

**Statement from the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation
Commission (SSRRC) and
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFAIC)
01 September 2011**

This note summarises views presented by the SSRRC and MFAIC at a meeting between representatives of the SSRRC and 6 NGO representatives (on behalf of the 38 signatory agencies to the report) held in Juba on 31 August 2011 to discuss the joint NGO paper *Getting it Right from the Start: Priorities for Action in the New Republic of South Sudan*. Comments focused on the ten priorities highlighted in the report.

Priority 1: Balancing development assistance with continued support for emergency humanitarian needs

- The RRC wants to conduct a needs assessment that would identify what would be the ratio between humanitarian and development needs in the country.
- There needs to be work with the Government to develop and strengthen National and State strategies on sustainable Disaster Management that include emergency preparedness, prevention, and mitigation.
- In reference to child participation in humanitarian initiatives, this reference would be better directed at youth participation.

Priority 2: Understand conflict dynamics

- Regarding capacity building, this should be treated as a cross-cutting issue. Capacity building should be based on recognizing and identifying existing capacities, then building-up skills over the short, medium, and longer term.
- Support and build capacity of community structures, local peace committees, youth committees, Councils of Traditional Authority to be actively involved in peace-building.
- There needs to be more of a focus and funding on peace-making and supporting negotiations and conflict resolution between groups.
- Peace-building should be mainstreamed into all programs along with do-no-harm approaches.

Priority 3: Involve communities and strengthen civil society

- Need more training and capacity building for local partners, mentors, local NGOs and community-based groups; an approach of working through partnership with local civil society and community organizations and line ministries should be emphasized.
- Communities need to be involved in all levels of decision-making including in designing and planning projects to ensure they are appropriate to the local context.

Priority 4: Ensure an equitable distribution of assistance

- NGOs and donors also tend to work in some areas and not others and their selection is not always clear. NGOs need to increase their presence in areas where there has been little support.
- The international community can sometimes create pockets of exclusion because areas that appear peaceful are not prioritized and unless an incident occurs, very little assistance is provided in these areas.

- The focus should also be given to gender issues, gender mainstreaming, girl child education and job opportunities for women.
- Programs should target change of attitudes and perceptions regarding source of livelihoods so that communities diversify their source of livelihoods (i.e. pastoralist communities can start adopting agriculture activities).

Priority 5: Prioritise the most vulnerable and ensure social protection

- Regarding separated and unaccompanied children, organizations and donors should not create incentives for young people to leave home, and should adopt approaches that work through family and community networks to support vulnerable children and youth. It is important to understand the specific local context where these children or youth live.

Priority 6: Promote pro-poor, sustainable livelihoods

- Implement an accelerated repatriation and reintegration guideline by involving community leaders such as Council of Traditional Authority in reintegration or returnees and ensure that they are not only supported to resettle back to their original homes but also contribute significantly to the development of the nation.
- Regarding promoting access to land for returnees, this should focus on advocacy for land ownership in urban areas as this is where the “access to land” challenges lie.

Priority 7: Strengthen government capacity from the bottom up.

- Donors need to strengthen the capacity of learning institutions; NGOs and donors should look into sending seconded staff to government institutions, and vice versa hosting seconded government staff in their institutions.

Priority 10: Ensure Integrated Programming

- As much as donor coordination is necessary, there is also a need to enhance communication and coordination between government (especially RRC that regulates and supervise humanitarian agencies operations in South Sudan) and implementing agencies to ensure that funds received from donors are properly utilized.

End.