



## ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES CONFERENCE DES EGLISES DE TOUTE L'AFRIQUE

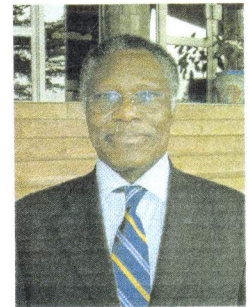
### Office of the Ecumenical Special Envoy to Sudan

An Initiative of the All Africa Conference of Churches, the Sudan Ecumenical Forum  
and the Sudan Council of Churches

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The Ecumenical Special Envoy to Sudan, Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia is deeply concerned that whatever the outcome of the referendum process in South Sudan, the result will be disputed. He warns that this dispute must be anticipated and mechanisms to resolving it must be agreed upon and put in place fast.

This results from the increasing fears by the people of Sudan and the international community that the referenda for southern Sudan and Abyei are behind schedule and they may not be held on time and in a free and fair manner. Of particular concern is the 60% voter turn-out threshold for the referendum in the South. The manner in which establishing the eligibility of voters residing outside southern Sudan, especially in the north and in the diaspora, presents serious challenges. The lack of trust between the parties may lead to accusations of rigging. Any doubts in the south about the credibility of the referendum outcome could herald a return to war.



*Rev. Dr. Samuel  
Kobia*

The Special Envoy is calling for a new sense of urgency in implementing the referenda instruments (including civic and voter education) and in negotiations about post-referendum arrangements, including border identification, oil, citizenship, minority rights and security.

He therefore welcomes the appointment by the UN of a panel headed by President Benjamin Mkapa and believes that there is an urgent need for close monitoring of the implementation of various instruments by Sudanese civil society and the international community to begin immediately.

In addition he is gravely concerned that the referendum in Abyei and the popular consultation in Southern Kordofan are both even further behind schedule than the southern referendum. Both must be speeded up through honouring of Agreements including the Permanent Court of Arbitration's ruling on Abyei. The Special Envoy says the urgency is aggravated by reports of military escalations in these areas.

Dr. Kobia is expressing fears that real danger looms large if the popular consultation will not meet the aspirations of many of the people in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. This is because the consultations will be expressed through the elected members and not directly by the people, and due to the flawed election process, they may not truly be representative of the view of the population. There being no mechanism for resolving disputes and with many people

feeling betrayed by the CPA, a volatile and unstable situation may ensue.

Even if north and south were to separate peacefully after the referendum, there is danger that an insurgency may begin amongst disaffected people in the transitional areas, which could soon draw the whole country back to war.

The Special Envoy remains concerned about the security of southerners in the north, before, during and after the referendum. He is also concerned that a humanitarian disaster may arise in the event large numbers of southerners decide to move, whether voluntarily, through fear or through forced migration. The Special Envoy therefore calls for support to those southerners who wish to return to the south, noting that international church agencies (ACT/Caritas) are already mobilising for this eventuality. The Special Envoy has called on these agencies and all humanitarian actors to demonstrate a renewed sense of urgency.

In addition Dr. Kobia is concerned about the ongoing war in Darfur and the general human rights and security climate in northern Sudan.

While the primary responsibility for implementing the CPA remains with the two signatory parties, the Special Envoy believes that the international community also has a responsibility as guarantor of the CPA, and in view of the regional and international implications of a return to war in Sudan. The Troika (USA, UK, Norway), the EU, the AU (and particularly IGAD members), the Arab League and the UN bear particular responsibility. The Special Envoy also calls for the constructive intervention of China (as a major economic partner of Sudan), South Africa (in view of President Thabo Mbeki's role as head of the African Union High Implementation Panel) and Kenya (as the guarantor of the protocol on Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile). The Special Envoy is willing to engage with these states and organisations and to offer his good offices to facilitate collaboration and understanding.

Finally, the Special Envoy would like to commend the role of the Church in peace in Sudan. The Church spearheaded the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement, advocated strongly for the right of self-determination to be included in the CPA, and has worked at all levels on the ground to bring peace between communities and political factions in Sudan, particularly through the successful People to People Peace Process in southern Sudan. The Sudanese Church, with its international partners, has recommitted itself to working for peace. The Church will launch a new incarnation of the People to People Peace Process in the south and the transitional areas, bringing together communities and also political and military leaders in a spirit of dialogue, reconciliation and peace.