



2012 ECOSOC Substantive Session

Panel Discussion

Integrated Support to South Sudan: Capacity Building and Core Governance Functions

Tuesday, 24 July 2012, 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Background and context

The Council's request for the first report on integrated support to South Sudan by the UN system was an outcome of an engagement around the independence of the country in mid 2011. A joint informal event of the ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission on "Promoting Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Sudan and South Sudan"¹ was held on 13 June 2011 followed by a transition event on "the role of the United Nations and the international community in supporting the capacity of the Government of South Sudan to manage the transition" on 19 July 2011².

Recognizing the need to strengthen the synergy between the economic and social development programmes of South Sudan and its peace and security agenda, members of the Council have been keen to address the unique, immense and complex development challenges that this new country faced. As the Secretary General's report notes, at present, the living conditions of the South Sudanese people are among the harshest in the world. More than 80 per cent of the population lives on an equivalent of less than USD 1 per day and a staggering one third lacks secure access to food. Only 40 per cent of people have access to basic health care and while some progress has been made in the area of immunization, less than six per cent of children are fully immunized. Despite the increase in primary enrolment, half of all children do not attend school and graduation rates for girls are among the lowest in the world. Eighty-five per cent of the South Sudanese population cannot read or write. The report also notes the changed context for South Sudan since the beginning of 2012 with the shut-down of oil production, an austerity budget and the deterioration in the security environment.

Following South Sudan's independence, a UNCT and Resident Coordinator's Office was established in Juba. The UNCT in South Sudan comprises of 22 agencies, funds and programmes. The UN Resident Coordinator's Office and UNCT coordinate closely with the Government at both central and state levels to ensure that UN development assistance is aligned with government priorities. Key in guiding the UN System's development support is the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). Under the UNDAF, the UNCT assists the Government to reinforce core governance functions, build service delivery systems, improve food security, reduce community conflict and increase access to justice in an equitable way

¹ The Informal Summary of the event by the President of the Economic and Social Council and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission is available at http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/pdf11/Combined_summary-final.pdf

² <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/has2011statement.shtml>

across all ten states of South Sudan. In response to austerity, the UNCT supports the Government to rapidly and realistically prioritize measures that will help to mitigate the impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable people and preserve core state functions.

With nearly half of all civil servants having only primary education, South Sudan has the highest capacity gap in Africa. Identified by the Government as a key priority, the South Sudan Development Plan includes a Medium Term Capacity Development Strategy, which identified critical institutional capacity needs required for a viable state. In support of the capacity building strategy, a number of key UNCT initiatives, in partnership with regional governments and organizations, have been developed:

- Under UNDP's Rapid Capacity Placement Initiative, 120 UN Volunteer specialist have been embedded in public sector offices and agencies;
- Through the IGAD Regional Initiative for Capacity enhancement in South Sudan, 200 experienced civil servants from three IGAD member states are being deployed to core ministries;
- Under a complementary initiative has been supported by the UN Population Fund, more than 100 UN volunteer midwives from neighbouring countries are being embedded in health systems to boost access to supervised delivery and provide mentoring support to community midwives.

Against this background, the Council's discussion on "African countries emerging from conflict" during the General Segment provides an opportunity to examine more closely some of the key elements of the first Secretary General's report on South Sudan on how the UN system is providing integrated support to the country in the areas of capacity building and core governance functions and how these priorities have been adjusted in light of the new circumstances.

Objectives

The panel discussion will:

- Look at progress that has been made in state building and core governance functions during the first year of independence of South Sudan.
- Take stock of UN system support to these efforts, including innovative approaches to capacity development and examine possible gaps in support to capacity building.
- Examine how the UN system can strengthen its efforts to assist the Government to establish and strengthen its core governance functions at all levels.
- Assess the current coordination structures and the extent to which they allow for flexibility, nimbleness and quick results in a changing environment of transition.

Panellists

1. Ms. Mary Jervas Yak, Deputy Minister of Finance, Government of South Sudan
 2. Ms. Amanda Serumaga, Team Leader, Democratic Governance Unit, UNDP, South Sudan
-