

IASC Weekly Meeting
19 January 2005
Notes



1: Briefing on the Sudan peace process and its future implications
(by Sikander Khan, UNICEF)

Mr. Sikander Khan gave a briefing on the Sudan peace process, after the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement on 9 January 2005 in Nairobi. He particularly focused on different triggers and the future development of the peace building process.

While there had been made a number of attempts to reach a comprehensive peace agreement in recent years, elements remained that were difficult to consolidate, especially regarding the various rebel movements and loose collections of militias. Finally on 9 January, a comprehensive peace agreement was signed. The agreement presents a compilation of 13 different protocols that are mainly related to North-South issues and that were partly already made over the recent years.

Several challenges remain to ensure the effective implementation of the agreement, and various crucial triggers will determine the development of the peace building process.

As one important trigger, the Joint UN Workplan for Sudan was mentioned, in order to ensure humanitarian and developmental assistance in Northern and Southern Sudan and to support the government in meeting basic needs of the population. Further crucial steps originate from the context of the various agreements. During the six months pre-interim period, especially maintaining the ceasefire will play an essential role in building confidence. Also the appointment of the Vice President and the first steps of establishing a government in South Sudan will determine the future development of the peace process. In this regard, it will be significant to ensure a physically existing administration in the South. In the longer term, the way of dealing with the SPLA and of establishing a new state party, as well as the overall reorganisation of government and administration present key elements for the peace process. Especially the referendum will be an essential step for the consolidation of peace. Generally, it has to be taken into account that all these challenging changes and developments will require extensive preparation and support for the entire government.

Following the briefing, the implications for the country as a whole, and other regions like Darfur, were considered.

Regarding the various rebel groups, the importance of comprehensive disarmament and demobilization was highlighted.

Participants also discussed the political will to implement the comprehensive agreement, and to which extent this was due to external pressure. In this regard, the significance of the next two years for the overall success of the peace building process was stressed.

Further, the situation of IDPs was examined, questioning the repatriation of those displaced. As of yet, a return does not seem to be feasible, as many of the original locations are now occupied by other groups of IDPs.

2: Presentation of the new ReliefWeb site (by Esther Vigneau, ReliefWeb)

Ms. Esther Vigneau, Managing Editor of ReliefWeb, Geneva, presented the re-designed website of ReliefWeb and introduced several new features of the site. In addition to a new look, the site has been restructured with new technology allowing users to quickly download information and to swiftly navigate the database of information.

The new ReliefWeb site was officially launched by Ms. Yvette Stevens (AERC) on Tuesday, 18 January at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe.

The process of re-designing the site started already in March 2002. As the objective was to create a user-oriented site, interviews and studies were made to analyse the user community of ReliefWeb. The results showed that 70% of the users are humanitarian professionals, while the remaining 30% of users are mainly students and journalists, and only to a very limited extend the general public.

Generally, users visit ReliefWeb to find specific information and to accomplish a certain goal.

Taking this into account, the site was re-structured and provided with new features to serve their target audience of humanitarian response professionals, the academic and research community as well as the media. As a tool to create a user oriented structure, the team developed so-called "wire frames" to map the different steps and links of an information finding process.

One of the main improvements is the introduction of filter tools to specify the search for information. Furthermore it is now possible to create the so-called "My ReliefWeb", a private space which allows to save documents and other content for later reading, printing or emailing.

On the new site, users can now easily find updates on all global humanitarian emergencies, information on appeals and funding, policy papers, field manuals and thematic reference documents and maps, as well as vacancies, volunteer opportunities and a training inventory. (<http://www.reliefweb.int>)

3: IASC Standard Briefing (by Umesh Palwankar, ICRC)

- The IASC Task Force on the Tsunami will meet on Wednesday, 19 January at 17h00. The finalised agenda, including a briefing by the UN Development Group (UNDG), will be sent out by 12h00.
- It has been decided to continue with the Tsunami Task Force Meetings three times a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday).
As Friday, 21 January, is an official UN Holiday, the next meeting will take place on Monday, 24 January.
- The IDD (Inter-Agency Internal Displacement Division) is currently undertaking two missions, one to Colombia and one to Uganda.
- An IDD OCHA Heads of Office Workshop on the implementation of the IASC Policy Package with focus on protection will be held in Nairobi from Tuesday, 25 January, to Thursday, 27 January.

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List of Participants**



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