

Seven Steps to Assisting the People of South Sudan

Statement by Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

Juba, May 2014

On 20 May 2014, the international community will convene in Oslo, Norway, to discuss how to address the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan. In just under five months since fighting erupted, the situation in South Sudan has deteriorated severely, causing 1.3 million people to flee from their homes, including an estimated 300,000 to neighbouring countries. Over 4 million people, including over 2.5 million children, are extremely vulnerable to food insecurity, as people have been displaced from their sources of survival. This crisis is worsening on a daily basis. Humanitarian actors have warned that by the end of this year half of all South Sudanese citizens could experience forced displacement (within the country or as a refugee), severe food insecurity, and/or threats to their protection. **The undersigned non-governmental organisations (NGOs) call on the UN member states and others to urgently focus on clear and immediate actions to provide assistance to the people of South Sudan and to rally national, regional and international support to this end. Furthermore, an inclusive and viable political framework for ending conflict is critical. As such, we call for the following seven steps in order to provide coherent assistance to the people of South Sudan.**

1) Timely funding of the humanitarian response is critical to saving countless lives, preventing further suffering in the coming months, and supporting resilience to further shocks. Despite some generous contributions, the overall donor response to the humanitarian crisis has been disappointing. The UN humanitarian appeal for South Sudan for January-June 2014 remains sixty-one per cent unfunded. Based on Gross National Income, traditional donors have yet to contribute close to a quarter of their fair share to the emergency response in South Sudan. Aid transparency is an important part of a well coordinated and cost effective response. All donors, traditional and non-traditional, are encouraged to give aid that is proportional to the size of their economy and to fully disclose such donations.

Enabling the delivery of large-scale humanitarian assistance will have a clear and tangible benefit in the immediate term, allowing supplies to be pre-positioned and delivered to affected populations. It will ensure that an already beleaguered population has access to life-saving water, sanitation, healthcare, shelter services and essential items, and to reinforce protection of the most vulnerable, particularly women and children. The Oslo conference presents an opportunity for donors to demonstrate their resolute commitment to addressing the humanitarian needs of the South Sudanese people, by generously contributing and rapidly disbursing funds to the humanitarian appeal and ensuring that all sectors are adequately funded.

2) Protection of and respect for humanitarian staff, installations and operations is vital to allow the delivery of this assistance. Aid workers have been killed and thousands of national staff are unable to work in many areas due to fear of being targeted, and this is significantly undermining the humanitarian response. Aid workers must be free to deliver assistance wherever it is needed, without fear of attack or restrictions placed upon them by parties to the conflict.

In addition to these difficulties, access to people in need and the ability to scale up the humanitarian response are further constrained by the imposition of targeted bureaucratic impediments, including difficulties in obtaining flight clearances and tax exemptions, and the

stop-and-search of humanitarian convoys. For example, customs clearances are taking an average of five weeks to obtain.

Donor governments must continue to urge all parties to the conflict to ensure the protection of humanitarian personnel and installations, enable the safe and unfettered movement of such personnel, equipment and supplies, and ease bureaucratic procedures to allow rapid delivery of assistance.

3) In South Sudan political and financial support to the Government of South Sudan has, until now, been generally quite high, but support to the humanitarian needs of the people has sometimes wavered. Whilst recognizing the importance of building national institutions, the recent crisis has highlighted that a focus on 'state building' can come at the expense of supporting sustainable peace and development that *all* South Sudanese can benefit from. At this time, given the humanitarian impacts of the recent crisis, there is an imperative to protect the lives and security of *all* communities in South Sudan without delay.

In the midst of the conflict, humanitarian partners on the ground have seen many positive examples of community commitments to non-violence and mutual support. In states currently less affected by the conflict, local authorities and leaders are working to protect their communities from slipping into crisis. In those states most affected by violence, NGOs and civil society organisations work tirelessly to provide health, education and other community services to the most vulnerable. While there are, and should be, serious questions about providing support to the parties to the conflict, help for the people of South Sudan should never be something that is up for debate. Because of the recent crisis, some donors have already reoriented their approach to direct funding for state building for certain purposes in South Sudan, and suspended some institutional support packages. We therefore recommend that suspended assistance to the Government of South Sudan for building state institutions should be re-programmed to national community services providers who offer the clearest way to support the people of South Sudan.

4) Providing financial assistance cannot be an excuse for inaction or inertia at the political level. The people of South Sudan require a viable, inclusive and transparent mediation and political process. The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), despite its successes, failed to address some of the fundamental drivers of conflict and societal divisions that are being manipulated by political and military leaders. The CPA also sacrificed inclusivity in order to ensure agreement on key political and security goals. A much-needed reconciliation process was also insufficiently supported. We welcome the signing of an initial peace agreement on 9th May, that includes commitments to an immediate truce, cooperation with the IGAD Monitoring and Verification teams, and commitment to an inclusive dialogue. However, we are deeply concerned about the reports of violations of the ceasefire within hours of the signing of the agreement. The peace effort must offer tangible and immediate outcomes to enable affected populations to seek safety, access assistance and recover livelihoods. Even if peace is achieved, the crisis has created severe humanitarian needs that will require addressing well into next year.

5) In addition to an inclusive mediation and political process to address this crisis, other measures need to be taken to immediately protect the people of South Sudan. The upcoming renewal of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) mandate - which current circumstances dictate be brought forward without delay - provides an opportunity to increase emphasis on the protection of civilians, and to provide greater clarity and resourcing for the UNMISS. A significant re-orientation of the UNMISS mandate and implementation framework is needed to enhance the credibility and acceptance of the mission amongst the population and to ensure UNMISS has the requisite tools to take

preemptive action against threats to civilians, including those residing outside UNMISS bases. It further provides a platform from which to promote renewed respect of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) by all parties.

6) **UNMISS alone cannot protect the people of South Sudan in the face of the extraordinary violence being levied against them by the multiple armed groups in South Sudan. Engaging with clear and direct drivers of the conflict is imperative.** There are reportedly one million small arms in South Sudan and they are widely available to all. Tougher domestic and international measures must be explored to curb the sale, transit and flow of arms to South Sudan.

7) **Finally, but importantly, accountability for the violence should be a critical component in any eventual political settlement and peace effort.** Building towards justice and reconciliation in South Sudan should be the genuine aim of the international community, requiring sustained diplomatic efforts and political will.

Signed by the following Non Governmental Organisations (NGO):

1. ACTED	31. Joint Aid Management (JAM)
2. ACORD	32. Light for the World
3. Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)	33. Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
4. African Educational Trust (AET)	34. Mercy Corps
5. Association for Aid and Relief (AAR-Japan)	35. Mentor Initiative
6. BRAC	36. Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF)
7. CAFOD	37. Non Violent Peace Force
8. Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	38. Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
9. Care	39. Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)
10. Caritas Switzerland/Luxembourg	40. Oxfam
11. Christian Aid	41. Pact
12. Concern Worldwide	42. PAX Netherlands
13. Cordaid	43. Peace Winds Japan
14. Coordinamento delle Organizzazioni per il Servizio Volontario (COSV)	44. People in Need (PIN)
15. Danish Church Aid (DCA)	45. Plan International
16. Danish Refugee Council (DRC)	46. Population Services International (PSI)
17. Farm Africa	47. RedR
18. Finn Church Aid	48. Relief International
19. Food for the Hungry	49. Save the Children
20. Handicap International	50. Sign of Hope (Hoffnungszeichen)
21. Health NET TPO	51. SNV Netherlands Development Organisation
22. HELP (Hilfe zue Selbsthilfe e.v)	52. Tearfund
23. IBIS, Education for Development	53. Terre des Hommes
24. ICCO	54. War Child Holland
25. International Aid Services (IAS)	55. War Child Canada
26. International Medical Corps (IMC)	56. Welthungerhilfe (German Agro Action)
27. International Rescue Committee (IRC)	57. Windle Trust
28. Islamic Relief	58. Women for Women International
29. INTERSOS	59. World Relief
30. Islamic Relief	60. World Vision