



Statement from the Episcopal Church of the Sudan November 30, 2009

"Blessed are the peacemakers"

Luke 2:14

Mark 2:1-11

We, the Provincial Standing Committee of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan (ECS), met in Rumbek, Lakes State between 23rd and 27th November 2009, at the generous hospitality of the Diocese of Rumbek and the Government of Lakes State. We wish to give our heartfelt thanks to the Rt. Rev. Alapayo Manyang Kuctiel, Bishop of Rumbek, and H.E. Lt. Gen. Daniel Awet Akot, Governor of Lakes State, for their hosting of this great meeting and their exemplary hospitality for the entire week of the meeting. It has been an excellent opportunity for discussing issues of Church governance, management and structure; the expansion of Christianity in the Sudan, and the state of our great nation today, which we now bring to your attention.

The peace process in Sudan has reached a critical point. With less than five months before National Elections and just over one year to the referendum on southern self-determination, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) is on the brink of collapse due to contentions over the referendum law, the demarcation of the 1st January 1956 borders, and violence recently perpetrated by other armed groups. We, the Provincial Standing Committee of the ECS affirm our role to act urgently to support the implementation of the CPA: through our internal Church networks, our ecumenical and inter-faith partners within Sudan and our international partner support.

We express our sadness at the missed opportunity for making the unity of the Sudan attractive since the signing of the CPA: the lack a reconciliation process, the lack of transparency over the National Census and oil revenues, the failure to repeal or alter laws which are contrary to the spirit of the CPA which guarantees equality and freedom for all, the stalling implementation of the July 2009 Abyei ruling, and the current deadlock over the legislation governing the referendum in Southern Sudan and the popular consultations in Abyei, Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan. Unity has not been made attractive.

We strongly condemn all inter-ethnic violence currently witnessed across much of Southern Sudan, the ongoing violence against civilians in Darfur, and the violent attacks on civilians being perpetrated by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in the south-west of the country. We re-affirm our commitment to doubling the efforts of the Church in bringing peace and reconciliation to our people, working together with the government as a force for unity and love amongst our people who have suffered for so long.

We strongly condemn the damage being done to the environment by oil companies in Unity and Upper Nile states. Our waterways are being polluted and our people displaced by the profit making of others. We bring this before our government and the international community, and ask and pray that the resources of our land be fairly utilized in future for the good of all our people.

We call the attention of Sudanese government and the international community to the severe threat of famine in Southern Sudan at this time, due to the failure of rains in various parts of the country this year.

We appeal to our partners to assist us the Church in providing for the physical as well as the spiritual needs of our people, and pledge to use all such support, as well as support from the Sudanese Christians, for the well-being of those facing hunger this Advent and Christmas season.

Tribal differences must be put aside at this crucial time in history and the government must fulfill their duty to provide security for their citizens. God will sit in judgment on those who are working against the rights of their own people. It is the escalation of non-traditional de-stabilising violence, specifically targeting civilians and the government that will make registration and voting in the elections and referendum very difficult. The conclusion that is drawn is that this violence is intended to negatively effect the elections and referendum. The Church must act now to counter these effects for the sake of the rights of the people of Sudan.

The Church affirms its support of the National Elections Commission (NEC) in its vital work to make free and fair elections a reality across Sudan. We urge all citizens to register and to encourage others to do so, participating fully in the political process in 2010. The ECS offers its entire network, personnel and contacts as potential support to the NEC and the elections process.

In post referendum planning, we call on those involved to put the safety, security, livelihoods and rights of the poorest and most vulnerable first. In the case of unity, issues of national identity, power- and wealth-sharing need to be addressed. If separation, issues such as the position of southerners and churches in the north, the arrangements for resources such as oil and water, and the status of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, need to be addressed to ensure peaceful relations between the two new neighbours and to guarantee the basic rights of all people in both north and south Sudan.

There is no alternative to the CPA. It must be fully implemented by both signatories and must be fully supported by those guarantor governments who promised to do so in 2005. Those international guarantors and stakeholders must take full heed of the crises affecting the country, and be active according to their promises made to the Sudanese people.

We as the Church proclaim "Let my people choose", and urge renewed national and international focus on the political processes of the elections and referendum, the latter of which must be considered inviolable. As the Church we support the right of every individual Sudanese citizen to have a free and fair say in the future of the Sudan. We welcome support for this work from any and all governmental, non-governmental and international institutions and pledge to work with efficiency and integrity for the Sudanese people.

We urge our international partners to take the message of the inviolability of the CPA to their respective governments who promised to guarantee peace in Sudan. Unless international support for the CPA is urgently stepped up the Sudan is in very real danger of descending back into a war which will not harm those people who create it, but which will again destroy the lives of those voiceless masses for which the Church now cries.

We, the undersigned, therefore urge the Government of National Unity (GoNU), the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) and the international guarantor nations of the CPA to uphold their promises of equality and freedom to the people of Sudan.

Together in the uniting love of Christ, For the House of Bishops:

His Grace the Most Rev. Canon Dr. Daniel Deng Bul Yak Archbishop and Primate of the Province of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan.

For the House of Clergy:

The Very Reverend Sylvester Thomas Dean of Khartoum and Chairman of the House of Clergy.

For the House of Laity:

Engr. Barnaba Dumo Chairman of the House of Laity.