

United Nations Mission



January 2011

In SUDAN

Special Focus: Six years of peace

Back to school

The future of oil

From dirt roads to bridges

Published by UNMIS Public Information Office

**Not for
sale**



INSIDE

3 Referendum

Southern Sudanese go to the polls

4 Special Focus: Six years of peace

- Back to school
- Successes and setbacks
- A guarded step forward
- INTERVIEW:
Professor Ali Abdallah Ali:
A question of balance
- The housing woes of Juba
- The future of oil
- What have six years of peace meant to you?
- PHOTO GALLERY: From dirt roads to bridges
- CULTURE: A cultural revival

19 News Briefs

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*.

Editor-in-Chief: Hua Jiang
Managing Editor: Catherine Waugh
Associate Editor: Joseph Contreras
Assistant Editors: Murugi Murekio and Eszter Farkas
Layout and Design: Sezar Amin

For comments and suggestions contact
unmis-insudan@un.org

FRONT COVER: Electricity pylon on one of Khartoum's main streets. Photo: UNMIS/Paul Banks.

BACK COVER: Southern Sudanese voting on first day of the region's self-determination referendum in Juba. Photo: UNMIS/Tim McKulka.

Diary

8 December: Three Latvian helicopter crew members working for the World Food Programme, abducted in the South Darfur capital of Nyala on 4 November, were freed.

9 December: Voter registration ahead of the January 2011 Southern Sudan self-determination referendum was concluded in a peaceful and orderly way, UN Secretary-General (UNSG) Ban Ki-moon's Panel on the Referenda in the Sudan said in a press release, noting that the exercise was extended in some out-of-country sites. But the panel voiced concern over the Abyei referendum, where disagreements over voter eligibility had prevented the establishment of the Abyei Area Referendum Commission.

10 December: Celebrated under the theme "Speak up and stop discrimination" globally on 10 December, International Human Rights Day was observed across Sudan with speeches, a symposium on discrimination, a concert and street parades between 9 and 16 December.

16 December: While hailing successful conclusion of referendum voter registration on 8 December in Southern Sudan, Under-Secretary-General for UN Peacekeeping Operations Alain Le Roy voiced concern over the lack of accord on a simultaneous Abyei referendum determining the area's status. In a briefing to the Security Council, Mr. Le Roy added that reaching an agreement on citizenship issues before the referendum's start was also crucial.

17 December: Independent UN human rights expert Mohammed Chande Othman called on the Sudanese government to bring to justice 11 human rights activists and journalists, detained between 30 October and 3 November, or release them. The government had failed to specify charges or provide them with access to legal counsel, Mr. Othman noted in a news release.

22 December: Closing the UN referenda panel's third visit to the country, Chair Benjamin Mkapa said the panel believed a credible referendum could take place in Sudan. Speaking at a Khartoum press conference, Mr. Mkapa also called for the release of pending funds and stepped-up voter awareness raising.

23 December: The UN Integrated Referendum and Electoral Division (UNIRED) delivered over seven million ballot papers to the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau in a ceremony held at UNIRED's warehouse near Juba International Airport, and their distribution to the region's 10 state capitals began. Ballots were also handed over in Khartoum for use in referendum centres in the north.

31 December: In his message marking the 55th anniversary of Sudan's independence on 1 January, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haile Menkerios praised President Omar Al-Bashir and Vice-President Salva Kir for their cooperation ahead of Southern Sudan's self-determination referendum. Mr. Menkerios also called on the parties to find a solution to outstanding issues of the Abyei Area.

4 January: UNMIS airlifted 39,000 kilograms worth of voting materials to 50 drop-off points inaccessible by road in nine Southern Sudanese states, in addition to the 198,000 kilograms of training and polling materials delivered by 41 flights from Juba to state capitals between 16 and 30 December.

5 January: The UNSG's referenda panel arrived in Khartoum to monitor the polling, counting and aggregation of results phases of the referendum, while also meeting with senior government officials, the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission, international and domestic observer groups and the diplomatic community.

5 January: A Hungarian civilian staff of the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur, who was abducted from his El Fasher home on 7 October, was released from captivity after 90 days.

8 January: Southern Sudan Referendum Commission Chairman Mohammed Ibrahim Khalil announced that the total number of voters who had registered for the poll in Sudan and out-of-country was over 3.93 million. About 95 per cent of eligible voters had registered in Southern Sudan, three per cent in the north and more than 60,000 registered in eight foreign countries.

9 January: On the first day of voting for the region's self-determination referendum, Southern Sudan Referendum Commission Deputy Chairperson Justice Chan Reec Madut hailed the massive turnout of voters in the south. According to UN *Radio Miraya FM*, turnout was generally low in the north, especially for women.

Southern Sudanese go to the polls

Jackson Joshua Jada walked up to a polling centre in the Kator district of Juba at 1 a.m. on 9 January to ensure he would be its first voter in Southern Sudan's long-awaited referendum on self-determination.

The moment was a long time coming for Mr. Jada, who lost his father, brothers and other close relatives in the carnage of Sudan's second civil war. The prospect of a seven-hour-long wait before the start of polling failed to faze him.

"I lost my family, and now I do not want to lose Southern Sudan," said Mr. Jada, who left his wife and seven children behind in Khartoum to vote in the regional capital. "I will vote for freedom to fulfill my dream and the dream of my people."

Amid joyous ululating and long queues, hundreds of thousands of registered voters descended on polling centres across Southern Sudan on the first day of balloting to have their say in the future of the impoverished region.

Only three of the 2,638 polling centres set up across Southern Sudan failed to open as scheduled on 9 January, which also marked the sixth anniversary of the signing of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. By the end of the day, an estimated 20 per cent of the 3.7 million registered voters in the country's 10 southern states had trooped to the polls, according to the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC).

With six days of voting still remaining, there seemed little doubt that voter turnout would surpass the 60 per cent threshold established by the 2009 Southern Sudan Referendum Act to make the outcome legally binding. That translates to 2,359,533 votes.

"It is proceeding very, very smoothly," said SSRC chairperson Mohammed Ibrahim Khalil on the third day of voting. "There doesn't seem to be any fear of not reaching the 60 percent limit."

The mood and levels of participation were quite different in the country's 15 northern states, where over 116,000 southern residents had registered to vote.

Only one man stood outside a polling centre in the Morda district of Omdurman

when it opened its doors at 8:15 a.m. on the first day of voting.

Sadiq Ibrahim was born in Khartoum and has never visited his family's ancestral homeland in the Western Bahr El-Ghazal State county of Raga. But he still felt it was his duty to register his support for the continued unity of the country.

"Unity might still happen but with a new set of morals, ideas and opinions," said 46-year-old Ibrahim. "I am optimistic."

An estimated 14 per cent of registered voters in North Sudan went to polling centres on the first day of voting, according to SSRC member Paulino Wanawilla Unango.

The SSRC and its Juba-based bureau received high praise at home and abroad for spearheading preparations for the referendum and starting the vote on time.

"The commissioners, bureau members and their staffs have carried out their responsibilities under an extremely tight timetable in a politically sensitive environment," said UNMIS Regional Coordinator David Gressly at a 6 January press conference. "Thanks to their efforts, the many skeptics who never thought Southern Sudan would be ready to hold its referendum (on schedule) were proven wrong."

UNMIS and the United Nations Integrated Referendum and Electoral Division (UNIRED) provided vital logistical support and technical advice to the SSRC

"I lost my family, and now I do not want to lose Southern Sudan. I will vote for freedom to fulfill my dream and the dream of my people."

during the countdown to 9 January.

Nearly 340 UNIRED staff members worked closely with Sudanese referendum officials throughout the country. Domestic flights funded by the UN Development Programme's Basket Fund delivered over 1.2 million kilograms of referendum materials in the south.

During a six-day period ending on 4 January, UNMIS aircraft transported over 29,000 kilograms of referendum materials to 50 remote drop-off points in the Southern Sudanese hinterland that were inaccessible by road.

UNMIS also opened 19 referenda support bases in nine southern states to facilitate assistance to the referendum process at the county level.

UN Police advisers serving with UNMIS provided referendum security training to approximately 17,600 members of the Southern Sudan Police Service and 4,500 officers with the Sudan Federal Police in the north.

The SSRC is expected to make a preliminary declaration of results on 2 February. If no legal appeals are filed, final official figures could be available as early as 7 February.

Joseph Contreras



Southern Sudanese voting on first day of region's self-determination referendum in Juba. Photo: UNMIS/Tim McKulka.

Back to school

Tangible progress

The six-year-long Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) era has witnessed tremendous growth in the education sector throughout the greater Bahr El-Ghazal region.

Western Bahr El-Ghazal State Minister for Education Adil Athanasius cited a sizable increase in the number of enrolled students and a marked improvement in the quality of education.

At the start of the CPA era in 2005, the total number of students in his state's primary and secondary schools stood at around 23,000. It has now surpassed the 60,000 mark, with female students making up one-third of the student population, according to Mr. Athanasius.

"This shows how people are enjoying peace and investing their time in education," he said.

Warrap State has also registered a significant rise in the number of trained teachers, student enrolment and retention as well as infrastructure improvements, said Kuawyin Wek of the state's Ministry of Education. Total enrolment of primary and secondary school students state-wide rose from 145,703 in 2007 to 171,058 last year.

An even faster rate of growth has been seen in Northern Bahr El-Ghazal State, where student enrolment more than doubled in two years from 54,136 in 2007 to 110,315 by 2009.

"We are working to make sure that every child should go to school," Governor Gen. Paul Malong Away told *In Sudan* at his office in the state capital of Aweil. "Education is a key for development."

Victorino Ken Akoon of the Northern Bahr El-Ghazal Ministry of Education credited the sharp rise in enrolment in part to the intensive "Go to School" campaigns launched by the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) in 2006 to boost the number of primary school students. UNICEF and other educational partners of the GoSS enlisted chiefs, government officials and religious leaders in the effort to get children, especially girls, back into the classroom.

"We have trained a good number of teachers, managed to increase enrolment rates, constructed

many new schools and rehabilitated others in collaboration with our education partners," said Mr. Akoon, who serves as the ministry's director of planning and budgeting.

The figures bear him out. The number of schools in Northern Bahr El-Ghazal State soared by 63 per cent in a two-year span beginning in 2007, rising from 500 to 813.

More schools have also opened their doors in the neighbouring states of Warrap and Western Bahr El-Ghazal. Warrap State had reported a 16 per cent increase by 2009 when the total number of schools stood at 2,394, and between 2007 and 2009 Western Bahr El-Ghazal added 142 schools to the 664 that existed three years ago.

Go to school

When the "Go to School" initiative was unveiled by the GoSS Ministry of Education, Science and Technology four years ago, the number of primary school

"Education is a key for development."

A girl student writing her exam in Wau.

When Santino Mayen enrolled in a primary school in the Western Bahr El-Ghazal State capital of Wau in 2005, Southern Sudan was just beginning to recover from two decades of civil war that had crippled its educational system.

Now enrolled at the city's John Paul II Secondary School, the 15-year-old student said he felt fortunate to be pursuing his studies at a time of peace, while so many Southern Sudanese in their thirties and forties saw their education interrupted by war.

"I am very happy to be with my family and to attend my school peacefully and freely," Santino said. "Although we have a shortage of reading materials, we are doing fine."

Students of Mbili Girls secondary school in Wau.



students in the country's 10 southern states was estimated at 350,000.

That figure has mushroomed to 1.6 million today, and that includes illiterate adults who have been invited back to school to learn how to read and write.

"I think we have been succeeding in the last six years in terms of school expansions to most areas in the south," said Bahr El-Ghazal University President Stephen Akot Wol. "Although there are some problems and shortages of schools, materials and qualified manpower, we can say the last six years were a success."

Girls' education campaign

The education of girls has ranked high on the agenda. "The most important progress was that the understanding and perceptions of the local people towards education, particularly girls' education, totally changed," said Mr. Athanasius of the Western Bahr El-Ghazal Ministry of Education.

Mr. Wek said the enrolment of girl students in Warrap State had been rising, spurred undoubtedly by the example of Nyandeng Malek, who became the first democratically elected female governor in the history of Southern Sudan when she won the state's gubernatorial race last year.

But Mr. Wek also cautioned that the enduring practice of early marriage in rural parts of the state continued to undermine the formal education of girls, who were often regarded by family members as a source of wealth to attract large wedding dowries.

"Early marriage has dropped a bit in most towns after we campaigned in different parts of the state to convince

parents to send their daughters to school," he said. "Currently we are using the governor and other female politicians as motivational figures for girls to go to school."

Crippling shortages

Offsetting these otherwise encouraging trends in the educational sector of the three states is a chronic shortage of qualified teachers, classrooms and learning materials.

"We don't have enough classrooms, and most of our students are attending their classes under trees and open spaces," said Warrap State Minister for Education Madhel Malek Agai. "In most cases, about 200 students sit inside a class which is supposed to accommodate about 50 students in normal circumstances."

The recent switch from Arabic to English as the preferred medium of instruction was prescribed by the regional government in Juba, but that policy shift overlooked the widespread use of Arabic among the northern states of Southern Sudan. "It is not correct to change the curriculum from Arabic, which has been spoken by the majority, to English

tongue and have experienced difficulties adapting to the new English-language curriculum.

Exacerbating the language issue was the arrival of over 100,000 southerners from North Sudan in the final two months of 2010. Their children have grown up with the Arabic language, and they will have to start from scratch in classrooms where only English is spoken and read.

"Definitely, the returnees issue is another problem for us right now when it comes to the curriculum," said Mr. Athanasius. "We will either make an extensive programme on English for the newcomers or hire some specialists in English to quickly organize intensive English courses so that students can cope."

All of Southern Sudan's three universities were relocated to Khartoum during the country's second civil war. But they have been moving faculties and students back to the region during the CPA era. Bahr El-Ghazal University President Wol believes that a revival of tertiary education in Southern Sudan will eventually reduce the region's acute shortage of qualified teachers.

Mr. Akoon echoes that view. "We have a blooming hope that these universities will train and fill the gap of qualified teachers after the referendum," said the Northern Bahr El-Ghazal State education official.

Young students like Santino Mayen also anxiously awaited Southern Sudan's self-determination referendum (being voted on as *In Sudan* went to print), hoping that it would bring them more years of peace and stability to fulfil their lifetime aspirations.

"The returnees issue is another problem for us right now when it comes to the curriculum."

overnight," said Wau teacher Mariel Dut. "I don't believe the decision put into consideration the reality on the ground."

Ministry of Education officials in all three states confirmed that most of their teachers regard Arabic as their mother

Story and photos:

Hailemichael Gebrekrstos





Elementary school children receiving polio immunization dose as part of country-wide campaign. Photo: UNMIS/ Johann Hattingh.

Successes and setbacks

Since Sudan's peace accord was signed, the southern government has worked to improve the region's health care services, which should remain on its list of future priorities.

Over the past six years, the Ministry of Health of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) has worked with its international partners to reduce the incidence of some communicable diseases, but other diseases that were thought to have been eradicated have resurfaced.

POLIO

Sudan was believed to be free of polio at the dawn of the CPA era in 2005, but one case was reported later that year and another six new cases were diagnosed in May 2008. By June 2009, that figure had risen to 64.

"This has been the worst polio prevalence in Southern Sudan since the peace came," said UNICEF Immunization Specialist Dr. Daniel Ngemera.

The GoSS Ministry of Health and UNICEF responded with an aggressive publicity campaign throughout Southern Sudan in 2008 to raise public awareness about the infectious viral disease, which attacks the nervous system and causes partial or complete paralysis.

Over 30 vaccination campaigns immunized more than six million children under the age of five in Southern Sudan over the intervening years. No new cases had been reported as of last July, according to Anthony Laku of the GoSS

Ministry of Health's immunization program.

"Our role is to kick polio out of Southern Sudan as soon as we possibly can," said World Health Organization (WHO) Medical Officer Yahia Mostapha Hassan.

CHOLERA

Cholera has killed over 1,000 people in Southern Sudan since the first major outbreak of the disease occurred in 2006. But no new cases of the disease were reported last year.

"There has been a great achievement in the control of cholera in 2010," said UNICEF Chief of Health and Nutrition Programme Dr. Romanus Mkerenga.

The lack of pit latrines and chlorine-treated water as well as open defecation on the banks of the White Nile River have been blamed in the past for spreading the waterborne disease.

WHO officials developed a strategy in 2007 to combat cholera in conjunction with GoSS health authorities, international organizations and other UN agencies. UNICEF has provided cholera control kits to areas stricken by the disease, and WHO has trained over 3,000 health workers in integrated surveillance techniques for early detection of fresh outbreaks.

"We will continue to train health personnel, strengthen surveillance and pre-position essential cholera supplies to all states and main referral hospitals to build up reserves in case of a cholera outbreak," said WHO Medical officer Dr. Abdinasir M. Abubakar.

MENINGITIS

Sudan sits on Africa's so-called "meningitis belt" that spans the continent from Senegal to Ethiopia. Two major outbreaks of meningitis hit Southern Sudan during the first half of the CPA era.

The first occurred in 2006 when over 4,300 cases were diagnosed and 426 patients died of the disease, a bacterial infection of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord.

The next outbreak took place a year later and was deadlier. Of the 12,000 reported cases of meningitis in 2007, 677 proved to be fatal.

An ambitious vaccination campaign spearheaded by WHO, the non-governmental organization Médecins Sans Frontières and other partners in Southern Sudan helped to turn the tide by immunizing 500,000 people in states affected by the outbreak.

Only 27 people died from the 128 cases of meningitis recorded in 2008, according to WHO statistics. A year later the number of cases nearly tripled to 363 and claimed 28 lives.

WHO has assigned epidemiologists to southern states with a high incidence of meningitis since 2007 to provide technical support to their health ministries and train health care personnel on case management and observation.

"We do hope that by implementing and expanding an integrated disease surveillance system, we would reduce morbidity and mortality caused by meningococcal meningitis in Southern

Sudan," said Dr. Abubakar of WHO.

No serious meningitis outbreaks had been reported in the country's 10 southern states since the end of 2009 as of last September. But experts caution that new cases of the disease may surface in the coming weeks as Southern Sudan moves into the meningitis season stretching from January to March.

KALA AZAR

The parasitic disease known as kala azar has medical authorities in Southern Sudan quite worried.

As of September 2009, some 9,885 people had been diagnosed in the current outbreak of kala azar (which means black fever in Hindi). Nearly 400 have died from the disease, which is caused by bites from female sand flies.

The number of kala azar cases in Southern Sudan today dwarfs similar figures for outbreaks in 2007 (758 cases) and 2008 (582 cases).

Most of the 8,324 infections recorded in 2010 occurred in Jonglei and Upper Nile states. The disease is also endemic to the states of Unity and Eastern Equatoria, according to Dr. Abubakar.

If left untreated, kala azar can kill a human being within a time frame of six months to two years, said Dr. Romanus Mkerenga of UNICEF.

Kala azar patients are receiving treatment in the Jonglei State counties of Ayod, Old Fangak, and Khorflus at centres funded by the Spanish Government, the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid department and Common Humanitarian Funds.

Ground zero for the outbreak appears to be in Old Fangak county where the main clinic, which is managed by the Sudan Medical Relief Organization, treats over 50 per cent of all new cases.

"The increased number of cases in Old Fangak, Ayod and surrounding areas is very disturbing and is becoming difficult to contain," said Abdi Aden, the head of the WHO office in Juba. "Before the situation becomes uncontrollable, we must do something about it."

HIV AND AIDS

Accurate data on the prevalence of the HIV and AIDS pandemic in Southern Sudan are hard to come by. Although the UN has estimated HIV awareness at about 45 per cent of the general population, only 8 per cent of all Southern Sudanese has knowledge of effective prevention methods.

The GoSS established the Southern Sudan AIDS Commission and an HIV and AIDS directorate in its Ministry of Health in 2006 to educate the public at large about the disease and reduce its prevalence.

In 2007, the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimated the number of southerners living with HIV at about 214,000. By 2010 that figure had risen to 300,000, according to Dr. Lul Riek, the ministry's director general for community and public health.

But only 3,000 patients have access to antiretroviral drugs (ARVs), said Dr. Emmanuel Oryem Lino, the ministry's deputy director for HIV and AIDS.

About 50,000 people have been tested for HIV at 90 voluntary counseling and testing centres established by the GoSS Ministry of Health since 2007. Dr. Lino said that ARV medication is available at 14 of those centres.

About \$45 million has been spent during the CPA era on HIV and AIDS prevention, care, treatment, and capacity building campaigns for the GoSS Ministry of Health at the state and county levels, according to Joe Feeney, the head of the

UN Development Programme in Southern Sudan.

But traditional practices and the conservative attitudes about sex held by many southern tribes have hindered efforts to spread awareness about the pandemic and its prevention.

The use of an unsterilized tool for scarification of a youth's forehead or the removal of teeth can unwittingly spread the HIV virus among various members of a community, according to Dr. Lino. "If one member of the group is infected, the contaminated tool will infect the rest."

The ban on open discussion about sex observed by many rural communities is another obstacle facing information campaigns about the disease.

"The more the silence about HIV and AIDS, the more widespread it becomes," said Jacqueline Nyanga, head of the UNMIS HIV/AIDS office in Southern Sudan. "And the more we talk about it, the more people get sensitized and reduce the risky behaviour. We are fighting the infection, not the infected."

James Sokiri

Child at cholera treatment centre run by Médecins Sans Frontières during 2010 flooding in Aweil, Southern Sudan. Photo: UNMIS/Tim McKulka.





A guarded step forward

Devastated by heavy fighting during Sudan's civil war, Southern Kordofan is gradually transforming itself from an area of humanitarian emergency to one of cautious progress.

Gazing around the state capital Kadugli, one is struck by its mushrooming development. A long-distance bus station is scheduled to open its doors in March 2011, followed a couple of months later by the city's new, 1,000-bed hospital, and work on a stadium is ongoing.

Development is gradually coming to the state, which was formed when the former Western and South Kordofan states were merged after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed in 2005.

Six years ago, delivery of basic services – including provision of food, clean water, shelter, access to education and health services – was still rather problematic, recalled Takako Uguya, regional head of the UN Resident Coordinator's Support Office.



Ongoing bus station construction, Kadugli, South Kordofan.

The state was facing a humanitarian emergency when the peace accord was signed, Ms. Uguya noted. This had since eased and Southern Kordofan had recently entered a recovery phase.

Pillars of change

Development, which has recently picked up its pace, is largely due to the four-pillar policy drawn up in 2009.

Laid down by the government, these objectives included "peace and stability, unity of the three main parts of the state (southern, western and Sudan People's Liberation Movement -SPLM-controlled areas), sustainable development and preparation for elections", Southern Kordofan Secretary-General Abdalla Eltom said in his office at the recently built state secretariat building.

To maintain peace and stability, reconciliation conferences have been organized by the state's Reconciliation and Peaceful Coexistence Mechanism, with support from UNMIS' Civil Affairs Division and the UN

Development Programme. One of the most notable, held in Kadugli in November 2009, helped settle a long-standing debate on land and identity issues between the Abu Junuk and Misseriya tribes.



Ongoing stadium construction work in Kadugli, Southern Kordofan.



Ongoing construction work at new hospital site in Kadugli, Southern Kordofan.

Stability and development go hand in hand, as the scale of road constructions show. Close to 2,400 kilometres of roads have been built by December 2010, said Mr. Eltom, including inner-state gravel or asphalt roads and parts of the novel "ring road" linking Kadugli through El Obeid in Northern Kordofan State to Abu Gebiha in eastern Southern Kordofan.

The community benefited from newly built roads as they allowed people from different parts of the state to meet and get to understand each other, Mr. Eltom said. They also initiated trade, further contributing to development.

On the status of education, the official said, "If you don't have peace and stability, you can't provide services," adding that maintenance of schools and health centres had also recently started. But the state was struggling with a lack of qualified medical personnel, as many had fled during the war, and Kadugli still needed a college or university.

Issues of coexistence

Sitting at a local shop north of Kadugli, Pastoralist Union member Ali Brema also lamented the lack of educational facilities. "There is no improvement in the number of general or nomadic schools," he said, adding that schools were crowded and free education was still just a vision.

In Kululu, 25 kilometres south-east of Kadugli, Nuba high-school student Julius Julul noted similarly that villagers needed more schools and health facilities. The village was lacking hand-pumps, he said, forcing women to walk about an hour every morning to fetch water from the nearest

dam.

And even though peace has prevailed for the last six years, the state still has its Achilles heel. Sharing scarce water resources and grazing land have created tension between pastoralist and semi-nomadic Arab tribes, including the Misseriya and Hawazma, and the mainly farmer Nuba.

In Al Hamra, an hour's drive east of Kadugli on a major livestock route from El Obeid to Upper Nile State in Southern Sudan, pastoralists and farmers share one water yard, according to Sharif Hammad, the son of a Hawazma chief. Besides water scarcity, cattle rustling and damage to crops by cattle have been an issue for decades, mainly resolved by local mechanisms involving traditional courts and financial compensation.

As *In Sudan* went to print, several pastoralist groups had opted to stay in northern areas or migrate horizontally, having altered their migratory routes.

In addition, the Southern Sudan self-determination referendum meant "a lot of political variables (which could lead to insecurity) and people are confused",

noted teacher Mohamed Abubakar in Al Hamra. Members of his tribe added that they would wait until early 2011 before moving further south.

The state government had pledged to strengthen peaceful coexistence through infrastructure and human development, but Southern Kordofan was still awaiting state elections – postponed to April 2011 – and "popular consultations", allowing people to assess CPA implementation in their state.

Results of Southern Sudan's self-determination referendum might also have an unexpected effect on the state, as it bordered north and south, State Secretary-General Eltom said, adding that Southern Kordofan was looking for assurance from the Government of Sudan and international actors to maintain peace and security.

Story: Eszter Farkas

Photos: Paul Banks

Nomadic camp near Al Hamra village, Southern Kordofan.



Professor Ali Abdallah Ali

A question of balance

While Sudan's 21-year civil war mainly wrought destruction in southern areas of the country, it also had a severe economic impact on the north. To learn more about the war's effect and how the north has fared since the peace accord was signed in 2005, In Sudan spoke with renowned economist Professor Ali Abdallah Ali (Omdurman Ahlia University), who currently works as an advisor at Khartoum Stock Exchange.

In Sudan: What were the main economic effects of the war on Sudan?

Professor Ali Abdallah Ali: Both the north and south were affected – the south directly and the north indirectly. War not

only results in the loss of human lives, but destroys infrastructure and resources, which was especially true in Southern Sudan.

In the north, an increasing amount of money was allocated from the budget to continue the war, which meant less for social services. A large amount was used for defense, which indirectly meant a decline in the share of education, health, housing and other services.

What economic challenges faced the country when the peace agreement was signed?

The infrastructure, including the airways and other means of transport, was poorly developed. Expenditure on the war had diverted funds needed for this. But another big impediment was the frequent changes

in government and ruling parties, each of which had a different ideology on how the country should be run.

Every new government changed the civil service, which managed the economy. So there was a lack of continuity in perceptions of development and how it should occur. Hardly any policies had time to take effect.

Also, many unemployed civil servants and other qualified workers left for the gulf or western countries, leading to a brain drain of skills.

What about the longer-running governments of Jaafar Nimeiri and Omar Al-Bashir?

Although Nimeiri ruled for 16 years and the NCP (Omar Al-Bashir's National Congress Party) has been in power for 21, there were still many changes and shifts in the civil service during these periods. And the NCP had the war to deal with as well.

There was more unity in policy making after 1989, when the present government came to power. The NCP did more than previous ones in terms of infrastructure, especially roads, bridges, dams and telecommunications. But development still far from satisfied the basic needs of the individual.

How has the northern economy changed since the CPA was signed?

Well, the Meroe Dam has been built and the Roseires Dam raised, thus increasing electricity generation. But the north is still underdeveloped, despite those and other improvements in parts of the infrastructure.

Many universities and private colleges were established, but with a visible absence of technical education and training. This led to unemployment of a good number of graduates and meant that investors were forced to import their own skilled workers and trained staff.

After the war ended, expenditure should have been directed towards social services, as there was no need to spend money on the military. But a large amount is still spent on defense.

With the signing of the CPA, the north had to share the oil revenue with the south, which further reduced financial resources. Then oil prices declined between 2008 and 2010, although they have now improved.

In addition, the government still had responsibilities in Darfur and East Sudan. The budget continued to be used on these



Professor Ali Abdallah Ali. Photo: UNMIS/ Paul Banks.

areas, even though it had been reduced by 50 per cent (due to oil sharing).

How has oil itself affected the economy?

The oil share actually became a bit of a curse, as it was spent on imports in an open door policy, supporting consumerism rather than productive investment. A good portion of investment – about 38-40 per cent of GDP – has been spent on the services sector. But these were services for the wealthier class and foreigners in the form of restaurants and other expensive activities, not servicing poor people at all.

Oil itself has also led to a great deal of expenditure, as the country previously was lacking infrastructure and had to build roads, bridges and dams before and after the CPA was signed.

How could the oil revenue have otherwise been spent?

Little of the oil revenue went to agriculture, which has been neglected to a great extent. For example, the Gezira cotton-producing scheme, which has been failing for the past three decades or so, was seriously compromised by the 2005 land ownership law and disputes that followed.

The Gezira scheme was developed by the British some years after their reconquest of Sudan in collaboration with Egypt. It was thought that Gezira was a suitable place to grow cotton very much needed by Britain's Lancashire mills. The British had lost their supply of raw cotton due to the civil war in the United States.

Some of the oil revenue could have helped to revitalize Gezira and convert cotton into yarn, which could have led to Sudan becoming a spinning and weaving centre.

Some of the oil revenue could also have gone towards developing livestock and various processes involved in such a resource. These activities and others – for example, the growing of wheat, sorghum and oilseeds – support a sizeable part of the population, especially in the less fortunate areas of Sudan.

Would you say the country is too dependent on oil?

Yes, Sudan is far too dependent on oil, especially since the country began exporting it in 1999.

If the south separates in the January referendum, it will claim a sizeable share of oil production, as most of the oil fields are in the south. This is estimated at about 70 per cent of total proceeds, with the remainder accruing to the north. Blocks 1, 2 and 4, which produce about 250,000 barrels per day, are wholly in the south. The remaining producing fields are shared between the two parties.

Since the southern administration has decided to continue exporting its share of oil through Sudan in the event of separation, the north stands to gain from right of passage. But North Sudan will need to seek alternative sources of income to compensate such a large loss in revenues after June 2011.

What has attracted foreign investors to Sudan?

They primarily came under the umbrella of "oil-related investment". Due to the sanctions imposed on Sudan by western countries, it began looking east, so many have come from Arab and Asian countries.

Another reason investors have come is that the Khartoum Stock Exchange decided to list high share-earners like Sudatel in some Arab markets. This gave the impression that Sudan was worth investing in. They also came due to expected stability after the CPA was signed, of course.

Many foreign banks have established themselves here – for example, the Dubai Islamic Bank within the framework of the Bank of Khartoum, Al Salam Bank and United Bank. Also, several Arab investors have been developing large tracts of land. Westerners tend to invest indirectly through companies from the gulf countries.

How much foreign investment has been made in the country?

From 1990 to 2010, it is estimated that more than \$20 billion in FDI has flowed into Sudan, although there has been a slowdown lately, as people are uncertain about the outcome of the southern referendum. Besides services, there has been a lot of investment in agriculture, mining, construction, hotels and infrastructure.

Where has development mainly been concentrated?

Beginning with British rule, development has been mainly confined to Khartoum, Gezira and other central states. The rest of the country was very tightly controlled by the Closed District Ordinance of 1925, which controlled people's mobility so that they would not put any pressure on cotton production, as it was the major activity of the imperial administration in the country.

Development is still unbalanced, which has contributed to conflict and rebellion. Even FDI (foreign direct investment) has been concentrated on the most developed regions of the country, leading to an increased imbalance in the space and tempo of development.

How has the stock exchange fared in peacetime?

It's been growing since it started in 1992 and opened officially in 1995. It now has 57 companies listed, plus *sukuk* (Islamic bonds) and investment funds. Trading is active though limited to certain instruments. It is the only Islamic-based market in the region.

The KSE (Khartoum Stock Exchange) is not international yet, just concerned with the region. It's listed in Arab markets, mainly the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Previously, trading was manual but we're developing electronic trading this year. The KSE has developed a relationship with the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) and is part of the AMF data base and index.

Despite its relative newness, the KSE could definitely be considered one positive achievement in the area of economic policy instruments.

Recently, people have been thinking about establishing a Sudan Commodity Exchange, in advance of the expected revival of Sudan's agriculture and other resources, such as gold.

What economic challenges remain?

This will depend on how smooth the referendum goes. We also need clear cut borders or there will be difficulties.

The north will be affected by the decline in its share of oil. Utmost attention should be given to the development of agriculture and agro-industries as well as livestock and other crops. Efforts should be directed towards creating a hospitable and enduring environment to encourage investors interested in these fields.

Technical education and training should also be given a high degree of care and attention or Sudan will continue to suffer from a widening digital gap. It will look odd to see hundreds of qualified Sudanese serving in all parts of the world while the country is in real need of their qualifications and experience.

The immediate decline in resources will be a very difficult in the north, as it has already started reducing foreign imports into the country. Inflation is taking a toll, especially on the poor and fixed income groups. A state of stagflation (stagnation and inflation living side by side) is already in progress.

All that can be said in this brief space is that any economic policies adopted after June 2011 should not be carried out at the expense of the weaker members of the population.

The housing woes of Juba

The transformation of Juba from an isolated garrison town to a sprawling, burgeoning metropolis has created an acute shortage of housing in the city.

The shortfall is embodied in the omnipresent, pre-fabricated “containers” that house UNMIS staff members assigned to the mission’s compound in Juba and its other facilities across the country.

It is also reflected in the steep cost of rental housing in the Southern Sudanese capital. A three-bedroom home with backup generator and good security arrangements fetches between \$4,000 and \$5,000 a month, putting it beyond the reach of many expatriates who live and work in Juba, along with the vast majority of local residents.

The swelling ranks of the Government of Southern Sudan’s workforce in the city have exacerbated the problem. One regional government official acknowledged that housing issues have been neglected since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005.

“Housing has not been a priority of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) for the last six years,” said Silvas Clark Amozay, director general for housing in the GoSS Ministry of Housing, Physical Planning and Environment. “After the referendum, accommodation is even going to be worse for the people of Juba.”

In past years, the public sector has been the driving force in the construction of housing and office space in Juba.

The cluster of ministries near the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly building was built by a Yugoslav firm with funds furnished by the government of President Jaafar Nimeiri after the signing of the 1972 Addis Ababa peace accord.

Dwellings were also erected in the mid-1970s for ministers and directors-general of the fledgling regional government that was established under the terms of the peace agreement. Those houses were later renovated by a Ugandan company that the GoSS hired after the signing of the CPA.

Going private

GoSS officials are counting on a non-government source to devise solutions to the city’s current housing issues.

“The government is looking for a delivery of housing by the private sector,” said Mr. Amozay. “The private sector can deliver in a very short time, and we

want houses to be available to people as (private) homes and not as government houses.”

A riverfront property project was unveiled last November by a development company to build new residential housing as well as office parks, retail and commercial outlets and storage depots

The company belongs to Sudanese and international investors. One of its shareholders, Tim Carson, described the ambitious project as the first of its kind in Southern Sudan to address the needs of both the business community and aspiring homeowners.

The development company has leased dozens of acres on the outskirts of Juba for 33 years from a Bari community living along the Luri River. “The launch of this project is in line with the government policy to welcome more development

companies in South Sudan,” said GoSS Presidential Advisor Elia Lomuro during the official launch held in Juba.

In addition, a foreign bank signed a \$452 million contract with the GoSS last year to build 1,750 housing units in Central Equatoria State.

At a ground-breaking ceremony held in June 2009, the bank’s chairman, Peter Muthoka, spoke of “an increasing need” for residential housing in many Southern Sudanese towns to accommodate the growing population of public servants and employees of private and non-governmental organizations.

The first phase of construction envisions the building of about 150 new houses, which have been earmarked for government employees.

Felix Waya Leju



Old Juba residential area. Photo: UNMIS/Felix Waya Leju.



New construction in Juba. Photo: UNMIS/Tim McKulka.

The future of oil

As the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) enters the final six months of the interim period of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the future of oil, its largest revenue earner, remains uncertain.

Management of the sector has been the exclusive domain of the central government in Khartoum in the past. But if Southern Sudanese voters decide to secede from the rest of the country in this month's referendum, the GoSS will need to develop, as part of post referendum arrangements, a comprehensive and legally sound management plan for the industry, foster a favourable environment for foreign investment and demonstrate adherence to international standards.

Highly profitable

Oil was discovered in Sudan in 1978, but the outbreak of the country's second civil war five years later delayed production until 1999, when the first 1,500 barrels of crude oil were pumped through a pipeline to a marine export terminal on the Red Sea.

Production climbed sharply over the ensuing six years and hit the 355,000 barrels per day (b/d) mark in 2005.

The industry continued to grow steadily throughout the CPA era. According to a monograph issued by the European Coalition on Oil in Sudan (ECOS) at a conference on the oil industry that was held in Juba in December 2010, the 457,000 b/d production levels registered in 2007 rose to 514,000 b/d during the first six months of last year.

ECOS Coordinator Egbert Wesselink described the industry's profitability to date as "extremely high" at the conference entitled "Sudan's Oil Industry after the Referendum." The sector's annual revenues peaked at \$11.1 billion in 2008.

A 2009 report by Business Monitor International forecast a robust increase in production in the foreseeable future to an average of 771,000 b/d by 2013.

But Mr. Wesselink differed with that bullish outlook at the Juba conference. He said that rising oil production levels are showing signs of flattening out, a medium-term trend blamed on falling output in the industry's older oil fields and declining rates of investment in the sector.

An April 2008 ECOS publication predicted that oil production would fall below the 500,000 b/d threshold in 2012 and would continue its downward spiral over the ensuing four years.

The semi-autonomous GoSS depends on oil revenues for between 93 and 98 per cent of its annual budget, and no alternative sources of hard currency are in the offing to cushion a plunge in oil-derived income.

Mr. Wesselink warned that no relief could be expected, even if people of the disputed Abyei area opted to join Southern Sudan in their upcoming referendum.

"If you look at Abyei within the boundaries set by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (in July 2009), there is only one field there," he said. "There is always a chance there could be more oil. But we are expecting production to be completely phased out within six years."

Post Referendum arrangements

The Undersecretary of the GoSS Ministry of Energy and Mining David Loro Gubek said the regional government is currently drafting an oil and gas policy that would address compensation and environmental issues as well as community interests.

In December 2010, the CPA parties agreed to maintain the flow of oil until 9 July 2011 when the peace agreement's interim period ends. They also agreed to entrust the security of oil company assets and personnel to Joint Integrated Units (JIUs), consisting of troops belonging to the Sudan Armed Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Army.

But that would have to change in the event of separation because the JIUs would be disbanded under the terms of the CPA.

In order to build capacity within its own ranks, the GoSS Energy and Mining Ministry has sent 37 staff members to Southern Sudan's oil-producing states in order to familiarize themselves with industry operations in the field. In October, some officials also visited China, which is by far the largest customer of Sudanese oil exports.

Social and environmental management consultant Jill Shankleman said that the Sudan oil sector would also need to upgrade its operations to meet current international standards.

Adherence to existing international standards such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and the Natural Resource Charter are a prerequisite for attracting more foreign investment, she added.

Murugi Murekio

Unity oilfield operated by the Chinese National Petroleum Company (CNPC) led consortium Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company (GNPOC). Photo: UNMIS/Tim McKulka.



Vox Pop

What have six years

Mak Mohamed Rahal, 56, tribal leader



Security-wise, the CPA has brought about development. There were many hard-to-reach areas in Southern Kordofan before the peace agreement was signed, including the SPLM (Sudan People's Liberation Movement)-controlled areas, which restricted

people's movement. But these areas are now accessible. However, more development is needed, especially in the areas of health, education and water resources.

Ismail Mustafa, 55, local NGO Basegat staff member

People of Southern Kordofan think they gained nothing during the past five years because the CPA signatories failed to include the state's needs in the agreement and neglected Southern Kordofan. The only thing the CPA gave the state was popular consultations, which people expect much from.



Ikbal Hassan, 50, student of English language and translation



Five years is a very short time to reach real development. Development seen around Khartoum is due to oil revenues, but much more improvement is needed – in the areas of health and education, for instance. Nowadays, everything is available in Khartoum. If you have the money, you can get anything – but it's not for everyone.

John Lia Wol, 42, manual labourer

Now there is stability, whereas before the peace there was no security and people could not settle down. But still there are undeveloped areas that are hard to reach, especially during the rainy season, like Bentiu (Mr. Wol fled to Khartoum from Bentiu in 1981). Education is also lacking, and most people depend on growing crops and grazing cattle.



Yahia Mohammed, 46, car wash worker

There has been a lot of development. There is no shortage of food and there are new roads everywhere. But much improvement is still needed, especially in education. They say that education is free, but I have to spend on my kids from primary school to university. The major achievement is that the war stopped.



James Aban Deng, 36, trader

Since the CPA was signed, the situation has been much better, especially for a trader like me. Before it was difficult to find transportation to move vegetables from Khartoum or Juba to Malakal. Now everything is easy, the road is accessible and transportation has become available.

Gai Salva Akut, 26,



of peace meant to you?

college student



The signing of the CPA has had a good impact on education. Southern Sudan has three universities – Juba University, Upper Nile University, and Wau University. Prior to the signing of the CPA, these universities were located in Khartoum.

But development is slow. So far, there are no new buildings that have been built in Malakal.

All the buildings are old ones being renovated to improve them a bit. But contractors doing the renovating are mainly from other countries like Ethiopia and Uganda, so the jobs are going to foreigners rather than locals.

Nyabaj Mot Keir, 35, restaurateur

The situation in Malakal is more peaceful now and the market is more stable. Before the CPA was signed, I had no permanent location for my restaurant. We were asked to move from one place to another and I could not run my restaurant properly. Today I have a permanent stall and a steady volume of customers.



Lodu Ezbon Gambura, 24, hotel security guard

Peace and security are the main, positive achievements of the CPA. Now we are living without fear and that is most important for me.

There has also been substantial progress in the delivery of water, education, electricity, health, roads, transport and housing in Juba since the end of the civil war. But there is little progress in rural areas like my own village of Lobonok,



60 kilometres away. Children learn under trees and there are not even primary health care facilities. Sometimes pregnant women die before they reach health centres.

Soro David Joseph Kenyi, 30, television reporter

Southern Sudanese have exercised self-government and democracy since the signing of the CPA. For the first time, southerners enjoyed relative freedom of worship and expression.

Continuing development of the region's infrastructure will bring a better future for the people of Southern Sudan. We have good roads and schools not only in Juba, but in almost all the 10 states.



Samuel Manga, 47, government employee



I am very happy to see what is going on in Southern Sudan now in terms of development. Since 2005, people have been free to move from Wau town to our village in Bazia, even at night, without being stopped on the road, as was the case in the 1990s.

The number of cars circulating in the state capital of Wau has risen so sharply in the last six

years that I sometimes have difficulties crossing the road as a pedestrian.

Regina Francis Safu, 53, government employee

Perhaps the biggest peace dividend has been the increased selection of commodities on sale in Wau's main market, which has caused prices for cloth sold by northern Sudanese and foreign traders to drop. There are so many people in the city now that the market is very crowded. I have problems moving around the stalls.



MALAKAL

JUBA

JUBA

WAU

From dirt roads to bridges

Participants in a game of Tent Pegging at the Khartoum Horse Racing Club in Al Sagana, Khartoum.

When Sudan's peace accord was signed in 2005, its capital Khartoum was plagued with mainly dirt streets, congested intersections lacking traffic lights or even stop signs and spotty or non-existent electricity. Few hotels or apartments could be found to accommodate the rising influx of foreigners to the country.

Now, six years later, the city has undergone an incredible transformation. Many roads have been paved, traffic lights have magically appeared at major crossings, electricity has improved greatly due to the Meroe dam and construction is booming.

The city presently has no less than four five-star hotels, and new apartment as well as office buildings now dot its increasingly modern horizon. With a dramatic increase in the number of people and vehicles,

Khartoum has also multiplied its number of bridges crossing the Nile from two in 2000 to seven, including Africa's only suspension bridge.

Entertainment has also opened up in the growing metropolis, as exhibitions, musical festivals and cultural events take hold in various parts of the city. The renowned Rashid Diab Arts Centre opened its doors in 2005 and several cultural institutes of different backgrounds, including French, German and British, soon followed. Local activities and events targeting youth have also blossomed.

All photos by Paul Banks except where Tim McKulka is given credit.

New five-star hotel, Burj Al-Fateh, Khartoum.
Photo: UNMIS/Tim McKulka.



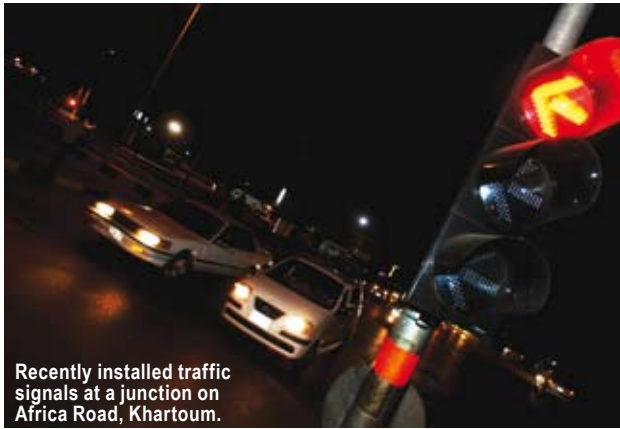
Despite its recent development, farmers still sell sheep by the roadside in central Khartoum.



Increased traffic crowding Khartoum streets. Photo: UNMIS/Tim McKulka.



Open Mic night at Bait Al Finoon (House of Culture) in Khartoum.



Recently installed traffic signals at a junction on Africa Road, Khartoum.



Constuction work on new apartment building in Al Riyad district of Khartoum.



A street sign on Africa Road in Khartoum with directions to Khartoum Airport and other locations.



Buses awaiting passengers at Stadium Bus Station in central Khartoum.



Traffic passing under an overpass on Africa Road as an aircraft prepares to land at the International Airport in Khartoum.

A cultural revival

On a cool starry night, thousands of people have gathered at Juba's Nyakuron Cultural Centre to attend the sixth annual Miss Malaika New Sudan beauty pageant.

Twenty-two young women from the country's 10 southern states stand on stage nervously awaiting the announcement of the winner.

In the wee hours of 5 December, a 20-year-old contestant from Unity State named Rachel Angeth is crowned the most beautiful woman in all of Southern Sudan.

Five days later, hundreds of Eastern Equatoria residents have converged on Freedom Square in the state capital of Torit on a hot, dusty afternoon. They have come to watch men, women and children dressed in traditional animal skins and body paint sway to the songs and thundering drums of the Madi, Tannet, Acholi, Latuka and Toposa tribes.

"Today we have the freedom to practice our traditional dances at whatever time we want without fear," said dancer Magadeline Aya. "Nobody can prevent us from dancing."

The era of peace in Southern Sudan has witnessed both a rebirth of traditional cultural practices and the adoption of modern entertainments imported from the Western world.

Dancing is seen as a vital link to the past in many local communities. "(Dancing) is important because we want to pass on our culture to the young generation," said Ms. Aya, 46. "Our culture defines who we are and what we do as a community, and we don't want our culture to die during our generation."

The displacement of an estimated four million people during the country's second civil war did not promote the practice of traditional arts like dancing.

"During the war there was no time to dance traditional dances, so many of our youths forgot it," said Odit Denis, an Acholi practitioner of the Larakaka dance that involves vigorous swinging of the waist.

Enter the beauty pageant

As a renaissance of traditional culture began to develop inside Southern Sudan, the first Miss Malaika beauty contest was

"Our culture defines who we are and what we do as a community, and we don't want our culture to die during our generation."

held in Nairobi in 2005, the same year the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in the Kenyan capital.

Envisioned as a celebration of African beauty that would promote the cause of peace through culture, the event was also something of a novelty for the region.

"During the pre-CPA period we (did not) have competitions like the Miss Malaika," said Lam Tungwar, the chief organizer of the beauty pageant and head of the Nyakuron Cultural Centre. "What we had was informal gatherings in the villages where both men and women gather to dance during celebrations."

The second installment of the Miss Malaika competition was moved to Juba in 2006, and the beauty pageant has become one of the regional capital's premier cultural attractions.

"The competition has been improving every year," said UNMIS Radio Producer Brando Keabilwe, who has been training the contestants in dance and movement.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for South Sudan to reflect how diverse the region is and to show their talent, and do away with the tribal issues because to see various girls come to compete can be a unifying factor."

The freshly crowned Ms. Angeth will be expected to provide a positive role model to young Sudanese women during her reign and advocate the rights of women.

Emmanuel Kenyi

Southern Sudan
Miss Malaika 2010.
Photo: South Sudan
Artists Association.

NEWS BRIEFS

Upper Nile learns polling and counting



With the Southern Sudan self-determination referendum rapidly approaching, the Upper Nile State Referendum High Committee and UNMIS completed a two-day training on polling and counting on 23 December in Malakal.

A training-of-trainers exercise, the activity was attended by 46 participants from the state's 13 counties, who then travelled to their respective areas to share information they had learned with their colleagues.

"You must be impartial and not intimidate anybody during the polling and counting," State Minister for Information and Communication Peter Lam Both told the gathering during the opening ceremony in the state capital.

"Your responsibility is to allow room for those who are registered to vote," the minister added. "We need the referendum to be free, fair and transparent."

Also attending were Malakal County Commissioner Chougi Abaj Ajang and State Referendum High Committee Acting Chairperson James Daniel Chuang.

Top UNMIS official urges restraint in border area



Sudan People's Liberation Arm (SPLA) commanders should exercise restraint in ensuring the southern self-determination referendum occurred on schedule, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) Jasbir Singh Lidder said during a pre-poll visit to Western and Northern Bahr El-Ghazal states.

Obtaining updated information on security conditions in the area on 18 and 19 December 2010, Mr. Lidder was heading an UNMIS delegation which met with government officials and senior SPLA officers.

The UNMIS party also visited sites of recent aerial bombardments

near Kiir Adhan and Timsaha, allegedly committed by Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) aircrafts. (SAF officials have denied the accusations.)

The DSRSG met with Aweil North County Commissioner Kuol Athui Hal, who said that about 1,500 people had fled the Kiir Adhan area and taken refuge in the county seat of Gok Machar after the November 2010 bombings.

Mr. Lidder also reminded SPLA officers about their responsibility to guarantee unhindered movement of UNMIS military observers to remote corners of Southern Sudan.

Acknowledging that UNMIS had not maintained much of a physical presence in the vicinity of the bombing sites, the DSRSG said the mission was planning to carry out a more permanent physical deployment in the near future.

UNAMID investigating Darfur clashes



The United Nations-African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID) said on 10 January that it was continuing to investigate clashes in an area where thousands of people had been displaced by recent fighting between Sudanese government forces and rebels.

According to a UNAMID patrol to Tabit village, 37 kilometres northwest of Shangil Tobaya in North Darfur State, exchanges of fire took place on 7 January between government troops and forces of the Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi (SLA/MM).

The mission was looking into the incident, in which three people were believed to have been killed, UNAMID said in an update.

UNAMID Joint Special Representative Ibrahim Gambari traveled the same day to Nyala, South Darfur, where violence has also recently occurred, to meet with local authorities, internally displaced persons (IDP), and mission staff.

Mr. Gambari then proceeded to Khor Abeche, where he met with IDPs, who expressed gratitude to UNAMID for assistance received in the wake of last month's attacks on civilians. While the mission has been providing security, medical attention and water, IDPs expressed concern over the lack of sufficient shelter, food, and clothing.

Meanwhile, a joint humanitarian assessment mission on 4 January to Shangil Tobaya, led by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), reported that the situation had stabilized, but further assistance was needed.

As in Sudan went to print, there were an estimated 30,000 people displaced in and around the Shangil Tobaya area following recent clashes. At least 3,000 had gathered outside the UNAMID team site, which has provided them with protection, water and limited medical assistance.

Food distribution was continuing and general health reportedly stable and under control, although some cases of malnutrition were confirmed, according to the mission.

UNAMID's team site clinic has treated a daily average of 25-30 patients. A clinic, operated by an international aid group, recently resumed operations, which had been previously suspended due to insecurity.

