



Amplifying the chances for stability and peace in South Sudan

Statement from the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS)

17 January 2014

The Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS) is deeply concerned by the ongoing tragic events in South Sudan where as a result of political unrest and instability many innocent civilian lives have been claimed and many hundreds of thousands are displaced from their homes.

As a team that has been engaged in the International Dialogue and the New Deal process since its inception, we strongly believe that violence can never be an option on the path to sustainable peace and development. We are especially concerned that the ongoing violence in South Sudan is undoing efforts to advance the New Deal for Engagement in South Sudan and other conflict affected states. Of equal concern, conflict has emerged recently in other IDPS member countries, including the Central African Republic and Guinea Bissau.

In light of the foregoing we would like to state the following with regard to the situation in South Sudan:

We call upon all parties in South Sudan to reach an immediate cessation of hostilities. The parties should continue engaging in a constructive dialogue towards a comprehensive resolution of the current crisis – one that lays the foundations for more stability and a pathway towards a democratic South Sudan.

We strongly support the accompanying statement from Civil Society working in South Sudan that emphasizes the need to address unresolved measures from the 2005 CPA and the current security architecture in the country. Civil society in South Sudan presently faces critical challenges both as a result of the ongoing conflict, and more structurally, undermining their ability to effectively engage in the political process in ways that will allow them to have a meaningful role and impact. Their statement importantly calls for an inclusive and participatory political solution in line with the goals and values of the New Deal.

In the context of renewed conflict in South Sudan, we are forced to ask difficult questions about the effectiveness and responsiveness of the New Deal framework and process in meeting its goals. In particular, there is the question of whether the fragility assessment adequately identified the country's underlying drivers of conflict. These include 1) the role of natural resources in politics, 2) issues of inclusion in, and appropriate checks and balances on political power, 3) effectively dealing with past atrocities, and 4) sufficient attention to inequalities that carry potential for catalyzing violence and conflict. Conducting a deep and honest fragility assessment should never be based on the assumption that the drivers of fragility are already known, or are too sensitive to put in public documents.

It may not have been possible to avert this violence, but a stronger fragility assessment that clearly placed vital political issues on the table for state and society to collectively address through analysis and action – both through the compact and other instruments – may have enabled conflict prevention or mitigation.

Civil Society has consistently called for a move from the technical aspects of the New Deal to a more society driven and politically owned engagement at the highest levels amongst all IDPS Partners.

The current crisis situation provides an opportunity to advocate for upholding our commitment to the New Deal and its values. Civil Society strongly urges the INCAF and all members of the IDPS to call upon parties of in South Sudan to ensure the current political mediation process is inclusive and participatory and that it is informed by an analysis that goes beyond the identification of warring factions and the supporting of emergency negotiations – elite agreements are simply not sustainable.

Civil Society also urgently calls all INCAF members to consider what changes may be needed in the New Deal process to ensure that fragility assessments in all countries sufficiently reveal root causes, and that current drivers of conflict and potential triggers are clearly articulated. If the framework of the fragility assessment in South Sudan has not adequately captured these issues, this has implications for the methodology and framework that is guiding these assessments. Robust analysis must capture the drivers of conflict and violence and use this to underpin analysis of the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals. The process must be inclusive to ensure that societal stakeholders including a broad section of civil society groups – including women, youth, citizens groups and political parties are fully involved; it is they who will help to foresee, prevent or mitigate recurrence of violence. Further, it is vital that ongoing, regular assessments are undertaken, that processes and structures are put in place within government and with civil society participation, for this purpose. Analysis is not a one-off event. These are vital areas of added value that the New Deal must bring to g7+ countries.

Continuous learning from situations like this will ensure that principles of the New Deal are strictly applied starting with accurate analysis of instability and conflict factors. The New Deal process comes with instruments - fragility assessments, PSG goals and indicators to measure and monitor progress, and compacts to reflect critical priorities - that are designed to focus on structural factors of fragility, violence and conflict. The practical application of these instruments in aid of an inclusive political process can and will amplify the chances for return of lasting stability and peace in South Sudan and across g7+ countries.

If it is to become fully accepted, the New Deal must not be limited to a technical issue as its true purpose is to address and remedy the deep drivers of conflict that limit the growth and development of fragile states. The New Deal should strive to proactively contribute to peacebuilding, conflict prevention and conflict resolution during its implementation. A discussion is also needed about how the International Dialogue and its partners can strengthen New Deal mechanisms to ensure its responsiveness in situations of acute crisis.

The Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS) is a Southern-Northern non-governmental coalition of peacebuilding organizations that helps coordinate civil society participation in international policy processes.

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