

Public Governance for Results in Post Conflict and Post Disaster Countries

Starting from Scratch:
Lessons on Citizen Engagement and
Participatory Governance for Post
Referendum Public Management:
South Sudan

CEPA
4 – 8 April 2011
Odette Ramsingh

Introduction

- ❑ Conflict of any kind within a country negatively affects development, especially economic growth and social justice. More so if the conflict has been sustained for a long period
- ❑ Countries arrive at the point of post conflict recovery through different paths and experiences (power sharing model, comprehensive peace agreement, negotiated settlement)
- ❑ There are no simple answers to reconstructing governance and definitely no panaceas to address the issue
- ❑ This paper examines participatory state rebuilding efforts, with particular focus on citizen engagement
- ❑ It emphasises the importance of widely inclusive processes for sustainable post conflict rebuilding
- ❑ It draws from some current and longer examples from around Africa (Angola, South Africa, etc.)

Context

- ▣ South Sudan voted in a referendum in favour of southern succession in January 2011
- ▣ Signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 was regarded as a bold step away from conflict and continued war to peace
- ▣ Prolonged war and devastation literally meant that South Sudan has started from scratch
- ▣ Aspirations of southern Sudanese are high and the demand on their government will be relentless
- ▣ South Sudan has the dual challenge of post conflict reconstruction and transition from post liberation movement to ruling party
- ▣ Securing state security, enduring peace and prosperity tied to how it is able to make government open, accommodating and representative of diverse voices on its road to state building
- ▣ Country will have to balance state building and nation building, with the understanding that these aspects are so interlinked that they should not be separated

Lessons

- ❑ Development and transformation in Africa cannot proceed without the full participation of its people in decision-making
- ❑ Exclusion and alienation strengthened local identities rather than a national brotherhood
- ❑ While there is a legitimate concern for peace and security, this must not be used as an excuse to suppress different voices and opposition
- ❑ Governments need to recognise the link between security and people's inclusion in determining the trajectory of governance

- ▣ Pressure of international agendas on internal affairs is not easy to resist
- ▣ Blurred lines between intervention and interference show the difficulties to set boundaries and ensure acceptable rules of engagement
- ▣ Challenge of single party dominance becomes a governance and institutional conundrum, with unconstructive implications
- ▣ Willingness of new leadership to circumnavigate the past mistakes of Africa leadership experiences and embrace emergent discourse on good governance, sustainable development and effective government

- ▣ With high dependence on donor funding, policy priorities are determined by donor community and domestic concerns (strategies for social inclusion and assimilation of ex-combatants) are not given considerable attention
- ▣ Trust building and inclusivity could be a more important imperative for public administration than technical issues of capacity and skills development
- ▣ Donor nations paradigm of engagement encourages less government and prefer funding non government groups in development projects

Recommendations

- ▣ Link between security and public participation must be highlighted by promoting inclusivity
- ▣ Broad participation of all sectors of society, including opposition parties, ensure a more sustainable solution
- ▣ New political leadership must engender vision and trust in setting tone and shape of the new nation
- ▣ Donor approach must move away from purely technical assistance to one that promotes the prioritisation of citizen voice in state building

- ▣ Move away from one of prescription and move to facilitation in the process of state building
- ▣ Still a general disconnect between the needs of individual states under reconstruction and the agenda of donor and funding communities
- ▣ Support local initiatives that build trust and inclusivity between the government and communities
- ▣ Strengthen local government and local community participatory platforms on policy development and engagement with government delivery processes

THANK YOU