

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

23rd January 2014

“CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM ON SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN” Third Session, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, January 20th – 22nd, 2014

This week, over 100 civil society activists and advocates from all over the world attended the Third Session of the Civil Society Forum on Sudan and South Sudan. The Forum was held at Bole Ambassador Hotel in Addis Ababa during the period 20 to 22 January 2014. The three-day forum covered a wide variety of issues plaguing Sudan, South Sudan and the surrounding region. Advocates in attendance were experts from Sudan, South Sudan, Africa and the rest of the world. The Forum culminated in rich intellectual discourse, recommendations for future advocacy work, and civil society resolutions as a pre-summit contribution to the 22nd Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

The Third Session of the Forum consisted of panel discussions, open sessions of questions and comments, and special presentations. While calling for an immediate end to the suffering of civilians and the expeditious signing of a ceasefire arrangement in South Sudan, the Forum also recommended that the IGAD Secretariat and the Chairperson of the AU Commission strengthen oversight and reduce ambiguity in the Final Draft Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities Between the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army In Opposition.

The Forum’s panel topics included: A discussion of stakeholders in peace, particularly focused on the AU and civil society; Civil society’s role in the technical assistance of Sudan; An update of the humanitarian situations in South and West Kordofan States, Blue Nile State, and Darfur; An update of the situation in South Sudan; Conflict analysis and the building of peace within the region; Opportunities on future civil society advocacy work on Sudan and South Sudan within the AU and IGAD; and Special advocacy and awareness projects. Speakers included world-renowned peace activists and experts on the two countries including Dr. Suliman Baldo, Professor Mukesh Kapila, Mr. David Deng, Mr. Abdul Mohamed, Professor. Mashood A. Baderin.

At the end of the discussions, the Forum adopted 10 resolutions to be presented before the 22nd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (January 30th – 31st 2014). Resolutions were adopted on different topics including: the armed conflict in South Sudan, State-Building and Reconciliation in South Sudan, the Critical Situation of Women in Sudan and South Sudan, Refugees and IDPs in the Two Sudans, Press Freedom in the Two Sudans, the Role of the United Nations in Sudan, South Sudan, and the Disputed Territory of Abyei, Civil Rights and Political Freedoms in Sudan, the Situation in Darfur, the Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and Democratization in Sudan. Forum contributors trust that adoption of the proposed resolutions will help assist, protect, and serve the people of Sudan and South Sudan.

The Third Session of the Forum also witnessed the official launching of the People To People Initiative on Sudan.

Participants and observers, including AU-accredited ambassadors and officials expressed the views that “this gathering of bright and enthusiastic experts and peace advocates has again produced high-quality materials for contribution to the AU work on Sudan and South Sudan. Future forums of this kind are encouraged to continue to be convened in order to enhance advocacy, raise awareness and mobilize the public opinion of African policy decision-makers on matters concerning Sudan and South Sudan. There is need for continued civil society commitment to fight for peace, democracy, good governance and prosperity for the people of Sudan and South Sudan.”

Contact: Ms. Brenda Prempeh, Programme Manager, Advocacy, Darfur Relief and Documentation Centre (DRDC) brenda@darfurcentre.ch Cell phone in Addis Ababa, +251919904345