have pushed Darfur into a spiral of lawlessness and violence,

reportedly leading to 300,000 deaths and the displacement of more than two million people since 2003.

Institutions governing access to land and water have grown weaker, affecting some groups more than others. Violence became an attractive option for those who suffered the most.

"Marginalized pastoralist groups, for example, have been recruited as militias to fight proxy wars where they were able to raid cattle," states a 2009 UN Environment Programme (UNEP) report.

"Nomads, whose camel-herding livelihoods have been hard-hit by drought and desertification, have also been easy prey for armed groups in the region," according to the report.

These conditions fostered violent competition between farmers, nomads and pastoralists in a region where some 75 per cent of the population were directly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods.

Based on the UNEP reports "Conflict and the environment (2007)" and "From conflict to peacebuilding - the role of natural resources and environment in conflict (2009)". ■

Photos by Nektarios Markogiannis/
UNAMID

IDP children at an Al Salam camp water point, outside El Fasher.





Locals at El-Serif receiving water from UNAMID truck.



Displaced persons gathering at water point in Al Salam IDP camp.



Villagers receiving water from UNAMID truck in El-Serif.

Displaced woman with baby gathering water at one of Al Salam camp's water points.



Elections and southern media

While reports have surfaced of harassment to southern media before the April elections, government officials and police have denied such claims, insisting that the press was free.

David De Dau of the Juba-based Agency for Independent Media (AIM) told a March press conference that two privately owned radio stations had recently been taken off the air. He also cited several instances of journalists being threatened, jailed and even physically assaulted.

"This harassment will kill the flow of information not only in the states but in Southern Sudan as whole if it is not stopped immediately," said Mr. Dau.

He said AIM had received a series of reports of intimidation and arbitrary detention of journalists since the beginning of the year.

One reporter in the Jonglei state capital of Bor was allegedly arrested, harassed and held without charges for over three days. Another from the same city was reportedly whipped and jailed for a week after comments made during a radio call-in talk show apparently angered authorities.

Reports of similar cases had arrived from Unity, Lakes, and Western and Eastern Equatoria states, Mr. Dau said.

Deputy Inspector General of Police Lt. Gen. Gordon Micah Kur Lua denied any knowledge of media harassment or intimidation of media personnel.

"Nobody has complained to us that he or she has been silenced by the security organs," said Lt. Gen. Lua, who also serves as the Southern Sudan High (election) Committee Chairman of Security.

Government of Southern Sudan Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Undersecretary George Garang Deng said that Southern Sudan was a liberal democracy where the media were free, especially during the election period.

Denying any knowledge of harassment claims made by AIM, Mr. Deng said the ministry had received no reports that journalists had been arrested anywhere.

"Anybody accusing the ministry or government of

harassing journalists should substantiate they were arrested," the undersecretary said.

He added that the ministry was not responsible for controlling information flow in the states. If there were arrests or harassment in the states, it was the responsibility of that area, Mr. Deng said.

Earlier this month, the general manager of *Liberty FM* radio station and director of *Bakhita FM* Catholic radio station were taken into custody briefly by Central Equatoria State police, and both stations had to suspend broadcasting for more than an hour.

Reflecting back on the incident at *Bakhita FM*, Lt. Gen. Lua said the issue had been magnified.

On the day in question, a student protest over the delayed payment of teachers' salaries degenerated into a riot, he said. During a running battle with police, students went into the offices of *Bakhita*, he said.

"The police had no choice but to follow them. It was an incident that should not have happened, but the circumstances were unavoidable," the general said.

In the case of *Liberty FM*, a recent programme featuring a live interview of the aide to an independent candidate for

Central Equatoria governor was reportedly deemed to be unacceptable by a senior state police official.

Mr. Dau said he did not think media harassment, which had targeted both private and state-owned outlets, was organized by any specific group.

"It is, however, rampant practice in Southern Sudan that the media are not seen as key players in the development of democracy," said Mr. Dau. "They are seen as spies and agents of political parties that are opposed to government."

He appealed to all government officials and the Government of Southern Sudan to "understand the role of the media and to respect the freedom of the press".

Lt. Gen. Lua appealed to the public to report any forms of harassment they witnessed. "Please inform us and we will take immediate action against that person. It does not matter if that person is security, police... we will take action."

Three long-awaited media and broadcasting bills spelling out media regulations and journalists' rights have yet to be approved by the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly. ■

Story and photo by Isaac Billy

Press conference held by Agency for Independent Media, Juba.



Boosting the private sector

P rivate businesses in Southern Sudan are receiving a sorely needed shot in the arm through a joint enterprise promotion initiative by the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) and the World Bank.

Since it was officially launched in May 2007, the Southern Sudan Private Sector Development Project (PSDP) has disbursed loans of up to \$20,000 each to 45 local entrepreneurs engaged in a variety of businesses throughout the region.

As many commercial enterprises in Southern Sudan are owned by foreigners, the microfinance scheme aims to build up a homegrown "middle-class business sector" in the region, according to World Bank consultant Spencer Kenyi.

"We want to reach every corner of Southern Sudan to involve rural community-based organizations that are interested in building their capacities," said Mr. Kenyi.

Founded with a grant from the Multi-Donor Trust Fund, the PSDP seeks to develop an enabling environment for private sector growth and boost formal employment in Southern Sudan.

The project's four components are designed to support the establishment of a legal and policy framework for private investment and trade, enhance access to microcredit through the creation of viable microfinance institutions, identify and assist high value-added industries in the country's ten southern states and support the opening of a large wholesale food market in the regional capital of Juba.

A dozen laws have been passed by the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly to foster a more stable business climate in the region, said Mr. Kenyi, and the World Bank's International Finance Corporation helped draft the legislation.

Three GoSS ministries have provided training to private sector employees in areas such as procurement and project management.

Construction of the wholesale food market is expected to begin later this year, he added.

A key goal of the PSDP is to lessen Southern Sudan's dependence on imported goods from neighbouring countries by promoting the local agricultural sector and small-scale manufacturing plants.

Among the small businesses that have received financial assistance under the project are INENE Farm Products, which cultivates maize and sorghum, and

SUDAHONEY, a company with honey-producing operations in the southern towns of Rumbek, Yambio and Kajo Keji.

"Since I have enough capital to expand my farming for commercial purposes, I am going to cultivate four hectares of land this year."

A tractor-for-hire business in the Eastern Equatoria State county of Ikotos is another beneficiary of PSDP loan money.

"Investment in these projects is vital for Southern Sudan," said Mr. Kenyi. "Through these businesses, we ensure food security and enough products for export."

One of the loan recipients is David Kulang, director of the Unity State New Culture Crop project, which produces mainly maize and sorghum in the county of Mayendit.

"Since I have enough capital to expand my farming for commercial purposes, I am going to cultivate four hectares of land this year," he said. "As a lot of people have returned home, it is much easier to get



World Bank Consultant Professor Spencer Kenyi.

manual labour and a market for our farm produce."

Investor confidence does appear to be growing in Southern Sudan if the number of registered companies is anything to go by.

In 2006, three companies registered each day on average with the GoSS Ministry of Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development.

That figure has jumped to a current daily average of over 30. More than 1,800 companies registered with the regional government during the first quarter of last year, but nearly half that number filed the requisite paperwork in January alone. ■

Story and photos by James Sokiri

Beneficiaries of private sector plan at Heron Composite Hotel workshop, Juba.



A hazardous quest

Iman arrived in Shagarab refugee camp, Eastern Sudan, after fleeing from Eritrea to Sudan four months ago to escape religious persecution in her country.

"We came here because the government was chasing us and wanted to arrest us. In prisons in Eritrea ... they rape you and they mistreat you," said the 24-year-old refugee.

Now the young Eritrean is dreaming about following the route to Europe to pursue an education or work – both inaccessible in the camp.

Iman is one of many migrants the International Organization of Migration (IOM) has recently been warning about the risks of illegal migration.

With more than 7,600 kilometres of land borders, 853 kilometres of coastline and nine neighbours, Sudan lies on the East African route to the Mediterranean via Libya and Egypt.

The route is used mainly by Ethiopian, Eritrean and Somali irregular (also called illegal) migrants seeking to escape poverty, conflict and increasing environmental degradation at home.

"Out of 46,000 people registered in Shagarab camp in the past three months, only 600 are still there, noted Hamad Al Jouzoli, assistant commissioner of the governmental Commissioner for Refugees (CoR) in Kassala. "The rest moved onwards to Khartoum and beyond."

During their journey, however, irregular migrants are vulnerable to human trafficking and abuse, often due to ignorance of what the journey will actually entail.

As part of a broader effort to tackle key migration issues in East Africa and the Horn of Africa, IOM launched an information campaign in September 2009, on the risks of irregular migration.

The campaign, which targets six states in eastern Sudan, aims to inform illegal and potential migrants of the risks they might face on their journey to Europe and the Middle East.

Many refugees are aware of the dangers, but feel they have no alternative. "We know that many of us went and died on the way, but it is our last and only option. We can't keep living here with no work and no access to education," said a young Eritrean woman in Shagarab.



Refugees in Shagarab camp attending community dialogue on irregular migration (24 February 2010).

"We know that many of us went and died on the way, but it is our last and only option."

"A lot of us get smuggled and our relatives in Europe are called and told to send money or we will be killed," said David, another Eritrean refugee planning to move away from the camp.

As part of the IOM information campaign, posters and flyers with information and advice were distributed in Arabic, Amharic and Tigrinya in Khartoum, Kassala, Gedaref, Gezira and Blue Nile states beginning in February 2010.

To kick-start discussions on irregular migration risks with local authorities and partners, IOM Chief of Mission in Sudan Jill Helke met with senior officials in Kassala,

Wad Medani and Gedaref during the last week of February and in Ed Damazin with the governor of Blue Nile State in March.

Sudanese officials stressed the continuing flow of asylum seekers coming from neighbouring countries, especially from Eritrea, and the high number of unaccompanied minors who have no option for local integration and rely on possible resettlement programmes.

The campaign is also using radio programmes to reach irregular and potential migrants with materials based on true-life stories. The programmes were broadcast throughout the month of September last year in Arabic, Tigrinya and Amharic on *FM 100* and in Arabic on *Sudan Omdurman Radio*.

Part of an Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) programme to address operational gaps in border control and migration management in the IGAD region, the campaign will be extended to Red Sea State in April.

"The challenges raised by irregular migration in Sudan must be addressed through a joint effort in collaboration with the relevant authorities in managing borders and protecting migrants," Mrs. Helke said.

Funding permitting, IOM is planning to extend the information campaign on irregular migration risks in Southern Sudan as well, although the date has not yet been determined. ■

Story and photos by
Raluca Raduta, IOM



Eritrean refugee Iman attending Shagarab camp IOM dialogue on migration.

Strangers in a strange land

The impoverished Hai Matar and Malaja areas in the South Darfur capital of Nyala are notorious for the high incidence of carjackings that target vehicles of international aid workers.

They are also home to a population of over 3,000 Southern Sudanese who fled to Darfur during the country's second civil war, which broke out in 1983.

Some of these internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been living in Nyala for over 20 years – and they now face eviction after the city's local government ordered their removal during the month of March.

"We can't go home because we don't have the means," said the Southern Sudanese community's leader Sultan Dil Deng Dil. "If we are evicted from here, where would we go?"

The southerners are mostly Dinka who hail from the Northern Bahr El-Ghazal state capital of Aweil.

They live in squalid hovels made of mud walls and roofs fashioned from plastic sheets and straw thatch.

The long years spent in IDP camps have left their marks on residents. The men have adopted the long white *jallabiya* gowns like most Sudanese in the north, while their wives and daughters wear the all-enveloping garment used by northern women known as the *thob*.

The southerners have not gone home for want of trying, according to Mr. Dil. He retrieved some documents from an old, battered briefcase that requested assistance from UNMIS, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Government of Southern Sudan.

"We have been making frantic efforts to get organizations to help us go back home," said Mr. Dil, speaking through an interpreter. "If transportation is available, more than a thousand of us will leave this place today."

Lack of funding

According to UNMIS Return, Reintegration and Recovery (RRR) Officer Bashir Balal, 21,000 people were assisted in returning from Southern Darfur to Northern Bahr El-Ghazal between 2006 and 2008.

"This was one of the biggest movements under the Joint Plan for Organized Returns, which the

Government of National Unity, Government of Southern Sudan and UN agencies agreed on in October 2006," the RRR Officer said.

But assisting IDPs became more difficult in mid-2009, when donor as well as government funding dried up and the Joint Plan was halted, said Mr. Balal.

IOM Darfur Coordinator for Carla Martinez acknowledged that tens of thousands of IDPs in South Darfur were

"Every day, I go out to get five or six Sudanese pounds to feed my children. This is what we live on every day."

waiting to return to Northern Bahr El-Ghazal.

"Pending support from its national counterparts and funding, IOM will continue ... to provide migration services in Darfur as appropriate and as relates to the needs of individuals," Ms. Martinez said.

Meanwhile, life is a struggle for the

remaining IDPs. In the Nyala camp, only Mr. Dil has enough money to send his children to a local school, and many of the youths have never held a job.

"Only a few of our mates work on a part-time basis," said Simon Deng, who was a small boy when his family came to Darfur. "We depend on handouts from them to survive."

The options are even fewer for the women of Hai Matar and Malaja. Most can only find work as maids in the homes of Nyala families.

Met Akot is a young mother of five who became the sole bread winner in her family after her husband became ill. But she has been unable to work as a domestic since giving birth late last year.

Ayan became a widow seven years ago when her husband passed away. Her paltry earnings from housekeeping are the only source of income for Ayan and her four children.

"Every day, I go out to get five or six Sudanese pounds to feed my children," she said. "This is what we live on every day."

Their daily meals consist of *assida* – a wheat flour lump of dough – and milk.

"We have a constant diet," she said. "It does not change at all." ■

Story and photo by Edward Kargbo

Home of Southern Sudanese IDP in Darfur.



Felicita Keiru



Felicita Keiru

Walking with generals

Recollections from the IGAD-led Sudan Peace Process

The death of John Garang de Mabior in a helicopter crash in July 2005 was tragic news for all who had participated in Sudan's peace talks as well as Sudanese people in both north and south.

For Kenyan diplomat Felicita Keiru, the demise of the Sudan's People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) leader, who had been a key figure in the country's peace process, was especially heartrending.

The accident came only two days before Ms. Keiru officially took up her new assignment with UNMIS. She had been a member of the mediation team in peace talks between the Government of Sudan and SPLM to end a 22-year civil war that left two million dead.

"Like everyone else, I was devastated," said Ms. Keiru. "I had worked very closely with the Sudan peace process for six years and was afraid that the years of negotiations would go up in flames."

The peace talks, which culminated in the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005, were spearheaded by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

IGAD entered the process in 1993 with the establishment of a standing committee to support negotiations, comprising representatives of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Uganda.

In 1999, the committee established the Secretariat for the IGAD Peace Process on the Sudan under the leadership of Kenyan diplomat Ambassador Daniel Mboya. In

2002, former Kenya Army Commander Lieutenant General Lazaro Sumbeiywo took over.

Key players in the peace process included the IGAD Partners' Forum, which drew in Norway, Italy, the United Kingdom, United States, the Netherlands, Germany, the United Nations and African Union.

Commonly referred to as Mama CPA by the Southern Sudanese, Ms. Keiru's involvement in Sudan's peace negotiations began in 1999, when she was one of the first staff to be transferred by Kenya's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the IGAD secretariat as an administrator and rapporteur.

"She was a very active lady during the negotiations," said Government of Southern Sudan Ministry of Information Director Mustafa Biong. "We call her Mama CPA because she was involved in the whole process, and among the Southern Sudanese she is synonymous to the CPA."

Initially, said Ms. Keiru, there was much mistrust among the rival parties, but after working together for a while they learned to trust each other and proceed amicably.

But the peace process still had its highs and lows, with tricky incidents playing out during negotiations and times when many thought it would collapse.

In 2002, the government team pulled out of the talks, following an attack in September on the strategic garrison town of Torit by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

Ms. Keiru particularly remembered an

incident in September 2003, when Dr. Garang failed to initially appear for a historic face-to-face meeting at the Great Rift Valley Lodge in Naivasha, Kenya, with Vice-President of the Government of Sudan Ali Osman Taha.

Dr. Garang turned up on the third day at the meeting, as patience was beginning to wane, ending years of proxy negotiations between the rival parties and giving a much needed boost to the peace process.

One of the most memorable events in the process for Ms. Keiru was the signing of the Machakos Protocol. "There was so much tension; you could almost feel it," she recalled. "Immediately after the signing everyone in the room was so ecstatic that we all cried. It was the most emotional moment I had ever witnessed."

The lead-up to the signing of the CPA remains etched in her memory. There were long nights of discussions, intense pressure and work towards the end of 2004, when all parties were finalizing implementation modalities.

The moment all had been waiting for finally came on 9 January 2005, when the historic peace deal was signed at Nyayo Stadium in Nairobi.

Looking back, Ms. Keiru said she had feared implementation of the CPA would be difficult due to lack of infrastructure and critical human resources in the southern region of the country.

"I'm amazed at the energy the Government of Southern Sudan has been able to expend to provide basic necessities. It should be judged against how far it has come in the last five years and not against other countries in the region," she added.

On her future, Ms. Keiru said she would make a decision after next year's referendum, which she hoped would bring the CPA to a peaceful end. "Maybe I will write a book about my experience 'walking with the generals'," she laughed.

UNMIS driver Yona Furangi said he knew Ms. Keiru well, describing her as a "good and humble lady". "All the Southern Sudanese recognize her and know the important role she played in the peace process." ■

Antonette Miday

Left to Right: John Garang de Mabior, Omar Al-Bashir and Ali Osman Taha, Khartoum. Photo: UN/ Evan Schneider.



Drought, conflict and raids

Food insecurity resurfaces in south

Late and erratic rains, displacement due to ethnic conflicts and raids by Uganda's Lords Resistance Army rebels have worsened food insecurity in Southern Sudan.

According to the recent Southern Sudan Food Security Update, 4.3 million people may face starvation unless pre-emptive measures are put in place.

The annual update states that cereal production went down by 340,000 metric tons in 2009 from 1 million metric tons harvested in 2008.

"Based on our analysis, Southern Sudan will face a deficit of about 225,000 metric tons this year," said Elijah Mukhala, of the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO's) Sudan Institutional Capacity Program Food Security Information for Action (SIFSIA).

"This will have a significant effect on the availability of food in 2010," said the FAO official.

The finding came from an annual needs and livelihood assessment conducted in October and November 2009 by various agencies, including the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the FAO.

"The assessment gathered data on areas including the size of land actually planted, the performance of crops and condition of livestock," Mr. Mukhala said.

Food crop production varied among the 10 states. Upper Nile, Warrap and Western Equatoria produced some surplus, but Jonglei State was the worst affected with a deficit of 100,000 metric tons.

"I produced almost nothing because the rain was not enough," said Nyadem Gatkek, resident of Akobo village in Jonglei.

"I am currently feeding my eight family members with the food I receive from the World Food Program," she said. "I recently received food rations for March and April."

The effects of drought are already being felt in the most affected areas. People have started selling livestock, firewood, charcoal, grass and bamboo trees for additional income, said WFP Southern Sudan Coordinator Leo van der Velden.

Others have begun consuming wild foods and decreased the number of meals they consume per day.

"Of the total, 1.6 million are severely affected with an eight-month food gap. The



Moving WFP food by barge to Akobo in Upper Nile State. Photo: UNMIS/Tim McKulka.

remaining 2.7 million will need two to three months assistance during the traditional food gap season in May and June," said Mr. van der Velden.

Mitigating measures

In addressing the shortages, food aid distribution has begun for the severely affected.

"WFP is ready to provide food for the

4.3 million food insecure people," Mr. van der Velden said. "Our target scales up to 1.8 million people in March, 2.3 million in April to 3.3 in May and June."

WFP distributed food to 800,000 people in January and 1.35 million in February.

The organization assists displaced persons, returnees and refugees and has feeding programmes for schools and malnourished children.

"Pre-positioning of food into locations that will be made inaccessible once the rain starts is among our priorities. We have already pre-positioned about 60 per cent of the intended 60,000 metric tons of food," said the coordinator.

FAO Southern Sudan Deputy Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordinator Michael Oyat said many households had consumed the little harvest they produced and were left without seeds, which may affect the 2010 harvest.

"FAO will supply 2.5 metric tons of sorghum, maize, groundnuts, beans, cowpeas and sesame seeds to 150,000 people. Vulnerable households will also receive some farm tools to help them produce better in the 2010 agricultural season," said the FAO coordinator.

To ensure people plant the seeds supplied to them, WFP will coordinate its food distribution programme with FAO's seeds provisions, said Mr. van der Velden.

The GoSS has requested the international community and aid agencies for immediate food assistance to avert a possible emergency crisis. ■



WFP beneficiaries collecting food from aidrop site in Pochalla, Upper Nile State. Photo: UNMIS/ Mohammed Siddig

Negus Hadera

Baby naming, the Kuku way

In traditional African societies, the arrival of a new-born child is followed by a naming ceremony to celebrate the joyous occasion.

While some have replaced the event with other rituals, including the Christian sacrament of baptism, the Kuku community of Southern Sudan hold naming ceremonies to this day.

On the day the *ngiro* (baby) is born, the placenta is buried outside the main entrance to the house. If the child is a *ngiolulalet* (boy), it is buried to the right of the entrance, or to the left if the newborn is a *ngironanarakwan* (girl).

The newborn and *monyé* (mother) are confined to the house for six days without any contact with the outside world or visitors. During this time, the child remains nameless.

That period gives mother and baby a chance to rest and recuperate until the naming ceremony is held on the seventh day.

The *tukorijon* (naming ceremony) begins just before sunset.

Behind closed doors, the mother receives a stool, milk, some twigs, a bottle of cooking oil and a plate as gifts from her paternal female relatives. The stool represents a comfortable home, the twigs symbolize firewood and the milk prosperity.

The cooking oil is poured onto the plate and used for the actual naming exercise.

Another female relative knocks on the door and urges the mother and her kinswomen to come out with the infant and meet their guests who are waiting outside. She knocks three times if it is a girl. The door is shot with an arrow four times if it is a boy.

The child's paternal *yakanyé* (grandmother) sits on the far right-hand side watching over the proceedings. The *ngote* (father) of the child plays no role in the ceremony.

The father instead appoints his brother to stand in his place. In the Kuku culture,

a brother represents the father in all major family events, including birth, death or marriage.

The mother and child come out to songs and ululations. The women sing and amble around the compound, re-enacting a day in the farm spent tilling the land.

Once the mother, baby and father's brother have settled down, a paternal *manyanyé* (aunt) joins them. She begins by shaving the hair from the front of the baby's head and then turns to the mother's head. The shaving symbolizes a renewal for mother and child.

The special dish of the day is *wodo*, which consists of boiled sorghum and cow peas. A female relative receives *wodo* in the palms of her hand and begins to eat, while the aunt mixes the milk and oil. Just as a priest blesses a child with holy water during baptism, the *manyanyé* formally names the baby and rubs the blended milk and oil onto the baby's body, starting with the head.

The paternal aunt then takes the same mixture and applies it to the heads and chests of the mother, father, baby's uncle and all other guests at the ceremony as a collective blessing.

Subsequently, the mother and uncle are served with *wodo* and a bowl of millet porridge with milk. Once they have finished eating, the singing and dancing begins in earnest.

For the Kuku, as for most Southern Sudanese, cows are vital commodities. All the songs sung during the ceremony feature words of praise directed at the

Manyanyé flanked by baby's uncle and mother naming baby and rubbing it with blended milk and oil.



enclosure for cattle and other livestock known as the *Kraal*.

The baby's uncle begins the dancing and is quickly followed by other paternal relatives. The baby is taken away and the maternal relatives join the mother and father in a dance.

Guests present their gifts, and food and drinks are served to all. The new mother walks around the compound to greet her guests. Music resounds and drinks flow all night until the party ends just before dawn.■

Murugi Murekio

COMING EVENTS

Khartoum

Lectures and readings, French Cultural Centre

10 May, 7:30 pm - Claude Rilly, director of the Sudanese National Museum's French archeology section, seeks answers to the question "From where do the Nubians come?".

13 May, 7:30 pm - An evening dedicated to the famous Sudanese writer Tayeb Salih, who passed away last year.

Sports

Volleyball, basketball and ultimate frisbee, Khartoum American School

Fight the heat and jump into the circle! Sunday and Tuesday are ultimate frisbee days. On Monday you can play basketball and on Wednesday volleyball. Be sure to contact the person in charge to have your name put on the list: for the Tuesday frisbee write to rconnelly@krtams.org and for the rest to apaar@krtams.org. Have 5 SDGs and your photo ID ready at the gate.

African movies, French Cultural Centre terrace

Every Thursday at 7.30 p.m. African movies, made mainly in the year 2000, are shown either with Arabic or English subtitles, including the South African film *Drum* on 22 April and *Heremakono* (Waiting for Happiness) from Mauritania on 29 April. Entry free.

Juba

Music concert

Nigerian duo Bracket, famous for the hit song *Yori Yori* will hold a concert in Juba in May during their Africa Tour. Look out for posters announcing the exact date and venue.

Shaving of baby's head during naming ceremony. Photo UNMIS Murugi Murekio.



NEWS BRIEFS

Donors review DDR in Blue Nile

Donor representatives traveled on 30 March to Ed Damazin, Blue Nile State, to view progress in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants, a year after the country launched the programme with international support.

"Successful DDR can contribute to peace and sustainable development in Sudan," Japanese Ambassador to Sudan Akinori Wada said after meeting several demobilized former soldiers who had fully reintegrated into the local community.

Mr. Wada was accompanied by members of the diplomatic community, Sudanese government officials and Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) Georg Charpentier.

So far, more than 21,000 of a targeted 180,000 combatants from the Sudan Armed Forces, Popular Defense Forces and Sudan People's Liberation Army have been demobilized and over 13,000 participants have received counseling on reintegration opportunities.

In addition to Ed Damazin, the DDR programme boasts four other centres in Julud, Kadugli, Juba and Rumbek, most of which have completed demobilization and are now conducting reintegration. Preparations are well advanced to launch three more centres in Kauda, Aweil and Al Fula.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency, the Sudanese NGO JASMAR and the UN Food and Agricultural Organization currently provide vocational training and start-up kits for petty trade, cottage food processing, carpentry, and animal husbandry.

The donor trip came against the backdrop of concerted efforts by stakeholders to bolster the integrity of DDR and shore up international support for the operation.

Funding remains a critical drawback in the DDR programme, which is estimated to cost \$430 million over a period of four years. Donor pledges to date stand at \$125 million, and actual contributions at \$40 million.

SSHRC gets cameras, computers and furniture

The UNMIS Human Rights section recently donated a consignment of new cameras, communications equipment and furniture to the Southern Sudan Human Rights Commission (SSHRC) for distribution to its eight field offices in the region.

Senior Human Rights Officer Roxana Garmendia said that 10 digital cameras, 10 desks, 10 Thuraya satellite phones, and one video camcorder were delivered to the main offices of the SSHRC in Juba last February. An additional 10 laptop computers were delivered to the SSHRC in April.

"The purpose of this donation is to ensure that the commission's field offices are properly equipped to effectively carry out their monitoring, reporting and promotional work," said Ms. Garmendia. "This support is in addition to the technical assistance that is continuously provided by the UNMIS Human Rights section."

Founded in June 2006, the five-member SSHRC acquired new monitoring and investigative powers in February 2009 with the enactment of the Southern Sudan Human Rights Commission Act.

World water threatened, says Ban

The world's water resources had proven to be highly resilient, but were increasingly threatened and vulnerable, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a message to commemorate World Water Day on 22 March.

"Day after day, we pour millions of tons of untreated sewage and industrial and agricultural wastes into the world's water systems," the Secretary-General said, adding that clean water would become even scarcer with the onset of climate change.

The theme of this year's World Water Day – Clean Water for a Healthy World – emphasized that both the quality and quantity of water resources were at risk, said Mr. Ban. "More people die from unsafe water than from all forms of violence, including war."

The world had the know-how to solve these (water) challenges and become better stewards of water resources, said the Secretary-General. "Let us protect and sustainably manage our waters for the poor, the vulnerable and for all life on earth."

Polio eradication kicks off in Wau



As part of a region-wide bid to eradicate polio from Southern Sudan, a three-day immunization campaign targeting over 12,000 children under the age of five began in Wau on 29 March.

The effort was organized by the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and the Swedish Red Cross in close collaboration with the Western Bahr El-Ghazal State Ministry of Health.

During the launching ceremony, attended by UNICEF, WHO and Ministry of Health representatives as well as hundreds of mothers and children, UNICEF Chief Field Officer for the state Carmen Garrigos urged mothers to bring their children for vaccinations.

"We need to work together to eradicate polio ... and create a bright future for our innocent children," the field officer said.

Ministry of Health Acting Director General Dr. Martin Mayan Wol said his state, working closely with UN agencies and non-governmental organizations, had halted the disease's spread across the region.

"For the last two years, we have had no confirmed cases of polio in our state... and currently our ministry is working ... to keep up this momentum," Mr. Wol said.

Taban Musa, deputy director for supplemental immunization activities in the Government of Southern Sudan Ministry of Health, noted that 64 children in the region had been permanently crippled by the disease between June 2008 and June 2009.

But he added that no new cases had been reported after June 2009, after several polio campaigns had significantly boosted health across the south.

A total of three million children under five were targeted in the region-wide campaign, which began on the same day in the nine other southern states.

