

Political Accommodation in the Sudan

Overview

Conflict Dynamics is undertaking an initiative to explore, generate and ‘feed in’ technical options to accommodate political interests and perspectives in the Sudan. The current focus of Conflict Dynamics’ work under this initiative is on exploration of options for political accommodation following the referendum on self-determination of the people of Southern Sudan (“the Referendum”), during the Popular Consultations process for Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States and relating to the Darfur Political Process.

The target audience for the technical options being developed includes: the National Congress Party (NCP), the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) as the parties to the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) (“the Parties”); other political parties/actors in North and South Sudan; agreed international facilitators or mediators; international/regional organizations; civil society constituencies; and supporting States.

This initiative aims to convey technical options in an impartial manner to the Parties and agreed mediators or facilitators. The technical options being developed address political accommodation in the context of *North-South* relations following the referendum; political accommodation *within North Sudan*, and *within South Sudan*; political accommodation in the context of the *Popular Consultations* in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile; political accommodation in *Darfur*. These five inter-woven strands are designed to address political accommodation in a comprehensive manner, taking into account political interests, historical legacies, and ongoing political processes.

Context

Under the provisions of the CPA, national elections were held in April 2010 and a referendum on self-determination of the people of Southern Sudan is scheduled to take place in early 2011. Simultaneously, the people of Abyei will participate in a referendum on the future administrative status of the Abyei area. Processes for Popular Consultations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile will facilitate consultations to gain the people’s perspectives on political arrangements under the CPA.

These processes will catalyze an unprecedented political transformation in the whole of Sudan, irrespective of their individual outcomes. Critical to maintaining political stability and preventing potentially-violent disputes is the ability to achieve mutual conciliation or accommodation of oft-competing political views and interests in the Sudan. That objective, and the associated processes, arrangements or outcomes are collectively referred to here as political accommodation.

Objectives

The primary objective of this initiative is to enhance the prospects for peace and stability in the Sudan through exploration and provision of technical options for political accommodation.

In pursuit of this overarching purpose the specific project objectives are:

PO1 – To conduct policy-orientated research and solicit perspectives from the Parties, and other key actors in the Sudan, agreed international facilitators, international actors, others on prospects and potential options for political accommodation

PO2 – To promote a new vocabulary, centered on political accommodation, within the political discourse in the Sudan

PO3 – To continue to generate and refine options for political accommodation between North and South Sudan, as well as within North Sudan and within South Sudan following the Referendum

PO4 – To ‘feed in’ technical options directly to the Parties; agreed international facilitators or mediators; other political parties/actors in North and South Sudan; international, regional organizations; civil society constituencies; and supporting States

PO5 – To contribute to a targeted dialogue among key constituencies on prospects for political accommodation following the Referendum.

Political accommodation

Conflict Dynamics has developed a typology of five focal areas for political accommodation which is being used to explore technical options for the Sudan:

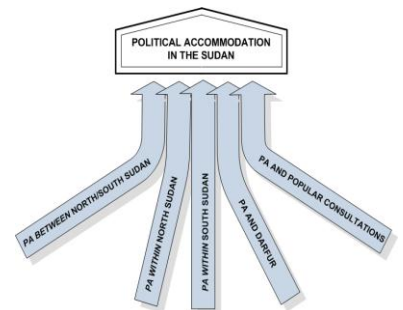
Political accommodation, “encompasses the objectives, process or outcome of mutual conciliation around competing political views and interests.”

- ➔ Political Structure and Decentralization
- ➔ Electoral System(s)
- ➔ Executive Branch
- ➔ Legislative Assembly
- ➔ Public Participation

Indicators of the degree of political accommodation are used to assess the various technical options developed, with a view to achieving equity of political representation and equity of decision-making influence, especially within central-level institutions.

Project architecture and methodology

Conflict Dynamics’ initiative on political accommodation employs a modular architecture consisting of five interconnected strands: **Strand I** – Political accommodation *between* North and South Sudan; **Strand II** – Political accommodation *within* North Sudan; **Strand III** – Political accommodation *within* South Sudan; **Strand IV** – Political accommodation and the Darfur Political Process; and **Strand V** – Political accommodation in the context of Popular Consultations.



Work on each of the strands is undertaken with the goal of producing options that are compatible and mutually reinforcing across all contexts. The methodology to implement the project consists of several components: (A) extensive literature review; (B) interviews and consultations; (C) development of technical options for political accommodation; (D) targeted presentation of technical options to political actors; and (E) consultations, outreach and dissemination to ensure uptake of options.

Project outputs

The primary deliverables/products developed under this project are technical inputs and options pertaining to political accommodation. These options are presented in targeted briefing papers in Arabic and English.

Two Briefing Papers have been produced under this initiative to date: *National Elections and Political Accommodation in the Sudan* (June 2009); and *Electoral Reform in Sudan and Prospects for Peace in Darfur* (October 2008).

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