

SYMPOSIUM ON THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF THE SUDAN

Barcelona, Spain 23 - 26 September 1995

FINAL REPORT

1. A symposium on the fundamental problems of the Sudan was held in Barcelona, Spain, from 23 to 26 September 1995, organized by UNESCO with the collaboration of UNDP. Thirty participants, representing both the Government of the Sudan and various movements and organizations from the Sudan, namely the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-United (SPLM-United), the South Sudan Independence Movement (SSIM) and the Union of the Sudan's African Parties (USAP), were joined by resource persons and representatives of UNESCO and UNDP.
2. The opening session was addressed by the President of the General Conference of UNESCO, H.E. Mr Ahmed Sayyad, the UNDP Resident Representative in the Sudan, Mr Christoph T. Jaeger, and the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Federico Mayor.
3. In his opening statement, the President of the General Conference of UNESCO recalled that the main objective of the symposium was to provide a place of encounter and dialogue for the parties in conflict in the Sudan, so as to allow them to freely express their views and to contribute to clarifying the main issues at stake. The initiative to convene the symposium was taken in full compliance with UNESCO's constitutional mandate to contribute to the construction of peace, and in the framework of the Organization's Culture of Peace Programme which has launched similar initiatives in various regions of the world. As regards the contents

of the debates, the President of the General Conference considered that issues such as democracy, the peaceful transfer of power, political, cultural and religious pluralism, tolerance, equity and equal citizenship should be dealt with in depth.

4. The UNDP Resident Representative in the Sudan laid emphasis on the close links existing between peace and development, as stated by the United Nation's Secretary General in his "Agenda for Peace". He assured the participants of UNDP's commitment to bring the Sudan closer to peace and underscored the fact that the symposium was a unique occasion for trying to reach a greater consensus on development issues in the Sudan, so as to give the Sudanese people the possibility of assuming their own destiny in the perspective of sustainable human development.

5. The Director-General of UNESCO underlined the importance of the symposium in the fulfilment of the Organization's essential mission, to build peace, at a time when the international community as a whole must rise to the challenges of the transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace. After recalling that dialogue was a key prerequisite in the search for peace in the Sudan, a country that has already paid a heavy toll to war and violence, he urged all participants to move from the memory of the past to the memory of the future. He went on to indicate that they should freely discuss all possible avenues of reconciliation and, first and foremost, endeavour to identify shared principles and a common framework. That would strengthen the on-going process of consultations between the conflicting parties. In this respect, he thanked the resource persons of the IGADD (Intergovernmental Authority of Drought and Development) for having accepted to participate in the symposium and expressed UNESCO's full commitment to help the Sudanese people in their search for peace.

6. At the start of the first working session, the President of the General Conference, who chaired the symposium, urged the participants once again not to

judge the past, but to engage instead in a responsible and open dialogue, respectful of the facts, oriented towards the search for the common denominators that could contribute to laying the foundations of peace in the Sudan.

7. The Director of the UNESCO Culture of Peace Programme, Mr Leslie Atherley, presented the main objectives of the Programme, namely the development of national programmes and the establishment of an information and networking system. He highlighted the achievements so far, in particular in terms of the national programmes of reconciliation and peace-building in El Salvador, Mozambique, Burundi, Congo and Somalia. Special reference was made to the culture of peace forum held in Khartoum in April 1995, which paved the way for the present symposium.

8. During the first working session, the heads of the various delegations thanked UNESCO and UNDP for organizing the symposium, and expressed their support for a culture of peace initiative in the Sudan. After a wide exchange of views on the historical and political roots and causes of the conflict between North and South Sudan, as well as on the various and complex dimensions of the conflict, the participants expressed their willingness to pursue the dialogue around certain specific themes considered to be crucial. On this basis, it was decided that the following themes would be discussed :

- A) Culture and peace,
- B) Development and peace,
- C) Democracy and peace.

9. Mr Betheuel Kiplagat, Mr Jerzy Skuratowicz and Mr Mohamed Sahnoun were respectively appointed moderators for the three working sessions dedicated to the above mentioned themes.

10. The following section of the report reflects only the points related to UNESCO's fields of competence and UNDP's concerns on which there was broad agreement by the participants.

A. Culture and peace

11. There was general agreement that the Sudan is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious society. Due to the growing complexity of the Sudan's cultural diversity, as it evolves through various processes of inter-action between cultures, the participants considered that one of the crucial issues facing the Sudan was the transition towards institutional recognition of cultural pluralism.

12. In order for this transition to be successful, and so as to avoid the frustrations and exclusions which have all too often led in the past, to distorted self-preceptions and distorted images of the other, the need for cultural dialogue in the Sudan was strongly emphasized. Such a cultural dialogue is a prerequisite for the free expression of cultural identities, their mutual enrichment and the participation of all.

13. With a view to establishing an appropriate framework for cultural dialogue, and in particular, to promote and enhance the cultural identities of South Sudan, various suggestions were made, namely:

- i. the establishment of a Centre for Sudanese Studies and of a South Sudan Culture and Development Institute, for which feasibility studies could be undertaken by UNESCO;
- ii. the adoption of a decentralization policy for the media;
- iii. the production of radio and television programmes, in particular documentaries, relating to the culture of South Sudan, the teaching of local South Sudan languages in North Sudan, and the development of museums in South Sudan to preserve its cultural heritage.

B. Development and peace

14. The participants recognized that the lack of development, in conjunction with deep social and economic disparities is one of the root causes of the civil war which has been raging for four decades in the Sudan. With millions of people affected by the war and the destruction of the social and economic infrastructure, any peace settlement becomes difficult. The continuum from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction to development is supported as complementary to the move from a culture of war to a culture of peace.

15. The needs of the local communities both in the North and in the South in terms of reconstruction and development are immense requiring the preparation of a comprehensive strategy. All participants agreed that a sustainable development can only be achieved in a peaceful environment in which the resources available are made accessible to all persons according to their needs. Analysing the current situation in the South Sudan, the participants appealed to the international community, to the United Nations organizations, and in particular to UNDP to:

- i. explore with the Government of the Sudan the possibilities of providing assistance to the populations of South Sudan, across the zones of influence of the warring parties and with their support in the form of the Area Rehabilitation Programme similar to the Area Development Scheme adopted in the northern parts of the country, realizing that this recommendation does not constitute a legal basis for future actions by UNDP;
- ii. extend their assistance in providing basic health, basic education and training, as well as basic social infrastructure to the displaced people in the Sudan, giving particular attention to the needs of women and youth.

16. The assistance to the local communities of South will lay the foundations for the social and economic infrastructure of peace in the Sudan, for which all the concerned parties will give their full support and will create the necessary conditions of security for its successful implementation.

C. Democracy and peace

17. There was general agreement on democracy as a system of governance.

18. In the assessment of its implications in the process of implementation, issues such as the need for taking into account the diverse roots of democracy, its various institutional formulas and the ways and means of reaching a national consensus thereon were addressed at length.

19. In the same context, various alternative approaches to peace in the Sudan were discussed, in particular decentralization, federalism, communitarism and the various definitions and interpretations of self-determination. UNESCO will consider organizing a seminar on one or more of these themes.

20. The participants agreed upon a number of fundamental principles on which democracy must rest, namely:

- i. respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of belief and worship;
- ii. rule of law;
- iii. peaceful transfer of power through free and fair elections in a democratic framework;
- iv. equity and tolerance.

20. At the end of the symposium's deliberations, a declaration was adopted by all the participants, which figures in Annex I of this report. The full list of participants is included in Annex II.

BARCELONA DECLARATION

We the participants of the symposium on the fundamental problems in the Sudan, held in Barcelona, Spain from 23 to 26 September 1995, aware of the fact that only a sustainable peace based on justice, democracy and solidarity can lead to meaningful development and assist in the solution of the fundamental problems of the people of the Sudan :

1. Affirm that the cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity of the Sudan constitutes a potential wealth of the people of the country and should be given effective constitutional and institutional expression.
2. Agree to encourage the development of projects which promote peace-building among the people of the Sudan, with the aim of establishing a true culture of peace.
3. Condemn all forms of intolerance and totalitarianism.
4. Commit ourselves to pursue the Barcelona dialogue, which aims at reinforcing the peace process undertaken by the Inter-governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD).
5. Express our wish and hope that to end the suffering of the Sudanese people, the arms will be silenced and that frank and peaceful discussions will continue among all parties concerned.
6. Express our thanks to UNESCO and UNDP for this timely initiative, and request the Director General of UNESCO to undertake all actions which could support the peace process
7. Register our deepest appreciation to the Government of Spain and the authorities of Catalunya for the excellent facilities provided in the organization of the Symposium.

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