



May 2009

United Nations Mission

# In SUDAN

## Land for food

*The mechanization debate*

# DIARY

- **15 April:** UNMIS' Pakistani contingent held a medical/veterinary camp in Aldisa Al Bahr primary school, treating and providing free medicine to some 1,500 patients. It also treated 3,500 cattle and sent a mobile vet camp to the field to extend further aid.
- **21 April:** Southern Sudan DDR Commission (SSDDRC) Chairman William Deng Deng announced that the Southern Sudan Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme would begin on 6 June. It would be officially launched in Central, Eastern and Western Equatoria states, where 35,000 soldiers were expected to take part.
- **22 April:** UNMIS expressed deep concern over renewed tribal clashes in Jonglei State, where dozens of people had reportedly been killed and many others injured or forced to flee. The mission called on the parties to immediately refrain from using violence, encouraging tribal and community leaders to resolve their differences through dialogue.
- **23 April:** The UN High Commissioner for Refugees announced that the number of Sudanese refugees returning home from Uganda in 2009 had topped the 20,000 mark, bringing the total helped home by UNHCR since the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed to almost 150,000.
- **30 April:** The Security Council extended the UNMIS mandate for another year, urging all parties to fully comply with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) as well as the Abyei Roadmap.
- **3 May:** In remarks on World Press Freedom Day, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed the need to protect journalist and media outlets operating on the front lines. He noted that the number of attacks on journalists had remained shockingly high at 11 this year, while 125 were in prison, some for more than a decade.
- **5 May:** A two-day forum attended by Sudan's 25 state governors concluded in Wau, Western Bahr el Ghazal State, agreeing on the need to focus on agriculture to increase national revenue. The governors also discussed the need for national reconciliation and integration ahead of next year's general elections and Southern Sudan's 2011 referendum.
- **7 May:** Almost three weeks of legal arguments between the National Congress Party and Sudan People's Liberation Movement over demarcation of Abyei ended at the UN-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon encouraging the parties to achieve a peaceful final settlement to their dispute.
- **10 May:** UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes concluded a five-day visit to Sudan, urging increased cooperation in responding to urgent humanitarian needs and a constructive future operating environment.
- **13 May:** Responding to recent tribal clashes in Jonglei State, UNMIS announced that it would be temporarily deploying about 120 civilian, military and police personnel to the affected counties of Akobo and Pibor.
- **13 May:** UN Deputy Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Southern Sudan Lise Grande expressed serious concern about the killing of over 60 women, children and men in the village of Torkech, Nasir County on the 8 May, following attacks between the Lou Nuer and Jikany ethnic groups.



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**FRONT COVER:** Mechanized farm owned by DAL Group outside Khartoum. Photo: Johann Hattingh/UNMIS

**BACK COVER:** Stone pharaohs at entrance of Sudan National Museum, Khartoum. Photo: Johann Hattingh/UNMIS



# BAN KI-MOON: UNRAVELING OF CPA COULD MEAN CATASTROPHE

Calling on the international community to stay focused on implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says in his latest report on Sudan that a humanitarian catastrophe could occur if it collapsed.

The recent expulsion of 13 international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and closure of three national NGOs could result in a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation, states the report, issued on 22 April.

Mr. Ban says the United Nations would work with the Sudanese government to bridge gaps in Darfur, but notes that "available capacity for immediate alternatives are limited, given the sheer size of what has been the world's largest humanitarian programme".

The vacuum left by ejection of aid agencies has also left large portions of the Three Areas of Abyei, Southern Kordofan State and Blue Nile State as well as eastern Sudan with little humanitarian, recovery or reintegration support, the report points out, warning that this could hurt peace efforts.

Mr. Ban also notes that fighting in Malakal, which left at least 62 dead and 94 wounded, illustrates volatility along the north-south border area. "I call upon the parties to take the necessary steps to avoid such incidents in the future and I urge them to ensure that allegations of killings of civilians by security forces are thoroughly investigated."

In addition, the Secretary-General points to heavy inter-tribal fighting in Jonglei State, which reportedly killed 450 civilians and displaced more than 5,000. He calls on the Government of Southern Sudan and local leaders to "resolve these tensions peacefully and build confidence in the lead-up to the elections and referendum".

The report observes that Joint Integrated Units (JIUs) still lack sufficient communications equipment, transport, administrative facilities, accommodation, water and sanitation. "Working with the JIU headquarters in Juba, UNMMIS is exploring options to accelerate logistical support and specialist assistance for the units from the international community."



Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon inspects guard of honor upon his arrival at Juba airport. Photo: Tim McKulka/UNMIS

Mr. Ban says he is encouraged by strides made in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, launched on 10 February in Ed Damazin, Blue Nile State, and the parties' cooperation on the issue. The initiative could spur confidence and progress towards putting the CPA into place, he says, urging donors to continue funding the scheme.

The report also welcomes progress made in implementing the Abyei Road Map, commending the parties' efforts to pursue peaceful solutions to problems in the area. "Given the difficult and sensitive nature of these issues, it is imperative that the parties immediately begin discussion on implementing the Arbitral Tribunal's decision (on border demarcation), whatever it may be."

However, it notes that the Abyei Area Administration and Presidency have yet to agree on the Administration's budget, severely impeding its capacity to provide services throughout the Road Map area. "The Administration currently has no operating funds, and owes much of its staff several months' salaries. Ongoing budget negotiations in Khartoum have further limited the Administrator's capacity to

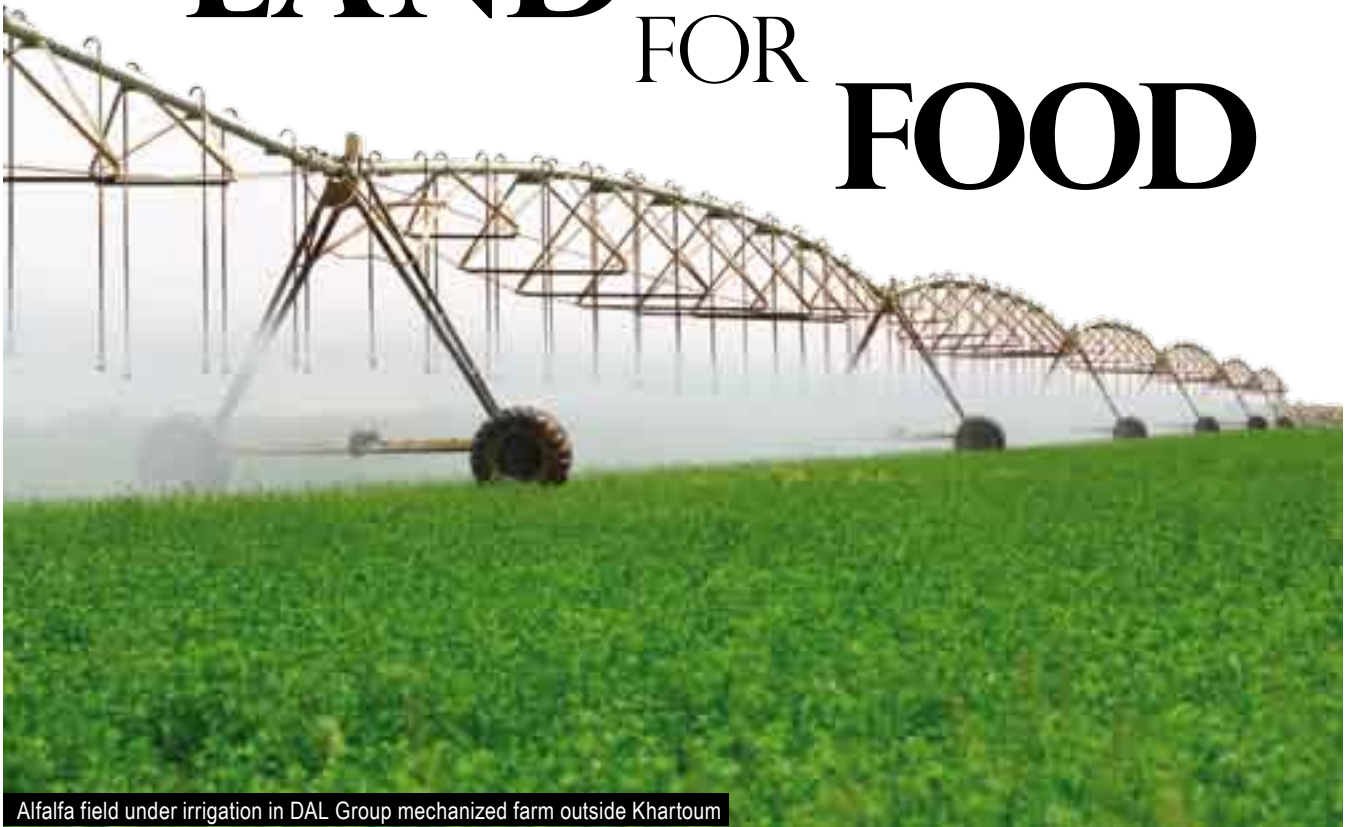
address urgent local issues."

The Secretary-General welcomes the National Election Commission's announcement of a proposed February 2010 timeframe for the country's poll, pledging UN assistance in helping the Commission organize and hold free, fair and peaceful elections, a key element of the CPA.

He also stresses the world body's commitment to help the parties hold referendums in 2011 in Southern Sudan and Abyei. "This goal must remain a priority for the parties regardless of other developments ... I restate my call on them to put in place the necessary legal and institutional frameworks for the vote and post-referendum stability."

On wealth-sharing, the report notes that Sudan's total oil revenue in 2008 was \$6,566.04 million, of which the GoSS share was \$2,888.3 million, and that arrears to the GoSS stand at about \$210.65 million. But it observes that declining oil prices in recent months and their consequent impact on national revenues have become a serious concern for both the Government of National Unity and GoSS. ■

# LAND FOR FOOD



Alfalfa field under irrigation in DAL Group mechanized farm outside Khartoum

**Vital in expanding food production, mechanized farming has also led to conflict and land degradation.**

Pivots were spraying water at about knee-height to irrigate large fields of alfalfa, a major Sudanese export, as DAL Agricultural Services Project Manager Hugh Simpson explained successful farming at the company's Al-Ailafoun farm, east of Khartoum.

The three main conditions for a successful farming venture were land,

water and capital, said Mr. Simpson. "Sudan is located in the Nile basin, so we basically have unlimited water," he said, adding that land and corporate investment for farming were also available.

The company, which has been active in mechanized agriculture since 1976, uses a pivotal irrigation system on the 1,000 acre farm. It produces grapefruit, limes and oranges in its orchard, tomatoes and cucumber in the greenhouses, plants for animal fodder and different varieties of palm trees, which it sells to the Gulf states.

"What they are lacking here (in Sudan) is modern techniques," Mr. Simpson said.

Harvesting was still done manually in most farms, Mohamed El Tigani, DAL Senior Project Manager added. Modern technologies were used in only about 20 per cent of agriculture, even though the history of mechanized farming in Sudan goes back to the 1940s.

To produce sorghum for allied troops during the Second World War, the British first initiated rain-fed mechanized farming in 1945 in the Gedaref area, Mohyel Deen



Nursery workers, DAL Group farm



Cultivated field, DAL Group farm



Tohami, UN Development Programme (UNDP) Reduction of Resource Based Conflict Project Manager, told *In Sudan*.

From Gedaref to Blue Nile and Upper Nile States, mechanized farming rapidly expanded through the Central Clay Plain of Sudan into the Nuba Mountains in Southern Kordofan, Mr. Tohami said.

Presently, mechanized farms accounted for about 15 million *feddan* (about 15.5 million acres), or 33 per cent of total cultivated land of Sudan, which was about 45 million *feddan* in size, according to the UNDP official.

The main motivation for this rapid and immense development was a demand for ample food supply, Adil Yousef, Director General of the Technology Transfer and Extension Administration of the Ministry of Agriculture said. "At that time the population depended on *durra* (Arabic for sorghum) as a main food crop ... this was the main aim of expansion."

To this end, the government began establishing mechanized state farms in the 1970s – which a decade later became privatized – on land it allocated. In Sudan, all land that is not officially registered belongs to the state, based on the Unregistered Land Act of 1970. Thus, there were ample resources for the government to start up farms and subsidize them.

## Land as a cause of conflict

According to Mr. Tohami, the government has cleared large forest areas for mechanized farming, especially in Blue Nile State, which has negatively affected soil and production.

At the same time, private mechanized farms sprang up with technical assistance from the World Bank. To encourage farmers and help them invest in machinery, the government subsidized both state farms and private ones, said Mr. Yousef.

The main crops farmed in the rain-fed mechanized schemes were millet, sesame and peanuts, besides sorghum, which is still a staple food for the rural population, particularly in the eastern region, said Yagoub Abdallah, chairman of Sudan's Environmental Society.

While acknowledging the importance of food production, Mr. Abdallah highlighted the negative aspects of mechanized farming. "Thousands of acres are cleared of trees, which contributes to wind and water erosion ... land degradation," he said.

"Land is a core cause of conflict in this country ... land is our identity, power, and

it has a symbolic dimension," Mr. Tohami added, acknowledging that "although mechanized farming contributed a lot to the national economy, at the same time it fuels conflict".

There are presently two systems in place to allocate land in Sudan -- a traditional one based on the tribal system and a modern, judiciary land tenure system. This often creates confusion, according to UNDP project manager Tohami, and some regulations are not enforced in practice.

Based on a presidential decree, for instance, at least 10 per cent of farmland should be left fallow, but this is not imposed. "The farmers don't adhere to this law, and the Ministry of Agriculture doesn't monitor it," Mr. Abdallah said.

## Corridors and land seizures

Similarly, a presidential decree prescribes that a corridor of 150 metres should be allowed between farmlands for pastoralists to pass through with their herds. But as this width is difficult to move through with cattle, herds might enter mechanized farms and destroy crops, added Mr. Abdallah. "This leads to conflicts between farmers and nomads."

Besides problems related to environmental harm and corridors, also called cutting tracks, mechanized farms contribute to further land problems. Farmers occasionally seized non-registered land around villages, which were traditionally handled by the customary system, Mr. Abdallah said.

"Up to now, there is no clear institution responsible for land in Sudan," Mr. Tohami said, adding that the UNDP had worked together with the Ministry of Agriculture and civil society groups on land tenure issues and formation of land commissions, as required by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

As a step forward, the land commission bill, which provides for the establishment of an independent land commission authorized to arbitrate in land disputes, was passed by the National Assembly on 20 April. However, it had yet to be signed by the President as *In Sudan*

went to print.

Picturing the possible future of agriculture in Sudan, DAL Project Manager Mr. Tigani said, "With the food and financial crises, I believe a lot of companies and governments will go back to basics -- to agriculture."

However, he would like to see vertical development (technical know-how to improve productivity per *feddan*) as opposed to horizontal expansion (more land taken up by mechanized farms). At the same time, he supported clear land legislation. "We are advocating for a conflict-sensitive mechanized plan," he said. ■

*Eszter Farkas*

*Photos by Johann Hattingh*



Tomato field, DAL Group farm



Hay bales, DAL Group farm

# FRUITS OF THE LULU TREE

**N**ow a rapidly growing business selling its oils and lotions to major Southern Sudanese cities and exporting them to Kenya, Lulu Works was the brainchild of a pioneering woman in the small village of Mapel, Western Bahr el Ghazal State.

Convinced that the local lulu (shear nut) tree had commercial value, Teresa Anuat traveled to Mombassa in 2001 with a sample of its oil for testing. Rewarded for her efforts, she found that the oil could produce good quality lotion, soap and cooking oil.

Returning to Mapel, Ms. Anuat trained local women in the tree's economic benefits, persuading them to collect Lulu seeds and extract their oil for sale. "Lulu trees are very important to help us generate income and improve our lives," said the now 35-year-old entrepreneur.

Mapel's lulu oil production project was born the same year, funded by USAID through the non-governmental organization Medic (Medical Emergency Development International Committee). It became a village affair, with local people collecting and selling seeds to the women, who produced cooking oil, soap, mosquito repellent and hair as well as body lotion.

The project was registered with the Government of Southern Sudan as the Lulu Works for Southern Sudan project in 2004, with Ms. Anuat as its coordinator. USAID funded it until 2006, when the burgeoning enterprise began using its profits to pay workers and buy seeds.

Lulu trees grow thickly in Western Bahr el Ghazal and Lakes states and are also present in the three Equatorias. Based in Mapel, the company now has branches in Tonj, Wulu, Torit, Mundri, Kajokeji and Kauda (Nuba Mountains), with 20 to 30 people working in each centre.

"We can now buy soap from Mapel rather than running to Wau," said company driver Michael Ibrahim, adding that local people had previously only enjoyed Lulu fruit, but were now benefiting from its products.

Good rainy seasons and ample seeds had steadily increased production over the past few years,

according to Mapel Lulu Works team leader Suzana Foni. The company produced 45 metric tons of oil and 20,000 boxes of soap in Mapel, Tonj and Wulu in 2006, and is expecting to up this to about 60 metric tons of oil and 45,000 boxes of soap this year.

"We have something to raise funds for the future of our families," said Roza Ator, a Mapel resident, emphasizing the need to support the project to better the lives of local residents.

The Western Bahr el Ghazal State government has also played a part, sending wildlife guards into the forest to keep people from cutting down valuable trees, including lulu, mahogany and teak, according to the state's acting director of forestry, Luis Naro.

"Lulu is a valuable tree that our people used for food and (its bark) for medicine to treat diarrhoea and wounds," said Mr. Naro, adding that the state government planned to support all community based projects, including Lulu Works.

Lulu products have even become popular with peacekeepers in the area. Felicita Wambaire of

the UNMIS Kenyan contingent plans to buy Lulu lotions as gifts for friends back home. "For me, Lulu oil is proven to be the best for the growth of hair," she said. ■

*Story and photos by Michael Wondi*



Lulu tree at Mapel farm



Body and hair lotions on display at Lulu Works Mapel processing room



# MANGOES IN WAR AND PEACE

**A**s most farmers were abandoning their fields to seek refuge in town at the height of Sudan's civil war, Venansio Gwang was planting his first mango trees on a Malakal island.

It was 1991 and Malakal was a Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) garrison town, with a checkpoint in Warrajwok on the way to his village of Alel, the 59-year-old father of eight recalled.

"I had to get (checkpoint) permits for the workers on the farm -- at that time about 15 men -- who were helping me to clear and cultivate the land," Venansio said.

Making the venture even more hazardous, SAF-allied splinter groups and so-called "friendly forces" were prowling the area, he added. "They could easily target individuals for their properties."

But Venansio was undeterred, planting 120 mango trees over the next three years and expanding his plot from 2.5 to 4.5 acres. The determined farmer then waited five years for his first trees to bear fruit, which he began selling at Malakal's main market in 1996.

While mangoes were his main crop, Venansio also planted some guava, lemon and banana trees, along with 100 bamboos. And he fished to help pay the workers' salaries and support his family, as the farm swallowed up most of his profits.

Seemingly immune to the war, the farm remained unscathed until a year before the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 2005, when a battle erupted there between the South Sudan Defence Forces and the Shilluk tribe, killing his son

and son-in law.

Now farming in the relative comfort of peace, Venansio faces other, more natural hazards. Fire broke out in the island's thick grass this year, damaging trees and cutting production from 20-25 (65 kilogram) bags of mangoes to 10.

The damage will cut into the 4,000 SDG (\$1,700) he makes per year, which has been just enough to pay his workers, maintain the farm and upgrade his mode of transport from a canoe to a rented speedboat.

The farm is also threatened by wandering animals in search of grazing land. "Hippos and cows come into the garden to graze in the farm, resulting in trees being destroyed," said Venansio.

Partly due to the fire and lower profits, but also because employees have left to start their own farms, Venansio's workforce has dropped to eight. "The King of Shilluk Reth Kwongo Daak Padiet has called on all Shilluk to imitate what I have done in order to plant the banks of the Nile."

Indeed, some 10 mango farms now range the banks of the Nile, although none are yet bearing fruit. Once they are all producing, the farms should provide Malakal with all the fruit it needs, according to Venansio.

For now, he has built up a loyal



Venansio Gwang's mango farm, Malakal

following as the best and only mango grower around. "The mangoes from Alel garden are more delicious than the ones from the Nuba Mountains or North Sudan," said Achol Ojwok, who has been selling his mangoes at her fruit and vegetable stand in Malakal market for eight years.

A wise businessman, Venansio also allows his customers some credit. "He does not demand payment on delivery, but will collect it at the end of the day," said another of his customers, 14-year market veteran Nyathow Obeny. ■

*Story and photos by Francis Shuei Diu*



Nyathow Obeny (left) and Achol Ojwok (right) selling Venansio Gwang's mangoes at a Malakal market

# BACK TO THE LAND

*Action Africa Help International (AAHI) launched a food and income security farming programme in five counties of Eastern and Central Equatoria States in late 2007. With the project now well underway, In Sudan spoke with Bullen Augustine, a senior agriculture coordinator for AAHI, to see how its farmers were doing.*

## **In Sudan: Why did you launch the food security project?**

**Bullen Augustine:** Two decades of civil war in Southern Sudan led to the collapse of the local economy and markets as well as vital services like health, education, water, sanitation and agriculture.

The project aims to help revive the agricultural sector, so that farmers can produce enough for domestic food demands and sell the rest for income to meet other needs like education and health.

## **What have you done to improve crops?**

We have provided farmers with agricultural tools like hoes and improved seeds for rice, maize, beans and vegetables. We have also distributed 15 pairs of oxen as well as ox-ploughs. We have trained them in modern farming technologies, so they can cultivate larger fields with higher quality and quantities of crops.

The training, seeds and oxen are making a great impact on farmers' production capacity. When we started in September 2007, the yield stood at 30 per cent of planted crops. By August 2008, it had risen to 45 per cent, and by December 2008 to 60 per cent.

## **What about livestock and other products?**

We have distributed 125 improved Boer goats (from Uganda) to selected farmers, 2,100 cockerels for cross breeding with local goats, and chickens to improve the quality of the local breed. We have provided 160 modern beehives, which allow farmers to harvest 20 kilograms of honey per month.

We have also provided processing machines for Lulu (tree) oil to a group in Magwi County and trained its staff in producing Lulu products. The

group is producing 100 litres of oil per day, which sells for 10 SDG (about \$5) a litre. Lulu oil is used for products like soap, body lotions, mosquito repellents and cooking oil, which are in high local demand.

## **Have you also been helping farmers market their products?**

Yes, and this is most important. We research market prices for buying and selling various agricultural products in different locations each week and announce them on local FM radios or post them on notice boards. Farmers then know where to sell their produce at higher prices or to buy cheaper goods.

## **What are the main challenges facing your project?**

Poor roads hinder our travel to farmers in rural areas, and make it difficult for farmers to bring their goods to markets. Vegetables like tomatoes often perish during transport due to huge pot holes on the roads. And it takes too long for farmers to reach markets, which discourages them from producing large quantities.

Insecurity in some *payams* (townships), especially Tore *payam* in Yei County, has interfered with our supervision. Also, farmers can't concentrate on production when they live in fear of being attacked.

Then there is the problem of labour. The majority of young able-bodied men and women are moving to town in search of white collar jobs, abandoning agriculture



Woman planting maize in research field near Yei

to older people with less energy to work effectively. The labour shortage means lower production.

Finally, farming depends on rain, which is unreliable for the growth of certain crops. This frustrates the farmers' efforts.

## **Who is funding your project?**

Our project is funded by the European Commission through the Interchurch Organization for Development and Cooperation.

## **What are the project's chances of success?**

There are difficulties in Southern Sudan, but land is abundant and fertile. There is enough rainfall for farmers to cultivate large amounts and they can change from one field to another every season.

The Sudan Microfinance Institution and Norwegian People's Aid are providing agricultural loans. If farmers also take advantage of those loans, they will lead to better agricultural production in Southern Sudan.

## **What are your plans after completing this project?**

The Government of Southern Sudan Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, with funding from the World Bank, has asked us to carry out the same food security project in Western Equatoria State. We would like to cover all 10 southern states if funding is available. ■

*Photos: Emmanuel Kenyi*



Woman harvesting okra in her vegetable garden, Yei



# SMALL LOANS FOR BIGGER BUSINESSES

**W**hen Mary Poni returned to Juba in 2006 after spending 20 years in a Ugandan refugee camp, she struggled to feed her three children by selling tea at Juba construction sites.

Now, thanks to a microcredit loan, Ms. Poni has a thriving tea kiosk in Munuki Market and can send her children to school. Having paid back the 700 SDG (\$300) loan, she is even thinking of applying for another to expand her business.

"This time, I shall introduce food services, so that my income increases and I can build a proper restaurant," said the former refugee.

Ms. Poni obtained her loan from microfinance agency Finance Sudan Limited in 2007 as part of a group of four other women granted a total of 2,900 SDG (\$1,230) to set up similar businesses.

Set up in 2006 with support from the American Refugee Committee, Finance Sudan has granted small loans to 1,600 aspiring business owners through its Juba and Malakal offices, according to agency accountant Mary Andrua. Loans range from 500 to 7,000 SDG (\$210 to \$2,965) for groups, while amounts for individuals depend on salary size.

Finance Sudan was one of four microfinance agencies recently selected by the Southern Sudan Microfinance Development Facility (SSMDF) as development partners in delivering microfinance services throughout Southern Sudan.

The SSMDF, created by the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Supply, Bank of Southern Sudan and World Bank earlier this year, also chose the Bangladesh Rural Cooperative, Sudan Microfinance Initiative (SUMI) and the Sudan Savannah Farmers' Cooperative.

Established in 2003, the oldest and largest of these, SUMI, now operates through five southern branches, said its Juba manager Bebe Martin Awu. The agency has three categories of loans -- group loans from 100 (\$42) to 2,000 (\$845) Sudanese pounds, salary-guaranteed loans up three times the recipient's salary, and individual or business loans, ranging from 2,000 to 15,000 SDG (\$6,350).

To date, SUMI has issued loans to about 900 people in Juba under the first category, and up to 1,030 under the second. According to Mr. Awu, most

beneficiaries from the second, or salary loans, borrowed to build houses.

## Loans for non-bankable people

Although still in its infancy, microfinance is also becoming popular in North Sudan. A counterpart to the SSMDF -- the Sudan Microfinance Development Facility (SMDF) -- was created in April this year, supported by the Central Bank of Sudan and the World Bank, to support new and existing microfinance institutions.

The only microfinance institution to be registered at the Central Bank in the north is the Family Bank, which opened its doors in August 2008. Split equally between the public and private sectors, the Family Bank's biggest partners are Sudan Trade Union, Sudanese Business Ladies Association, Bank Pension Association and Social Insurance Fund Pension Association.

With few other microfinance facilities in the region, the bank has been a huge success, according to General Manager Salah Nazlawy. It offers loans for groups up to 150,000 SDG (\$63,500) and individuals to 10,000 SDG (\$4,200), mainly to fresh graduates and small businesses in agriculture, trade as well as rural industry. "Our clients are non-bankable people who couldn't fulfill conditions set by the conventional banking system."

One of the bank's beneficiaries, 34-year-old Sofia Al-Tayb Altaher, built an



Family Bank General Manager Salah Nazlawy

independent furniture trading business in Khartoum with her 3,000 SDG (\$1,270) loan. Previously employed by traders, Ms. Altaher has doubled her income to 2,000 SDG per month. "I am making good profits. In the future I would like a bigger space, perhaps open two shops."

Fatima Al-Tajiny Yousif took out a 4,700 SDG (\$1,990) loan to open a shop selling poultry and eggs, with a sideline in rotisserie chickens. During her best months from April to September, she pulls in over 1,000 SDG (\$422) in profit. Now planning to open a larger shop with more rotisseries, she said, "I tell other people to go to the bank for a loan."

Other microfinance facilities in North Sudan include the Northern Kordofan Microfinance Institution, Southern Kordofan Microfinance Institution, Social Development Foundation, Kassala Microfinance Institution and Port Sudan Association for Small Enterprise Development. ■

*Felix Waya Leju and Catherine Waugh  
Photos: Johann Hattingh*



Sofia Al-Tayb Altaher in her microcredit-financed furniture shop

# A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY



Winnie Babihuga in her Juba office.  
Photo: Paiyo Charles Angelo/UNMIS

Currently Officer-in Charge in Juba, Winnie Babihuga has been with UNMIS since it began in 2005, serving as Head of Office in Rumbek, Wau, Ed Damazin and Malakal. Drawing on her wealth of experience, *In Sudan* spoke with Ms. Babihuga about challenges and issues the mission has faced.

**The key objectives are to build a culture of peace, peaceful coexistence, rule of law and good governance, which will be enjoyed by all the people of Sudan.**

task.

This was much more challenging in Ed Damazin area, as until 2007 the northern part of the state was separate from the southern part around Kurmuk. Ed Damazine reported to Khartoum, while Kurmuk reported to Juba.

## What about other areas?

Challenges across all stations included maintaining the ceasefire and getting the parties to agree on modalities for meeting CPA benchmarks. Each sector is a unit that deals with either individual, or as in Greater like Bahr el Ghazal and Greater Upper Nile, multiple state governments, which have unique problems.

One of the biggest challenges in Bahr el Ghazal was getting other armed groups to recognize that the war was over and the country in the process of implementing peace. They could not cast a blind eye at

the provisions of the CPA and continue their operations. Those who still saw themselves as operating outside the SPLA and SAF were violating the CPA.

Another key challenge was consensus building on peace and reconciliation among the parties. There have been stand-offs between them, as occurred during the Malakal crisis of 2007, but I am pleased that the parties were able to resolve the problem amicably.

## How would you compare Malakal, a more northern sector, with somewhere further south, like Rumbek?

Rumbek in Lakes State had been the cradle of the SPLA/SPLM, while Malakal in Upper Nile was dominated by the SAF prior to the signing of the CPA.

Rumbek is still an SPLM-dominated area, while Malakal supports both the

## In Sudan: What were your key challenges when you began at UNMIS?

**Winnie Babihuga :**

Initially, the key challenge was effecting the ceasefire between the two armies -- the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) -- in Wau and Ed Damazin.

Getting the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the National Congress Party (NCP), plus other parties, to come together and discuss modalities of implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was initially not an easy





SPLM and NCP (National Congress Party), but both state governors are supportive of the mission.

Lakes State has cattle raiding and inter-ethnic clashes. Upper Nile has a different character, the key challenges being political rivalry within the majority parties. Jonglei State, between Lakes and Upper Nile, has cattle raids, child abductions and border disputes between counties and sometimes states as well as a stand-off within the military about assembly areas.

**There have been reports of several internal conflicts in parts of Southern Sudan. How does this affect UNMIS' work?**

Any conflicts in the area of responsibility definitely have a bearing on mission operations, which include monitoring and verification. The mission plays a supportive role in bringing together the two parties in conflict resolution and addressing key issues in implementation of the CPA.

On a personal note, it's very unfortunate that CPA progress has been sidetracked by tribal conflicts and cattle rustling. But I am happy that the parties are willing to come to an understanding on how to resolve these issues.

The key objectives are to build a culture of peace, peaceful coexistence, rule of law and good governance, which will be enjoyed by all the people of Sudan.

**What difficulties has UNMIS faced in raising community awareness about the CPA?**

Well, it has faced a big challenge in the vastness of the country, which poses logistical hurdles to movement and communication. Ground movement is limited due to lack of infrastructure as well as severe weather conditions.

However, teams are working hard and doing a good job using available resources. They move by air to different team sites and locations and make use of dry weather conditions to cover as wide an area as possible.

With *Radio Miraya*, the mission has an edge in boosting CPA awareness coverage. Also, the UNMIS Public Information Office, in collaboration with other departments, hold regular workshops for CPA dissemination.

The community is often confused about UNMIS' role in Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR). Who are the main players in DDR? DDR is the mandated task of the national government and the Government of Southern Sudan through their respective

DDR commissions. UNMIS plays a supportive role in implementing the DDR mandate, which is laid down clearly in the CPA.

**What are the remaining challenges in implementing the CPA?**

We are coming to the core benchmarks of the CPA. One is the election and its result, which will hopefully be agreeable to both parties and the country at large.

Another is the referendum, which is a big logistical challenge. The parties will be responsible for ensuring that the process is carried out peacefully. Once the referendum is completed, the mission will have fulfilled its mandate in implementing the CPA.

I hope there will be lessons learned

from the multinational composition of UNMIS staffing, that at the end of the day we will have assisted in building this country and nurturing it into a full fledged democracy enjoying peace and tranquility.

As a woman, I hope the women of Sudan will embrace peace and rise into the ranks of leadership in positively contributing to building the country.

**What have you gained from serving as Head of Office in several different sectors?**

As an individual, working in those areas gave me a unique opportunity to obtain on the ground experience across different areas of Sudan in implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. ■



Flooded tukuls during rainy season, Southern Sudan. Photo: Tim McKulka/UNMIS



Street in Malakal. Photo: Johann Hattingh/UNMIS

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

**T**his year's theme for International Day of UN Peacekeepers, celebrated on 29 May, is "Women in Peacekeeping". Serving in a challenging and tension-ridden area of Sudan, one of these women is Capt. Mia Vejrum.

When Capt. Mia Vejrum joined UNMIS as a Military Observer on 28 July 2008, she asked to be sent to Sudan's then hot spot -- Abyei. The area was far from calm and memories of the May clashes between the Sudan Armed Forces and Sudan People's Liberation Army were still fresh in people's minds.

Most civilians had fled the Abyei area, the market was deserted and essential food items unobtainable. Visible signs of destruction were everywhere, and fear as well as mistrust were clear on the faces of the few people who had remained.

Touched by the suffering of the people around her, Capt. Vejrum worked to make a difference. She studied villages and their needs, writing project proposals to improve their lives. On many occasions, she passed information to UNICEF about broken pumps or villages needing food.

Although she believes aid is important, Capt. Vejrum's vision is to see the Sudanese people empowered and self-



Dahalob village, northwest of Abyei. Photo: Maj. Hans Liiksaar/UNMIS

sufficient. She hopes that one day people in Abyei and surrounding areas will have the basic necessities of life.

Born in Aalborg, Denmark, the 29-year-old peacekeeper joined the Danish Army in 2000 as an infantry private. After

initial recruitment, she signed on as a medic trainee, learning front-line medical intervention, first aid, nursing, anatomy and physiology.

To further her education, Capt. Vejrum left the army eight months later, attending the Oure Sports Academy and then studying at the Copenhagen School of Physiotherapy from 2003 to 2005.

She rejoined the Danish Army as a reserve officer in July 2005, studying Arabic and planning to work as a military interpreter in Iraq. When Danish troops withdrew from that country before she arrived, she went to Algeria as a trainee at the Danish Embassy.

In Abyei, Capt. Vejrum is deployed for as much as four days at a time to Temporary Operating Bases in the towns of Agok and Diffra. Her days are spent on long-range patrols to far-flung villages, and her nights sleeping in tents or under the stars.

Capt. Vejrum's mission in Sudan was scheduled to end in January 2009, but she requested a six-month extension, feeling she could still make a difference.

In the Captain's own words, "It takes a lot of people to make a big difference in anything, but that difference always starts with one person." ■

*Lt. Helen Chota*



Capt. Mia Vejrum arriving at Allal village, northwest of Abyei. Photo: Capt. Fernando Saenz/UNMIS



## Dongxing Sun

# 'ONE WORLD, ONE DREAM'



Dongxing Sun (centre) standing in front of newly renovated Dongxing police Station

**D**ongxing Sun was barely a month into his new assignment as an UNMIS police adviser in Wau when he arranged a visit to a suburb of the city called Lokoloko to meet with some southern Sudanese colleagues.

It was raining hard in Lokoloko on that late August morning. Upon arrival, the 37-year-old Chinese law enforcer was surprised to see some local police in uniform huddled under a mango tree.

They had abandoned a dilapidated stone building that houses the local police station because a leaky roof turned the one-room structure into a big puddle every time the skies opened up.

Shocked by the sorry state of the police station, Sun returned to his office vowing to do something about it.

He found a local contractor willing to fix the damaged roof for \$500. Within a week of Mr. Dongxing's first visit to Lokoloko, the repaired police station had been handed back to the Southern Sudan Police Services (SSPS). But that is not all. The recently arrived peacekeeper paid for the work out of his own pocket.

"We came here from thousands of miles away to help this country as a member of

the United Nations, and the police post was really in need of help," noted Mr. Dongxing. "I could never just stand around and watch."

Nor did he stop there. To Mr. Dongxing's surprise, the main police station in the capital of Western Bahr el Ghazal state was in even worse condition. Paint was peeling from its walls, portions of the ceiling had fallen away and the leavings of bats that had lodged themselves on the roof of the Koronko Police Station pervaded the station with an awful stench.

Mr. Dongxing came to the rescue once again, approaching the station's senior staff last year with an offer to spruce up their building. Within a matter of weeks the ceiling was rehabilitated and the walls and roof had a fresh coat of blue and teal paint.

The facelift cost Sun an even prettier penny -- \$8,000 to be exact. But it also earned the Wau staffer the undying gratitude of his Southern Sudanese colleagues, who promptly renamed their police station in his honor.

"We are greatly humbled by your gesture," said Western Bahr el Ghazal Police Commissioner Maj. Gen. Francisco Mariarabu at a formal

ceremony in early January, which drew some of Mr. Dongxing's Police colleagues as well as state and local authorities. "We have nothing to offer you in return other than our true friendship and memory of your service to our people."

Mr. Dongxing was drawn to a career in law enforcement through his older brother, who is a policeman in the city of Xuzhou in the Chinese province of Jiangsu. He joined the Chinese police force in 1998 at the age of 27.

Since arriving in Sudan seven months ago, Sun reckons he's donated over \$14,000 in personal funds for the renovation of three police stations and purchase of medicine and mosquito repellent for SSPS members to ward off malaria. Though he receives a daily mission subsistence allowance of \$136 as an UNPOL staff member, Sun says he has not deposited a single dollar in his personal bank account to date.

The unfailingly polite Chinese officer has certainly raised the profile and stock of the United Nations among grateful residents and authorities in Wau. "He is a guy with a good heart who always makes his presence felt," said Police Public Information Officer Joseph Sunday. "He is an ambassador of UN Police who has made Sector II a giant among other sectors in the mission area."

The blue beret-clad policeman whose reputation for generosity has spread far and wide among Wau townspeople said he would continue doing his bit for the betterment of Sudan. "If I was in such a situation again, I would do the same thing and do it better," said Mr. Dongxing. "It's like the slogan of last year's Beijing Olympic Games -- 'one world, one dream.'"

*Story and photos by Hailemichael Gebrekstos*



Koronko Police Station before renovation



Newly renovated Dongxing Police Station

# A GLIMPSE OF SUDANESE NUBIA

**A**fter crossing a small bridge over an ornamental moat, visitors to Sudan's National Museum are greeted by two gigantic, stone pharaohs standing guard at the entrance.

Inside the two-story building, spectators may gaze at glass cases of ancient jewellery and view Christian-era frescoes beside age-old pots and miniature sculptures.

Dating from 1904, the museum was first housed by the University of Khartoum, then called Gordon University, Director General of the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums Hassan Hussein told *In Sudan*.

Its present abode stems from archaeologists' concerns about ancient artefacts in Nubia, a region stretching along the Nile from southern

Glass cup used in funeral ceremonies with central motif of god Osiris

Egypt to northern Sudan, during construction of Egypt's Aswan Dam during the 1950s.



Stone stamp with inscriptions from Uronarti



Depiction of Archangel Michael found on funeral chapel wall, Faras (11th Century)

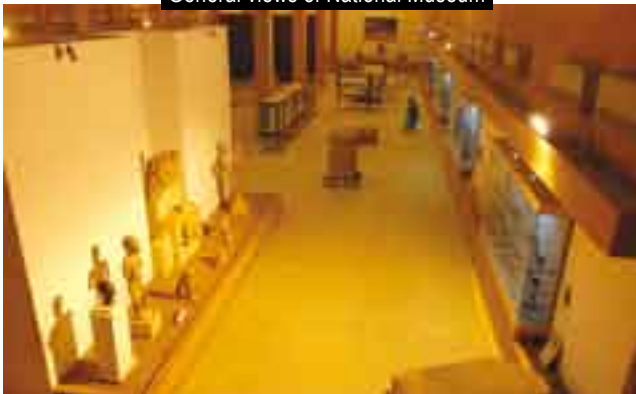
stretched from Palestine to the junction of the Blue and the White Niles, visitors glimpse large, dark frescoes of archangels highlighting the influence of Christianity in Sudan between the 6th and 14th centuries.

The low-roofed buildings in the museum garden house parts of the Semna and Bohein temples from Sudanese Nubia, offering another look at ancient hieroglyphs. ■

Aiming to preserve the pre-historic monuments by dismantling and transporting them from construction sites to museums, the Nubian Rescue Campaign was launched in 1960, with support from the UN Educational,



General views of National Museum



Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Benefiting from the campaign, Sudan's new National Museum opened its gates to the public in 1971, with the oldest pieces on display being sandstone objects from about 4000 BC.

Learning about the 7th century BC rule of Nubian King Taharga, whose empire

Photos: Johann Hattingh



Statue of King Atlanersa (653-643 BC)



# NEWS BRIEFS

## Holmes urges increased humanitarian cooperation

Speaking at a Khartoum press conference on 10 May, the UN's top humanitarian official urged increased cooperation in responding to urgent humanitarian needs and a constructive future operating environment.

The aim of UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes's five-day visit to Sudan was to review the humanitarian situation in areas affected by the 4 March government decision to close three national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and expel 13 international NGOs.

"The expulsions by the government and the manner in which they were carried out created both major new risks for vulnerable populations in Darfur and elsewhere, and a crisis of confidence with the humanitarian community," said Mr. Holmes.

The Emergency Relief Coordinator welcomed positive collaboration with the government on the Joint Assessment in Darfur, noting that the most urgent short-term needs in food, health and nutrition, emergency shelter, water and sanitation were being tackled, but voiced concern about longer-term needs in all sectors.

Mr. Holmes co-chaired with the Government of Sudan the first meeting of an expanded High Level Committee, which aims to resolve humanitarian problems and monitor existing agreements like the Joint Communiqué of 2007. The meeting was attended by key senior government officials, donors and other representatives from the international community as well non-governmental organizations.

"The High-Level Committee and the meetings I had in Khartoum marked positive steps forward in our engagement with the Government of Sudan ... agreement was reached on what we hope will be an effective monitoring mechanism at the state, national, and international levels, and a strengthened aid delivery system," said Mr. Holmes.

The Emergency Relief Coordinator also visited Akobo in Jonglei State, Southern Sudan, where tens of thousands of recently displaced civilians are in desperate need as a result of the violence in that area between the Murle and Nuer tribes.



## Deputy Coordinator expresses concern over Nasir killings

UN Deputy Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Southern Sudan Lise Grande expressed on 13 May serious concern at the killing of over 60 women, children and men in the village of Torkech, in Jikmir payam (township) of Nasir County on the night of 8 May 2009, following attacks between the Lou Nuer and Jikany ethnic groups.

Some 57 people were reportedly wounded in the attack, the majority of which were children, some in critical condition, Ms. Grande said in a statement released from Juba. At least 1,550 people had been displaced in Jikmir, Nor Nyariew, Banytik, Torpuot and Pandanyang.

"The UN is seriously concerned about the increasing violence in the area and the continuing loss of innocent lives of women, men and children. We call upon the community leaders, and all relevant authorities to intervene and resolve the conflict through peaceful means and reconciliation", Ms. Grande said.

The UN had sent a mission to the area to assess the situation, and the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission was mobilizing food assistance to be distributed to the displaced people, the statement said.

## Southern DDR to begin in June

A top southern official recently announced that the long-awaited Southern Sudan Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme would kick off on 6 June.

Speaking to journalists from his office in Juba on 21 April, Southern Sudan DDR Commission (SSDDRC) Chairman William Deng Deng said the programme would be officially launched in Central, Eastern and Western Equatoria states, where 35,000 soldiers were expected to take part.

The exercise would then move on to other states, the Chairman said. "On 1 or 6 August 2009, we shall be starting in Jonglei state in Bor and then in October in Rumbek."

The DDR programme would begin with special needs groups -- the disabled, veterans, and women associated with armed forces, along with an estimated 1,000 child soldiers -- who needed assistance to return to their communities, Mr. Deng said.

## UNMIS to deploy 120 personnel to Jonglei

Responding to recent tribal clashes in Jonglei State, UNMIS announced on 13 May that it would deploy about 120 civilian, military and police personnel to the affected counties of Akobo and Pibor.

The move, which comes as part of UNMIS' support to the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), aims to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to civilians in Jonglei.

In coordination with local authorities, UNMIS personnel will assist local communities in restoring effective dialogue by supporting peace and reconciliation conferences between concerned communities.

With a view to ensuring protection of civilians and assist in monitoring security on the ground, UNMIS will also provide technical and logistical assistance to the state government through military, police and support personnel.

