

Governance and Community Stabilization Section (GCSS)

In Action

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Foreword

Welcome to the third edition of “GCSS in Action”: a newsletter produced by UNAMID’s Governance and Community Stabilization Section (GCSS). With its broad scope of activities ranging from but not limited to, support to traditional and second-generation DDR programmes, and mediation of intercommunal conflicts in Darfur, GCSS continues to implement its mandated activities in close coordination with UN agencies, funds and programmes, NGOs, the local authorities, Native Administration and community leaders including youth and women and other local stakeholders. The spread of COVID-19 pandemic to Darfur and the resulting restriction of movements have had an adverse impact on these activities prompting the Section to explore creative and innovative ways for ensuring the accomplishment of its essential tasks and, at the same time, helping the government and local communities address the new challenges and threats posed by COVID-19. Therefore, this issue of “GCSS in Action” reflects on a wide range of issues that the Section has dealt with since the beginning of the year and amidst the numerous challenges, highlights the achievements, draws on lessons learnt and offers important solutions to some root causes of instability in Darfur. The quarterly Newsletter is a product of close collaboration and teamwork of all GCSS colleagues at the Mission Headquarters and in the field. I wish you pleasant reading and looking forward to your feedback.

Zurab Elzarov, Editor-in-Chief

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Interview with Chief GCSS Mr. Zurab Elzarov

Q: Congratulations on your recent reassignment to lead UNAMID’s Governance and Community Stabilization (GCSS) Section. Could you briefly tell us about yourself?

A: Thank you. I joined UNAMID in 2011 and have had the opportunity to serve in several leadership positions. Prior to joining GCSS, I was leading the Mission’s Joint Operations Centre (JOC) working on situational awareness and reporting, integrated operations coordination and crisis preparedness and response. Before that, I headed UNAMID’s Protection of Civilians (PoC) Section for over three years and served as Senior DDR Officer for two years with the Community Stabilization Section. While at the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) from 2007-2011, I served as the Recovery, Return and Reintegration (RRR) Officer in South Kordofan state and was later re-assigned to the Mission HQ in Khartoum. In 2011, I was sent on a three-month mission to Juba, South Sudan, to support the large-scale return of South Sudanese citizens to the areas of origin and their reintegration process. In addition to my 13 years of diverse experience with UN peacekeeping operations, I have also served with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in the North Caucasus/Russia and with the UN High

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict zone for a total of 11 years. I am pleased to bring this extensive background to my current position during this important period of transition.

Q: Your reassignment to GCSS coincided with the spread of COVID-19 pandemic to Sudan, including Darfur. What kind of challenges have you encountered in implementing GCSS activities and how are you addressing them?

A: The spread of the corona virus has definitely impacted the implementation of GCSS activities within our areas of operation. As you are aware, the closure of Khartoum International Airport to international and domestic flights was recently extended. So, my first concern is for those GCSS staff who remain locked down in the Mission, an “E” hardship duty station, for over three months missing several R&R cycles. I hope the ongoing efforts by the Mission leadership will mitigate this issue. Secondly, several other measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, such as restriction of movements, ban on public gatherings, lockdowns of cities and towns and suspension of inter-city and inter-state public transportations have also significantly impacted our level of engagement with the local community and implementation of our key activities

aimed at promoting intercommunal harmony and community stabilization. This has prompted us to adjust the way we work by exploring innovative and creative ways to ensure we are able to implement our core programmatic interventions and State Liaison Function (SLF) activities while also prioritizing programmatic funds to support government efforts to address the new realities and threats posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in Darfur. In other words, despite the numerous challenges and COVID-19 restrictions, GCSS has found a way, within current measures, including social distancing, to carry on with our work.

Q: Can you give us some concrete examples?

A: For instance, in effort to assist the Government of Sudan to address the spread of COVID-19 in Darfur, our Section, in coordination with the UNHQ, has re-directed some funds earmarked for core programmatic activities towards projects addressing the COVID-19 pandemic in Darfur, particularly in IDP camps. In late June, in coordination with the Central Darfur State Ministry of Health and WHO, we successfully completed a project targeting five large IDPs camps in Zalingei which are mostly overpopulated, have poor access to healthcare and lack awareness of the COVID-19 pandemic. The project's activities included risk communication and awareness raising campaigns on the virus, distribution of soap, face masks and hand sanitizers to IDPs and medical staff at the health clinics inside the five IDP camps. Based on the success of this project and positive feedback from all local stakeholders, especially the State Ministry of Health, WHO and IDP community leaders, we have developed and are currently implementing additional projects targeting not only IDPs but also nomadic community members and residents in the Jebel Marra area. These projects are not only addressing the spread of COVID-19 in Darfur but will also aim to promote peace and stability through the dissemination of peace messages during the awareness campaigns. At the same time, the implementation of our community stabilization projects (CSP) continues, albeit encountering considerable delays due to the spread of COVID-19, especially regarding the need for periodic physical monitoring and verification visits to the project sites. Very recently, we completed two pilot community security and arms control (CSAC) projects in Central Darfur which targeted a total of 529,000 people and selected 200 civilians who were in possession of illegal firearms and were willing to voluntarily surrender the illegal firearms in exchange for livelihood projects, which included agricultural inputs, livestock and diversified commercial commodities for setting up small business and income generating activities. In spite of the challenges posed by COVID-19, we are managing to find ways, within current guidelines, to monitor our projects and maintain some level of engagement with our interlocutors and stand ready to resume full operations once the current restrictions are lifted.

Q: Darfur is entering the rainy season which coincides with the period when farmers, including IDPs, go into the fields to prepare their lands for cultivation. This period usually witnesses a spike in the number and magnitude of inter-

“This (COVID 19) has prompted us to adjust the way we work by exploring innovative and creative ways to ensure we are able to implement our core programmatic activities.”

ZURAB ELZAROV, Chief GCSS.

munal clashes. What measures have UNAMID put in place to mitigate potential intercommunal violence?

A: The farming season in Darfur continues from June through December and, as you rightly pointed out, we usually see an increase in disputes over, e.g. access to land and natural resources. Therefore, GCSS led a Mission-wide exercise to develop a set of specific measures aimed at engaging the national, state and local authorities to address the disputes in a timely and efficient manner to prevent their escalation into violent conflicts. These measures include the strengthening of our early warning & early response capacity, coordination with relevant partners on the ground, especially in areas where UNAMID has limited presence. At the same time, since the beginning of the current fiscal year, we have organized a total of 24 community dialogue forums, peace campaigns and workshops in hot spot areas, including Kutum, Kabkabiya, Kass, Saraf Umra, Tawila, Shangil Tobaya, Nertiti, etc. to promote reconciliation and peaceful co-existence among different communities particularly farming and pastoral groups who account for majority of the violent intercommunal incidents. In addition, at the end of May, the JSR signed an MoU with FAO to implement a joint project aimed at reducing tensions between farmers and nomadic herders by establishing and demarcating camping sites along migratory routes and providing access to basic social services for both farming and pastoral communities in South and West Darfur.

Q: The parties to the Sudan peace process are planning to sign the peace agreement soon. Is UNAMID ready to support its implementation, especially the DDR provisions?

A: We welcome the reported progress made at the ongoing peace talks. We have been providing support to the Government of Sudan in the implementation of traditional and second-generation DDR activities since 2010. In coordination with the Sudan DDR Commission (SDDRC), the Mission provides support for the demobilization and reinsertion of former combatants from armed movements, while the SDDRC and the UN country team facilitate their social and economic reintegration into civilian society.

In preparation for the eventual new DDR programme, we have drawn the lessons learnt and good practices from our previous engagements, holding consultations with our national and international partners, making logistics arrangements, raising funds and making other arrangements to support this process, as and when requested by the Government. It is important to note that we will be working closely with the new mission in Sudan, UNITAMS, to ensure consistency and swift transition from UNAMID to the follow-on presence in the country. ●

Central Darfur



GCSS completes COVID-19 prevention project in five large IDP camps in Zalingei, Central Darfur

The first confirmed case of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Sudan was reported in Khartoum, the federal capital, on 13 March 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic subsequently spread to other areas including Darfur, with new cases reported daily, highlighting the need for authorities and the Mission to implement mitigation measures and restrictions to combat the pandemic and prevent its further spread. To support Central Darfur State efforts to combat the pandemic, GCSS proactively reviewed its core activities prioritizing programmatic funds to enhance the efforts of the Central Darfur State Ministry of Health (SMoH) towards COVID-19 response and prevention. Following consultations with health partners in Central Darfur, GCSS, through a national NGO Sudan Social Development Organization (SUDO), in collaboration with the Central Darfur State Ministry of Health (SMoH) and WHO representatives in Central Darfur state, successfully concluded a COVID-19 prevention project

aimed at risk communication and awareness raising among the displaced population residing in camps. The 16-day project targeted five large IDPs camps in Zalingei, namely Hamediya, Hassahissa, Khamsa Dagaig, Taiba and Al Salam camps, which are mostly overpopulated, have poor access to healthcare and lack awareness of the COVID-19 pandemic. The project's activities included house-to-house awareness visits; dissemination of the Ministry of Health protocols and brochures; short presentations, mobile awareness campaigns, and distribution of soap, face masks and sanitizers for medical staff at the clinics inside the five IDP camps in Zalingei. The project provided mini-training sessions and trained volunteers from the camps and host communities, 14 of whom were women out of 22, to help sustain the key messages, particularly those related to handwashing and maintaining social distancing. The initiative also mapped out the needs for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and



testing kits in the health clinics inside the IDP camps. The project had a strong focus on gender mainstreaming at all stages. The women groups, among other IDP leaders in the camp, were consulted during the planning stage of the project and participated actively during the engagement with IDPs. They identified gaps and needs for the project and assisted in the design of appropriate response to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the IDP women leaders at Hamediya camp said, “we have requested medical support, but our requests have not been met yet. I fear a high death toll if the virus reaches the IDP camp”. Such statements by women representatives highlight the importance of the project funded by GCSS to undertake sensitization and awareness campaigns among the IDP community, living in densely populated camps to mitigate the risk of a potential spread of COVID-19 pandemic among the IDPs. To reach all households, the project implementation included house-to-house visits, adhering to the guidelines of the State Ministry of Health on social distancing and avoiding large gatherings of people. During visits to the houses in the IDP camps, it was observed that the majority of those found were women, while men left for work during the daytime. Raising awareness of women on hygiene issues coupled with their role and dedication as care givers, provided them an opportunity to effectively oversee and monitor implementation of the guidelines of the SMOH in their households.

During the implementation process, the 14 female volunteers selected actively participated in the implementation of all the project activities. The volunteers

were selected from the host communities and the five IDP camps in Zalingei. Hamediya, Hassahissa and Khama Dagaig camps are mainly occupied by Fur tribesmen and Taiba and Al Salam camps include Arab community members. Therefore, the selection of volunteers also contributed to bridging the gaps in social relations created by the protracted conflict in Darfur. Furthermore, in addition to risk communication and awareness raising on COVID-19, the project also delivered messages of peace between the Fur and Arab communities in the IDP camps. During the monitoring visits to the project sites, GCSS staff members observed the contribution of the project to the re-establishment of good relations among the volunteers from the various communities. Therefore, it is expected that such creative and innovative projects addressing health issues and in parallel promoting peace and reconciliation, will eventually contribute to peaceful co-existence, integration and creation of close ties between different communities, which are the prerequisites of lasting peace in Darfur.

Based on the positive feedback from all the stakeholders, especially the SMOH, WHO and IDP community leaders, the project could be described as a success. Therefore, GCSS is currently implementing additional activities targeting, in particular, the nomadic communities in the outskirts of Central Darfur state, as requested by the SMOH. This approach will ensure that the assistance provided by GCSS is neutral and targets vulnerable beneficiaries from all segments of the local population, including IDPs, refugees, nomadic population and other vulnerable groups. ●

Darfur States



Measures to address intercommunal conflicts during the rainy/farming season

The three core drivers of violence in Darfur at present are disputes over land and resources, the complex network of militias and paramilitary forces, and the weakness of rule of law and security institutions. These drivers are interrelated. Land and resource disputes lie at the heart of many conflicts in Darfur - intercommunal conflicts between pastoralist and farming communities, attacks on civilians by militia groups seeking to assert control over land or resources, and the inability of some displaced populations to return to homes that have been occupied by militias.

The absence of legislation to clearly elaborate land rights, the weakness of rule of law and security institutions that could adjudicate and enforce those rights, and the unwillingness of the Government institutions to resort to traditional conflict settlement mechanisms have prompted community groups and militias to use violence as a means of claiming land and/or resources.

These core drivers of violence are compounded by various underlying causes, ranging from crop damage by livestock and expansion of agricultural land, disputes

over land ownership and natural resources, access to water, shortage of agricultural land and inadequate pasture (exacerbated by climate change), burning agricultural lands to keep others away, theft of crops and livestock, people carrying weapons, unregulated land borders, etc. These conflict events usually increase during the rainy/farming season and during harvest when farmers report extensive crop destruction by nomads' livestock.

The prevailing trend of intercommunal clashes compounded by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and weak law enforcement, especially in the remote areas of Darfur, implies that the threat of intercommunal violence remains also due to the unaddressed plethora of root causes of the violent competition for resources. Farming season is likely to heighten residual tensions between farmers, IDPs and herders, who often tend to sort out their issues by violent means. UNAMID has been particularly concerned with the impact of these intercommunal conflicts on civilian population in Darfur on the basis of its PoC mandate.

Therefore, over the past several weeks, the Mission has



intensively deliberated on exploring some specific measures for engaging the transitional Government of Sudan (TGoS) and security forces on addressing protection of civilians (PoC) issues in Darfur during the forthcoming farming season. These measures include but are not limited to strengthening the whole-of-mission early warning & early response mechanisms and coordination structures, and taking timely preventive and response actions in coordination with the relevant government structures at the federal, state and locality levels, native administrations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), humanitarian (HCT) and UN country team (UNCT) members and other actors.

For instance, in 2017, UNAMID conducted an analysis of PoC risks and threats and listed of farming areas in Darfur. Based on the results of this exercise, a total of 77 farming areas have been prioritized for the Mission's PoC activities during the rainy/farming season, including through adjusting patrol plans, engagement with local communities, particularly through crop protection (CPC), peaceful co-existence (PCC)

and agriculture protection (APC) committees, increased TGoS and/or UNAMID presence in priority farming areas, strong advocacy by UNAMID at different levels, etc. The Mission, in coordination with its partners, will conduct the review and update this list of priority farming areas based on developments since 2017.

In addition, during the farming season, UNAMID will need to strengthen its communication channels with relevant government counterparts, UN AFPs, NGOs and CSOs to increase the early warning capacity of the Mission. In fact, the informal community engagement and strengthening the relationship with e.g. CSOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), CPCs, APCs, PCCs and community and religious leaders may be the best way to collect early warning information and mitigate intercommunal violence during the farming season.

During the past farming season, the Walis (State Governors) have initiated specific measures to respond to violent intercommunal clashes in Darfur, such as the establishment of joint quick reaction teams in North and Central Darfur. UNAMID has traditionally engaged through these mechanisms. As in previous years, UNAMID will engage with the Walis to offer support to their preventive and response measures (with a focus on prevention) during the forthcoming farming season as well.

The Mission may also offer some capacity building activities to the Sudanese law enforcement structures in this regard and will consider strengthening the TGoS's early warning capacity. UNAMID will also consider the allocation of resources both in-kind and from its programmatic funds to enable the state authorities to assume full responsibility for PoC in Darfur as part of the transition process and thus support the TGoS in their role as primary responsibility bearer for the safety of Sudanese citizens.

Nevertheless, in the absence of a comprehensive peace agreement and the weakness of rule of law and security institutions in Darfur, the prevention and mediation of intercommunal conflicts will continue to face numerous challenges. The unchecked proliferation of arms and the culture of arms possession is common and is further exacerbated by the prevailing feeling of insecurity and continued polarization of communities.

The lack of effective local governance, including rule of law institutions and judicial processes has resulted in rampant impunity, particularly towards those with underlying animosity over disputed land. The land rights and land ownership issues are not addressed in a transparent and coherent manner, further complicating the issue. There is also evidence of complicity and even active involvement of law enforcement structures in intercommunal conflicts.

Therefore, the new Sudanese authorities, supported by national and international stakeholders, will have a difficult and complex task of addressing the root causes of intercommunal violence in Darfur in order to achieve durable and sustainable peace and stability in the region. ●

Central Darfur



GCSS successfully completes two pilot community security and arms control projects in West Jebel Marra and Azoum Localities

Proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Darfur presents a serious threat to human security and long-term stability in the region. Due to the protracted conflict and instability, the level of civilian firearms ownership in the region has sharply increased. The distinction between civilians and combatants is often blurred because the militias are closely aligned with the tribes and combatants are drawn from the local population. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons is eroding the traditional governance and social structures and rule of law. For youth, possession of firearms has become a symbol of status and has given them the confidence to challenge traditional hierarchies and demand to be part of decision-making processes.

In addition, the local population in Darfur has become accustomed to violence and quickly resorts to firearms to settle disputes.

The Government of Sudan (GoS) does not have official figures for the number of weapons owned by civilians in Darfur, but UNAMID estimates it to be around 2 million pieces. On 7 August 2017, the Sudanese government launched a campaign for collecting arms and unlicensed vehicles in Darfur in an effort to improve the security situation in the region and to reduce the number of firearms in the hands of the local community members. The arms collection was initially largely commended and welcomed by Darfuris. However, inter-communal conflicts over access to natural resources persisted with



the use of firearms. Therefore, at the end, the reactions to the Government's arms collection campaign were mixed and criticized by many of the local population as being one-sided, limited in scope and coverage.

Many Darfuris have also blamed the continued possession of firearms by nomadic herders and militias for hampering the return of displaced population, and for those that have returned the security situation is not conducive for their permanent stay. Considering this situation, many internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees have preferred seasonal returns to cultivate their farmlands during farming season.

Furthermore, reports from the field have indicated a new wave of proliferation of arms during the uprising in Sudan in 2018/19 and in the aftermath of the removal of former President al-Bashir regime.

The above situation prompted UNAMID to seek innovative and creative initiatives to address the proliferation of arms in Darfur, based on its protection of civilians (PoC) mandate. On 31 May 2020, The Governance and Community Stabilization Section (GCSS) developed and successfully completed the implementation of two pilot community security and arms control (CSAC) projects in West Jebel Marra and Azoum Localities, Central Darfur.

The projects were implemented through a national NGO implementing partner. The overarching objective of the projects was to test a more collaborative and rights-based approach to civilian disarmament, following the end of the Government's highly criticized civilian arms collection campaign, which commenced in 2017, and

abruptly ended about a year later.

The pilot projects targeted a total of 529,000 people in both localities and selected 200 civilians (100 civilians from each of the two localities), who were in possession of illegal firearms and were willing to voluntarily surrender the illegal firearms in exchange for livelihood projects. As a result of the projects implementation, 200 firearms were collected in exchange for various livelihood projects in both localities.

All those who voluntarily surrendered their firearms were trained on income generating activities, livelihoods, and small business start-up. They also received incentives in the form of three types of livelihood projects, such as: a) agricultural inputs, including water pumps, seeds potato, onion, carrot, watermelon, radish and garlic), fertilizers and insecticides; b) livestock, including small ruminants (sheep) and big ruminants (cattle) for restocking; c) diversified commercial commodities for grocery opening (sugar, oil, soap, tea, etc.), phones for boutique opening, timber for carpentry workshop opening, traditional salt (atrun) for animals and veterinary drugs for opening veterinary shop opening, etc in order to boost their economic activities and sustain their families through peaceful livelihood activities rather than through the use of firearms and engagement in banditry and criminal activities.

The pilot CSAC projects implemented by UNAMID were largely successful and the number of people possessing firearms and willing to participate in the projects was far beyond the number that the projects could accommodate.

North Darfur



Workshop on the role of Youth and Native Administration in Peacebuilding and Promotion of Peaceful coexistence in Kakababiya

Through regular engagement with all groups in the community, the Governance and Community Stabilization Section (GCSS) identifies the various needs and issues that cause tensions in the community and how the Mission could intervene to address them including by enhancing the capacities of the local peace mechanisms to promote meaningful dialogue and peaceful coexistence entrenching the culture of peace as durable solutions to prevent relapse and renewed conflicts. In that regard,

GCSS continued to make significant strides at enhancing the capacities of various local stakeholders across the region, including women, to effectively contribute to local conflict resolution including through conducting capacity building workshops targeting key local stakeholders particularly local authorities, native administration, youth and women leaders.

Disputes between farming and pastoral groups in Kakababiya, like in most areas across the region,



normally increase during the farming season heightening intercommunal tensions and disrupting the social fabric. Traditionally, the native administration and community leaders lead mediation and conflict resolution efforts with little or no participation from the youth and women leaders, which mostly result in partial agreements not accepted by all groups in the community ending in further escalations. Increasingly, we are seeing more participation of youth and women in local conflict resolution processes, a welcome development which is affecting the acceptance and sustainability of the processes. In addition to conducting several interventions including dialogue forums and peace campaigns to help promote peaceful coexistence and shared access to natural resources between the farming and pastoral groups, GCSS also conducted a capacity build workshop on the role of youth and native administration in peace building and promotion of peaceful co-existence from 23-24 December 2019.

The two-day workshop was conducted in collaboration with the local authorities and national NGO, Action Hand for Development (AHD). The workshop was attended by fifty participants (including 21 women) drawn from youth and women's groups, native administrations, local authorities and representatives of various tribes in Kabkabiya town. The key objectives of the workshop include: to discuss sustainable ways to strengthen the roles of youth in peacebuilding and peaceful coexistence in their local communities; disseminate peaceful coexistence messages to raise awareness among the communities, help reduce of communication gap between the youth groups and native administrations at locality level; to lay the foundation of sustainable peace and development in the area, restore confidence, strengthen

the social fabric between native administrations and youth groups to enhance the implementation of traditional conflict mechanisms in addressing their disputes, to provide participants with knowledge, skills and experiences in the fields of conflict management, and to enrich the Culture mutual respect, and to support and build capacity of the targeted group in the areas of peaceful co-existence, conflict management/resolution and negotiations for the sake of durable peace.

The facilitators discussed several topics including conflict management; types of conflict; conflicts over natural resources management; root causes of conflict and benefits of peaceful coexistence and the relationship between the Kabkabiya youth groups, native administrations and community leaders in conflict resolution; mechanisms to improve the security situation and create a conducive environment for peace building and peaceful coexistence in Kabkabiya.

Among the recommendations and outcomes, participants agreed that the government should support the active participation of youth and women leaders in local conflict resolution; GCSS should conduct more interventions to build capacities, raise awareness and sensitize women and youth groups on the need to participate in local conflict resolution and other local peace initiatives to strengthen peaceful coexistence. It was also recommended that women and youth leaders be included in any follow up mechanisms to oversee the implementation of a local peace agreement as both groups (especially the women) bear the brunt of inter-communal conflicts. GCSS assured the women and youth leaders of UNAMID's continued commitment to strengthen local peace mechanisms and encouraged the participants to share the knowledge acquired at the workshop. ●

North Darfur



GCSS conducts dialogue forums to address tensions between farming and pastoral groups in Tawila and Saraf Umra localities.

In most areas across the region, tensions between farming and pastoral groups normally rise during the farming season from June-December into

the migration period in February. Most incidents between the two groups are triggered by disputes over access and/or control of land/farming areas



and water resources, which frequently result in crop destructions, hampering food security and livelihoods especially among the farming communities, and further escalating existing fragile intercommunal relations. In 2017, the authorities conducted an arms collection exercise across the region which resulted in a reduction in violent incidents involving nomads (mostly armed) and farmers, although most of the violent incidents have since reemerged, and continue

to rise, causing many among the local population (mainly farming communities) to insist that the arms collection exercise was not comprehensive, but was one-sided and limited in scope and coverage. In accordance with the mandate of UNAMID, GCSS, in collaboration with the local authorities and native administration, has continued to support local efforts to address issues that cause tensions between farming and pastoral groups including by implementing key programmatic interventions particularly community dialogue forums and peace campaigns to encourage meaningful dialogue and to promote peaceful coexistence and shared access to natural resources.

In Tawila, North Darfur, tensions over land between farmers (mostly Fur) and Arab nomadic groups have persisted, disrupting the social fabric in the area. GCSS' active engagement with local authorities and native administrations of both groups encouraging them to engage in peaceful dialogue resulted in two dialogue forums conducted by GCSS in collaboration with the native administrations and community leaders from both groups and the Ajaweed Organization for Peace and Reconciliation in El Fasher, North Darfur from 9-10 March 2020. The two dialogue forums brought together leaders of both groups who met separately to discuss respective issues of their communities regarding land occupation; control of natural resources; and possible solutions on peaceful and agreeable ways to address the identified issues.

The native administrations and community leaders from both groups commended GCSS for facilitating the outreach forums and called for more peacebuilding activities to promote peaceful coexistence between the two groups in Tawila. During the deliberations, participants agreed on several causes of conflict in Tawila locality namely: both groups not adhering to the harvest and grazing periods; nomads from outside Tawila who come to the area to graze their livestock; the weakened position of the native administrations and local authorities to adequately address tensions and resolve conflicts; rise in human and livestock populations increasing competition for the scarce natural resources and insecurity in the region. The participants advocated for outreach activities targeting Arab nomads (especially the youth) to raise awareness on peace; review current local laws especially the role of the native administration; enhance effectiveness of mechanisms to implement the laws governing relations between farmers and the pastoralists; enhance the native administration and help prepare signposts leading to the migratory routes

in each area and UNAMID to continue supporting efforts by both sides to ensure peaceful resolution of disputes. The two forums were attended by 40 native administration leaders (20 from each side). Following the separate forums, and as a next step, GCSS in collaboration with relevant stakeholders will conduct a joint forum to bring both groups together with the aim to reach common ground on identified issues and agreeable sustainable solutions on ways to promote intercommunal harmony and end the recurring conflicts between the two groups in Tawila. The leaders of both groups commended GCSS for the initiative and requested for more peacebuilding activities to promote peaceful coexistence in the locality. GCSS in the closing remarks commended the leaders for committing to dialogue and assured them that UNAMID will continue to support local efforts to promote peaceful coexistence among all groups in Tawila locality. So far, both groups have committed to resolve their disputes peacefully although more efforts have to be exerted by the local authorities and native administration to ensure sustainable solutions to the issue of access and control of land/farming areas which remain the main root cause of disputes between farming and pastoral groups in Tawila area.

In West Jebel Marra locality, another identified hotspot area, tensions between farming and pastoral groups also heighten during the farming and migration seasons due to similar factors exacerbated by the increasing human and livestock populations amidst scarce natural resources. As with other hotspot areas, GCSS proactively engages with the native administration and local authorities to support local conflict resolution interventions and efforts to address disputes between the two groups. One of such key interventions, community dialogue forums between farming and pastoral groups, was implemented by GCSS in Thur village (17 km south of Nertiti) in collaboration with the native administration and local authorities on 9 December 2019.

The dialogue forum aimed to address issues related to farmlands and to facilitate a common understanding on shared access to natural resources, which were identified as the main causes of recurring conflicts between both groups in the area. The dialogue forum was attended by 100 participants (including 25 women) representing local authorities, women and youth leaders, commanders of Central Reserve Police (CRP), Military Intelligence (MI) and Sudan Armed Forces (SAF). In the opening session, the Executive Director of West Jebel Marra locality

and the Thur SAF commander both commended UNAMID for its active interventions and support to local efforts to address intercommunal tensions in the area, which they noted would enhance security, stability and protection of civilians in the area. They equally commended GCSS for implementing other peacebuilding initiatives in addition to the dialogue forums, which according to them, have significantly promoted the commitment to dialogue and enhanced intercommunal harmony in the area.

The forum encouraged open and frank discussions by the participants on key issues that cause tensions between the two groups highlighting the importance of both groups engaging in meaningful dialogue and raising awareness among their communities (especially the nomadic groups) including through initiating networks among the youth and women leaders to ensure all groups participate in local peace initiatives. The participants also highlighted the need for a comprehensive civilian arms collection exercise, with the farmers contending that GoS did not fully implement the exercise in nomadic communities enabling them to use the uncollected weapons to commit acts against farmers and IDPs. They stressed that the competition over natural resources especially land and water remain the root causes of conflicts in the area, which they called on the authorities to promptly address, with support from UNAMID.

The pastoral groups disagreed with the notion that the arms collection exercise was not fully implemented in their area but agreed on the root causes of conflicts in the area. The participants also discussed the negative impacts of conflicts on livelihoods and food security highlighting the need for peaceful dialogue to promote security and stability. They appreciated GCSS for facilitating the dialogue forum and UNAMID's active support to peaceful coexistence in the area.

Several recommendations were proposed including opening migratory routes and provision of veterinary services and basic services to nomadic communities, enhancement of local peace mechanisms including the agricultural protection committees to address local disputes and crop destruction incidents; construction of a community center to promote peaceful coexistence, implementation of income generating activities and support to winter season farming; local authorities to activate the guideline of the forestry department against cutting of trees; members of the community encouraged to report incidents to the authorities with information on the offenders to facilitate the investigation; GCSS to conduct more

peacebuilding activities and trainings to enhance the capacities of local conflict resolution mechanisms in the area. GCSS commended the leaders for their commitment to intercommunal dialogue and assured that UNAMID will continue to support local efforts to promote peaceful coexistence in the area.

In Saraf Umra, North Darfur, the frosty intercommunal relations between pastoral (Northern Rezeigat subgroups) and farming communities (mostly Fur) heightened in the aftermath of the fall of the last regime when the farming communities (led by the Fur) held series of protests demanding that the Northern Rezeigat community (regarded as affiliates of the fallen regime by the farming communities) leave the area. Following appeals to UNAMID by the Northern Rezeigat leaders, GCSS conducted series of consultations that helped deescalate the situation although simmering tensions remained and could be renewed at the slightest provocation. Fully cognizant of this, GCSS maintained regular engagement with influential leaders of both groups to ensure disputes (including minor ones) do not escalate due to the potential to disrupt the existing fragile relations in the area. The arms collection exercise also resulted in relative security which contributed to a conducive environment for implementation of many GCSS interventions in areas outside the locality.

In collaboration with NAs, locality authorities, agricultural protection committee (APC), peaceful coexistence committee (PCC), community-based organization and CSOs, GCSS conducted sixteen dialogue forums attended by over 2,000 participants from the local communities half of which were women highlighting the increasing role and participation of women in local conflict resolution. The participants identified and discussed ways to promote peaceful coexistence and stability among all groups in the communities. While also recommending actions points and stabilization priorities to achieve lasting peace and stability.

Given the complexity of the social and natural resources dynamics relating to the conflict in Saraf Umra, the peace dialogue forums helped promote inter-communal dialogue; restoring trust and mutual respect amongst all groups. The forums also led to the establishment (or enhancement) of local peace mechanisms and joint teams to address concerns of farmers and herders. It was noted that farm destruction incidents were on the decrease as about 300 incidents were reported in Birka Siera alone in addition to more than five violent inter-communal clashes over crop

destruction reported to Sudan Police Forces (SPF) in Kala administrative unit. As a result of GCSS' active interventions in Saraf Umra area, intercommunal tensions between Fur and Northern Rezeigat (the two main farming and pastoral groups) which erupted during recent political developments were mitigated while joint action plans with locality authorities, APC, and PCC to protect the harvest season were developed. Collaboration and coordination between UNAMID and local interlocutors were further enhanced with an understanding of the role and mandate of UNAMID in the area. GCSS has continued to use the dialogue forums as viable platforms to help entrench the culture of peace among all groups in the locality.

Overall, GCSS interventions especially the dialogue forums have helped establish (or enhance) effective early warning and alert systems in the local communities. The active collaboration and coordination with the local authorities and NA also enhanced their capacities and local confidence in the mechanisms resulting in several positive developments including the seizure of livestock involved in crop destructions incidents until the owners pay fair compensation to the farmers, although much is still required to prevent nomads from forcibly grazing their livestock in farms and destroying crops. There has been a significant increase in women and youth participation due to GCSS' active engagement with leaders of both groups, this development will enhance ownership and sustainability of local peace agreements and conflict resolution mechanisms.

Community leaders in many areas, especially hotspots, reported that the dialogue forums have helped to address existing intercommunal tensions by encouraging the various groups to engage in meaningful dialogue. Many of the communities have requested GCSS to conduct more dialogue forums to strengthen intercommunal relations, although current COVID-19 restrictions on public gatherings have led to a temporary suspension of several interventions including the dialogue forums.

In response to the current situation GCSS reviewed some of its activities and will continue to assess the possibility of conducting low-level interventions where critically needed, respecting current COVID-19 restrictions, due to the feedback and demand from the community for the dialogue forums. In addition to promoting meaningful dialogue between farming and pastoral groups, the dialogue forums enhance community stabilization reducing the likelihood for relapse to conflict. ●

South and West Darfur



Joint UNAMID-FAO project on demarcation of migratory routes and provision of basic services to nomads and farmers in South and West Darfur

On 31 May, UNAMID Joint Special Representative, Mr. Jeremiah Kingsley Mamabolo, and FAO Representative in Sudan, Mr. Ahmadu Babagana, signed a revised Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations represented by UNAMID and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for the implementation of a joint project on “Strengthening local capacities to address intercommunal violence and to find sustainable solutions to its root causes in Darfur, Sudan”.

The project was developed by UNAMID’s Governance and Community Stabilization Section (GCSS), FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources of Sudan to prevent and mitigate recurrent conflicts between farmers and nomadic herders in Darfur through the demarcation of migratory routes and camping sites, and providing basic services along the routes and corridors for both nomads and farmers.

In order to reduce tensions between farmers and nomadic herders caused by incidents of crop destructions, the project will establish and demarcate 15 camping sites along migratory routes in seven hotspot localities in South Darfur,

and will demarcate 20 km of the Arara - Gerjira migratory route in West Darfur. Five peaceful co-existence committees (PCCs) will be established to safeguard and strengthen the relationship between farmers and herders

For increased access to basic social services for pastoral communities, the project will also rehabilitate four haffirs (natural water reservoirs) along migratory routes; rehabilitate 20 handpumps and one borehole along migratory routes in seven localities in South Darfur; construct or rehabilitate six veterinary clinics along migratory corridors in hotspot areas; construct four healthcare centers along the migratory corridors in hotspot areas; construct four police posts along the migratory corridors; establish ten hand dug wells along migratory corridors in West Darfur; and construct one basic school along migratory corridors in West Darfur.

The project is funded by the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund in the amount of \$1,128,581 and will be implemented in the course of 12 months. It is expected that as a result of the project, the clearly demarcated migratory routes and camping sites will contribute to reduced crop destruction incidents. ●

GCSS Improves access to Water Points in Jebal Marra

Rehabilitation of 13 Water Points and Installation of Hand Water Pumps in Guildo and Rockero localities;

Tensions over scarce water resources remain one of the root causes of intercommunal conflicts across the region, which is further exacerbated by the rising human and livestock populations. In several areas, particularly identified hotspots, GCSS has implemented key interventions aimed to mitigate this issue by promoting shared access to this valuable natural resource.

Following a conflict in Rockero area, the mostly farming communities around Guildo and Rokero localities were displaced to Rokero capital of North Jabel Marra Locality and to Gulido Many IDPs also return to the area for seasonal farming activities adding pressure to the existing water resources in the area, resulting in tensions between the host community and returnees/IDPs. Furthermore, women and children have to walk long distances to fetch water due to the scarcity in the area, placing them at risk. The few humanitarian actors in the area are not in the water pillar. Following an assessment of the area, the community leaders requested UNAMID to rehabilitate the existing water hand pumps to support the community and reduce tensions between the host



community and IDPs. The Mission subsequently implemented the project through national NGO “Al-hima Organization for Social Development”. As part of the project activities, the NGO conducted “On-The Job” training for 30 youths from the area who will be responsible for maintaining the water hand pumps. The training is a key part of the project as there are no technicians in the remote area. Some lessons learned from the project include: projects of this nature help build trust between the Mission and the community: the training will enhance the skills and livelihoods of the youth and build ownership since they are responsible for repairing the hand pumps; joint responsibility to maintain the hand pumps will reduce conflict in the community and risks encountered by women and children who no longer need to walk long distances to fetch water and the project will greatly increase water resources in the area. ●



GCSS LEARNING HUB: Defining DDR and civilian disarmament

Questions from readers of the “GCSS in Action” Newsletter: **“What are the terms “disarmament”, “demobilization”, “reintegration” and “civilian disarmament” refer to?”**

A: “Disarmament” is the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. responsible arms management programmes.

“Demobilization” is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups. The first stage of demobilization may extend from the processing of individual combatants in temporary centers to the massing of troops in camps designated for this purpose (cantonment sites, encampments, assembly areas or barracks). The second stage of demobilization encompasses the support package provided to the demobilized, which is called “reinsertion”.

“Reinsertion” is the assistance offered to ex-

combatants during demobilization but prior to the longer-term process of reintegration. Reinsertion is a form of transitional assistance to help cover the basic needs of ex-combatants and their families and can include transitional safety allowances, food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term education, training, employment and tools. While reintegration is a long-term, continuous social and economic process of development, reinsertion is short-term material and/or financial assistance to meet immediate needs and can last up to one year.

“Reintegration” is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open timeframe, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility, and often necessitates long-term external assistance.

“Civilian disarmament” refers to removal of arms and ammunition from the civilian population. This is mostly achieved by voluntary surrender, sometimes motivated by the wish to avoid later confiscation and prosecution. It is common to also

offer positive inducements, i.e. rewards in the form of food, tools, wells, livelihood projects, vouchers, tokens of appreciation or cash.

Supporting the peace process

Options for the implementation of the DDR process in Sudan

From 2010 to 2019, UNAMID and the UN Country Team supported the implementation of the DDR process in Darfur. During this period, the Mission supported the disarmament and demobilization of up to 11,000 ex-combatants from signatory armed movements of the Darfur Peace Agreement (2006) and the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (2011). Abiding by the security arrangements provisions within these frameworks, the Mission provided technical assistance, financial, logistics and capacity building support to the Sudan DDR Commission (SDDRC) and other relevant counterparts. The process was complemented through the development of Community Stabilization Projects (CSPs), aimed at reducing community violence and preventing the recruitment of at-risk youth by non-state armed groups. UNAMID also supported arms control initiatives led by the Government. Based on available funds, the UNCT provided reintegration support to eligible individuals (30% of the demobilized caseload).

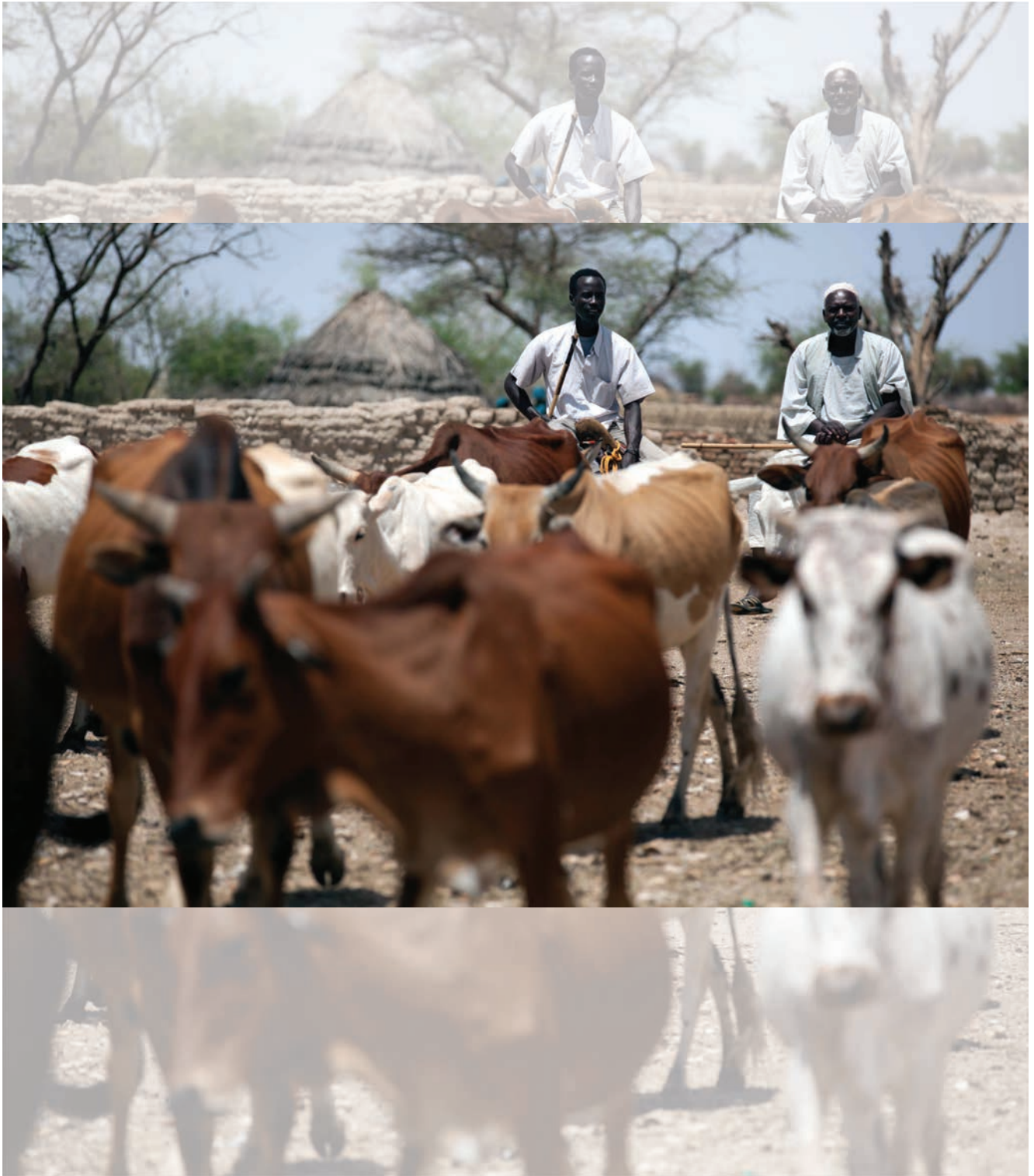
Since the signing of the Juba Declaration on 11 September 2019, the transitional Government and Sudanese armed movements, including the Darfur armed groups with the exception of Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid, have engaged in peace negotiations. Following this milestone, the Security Council mandated UNAMID to support the peace process, the implementation of future agreements as well as peacebuilding activities. Upon this premise, the current planning process for DDR is aligned with requests from Sudanese authorities and recommendations presented in the “Special Report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and a follow-on presence” S/2020/202 of 12 March 2020.

Ensuring a successful DDR process will require promoting an integrated planning process. Based on this assumption, UNAMID, in coordination with all stakeholders, is currently engaging in the following areas: a) provision of technical support to peace talks to ensure the inclusion of realistic and implementable provisions in future agreements; b) provision of strategic, operational and programmatic support towards the design and effective implementation of the DDR programme, including the development of a National DDR Strategy in collaboration with the Sudan DDR Commission (SDDRC); c) implementation of community stabilization/violence reduction projects, in coordination with UNCT, to improve conditions for DDR activities and prevent the resurgence of violence; d) provision of strategic and technical support on weapons and ammunition management (WAM) to mitigate arms proliferation in targeted communities; e) development of institutional capacity, including training and resource mobilization.

Past DDR processes offered a series of lessons learned on operational challenges, coordination gaps and funding limitations. These aspects are being taken into account throughout the current planning process and as part of transition from UNAMID to UNITAMS. The adoption of a country-wide mandate by UNITAMS will require developing tailored interventions according to local dynamics and institutional capacities. Innovative approaches and coordination modalities should be promoted to ensure permanent presence and/or rapid deployment of DDR offices in the regions. This should be based on a clear understanding of expectations of the non-state armed groups and the existing national and international capacities to fulfill commitments. Effective cooperation arrangements with UNCT and international financial institutions will be critical to prevent programmatic gaps and ensure resources for the long-term reintegration.

PHOTO JOURNAL

GCSS IN ACTION



Pastoralists guide their cattle to water source in Khor Abeche, South Darfur



Chief GCSS commissions a community-based initiative in North Darfur.



Displaced people collect millet they had stored underground in Khor Abeche, South Darfur



UNAMID patrol provides protection to farmers and herders in Golo, Central Darfur



UNAMID trains 50 women in food processing in North Darfur.




UNAMID conducts COVID-19 intervention in five IDP camps in Zalingei, Central Darfur





Dialogue forum between farming and pastoral groups in Saraf Umra, North Darfur




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