

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme



UNDP supports historic meeting of the Executive and Legislative branches of the Government of Southern Sudan

Juba, Friday, 14 March 2008: The Fifth Governors' Forum and Third Speaker's Forum of Southern Sudan undertook a joint session here Thursday in the presence of The First Vice President of the Government of the Republic of Sudan and the President of the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS), H.E. Lt. General, Salva Kiir Mayardit. The joint session was organized by the Ministry of Presidential Affairs and the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs in the Government of Southern Sudan.

The Governors' Forum and Speakers' Forum are supported by UNDP with the support of the government of the UK and the government of the Netherlands.

The joint session that brought together the leaders of both the executive and the legislative branches in Southern Sudan was aimed to increase communication, foster dialogue, and harmonize policies between the legislative and the executive at all levels.

In his closing remarks, President Kiir has renewed commitment "to strengthen and implement the decentralized system in Southern Sudan in line with the provisions of the comprehensive peace agreement." He emphasized the need to maintain security through collection of unauthorized arms in the possession of the civilian population and acceleration of the ongoing peace process between the government of Uganda and the insurgent Lord Resistance Army (LRA). President Kiir also called for the need to downsize the number of redundant employees in both the civil and military institutions to improve performance and allocate more funds for development. He urged Governors to be "agents of peace and reconciliation in their respective states." He underscored the need to improve and diversify tax collection in order to avoid dependence on oil revenues. He also stressed the importance of the implementation of the resolutions and recommendations of the Fifth Governors' Forum and Third Speakers' Forum in order for the citizens of Southern Sudan to experience peace dividends and improvement in their quality of life.

Kiir commended the role of the UN and development partners in promoting democratic transformation in Sudan. "Your participation in the reconstruction of southern Sudan is very much appreciated and we are very happy to see you working with us in this field."

Addressing the opening session, UNDP Southern Sudan Head of Office, Mr. Jafet Enriquez, described the event as "a unique experience" and reiterated UNDP's commitment in providing support to GOSS, the legislative bodies, the Judiciary, the civil society, the emerging private sector and other development actors as well as in bringing democracy and sustainable human development to Southern Sudan. "Democratic governance is a process. Its success rests on political will and value driven actions from the key actors -institutions as well as individuals- at various levels of governance," Mr. Enriquez explained.

Present at the closing session were also the Vice President of Government of Southern Sudan, H.E. Lt. General, Dr. Riek Machar Teny and the Speaker of the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly (SSLA), Mr. James Wani Igga, as well as GOSS ministers.

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