



United Nations Mission

In SUDAN

Special Focus:
Building an economy

**Women behind bars
Home to uncertainty**

Published by UNMIS Public Information Office



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Diary

11 February: UN High Commissioner for Refugees spokesperson Adrian Edwards said at a Geneva news briefing that humanitarian assistance was needed to support southerners returning to the south. According to the refugee agency, which was seeking \$53.4 million for this effort, over 200,000 southerners had already returned out of an estimated 800,000 expected this year.

16 February: In the wake of renewed fighting in Darfur, UN-African Union Joint Special Representative Ibrahim Gambari told a Khartoum news conference that the UN-AU mission in Darfur (UNAMID) had increased military and police patrols from 90 to 130 daily and was setting up a quick reaction force to help protect civilians.

21 February: UNAMID expressed grave concern in a news release after Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minnawi faction (SLA/MM) leader Minni Minawi warned that airports in Darfur and the rest of Sudan had been designated military targets and could be vulnerable to attacks by his group. Aid workers and peacekeepers relied heavily on air transport to support those living in remote locations, the mission said.

22 February: Several agencies, including the Upper Nile State Ministry of Health, UNICEF and the World Health Organization, joined together in launching a three-day polio immunization campaign, targeting children up to 5 years old.

27 February: Fighting broke out in the Abyei area between militia and Southern Sudan Police Service (SSPS) officers, leaving at least seven dead and two wounded police, according to UNMIS reports. The attackers also managed to take away a few SSPS weapons.

28 February: The Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) launched a three-year private sector development programme to improve the investment climate of the south. Present at the launch in the regional capital of Juba were GoSS Vice-President Riek Machar, World Bank International Finance Corporation (IFC) Vice-President for Business Advisory Services Rachel Kyte, GoSS Minister for Investment Oyay Deng Ajak and other government officials as well as members of the donor community.

1 March: Oyay Deng Ajak, GoSS Minister of Investment and Chairperson of the ministerial committee told journalists in Juba that no decision had yet been reached between the GoSS and state authorities on where to set up Southern Sudan's capital when it became independent. Obstacles cited included the regional and state constitutions, which make Juba the capital of both Southern Sudan and Central Equatoria State, and communities reluctant to allocate land.

5 March: Some 2,890 of the almost 6,000 returnees stranded in Kosti, White Nile State, for nearly two months due to lack of transport left by barge for Upper Nile State in the south. The returns are led by the Southern Sudan Relief and Recovery Commission (SSRRC), which is responsible for returnees and returns via barge, with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

8-9 March: Under the theme "Equal access to education, training and science and technology", the hundredth anniversary of International Women's Day was celebrated across Sudan with ethnic singing and dancing, marches, ceremonies, craft displays and clean-up campaigns.

10 March: UNMIS officials visited states suffering growing insecurity in the Greater Upper Nile area to assess the humanitarian situation and immediate needs of residents. The group included Southern Sudan Regional Coordinator David Gressly, UNMIS Chief of Public Information Hua Jiang, Jonglei State Coordinator Rose Sakala, Upper Nile State Coordinator Hendrik Bruyn and Civil Affairs Officer Kwame Dwamena Aboagye representing Unity State. In a press statement, the mission called on all parties to refrain from any actions and activities that could harm civilians or endanger their lives and property.

12 March: Fighting broke out for several hours in Malakia, a suburb of the Upper Nile State capital Malakal, between elements of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and Capt. Olony. One SPLA soldier and one UN Office for Project Services personnel were reportedly injured, but details of other possible fatal casualties were unknown as *In Sudan* went to print.

FRONT COVER: Labourer preparing foundations of home for returnee family in Abyei. Photo: Stuart Price.

BACK COVER: Statue of graduate at University of Juba campus holding institution's logo. Photo: Isaac Gideon.

More than a borderline

Six years after Sudan's peace accord was signed, demarcation of its 2,000-kilometre-long north-south border area is finally about to begin.

A complex issue, the borderline directly affects 10 border states and some 13 million people -- nearly one fourth of the country's total population -- and is intertwined with questions of security and resource sharing.

According to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the border must be demarcated as it stood on the day Sudan gained independence from Anglo-Egyptian rule on 1 January, 1956, or along the so-called 1/1/56 line.

Border delimitation, or marking the border on paper, was completed in late 2009 by the CPA-established Technical Border Committee, with the exception of five areas or some 500 kilometres.

However, experts claim that demarcation is not merely about physically marking the borderline.

"The issue is not whether (border demarcation) physically happens but whether it will be sustainable," said socio-cultural anthropologist and private consultant Abdalbasat Saeed from his Khartoum office.

According to Mr. Saeed, author of the 2011 paper *Challenges facing Sudan after the referendum*, border demarcation has been stalled due to its complexities and the lack of political will, as the borderline belt is a highly valued area prone to conflict over resources.

"The BLB (borderline belt) is a disputed, conflict-ridden zone, subject to special provisions of the CPA," the study states. "It includes Blue Nile State and South Kordofan State in North Sudan, which are governed by the CPA Two Areas Protocol; the disputed Abyei area (...) and five states in South Sudan that are subject to the other major CPA protocols governing power sharing, resource sharing, and security."

In some areas, especially in Southern Kordofan, "Oil-related and pasture-related disputes are entangled with unresolved

border delineation disputes that the TBC has been trying to address for six years," the paper adds.

To resolve some of these problems, a new phase of peace and capacity building is needed, said Mr. Saeed, adding that the border areas lacked essential services while resources were fully utilized, as much of the country's oil, mineral wealth and sugar were produced here.

Recognizing the sensitivity of the border issue, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel (assisting with post-referendum negotiations between

of their seasonal movement, soft ones would acknowledge interdependencies of communities, consultant Mr. Saeed said.

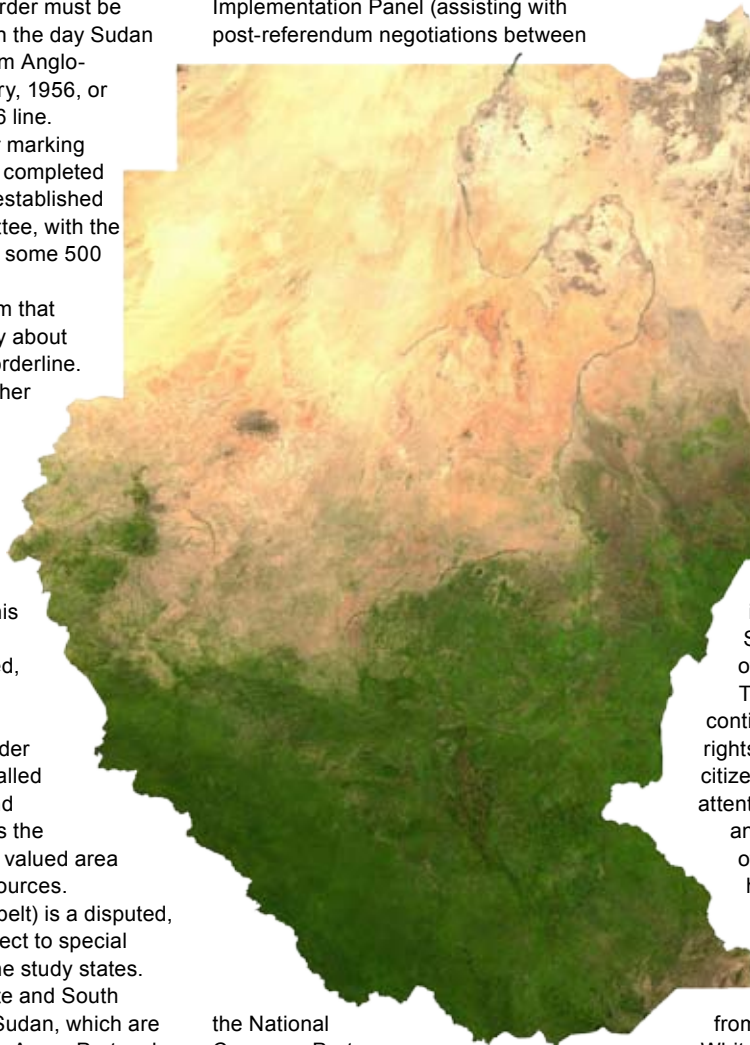
If a soft border were established for an extended transitional period, pastoralists "would feel as if there was no border drawn", Mr. Saeed said. A merchant coming either from north or south, "would feel that things are normal as ... you used to know them before the setting of the two states".

From a technical point of view, however, soft borders would mean "ice cream borders", TBC Chairman Abdallah Al-Sadiq said, and the demarcation committee's mandate required the actual placing of pillars on the ground.

In undisputed areas, the TBC was aiming to start technical border demarcation by 27 March, the Chairman said. Once demarcated, 1.8 metre high pillars placed every five kilometres in vast rural areas, and every kilometre in "high value" areas, including Abyei and Higlig towns, would indicate the border between Sudan and its would-be neighbour of South Sudan.

To maintain border safety and the continuation of border communities' rights, including grazing, trading and citizenship, "will require goodwill, attention to the historical context, and an emphasis on the mutual benefits of cooperation", Mr. Saeed notes in his study.

At a three-day workshop held in Ed-Damazin last October discussing post-referendum border issues, representatives from Southern Kordofan, Upper Nile, White Nile and Blue Nile states called for the creation of a joint police force and joint native administration courts, regular meetings of state-level joint border commissions and uniform taxation and tariffs along the border.



the National Congress Party and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement) called for a "soft border" last November to allow communities to continue economic and social activities as before.

While stiff borders might mean a dead-end as pastoralists, for instance, would fail to comprehend a closing off

Eszter Farkas

As Southern Sudan prepares to declare its independence, nations have been flooding it with requests to install a diplomatic presence in the new state.

"There is huge interest from countries to open embassies here in Juba, including Morocco, Republic of Korea, China and South Africa," said Thiik Giir Thiik, Director of Information and Communication Technology in the Ministry of Regional Cooperation (MRC).

Even the Government of Sudan has made its bid. In what was seen as a dawn of partnership and cooperation, Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir asked the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) in January to allocate his government a piece of land for its embassy.

"Sudan will work to be the first country to open an embassy in Juba to mark the establishment of positive diplomatic ties with the newly born South Sudan state," Foreign Minister Ali Ahmed Karti said, addressing the Sudanese National Assembly on 22 February.

Similarly, the GoSS will be expanding its presence in the north. "Currently we (GoSS) have our liaison office in Khartoum and we will upgrade that office into an embassy," said Mr. Thiik.

The GoSS-MRC is currently transforming itself into a Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. This will mean setting up new systems and structures, enacting a foreign service law, recruiting relevant staff and ratifying regional and international treaties.

The MRC will also be upgrading its current 22 liaisons offices to embassies and consulates. "At present, the MRC has plans to send 12 delegations to 12 regions of the world to brief governments ... on the new status of the south," Mr. Thiik said.

CPA era

During the five-year Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) period, the interim constitution of Southern Sudan allowed the GoSS to create diplomatic liaison offices in various nations, including Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, United Kingdom and the United States (US), to promote bilateral cooperation.

Some 27 countries, including the United States, Kenya, Uganda, Eritrea, China, Norway and Egypt, also opened



Expanding diplomatic relations

consulates in the regional capital of Juba.

Uganda and the United States were among the first nations to set up a diplomatic presence in Southern Sudan. "We have a historical relationship with South Sudan," said Migadde Habib, Head of Chancery at the Uganda Consulate. "In order to strengthen this historical relationship, we had to have our presence here."

"Sudan will work to be the first country to open an embassy in Juba to mark the establishment of positive diplomatic ties with the newly born South Sudan state."

As an immediate Southern Sudan neighbour, Uganda needed to have a presence on the ground to strengthen shared social, economic and political links, he added.

The US consulate in Juba has played host to the State Department and the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

"There is a concentrated interest from the USA in the future of South Sudan," said US Principal Officer and Consul General Ambassador R. Barrie Walkley. "We are interested in making sure that this entire region remains stable."

nature of Uganda's presence would change with Southern Sudan gaining independence. "We will transform from consulate to an embassy in South Sudan by 9 July this year."

A dramatic increase of US diplomats serving in the State Department and USAID was expected, according to US Ambassador Walkley, with numbers in Juba rising from 40 to 70. "The construction of a US embassy here in Juba is expected to start by 2013."

Chinese Consul General in Juba Zhu Zhibin said his country had experienced long-term relations with the south and that one of their priority areas would be to develop agriculture in Southern Sudan.

Southern Sudan will also likely seek membership in several regional and international organizations. Although the results of the January self-determination referendum have been widely acknowledged by such organisations, MoRC director Thiik said it was not automatic that Southern Sudan would become a member.

"It has to make a formal application to such bodies in order to become a member," he said.

To be considered for membership to the East African Community, for example, the new state must first establish and maintain a market-driven economy and demonstrate a high level of democracy as well as governance.

Story and photo:
Emmanuel Kenyi

Come independence

Ugandan diplomat Habib said that the



Back to their roots

University of Juba.

With Southern Sudan soon becoming a new state, universities that fled to the north during the country's long-running civil war have been returning home.

"We have relocated at least 90 per cent of our universities (and) we have brought most of our students and staff," said Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology Undersecretary Mou Mou Athian Kuol.

Three southern universities -- Juba University, Bahr-Al-Gazal University and Upper Nile University -- moved to Khartoum during the 21-year conflict, where they educated displaced southerners as well as northerners.

Once peace was restored with the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), people and institutions began returning south, although some needing special facilities delayed relocating to the war-ravaged region.

"Some colleges remained (longer) in the north due to logistical difficulties like laboratories, workshops and libraries," said Undersecretary Kuol, adding that these were mainly science and law colleges.

Those and other challenges remain for colleges now moving south ahead of southern independence. They are also faced with a lack of financial resources, classrooms and accommodation as well as limited teaching staff.

About 25,000 students are estimated to have registered in the south for the 2011/12 academic year, including over 3,000 students who have come from the north.

University buildings are already insufficient for existing staff and students, let alone additional people from the north,

according to university officials. "Space for the University of Juba has been the biggest challenge to date," said its vice-chancellor, Aggrey L. Abate, adding that this included land to rent or buy.

Another challenge is finding qualified teaching staff, as many lecturers remained in the north and qualified personnel are lacking in the south.

"Over 75 per cent of teachers in southern universities based in Khartoum were northerners, most of whom may not want to come to the south," said Undersecretary Kuol. "As an alternative, we may look into recruiting lecturers from regional countries to fill the gap."

"Over 75 per cent of teachers in southern universities based in Khartoum were northerners, most of whom may not want to come to the south."

Meeting budget needs of universities presents another problem, as they were previously funded by the national government. When the south becomes officially independent on 9 July this year, the Government of Southern Sudan will take over that responsibility.

Arabic to English

Besides logistical and financial constraints, some students will face academic and career obstacles with the change in

instruction language from Arabic in the north to English in the south.

"It is not easy to understand lessons in English for me, but I will take English courses to cope with the situation," said Cecilia Agustino, a fourth year banking and finance student, who arrived in Juba from Khartoum in November 2010.

Students who have just graduated in the north will also encounter language problems. "I must learn English so that

I can work in offices in the south," said banking and finance graduate Karbino Orlando Oboy.

Undersecretary Kuol said that intensive language courses would be provided for students and graduates coming from the north, either domestically or abroad. "We can do it here in Southern Sudan or we can make arrangements in some regional countries like Ethiopia ... Uganda ... or Kenya. But we prefer doing it here in Southern Sudan as much as possible."

To meet budget needs, his ministry was soliciting funding from public and private sources for the second half of 2011, and trying to expand the existing five public universities so they could accommodate more students, the undersecretary said. It would also be seeking personal and technical, material as well as financial assistance from the international community.

According to Mr. Kuol, higher education is vital for the new nation. "This is a country that was damaged by war and we had no studies for the last 22 years. We have an enormous problem of manpower."

Story and photo:
Negus Hadera



Feeding the people

Hosting a huge influx of southerners who have returned from the north since Sudan's civil war ended six years ago, Northern Bahr El-Ghazal State depends heavily on aid to feed its people.

United States-based non-governmental organization (NGO) Refugees International estimates that more than 400,000 people or one third of the state's population have returned since 2004, placing a huge burden on its social services.

About 40 per cent of the state's population rely on handouts from the World Food Programme (WFP) and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), according to Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) State Director Gar Gar Adim.

"We have an influx of returnees who came from North Sudan," said State Secretary-General Kuot Kuot. "The issue of returnees is one of the most challenging scenarios we have as a state."

Since 2010 alone, the state has received an estimated 86,530 returnees from the north, with some 90 per cent of them depending on food aid, said Director Adim.

"We are the leading state in terms of internally displaced people (IDPs) in the

"The issue of returnees is one of the most challenging scenarios we have as a state."

south," Northern Bahr El-Ghazal State Governor Gen. Paul Malong Awan said. "Right now, about 65,000 IDPs are on the waiting list to come into the state from Khartoum."

With such a large number of people needing food, some must wait for their rations to arrive.

Before returnee Nyanjok Jurwer Ngor recently left Khartoum to return home, she was promised assistance by the Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) in the state, but none has been forthcoming.

"We arrived here empty-handed," complained the mother of five, showing the ration card she was given by the SSRRC before leaving Khartoum. "They promised to provide assistance during our initial resettlement phase ... Life is so difficult right now."

Promising to look into claims like Ms. Ngor's, SSRRC Director Adim added that his office and the WFP were only providing

food rations for three months to returnees.

WFP head in the state Jayoung Lee said his office was busy distributing food to thousands of people who had returned from the north.

He noted that the WFP had provided food aid to some 58,000 returnees and 4,000 IDPs who fled Kiir Adem north of the state capital Aweil following an aerial bombardment in November 2010.

"Right now our focus is very much on the returnees," Mr. Lee said. "We provided returnees with a three-month general food distribution package consisting of sorghum, beans and vegetable oils."

But Governor Malong disagreed with the short time span for food assistance. "Three months is not enough for those people and it would be good if they were assisted up to August, a time of new harvest in the region."

Fighting dependence

The WFP, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other donor agencies are trying to avert dependence on food aid in Northern Bahr El-Ghazal by training farmers, building key agricultural assets and storage facilities, creating

access to markets and constructing roads.

"This year we plan to invest much more on food for recovery activities to upgrade the skills of the people that would enable them to increase their agricultural production and to enhance their food security ...," Ms. Lee said.

Measures were also in place to reduce poverty at the state level, according to Secretary-General Kuot. All five state counties were now connected through a road and bridge network, creating access to markets for local farmers.

"As a government, we have invested a lot in rebuilding the state infrastructure, which was totally destroyed during the war," he said. "We are ... working with our people and other partners, including the UN and other donors, to develop our state."

Acting State Minister for Agriculture Albino Madhan Anei Atem said they were offering seeds and training for farmers.

"We have arable and vast fertile lands with huge animal resources. Now what we need is to mobilize people to go back to farming," said Mr. Atem, who also serves as State Minister of Animal Resources and Fisheries.

"We have arable and vast fertile lands with huge animal resources. Now what we need is to mobilize people to go back to farming."

He noted that negative cultural practices, such as using animals only for dowries, were changing. "Now the local community are considering their cattle resources as a source of income and are selling and buying cattle like other commodities in the market. This is a very important development, given the huge animal resource we have throughout the state."

Governor Malong said they were encouraging people to cultivate their land and produce enough food to consume or sell in the market. "As a government we are working for the prevalence of peace and stability in the state so that people can cultivate their own food."

Such efforts are good news for returnees who would eventually like to support themselves, like Ms.

Ngor. "I don't (want) to live on handouts forever. I would like to work and assist myself if the government provides plots and seeds for us," the returnee said.

In addition to Northern Bahr El-Ghazal, other states suffering severe food insecurity include Eastern Equatoria, Warrap, Lakes and Jonglei.

According to a 2010 FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission, 890,000 people (9.7 per cent of total population) in Southern Sudan are currently severely food insecure and an additional 2.4 million people (26 per cent) are moderately food insecure.

But the assessment also noted that food security in Southern Sudan had markedly improved since the civil war ended six years ago and that crop-growing conditions in 2010 had been generally good. The April/May rainy season had started on time with rainfall levels normal to above normal, and generally well

distributed in most parts of the region.

According to the WFP, the number of people expected to need food aid in 2011 is 1.4 million and at worst-case scenario 2.7 million. The huge majority of these dependents will be returnees from the north and those internally displaced by insecurity.

A January 2011 FAO/WFP press release singled out rebel activities, tribal armed conflicts and sustained tensions over borders as having a negative impact on farming and husbandry activities.

Story and photos:
Hailemichael Gebrekrstos

Left: Residents receiving food from WFP in Nyamlei, Northern Bahr El-Ghazal State.

Bottom: Nyanjok Jurwer Ngor showing food ration card at SSRRC office, Aweil, Northern Bahr El-Ghazal State.



Building an economy

The Southern Sudanese government has been pushing through investment reforms to create a solid foundation for a market-driven economy, vital for a new state.

The International Finance Corporation (IFC), a World Bank Group member, has been instrumental in helping to kick-start the needed reforms.

"We were asked in 2005 by the Government of Southern Sudan to come and help them prepare the environment for investors," said IFC Private Sector Specialist Catherine Masinde.

Early signs of an improving business environment have been the emergence of a banking sector, improvement of the telecommunications sector and increases in investments in manufacturing as well as agribusiness, according to the IFC.

Key priorities for investment climate reforms to bolster the local economy were the establishment of a legal and institutional framework as well as business registry.

The Southern Sudan Investment Authority was established in 2006 and formalized in 2009 after the Investment Promotion Act was enacted. In 2009, the GoSS Ministry of Commerce launched a business registration campaign that has seen an estimated 10,000 businesses formally register.

During the same period, 13 laws, including the Investments Promotion Act (2009), were drafted, nine of which have since been enacted.

"These laws include the Partnerships Act, Limited Partnerships Act, Registration of Business Names Act, Agency Act and the Contract Act," said Jean Phillipe Prosper, IFC Director, Eastern and Southern Africa.

Early birds

A pioneer in the banking sector, KCB Sudan Limited, opened its first branch in Rumbek, Lakes State, in 2006. Although the Kenyan-owned subsidiary originally aimed to provide banking services for the foreign community, the bank's head of credit, Ituu Ngacha, said that Southern Sudanese now make up the majority of their customers.

Previously, Southern Sudan offered Islamic banking. "We came in to offer conventional banking services which were not the norm at the time," said Mr. Ngacha. "We knew that there was a chance for immense growth, if the CPA (Comprehensive Peace Agreement) succeeded, as it has now."

After an initial investment of \$15 million, KCB now has 17 branches offering banking and money transfer services. "From the statistics available, KCB has 40 per cent of the market share. We are in nine of the 10 states, except Northern Bahr El-Ghazal. We expect to cover all the states by end of March," Mr. Ngacha said.

While skilled local professionals were scarce when KCB first started operations,

the situation has now changed. "Initially we used to advertise for positions and we did not get enough responses," said KCB Head of Risk Joseph Chepkurgor. "Today more than three quarters of the staff, from entry level to senior management, are Sudanese nationals."

The growth of credit services has, however, stagnated. "Credit facilities have been limited by the lack of collateral by most loan-seekers," said Mr. Ithuu.

Companies like KCB have been assisted by a growing telecommunications sector.

Vivacell Managing Director Amin Mardam Bey noted that communications was a major enabler for economic growth, as it acted like a pillar for all other investments.

The mobile phone service provider began operating in Southern Sudan in February 2009. "Communications (at that time) was left unattended by the national operators, who were focusing their operations on the more lucrative areas of Sudan, with South Sudan being a mere extension of their operation, more of an obligation and a liability," said Mr. Bey.

He added that Vivacell now had a leadership position in telecommunications, according to statistics, despite being the sixth licensed operator in Southern Sudan. "Currently, Vivacell is the only operator fully established in Southern Sudan."

In the manufacturing sector, trailblazer SAB Miller PLC subsidiary Southern Sudan Beverages Limited (SSBL) set up



a base in the capital Juba in 2009. SSBL locally manufactures four brands of beer, Club Minerals soft drink in nine flavours and Source bottled water.

"Although the cost of doing business is higher in Southern Sudan, the profit margins still compare with international standards," said SSBL Managing Director Ian Alsworth-Elvey.

To date, SSBL has invested \$50 million and has penetrated nine of the 10 states.

"We are not in Malakal, Upper Nile State," the managing director said. "The logistics to get to Upper Nile are very difficult. Currently the only way to get products there is via the Nile River on barges and the costs are prohibitive at the moment."

Challenges

Akuei Deng Akuei, undersecretary in the Ministry of Investment, identified acquisition of land, insecurity, lack of capital and multiple taxation (at the *payam*, county, state and national levels) as major hindrances to investment.

"The issue of land is a roadblock for investment," said Undersecretary Akuei. "The Comprehensive Peace Agreement indicates that land belongs to the community."

And the taxation system needed streamlining, according to SSBL director Alsworth-Elvey. "In particular, the *payam*, county, state and national taxes that are duplicated."

Poor infrastructure, high illiteracy levels, corruption and lack of legislation as well as skilled local professionals have also been identified as hurdles for foreign investors.

But Mr. Alsworth-Elvey is unconvinced that infrastructure is a hindrance. "People who use poor infrastructure as an excuse not to invest here in my view are not serious in business, because you can do things to overcome the poor infrastructure and still run a good business, which gives you good returns," he said, adding that SSBL generated its own electricity and disposed of its own waste.

KCB's Mr. Ngacha agreed. "With all the numerous mobile phone companies, communication has not been a problem, neither has transportation. Most of the

"People who use poor infrastructure as an excuse not to invest here in my view are not serious in business."

major towns are connected by air. The challenge is (the high) costs of (these



services)."

Infrastructure had not been a problem for his company, said Vivacell director Bey. "Poor infrastructure was well known before embarking on the project and was taken into consideration in our planning."

Legislation and government institutions are also now in place. The Investment Promotion Act (2009) regulates 10 areas, including starting a business, work permits, construction permits, registering property, enforcing contracts, paying taxes, trading across borders, getting credit facilities, employing workers and closing a business.

According to Ms. Prosper of the IFC, registering a business begins at the Ministry of Legal Affairs, where a certificate of registration is issued. For investments above \$100,000, applicants go to the Ministry of Investment to obtain a certificate of investment.

The Ministry of Commerce issues import and export business licenses, while traders obtain their licenses from the state level ministry.

The way forward

The GoSS and the IFC launched a Private Sector Development Programme to be spearheaded by the Ministry of Investment on 28 February. It has three main components -- investment climate reforms, small and medium enterprises (SME) and access to finance, said Ms. Masinde of IFC.

The SME component will improve the capacity of small businesses to function competitively. The access to finance aspect will work with commercial banks to enable them to offer small businesses finance and promote microfinance as well as mobile money transfer.

The IFC has also been asked to help with business disputes. "The court system in Southern Sudan is not functioning efficiently yet," said Ms. Masinde. "Given the many disputes that are arising between businesses, we have been asked to develop an alternative dispute resolution mechanism to resolve cases between

businesses."

To deal with the lack of collateral borrowing problem, the programme will also pilot a secured lending project. "Secured lending is a concept used for non-fixed asset collateral," the IFC specialist said. "A register will be created for collateral that is not land, because we do have an issue with land here in South Sudan. This will help banks to lend without relying on collateral. You can register your cows or your bicycle in order to borrow money."

The Deloitte Partner responsible for Southern Sudan, Robert O'Hanlon, said his firm had received many enquiries from potential investors who wished to invest in Southern Sudan.

"These (enquiries) range from property development to manufacturing enterprises," Mr. O'Hanlon said. "All have the potential to create significant employment opportunities."

He added that these investors would want their financial affairs managed to international standards. "At present, there is a significant shortage of qualified and experienced Southern Sudanese financial management professionals. Our role is to assist the investors in ensuring they are properly registered, understand the tax and regulatory systems, and set up adequate systems of internal control and reporting."

Donor interest in Southern Sudan will also increase, Head of the Joint Donor Team Michael Elmquist said. "We certainly expect that the level of donor interest is not going to go down. It is quite likely going to increase. We expect much more funding from the European Union."

Story and photos:
Murugi Murekio

Left: KCB Sudan Limited Buluk Headquarters in Juba, Central Equatoria State.

Top: KCB Sudan Limited Joseph Chepkurgor Head of Risk and Head of Credit Ituu Ngacha at the Buluk Headquarters in Juba.

After the referendum



Power and printing presses

One of the world's most underdeveloped cities just six years ago, the Southern Sudanese capital of Juba has recently been dubbed the fastest growing town in Africa.

The city's dirt roads and infamous potholes are gradually being replaced with tarmac to accommodate a dramatic increase in vehicles. Completely lacking public electricity a few years ago, the city now has a power plant driven by eight large-capacity generators to supply most of the town with power.

Manufacturing is expanding as large companies open up, including Southern Sudan Beverages Limited, which manufactures the locally renowned White Bull beer, Club Minerals soft drinks and Source bottled water.

Previously, publishers wasted precious time sending their materials to the north to be printed due to lacking facilities in the south. The Citizen newspaper has now brought in the region's first printing press, which will soon be available for other media to rent.

With particularly explosive growth in the hospitality sector, the number of lodging houses in Juba has grown from a mere one in 2005 to over 200 hotels, motels and lodges, some even offering swimming pools.

Educational facilities took a leap forward in October 2010 with the opening of Dr. John Garang International School, the first of its kind in the region. A brainchild of the late Dr. Garang's widow, Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior, the British

system private school operates under the motto "Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow".

Photos: Isaac Gideon

Top left and top right: Students at Dr. John Garang International School.

Bottom left: The Citizen newspaper's new printing press.

Middle left: Producing soft drinks at Southern Sudan Beverage Limited, Juba.

Middle right: Juba Power Plant Station now supplies most of Juba with electricity.

Bottom right: Jebel Lodge, one of Juba's new hotels.

The Citizen
SOUTH SUDAN INDEPENDENT DAILY FOUNDED IN 2005



After the referendum



Women behind bars

The building that houses the six female inmates of Malakal Federal Prison sits directly behind the structure occupied by male prisoners.

A \$1.4 million renovation financed by the World Bank's Sudan Multi-Donor Trust Fund and carried out by the UN Development Programme in 2010 has given the building for women prisoners a surprisingly clean appearance. The agency also donated bunk beds and mattresses for use by the inmates.

Another donation of food and non-food items valued at \$500 was recently made to the female prison section with funds raised by The Alternate School of Greenfield Park in Canada at the instigation of its alumnus, Capt. Michael Marchand, who serves as an UNMIS military observer in the UNMIS Malakal sector.

But the spruced-up facility remains a place of involuntary detention for its inhabitants, who range in ages from 21 to 45 and are serving time mostly for theft and murder.

One of the convicted murderers is Nyabang Ukech, a 35-year-old mother of six who stabbed her second husband to death in June 2008, according to prison director Lt. Romano Deng Jok.

Her sentence is scheduled to end in March of next year. But Ms. Ukech could see her time behind bars extended if she fails to compensate her husband's family for his death.

That compensation has been set at 20 cows or cash in the amount of 30,000 Sudanese pounds.

Ms. Ukech is required to come up with this so-called "blood money" payment under Sudan's dual judicial system of traditional and official laws unless her former in-laws release her from this obligation.

"This 'blood money' is based on Sharia Law and mostly practiced in Islamic states," said UNMIS Human Rights Officer Alfred Zulu. "She should be released from 'blood money' because she (will have) served her sentence in prison (by March 2012)."

Ms. Ukech said her relatives have shunned her since her incarceration. "They think I'm crazy," she said.

But prison director Jok said that it is Ms. Ukech who has refused to receive her family members when they have tried to see her, adding that she sometimes engages in "abnormal behavior".

The inmate has never undergone any psychiatric treatment during her incarceration because there is no psychiatric hospital in Upper Nile State and the government lacks the necessary funds to send her to Khartoum or Juba for that kind of attention.

Mr. Zulu said that Ms. Ukech should have undergone an evaluation for signs of mental illness before being put on trial for murder in the first place.

While Ms. Ukech could be looking at an indefinite stay in detention that would violate international law in Mr. Zulu's judgment, the plight of a female inmate at Bor Central Prison seems even more iniquitous.



Athieng Ayuen Yen married a soldier in the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in 1996 and bore him four children over the ensuing 13 years. At the time they were married, Ms. Yen's relatives sought a dowry of 50 cows from her husband, as required by the traditional customs of Dinka culture, but the soldier delivered only 17 animals.

Her family's longstanding sense of grievance over the dowry issue came to a head after Ms. Yen became pregnant in 2009.

Her relatives told her about a wealthy businessman who wanted to marry Ms. Yen and would pay them an ample dowry. Ms. Yen's family ordered her to leave her husband, who had since married other women and increased his income as an SPLA officer without ever settling the bride-wealth debt.

Ms. Yen rejected the ultimatum, insisting that any decision to leave her spouse was hers alone to make.

Her relatives then obtained a court ruling that threatened Ms. Yen with the loss of her newborn son unless her husband finally came up with the 33 cows demanded by her family.

She rejected the ruling and was sent to prison, where she has spent the last 16 months raising her fourth child.

"My family and the new man they wanted put me in prison because I refused to be (his) wife," said the 29-year-old inmate. "The child will be given to the new man if the father of my children fails to show up."

On that score, Ms. Yen has little grounds for optimism. Her polygamous husband has yet to visit her or their son since they moved into the prison in 2009.

Imelda Tjahja and Francis Shuei Diu

Top: Female prison in Malakal renovated by UNDP.

Left: Nyabang Ukech with beads she makes, Malakal Federal Prison.



Educated women at home

Literacy and a formal education for women are usually linked with work, but they also yield important benefits for a family household.

An educated mother is more likely to understand the importance of a balanced diet and what food types provide protein, vitamins, carbohydrates and fat to her children, according to UNMIS Civil Affairs Officer Mary Achiro Stephen.

The head of the UNMIS Gender Affairs unit in Southern Sudan said that literate mothers attach a higher priority to a good education for their children and will shrug off traditional beliefs that school is a waste of time for girls in particular.

"I ... monitor the academic progress of my children so that I know that this child is performing well, this one is not, or this one needs remedial classes," said Ruth Kibiti, adding that girls should especially value education because many men in the future will not be interested in marrying a woman who cannot even read a text message on a mobile phone.

Ms. Kibiti's UNMIS Gender Affairs colleague Mikelina Emilio noted a greater readiness to accept family planning guidelines among women with a certain level of learning.

"An educated mother knows how heavy it is to carry a big family," said Ms. Emilio.

Access to formal education in Southern Sudan is unequally distributed among boys and girls. Estimates of illiteracy among the region's female population run as high as 88 per cent, with girls making up only about one-third of all primary school students in Southern Sudan, according to UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS).

UNICEF is supporting a programme that uses community-based advocacy groups of prominent women and other leaders to urge parents, politicians, administrators and communities to support ongoing GoSS efforts aimed at promoting the education of girls.

"The active involvement of women leaders as champions of girls' education is critical to bridging the girl child education gap," said UNICEF Communications Officer Bismarck Swangin. "Girls' education is the single most important investment any wise nation can make."

"Girls' education is the single most important investment any wise nation can make."

Juan Betty Samuel would agree. The 26-year-old mother of two failed to finish secondary school, but the years of formal education she did receive helped prepare Ms. Samuel for her maternal duties.

She carefully follows the instructions for prescription drugs she buys for an ailing child, and ensures that her three-year-old son observes basic hygienic practices like washing his hands before meals and brushing his teeth afterwards.

"Sometimes, a particular drug is labeled 2 x 2 (two pills twice a day), or 2 x 3, or 4 x 1/7 (four pills a day for one week)," said the resident of Juba's Munuki *payam* (township). "It is hard to interpret medical prescriptions by someone who has never attended even a lesson of algebra in mathematics."

Educated women who work outside the home often have more leverage over important decisions involving their families.

"Greater earning power will increase our bargaining capacities in the household, giving us a greater say in channeling resources to the next generation," said UNMIS Gender Affairs Officer Margaret Joshua.

Story and photo: James Sokiri

Students at Terekeka Basic School.





Dorcas Zendia

Work, family and culture

as Islamic Law discourage women from working in an office, which is considered a man's job.

As women are meant to perform domestic work and care for children, a husband may frown on his wife spending the day in an office.

"Some women resort to staying at home, even though they are qualified," Ms. Duany said.

Many graduates feel that finding a job in ministries and organizations is difficult, especially in Juba.

Although she has an economics degree, Makandi Virmo was still unemployed after repeatedly applying when vacancies came up

"There should be transparency in the process, otherwise it is discouraging."

for more than two years.

"I have never even seen my name in the short list and I have no idea why," said Ms. Virmo. "There should be transparency in the process, otherwise it is discouraging."

The 26-year-old economist, who completed her degree at Khartoum University in 2006 and studied English for another two years in Kampala, said many of her fellow graduates opted for lower-level jobs when they failed to obtain posts equal to their qualifications.

Balancing work and family

According to Undersecretary Duany, even women who work in offices are hindered by conflicting work and family responsibilities or difficult relationships with male colleagues, which curb their desire to grow.

Women may also run afoul of their spouses when job demands keep them late in the office. "Some of the staff under my supervision told me that they were beaten by their husbands when they stayed late," said Ms. Zendia, now an office administrator in the Ministry of Labour and Social Services.

"Some of the staff under my supervision told me that they were beaten by their husbands when they stayed late."

Even those with understanding and supportive husbands face challenges in developing skills and advancing their careers.

Managing a family and seeking higher education required maximum commitment, acknowledged Under-secretary Duany, a mother of two when she joined Juba University in 1980.

"I don't know how I did it, but I struggled through it," said the under-secretary, who eventually earned a doctorate degree in education.

Some progress

Although illiteracy is still high, the job market has improved for women in recent years, at least in the government sector. Thanks to the 2005 Southern Sudan constitution, women are granted a minimum of 25 per cent representation in government jobs.

After the April 2010 elections, the Government of Southern Sudan had six women ministers, seven under-secretaries, a minimum of two women directors in each of its 30 ministries and 147 members of parliament in the Southern Sudan legislative and state assemblies.

"If we have five posts, at least two go to women occupants and at least one out of three directorate posts must be occupied by a woman," said Under-secretary Duany.

Accurate figures are unavailable, but the number of educated women has increased over time, noted Ms. Zendia, adding that two of her daughters had graduated from university. One found a job with Sudan Airways, while the other is still seeking employment.

"There are many women working in offices and many educated woman, which was not the case some years back," she said.

Story and photo:
Negus Hadera

Little has changed since Dorcas Zendia became one of a handful of women in Southern Sudan to land an office job after completing secondary school in 1988.

A rare woman of her generation who could read and write, Ms. Zendia was offered a position as junior typist in the Ministry of Housing and Public Utility.

"Most of our age mates didn't go to school at all and some withdrew at an early stage," said the now 45-year-old mother of eight. "It was rare to see female staff in offices at that time except as cleaners."

Some 25 years after Ms. Zendia found her first job, about 88 per cent of women in the region are still illiterate. Lack of qualifications is a major drawback for them in finding gainful employment, especially at the professional level.

"There are very few women who hold higher diplomas and relevant experience required to work in higher positions," said Parliamentary Affairs Under-secretary Julia Aker Duany.

Women university graduates were currently increasing in number, Ms. Duany noted, but even those who acquired degrees were hindered from working by socio-cultural or family obstacles.

According to the under-secretary, most cultures in Southern Sudan as well

A second chance

When Jessy Jackson's family fled civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo over 16 years ago, they found a safe haven in Uganda and quickly adapted to a new life.

A tender 25 years old at the time, Jessy never imagined she would face yet another life-changing experience so soon in the Ugandan capital of Kampala.

A spate of bomb blasts shook the city on 14 February 1999 in Kabalagala on the city's outskirts. Two people were killed and Jessy was among the injured, with her left leg shattered and only one left to stand on.

"That day, my life completely changed because I lost my leg and had to be fitted with an artificial leg and learn how to walk again," said Jessy, who was in Juba visiting a friend. "It has been quite challenging learning how to use these limbs."

When she learned about the physical rehabilitation reference centre in the Southern Sudanese capital, she quickly consulted the establishment for a review of her limb.

The centre recommended a new one, which Jessy obtained. She was learning afresh how to use it, as it was different from the previous one.

"It is difficult to practice using the new limb," Jessy said. "However, I have to learn to use it because it is much better than the other ones."

Jessy is one of 1,000 people to benefit from the centre each year. Managed by the Government of Southern Sudan's Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, it has been operational since 2006.

Services on offer include pre-fitting physiotherapy, disability assessment, lower and upper limb prosthetics, lower and upper limb orthotics, crutches, walking frames, wheelchairs and referral for medical treatment, according to Antero

Kinnunen, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross' (ICRC) Orthopedic Project, which supports the centre.

The centre was originally located in Lokichoggio, a northwestern Kenyan town about 30 kilometres from the Sudanese border, which was host to UN agencies and non-governmental organizations operating in Sudan during the conflict. Initially managed by the ICRC, the centre relocated to Juba following the signing of the 2005 peace agreement.

It was officially handed over to the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare in 2009.

The centre treats war-affected victims as well as those who have fallen prey to amputation or illnesses like polio.

Most victims coming from other parts of Southern Sudan are referred to the centre by the NGO Médecins Sans Frontières or ICRC field offices. A small number come on their own.

But many victims were deterred from seeking prosthetic consultation in Juba by lack of transport, noted Mr. Kinnunen.

"Due to the transport problem, most of those who manage to be fitted with limbs are unable to come back for review and only do so when the limbs are too destroyed (to be used)," he added.

The centre has about 20 orthopedic

technicians and an inpatient bed capacity for sixty people. With the inpatient facility, the ICRC head said they could see more patients and follow up treatment until patients were fit enough to return home.

Jane Halima, from Chukudum, was brought to the centre by her aunt. The 17-year-old was going to visit a relative when she was struck by a landmine on the roadside, she recalled. Although Jane was in the company of four other girls, she was the only one injured, losing a leg.

"Why did God punish me and yet I did not do anything wrong to anyone?" she asked. "Even my father never fought with anybody."

Joan is currently visiting the centre for a third replacement of her limb after two prior visits to Lokichoggio.

Having just completed her primary school exams, she is eagerly awaiting her results. "I am confident that I will pass and go on to study medicine. I want to become a doctor so that I can save lives."

Bolngor Wal Makuach of Abyei lost a leg over twenty years ago while working as a heavy truck driver in Darfur. The 65-year-old man said the biggest challenge disabled persons faced was ridicule.

Unable to drive after the accident, Bolngor said he was able to make a living from selling tobacco. But he bitterly recalled being ridiculed by his peers, who mocked him for not fighting in the country's civil war.

"It was a very painful experience", he admitted, his eyes tearing.

He would be forever grateful to the ICRC and now the government for enabling him to use his limbs again, Bolngor said. He was initially fitted with limbs in Lokichoggio and was in Juba to get a new limb after the previous one wore out.

Antonette Miday
Photos: ICRC

Top: ICRC worker helping man with prosthesis at Juba rehabilitation centre.

Left: Woman receiving prosthesis at Juba rehabilitation centre.



Home to uncertainty

Sitting on an iron bed under a tree beside belongings that had been piled up since his January arrival in Abyei, Mayowd Deng Ayot might have envisioned a less daunting homecoming.

Having spent more than two decades in Khartoum as a labourer, the middle-aged man returned with his family to Rumamier locality, 32 kilometres south of Abyei.

"We have no tools," Mr. Ayot said, explaining why he had yet to build a traditional *rokuba* (square, thatched-roof house). "Without tools it's difficult to cut grass for roofing or start farming."

The returnee is one of some 37,700 who arrived between November 2010 and January this year in the Abyei area from northern Sudanese states through state-organized returns – multiplying the conflict-ridden area's population by nearly half.

Returns to the area were organized by the Abyei High Management Committee for Returns and financially supported by the Abyei Area Administration as well as Government of Southern Sudan. Having surveyed displaced areas in Khartoum and other northern states, the committee had expected some 35,600 formerly displaced persons to return.

But the actual number exceeded plans, according to Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) Humanitarian Officer Deng Luar. Over three months, the area's population of some 80,000 increased by 47 per cent. Moreover, another 4,000 people were waiting to return from northern states at the end of February, held back by lack of transport.

Thinking about limited and basic services as well as resources, the international community had encouraged a gradual return process to allow for a scaling up of activities, noted UNMIS Return, Reintegration and Recovery Officer Keikura Braima at the UN Resident Coordinator's Support Office in Abyei. However, the rate and scale of returns turned out to be much faster and higher than anticipated.

Deputy County

Administrator Arop Ayuel expressed concern about a strain on resources in Rumamier, adding that arguments over the use of two operational hand pumps were common.

Besides limited access to water, returnees were worried about lack of shelter and education. Mr. Ayot, for instance, had received the first portion of three-month food rations from the UN's World Food Programme, but was still awaiting plastic sheeting and other non-food items, as he came with the last phase of returnees.

In Mijak locality, some returnees were being supported by their relatives with assigned plots and tools. John Aguer, head of a family of eight, had left his small shop in Omdurman to return to the land of his ancestors "even if we sleep under (a) tree".

Mr. Aguer was hoping that his three school-aged children could continue education in Mijak, and he himself wanted to complete secondary school in Abyei.

According to a recent assessment by various UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), a glaring gap existed in the area's education sector. While demand is excessive, as 55 per cent of the returnees are primary and secondary school students, over 500 new classrooms and 250 teachers are needed.

According to Mr. Braima, livelihood and vocational training was being planned to support alternative coping mechanisms, as only one per cent of the returnees were farmers.

Hawa Deng, a woman in a wheelchair, was one of the 60 per cent of recent returnees settling in and around

Abyei town. Seemingly a leader of her community, she spoke with authority.

"We are comfortable here," she said, despite the hardships. "For food, we depend on relatives and the hand pump is far, at about one kilometre."

Ms. Deng left her two children behind, as they were working in Khartoum. She had spent 21 years in North Sudan working as a cook. In Abyei, she was hoping to set up a small shop selling commodities like sugar and cigarettes.

Although the UN and NGOs had scaled up support in all sectors, including water, sanitation, health and food provision, services were overstretched and there was a concern about congestion in certain villages.

Tensions were also growing due to several clashes north of Abyei in February, causing some returnees to flee the town to villages, further compounding already scarce services.

As In Sudan went to print, most residents of Abyei and other affected towns had fled to surrounding villages due to sporadic conflicts and rising tension in the area.

Eszter Farkas
Photos: Stuart Price

Top right: Girl sheltering under tree as her returnee family awaits tools to build new home in Abyei.

Bottom right: Labourer holding support post during building of home for returnee family in Abyei.

Bottom: Returnee children standing in front of a partially built *tukul* on Abyei's outskirts





Dr. Aguek Deng Alel

“This is my job”

Continual challenges at Warrap State's only government hospital in Kuajok have failed to discourage Dr. Aguek Dang Alel, who has been struggling to overcome them for the past five years.

“When I first came here, it (the hospital) was just one small building... you could call it a clinic,” said the 42-year-old general practitioner. “And ... I was the only doctor. Now there are three of us, in a much bigger hospital. We have two wards, 31 beds and mattresses.”

The doctor's enthusiasm faltered, however, as he recalled the hospital's persistent efforts to obtain beds.

The non-governmental organization (NGO) World Vision gave the hospital 11 beds in 2008, but it needed more for the growing number of sick. “Patients used to take turns to lie on the beds, depending on who was getting IV (intravenous) treatment,” the doctor said.

The bed problem was resolved when inter-state sports competitions were called off at the end of last year. “They (the state) had secured beds for the participants,” said Dr. Alel. “We took advantage and asked the government to give them to us and in January, they gave us 20 beds.”

Inheriting beds originally meant for sports rather than a hospital was clearly just another incident in the long, winding road that has brought Kuajok hospital to its current, more positive state.

“I am happier than when I first came here,” said the doctor, who arrived in 2006 after completing his medical training at the University of Bahr El-Ghazal's College of Medicine in Khartoum. “Back then, there was almost nothing. Now we even have a laboratory ...”

While the laboratory has a fully functional routine-test section, it has no equipment for other key areas like serology, clinical chemistry and microbiology sections. The lab is run by a generator donated by World Vision, which



Dr. Aguek Alel.

has also been funding its operations.

The time is slowly approaching, however, when the NGO will expect the government to take over that role. As far as Dr. Alel can see, it might be a case of switching the generator off – and the services in the lab.

“My hope is that things will change, but the trend so far has been that you speak to the government officials and when you are lucky, they make promises, but then they don't keep them,” he said. “Many times, there is no response. Healthcare isn't ... a priority...”

Despite those misgivings, the doctor is optimistic that change will come. “I think, maybe, they were busy implementing the CPA (Comprehensive Peace Agreement) and now that the referendum is over, hopefully they will concentrate on development issues.”

For Dr. Alel, those issues include ensuring that people like cleaners get paid. “You can't have a dirty hospital and we honestly cannot treat the patients and do the cleaning... It's enough that the medical personnel also have to do ... pharmacy work.”

Operating the pharmacy, of course, only applies when drugs are available. “We treat mainly malaria, pneumonia and STIs (sexually transmitted infections), and get drugs for three months, but the number of patients is too high and the drugs run out

too quickly,” the doctor said.

On the positive side, he notes that many people have overcome their previous distrust of doctors. They come to the hospital even if they only obtain a prescription to buy medicine at a pharmacy in Kuajok.

“I do a radio programme where I explain to them the importance of getting treatment and a doctor's opinion,” Dr. Alel said. “They have been responding well. The lines have definitely grown since the time that I first arrived. Sadly, that is only for some diseases.”

As far as he is aware, for example, only four patients are receiving anti-retroviral treatment

at the state hospital. Family planning is unheard of – the hospital doesn't even stock contraceptive pills. “Nobody would take them. Not in Southern Sudan, not now.”

Some days Dr. Alel receives insults, becomes frustrated at having to tell patients about a lack of drugs, or referring them elsewhere because the hospital has no facilities to carry out procedures like c-sections and operations for appendicitis.

But he refuses to up and leave, as many in his situation might have done.

“I had started a private clinic, but then I tried to run for legislative assembly in the north and the clinic had to close and finally, I came back to my roots,” said Dr. Alel, who was born in the state's Twic County.

According to Dr. Alel, the job has its own kind of reward. “There is a great amount of satisfaction in meeting a patient who was cured, who has come back all the way to thank you.”

Nor will he accept any kind of status as a hero.

“No,” he smiled. “These are my people. This is my job.”

Story and photo:
Tina Turyagyenda

NEWS BRIEFS

Thousands flee Abyei fighting

An estimated 20,000 people had fled fighting between militia and police in Sudan's disputed oil-rich Abyei area, the UN humanitarian office reported on 8 March.

The internally displaced persons (IDPs), about half the town's population, had sought refuge with relatives and other communities as far away as Agok, 40 kilometres south of Abyei town, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Voicing concern in a statement on 7 March about the plight of civilians affected by the fighting, which killed at least seven people, UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan Georg Charpentier urged the parties to respect previous accords.

"The Humanitarian Coordinator calls on all parties to respect the Kadugli Agreements of 13 and 17 January and the Abyei Agreement of 4 March, and to refrain from any action that could put civilians in danger," the statement said.

Mr. Charpentier added that aid agencies in Agok as well as those in Abyei were ready to assist people in need, particularly with food, emergency shelter, water, sanitation, and health care.

An agreement was signed on 4 March by representatives of the National Congress Party and Sudan People's Liberation Movement to immediately implement earlier accords on the Abyei dispute.

The agreement, which was reached at a UN-facilitated meeting in Abyei addressing the current security situation, established a standing committee of representatives from both parties, as well as the command of the Joint Integrated Units, which are made up of troops drawn from both the north and south.

"This agreement is an important step," said Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan Haile Menkerios. "The recent clashes in the Abyei area have highlighted the challenges still to be overcome by both sides and I expect a speedy and effective implementation of the agreed measures."



ICC charges rebel leaders for Darfur attack

The International Criminal Court confirmed on 7 March war crimes charges against two rebel leaders accused in

the September 2007 attack that resulted in the death of 12 peacekeepers in Darfur, and committed them to trial.

The decision released by the court, based in The Hague, concerned Abdallah Banda Abakaer Nourain (Abdallah Banda) and Saleh Mohammed Jerbo Jamus (Saleh Jerbo).

The Pre-Trial Chamber found "substantial grounds" to believe that both men were criminally responsible as co-perpetrators for three war crimes allegedly committed during the attack on the Haskanita camp in South Darfur state, according to a news release issued by the Court.

These are violence to life and attempted violence to life, intentionally directing attacks against personnel, installations, material, units and vehicles involved in a peacekeeping mission and pillaging.

The attack resulted in the killing of 12 peacekeepers and the wounding of eight others serving with the African Union Mission in Sudan – a predecessor to the joint UN-African Union peacekeeping mission, known as UNAMID.

It was allegedly carried out by troops belonging to the Sudanese Liberation Army-Unity jointly with splinter forces of the rebel Justice and Equality Movement.

UNHCR concerned about Africans in Libya

The UN refugee agency recently voiced alarm at increasing accounts of violence and discrimination in Libya against sub-Saharan Africans in both the rebel-held east and government-controlled west, including the reported rape of a 12-year-old girl.

Speaking at a news briefing in Geneva on 8 March, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Spokesman Adrian Edwards said his agency "reiterates its call on all parties to recognize the vulnerability of both refugees and migrants from sub-Saharan Africa and to take measures to ensure their protection".

The day before, Sudanese refugees arriving from eastern Libya at the Egyptian border told UNHCR that armed Libyans were going door to door, forcing sub-Saharan Africans to leave. "In one instance a 12-year-old Sudanese girl was said to have been raped," Mr. Edwards said.

"They reported that many people had their documents confiscated or destroyed," the spokesman added. "We heard similar accounts from a group of Chadians who fled Benghazi, Al Bayda and Brega in the past few days."

Some Sudanese refugees journeyed on to North Darfur in west Sudan, where a team of UN agencies, government representatives and UN-African Union Mission in Sudan Humanitarian Liaison Office staff recently visited them in Malha to assess their humanitarian needs.

The mission reported that about 60 returnees, primarily women and children, who had temporarily settled in Malha urgently required water and other basic services.

Many of the returnees, who were largely migrant workers, left Sudan several years ago to search for job opportunities in Libya. More Sudanese families were expected to arrive from Libya in the coming days.

