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Focus On South: Dr. Riek Machar GoSS Vice President Opens Conference on Governance and Social Ac

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Jonathan Mayen Nguen, Juba

The Vice President, Government of Southern Sudan, Dr. Riek Machar opened the International conference at University of Juba, sponsored by Volkswagen Foundation of Germany, and UNDP Southern Sudan in Juba at Samani Conference Hall.

This conference is intended by University of Juba, for cooperative research project, governance and social action in Sudan after the peace agreement of January 09th 2005, local, national and regional dimensions and United Nations Development Programmes UNDP, southern Sudan.

Addressing the conferees, the Vice President of GoSS Dr. Riek told his gathering or audience of what GoSS has been doing since its inception in 2005 when the CPA was rectified or signed by the SPLM/A and Sudan Government that ended the 21 years of war between the North-South.

On the Road Map of the real implementation of the CPA he said that during the three years of the Agreement much has been done and more need to be done towards the implementation of CPA to the letter up to 2011 when the Southern people will decide through ballot boxes to choose either opt for unity or separation from the rest of the country in a Referendum..

Dr. Riek informed the gathering that the implementation of CPA has achieved a number of issues like devolution of powers from Central Government to GoSS and the States to be able run their own local affairs.

He enlightened the conference of the passage of the electoral law by the National Assembly, the IDPS the Internal Displaced Persons, refugees and the disarmament or demobilization of people carrying illegal arms and to end the intertribal armed conflicts throughout the South to come to an end which he said has already started.

The conference began on 21st - 24th July 2008 at Juba University premises at Samani Conference Hall attended by all walks of life in Juba, Khartoum and abroad.

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On Monday 21st July 2008 the conference went into sessions with a number of papers being presented. The facilitator of the first day was Professor Joshua Otor Akol of University of Juba who chaired all the papers delivered and deliberated on by participants until evening hours.

Of these papers presented was Conflict Societies and challenges of sustainable peace, where Dr. Samson S. Wassara of University of Juba spoke to the conferees about volatilities of post-conflict, Governance in Sudan, actors and context.

Then Dr. Shyam K. Bhurtel, Senior Governance Advisor and Team Leader Governance unit UNDP Juba presented his paper on Governance and Social Action in Conflict Societies.

Speaking to the attendants, he said that, broadly, that the structure of Government in Sudan in general and in the context of linkages, roles, responsibilities and fiscal arrangements between the Government of National Unity GONU and the Government of Southern Sudan GoSS in particular, the system can best be described as Asymmetrical Federalism.

He said that the Government of Southern Sudan has three-tiered structure. GoSS has (10) ten states and local Government, which are counties or Payams.

The second tier is the state Government. States are autonomous bodies with three branches of government having popular mandate.

The numbers of the local Government is not determined. Hence the scope of decentralized government in Southern Sudan covers states as well as the local government.

On the second day of the conference on Tuesday 22nd July 2008 a good number of papers were presented in view of the dilemma of simultaneous economic and political transformation and the risks of contested Governance. The Facilitator was Dr. Samson S. Wassara.

Dr. Abraham Matoc Dhal, University of Juba presented a paper on Southern Sudan Economy, basis and prospects for development during the peace era.

Dr. Matoc, said that in broad sense, in regards to wealth sharing policies of the state, wealth refers to any source when utilized in monetary terms or converted into value that generates financial wealth.

In this context, it suffices to say that natural resources like water, rivers, Nile water, Land, gold, oil, tin, uranium, agriculture, forestry, fishery, wildlife, fruits and so on.

Once they are exploited or extracted and converted into money, value would surely constitute basis for financial wealth in a given country or region.

Dr. Abraham said that, exploitation or utilization of resources usually result into creation of employment projects, hence providing an opportunity of creating incomes.

Wealth sharing agreement stress sharing of the wealth equitably to enable each level of government to discharge its legal constitutional responsibilities and duties.

The national government obligation is to make transfers to the government of Southern Sudan and that the sharing and location of the wealth ensures the quality, dignity and living conditions of citizens.

To promote and ensure development and in particular to enable GoSS to perform basic government functions, build civil administration, rehabilitate, reconstruct or construct the social infrastructure and with regards to revenue, the revenue sharing should reflect a commitment to the devolution of powers and decentralization of development services delivery and governance.

