

Forum participants endorsed the Recommendations of the Harker Mission Report. Hope was expressed that its Recommendations would be accepted and implemented by the Government of Canada. In particular, participants mentioned frequently that Canadians must be encouraged to demand more significant action by the Government of Canada. This action should stem the flow of oil revenue to the GOS. Canada must also play a more enlightened and pro-active role, particularly as it is also a member of the IPF.

4 Forum II - Ottawa

Forum II, held in Ottawa on June 7-9, brought together civil society voices from Sudan, Canada, the US and Europe for nearly three days to air views on the many issues concerning the conflict in Sudan and to discuss the possibilities of strengthening the peace process. Representatives of the Government of Canada and the diplomatic community were welcomed to the Forum.

4.1 Review of the Context

Participants heard of the tradition of and experience with national democratic institutions in Sudan and gained a particular appreciation of the democratic history and successes throughout the country, noting that twice in Sudan's history since independence, civil society forces have brought about periods of democratic government. Specific reference was made to the role of women in the life of the nation, their role in the history and the structures of civil society and the new role of women in search of peace - pushing the peace process from within civil society. It was also noted that undemocratic regimes and war plagued the country and the results of war have dealt Sudan a severe legacy of destruction, dislocation, uneven development and indeed underdevelopment.

In order to bring about significant and positive change in Sudan, elements of Sudanese society have attempted to bring about peace. There must be an acknowledgement of the long history of negotiation and dialogue towards peaceful settlement of issues, accompanied by great frustration and protraction of the armed conflict.

The participants heard of the recognition that should be given to the tremendous size of the problems and issues facing the people and the parties in the Sudan conflict. The details on the death and displacement of people in the Sudanese conflict are staggering and underline the call for urgent international attention to the requirements of the peace process.

There was great concern among the participants at the Forum that the Mediation Committee of IGAD is not making adequate progress. Many details of the IGAD process were described, as were ideas that can be considered by the IPF members as they discuss their next moves in the IGAD process. The parties heard a strong rationale for the IGAD process to be used as the main initiative for mediation of the conflict. Participants heard many views on the Egyptian-Libyan process and there was a view that there should be only one process at the diplomatic, international level.

There was concern by the Sudanese civil society representatives that the principle of self determination must not be abrogated, that it is of primary concern. Participants heard that the Interim Period after cessation of hostilities and the Referendum on Unity or Separation are key steps in securing an enduring peace, and that these should be taken in a context within which democratic norms must be practised vigorously.