

Sudan Link Committee Quarterly Meeting September 2010 Advocacy and Public Affairs Report

The key focus of our Public Affairs and Advocacy activity is on the Referendum in January next year and increasingly the various scenarios of the Post – Referendum period, and the visit of the Archbishop to Salisbury and London. The timing of the Archbishop's visit is centred on the approximate '100 days' to the Referendum that is likely to lead to the secession of the South, assuming the vote happens.

We continue to work in tandem with Christian Aid on these issues in association with the NGO consortium coordinated by Crisis Action. This week (20 -25th September) the United Nations is reviewing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which are central to the Anglican *Partners in World Mission* (PWM) and which Link Committee members will be aware guide our own Link priorities. Of more central interest is the Friday 24th September when the UN has set aside the day to debate the situation in Sudan. Attendees are expected to include US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton and possibly the US President and from this side William Hague and our UK Special Representative et al. It is hoped that the outcome will be a renewed UN commitment and a recognition of the fragility of the CPA and an effective and peaceful transition through the Referendum, the Interim Period and the post July state of Sudan. We have been greatly helped in this by the Anglican Communion representative in the UN Helen Wangusa, the ACC Office and The Episcopal Church.

On the Referendum, there is concern that apparent lack of progress on the three outstanding border issues (Abbyei, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile) will hinder the Referendum Act supposedly necessary for the Referendum to be held. The second issue is the Registration by Southerners to permit them to vote. The Referendum itself will be overseen by the Carter Centre in Atlanta, Georgia. One area of concern is the supposed threat of mass-migration after a vote for secession, but HMG is currently not convinced of such a danger but it is likely to come up in the UN debate. The Post Referendum challenge of GoSS's ability to effectively govern and rapidly develop Southern Sudan in a timescale to sustain the support of the populace is an unspoken concern.

The Archbishop's visit programme is still being put together and will be circulated for information. The outline plan is as follows: he arrives on Friday 1st October and will spend that night and the Saturday night with the Dean. He will attend the Michaelmas ordinations on the Saturday. Sunday am Church is to be decided as we need to be at a Sudan Diaspora service in London on the Sunday afternoon. Monday 4th there is a lunch meeting with Rev Sam Kobia of African Council of Churches and we then proceed to Birmingham to participate in the Conservative Party Conference Service at which the Archbishop will speak of behalf of certain NGOs in a discussion type conversation with the Bishop of Birmingham. We are working with Lambeth on a Press Conference with Archbishop

Rowan and possibly a meeting with the Prime Minister in Downing Street as we did in January. There should also be a meeting with the FCO Sudan Unit; the Associate Parliamentary Group and the Christians in Politics group, both in Parliament. We are looking at briefing sessions at the Overseas Development Institute and possibly Chatham House and to compiling a more focussed list of media to brief including in particular BBC World Service *Africa Calling* and *Focus on Africa*. The Archbishop will depart to New York on Saturday 9th October.

The medium term challenge is for the Post Referendum period and longer term the peaceful development of the whole Country and the Churches continuing involvement in these momentous issues.