



CEPO ACTIVITIES NEWSLETTER

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Yakani on High-Level Mediation for South Sudan Peace Tumaini Initiative



(Nariobi). Tumaini peace process is the continuation of the Rome Peace Talks initiated after the South Sudan spiritual retreat in Rome in 2019. The process is aimed at bringing the Government of National Unity and the Opposition parties non-signatories to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS).

The expected results of the Tumaini peace process is to promote inclusive government for securing genuine political transitional process. The parties in the Tumaini peace talks composed of the Government of National Unity, SSOMA, SSUNA and NAS-RCC including stakeholders (civil society, faith-based group, media, academia, youth, women and persons with disabilities). Tumaini Peace talks is not creating new peace agreement but to initiate an implementable political framework for delivering the pending tasks of the R-ARCSS taking into account the new idea initiated from the declaration of principles signed in Rome between the Government of National Unity and the Opposition group (South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance-SSOMA). CEPO is among the stakeholders invited for the Tumaini peace talks as a stakeholder.

CEPO intentions around the Tumaini peace talks is to advocate for genuine inclusive political pathway for transitioning the situation of the country from violence to peace. CEPO is interested to see effective and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in the Tumaini peace talks

Second Phase Civil-Military Dialogue calls to restore peace, security and stability

Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) implemented the second Phase of Civil-Military in Bereka Boma Iainya, Liwolo Payam, Kajo-Keji County, Ologo payam of Yei River County of Central Equatorial State with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), organized the symposium.

Due to the continued presence of armed rebel groups in the area and its neighbouring counties, the situation in Yei River County changed significantly following the escalation of conflict in 2016. This resulted in significant internal displacement and migration across neighbouring countries like Uganda.

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CEPO launches first Sign

Language Learning Center in South Sudan

The Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO), in collaboration with Light for the World, inaugurated Juba's first Sign Language Learning Center on Tuesday. During the ceremony,

Edmund Yakani, Executive Director of CEPO, emphasized that enrolling individuals with disabilities in sign language classes would enhance societal inclusion in communication and information sharing. CEPO is taking proactive role in enforcing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and that its optional protocol is genuinely and timely implemented," said Yakani on Friday in a statement issued in Juba.

The sign language center is set to open on May 14, 2024.

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Three-days' collection of the local peace agreement signed in Lakes State –(Rumbek)



(Rumbek)— Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) in collaboration with National Ministry of Peace Building has conducted three days' activity on collection of local peace agreement in Rumbek of Lakes State.

During the opening, CEPO State Coordinator, Mr. Daniel Laat knon welcomed the stakeholder and stated the importance of the activity which aimed to document and track all local peace agreement conduct in Lakes State in order to create comprehensive databased. The activity conducted from 10-11 July focused on the establishment of joint website for easy accessibility.

The activity brought together 30 participants from youth groups, women, chiefs, church leaders, CSOs and local Government administrators in order to discuss local peace agreement in Lakes State.

Member of Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation Commission, Agum Joseph emphasized the importance of peacebuilding as a backbone of economic development for the State, and expressed readiness to see the National Ministry of Peace Building doing a follow up on the local peace agreements. Stressing on the need to establish a proper early warning to control conflict escalation in Lakes State.

He reaffirmed that the State is very peaceful and exchanges of inter-marriages, agriculture, sports activities such as wrestling, Cultural dance, football as the only factor that unites the youths of Lakes State. He recognized the credible work of CEPO, Peace Canal and OXFAM GREAT BRITISH for their commitment to peace in Lakes State.

Conclusion, the past years' Lakes State signs numbers of agreement of which some successful work due bottom up approach, role of the church leaders and Availability of funds etc. Other factors contribute to the failure are mainly Proliferations of small arms, recurrent cattle theft and cattle raiding, lack of law enforcement, political influence and inadequate funding.

CEPO champions educational support for visually impaired students at University of Juba

(Juba)— In a heartwarming display of commitment to inclusive education, the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) has taken a significant step forward in supporting visually impaired students at the University of Juba. Through their initiative, several students pursuing various fields have expressed gratitude and hope for a brighter future.

Jimmy, a Bachelor's student in Social Work and Rural Development, exclaimed te support provided by CEPO in the education sector for persons with disabilities is invaluable. It not only helps us access education but also paves the way for a sustainable livelihood through knowledge.

Precious Arkangelo, who is studying Arts and Humanities, shared her appreciation for CEPO's efforts, stating i am deeply touched by CEPO's dedication to educating visually impaired individuals. With this support, I see a path towards making a positive impact in our community through innovative social work in South Sudan. (JStella Peter, a Mass Communication student, welcomed CEPO's assistance and called for continued support to empower more visually impaired and disabled individuals in the education sector. She emphasized the importance of nurturing responsible citizens for the Country's development. Martin Ladu, echoing his peers' sentiments,

(emphasized the vital role of organizations like CEPO in promoting inclusive education in South Sudan. He highlighted the rights of persons with disabilities to equal access to education and fundamental opportunities, made possible through CEPO's initiatives.

The students shared the challenges they have faced on their educational journeys and expressed gratitude for CEPO's unwavering support. They encouraged other partners to contribute to CEPO's cause, emphasizing the transformative impact such collaboration can have on their educational pursuits and broader community engagement.

CEPO concludes two-day civil-military dialogue in Lainya County



(LAINYA)---The Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO), with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), on Saturday concluded a two-day civil-military dialogue in Lainya County's Bereka Boma in Central Equatoria State.

This dialogue followed the recent deployment of a new contingent of an SSPDF commando unit to replace the ground forces who were stationed in the area during the past conflict. The goal was to orient the newly deployed forces and educate the local community on maintaining peace to facilitate the return of displaced residents.

CEPO project officer, Malic John Scopas, highlighted that the dialogue aimed to foster peaceful coexistence between the military and civilians to encourage civilians to return to their homes in Bereka,

"The dialogue brought together military and civilian participants from Bereka Boma to build a foundation for peaceful coexistence. We urge the government to implement the recommendations outlined by the local community in Lainya to ensure security and safety," he said. "This time the community felt it wise to have a dialogue with the newly deployed commando forces of the SSPDF to avoid previous incidents."

For his part, Retired Bishop Lihab Lako, a facilitator from Central Equatoria State, encouraged the army and civilians to support each other.

"We are here to complete our dialogue on civilian-military relationships. When the new army arrived, the land was empty and now they need to reconcile and protect the returning civilians," he counseled. "Civilians should also support the military with necessities like food to foster cooperation."

Meanwhile, Lainya County Head Chief Samuel Malik John emphasized the dialogue's aim to encourage the return of the local community from Lainya to Bereka.

"People fled due to conflict and fear of returning due to potential intimidation from soldiers. Our dialogue has reassured them that the soldiers are here to protect them. Residents are now willing to return home and start farming, addressing food shortages," he said. "We resolved that soldiers should see civilians as family members and rumors should be disregarded. The forces are here to protect the people and their property. We hope to see positive changes in Bereka soon."

On her part, Dina David, a women's representative from Bereka, urged all women who fled to return home, citing improved peace and stability.

"We need to return to Bereka to farm and alleviate hunger," she stated. "We have lost many possessions and appeal to the government for support with shelter and blankets."

Dina also called on NGOs to focus their attention on the returnees in Bereka Boma and provide essential support

CEPO launch Investment in Women South Sudan (IIW-SS) in women project.



During awareness Campaign on unpaid care and Lost Productivities/Income by Men & Women in four Bomas of Terekeka County of Central Equatoria State.

Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) and its partners have launched a project called Investing in Women in South Sudan with kind support from African Challenge Fund (ACF) aims to economically empower women in the agricultural sector through selected value chains.

While, its objective is to reduce gender-specific barriers to women's participation in agriculture value chains to increased adoption in agricultural practices and early warning and response systems, climate smart agriculture training, post-harvest handling and collective marketing.

One of the participants, Rufina Zakaria shared numerous challenges facing them in the farming sector especially in Terekeka. "Our people here (Terekeka), some of them who are involved in grazing animals in the town are police personal, whenever you report them to the police station nothing is done about them, when you try to plant some small vegetables around your home state the animals will eat them up".

She continued that "if these livestock are properly controlled, we shall have enough food in our houses" she added.

However, Chief Daniele Kerimi pointed out that, "most of the pastoralists are coming from other places to spoiled the crops inside the residual areas in Terekeka. Cattle grazing should be discouraged from being grazed inside the town of Terekeka.

Government should create laws that regulate cattle movement and where they are supposed to be Grazed.



Margret Kolong who is also one of the participants, said they are powerless to prevent the cattle from driving onto the farms advising the Community to play their part.

With all the challenges, the community fear to talk to the cattle keepers to relocate to other places, to allow women to provide food for their families, however some of the community members are in support of grazing the animals within the town, she revealed.

Meanwhile Andrew Juma explained about the increase of cattle that are destroying crops in the area.

"Terekeka is a place for production of Agricultural produce, the main issue is the cattle and goats, whenever you cultivate your crops, the animals will come and destroy them, when you report to the policy you find that the culprit is realized without any charge. That is the issue why we prefer to go as far as Liyari to cultivate where there are few livestock. And as you (CEPO) talk to the supplying company (PROSEED) to distribute the seeds early as early as April for better production or harvest" said Juma.



NOV, 2024- Obbo Payam Magwi County, Awareness and Advocacy Campaign on Unpaid Care and the Lost Productivity Income by Men and Women Implemented By CEPO support from African Challenge Fund (ACF)

Women farming groups received more agricultural inputs



Kajo-keji County more than 40 women farmer's groups from five payams benefited from Strengthening Conflict and Gender Sensitive Community (SCCR) Project, its was Organized by Community Empowerment for Progress Organization and Funded by Austrian Development Agency.

The project which was started in 2021 came to an end in May 2024. The aim of the project was to empowered communities to be gender sensitive, peaceful and self-reliant for improved livelihood in kajo-keji county of Central Equatorial State

Following the 2016 war, most residents of Kajo-Keji fled to Uganda for refugee's settlement when war broke out and cattle raiders contributes Negatively on distraction of livelihood. speaking during distribution of seeds County commission of agriculture said the county was facing challenges of boost agriculture and lacking seeds, Tools, adequate land for agriculture and ploughing Machine.

CEPO in collaboration with Austrian Center for Peace with funding from Austrian Development Cooperation worked with farmers, community peace monitors and local authorities in five payam, to guarantee and keep agriculture resilience in kajo-keji by provides seeds, Tools cows, ploughing and carpet for drying cassava, the most produce are cassava, groundnut, maize, Beans. Famers from their own initiatives added soya bean and sunflower to increase produces of the seeds in additional of developing stores for keeping harvest.

CEPO's Field Officer for Kajo-Keji Kenya Nason Felix, said each payam has one group of famer and they carry cooperation activates and peace analysis of agriculture in community, he added that a lot of produced came out as results of boosting small famers and created small scale business and women Famers groups earn small money to support their children education through (Village Saving Loan Association).

Finally, kenya appreciated Austrian Development Agency (ADA) for the great support to the women farmers group in kajo-keji county.

Meanwhile famers express their happiness for the great support from CEPO and its partner provides tools and seed and other necessities for cultivation, added that they have one challenge the weather which is control by nature. Some famers stated that food is life and its brings peace in families and community added that seeds can be reused in the next harvests season.

South Sudan launches first Sign Language Learning Center in Juba

"(Juba)---The Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO), in collaboration with Light for the World, inaugurated Juba's first Sign Language Learning Center on Tuesday.

During the ceremony, Edmund Yakani, Executive Director of CEPO, emphasized that enrolling individuals with disabilities in sign language classes would enhance societal inclusion in communication and information sharing "As CEPO, in partnership with Light for the World, we believe it is crucial to ensure that sign language becomes a skill every South Sudanese citizen possesses. This enables us to communicate respectfully and effectively with our brothers and sisters who have impairments,

societal inclusion in communication and information sharing " "Yakani stated. Mandela Isaac, Senior Disability Facilitator at Light for the World, underscored the importance of making educational facilities inclusive for people with disabilities. "Inclusive education cannot be complete if individuals with hearing impairments are excluded from receiving information at schools.

"Therefore, Light for the World collaborated with the government to develop the National Inclusive Education Policy, launched in 2021. This policy, now government-owned, promotes the rights of persons with disabilities in accessing education," Isaac explained. He further highlighted the need for accessible school infrastructure, including classrooms wide enough for wheelchair users and teachers proficient in sign language.



"This centre's emergence is timely, coinciding with the ratification and signing of the U.N. Convention by our President. It is crucial to translate this commitment into action," Kachinga emphasized. "South Sudan, amidst numerous challenges, particularly faces communication barriers for persons with disabilities. Today, this center marks a significant step forward in addressing these challenges and benefiting individuals with hearing impairments."

President Salva Kiir endorsed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on February 21, 2023, making South Sudan the 185th country to ratify the convention. The U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities serves as a global framework dedicated to advancing and safeguarding the equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all individuals with disabilities.



Floods Advocacy

South Sudan is among the East African Countries identified to witness serious floods from the period of June to December, 2024. CEPO annually hold an advocacy and lobby engagement on inclusive flood preparedness and response. This will be the third cycle of the flood in the Country. The previous flood has negative implications on the affected communities due to inadequate State Government preparation for prevention, mitigation and recovery from the flood shocks.

In this year, 2024, CEPO will undertake very influential advocacy and lobby engagement for the Government to be more pro-active in handling the flood shocks on the affected communities.

CEPO advocacy and lobby engagement will attempt to drive inclusive flood preparedness and response through development of flood inclusive preparedness and response strategy. The strategy will be developed in collaboration with the national flood mitigation committee of the national government including humanitarian partners. CEPO will be engaging in claiming for direct involvement of the organizations of persons with disabilities in the flood preparedness and response



South Sudan was urged by the Secretary General of United Nations to enforce UNCRPD from 6th March, 2024 after successful deposition of the UNCRPD. The desk review mainly focuses on the developed government strategies and plans for flood preparedness and responses at national and state levels.

The trigger for this small scale desk review survey was the observation of inadequate messaging on matters or needs of persons with disabilities. Additionally, the language used in the strategies and plans is not disability inclusion focused. This has made the safety and protection of the persons with disabilities at greater risk and threats.

Flooding in South Sudan created multiple shocks to human lives. Among the key shocks are diseases, food insecurity, violence related to competition over highland for human, livestock and farming use, gender based violence for the last three years in the affected states. Evidently, this survey found out that use of the language in all writings of the documents on flood preparedness and response never embrace disability inclusion. Only the phrase of persons with disabilities is mentioned in the list of defining the most vulnerable category of the society in the face of flood shocks.

Six states namely Jongeli, Upper Nile, Unity, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Lake and Central Equatoria of South Sudan are badly affected by the floods for third consistent time without durable solutions offered by the government. It is estimated that has been effected by flooding. The government of South Sudan has developed South Sudan flood preparedness and response plan for the period June-December 2024. CEPO reviewed the plan, it was realized that the plan has not strongly embrace disability inclusion. This made the flood inclusive preparedness and response bid difficult.

Among the selection of the society that are more than double facing the flood shocks are persons with disabilities. It is clear that disability inclusion in the flood preparedness and responses is not taken seriously by the institutions of government and Non-governmental institutions. Evidently, this survey found out that use of the language in all writings of the documents on flood preparedness and response never embrace disability inclusion. Only the phrase of persons with disabilities is mentioned in the list of defining the most vulnerable category of the society in the face of flood shocks

South Sudan population figures that are to be used for flood preparedness and responses should be properly aggregated with specific focus on figures of persons with disabilities. Data is very important for any accurate and functional planning or strategy designing in any form of shocks preparedness and responses. The survey realized that the absence of accurate data on persons with disabilities has contributed to missing of public messaging on disability inclusion in the whole South Sudan Flood Preparedness and Response Plan for June-December 2024 besides the stronger call made in article 11 (1) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities as quoted



survey map on page 7



Peace dialogue between community of Warrap and Bhar El Ghazal

(Wau) ---The Apuk Giir from Gogirial East of Warrap State and Marial Wau of Western Bhar El Ghazal State were fighting over ownership of Manyang land. The conflicts intensified in August 2023 were numbers of people displaced and hundreds lost lives and their properties.

After serious consultations, the two conflicting parties requested CEPO to bring them together to dialogue over their differences to end the bloodshed. CEPO with support from USAID in collaboration with Peace Cannal and Lake State Peace Committee has successfully completed five days' dialogue from 16-25 July 2024 between Apuk Giir and Marial Wau.

The dialogue brought together 90 delegates from the two communities and Government officials of Western Bhar El Ghazal, Warrap and Lakes States, additionally, members of the Bahr el Ghazal Peace and reconciliation committee were among the invited guests.

The participants discussed the roots costs of the violence, its impact of the community members and the way forward to avoid reoccurring of similar conflicts.

The delegates acknowledged that the main trigger of violence is the dispute of Mayang area. The participants also accused some elites with high profiles for fueling the intercontinental violence and some armed forces directly supporting their communities' members.

After length deliberations and bitter discussion, the delegates agreed to end intercontinental hostility, hate speech in all of the platforms and traditional songs. Embrace pathway for intercontinental truth, healing and reconciliation. Free movement between the two community

Finally, the delegates preformed a ritual of reconciliation in the Western Bhar El Ghazal State Council of Ministers before H.E. Governor Sarah Cleto Rial and she urged the National Government to address the fate of Manyang with immediate effect to avoid reoccurring of the violence.

CEPO State office and Peace Canal-Partners in collaboration with Lakes State peace committee with support from State Government of Western Bhar El Ghazal and Warrap State facilitated an intentional, sequenced and community-led peace building approach to form the foundation of collective initiatives

The two communities signed 17 resolutions and harmonized for peaceful co-existence, exchange of goods and intermarriage.

EU lunches Raising Civil Voices Project



Juba, 3rd May 2024- EU and Partners lunched three year finance project to raise civil Voices in Juba, held at Central Equatoria Women Union Compound. Attendance to the lunches is Ambassador of EU, the National Minister of Youth and Sports, CEPO Director and Jackline Nasiwa.

The concern partners are Community Empowerment Progress Organisation (CEPO) and the Centre for Inclusive, Governance, Peace and Justice (CIGPJ).

This European Union (EU) funded project aimed to create a peaceful and enabling environment; in which inclusive and transparent democratic processes will take place. The initiatives that will be conducted during the project, includes; Civil Society Consultations & Trainings, Political Engagement, Trainings for Young Women, Civic and Voter Education Trainings and Radio Talkshows, as well as National Pre-Election Surveys.

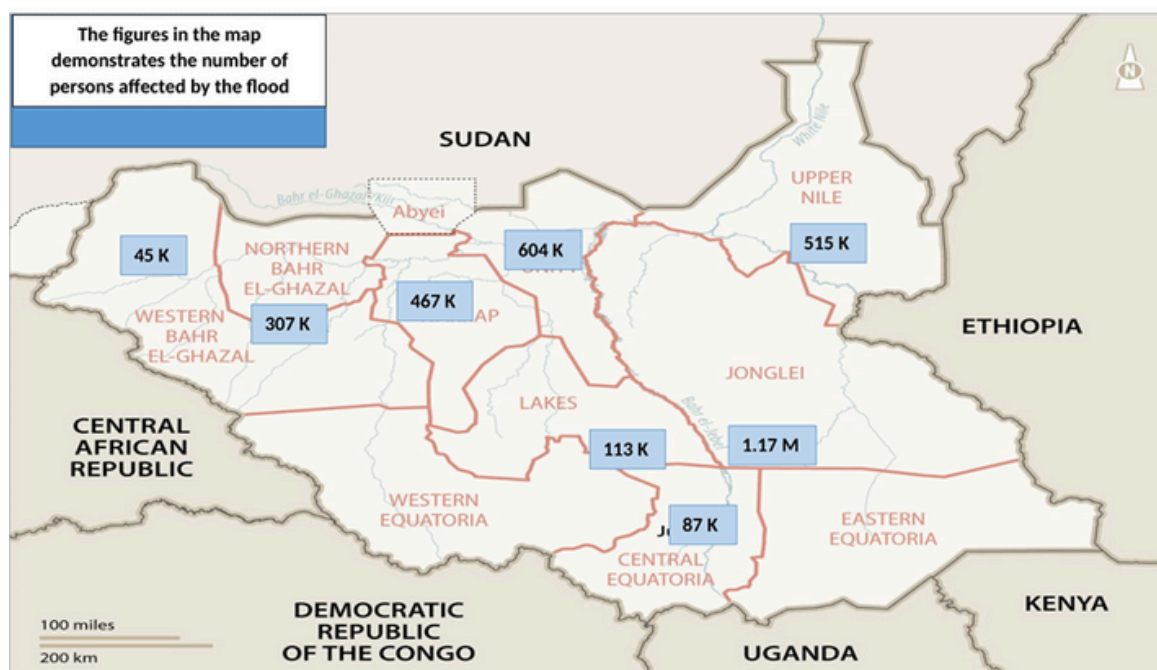
The event hosted Panel Discussion which featured three Political Key Players, that focused on fostering inclusive Democratic Participation in South Sudan.



Community Empowerment for Progress Organization

Small Scale Survey

South Sudan Flood Map, 2024



“More than 2,000,000 people will likely be affected, and approximately 1,200,000 individuals are expected to be displaced and in dire need of humanitarian assistance. Massive flooding is expected in the following areas:

- Five Counties of Jonglei State (Bor South, Twic, Duk, Uror, Fangak)
- Six counties of Unity state (Rubkona, Guit, Leer, Mayandit, Pariang, Panyinjari)
- Four counties of Upper Nile state (Kodok-Fashoda, Maban, Malakal, Renk)
- Three counties of the GPAA (Pibor, Lokuankeley, Pochala)
- Great Administrative Areas of Abyei and Rueng
- Two counties of Central Equatoria (Terekeka, Juba County)
- Northern Bahr–El–Gazal (Aweil center, Aweil East South of Abyei)
- Three counties of Lake State (Awerial, Yirol East, Cuibet)

The impact of flooding in 2024 is likely to be compounded by ongoing insecurity and conflict, previous consecutive flooding incidents, limited access to basic services, and high levels of food insecurity. Several consecutive years of the above listed challenges and flooding have resulted in long-term displacement and complex humanitarian conditions in most of the above listed at risk areas. The cost-of-living crisis will also exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities”. Sources: [South Sudan: Imminent floods - DREF Operation \(MDRSS014\) - South Sudan | ReliefWeb](#)

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 South Sudan: Humanitarian Situation Monitoring - Prospective areas of destination in the event of flooding, June - July 2024 ([South Sudan Humanitarian Situation Monitoring - Prospective areas of destination in the event of flooding, June - July 2024 - South Sudan | ReliefWeb](#))
 South Sudan Complex Emergency Fact Sheet (2024-08-12 USG South Sudan Complex Emergency Fact Sheet 5.pdf (usaid.gov))
 Inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action ([Inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action: Case studies collection 2019 \(interagencydisabilitycommittee.org\)](#))
 Guidance on strengthening disability inclusion in Humanitarian Response Plans ([Guidance on strengthening disability inclusion in Humanitarian Response Plans.pdf](#))
 Key Recommendations for Inclusive Practise in this thematic area for WFP inclusion in this ([WFP-134215](#))
 Media Articles
 Radio Tamazuj articles on flood ([You searched for Flood South Sudan - Radio Tamazuj](#))
 Eye Radio articles on flood ([You searched for Flood - Eye Radio](#))
 Sudans Post articles on flood ([You searched for Flood - Sudans Post](#))



Promotion of social cohesion, protection of human rights, transitional justice and quick impact projects



Promotion of peace building and civilian-military relation

**FRIEDRICH
EBERT
STIFTUNG**



Strengthening civil society coalition capacity and civil society engagement on conflict early and response



Promoting effective advocacy and lobby on inclusion of disability



BMZ



Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development



AUSTRIAN
DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY



World Vision



**Austrian
Centre for Peace**
SCHLAINING • VIENNA



unesco



Dorcas

South Sudan

