

# **NPA's Southern Sudan Programme:**

**An Assessment with Reference to the Current Sudanese  
Context and Future Institutional Cooperation with Noragric**

By

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents a preliminary assessment of Norwegian Peoples Aid's (NPA) programme in Southern Sudan with reference to rights to land and other resources, gender and the emerging issues in smallholder agriculture development in the new conjuncture characterised by a cessation of hostilities and negotiations between the Government of Sudan (GOS) and the SPLM. The consultant was also mandated to identify areas in which Noragric may be able to provide professional backstopping to NPA. The report focuses on the Land question as a core contentious issue in the North-South conflict and discusses it in the light of the ongoing peace process. It highlights the fact that the GOS and the SPLM, while sticking to their statist and communitarian positions respectively on the Land question at the negotiating table, are also compelled to come to terms with privatisation as a necessary condition for the development of a market economy to which both sides have pledged their commitment. The peace process has also made the two protagonists address resource issues and development within the globally enforced common policy framework of liberalisation and adjustment. The SPLM is committed to formalisation of the customary rights of the people to resources and to the creation of modern private property rights with a ceiling on land ownership. It will also reform the customary rights to provide for gender equality in rights to land and other resources. SPLM's land policies and reform legislation are still evolving. Apparently, some inconsistencies have surfaced within the policy process on the types of tenure envisaged. These are likely to be ironed out as the process proceeds. However, the envisioned reforms are likely to be highly demanding of professional and financial resources and time. A more cautious approach may yield better results. Both the GOS and the SPLM have lessons to be learnt from the various agricultural modernisation projects implemented in the north by successive regimes in Khartoum.

While NPA has established impressive and well-functioning organisational structures in the field, it continues to neglect monitoring and evaluation. This shortcoming should be rectified without further delay. NPA's field personnel are competent and dedicated. The officials responsible for agricultural and animal health activities are well qualified and have gained good field experience. However, the absence of personnel with competence in socio-economics is too evident to be missed.

The agriculture project has achieved significant results in terms of transfer of the ox plough technology, capacity building and expansion of area cultivated. The beneficiaries have been able to enhance their food security and some of them have become marketable surplus producers too. The animal health project has achieved impressive results too. However, the weaknesses of the projects have also become more evident. An extensive form of farming exploiting the natural fertility of the soil continues to spread while the animal health project operates without a herd quality improvement programme. This is not a healthy combination from a long-term perspective. Sustainability considerations need to be taken more seriously. In Yirol and Rumbek, the agriculture and animal health projects operate in isolation from each other although herding and farming are integral and interdependent elements of the production system in the area. NPA has privileged the agricultural above the animal health project. However, long-term success of the project requires better integration with livestock production and better natural resource management (NRM).

The majority of the farmers, including the most enterprising ones, are women. However, women are conspicuous by their total absence or by their insignificant presence in the NPA's field organisation. NPA has been making efforts to recruit female staff but has not been able to find qualified women interested in the jobs available. Women's participation in agricultural training programmes is around 40%, which is not so unsatisfactory but can be increased to reflect their active role in farming. The few women who have become large farmers are farm managers who use hired or exchange labour. The adoption of the ox plough technology has freed the women farmers from the drudgery of hoe cultivation. It has also enabled greater participation of men in land preparation. However, the workload of women in households operating at or around subsistence levels has increased with the adoption of the ox plough technology due to the increased need for labour for weeding and harvesting.

In the unfolding socio-economic differentiation in the project areas, large farmers are also large herd owners. Predictably, these are the biggest beneficiaries of the project while a larger number of middle and smaller farmers have also emerged. The project has produced some trickledown effects on the poor. This is not so significant in an area in which the majority remain vulnerable and poor. There is need to broaden the target groups to include more households from among the marginalized. In planning for the future, NPA may consider the alternative outcomes of the current peace process and adopt a flexible approach. There is potential for collaboration between NPA and Noragric with the latter providing professional backstopping. A range of issues has been identified for further study to generate data and analysis to assist in planning NPA's future interventions. Noragric can also assist NPA in capacity building.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Monitor the peace process from NPA's point of view**

NPA should carefully monitor the peace talks and their outcome at every stage with a view to direct its own programme and its development paying special attention to aspects of the negotiations that pertain to reconstruction and development including the Land question, rights of women, return of IDPs and capacity building.

### **Carry out a comprehensive self-evaluation with a view to strengthen the development component with reference to the long-term objectives of the Programme**

NPA should carry out a comprehensive self-evaluation of the agricultural and animal health projects from an integrated perspective with reference to competing land uses and socio-economic and agro-ecological aspects of sustainability and equitability. This exercise should take into consideration the diversities in socio-economic conditions, land use practices and crop-livestock interactions in the project areas. Its main objectives should include the following:

- Identification and assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the ongoing activities with reference to an agreed set of criteria

- Projection of alternative scenarios regarding changes in land resource needs due to migration of IDPs and refugees into the project areas in the next 3-5 years
- Identification of the main elements of a strategy for strengthening the development component of the SSP in the next 3-5 years with a view to sustain the progress achieved so far and to include households from the more vulnerable sections of the community

The NPA's staff in the different project areas such as Yirol, Kajo Keji and Juba should carry this out with the professional assistance of one or two competent facilitators. It is advisable for the Country Director to prepare a set of guidelines including key questions for this workshop and circulate it to the participants in advance. Internal documents and reports by external consultants can be used too.

### **Be more inclusive of the marginalized**

In conjunction with the above, it is recommended that the programme should broaden the target group to include households from marginalized groups with a view to move beyond being content with trickledown effects and enable the upward mobility of more households from the ranks of the poor into the middle. However, not every marginalized household may be interested in, or capable of moving into, farming. It is, therefore, necessary to study the poor with a view to identify their interests and potentials in order to design appropriate interventions. In this regard, Diress Mengistu's CARD (Community Agro-based Rural Development) Model should be helpful. Based on this model, the following may be considered:

- Agro-processing as an income generating activity for women; The activities with economic potential include sesame and groundnut paste production, sorghum and maize processing and honey production and processing
- Employable-skill development: Training of men as blacksmiths and carpenters; Employment opportunities exist and are likely to increase in the following areas: production of ploughs and inter-cultivators, housing and infrastructure and construction sectors.
- Training in crop-livestock production
- Enabling the poor to have easier access to forests and fishing grounds as supplementary sources of food
- Credit schemes based on revolving funds to assist poorer households in the project areas to strengthen their livelihoods. Examine the experience of the NPA's scheme in Kajo Keji and any other similar credit schemes to see if useful elements can be identified to design more credit schemes.

### **Pay more attention to crop-livestock interactions and their area-specific variations**

There is an urgent need to adopt a more enlightened approach to livelihood construction in areas such as Yirol and Rumbek where pastoralism and agriculture are integral components of the production system. An integrated concept of agro-pastoralism should serve as the organising framework for NPA's activities in these counties. Such a framework should routinely guide the work of the field staff.

Towards this, the following steps are recommended in areas such as Rumbek and Yirol where agro-pastoralism is the dominant system of livelihood:

- Reorganise the extension service as an integrated professional activity to promote sustainable livelihoods. Educate the agricultural extension workers on the importance of the livestock component and crop-livestock interdependence in the livelihood system. Likewise, educate the animal health workers on the importance of the crop component. Let the two work in teams. Organise joint meetings of the two with farmers/pastoralists.
- Revise and improve the training programmes for the staff as well as the target groups on the basis of the integrated approach.
- For this to be put into practice, it is absolutely essential that the agriculture and animal husbandry coordinators and other personnel make it a point to interact constantly with the aid of concepts of integrated and community based NRM.

### **Initiate a pilot project on land-use planning in partnership with CANS and local communities**

The emerging land use changes and the conflicts in the field call for early action to ensure sustainable land use and prevent/resolve resource conflicts in the project area. NPA may consider initiating a pilot project on land use planning in a project area with the participation of the local communities and CANS. It may also consider inviting the UNDP/FAO to join this exercise. The project should be designed as a learning process to provide inputs to land use policy and planning at broader levels. It would involve the following:

- Detailed mapping of land use patterns and practices with reference to farming, herding, human settlements, forestry, fishery and other activities
- Identification of sustainable land use systems with reference to farming, grazing and conservation
- Assessment of future demands for land from different sources
- Developing sustainable land use plans for the area and reaching consensus on the most appropriate plan

Noragric and the Department of Land Use Planning and Landscape Architectures at the Agricultural University of Norway (AUN) will be able to provide professional inputs to the conceptualisation and designing of the pilot project.

### **Continue capacity building**

NPA has been paying attention to internal capacity building. Several members of the field staff have had opportunities for further training and study tours. This good practice should be continued. The following areas should be given priority in staff capacity building:

- Land and soil-water management; Water harvesting
- Crop-Livestock integration and Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM)
- Gender and livelihoods in the project area



NPA should also more consciously strengthen its capacity to assist CANS, SRRC and local NGOs in upgrading their capacities.

### **Recruit competent socio-economists to the staff**

Recruit as early as possible at least two socio-economists with sound academic backgrounds and field experience in development work in conflict areas to work with the technical staff. The quality of NPA's professional work can significantly be improved with inputs from socio-economists. At least one of the two recruits should be a woman. If NPA is able to recruit only one, all efforts should be made to find a well-qualified female.

### **Introduce and popularise water harvesting**

Water harvesting should be promoted in the project areas. NPA's staff should identify the appropriate techniques and methods. They may need exposures to water harvesting technologies practised in other countries.

### **Explore feasibility of agro-forestry models for the poor**

There is need to explore the feasibility of agro-forestry as a component in the livelihood systems of small and marginal households. Project personnel in the field believe that agro-forestry has potential in this regard. They should be encouraged to initiate a pilot scheme to study the feasibility.

### **Examine prospects of promoting high value crops**

Carefully examine the prospects of promoting high value crops with reference to the suitability of the crops, infrastructural and transport constraints and cost effectiveness.

### **Introduce a herd quality improvement project**

Develop a herd quality improvement project with the assistance of experts with sound knowledge of the local conditions and capable of working with local herders.

### **Make the Ox plough Farmers Coop more inclusive**

Critically review the experience of the Ox Plough Farmers Cooperative with a view to find ways and means of making it more inclusive and dynamic. Make it a more effective instrument in the intra-regional marketing of surplus grains.

### **Assist cross-border livestock marketing**

Consider organising a livestock-marketing cooperative as a pilot scheme to assist herders to market their animals at the Ugandan border. This pilot scheme should include the construction of resting places and water points, protection of the livestock and a marketing arrangement that can secure fair prices to the herd owners.

**Continue the women's literacy and income generation projects**

Continue and expand if possible the women's literacy and income generating projects.

**Encourage development of the blacksmith workshop in Mabui**

This workshop has high potential and its development should be encouraged. NPA may also explore the prospects of making it function as an autonomous enterprise and its expansion, which will also provide employment to local persons.

**Develop partnerships with local NGOs/CBOs**

NPA has experiences and capacities to be shared with local NGOs/CBOs. NPA should actively look for local partners in the project areas and work with them with a view to enhance their capacities in sustainable livelihood development. Similar partnerships may also be developed in crop and livestock marketing. NPA should seriously consider offering internships/ on-the-job training for members of local NGOs/CBOs in agricultural production systems, animal health work and CBNRM.

**Develop closer links with UN agencies**

Since UN agencies have become interested in rehabilitation and development of Southern Sudan, NPA should consider developing collaborative links with them. The UNDP in particular has programmes that are relevant to the NPA. An opening of a dialogue for collaboration with the UNDP is recommended. Consider inviting the UNDP/FAO to participate in the pilot project in land use planning recommended above.

**Link resource conflict resolution to reconciliation and peace building**

This should be done wherever a resource conflict is a part of a larger conflict which has taken inter-ethnic or inter-territorial forms. The Nuer-Bor Dinka conflict is a case in point. The probability of success of future attempts at reconciliation between these two groups is likely to be enhanced if the distributional issues including access to resources are transparently addressed as a part of a broader agenda of peace building and livelihood development.

**Put in place a monitoring and evaluation system as soon as possible**

This recommendation was also made in 2002. Hopefully it will be implemented in 2003. This involves the developing of appropriate indicators to monitor change and standardised procedures for recording information to enable analysis without delay. The location manager should be made responsible to make regular (say quarterly) monitoring and evaluation (M&E) reports. The M&E unit's function should include the establishment and updating of a socio-economic and agro-ecological database. Noragric can provide professional assistance to develop a monitoring and evaluation system that can be managed by NPA staff.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This report presents a preliminary assessment of the NPA's Southern Sudan Programme and identifies some areas for institutional cooperation between NPA and Noragric in a context characterised by two key ongoing processes: one, the operationalisation of the new international strategy of NPA and the other, the current Sudanese peace process. Parallel to the first, NPA has been involved in discussions with Noragric to obtain professional backstopping for its future development activities in Southern Sudan. These three processes have largely determined the mandate of the present mission.

In the light of the changing global environment, NPA has reviewed its experience and redefined its international role in development as a rights-based organisation. Consequently, NPA has decided to focus on the following six thematic areas with a view to promote rights-based development: land and resource rights, democracy, women's rights, youth's rights, indigenous people's rights and the right to a landmine impact free environment.<sup>1</sup> Further, NPA has chosen to practise this policy with partners operating in conflict areas.<sup>2</sup> This makes its international role highly challenging as rights of the civilians are major casualties in conflict areas and most people in such situations suffer from livelihood losses. Another major aspect of the challenge is to find partner organisations that meet all or most of the criteria set by NPA.

The question arises whether the allegiance to the currently hegemonic doctrine of rights-based development reflects a fundamental shift in NPA's philosophy and approach. The leadership of NPA is best placed to answer this question. However, it would be pertinent to make an observation on this matter, given the mandate of the present mission. Solidarity with peoples struggling for their rights has always been a core value of NPA. In other words, NPA has historically been a rights-based organisation and its approach has been to identify and work with partners that served the cause of freedom and democracy. The new doctrine of rights-based development is a product of a different global context that emerged in the post-cold war era. While incorporating important rights and going beyond the conventional rights discourse on the one hand, the new doctrine is prescriptive and top-down both in theory and practice on the other. Critics have drawn attention to the negative implications of this approach for developing countries. For instance, while welcoming the emphasis on economic and developmental rights, Mohan and Holland (2001: 177), observe that 'the potential exists for the rights-based agenda to be used as a new form of conditionality which usurps national sovereignty and by handing the responsibility for defending rights to authoritarian states the process does little to challenge the power structures which may have precipitated rights abuse in the first place'. It may be added that, in the present global environment, any popular armed struggle for autonomy and rights, including the right to development, against an oppressive state faces the danger of being branded 'terrorist' and internationally delegitimised.

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<sup>1</sup> NPA (2003)

<sup>2</sup> 'Operating in conflict areas' is one of the criteria of selection of partners by NPA. The keywords of the other criteria include: Rights-based, Change agent, Popular/grassroots' support, Participatory approach, Internal democracy, Administrative routines, Gender awareness, Capacity and/or potential and HIV/AIDS awareness (ibid).

However, by including rights to land and other resources as a focal area, NPA has underlined the importance of livelihood in rights-based development. This focus has subsequently been sharpened by NPA making an explicit commitment to the right of the poor to sustainable livelihoods. The livelihood approach brings both the individual and the community into an analytic frame that includes relations of power as well. Livelihood has become a widely used concept in analytical writings on poverty, food security, human development and post-disaster reconstruction. Livelihood comprises the assets and activities that together determine the living gained by individuals or households in particular social, institutional and environmental settings.<sup>3</sup> Assets include material means of production (private and common property), labour power (physical qualities, knowledge and employable skills) and non-material assets such as formal and informal social associations and networks (referred to as 'social capital' in many writings) to which individuals/households belong. Livelihoods are located in social and institutional contexts that mediate the process of livelihood construction and its outcome in particular environments.

Against this background, the mandate of the present mission has been focused on some key aspects of the NPA's programme such as land and resource rights, gender, local agricultural and pastoral development and capacity building. NPA has been involved in a major food security programme for many years in Southern Sudan, which has been ravaged by a protracted armed conflict. It has developed an excellent working relationship with the SRRC (formerly known as the SRRA) and the Civil Authority of New Sudan (CANS) at different levels from the local upwards. The present author had led an earlier mission to review the Southern Sudan Programme at a time when the war was still on (Shanmugaratnam et al, 2001). This Report, while building on the findings of the previous mission, addresses issues emerging in the new political conjuncture characterised by a cessation of hostilities and negotiations between the protagonists and a major effort by international actors including IGAD, USA and Norway to mediate a political settlement and bring about an end to the civil war.

## **2. THE SCOPE OF THE PRESENT ASSIGNMENT**

The ToR drafted by NPA cover a wide range of issues (Appendix 1). It was agreed to limit the scope of the present mission to fewer areas. Consequently this report focuses on the following:

- Land and resource rights issues: The Land question in the North-South conflict and the current peace process;
- Gender aspects with reference to resource rights and participation in associations and activities
- Emerging issues in smallholder agricultural development with reference to sustainability taking into account interactions between farming and herding,

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<sup>3</sup> This modified definition is derived from the definitions of livelihood by Carney, 1998 cited in Rakodi; 1999; and Ellis, 2000.

- and NRM issues; Observations on SPLM's policy on land tenure, agriculture and livestock development
- General observations on the political environment and the prospects of durable peace and conflict resolution and on the role of NPA in Southern Sudan with reference to alternative scenarios
- Areas of collaboration between NPA and Noragric

### **3. RIGHTS TO RESOURCES: DISCOURSES AND ISSUES AT DIFFERENT LEVELS**

#### **3.1. THE LAND QUESTION AND THE PEACE PROCESS**

*'The quest for land, water and oil in the South to replenish the already degraded northern resource-base has driven some Jellaba and their state to wage war against their own people.'* - Mohamed Suliman (1998:2)

*'The Special Rapporteur believes that oil exploitation is directly linked to the conflict which, although it contains a religious component, is mainly a war for the control of resources and, thus power.'* - Gerhart Baum, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, January 2002.

The natural resource question (or the Land question in the generic sense of the term) is one of the most contentious core issues in the North-South conflict in Sudan. People in the South perceive the GOS as an alien regime located in Khartoum and determined to oppress them in order to expropriate their natural resources. The roots of the current North-South conflict can be traced back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the Turko-Egyptian state and the British colonial rule that followed it (Keen, 2001; Gray, 1961). The South became more marginalized politically and economically after the country's independence in 1956 due to the discriminatory policies and practices of the GOS, which appeared to be more interested in having the resources of the South appropriated for the benefit of the business and state elites in the North and their foreign allies than in the development of the former. For instance, the commencement of construction of the controversial Jonglei Canal in 1978 as a joint Sudanese-Egyptian project in collaboration with a French company posed a major threat to the livelihoods of large populations belonging to the *Dinka*, *Shilluk*, *Nuer*, *Anuak* and other communities in the South. The project was expected to drain the Sudd marshes of the White Nile at Jonglei and supply water for commercial farming downstream in N. Sudan and Egypt<sup>4</sup> while converting the swamps into cultivable lands. As dry season grazing lands, the wetlands (Toic) are an essential part of the livelihood system of the pastoralists. The Toic are also a source of fish for the local people. So it was no surprise that there was popular opposition to the Jonglei Canal project in the South. Suliman (1998:3) contextualises the problem succinctly:

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<sup>4</sup> The canal was designed to divert some 25 million cubic meters of water a day from the southward flow of the upper Nile waters just north of Bor and carry it through 360 km to Malakal. Egypt and Sudan were to share the water on a 50-50 basis (Baker, 1995).

There was justifiable mistrust of the project from the southerners who saw the North and Egypt benefiting while their own lives were irreversibly changed, not for the better. By drying out the swamps and taking away the 'grass curtain', the canal would open up the entire Sudd area for mechanised farming, the domain of the Jellaba, and also allow the north to move military equipment and troops into the South with greater ease. Thus the project's giant earth excavating machine, the biggest in the world, was one of SPLA's earliest targets, much to the chagrin of the governments of Egypt and the Sudan.

The work on the Canal came to a halt in 1984 when the giant Bucketwheel, as the excavating machine is known, was severely damaged by an attack from the SPLA. Today, the unfinished canal and the wrecked machine in Jonglei serve as symbolic reminders of an unresolved conflict. However, the natural resource dimension of the North-South conflict assumed even greater complexity with the discovery of commercial oil deposits in 1978-81 in regions of Sudan including the South by the American oil company Chevron. The Nimeiry government chose not to have the oil processed locally but to construct a refinery near Port Sudan and link it to the oilfields by a 1400 km pipeline. This move deepened the southerners' mistrust and anger towards the GOS. An attack on Chevron's oilfields by the SPLA forced the company to suspend operations in February 1984 (Suliman, 1998). However, oil exploitation was revived in the 1990s in the North and then moved southwards where the richer deposits are located. Foreign oil companies, including European and Asian, were quick to move in. The construction of the pipeline was completed in 1999 and the first deliveries of oil reached Port Sudan in August 1999.

The GOS had used military means including helicopter gunships and Antonov bombers to drive people out of their villages and towns to secure the land for oil fields. Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced and many had lost their lives in Western Upper Nile as a result of this practice of 'land clearance' by the GOS, which has been using the oil revenue to finance the war.<sup>5</sup> The government also manipulated local conflicts and created anti-SPLM militias in Western Upper Nile. It has been using these militias to defend the oilfields and drive away the communities living in and around them. The entry of oil has redefined the parameters of the conflict and dramatically increased the importance of control over territory. It has given a major fillip to the internationalisation of the conflict and its resolution. 'With the onset of large-scale production of oil', notes Seymour (2001: 3), 'the oil rent has created new structures of profit, power and political control that have reshaped the capabilities of, and incentives for, key actors in the conflict.'

The standpoints of the protagonists on property rights to natural resources have to be understood against this background. It is the position of the government of Sudan (GOS) that all land in the country belongs to the state. The SPLM rejects this and insists that 'all land in New Sudan belongs to the community while the state is a custodian of the land'.<sup>6</sup> It goes on to point out that the state ownership of land has placed the communities at a great disadvantage. This 'statist'-'communitarian' polarisation of the positions of the protagonists regarding land, which applies to all

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<sup>5</sup> See Christian Aid (2001 and 2003) for documentation and analysis of the conflict with reference to oil exploitation and its impact.

<sup>6</sup> Draft/Enacted Agricultural Policies, Proposed Regulations and Strategic Plan Direction for Agriculture Sector in New Sudan, SPLM (2003)

natural resources in general, has serious implications for the peace process as the two appear to be irreconcilable. The reality in the SPLM-governed areas of Southern Sudan refutes the statist/legalist claim of the GOS. This seems to be the case in many other parts of the country as well (De Wit, 2001). However, the Land question in Sudan today is not about the statist and communitarian discourses alone. A third discourse, which is globally hegemonic, has entered the peace process too. It is that of privatisation. It would, therefore, be more realistic to see the Land question as being at the centre of three conflicting discourses at the macro level. While a reconciliation of the positions of the GOS and the SPLM is a necessary condition to achieve peace, the two parties have to come to terms with privatisation as a major policy issue. Privatisation is not only a key component of the policy prescriptions of the International Financial Institutions and bilateral aid agencies but also an issue to be addressed in dealing with the long-felt need for tenurial reforms to enable the people to gain secure and equitable access to land. It would seem that the SPLM's thinking on rural development is accommodative of privatisation of land as a necessary condition to enable the commercialisation of agriculture (see below). Indeed this is a policy premise shared by the GOS, and it is likely to provide a basis for the two parties to approach the Land question at the negotiating table. Further, it needs to be recognised that the complex realities of control over resources at the local level cannot fully be captured by any single concept of property rights.

### **3.2. LAND LEGISLATION AND POLICIES OF THE GOS**

*'The confrontation between legality and legitimacy, or in other words the non-legitimacy of the Sudanese legal "land" framework for a majority of the population constitutes one of the core issues of the land question.'* De Wit, 2001:6

Sudan has a number of laws related to land and water enacted since the early days of British rule. De Wit lists 13 land related and five water related pieces of legislation. Legally, more than 95 percent of the land belongs to the state. The colonial policy of statisation of ownership of unoccupied and uncultivated lands and forests was continued by the GOS after independence. However, the situation in Southern Sudan highlighted above and De Wit's review of the legislation with reference to access to land, pasture and water in Sudan clearly show that the laws lack legitimacy among the majority of the people who continue to follow the customary rights they are used to for ages, even though these rights do not enjoy effective statutory recognition. Thus there are two parallel systems of land rights in Sudan – the legal statutory system and the indigenous system of tenure based on customary rights. The former serves the bigger rural entrepreneurs, urban dwellers and elite groups to obtain land through secure leaseholds, while a large majority of land users depend on the latter, which is unable to ensure formal security of tenure (De Wit, 2001). However, customary rights continue to enjoy legitimacy among the rural people of diverse ethnicity in different parts of Sudan.

The state has actively been promoting large-scale mechanised farming in the North at the expense of pastoralists and subsistence farmers. It has a range of laws at its disposal to acquire land, to which local communities may already have customary rights, and allocate it for commercial farming by state corporations, cooperatives or private firms. It has been using the Unregistered Land Act of 1970 to acquire large extents of grazing lands for agricultural schemes. Under this Act the state became the

owner of all land not registered before 1970. The Act was yet another piece of legislation to extend state ownership to lands governed by customary rights and managed by local communities. The procedure adopted by the government for agricultural leasehold allocation for commercial farming does not pay serious attention to the rights of the current users, who are invariably pastoralists and subsistence farmers. De Wit mentions that in the field he came across cases in which entire villages were demarcated by the land authorities for leasehold allocation to commercial farmers. In 1995, African Rights reported that the military regime led by el Bashir had been far more draconian in its land policies than any of its predecessors and the expropriation of land for mechanised farming had accelerated after this regime's coming to power.<sup>7</sup> The recipients of lands for mechanised farming include absentee Jellaba merchants, retired military officers and civil servants and politicians (Suliman, 1998).

While the wide gap between the land legislation of the state and the indigenous tenure systems in Sudan is a permanent source of uncertainty regarding people's access to resources, the large-scale agricultural projects have contributed to soil erosion and environmental degradation. Thus exclusion of a growing number of people from their material means of livelihood and environmental degradation are two major adverse consequences of the agricultural policies of successive regimes in Khartoum. Furthermore, these policies, state's land acquisition for oil exploitation and the war have contributed to violent resource conflicts between and within ethnic communities/tribes (Suliman, 1998; De Wit, 2001; Seymour, 2001; IntermediaNCG, 2003)

### **3.3. THE SPLM's POSITION**

The SPLM's opposition to the GOS's statist stand on resource tenure and control has important political underpinnings. As noted above, the regimes in Khartoum have used colonial and post-colonial land laws and the coercive apparatus of the state to the detriment of the resource rights and livelihoods of local communities. Control over the waters of the Nile, the wetlands, and oil and mineral resources in the South remains a major bone of contention in the North-South conflict. The SPLM's rejection of the GOS's position on this issue was a forgone conclusion dictated by ground realities and the political imperatives of a struggle, which is aimed at nothing less than a transformation of the Sudanese state. On the other hand, the SPLM has become aware of the need to envision property regimes for the future from a development perspective with due consideration to the global context. The ongoing peace process has made this need to be felt more acutely and the SPLM has activated already existing working groups/committees dealing with natural resource related matters and established new ones to address various aspects of development policy. A Secretariat of Agriculture and Animal Resources has been set up with a mandate comparable to that of a ministry.

In a brief interview at Yei, Dr Ann Itto, a senior official in the development wing of the SPLM, told me that her movement was for reforming the traditional tenure systems in order to formalise communal tenure as well as freehold, ensure the right of women to land without having to depend on their husbands or male family members

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<sup>7</sup> Cited in Keen (2001)



and to promote commercialisation with equitability and sustainability. Further, in a context of negotiations towards a political settlement, the protagonists can be expected to seek a mutually acceptable alternative to the positions they took during the conflict. The current peace process seems to provide an opportunity to seek such a compromise although there are obstacles. Let us look at the SPLM's development vision and policy framework for agriculture and livestock development.

### **3.4. SPLM's POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT**

#### **3.4.1. Development Policy: A general comment**

*'The New Sudan economy shall be a mixed free market economy in which both public and private sectors shall complement each other and be encouraged, with the public sector based on social welfare, competitiveness, efficiency and provision of social overhead service. ... Foreign investment in the New Sudan shall be allowed and encouraged and repatriation of profits shall be guaranteed.'* - SPLM, Resolution 20

Resolution 20 is a mixed bag indeed. As a general policy statement, the above quote seeks to combine competitiveness and efficiency with social security. The roles of the state and markets are seen as complementary and non-antagonistic although the term 'mixed free market economy' sounds internally inconsistent. It is not the purpose here to dissect this statement and explore the different interpretations and their contradictions. What is relevant to note is that the SPLM is for an economic order in which the state and the market play complementary roles and social welfare is taken care of. SPLM's documents refer repeatedly to the deprivations suffered by the people, the need to ensure people's participation in decision-making, resource security and food security and human development with gender equality.

However, the SPLM has also chosen to articulate its vision (as quoted above) with deference to the hegemonic paradigm of development, which rests on premises such as liberalisation, privatisation and economic efficiency. It is important to bear in mind that the internationalisation of the peace process has also drawn the protagonists into a common development policy discourse. In the post-Washington consensus phase, the discourse has been endeavouring to internalise a more pragmatic view of state-market relations by replacing the earlier 'state versus market' stance with a 'state and market' stance. However, the exact nature of the post-war Sudanese development policy will depend on the kind of political settlement reached and the ability of the two parties to agree on the goals, objectives, priorities and the institutional mechanisms for a policy grounded in the real needs of reconstruction and development and to put up a joint effort to secure international support for such a policy. It is difficult to make any definitive prognosis on this at the time of writing.

#### **3.4.2. Main elements of SPLM's Agricultural Policy**

The SPLM's policy statements regarding agriculture and livestock development, forestry and fishery are presented in the 'Draft/Enacted Agricultural Policies, Proposed Regulations and Strategic Plan Direction for Agricultural Sector in New Sudan'. This set of documents deals with a vast array of issues although it is rather weak in analysis and consistency. While reading through the dossier, I strongly felt that it could have been better structured. The descriptive sections include information on the ecological and socio-economic diversity of Southern Sudan. They draw

attention to the diversity in production systems, the importance of pastoralism for many communities and the differences between areas that have high potential for surplus grain and higher value crop production and the others that are poorly endowed. The documents brought together highlight the decline of the agricultural and livestock sectors due to war and drought and the dominance of emergency relief in the form of food supplies in the humanitarian assistance programmes of international NGOs. They discuss the constraints to agricultural and livestock development.

However, when it comes to policy statements, the dossier in its present form displays a sectoralist bias towards agriculture and its commercialisation as compared to pastoralism and forestry. There are also ambiguities and inconsistencies regarding future types of land tenure. Before commenting on these aspects, let us obtain an overview of the present state of the policies while keeping in mind that they are still at a relatively early stage of formation and their future evolution will depend on the political dynamics of the peace process and its outcome.

In the words of Commissioner Bandindi Pascal Uru, who heads the SPLM's Secretariat of Agriculture and Animal Resources and with whom I had an open discussion on a wide range of issues concerning agriculture and animal husbandry, the main goal of the policies is to 'transform smallholder agriculture from subsistence to commercial farming'. The dossier lists five 'underlying characteristics' of the agricultural policies of the New Sudan

- Self-sufficiency in food
- Surplus production
- Domestic and foreign market development for agricultural produce
- Human resource development
- Community participation.

It proceeds to state the guiding principles for agricultural policy, which can be summed up as follows:

- Ensure food security at the household, community and national levels
- Rely as much as possible on local resources
- Develop marketing facilities (domestic and export)
- Promote surplus production and reinvestment to achieve higher incomes through commercialisation (agribusiness – high value crops)
- Classify agricultural land according to appropriate use and define regulations regarding acquisition, ownership, inheritance and utilisation of land so as to encourage private initiative
- Enforce appropriate management practices for grazing and farming lands and water conservation
- Include the disadvantaged/vulnerable groups especially war affected women and men in agricultural programmes
- Develop well functioning credit schemes
- Develop preventative animal health programmes in order to improve livestock production

- Encourage development of local institutions such as cooperatives to support crop and livestock production, fishery and forestry

These points are further elaborated and ‘strategic recommendations’ made to address the constraints to agricultural development in order to achieve the ‘strategic objectives’ and move towards the goal of commercialisation and modernization of agriculture so as to achieve food security and higher income levels. The main constraints to agricultural development identified include land tenure, inadequate human resources in terms of availability and quality of labour, lack of access to productivity enhancing technology and inputs, lack of credit and marketing facilities, lack of physical infrastructure and the absence of regulatory frameworks to monitor and enforce standards regarding the inputs used (such as seeds and chemicals) and the quality of output. Consequently ‘strategic recommendations’ have been made with a view to overcome some of these constraints. Unfortunately, the document lacks logical coherence in relating the recommendations to the constraints. The recommendations include the following:

- Building research capacity: Strengthen research institutions and encourage them to undertake demand-driven (problem-solving) research in food production, crop-livestock interaction, and human nutrition and health; Promote linkages between national and international research institutions; Develop information and documentation services.
- Human resource development for agricultural development: Establish training centres and programmes for extension personnel, community leaders and farmers paying special attention to women and youth.
- Infrastructure development: Develop road and transport infrastructure and storage facilities for grain reserves
- Develop agricultural services: Develop regulatory institutional framework for use of chemicals and supply of seeds; Provide credit support to agricultural production and marketing
- Promote community participation

### **3.4.3. Livestock Development**

The policy document recognises the importance of animal husbandry to the livelihoods of the people and the potential for livestock development in New Sudan. Animal husbandry is seen as an important contributor to food security at all levels. Several factors affecting livestock production have been identified and discussed. They pertain to animal health, animal nutrition, genetic quality, systems of herding (nomadism, transhumance and sedentary), overgrazing, socio-cultural relations, marketing and the civil war. The following are among the objectives the SPLM’s livestock development policy seeks to achieve:

- Increased livestock productivity and improved quality and of livestock products
- Better livestock marketing
- Access to adequate grazing lands and water
- Attracting local and external investors to the livestock sector

The ‘strategic recommendations’ for livestock development focus on the following:

- The need to support the pastoral and agro-pastoral communities to improve herd quality and commercialise production
- Regulation of grazing in order to manage conflicts between different groups of herders and to enable sustainable utilisation of the grazing resources
- Infrastructure and institutional arrangements for animal health services and veterinary laws and regulations
- Programme for genetic improvement of the animal breeds
- Livestock trade regulation: initially regulate trade to encourage producers and develop marketing facilities before liberalising
- Animal traction: ox plough training and use of oxen for cultivation
- Personnel training
- Model animal production farms to serve main towns
- Restocking of herds for those who lost theirs due to raids and war

#### **3.4.4. Land Tenure Policy**

At the political level of negotiations, the SPLM's position on the Land question is quite clear as discussed above. This cannot be said about the various statements regarding land tenure in the dossier under review. The goal is fairly clear: 'to formulate and create land ownership for rural and urban land users so as to strengthen land and resource tenure rights'. However, while stating that all land in the New Sudan belongs to the community and the state is its custodian, the document says the following under 'Regulations and Rules for Agricultural Sub-Sector':

While all lands belong to the Civil Authority of the New Sudan (CANS), local communities have access to their current lands and reserve lands for proper and sustainable land utilization.

Elsewhere, in the section on livestock sector, the following view is expressed regarding community ownership of land:

Community ownership of land does not encourage private investment in proper land use and management. This often results into over-exploitation of natural resources and lack of incentives for its improvement: hence, land degradation, reduction in environmental potential, poor yields and increased poverty.

It would seem that attention was not paid to the inconsistencies created due to the assembling of documents prepared by different sources. An implication of the first quote is that the state (as represented by CANS) is the owner of all land. The second quote reminds us of the 'Tragedy of the Commons' (Hardin). It sounds as if community ownership of grazing lands is not desirable and hence it should be rejected in favour of privatisation. However, that is not the position of the SPLM on the commons. The viability of community ownership of grazing lands is acknowledged elsewhere in the policy document, which also states that 'security of tenure for pastoralists in pastoral land areas will be guaranteed by appropriate measures including gazetting to protect grazing land from encroachment'.

Based on clarifications by Commissioner Bandidi Pascal Uru and a careful reading of the documents, the following property regimes are likely to be among those being envisaged:

- Common property rights to grazing lands including sources of water for animals (formalisation of customary rights with appropriate provisions for women to have equal rights as men)
- Private property rights (freehold) to agricultural land subject to a ceiling (new legislation)
- Private property rights to homestead (new legislation?)
- Long-term lease for commercial purposes (The GOS has been practising a policy like this for decades. The SPLM is likely to follow a different approach that respects community interests.)
- State ownership of protected/ conserved areas (included are catchments and protected forests, wildlife, wetlands, rivers)
- Common property rights to particular forests to enable people to access forest products (formalisation of customary rights with modifications)
- Privatisation of timber extraction and processing – (extraction of high value timber from natural forests)
- Fishing rights to communities (The Sudd and other permanent swamps, shallow lakes, seasonal wetlands and seasonal rivers) (formalisation of customary rights)
- State ownership of public buildings and premises

It is not difficult to imagine some of the problems that are likely to arise in formalising and enforcing the different property regimes. What is being envisaged is nothing less than a major reform of the existing indigenous tenure systems. The legal and administrative procedures to institute the reforms could become a long drawn out process demanding professional capacities and financial resources, as shown by the experiences of land titling in African and other developing countries. The demarcation of land for different uses and the assignment of property rights are not simple physical or legal exercises. They change the existing social relations that govern ownership and utilisation of resources. They are bound to open the way for new power relations. Designing a socio-politically legitimate and cost-effective tenure reform programme is a major challenge indeed. The tenure policy is still evolving and a systematic formulation of a reform programme is likely to take time.

#### **4. RIGHTS TO LAND AND WATER AND RURAL LIVELIHOODS: EMERGING ISSUES IN NPA PROJECT AREAS**

We now turn to the situation in some of the NPA project areas. The SPLM's policies summed up and commented upon in the previous section are about the future. As mentioned above, the policies are still evolving. In this and the sections that follow we review the experiences of a programme that is being implemented in some parts of Southern Sudan, especially in Rumbek-Yirol areas. NPA has been involved in humanitarian relief and activities aimed at enhancing household food security in these counties and Kajo Keji and Juba for many years.<sup>8</sup> The household food security programme consists of projects that promote smallholder agriculture as well as animal

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<sup>8</sup> See Shanmugaratnam et al (2002) for a brief background.

health. The key elements of the agricultural project are: transfer of the ox-plough technology, supply of seeds (based on a concept of local seed security) and tools, assistance to surplus producers to store and market their surplus and, formation of ox-plough farmers cooperatives. In 1995-96, the project also assisted 30 farmers in Yirol to construct shallow wells. In Kajo Keji, the project has organised a farmers' credit scheme based on a revolving fund. The animal health project activities include immunisation and training in veterinary and community based animal healthcare. NPA collaborates closely with CANS and SRRC. It is hoped that a critical assessment of the experiences of NPA's interventions would be useful to the ongoing policy process and discussions regarding reconstruction and development.

People's livelihoods in the project areas in Rumbek and Yirol have different components whose relative importance varies over time and space. The majority of the people are agro-pastoralists in the sense that they depend on both farming and herding. However, herding is the more dominant of the two. Moreover, many depend on fishing and gathering of forest products as well. The poor, who cannot afford to own a sufficient number of animals or to cultivate an adequate extent of land, depend a lot on forests and fishing grounds (lakes, rivers, wetlands) especially during the 'hunger gap' from April to August. Thus access to land and water is so fundamental to the livelihoods of the people. Access to land and water is equally fundamental in the other project areas such as Kajo Keji and Juba too, as the people there are dependent mainly on farming. The accounts and analysis that follow are based on visits to project areas in Rumbek and Yirol.

#### **4.1. 'LAND IS ABUNDANT IN SOUTHERN SUDAN': THE MYTH AND THE REALITY**

There is a popular belief that land is abundant in Southern Sudan. I have heard statements such as 'there is plenty of land' and 'land is not a problem' from officials of the CANS, local people and even from a Promoter of the NPA. The latter is also a highly successful female farmer regarded as a role model for other female farmers by NPA field personnel. However, even those who made such statements agreed that land was not so abundant when they were asked to reconsider their statements in the light of the following factors:

- Water is the limiting factor for farming, pastoralism and human settlement. In the rural areas these three compete for land with accessible sources of water.
- Security concerns limit access to land even where water is available; e.g. the Dinka-Nuer conflict areas and areas cleared by GOS for oil exploration
- The longer-term presence of IDPs in safer areas has increased the pressure on local land-water resources; e.g. Bor (Dinka) IDPs in Maridi-Mundri areas.
- Tse-tse infested rangelands are not suitable for grazing
- The wetlands cannot be used for grazing during the rainy season. This is the period when cattle cause crop damages.
- Landmines
- The need to conserve forests, wildlife, catchments and wetlands
- There are other competing uses which can be expected to grow in the future:
  - Infrastructure development

- Returning IDPs and refugees will need land for housing, cultivation, herding and other activities
- Public buildings and spaces: schools, hospitals, recreation

All these underline the need for sound land use policy and land use planning. The competing uses are also creating the need for a well thought out tenure policy. Take for example the three competing uses pastoralism, farming and human settlement.

Pastoralism – Grazing land and water are used communally according to customary rights and obligations. Growth in animal population has led to an increased need for grazing land with sources of water. The availability is subject to various limitations mentioned above. Some of them such as the security problems may be easier to remove once peace is achieved but others will remain. In fact, peace is most likely to lead to an increased demand for land and other resources from the returning IDPs and refugees and for infrastructure development.

Farming – Communal land is privately used for farming. This trend is gradually growing in areas where soil and climatic conditions are suitable for farming. INGOs such as NPA are contributing to this. The area under cultivation is increasing. Most people prefer to expand their homestead as far as possible and/or clear lands nearby for extensive cultivation with the aid of the ox plough technology. Once a family has chosen to permanently stay in a homestead, which is evidently a growing trend in the project area, they would prefer to extend cultivation around the homestead if vacant land is available or not so far away from it. This is likely to contribute to increased competition for unoccupied communal land in and around residential areas. Grazing lands and bush may be converted into farming lands on a bigger scale than at present. Discussions with farmers showed that they would look for new lands when the output from the present ones declined to uneconomic levels. This means that the demand for uncultivated, fertile land will grow as long as shifting cultivation remains the dominant type of farming. It is possible that some farmers would opt to cultivate the same land permanently by adopting sustainable resource management practices. However, we have yet to see signs of such a trend. Thus land conversion for farming is likely to become a stronger trend leading to greater conflicts with pastoralism, forestry and other uses.

Human settlements - This will likely become a source of more rapidly growing demand for land, water and forest products.

The above examples illustrate the need for a tenure policy that addresses the resource needs for diverse uses that require diverse systems of resource rights. It is also important to note that different systems of rights to resources often overlap in the real world. Southern Sudan is no exception to this. For, instance land may be communally owned while an individual member of the community is entitled to temporarily appropriate a piece of land for private cultivation. A house built and the trees planted by a member in communal land are regarded as private property by the community. A river may be state property while communities enjoy the right to fish in it, appropriate water from it or use it for recreation. Such rights are invariably linked to

certain obligations and constraints in order to ensure sustainability and to enable some degree of equitability.

#### **4.2. COMMUNAL TENURE/CUSTOMARY RIGHTS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC SECURITY: THE RELATIONSHIP VARIES**

The communal ownership and the customary rights that prevail in Southern Sudan are necessary but not sufficient conditions to guarantee socio-economic security to all. There is inequality in the distribution of land resources at the level of appropriation and the majority are unable to find the means to reasonably benefit from the land rights they are entitled to under the prevailing communal ownership. The problem, therefore, is not the communal ownership of land but the lack of other means. However, customs do not permit women to enjoy access to land independent of their husbands or fathers or sons (see below). For the poor, gathering food from forests and fishing together constitute the most important source of food followed by homestead cultivation. The livestock they own consists of a few small ruminants and cows. For those with a few or no animals, access to forests and fishing grounds is vital for survival.

#### **4.3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIFFERENTIATION IN NPA PROJECT AREAS (RUMBEK-YIROL)**

Differentiation of a community along socio-economic lines is not an unusual phenomenon. It happens everywhere. What is of concern from a development perspective is the emerging pattern of distribution of entitlements and whether people are being marginalized and excluded. In this regard, the situation in the project areas displays both positive and negative signs, the latter being more dominant. The general picture of differentiation as perceived by local sources is as follows:

Wealthy:	10-15%
Middle:	25-30%
Poor:	40% (5-10 cows, 0-15 goats)
Very Poor:	20% (0-5 cows, less than 10 goats)

In local perceptions, the Wealthy are owners of large herds of cattle and cultivators of larger extents of land exceeding 10 fedans, the Middle own medium sized herds and cultivate 5-10 fedans, the poor own few animals (5-10 cows and may be 10-15 goats), and the very poor have fewer than five or no cattle at all and a few goats. People were reluctant to give exact numbers when they talked about large and medium herds. Large could mean any size over 75 heads of cattle. In the project area a few families own more than 300 heads of cattle. However, it was easier to define the poor and very poor which together constitute 60%. In the absence of a detailed survey of economic statuses of the households in the area, we have to be content with the general picture we were able to obtain through discussions with local groups and officials and NPA staff.

Large herd owning families are large farmers too. By 'large farmers' we mean farmers cultivating over 10 fedans. There are a few with farms larger than 30 fedans. The large farmers as a whole are a very small minority. There is a larger group of smaller farmers who cultivate less than 8 fedans and whose herd size varies from



medium to large. Then there are the smaller farmers who cultivate 3-5 fedans. So far, the NPA's ox plough technology project has benefited some 3,500 households in Yirol, Rumbek, Kajo Keji and Juba counties. Diress Mengistu, the former Agricultural Coordinator and pioneer of the NPA's ox plough project, provided the following approximate breakdown of the different categories of ox plough farmers in the NPA project areas:

- Total number of beneficiaries – 3,500
- Farmers cultivating more than 10 fedans – 5%
- Farmers cultivating >8-10 fedans – 25%
- Farmers cultivating 5-8 fedans – 45%
- Farmers cultivating 3-5 fedans – 25%

NPA's agricultural and animal health projects have contributed to increases in food production and animal population. They have helped the beneficiaries to achieve food security. However, the main beneficiaries are the wealthy and middle groups. A minority of the beneficiaries is able to produce marketable surpluses. In fact, the NPA projects are contributing to the ongoing socio-economic differentiation. The ox plough technology continues to remain beyond the reach of the poor and the very poor in Rumbek and Yirol. So, naturally the adopters of the technology are those with resources or access to extra financial assistance from some source. In Kajo Keji, a revolving credit scheme seems to have benefited some people by enabling them to buy ox ploughs and bulls. Such a scheme does not exist in Rumbek and Yirol.

Most of the enterprising farmers are women. The rich among them have become farm managers using hired labour, and they normally hire male workers (see Boxes 1 & 2).

In addition to the size of one's herd, the number of ox ploughs owned has also become a symbol of economic status in the project area. The surplus producing farmers own 3-5 (*maresha* and mouldboard) ploughs and 2-4 pairs of trained oxen each. Both *maresha* and the mouldboard plough have their specific merits. The *maresha* is easier to use and is particularly effective when the soil is dry and the weeds are not tall while the mouldboard is more suitable when the weeds are tall and the soil is wet. A third type of plough is about to enter the farming scene in the project area. It is a hybrid between the mouldboard and *maresha* designed by an Ethiopian agricultural engineer. Unlike the mouldboard plough, the 'hybrid plough' can be produced without imported steel and, according to local experts, it combines the best of both *maresha* and the mouldboard. The chief blacksmith at the project's workshop in Mabui has received training to turnout the new plough, which has a much lower cost of production than that of a mouldboard plough.

The main crops are groundnut, sorghum and cowpea. Sesame and Maize are also cultivated. Groundnut is the main cash crop in the project area. The surplus is sold through the Ox Plough Farmers' Cooperative to NGOs and locally. The membership of the Cooperative in Mabui has remained at 24 since founding in 2001. The Cooperative is a body belonging to a handful of elite farmers. Income from farming has helped these families, which are also large herd owners, to improve their living conditions and to send some of their children to schools in Kampala.

NPA's projects have produced some trickledown effect but it does not seem to be significant. The trickledown is happening in the traditional way whereby the better off

members of the community, i.e. the major beneficiaries of the agricultural and animal health projects, are helping their poor relatives by sharing a part of the surplus grains and groundnuts with them or by lending a milking cow. Another way in which some marginal households have been able to adopt the ox plough technology is through the traditional practice of exchange of labour and sharing of resources – in this case oxen and plough are shared. Some among the poor have been able to find seasonal employment on large farms.

The targeted beneficiaries of the NPA's agricultural project constitute a small minority, 3-5% of the estimated population of the villages concerned. However, it is not too small a minority as a target group for an initial intervention. Moreover NPA could not have chosen a larger population, given its resource constraints (Shanmugaratnam et al, 2002). There are, however, more important issues for deeper reflection and further study:

- The proportion of surplus producing farmers is quite low and does not show signs of increasing. An expansion of this group will not only increase marketable surpluses but also seasonal employment for the poor. How can this be achieved? What are the constraints and how can they be dealt with? We know that infrastructural constraints are serious. Lack of roads and transport facilities is a major disincentive for commercialisation. To what extent can this be addressed at the project level?
- Is it wise to push for surplus production in the absence of improvements in transport and marketing facilities? Wouldn't it be more prudent to aim at strengthening self-sufficiency at the household level for a wider target group in the current phase? To what extent can the logistical capacities of the INGOs in the area be tapped to facilitate marketing within the region?
- Many are unable to access the ox plough technology due to lack of financial resources. If this can be overcome through a credit scheme, it would be possible to raise the number of self-sufficient households. What are the obstacles to achieve such a modest objective?
- There are sustainability and environmental concerns. The expansion of agriculture by clearing forestland without adopting sustainable soil, water and land management practices can lead to serious socio-economic and ecological problems in the longer run. The mass production of the *maresha* and the 'hybrid' ploughs will contribute to deforestation unless there is a parallel programme to cultivate trees to supply the wood needed. The NPA has a major responsibility to address these issues in its project areas.

#### **4.4. GENDER, RESOURCE RIGHTS AND WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION**

Traditionally, women have been playing the main role in farming while the men looked after the herds. The majority of the farmers are women. Yet, as noted already, women do not have independent access to land although a woman can continue to cultivate the land cultivated by her husband after the latter's death or if the man had deserted her and moved to another area. The SPLM is committed to institutionalising gender equality in rights to land. The commitment is reiterated in policy documents but no specific proposal has been formulated so far. Dr Ann Itto told us that the SPLM had carried out a study of customary rights and a baseline study on the status of

women in Southern Sudan was nearing completion. She said that women's right to land was on the agenda of reform.

The women bore and continue to bear the brunt of the drudgery of hoe cultivation in Southern Sudan. In the project area, women are spared of this drudgery in households that have adopted the ox plough technology. However, the workload of the women has increased with the increase in the area cultivated as operations such as weeding, harvesting, cleaning and storing have become more labour demanding. The problem is more serious for households that are not producing marketable surpluses as they do not have the cash to hire workers. In these households, women have to work longer hours on their farms. The situation is different in households operating larger and surplus generating farms. The women in charge of farming in these households are farm managers who depend mainly on hired or exchange labour (see boxes 1&2). These few women have moved upward in terms of socio-economic status within the community. NPA's field programmes have given them opportunities to play some leadership roles. Some of them are also actively engaged in religious work. A few of them are quite active in the Ox Plough Farmers' Coop. However, here again, the women members face male domination. Lack of literacy has added to the disadvantage of most of the 10 women in the Coop. In the community, these women enjoy respect from other women. We did not have sufficient time in the field to get deeper insights into the relationships between them and the poorer women.

Even though women are the main farmers, the participation of women in ox plough training remains around or below 40%. It would seem that NPA has been trying to increase women's participation above this level. The proportion of women in NPA's field staff remains very low, less than 10%. NPA is keen to recruit more women to the staff but unable to find qualified persons. The few women with secondary and higher education have already found employment elsewhere and a field job as an extension worker does not seem to be attractive enough to any of them. However, I was told by one of the women I interviewed in the field that a few young women who had just completed some years at the secondary level at a local school might be interested in employment.

Enrolment of girl students at local schools is still very low although some parents are sending their daughters to school. Apparently, there is a growing awareness among parents that their daughters could benefit a lot by becoming literate. The rich are well aware of this and want their daughters to go beyond primary education. A few have sent their daughters to Kampala or Nairobi for schooling. However, if the parents were to choose between a son and a daughter to be sent to Kampala or Nairobi for education, they would invariably choose the son.

Box 1

Elite Women Farmers (1 & 2)

Among those interviewed in the field in Yirol were three women who belong to the exclusive group of elite farmers among NPA's beneficiaries. These women are active members of the Ox Plough Farmers' Cooperative. They also belong to large herd owning families. They practice rainfed farming. They spoke on matters beyond farming. The contents of the interviews are summarised below.

**1 Susanna (40 yrs)**

Living in Marpodit; married and separated. The husband had failed to pay the dowry but remained married till he had 9 children with Susanna. He left in 1998 after the family had expanded its farm. 6 daughters and 3 sons; 2 sons doing AL and one daughter OL in Kampala; Susanna is Chairperson of the local Catholic Women's Association

We were displaced in 1992 when the enemy captured Yirol. We came here and were helped by the church and the UNHCR. We chose Marpodit because it has water. There are two shallow wells here. The church was built in 1993. We started cultivation around the house. I had read in a primary school textbook that ploughing is better than digging the soil with a hoe for crop production. In 1993, I received three mouldboard ploughs from an NGO called CUSH. I bought three pairs of bulls for 50,000 Sudanese pounds (USD 150). In 1994, decided to clear new land for a big farm. Cleared around 80 fedans in a place about 1.5 km from home. Of this 40 are being cultivated and the rest is fallowed. I also practice crop rotation. Employ six male workers on the farm and pay them a monthly wage of KSh 1500 during the cultivation season. The main crops are groundnut, sorghum and sesame. Use a combination of short and long-term varieties. Benefited from NPA's training and advice. Groundnut is the most important cash crop. I am an active member of the Ox Plough Farmers' Coop. which facilitates the marketing of surplus produce. The Coop has not expanded in membership since founding in 2001. There are 24 members of whom 10 are women. The main reason for the non-expansion is that there are few surplus-producing farmers. Most of the ox plough farmers do not have any surplus above their family consumption needs. The lack of credit facilities is a factor that has prevented many from adopting the ox plough technology. There is a big need for credit facilities. But the SPLM has only guns, no money. May be NGOs like NPA should do something about the credit problem. Crop damage caused by cattle is a major problem. I have so far not reported any of the cases. I try to talk to the herd owners and reach some settlement. Crop damages are often caused by cows kept at homes for milking while the bulk of the herd is in cattle camps. These cows stray into farms. In the rainy season, the problem gets worse when cattle camps move closer to the village.

After my husband left me in 1998, I became a single parent. My herd of cattle is being looked after in the cattle camp by a nephew. Being a single parent has its problems as I have to manage the household, the farm and take care of the future of the children. Women are oppressed in our society. When you have a daughter, you expect to get a dowry of 100-200 cows from the bridegroom. Once this happens your daughter has become a slave of the husband. This problem will remain as long as women are not educated. Education is important for women. I am not interested in receiving bride prices for my daughters. I would like them to have good education.

**2 Monica (50 years)**

Married, husband is with the herd in a cattle camp, 7 children: 4 sons, 3 daughters; 2 sons and 2 daughters living in Khartoum. 2 sons schooling in Kampala; husband does not have another wife

For years, I was using the hoe and cultivating only 2-3 fedans. I bought a *maresha* and a mouldboard plough and had a pair of bulls trained in 2000. The area cultivated has increased fourfold. Now cultivating around 12 fedans. The main crops are groundnut, sorghum and sesame. About 50% of the land is devoted to groundnut production, as it is the best cash crop. Plant short- and long- term varieties. Three men carry out ploughing and other operations and I supervise them. The payment is in kind. I let the men use my plough and oxen to till their land in exchange for their labour. This exchange arrangement works well. Marketing of groundnuts and other produce is mainly through the Ox Plough Farmers' Coop of which I am a member. Of the 24 members 10 are women. Not all the members are active. At present 17 are quite active in the affairs of the Coop. The Coop has not expanded in membership due to some reasons. One has to pay a membership fee of 5000 Sudanese Pounds (KSh 700). Not many are able to pay and some who may not be able to pay may not have made up their minds to join the Coop. Lack of literacy is another factor that may be preventing some farmers from joining. It is important to overcome illiteracy. Two of my sons are going to school in Kampala. The youngest daughter is going to the local school. Parents are becoming aware of the value of children's education.

Box 2  
Elite Women Farmers (3)

**Rebecca (38 yrs)**

Vice President of the Ox Plough Farmers' Coop. Married, husband an employee of NPA as an agricultural field personnel, 9 children, 6 daughters and 3 sons, one son schooling in Nairobi; a cousin of the husband is looking after the family's herd in the cattle camp.

I got the first plough in 1998. It was a *maresha* and it is still in use. In the following two years bought another *maresha* and two mouldboard ploughs. Had two pairs of bull trained. Expanded the farming area from 3 fedans in 1998 to 12 in 2002. Main crops are groundnut (6 fedans at present), sorghum and cowpea. Cultivated green gram last year and faced labour shortage at harvest time. Hire relatives to work on the farm and pay their wages in cash now as I got money (=USD 1000) after selling 80 bags of groundnuts from last year's harvest. Last year I paid in kind in the form of groundnuts and sorghum. We are farming on the same land without adding any manure and I expect the yield to go down. When production declines to levels too low to continue we will move to a new piece of land. Crop damage by cattle was serious last year. Lost 3 fedans of sorghum, that is about 600 kg. But got only KSh 3500 (about USD 50) as compensation. This was too low. The loss was worth KSh 9000. I am the Vice President of the Coop and it is functioning well. However, the lack of a credit scheme limits the expansion of the membership.

Thanks to NPA, the plough has changed our lives. The plough means more food, more money and education for the children.

I have six daughters and I expect them to be married to responsible men who will offer dowry. I expect at least 100 cows for each of them. But now I want my daughters to get some education. Women in our community are abused by their husbands. It does not happen to me but many women are beaten by their husbands.

Note: When Rebecca said that she would move to a new piece of land when the yield from the present one declined to very low levels, I asked her if she believed that there was enough land for shifting cultivation on an extended scale. She answered in the affirmative and went on to say that there was plenty of land. As we continued the discussion, she admitted that it might not be easy to find suitable land if everyone adopted the same practice. She was aware of the need to manage the soil well if farming were to be sustained on the same land.

#### 4.5. RESOURCE CONFLICTS

It was observed in our earlier Report that there was increasing evidence of conflicts between transhuming herders and local cultivators due to crop damage caused by animals straying into lands with standing crops. Such conflicts are on the increase. There are also unresolved resource conflicts between different groups such as the Bor Dinkas and Nuers. Herders' access to grazing resources has been constrained by such conflicts and security concerns, lack of water, land mines and tse-tse infestation. This is contributing to resource conflicts too. Due to these limitations, the accessible grazing lands in safer and low animal-health risk areas tend to become congested with herds. This situation could easily lead to conflicts between different groups of herders, especially when one group feels that the other has no right to be there.

- Herding-Farming: Crop damage is a widespread problem in the rainy season; Herders move their cattle from the Toic towards the farming areas (due to floods in the wetlands). Intra and inter-ethnic conflicts result due to damage caused by cattle to sorghum, groundnuts and other crops. The affected farmers reported many instances of crop damage caused by cattle to the local authority, i.e. the Chief. In most of the cases, the cattle owners were ordered to pay

compensation to the affected party. However, the farmers were of the opinion that the compensations were not enough. Some expressed the view that the authorities were generally biased towards the cattle owners.

- In Maridi-Mundri area, there is a continuing conflict between the local Moro farmers and the displaced Bor herders who have sought refuge there. The Bor were displaced in 1991 when Nuers raided their whole county and unleashed a major massacre. The IDPs have been living in Mandri for more than 10 years. Now there are about 12,000 of them. Their cattle population has increased too, and causing increased pressure on grazing land and damage to crops belonging to the Moro farmers. There are 16-20 cattle camps and some of them have more than 1000 animals each. The locals complain that their honeybee production is affected by the Bor's practice of burning cow dung. The smoke drives the bees away. However, there has also been some social integration between the IDPs and the hosts; inter-marriage is not uncommon.
- Raids and dispossession: Nuer- Bor Dinka. This conflict remains to be satisfactorily resolved although some attempts have been made towards reconciliation. The Bor Dinkas do not feel safe to return to their county. The hostility of the Nuer towards the Dinka was also fuelled by a widespread perception among them that the latter were getting special aid from INGOs. There are also frequent conflicts including raids and shooting between the Toposa (Southern Sudan) and the Turkana (Northern Kenya)

The resource conflicts need to be addressed more systematically. The currently available mechanism to deal with 'herder-farmer' conflict is useful only after crop damage has taken place. Such a mechanism is necessary and, perhaps, should be made more effective. However, it is equally, if not more, important to develop local mechanisms to prevent crop damage, given the rising trend of the problem. Regarding the Bor Dinka -Nuer type of resource conflicts, it would be more appropriate to adopt a reconciliation approach and also make it serve the larger purpose of peace and nation building from below.

## **5. DEVELOPMENT OF SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE AND THE CHANGING DYNAMICS OF AGRO-PASTORALISM IN RUMBEK AND YIROL**

NPA's agricultural project has been promoting the development of smallholder agriculture with the long-term objective of assisting the vulnerable population to achieve a reasonable level of food security in the project areas. This intervention was also expected to enable the development of a less vulnerable, more self-reliant population better prepared to the transition for peace. I think the time has come to take stock of the project's achievements in terms of the progress towards these long-term objectives and the impact of the ongoing agricultural expansion on pastoralism, forestry and other land-using activities. This needs to be done as a part of an exercise to evaluate the prospects for smallholder agriculture. NPA has gained considerable field experience in smallholder agriculture development and animal healthcare in some parts of Southern Sudan. This experience needs to be critically examined in

order to plan and implement future programmes in sustainable livelihood development in Southern Sudan.

The key elements of the NPA's approach to smallholder agriculture development have already been described. Between its agriculture and animal health projects, NPA has been more actively pursuing the former. It has been observed that the replacement of the hoe by the ox plough signified a technological as well as a cultural change and that the internal dynamics of agro-pastoralism (particularly the relationship between farming and herding) were being reconstituted in Rumbek-Yirol (Shanmugaratnam et al, 2001). It appears that NPA has not been paying sufficient attention to this phenomenon, which has important long-term consequences for sustainability and social peace. The need for land use planning is also becoming increasingly important.

Let us recap the main issues:

- A persisting shortcoming of the programme is the weak integration between the agricultural and animal health projects in Rumbek-Yirol, where herding continues to be the dominant component of the production system. This shortcoming is obvious not only at the operational but also at the conceptual level. Indeed the former cannot be rectified as long as the latter remains. 'Sustainable agro-pastoralism' should be the organising, integrating concept for the programme in areas such as Yirol and Rumbek. Of course, the organising concept for sustainable livelihood development in an area in which farming is the principal activity will be different.
- NPA's intervention consists of an agricultural development project based on practices of extensive cultivation that exploits the natural fertility of the soil and an animal health improvement project without a herd quality improvement (upgrading) programme. The results of this approach are that more land is being used for farming without adequate land and soil-water management and more animals are being produced without quality improvement. This does not sound like a healthy combination in the long run. The farmers we interacted with were aware of the consequences of extensive cultivation and the need to manure the soil and conserve water. However, they still are able to obtain a reasonable return from the same land. They may become more serious about fertilising the soil when the yield declines below what they regard as a viable minimum or when they are unable to find new land to shift their cultivation. This appears to be rational at the individual level. However, it is not a rational approach when all the farmers are taken into consideration. The NPA ought to think and act proactively together with the community to promote models of sustainable smallholder agriculture.
- Water harvesting is not practised in the project area although there is scope. The agricultural project has so far failed to pay attention to this possibility.
- Farmers' organisations remain weak and confined to a handful of elite farmers. The majority of the ox plough farmers are not organised. The Mabui coop has 24 members (10 women). The membership has remained constant since 2001. Of the 24 only 17 are active. Low level of literacy was mentioned by NPA staff as a reason for the poor performance and lack of expansion of the coop. There is truth in this but the attitude of the staff is questionable. Aren't there ways to mobilise the non-literate farmers? The few literate may take responsibility for tasks that demand literacy. The non-literate may be

good at other tasks. Let us not forget that the oral tradition works well. In responding to the above observation, officials of NPA stated that the coop was 'operating at a pilot level' and the membership was deliberately kept low. However, there were no records of the experiences of the coop as a pilot project at the field office or the head quarters. This is unfortunate and it is hoped that the coop will be carefully monitored and evaluated as a pilot project by NPA.

- The absence of credit schemes is a major constraint to promote ox plough farming in Yirol and Rumbek.
- Women's workload seems to be increasing with farm expansion due to the rising need for labour for weeding and harvesting. This needs further empirical investigation.
- Change agents may need more training in sustainable agriculture
- Field staff need to pay more serious attention to gender issues
- Crop damage by cattle: a universal problem
- Lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation. There is no proper documentation of land use changes, production trends, NRM problems, social issues and other relevant developments.

The infrastructural constraint, especially transport, is a major factor that is beyond the capacity of NPA to deal with. As pointed out elsewhere in this report, the scope for future development of smallholder agriculture will be highly limited as long as this constraint remains. As pointed out in our earlier report, the capacities of CANS and SRRC as NPA's partners need to be raised considerably in order to sustain and expand the programme. NPA may have to play an active role in building the capacities of CANS, SRRC and local NGOs in livelihood development. Several issues that need deeper study have been identified in the section on NPA-Noragric Collaboration.

## **6. THE PEACE PROCESS AND FUTURE SCENARIOS**

The Sudanese peace process has reached an important stage one year after the two parties signed the Machakos Protocol in July 2002. It was expected that a deal would be made in June 2003 but that expectation turned out to be too optimistic. It would seem that the SPLM is not in favour of a protracted process of negotiations. A senior official of the Movement told me that he would like to see an agreement reached in August-September the latest. The people of Southern Sudan are hoping for an early settlement that will bring peace with dignity. Under the terms of the Machakos Protocol, a six-month pre-interim phase will follow the signing of a comprehensive agreement and then there will be an interim period of six years after which the people of the South could choose between remaining united with the North and secession at a referendum.

It would seem that the Protocol provides a reasonable framework to work out an agreement. However, other ongoing conflicts in Sudan are likely to impact on the current peace process and its outcome. The International Crisis Group (ICG) has drawn attention to 'Sudan's other wars' that are not being adequately addressed in the



two-party framework in which Sudan's peace talks are being held.<sup>9</sup> It has suggested to IGAD and the international community that the long-running conflict in the 'Three Areas' (Abyei, Nuba mountains and Southern Blue Nile) and the more recent outbreak of armed conflict in Darfur in western Sudan are driven by deep seated grievances that should be addressed as a part of the current peace process. The interests of excluded stakeholders are likely to be raised at different points in the peace process. There are other issues that continue to defy an amicable compromise. One of them is the religious status of Khartoum as the national capital.

The peace process and its outcome will have important implications for NPA's SSP. In the present context, it would be wise for NPA to consider the different possible outcomes of the peace process and adopt a flexible approach in envisioning its future role in Southern Sudan. How then should NPA proceed? We may look at this question with reference to the possible developments of the peace process.

- *The talks lead to a comprehensive agreement* – the endgame of the Machakos process

A comprehensive agreement is signed. A pre-interim phase of six months follows, which will be followed by an interim period of six years.

NPA may use the pre-interim phase to prepare an integrated programme with an initial time horizon of 3-5 years for reconstruction and reconciliation based on sustainable livelihood development and capacity building. In this initial phase, it would be advisable for NPA to expand its activities incrementally in the same areas where it is currently operating. This should be based on a sound analysis of the needs of and constraints to rebuilding people's livelihoods and capacities. NPA may form a planning and advisory group in collaboration with Noragric to deal with the professional challenges of the undertaking. The post-war environment should enable NPA to forge new alliances with likeminded organisations and to further strengthen its historical alliances with local and international organisations. NPA should activate its dialogue with the SPLM and provide whatever assistance it could in building local capacities for reconstruction and peace building. The expanded programme would require more professional and financial resources. Hopefully, NPA will be able to obtain financial support from more sources in the post-war period.

In making the recommendations in the present report, the author has taken into consideration the above scenario. The recommendations would ideally fit a post-war situation. However, most of them are also valid with appropriate modifications in some cases if the peace process becomes protracted. Most of the recommendations can also be adapted to a situation in which war has resumed after the collapse of the peace process.

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<sup>9</sup> ICG (25 June 2003)

- *The peace process is on but the talks are not progressing and uncertainty mounts*

With the talks being stalled, there is fear on all sides that the ceasefire might come to an end. The mediators are busy trying to bring the protagonists back to the table. The conflicts in other areas tend to escalate. However, the continuing absence of war in Southern Sudan is helpful to the people to engage in livelihood and other activities such as formal schooling and adult literacy programmes. On the other hand, people are acting with the worst scenario in mind.

In this environment, NPA may continue its activities as before while working on improving the programme paying due attention to our earlier and present recommendations. Without abandoning the exercise of preparing for post-war development, NPA should prepare for Scenario 3, i.e. armed hostilities have resumed. Here again the planning and advisory committee suggested above has an important role to play.

- *The peace process collapses and hostilities resume*

The NPA is back to a familiar situation. However, the challenge is how to continue with the integrated approach that combines emergency relief and livelihood construction and avoid regressing into an emergency relief mode.

## **7. NPA AND OTHER INGOs AND UN AGENCIES IN S. SUDAN**

NPA has operated throughout the conflict as an independent INGO outside the OLS group of INGOs. This has given NPA some unique experience. It would seem that the understanding it has developed with the SPLM and the experience of the food security programme have made NPA a more important INGO since the beginning of the peace talks. It would also seem that there are more opportunities for cooperation between INGOs operating in Southern Sudan in the current phase to promote peace and development. However, the INGOs have their individual mandates and agendas and are funded by diverse sources to which they are accountable. Further, most of the INGOs, including NPA, are severely constrained by their short funding cycle, which is one year. Sustained cooperation between INGOs cannot easily be developed without specific programmes that bring them together. However, it should be possible for NPA to relate to INGOs on specific matters of common interest. In this regard, it appears that the programme of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has some areas of common interest with NPA. These areas include seed security<sup>10</sup>, plough and tool distribution, technical capacity building and agro-forestry. The CRS is also doing a field survey on the adoption of the ox plough technology.

It may be noted that in the field INGOs tend to be concentrated in urban centres (such as Rumbek) where some basic amenities are available. There are counties in Southern Sudan which do not have any INGO projects. Moreover, most of the INGOs in

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<sup>10</sup> See Shanmugaratnam et al 2002 for information regarding NPA's seed project.

Southern Sudan are unable to switch from distributing emergency relief to longer-term rehabilitation and development due to various constraints such as lack of funds and capacities. NPA itself has been struggling hard to expand its development component. It is to the credit of NPA that it has been able to sustain a development component in spite of the funding constraint. Perhaps, it is time for development-oriented INGOs to open a continuing dialogue on how to play their roles in S. Sudan.

Regarding UN agencies, the UNDP has just initiated an area development programme in Boma, S. Sudan in collaboration with the SPLM. The programme is expected to include infrastructure development, schools, health projects, agriculture, small and medium enterprise development, capacity building and environmental conservation. One of its main objectives is to develop sustainable livelihoods. The newly appointed UNDP official in charge of the Sudan programme told us that S. Sudan was a completely unfamiliar territory for his organisation and he would like to develop links with NPA which has been involved in the region for many years. The UNDP's programme is quite relevant to NPA's interests and it would seem sensible to engage in a dialogue with the UNDP to explore the prospects of collaboration.

## **8. COLLABORATION BETWEEN NPA AND NORAGRIC**

The foregoing analysis and my observations lead to the conclusion that there are several areas in which Noragric-AUN can provide professional backstopping to NPA. The backstopping may consist of advice based on short-term field missions, documentation and analysis of socio-economic and environmental problems in project areas and participation in capacity building and designing of programmes/ projects. An area of collaboration, which has been explicitly referred to by NPA, is the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system for the country programme.

Here I shall identify some of the more important issues without necessarily prioritising them. We need to hold joint discussions to work out the priorities and modalities of collaboration between the two institutions. It may be mentioned that, as an academic institution within the Agricultural University of Norway, Noragric is in a position to provide assistance in more than one way. Some academics at Noragric have a long-term research interest in the development of war-torn areas with reference to livelihoods, NRM and peace building. Secondly, Noragric normally encourages students in its regular Master's degree and PhD programmes to conduct their research in areas within the broad field of environment and development studies. In addition to these two possible ways of supplying resource persons, Noragric can also mobilise researchers from other parts of the AUN and from its network in Africa to participate in studies in Southern Sudan

Some study topics for discussion:

- The Land question and the North-South conflict in Sudan with reference to emerging issues of land and water rights, land use and socio-economic conflicts in Southern Sudan; This topic can be approached in different ways. Can be of interest to students as well.
- Livelihood construction and access to resources: Locality studies in different zones in NPA project areas/Southern Sudan: Frame different research projects

for M.Sc students. This could be organised as a regular source of problem-oriented and in-depth research that can be beneficial to NPA and other development-oriented agencies involved in Southern Sudan. Individual studies may focus on particular aspects as for example: food security, vulnerability, poverty, resource conflicts, gender, NRM issues etc.

- An evaluation of the agriculture and animal health projects from an integrated perspective with reference to competing land uses and the agro-ecological and socio-economic aspects of sustainability and equitability.
- Mapping of land use patterns and practices and development of sustainable land use plans with the participation of the community and CANS at the Payam level.
- Resource management practices of a representative sample of farmers using the ox plough technology with reference to land use, soil-water conservation, crop rotation, yield, labour use, women's role and cost of production; Note: This can be split into two or three studies.
- Specific output-oriented studies:
  - Women as resource managers in agriculture
  - Feasible water harvesting techniques
  - Agroforestry systems for small/marginal farmers
  - Community based NRM
  - Marketing of farm produce
  - Marketing of cattle: border trade (Uganda); a cooperative approach

## **9. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Our previous review of the NPA programme (Shanmugaratnam et al, 2002) arrived at a general conclusion that a sustained shift from humanitarian relief to development was not only possible in the SPLM-controlled areas, but also necessary for the millions of people living there. Then the war was still on. Our general conclusion has much greater validity today in the prevailing environment of cessation of hostilities and negotiations towards a political settlement. As an INGO in Southern Sudan, NPA has been a pioneer in incorporating a component of development focused on household food security and capacity building into its largely emergency relief oriented programme. It has continued its development effort amid serious funding constraints and achieved impressive results that are quite evident to a visitor to the project areas. NPA has moved swiftly to explore how its development work could be further enhanced in the favourable environment created by the ongoing peace process. NPA seeks to promote rights based development with emphasis on, among others, rights to land and other resources.

The Land question is one of the core contentious issues in the North-South conflict in Sudan. It is being discussed at the talks. The positions taken by the GOS and the SPLM are statist and communitarian respectively. However, both parties are also relating to privatisation as a necessary condition to enable the development of a market economy. The SPLM has formulated draft policies and acts for tenurial reforms to formalise customary rights to resources (land, water, forests and fishing

grounds) and modern private property rights. SPLM is also committed to the institutionalisation of gender equality in the rights to resources so as to enable a Sudanese woman to gain access to land and other resources without having to depend on her father, husband or sons. SPLM's land tenure policy and legislation are still evolving. It would seem that the reforms envisaged are highly demanding of professional and financial resources and time. It is hoped that the reform issue will be carefully studied before reaching final decisions. Both the GOS and the SPLM have lessons to learn from the various agricultural modernisation projects implemented in the North by successive regimes in Khartoum.

While NPA has established impressive and well-functioning organisational structures in the field, it continues to neglect monitoring and evaluation. This shortcoming should be rectified without further delay. NPA's field personnel are competent and dedicated. The officials responsible for agricultural and animal health activities are well qualified and have gained good field experience. However, the absence of personnel with competence in socio-economics is too evident to be missed.

The agriculture project has achieved significant results in terms of transfer of the ox plough technology, capacity building and expansion of area cultivated. The beneficiaries have been able to enhance their food security and some of them have become marketable surplus producers too. The animal health project has achieved impressive results too. However, the weaknesses of the projects have also become more evident. An extensive form of farming exploiting the natural fertility of the soil continues to spread while the animal health project operates without a herd quality improvement programme. This is not a healthy combination from a long-term perspective. Sustainability considerations need to be taken more seriously. In Yirol and Rumbek, the agriculture and animal health components operate without being integrated although herding and farming are integral and interdependent elements of the production system in the area. NPA has privileged the agriculture project above the animal health. However, long-term success of the agricultural project requires better integration with livestock production and better NRM.

The majority of the farmers, including the most enterprising ones, are women. However, women are conspicuous by their total absence or their insignificant presence in the NPA's field organisation. NPA has been making efforts to recruit female staff but has not been able to find qualified women interested in the jobs available. Women's participation in agricultural training programmes is around 40%, which is not so unsatisfactory but can be increased to reflect their active role in farming. The few women who have become large farmers are farm managers who use hired or exchange labour for the farming. The adoption of the ox plough technology has freed the women farmers from the drudgery of hoe cultivation. It has also enabled greater participation of men in ploughing. However, the workload of women in households operating at or around subsistence levels has increased with the adoption of the ox plough technology due to the increased need for labour for weeding and harvesting.

In the unfolding socio-economic differentiation in the project areas, large farmers are also large herd owners. Predictably, they are the biggest beneficiaries of the project while a larger number of middle and smaller farmers have also emerged. The project has produced some trickledown effects on the poor. This is not so significant in an

area in which the majority remain vulnerable and poor. There is need to broaden the target groups to include more households from among the marginalized. In planning for the future, NPA may consider the alternative outcomes of the current peace process and adopt a flexible approach. There is potential for collaboration between NPA and Noragric with the latter providing professional backstopping. A range of issues has been identified for further study to generate data and analysis to assist in planning NPA's future interventions. Noragric can also assist NPA in capacity building.

## **9.1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Monitor the peace process from NPA's point of view**

NPA should carefully monitor the peace talks and their outcome at every stage with a view to direct its own programme and its development paying special attention to aspects of the negotiations that pertain to reconstruction and development including the Land question, rights of women, return of IDPs and capacity building.

### **Carry out a comprehensive self-evaluation with a view to strengthen the development component with reference to the long-term objectives of the Programme**

NPA should carry out a comprehensive self-evaluation of the agricultural and animal health projects from an integrated perspective with reference to competing land uses and socio-economic and agro-ecological aspects of sustainability and equitability. This exercise should take into consideration the diversities in socio-economic conditions, land use practices and crop-livestock interactions in the project areas. Its main objectives include the following:

- Identification and assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the ongoing activities with reference to an agreed set of criteria
- Projection of alternative scenarios regarding changes in land resource needs due to migration of IDPs and refugees into the project areas in the next 3-5 years
- Identification of the main elements of a strategy for strengthening the development component of the SSP in the next 3-5 years with a view to sustain the progress achieved so far and to include households from the more vulnerable sections of the community

The NPA's staff in the different project areas such as Yirol, Kajo Keji and Juba should carry this out with the professional assistance of one or two competent facilitators. It is advisable for the Country Director and the coordinators to prepare a set of guidelines including key questions for this workshop and circulate it to the participants in advance. Internal documents and reports by external consultants can be used too.

### **Be more inclusive of the marginalized**

In conjunction with the above, it is recommended that the programme should broaden the target group to include marginalized groups with a view to move beyond being

content with trickledown effects and enable the upward mobility of more households from the ranks of the poor into the middle. However, not every marginalized household may be interested in, or capable of moving into, farming. It is, therefore, necessary to study the poor with a view to identify their interests and potentials in order to design appropriate interventions. In this regard, Diress Mengistu's CARD (Community Agro-based Rural Development) Model should be helpful. Based on this model, the following may be considered:

- Agro-processing as an income generating activity for women; The activities with economic potential include sesame and groundnut paste production, sorghum and maize processing and honey production and processing
- Employable-skill development: Training of men as blacksmiths and carpenters; Employment opportunities exist and are likely to increase in the following areas: production of ploughs and inter-cultivators, housing and infrastructure and construction sectors.
- Training in crop-livestock production
- Enabling the poor to have easier access to forests and fishing grounds as supplementary sources of food
- Credit schemes based on revolving funds to assist poorer households in the project areas to strengthen their livelihoods. Examine the experience of the NPA's scheme in Kajo Keji and any other similar credit schemes to see if useful elements can be identified to design more credit schemes.

#### **Pay more attention to crop-livestock interactions and their area-specific variations**

There is an urgent need to adopt a more enlightened approach to livelihood construction in areas such as Yirol and Rumbek where pastoralism and agriculture are integral components of the production system. An integrated concept of agro-pastoralism should serve as the organising framework for NPA's activities in these counties. Such a framework should routinely guide the work of the field staff. Towards this, the following steps are recommended in areas such as Rumbek and Yirol where agro-pastoralism is the dominant system of livelihood:

- Reorganise the extension service as an integrated professional activity to promote sustainable livelihoods. Educate the agricultural extension workers on the importance of the livestock component and crop-livestock interdependence in the livelihood system. Likewise, educate the animal health workers on the importance of the crop component. Let the two work in teams. Organise joint meetings of the two with farmers/pastoralists.
- Revise and improve the training programmes for the staff as well as the target groups on the basis of the integrated approach
- For this to be put into practice, it is absolutely essential that the agriculture and animal husbandry coordinators and other personnel make it a point to interact constantly with the aid of concepts of integrated and community based NRM.

### **Initiate a pilot project on land-use planning in partnership with CANS and local communities**

The emerging land use changes and the conflicts in the field call for early action to ensure sustainable land use and prevent/resolve resource conflicts in the project area. NPA may consider initiating a pilot project on land use planning in a project area with the participation of the local communities and CANS. It may also consider inviting the UNDP/FAO to join this exercise. The project should be designed as a learning process to provide inputs to land use policy and planning at broader levels. It would involve the following:

- Detailed mapping of land use patterns and practices with reference to farming, herding, human settlements, forestry, fishery and other activities
- Identification of sustainable land use systems with reference to farming, grazing and conservation
- Assessment of future demands for land from different sources
- Developing sustainable land use plans for the area and reaching consensus on the most appropriate plan

Noragric and the Department of Land Use Planning and Landscape Architectures at the AUN will be able to provide professional inputs to the conceptualisation and designing of the pilot project.

### **Continue capacity building**

NPA has been paying attention to internal capacity building. Several members of the field staff have had opportunities for further training and study tours. This good practice should be continued. The following areas should be given priority in staff capacity building:

- Land and soil-water management; Water harvesting
- Crop-Livestock integration and Community Based NRM
- Gender and livelihoods in the project area

NPA should also more consciously strengthen its capacity to assist CANS, SRRC and local NGOs in upgrading their capacities.

### **Recruit competent socio-economists to the staff**

Recruit as early as possible at least two socio-economists with sound academic backgrounds and field experience in development work in conflict areas to work with the technical staff. The quality of NPA's professional work can significantly be improved with inputs from socio-economists. At least one of the two recruits should be a woman. If NPA is able to recruit only one, all efforts should be made to find a well-qualified female.



### **Introduce and popularise water harvesting**

Water harvesting should be promoted in the project areas. NPA's staff should identify the appropriate techniques and methods. They may need exposures to water harvesting technologies practised in other countries.

### **Explore feasibility of agro-forestry models for the poor**

There is need to explore the feasibility of agro-forestry as a component in the livelihood systems of small and marginal households. Project personnel in the field believe that agro-forestry has potential in this regard. They should be encouraged to initiate a pilot scheme to study the feasibility.

### **Examine prospects of promoting high value crops**

Carefully examine the prospects of promoting high value crops with reference to the suitability of the crops, infrastructural and transport constraints and cost effectiveness.

### **Introduce a herd quality improvement project**

Develop a herd quality improvement project with the assistance of experts with sound knowledge of the local conditions and capable of working with local herders.

### **Make the Ox plough Farmers Coop more inclusive**

Critically review the experience of the Ox Plough Farmers Cooperative with a view to find ways and means of making it more inclusive and dynamic. Make it a more effective instrument in the intra-regional marketing of surplus grains.

### **Assist cross-border livestock marketing**

Consider organising a livestock marketing cooperative as a pilot scheme to assist herders to market their animals at the Ugandan border. This pilot scheme should include the construction of resting places and water points, protection of the livestock and a marketing arrangement that can secure fair prices to the herd owners.

### **Continue the women's literacy and income generation projects**

Continue and expand if possible the women's literacy and income generating projects.

### **Encourage development of the blacksmith workshop in Mabui**

This workshop has high potential and its development should be encouraged. NPA may also explore the prospects of making it function as an autonomous enterprise and its expansion, which will also provide employment to local persons.

### **Develop partnerships with local NGOs/CBOs**

NPA has experiences and capacities to be shared with local NGOs/CBOs. NPA should actively look for local partners in the project areas and work with them with a

view to enhance their capacities in sustainable livelihood development. Similar partnerships may also be developed in crop and livestock marketing. NPA should seriously consider offering internships/ on-the-job training for members of local NGOs/CBOs in agricultural production systems, animal health work and CBNRM.

### **Develop closer links with UN agencies**

Since UN agencies have become interested in rehabilitation and development of S. Sudan, NPA should consider developing collaborative links with them. The UNDP in particular has programmes that are relevant to the NPA. An opening of a dialogue for collaboration with the UNDP is recommended. Consider inviting the UNDP/FAO to participate in the pilot project in land use planning recommended above.

### **Link resource conflict resolution to reconciliation and peace building**

This should be done wherever a resource conflict is a part of a larger conflict which has taken inter-ethnic or inter-territorial forms. The Nuer-Bor Dinka conflict is a case in point. The probability of success of future attempts at reconciliation between these two groups is likely to be enhanced if the distributional issues including access to resources are transparently addressed as a part of a broader agenda of peace building and livelihood development.

### **Put in place a monitoring and evaluation system as soon as possible**

This recommendation was also made in 2002. Hopefully it will be implemented in 2003. This involves the developing of appropriate indicators to monitor change and standardised procedures for recording information to enable analysis without delay. The location manager should be made responsible to make regular (say quarterly) monitoring and evaluation (M&E) reports. The M&E unit's function should include the establishment and updating of a socio-economic and agro-ecological database. Noragric can provide professional assistance to develop a monitoring and evaluation system that can be managed by NPA staff.

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## APPENDIX

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### NORAGRIC MISSION TO THE SUDAN, JUNE 2003

This is the terms of reference of the first phase of NORAGRIC assessment of NPA Southern Sudan Programme and the implications of the prospect for peace in Sudan. The study also represents the start of a possible long-term co-operation between the two institutions.

### 1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The study has its background in three parallel processes: (i) the prospects of an extensive co-operation between the NPA and NORAGRIC, (ii) the ongoing process of operationalising the new strategy for the international activities of the NPA, and (iii) the peace process in the Sudan, including the effort to establish a framework for international support to Sudan.

#### 1.1. Co-operation NPA – NORAGRIC

NPA and NORAGRIC have for several years had indirect cooperation through the Drylands Coordination Group. The discussion of a possible co-operation between the NPA and NORAGRIC within the Southern Sudan context began in 2001, during the review of the NPA Food Security project conducted by DCG/NORAGRIC. This study provided several important recommendations.

The first meeting with NORAGRIC where the idea of a formalised co-operation was introduced was held at NPA office 25 March. In a second meeting 24 April, the topics brought up at the meeting in March was further elaborated. It was concluded that there is a significant potential for co-operation and that it should start with a NORAGRIC study of NPA's current activities focusing on the food security project, seen in light of the NPA strategy process and the current peace process, as well as the plans for international support in the interim period.

The first phase of the study will take place during June 2003. The second phase will take place during autumn 2003. On a long-term basis (2004-2007) it is hoped that NORAGRIC's expertise can be merged with NPA's extensive experience and competence with implementation of projects and close co-operation with local partners.

#### 1.2 Strategy process in NPA and the Southern Sudan Programme

In 2001, the NPA Central Board initiated an internal strategy development process, and the process has been motivated by a need for focusing the activities both thematically and geographically. A *Policy and Strategy for NPA's International Humanitarian and Development Work* as well as several thematic strategy papers have been developed, which are to guide the organisation's international development co-operation and humanitarian aid activities in the period 2004-07. Although some flexibility is granted, the international activity of NPA shall take place within a framework of rights based approach to development.

To date, the main goal of the NPA's programme in Sudan has been to alleviate the suffering of the people in the project areas and to gradually help them to build up a subsistence basis. There is a discrepancy between the current programme activity and the new global strategy.<sup>11</sup> It is recognised that the Southern Sudan is a special case and that it is required that the design and implementation of a new country strategy should be country-driven and based on participatory and open consultation processes with relevant actors. It is still necessary to undertake an extensive review of the programme activity. In this connection, the intensions of the new strategy should give directions for the revision of the NPA Southern Sudan Programme. The Food Security project might find a similar guidance in the policy paper on land and resource rights.

NORAGRIC is at the academic forefront with regards to the issues of land rights and agricultural development as well as having long experience from research at the Horn of Africa. It is therefore hoped that the competence of NORAGRIC can be utilised in the process of revising the NPA's food security activities so that they reflects the intentions in the new strategy as well as the special conditions in the Southern Sudan.

### **1.3. Peace process in the Sudan and the new political and institutional setting**

Since the signing of the Machakos Protocol in July 2002 the prospects for peace in the Sudan have improved significantly, and it is hoped that a peace agreement will be signed during the summer of 2003. Immediately after the signing of a peace agreement, a six-month pre-interim period will start, which will be followed with a six-year interim period. Peace will represent an enormous opportunity for the people of the Sudan. However, a post-conflict Southern Sudan will also face numerous challenges. The warring parties, the people of the Southern Sudan as well as international organisations involved in humanitarian assistance and development must adjust to the new situation.

The IGAD partnership for peace and the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator are currently developing a general framework within which most major donors have joined. The main purpose of this initiative is to facilitate the co-ordination of assistance to a post-conflict Sudan and to give the Sudanese counterparts the opportunities to set the priorities for this assistance. Therefore, the ongoing process offers prospects for better approaches towards supporting national/local priorities, and also for better coordination of donor contributions in development cooperation. Mechanisms for implementation have not been presented and the role of the International NGOs remains to be explained.

The proposed NORAGRIC study is intended to provide the NPA with important information and analyses of the current situation and its consequences for the people of Southern Sudan as well as identify challenges and opportunities for the NPA programme, in particular within the frames of an extend and revised food security programme. Through this, it is hoped that the NPA and NORAGRIC jointly can contribute positively in the planning for a lasting peace in the Sudan. Still, it is also necessary to prepare for the worst, and the planned study must also pay attention to

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<sup>11</sup> In principle, all of NPA's international programmes and projects must be brought in line with this new strategy. The continuation of programmes and projects that cannot contribute towards the fulfilment of this strategy have to be explicitly decided by the NPA leadership, else the concerned programmes and projects must be phased out.

possible implications of a break-down of the peace negotiations and a future scenario where the civil war continues.

## 2. OBJECTIVES AND ISSUES TO BE COVERED

The overall purpose of the study is to provide data and an analytical basis for the ongoing process of revising the SSP, in particular the food security project, and to establish a point of departure for a co-operation between NPA and NORAGRIC. More specifically:

- Within the frames of the food security project, explore possible *modes* of co-operation between the NORAGRIC and the NPA, including current and prospect partners (IDEAS, SRRC, SPLM, local authorities, INGOs, etc). Specific issues:
  - how NORAGRIC can contribute with establishing an evaluation and monitoring component
  - the possibility of initiating NORAGRIC led research projects, attached to the food security project
  - a possible co-operation within the framework of extended agricultural and veterinary components which seeks to integrate and extend the planned institutional co-operation between NORAGRIC and IDEAS on capacity building and institutional development.
- Address the prospects of NPA's operations in the Southern Sudan in general, in particular food-security, agriculture/natural resource management, livestock and the feasibility of the new NPA strategy in a post-conflict situation in the Sudan. Specific topics:
  - land and resource rights issues.
  - awareness raising and civic education on land tenure
  - gender issues related to land rights, returnees and agricultural development
  - land access for rural communities within the present legislation
  - potential land resource/rights conflict cases
  - capacity building of land administrators
  - investigate plans for the formulation of national/regional policies on agri. extension and pastoralism/livestock
  - livestock restocking and livestock health issues
  - directing agricultural research to smallholders production
  - feasibility of integrated food/seeds for work and Internal Purchase of seeds/food projects
  - critical examination of documentation of aid dependency in the South
  - assessment of existing and potential partners to the FS-project in relation to the requirements for partners mentioned in the NPA strategy
- General comments on the political environment and more specific comments the role of NPA and other international NGOs within the framework of post-conflict authorities in the Southern Sudan. Suggestions as to how the NPA SSP can be adjusted to the following scenarios:
  - a post-conflict situation
  - a period of prolonged peace negotiations and uncertainty
  - a break-down of peace negotiations

### 3. SPECIFIC TASKS

The first phase of the study will consist of the following activities:

#### 3.1. Compile and Analyse Relevant Documents

Both identifying and acquiring relevant documents will be one of the tasks of the team. Also, to perform a review of the NPA strategy documents in relation to the current situation in the Southern Sudan and a future peace scenario should be a significant part of the mission report. A list of some of the relevant documents is provided in section 6.

#### 3.2. Meeting with stakeholders and relevant institutions in Norway, Nairobi and Southern Sudan

The meetings with partners and relevant institutions will be an essential part of the mission. It is important to learn about the future plans for the reconstruction and development of the Southern Sudan and the establishment of a viable civil government structure. A list of relevant institutions is provided in the table below:

Norway	Southern Sudan/Nairobi	International Organisations
MFA	SPLM, including relevant units of the civil administrative structure	UNHCR
NORAD	SRRC	UNDP
NCA	IDEAS	USAID
	DATO	OLS
	NESI	IGAD
	(BYDA?)	
	Norwegian Embassy in Nairobi	

#### 3.3. Field visit to NPA projects

A brief visit to selected project areas will give the researchers the opportunity to observe the current situation within the Southern Sudan and to discuss the issues to be covered by the study with the field staff.

#### 3.4. Stakeholder assessment

The study team will present preliminary findings and recommendations to groups of stakeholders in Sudan and Norway. The purpose is to assist the study team to take stock of the findings and recommendations, as well as to facilitate a process in which stakeholders have the opportunity to comment on the results before it is completed.

#### 3.5. Writing report

It is expected that the team present the report within three weeks after arrival to Norway.

#### **4. OUTPUTS**

The study will produce a report consisting of an analytical section and recommendations based on the issues listed in section 2. The analytical section will focus on the existing literature and the information provided through discussions with various stakeholders in Norway, Nairobi and Kenya. When relevant the report should comment on consequences of different future scenarios (peace vs. continued civil war). The report is expected to be a point of departure for later stages of the NORAGRIC study and will not include extensive studies of specific local areas within the Southern Sudan.

#### **5. SCHEDULE**

A detailed schedule for the field visit will be prepared late May/early June. A tentative schedule is presented below:

2-14 June: Preparations in Norway and document studies

15-30 June: Field visit

July: Preparing mission report. The deadline for submitting the draft report to NPA is 30 July.

August: The final report to be presented by 30 August.

#### **6. THE TEAM**

The NORAGRIC team will consist of Professor Nadarajah Shanmugaratnam and Senior Researcher Dr. Gufu Oba. Øystein H. Rolandsen from the NPA will facilitate the mission.