

SYMPOSIUM REPORT

Sudan Civil Society Symposium

Canada, June 2000

1 Introduction

The **Sudan Civil Society Symposium** was held in **Calgary** on **June 5** and in **Ottawa** on **June 7-9, 2000**. It was organized by the **Sudan Inter Agency Reference Group (SIARG)**, a network of Canadian NGOs working on Sudan. **Freedom Quest International** and **Partnership Africa Canada** played major co-ordination roles in **Calgary** and **Ottawa** respectively. The organizers gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the **Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)**, the **Centre for Foreign Policy Development** of the **Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)** and the member organizations of **SIARG** in making this Symposium possible.

The **Sudan Civil Society Symposium** provided an opportunity for views and opinions of Sudanese people to be heard with regard to Canadian involvement in Sudan, and an opportunity to discuss the effectiveness of existing activities and ideas for peace and development among invited non-combatant representatives from Sudanese civil society. The Symposium also aimed to explore and highlight appropriate responses among the Canadian public and private sectors with respect to their conduct and activities in enhancing the peace process in Sudan. In addition, the Symposium provided an opportunity to explore the role of Sudanese civil society and the international community in the promotion of peace within Sudan.

The first part of the **Sudan Civil Society Symposium**, **Forum I**, was held in **Calgary** on **June 6** with more than 160 people attending. The participation of the Sudanese community in western Canada was acknowledged and welcomed. A pre-Forum meeting of the Sudanese community was very important to building relations and sharing information among its members; it was also effective in enhancing the dialogue between participants and the speakers at the Forum.

The second part of the **Sudan Civil Society Symposium**, **Forum II**, was held in **Ottawa** on **June 7-9** and brought together Sudanese civil society representatives to air views on the many issues concerning the conflict in Sudan and to discuss the possibilities of strengthening the peace process. Representatives from Canadian NGOs, Sudanese community groups in Canada, the Government of Canada and the diplomatic community participated in the Forum. The Forum deepened the commitment of the participants and organizations to assisting the situation in Sudan and articulated ways to work on concrete issues together. The Forum also offered recommendations to the Government of Canada and other bodies concerning issues and policies that require urgent attention and renewed efforts to further the efforts for peace. Several additional meetings also took place in **Ottawa** and **Toronto** between the Sudanese participants and the Sudanese community in these cities.