



IPI POLICY FORUM

POSTELECTION SUDAN: THE WAY FORWARD

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TRANSCRIPT EDITED BY IPI

Edward Luck:

Good morning, everyone, and thank you for joining us on a somewhat inclement morning. We have a topic of real importance and urgency in terms of postelection Sudan, the way forward. We are delighted to have Erik Solheim here as our featured speaker, the Norwegian Minister for Environment and International Development. I will give him a fuller introduction in a moment.

I should say there's a slight change of tune in our program. We lost one speaker, Salah Hassan, late yesterday. He has taken ill and unfortunately had to go to the hospital, but we hope it's nothing too serious. And the weather got the better of our representative from South Sudan, Ezekiel Gatkuoth, who spent three hours on the tarmac rather late last night coming up from Washington. We did -- I should say Meiko -- booked a 3:00 a.m. train for him, but I think by that point, he was a little too exhausted.

So we're very pleased to have Adonia Ayebare, the Director of our Africa Program and a long-time Ugandan diplomat to serve as the commentator. So I think we can have a somewhat more relaxed pace of discussion and I think we'll get through all of the issues this morning. We will run until 9:45. First, Minister Solheim will give his presentation, then Adonia will make a few comments and raise some questions, and then we'll have several rounds of questions and comments from the audience and responses from the panel.

Erik Solheim, as I mentioned, is a Norwegian Minister of Environment and International Development. Earlier, he was the Minister of International Development, but apparently, his talents are so respected in Oslo that they pushed two ministries together to give him a larger portfolio -- both Environment and Development, and I can't think of two issues more pressing and important these days. He served for more than a decade as a parliamentarian in the Storting. He has also had a distinguished record in peace diplomacy, dealing with Sri Lanka and helping to move forward that agreement some years ago and more recently with Nepal and Sudan. Wearing his climate change and environmental hat, he has been in the forefront of Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative.

We're delighted that he's here and we're delighted that he did not try to the train up or take the plane from Washington overnight and is here today -- one, to see the Secretary-General a little later in the day, and to share his views with us on Norwegian policy towards the rebuilding of Sudan. Norway is one of the largest donors to Sudan and Sudan is one of the largest recipients of Norwegian assistance. So for political, environmental, and development reasons, for all of those, we're delighted that you could be here and to share your views with us this morning. So, Minister Solheim.

Erik Solheim:

Okay, I feel a little reluctant to speak about such an important topic as Sudan to such a distinguished audience where most certainly there are a lot of people with a lot more knowledge on Sudan than I can ever claim. This, of course, happens to politicians all the time. You have to go to hospitals to tell the doctors how to do surgery, to the farmers -- tell them how to farm the land, et cetera, et cetera, then always take refuge. What the former Norwegian Prime Minister once said when asked, "Who is an expert?" And he replied, "An expert is a person very far from

home." On that basis, I can stand in New York as a Norwegian speaking about Sudan.

First of all, why should we take an interest in Sudan? I think it's obvious to most people, because it's one of the biggest countries in Africa. It's one of the most important historic countries in Africa historically, the first nation, basically, to gain independence. It has seen enormous suffering over the years from the war. It is a nation with certain progress and everyone and anyone going to Khartoum can of course see the difference between Khartoum and many other African capitals. There's a lot of development going on in Khartoum as well as in other parts of Sudan. Of course, this has been hampered by the war, but still there is progress in Sudan. Though I do not believe in the notion that the conflict is the mother of all conflicts -- I sometimes am told that the Palestinian conflict is the mother of all conflicts, I think it's completely wrong. It's an important conflict, but not the mother of all other conflicts. And the Sudanese conflict is not the mother of all other African conflicts, but it's one of the definitely key conflicts.

I mean, there are now two basic regions of conflict in Africa. One around the Great Lakes and the other around Sudan. And if the worst were to happen in Sudan, a new big war, it's very, very hard to see how not most or maybe even all of the neighboring nations will be affected in one way or the other. Let's repeat, I mean, that would be Libya, that would be Chad, Central African Republic, Uganda, of course, Kenya, Ethiopia, even Eritrea. I mean, there is such an interest in Sudan and they will all feel affected and they will all possibly be drawn into a conflict. So Sudan is extremely important to us, and that's why we should engage in doing our utmost to secure peace and also prosperity in Sudan.

As you all know, elections have been held in Sudan last week. They are on the verge of announcing the result, because we do not know the result as we stand here, but in reality, we know the result. I mean, Bashir has been reelected, as I'm quite certain, by a large majority of the votes in the North. Salva Kiir has been elected the President of southern Sudan with a similar majority in the South. And there has been a participation of approximately 60%. The election has largely been peaceful. It will not live up to international standards, but still, I believe it has been and could be seen as a major step forward in the history of Sudan.

If we look to what the two main observer missions of the international community, the Carter-led mission and the European Union-led mission say, they say basically this -- it has not been acceptable from all international standards, but it's the first election in twenty-four years in a peaceful atmosphere and it has been a major step forward.

I think also we should allow ourselves to accept the fact that President Bashir is not largely unpopular in Sudan, as most people in the West tend to believe. He has real support in Sudan, and he may also have been elected even if the election was up to every international standard. *The New York Times* produced an article with that content a few days back, just to underline that point. Because no one will know, but since the overriding attitude in the West has been that he would have lost in a free and fair election, we should allow ourselves to give that another thought, I think.

Then, what is now, of course, to me the main prize, the main issue, is the referendum in southern Sudan, according to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, that should take place in January of next year. The new overwhelming impression I got from our last visit to Sudan was that everyone is now talking about this referendum, everyone is accepting that it will take place, and everyone is expecting that the outcome of the referendum will be separation. I did not speak to any top leader in Khartoum with another perspective than this. They all said, "We favor to make unity attractive. We will favor continued union of Sudan, but we understand that most likely the outcome of the referendum would be a vote for secession." That is, I think, new, and I think that will also be ... the atmosphere into which we will have to plan for what to do.

The referendum may or may not end up in secession. Under old circumstances, the international community should assist Sudan in preparing for the main issues, which will have to be resolved whether the referendum and happened separation or not, and what are these main issues? I think the number one issue, and that is the issue

where Norway has the potential of giving the biggest contribution is the issue of oil. Oil is by far the most important income for Sudan. Except for aid, I think oil is approximately 98-99% of the budget of southern Sudan, but oil is also fifty plus for northern Sudan. So the oil is absolutely crucial, whatever happens.

I think we should take the view that anything but an agreed outcome on the oil for the -- hopefully prior to if not after the referendum -- is catastrophe for both South and North. You may easily find people in the South with the view that, "The resources belong to us, the southerners. And we should have it and we should not give in on that matter." But let's contemplate the possibility that you accept that fact. The problem, of course, is that there is no way of getting the oil out of southern Sudan except through the north. Yes, let's then assume that someone could make a pipeline through Kenya. Let's give it to the Chinese to do it, and they will possibly be the most effective that can probably do it in maybe four years. No Westerners could do it that rapidly. I don't know whether the Chinese would accept, but that's the thought. If that were to happen, you made such a pipeline in four years, it will mean that southern Sudan will be without income from oil for four years. That loss of income you would need many, many, many years to compensate. I think you would have to look at least twenty years into the future to get to break even for that deal. So for southern Sudan to be staunch on this matter, make no compromise, will be absolutely self-destructing, as I can see it.

For the north, it's, of course, a lot of the same. The oil is in the border areas. Some of it will obviously be in the South, but they can benefit from this being transported through the North. So there is absolutely every objective reason for them to find an agreed, shared deal for the oil. Second issue, which has to be resolved is of course the border demarcation. Here there are lots of issues, but mainly, I mean, most of the border demarcation is in very sparsely populated areas, where there will be not a lot of interest, and there is no such thing that there has to be a 1-1 relationship between oil and border. But you can have a 1-1 in the sense that you draw a border on the map and whatever is south of that belongs to the South; what's north of it belongs to the North, but you can of course also share the oil revenue in many other fashions than in strict accordance with a border line, as for the parties to agree to such a thing, but I think it's a crucial issue to bring up in debate.

Norway has provided a lot of information to the two parties on oil. Main reason for that is, of course, the huge difference in knowledge, northern Sudan being a very developed state with a good bureaucracy, Ministry of Oil and Energy with a lot of information. Why do southerners have really no knowledge whatsoever on that? I mean, from the beginning, the southern experts on oil have absolutely zero knowledge of the field. So for them to get neutral information, what is expected down there, how can they be produced, what will be the price, all this gives a better way of finding a deal than to have neutral information.

There are indications also that the oil reserves of Sudan are less than most people think, which could possibly be some -- have some calming down effect. Of course, adding to oil and border demarcation, let's also focus somewhat on the border demarcation, because that's also a very important -- I think it's extremely important that the future border between North and South will be a soft border, and that's also a very important part if they were to separate. Should there be a soft border -- let's take the example of the RBA. I was there a few months back, speaking to the Miseria polit -- Miseria group. I mean, Miseria basically being a northern nomad group who had for -- I don't know how long, but for centuries -- for that matter, even for millennia, I don't know -- brought the cattle from the North to the South according to whether it's rainy or dry season. If you draw a map, a line on the map separating these into two states, making certain that the Miseria have to stay in the North, because it will be catastrophe for that group. I mean, this is the oldest conflict ever in human history between nomads and agriculturalists.

And if you add to that problem a line on a map, a border -- if it's soft, maybe not a problem, if it's a tough, hard border, then enormous problem for that group. Such a group can, of course, be utilized by outside forces, say Khartoum, for political purposes, but it's also a real, live issue to protect the rights of such a nomad group. Not all southerners will accept that they should -- their interest should be taken care of, and I think it's absolutely crucial.

So oil, border demarcation, the issue of the water of the river Nile is of course a key issue, not only for North and South, but for a number of other nations as well -- Egypt being one of them. And solutions will have to be found to that matter, what to do with the debt that has been built up over the years for Sudan. Should that be shared? Of course northerners will think it should be shared. Southerners will think that this has been paying for weapons with whom the northerners attack the South, so we should not take part in the debt cancellation effort is another issue. And finally, I think a very, very important issue is the citizenship. What will happen to the two million southerners living in the North? What will happen to the much smaller group, but still, northerners living in the South? This is not at all clear.

Again, just to give you one example, I was in southern Kurdufan, some SPLM-controlled areas there, and every person you spoke to in that area believed that they, after a possible separation, would belong to the South. Everyone in this group, looking at the map, would know that they would stay in the North, because it's clearly what's defined through every treaty as part of northern Sudan in the case of separation. But still, the popular mood was that, "We are southerners." So I mean, these kind of potentials for conflicts are there, and the citizenship rights and political future of these southerners will -- staying on the North is a key, key issue. So this is the number of issues which we'll have to find ways of resolving. Very clearly, the responsibility for resolving it are they government in Khartoum, the National Congress Party, and the SPLM. They will have to resolve it, but they should get assistance from the international community.

Then, as you know, there are now numerous mediation groups, efforts, environments, suggestions. I mean, there is no lack of media, just to put it that way. Still they call Carl Bildt, now Swedish Foreign Minister, he was the UN envoy to Bosnia in the 1990s was asking, "What were your main problems in Bosnia in those days?" And he answered me that the main problem was that we should have had a mediator to mediate between the mediators. So maybe that's what will be needed in Sudan. There are, as I said, a number of initiatives. I think the most likely scen -- I mean, it's the IGAD group of the neighboring nations, which has been a key for a long period of time, is the troika of the United States, UK, and Norway. It's the American-led efforts by Scott Gration. It's the UN team on the ground, led by Mr. Heile Menkerios. It's the African union team led by Mr. Mbeki with the former President of Burundi, Mr. Buyayo also is a key member of that team. There are so many different initiatives.

At the end of the day, it's the National Congress Party and the SPLM who will define and decide what kind of assistance they need. They must make the decision, and everyone else should obey to that decision. However, I think there are lots of reasons to believe, at the moment, that the big initiative will be the most important initiative around which most of the others will congregate. It's not -- again, it will be decided by Bashir and Salva Kiir at the end of the day, but still, it's the African initiative, and seems to be the African initiative is supported by most or all African nations. So at least we should do whatever we can to support that initiative and look into how everyone else can fit into a bigger puzzle.

Then, finally, if a referendum is happening, or when -- not if -- when it's happening, if it's ending up in a separate state of southern Sudan, of course that will be, as we all know, a very weak state. It will be the first new African state after colonialism, if we make the exception of Eritrea, which was not defined as a colonial break-out state. It's the first new African state. It's a very weak state. To have a few, to have a good top cadre of decent leaders would solve a key, as the cornerstone, but with a number of others as well. There's no problem with the top leadership, but they do not have, at the moment, all the cadres to penetrate and lead at every level in society. They have, except for aid and oil, hardly any income. They are landlocked. I mean, it's very, very difficult to look at any other African nation starting at a more difficult, with a more difficult starting point, so it has the possibility of being a very fragile state. Of course, there is also a lot of ethnic diversity within southern Sudan which can be played upon for those who want to create a conflict.

I think the most important issue is to make certain that the states around supporting this new entity, if it happens. Koivisto, once Finland's President, was once asked to describe Finnish foreign policy. It was the time of the Soviet Union, but still -- I mean, he said, "Finnish foreign policy boils down to four words: good relations to

neighbors." I think that foreign policy served him extremely well. Among the neighbors of course was also Norway, but we never have had a problem between Finland and Norway. That is the number one issue for southern Sudan: good relationship to all neighbors is key if they want to survive as a separate entity. Most important among these neighbors is northern Sudan. But all the rest are also important: Kenya, Uganda, Central Africa, Chad, Ethiopia -- all of them are important. Unless they can have a good relationship to neighbors, there are so many ways of destabilizing a new entity of southern Sudan. If one or two of the neighbors want to destabilize it, the way we're seeing say, Sudan and Chad destabilizing each other, Sudan supporting rebel groups in Chad, Chad supporting rebel groups in Sudan. If again, that kind of practice is allowed to happen, it will be extremely difficult. So we should do whatever possible to assist them in having a good relationship to the rest and the key to that is, of course, to make the relationship between North and South work throughout these difficult times.

Let me sum up. It's very easy to go around meeting journalists and others to find the doomsayers, saying everything is wrong with Sudan, that there are mass murders, all this. And there is some truth in most of it. But there's also another perspective, that SPLM and the NCP has been able to muddle through, throughout this period of Comprehensive Peace Agreement. All the difficulties, normally after a long period of time -- normally in the last second -- but they have come down with some new agreement, bringing the peace process forward. And I still have optimism that that will happen through this year. Most certainly, it will be a chaotic year with a lot of conflicts, a lot of newspaper reports about the peace process being in deep trouble, all this. But still, I doubt that either party see themselves -- an interest in resuming an all-out war, so they have every reason to move on with a good process between them, and have shown ability -- Bashir, Salva Kiir, and all the others -- at the end of the day to find a makeable solution. And we should do whatever we can, UN and others, to assist them in that endeavor. Thank you.

Edward Luck:

Thank you. That was terrific, a very nice way to lay out the issues and wonderfully clear and succinct as well. I would like to point out to those who were huddled in the back one place or another -- we do have about a half dozen seats here, and I think at least one here, so please, if you'd like to have a seat, please do so. Now is a good time to come up and take one. Those of us who are seated feel so guilty looking at people standing up; it's only for our benefit that you're finding a seat, so thank you.

You raise a number of fascinating issues -- one which is very familiar, obviously, to this town is coherence among mediators, a very important issue, particularly when you have a global, regional, sub-regional mix here, as we have at this point. Second of all, in that regard, some people I've talked to recently said, "Well, you know, people think it's a little early to start dealing with this issue. You know, people around the UN like to deal with issues by days or hours or maybe weeks. I don't know if Ambassador of Uganda would agree about the Security Council, but it seems that way. This would not be a bad time for a little early preventive diplomacy, one would think. I thought your idea of a soft border is quite a fascinating one, and those raise a question as to whether that requires any kind of international monitoring or something to allow a soft border to work a little more easily.

Whether or not we have a resource curse I think is something we'll find out, but unfortunately, it looks like the pieces could be there. And I'm glad to see your emphasis on identity politics, which is extremely important. And the emphasis on the neighborhood. I think South Sudan, as you point out, has a disadvantage of having a rather tough neighborhood, but there's no choice in that. And finally, you talked about some people thinking about a doomsday scenario. I find some people around the UN having a rather sanguine look that everything's going to be just fine, but I think probably somewhere in-between is probably where we ought to be, and cautious if at all optimistic.

I should point out that we had invited the Sudanese Mission to speak at the event, and we thought, actually, that was going to happen. At the end, it turns out that didn't happen. We feel a little unusual talking about a country without that country being represented on the podium, but in the end, they found that to be impossible, in this particular case. But as I said, we're delighted to have Adonia Ayebare as a

commentator. We're even more delighted that he joined us about a year ago to direct our Africa program at IPI. He spent many years as a journalist and then as a diplomat from Uganda, was deputy permanent representative here at the UN, and spent eight or nine years working on the peace process in Burundi. So Adonia, we'd welcome your comments and the questions, and then return to the audience.

Adonia Ayebare:

Thank you, Ed. In Africa, we have this saying that -- I came in as a standby commentator, which I'm willing to do, and people at IPI called me last night to speak. You know, in Africa, we say if this was engineered by the people -- if, you know, when you want to justify your actions in Africa, you always say, "People called on me to do this." So who am I to refuse the call of the people at IPI to speak today? Thank you, Minister, for your excellent presentation. I will take a different perspective. I'm sort of bringing another perspective to the minister's comments. For the issue of Sudan -- for years, first, as Ed said, as a journalist, and the benefit of being a journalist, you're not bound by secrecy or you can always record things, what politicians or actors talk about.

The issue of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement is very, very interesting. After it was signed in 2005, as we all know, after a very, very long sort of process, Darfur happened, and everybody took their eyes off the ball and went to Darfur. And a friend of mine told me that the CPA and all the international effort -- the UN, the AU, even IGAD which had brokered it, sort of was this implementation mechanism, which was abandoned, and everybody focused on Darfur, because Darfur was in the news and a lot of things were going on. And I think that was an error brought to the CPA, there was not enough focus on the CPA. Another fact, of course, on the CPA, is that we all tend to focus on the juicy issues around the CPA, which is election and referendum. And last night, when I was asked to speak, I dug up an interview I had with the late John Garang, who was the leader of the SPA. And in that interview, he told me that elections and the referendum -- elections in Sudan and referendum to determine whether the South should go on their own -- was a superficial element of the CPA. They were important, but they were the superficial element of the CPA.

But now, that's what we all hear, of course, as the international community, as diplomats, as journalists, that is what is in the news. But we shouldn't... the CPA had other elements that were really... that's talked about, and that Garang always emphasized and also, the Vice President always -- both of them, at the signing ceremony which I covered -- emphasized the issue of democratic transformation of the Sudan as a main issue, and they sort of unpacked that democratic transformation of Sudan, which was a new constitution, freedom of the press, strong political parties. The issues that happen in a democracy, they also committed that their organizations would be democratic, but now I think, again, at a crucial time in history with the Sudan, when we are all concentrating on elections and the referendum -- and this will come and pass, whatever the outcome -- but the issue of democratic transformation has not been, to me, adequately addressed by the UN, by the international community in general, because everybody wants -- the war has ended. Everybody wants -- some want a new country, others want a united Sudan.

But the issues of democratic transformation, which was in the CPA and those elements I talked about are not -- I think there is a danger that if we don't address them, we will hurry into having a referendum, into having whatever comes out, I must emphasize, and then we are back to square one, because history tells us, you know, you remember that Sudan has had many agreements. The 1972 agreements. There have been a lot of attempts to bring sustainable peace in Sudan, but this has not happened, and I must also add that Sudan has a history of a strong civil society, both North and South. What is their voice into this discourse? What we hear is the Carter Center, The European Union, General Scott, and everybody. But -- and when the current controversy over whether elections should take place, the civil society in Sudan had the position, but that was sort of shoved on the side, and we continued.

So my submission today is that -- and I agree with the minister that at the end of the day, it is the Sudanese stakeholders -- not only the National Congress, but the SPLM, but also other stakeholders. It's their country. And I think we should make sure that their views are reflected in whatever policy sort of instruments we craft for Sudan.

Another point I would raise is, "Which international institution is best suited to address this?" Sometimes you need a mediator to bring the mediators together. I remember in another African conflict which I participated in, in Burundi as a diplomat, as a mediator, the now President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, was a mediator. He said, "Look here, there are a lot of mediators running around here. You know? We need to create somebody in -- I need to create somebody on my team to deal with them, to deal with a lot of mediators, to mediate between the mediators," and in that case of Burundi, the region, the regional countries took charge of the process, and the international community supported them.

The Minister talked about the possibility of the Mbeki Implementation Group taking charge. I don't think, Mr. Minister, there is a consensus yet on that. This is a very, very sensitive sort of African issue. There is a lot of stakeholders. We must not forget that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was brokered by the IGAD countries. And IGAD has a potential role, but we don't hear about IGAD these days, but people like General Sombeo and others can be of help. I think IGAD countries can play a role in bringing the two parties together. Because the IGAD countries really, in the mediation, the sort of -- they know the complexities. They define the problems around power, around self-determination, around resources, the issues the Minister talked about. And we need to look at that, because trying also to bring in a new player, because the international community, whenever there is a fix, they always want to get the lead player, and some of these problems -- the Mbeki Panel did a good job with their report on Darfur -- it was mainly for Darfur, for the ICC. But they sort of covered the elements of the CPA, but they need to generate consensus. And within the AU, you hear a lot of comments about that panel, whether it should take the lead on implementing the CPA.

I'll sum up by saying that the issue of Sudan, of course, is surrounded by all narratives I'm not going to talk about, in the media. The Minister talked about them -- the doomsday scenario, the humanitarian agencies, and the diplomats and all that, but we should put them in the context that the process is ongoing, and it will not end with the referendum. I think for the next five years, Sudan, the way that Sudan political process and democratic transformation takes place will be of great importance for sustainable peace. Thank you.

Edward Luck: Oh, terrific. Thank you. Well, there's a lot to talk about. We have forty-five, fifty minutes, and the way we'd like to do this is get three or four comments, questions, from the audience and then revert to the speakers and do several rounds of that sort. So, who would like to begin? I see a lot of expertise out there. Well, Warren, and please identify yourselves.

Warren Hoge: I'm Warren Hoge, Vice President of External Relations of IPI, and I am not an expert on Sudan, though I've been there several times and have been to Juba, also. My question is about the capacity of a future government -- the economic capacity of a future government of South Sudan. In addition to oil, are there other areas where the South Sudanese economy could develop, and is that an area where the international community could lend assistance?

Edward Luck: I see an IPI alumna, Amy Scott?

Amy Scott: Thank you very much, Minister, and also to Mr. Ayebare. My question is in relation to the referenda. We've seen these elections -- you know, there are various different views on these elections. But the referendum on the independence of the South will have a much more binary outcome, and I think, given the conduct of the elections, we shouldn't rule out that the referendum -- the process of the referendum will also be contested, in that the SPLM will have to improve the logistical arrangements and get a turnout of 60% compared to the roughly 50% we think turned out for the elections. And there could be all kinds of ways in which the process is contested and questioned after the event.

The international community has a key role here, given that if there is going to be an independent South Sudan, it will have to be recognized by the international community. So my question is, "How much chance do you think there is of the international community having a coordinated approach towards setting parameters, sort of for that process?" I could imagine a process being contested, and then you have a similar situation as we've seen with many other countries, where there's

support for independence from some, and not from other parts of the international community, and I'm wondering how we avoid that. I think there's an assumption that the will for independence is so strong that that won't happen, but I'm not sure that we can expect it to be so clear-cut. Thank you.

Edward Luck: And Amy is from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, so she has a particular interest in this issue. John Hirsch, please?

John Hirsch: John Hirsch, also from IPI. First of all, thanks to both of you. I have two questions, primarily for the Minister, and again, I thank you for your remarks. I'd like to ask you to comment on Adonia's remarks about the importance of the democratic transformation of Sudan. Because in all of the newspapers and, you know, and commentary, one rarely hears about democratic transformation. One hears only about oil, and borders, and these specific issues that you very correctly mentioned. So I'd like to have your comment on that.

And secondly, I'd like you to comment on Darfur and how it relates to the referendum. In other words, is a negotiation now going on, or -- in Qatar, and so on. And do you believe that that will have a significant bearing on the outcome of the referendum? Thank you.

Edward Luck: Anyone else for this round? Minister.

Erik Solheim: Obviously, all these are huge issues. I believe -- I think it was an underlying topic in your speech, that it has been a huge problem, that the main issue in Sudan, which is the relationship between North and South, for a long period was overshadowed by Darfur. The international community, everyone focused on Darfur and forgot the most important element, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. I think it's very clear that if Sudan breaks down with a new North-South conflict, it will have an enormous impact on Darfur. The other way around is not so strong. So we should keep the main prize very clear, and that is the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Democratic transformation of the Sudan is of course something we all support, but we should also remember that it will take time. It cannot be done in one day, and in particular, southern Sudan is a very, very fragile entity, and what does democracy mean, and freedom of speech mean, in a society where hardly anyone can read a newspaper -- a very limited number, and hardly anyone can afford to buy a newspaper, and hardly anyone can afford to print a newspaper? We must start with the basics and accept that this is a process over time. Democracy, in the sense that all the worst abuses should be avoided -- that's another matter that I think is a clear issue we should bring up with all leaders. But democracy cannot be installed in one day in Sudan, as it was not installed in one day in the United States or Norway. It is an ongoing, long process, from my perspective.

On the topic brought up by the lady -- sorry, I can't remember your name, but about the referendum being contested. Obviously, that's a possibility, but the redeeming factor is the fact that the entire international community has accepted the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. We should stick to that, we should stick to the timeline of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and we should not deviate from that. The day you start deviating from that, you bring yourself into a lot of uncertainty. And since every nation in the world has accepted a Comprehensive Peace Agreement as the basis -- it's accepted by the international community in a number of different ways -- we should stick to that. That would be the most essential guarantee against a lot of problems.

Economic potential of southern Sudan -- I mean, if you look to the rest of Africa, of course, we know that landlocked nations with a very dangerous and difficult neighborhood generally have problems. It's not -- and they will depend upon development, also, the neighboring states, for their future. I mean, except for northern Sudan. Of course, Kenya, which is also at the moment, a fairly fragile place, is the most easy way to the ocean. Of course, southern Sudan would depend also very much -- they will depend much more on the development of nations like Uganda and Kenya, which is so close, and much more developed at the moment. As I can see it, the economic future of southern Sudan cannot be seen in isolation. It must be related to the entire neighborhood. I mean, if you move the perspective to the southern part of Africa -- except for conflict in Zimbabwe, there is

no wars and no severe conflicts south of the Great Lakes. That has been of enormous positive impact to the entire region, where a number of nations now have very, very high economic growth. And of course, if you can create something like that in the neighborhood, it will impact upon southern Sudan.

In isolation, southern Sudan has the potential for tourism and they have animals. Of course, agriculture is key. They have some raw materials. There are definitely potentials, but there is no way southern Sudan can be successful except in a neighborhood which impacts positively on the places I can see at the moment. Because aid and oil is as close to 100% of the income as you can ever come when it comes to the state budget. Of course for the people, state farming is the most essential.

Edward Luck: Terrific. Thank you very much. Adonia? Comments? No, no comments. Okay. Alfred, I saw you first.

Alfred Ndabarasa: Thank you very much. My name is Alfred Ndabarasa, from the Mission of Rwanda. You pointed out that the northern government is slightly more, rather, more efficient - a more efficient bureaucracy. In that respect, given the oil revenues, would the southern Sudanese sustain a war, given that they northerners have more abilities to utilize the oil resources? And would that also be, perhaps, a deterrence for war?

Edward Luck: I'm sorry -- you're saying they're exhausted in terms of ..?

Alfred Ndabarasa: What I sense is the northern government has abilities to utilize the oil more effectively in event of war, of a war situation. But if the southerners realize that that is going to be an issue, wouldn't that also be a deterrence? Thank you.

Edward Luck: Good. So oil is a deterrent in this case. Please, Ambassador Rugunda.

Ruhakana Rugunda: I am Rugunda, the PR of Uganda. I want to thank to the Minister. I think you have made a very powerful presentation on the Sudan, especially the facts, I think they are consistent with what we know. You did make reference to a soft border, and also reference to sharing the oil resources after the referendum, even if the South decided to be independent. I would be interested to hear a little more as to what you see as a possible formula. Secondly, you did highlight the capacity of the people of Sudan, both in Khartoum and in Juba, to somehow be able to overcome complicated situations. And I think you are right -- the signing of the CPA is a very good case, and the recent argument to increase the representation of the South in the Sudanese parliament to be able to block constitutional changes is, I think, another, so I think the people of Sudan have been very resilient in sorting out their problems, and I'm confident that they will continue to do so.

You also mentioned the fragility of southern Sudan. I think that southern Sudan is perhaps potentially more stable than many people tend to believe because it has been in conflict for the last fifty years, and in the fifty years of conflict, you could ensure that you are not fragile. I think if you see the development that is already taking place in Juba, in the short time of peace that they have had, it really indicates that these people are likely to stabilize.

The final comment is to thank Norway. Norway has been one of the very reliable countries in terms of being honest brokers in conflict situations in many areas, but definitely in Africa. And I commend that and I encourage you to continue. And Mr. Ayebare, thank you for your contribution and highlighting the issue of transformation of the Sudan.

Edward Luck: Thank you. I'm sure that's the kind of comment that the Minister welcomes. If I could add a question to that, because it reminds me that the Security Council is about to renew its consultations on Sudan, and I wonder, Minister, what you think would be a useful posture by the Security Council at this point? Is it further action, or no action? A standing watch? Some kind of a statement, some kind of a resolution, or nothing at this point in time? I would be interested in your thoughts on that. Please, right over here. If you'd please identify yourself.

Adam Day: Thanks to both of you. I had a few questions --

Edward Luck:

I'm sorry, if you could identify yourself?

Adam Day:

So sorry. Adam Day, from DPKO. The first question I have has to do with the sanctions regime and relationship of the international community with Sudan, post-referendum. As we know, there are a lot of sanctions and restrictions on trade with Sudan currently, and I don't think that the elections will be a cause of any change of that posture. Do you see any potential change, if there is a secession, between the relationship with the international community with a separate southern Sudan in terms of the sanctions regime and trade with the oil and other goods?

The second is kind of a related question, which is that oil is one issue, but water is another serious issue, and there doesn't seem to be a lot of clarity on the Nile Basin Treaty and how that will play out in the referendum, period, and what the stance of the regional players will be, on the issue of water, and especially -- people talk about the neighbors. I haven't heard the word Egypt yet in this discussion. And the third is to build on your comment on what the most useful posture of the UN would be, post-referendum. I'd really like your views on peacekeeping versus other UN kind of initiatives that could be useful post-referendum -- what you see in terms of the best possible role for something like UNMIS or something different than UNMIS. Whatever you think on that would be very useful for us. Thanks.

Edward Luck:

That's a lot of good questions. So you have thirty-five minutes to answer them. I have a feeling you won't require that, but then we take another round. Yeah, I will come back. I see you for next round. There'll be time for other rounds. And also, Adonia, you may want to say something about the Nile Basin, as well. Please, Minister?

Erik Solheim:

All these questions are very essential and not so easy to answer. And first of all, to congratulate Rwanda, on the enormous progress you had after the genocide. I mean, I was there in 1990s and back last year, and there's very few places in the world where you see such as visible, positive change, so congratulations with that. Of course Uganda also, and then the Sudanese leadership has had enormous progress, so these are also possible and positive role models for southern Sudan, showing that other countries in difficult neighborhoods, also landlocked, can have rapid development.

I think the most important, both on the sharing of the River Nile, on the oil, and the potential of war, is to understand that there is not a zero-sum game. There is always a tendency to believe that if I win, you will lose -- If you win, I will lose. To me, I mean, to speculate about future wars has proven itself absolutely futile in human history. Obviously, on paper, northern Sudan will be stronger than southern Sudan. The only thing which is absolutely clear, I think, is that both will lose. There will not -- you may win a battle here and there, but neither party can win such a war, so there will be two losers, not one winner, one loser.

Same came to oil, where it is very easy to believe that if I get more and you get less, I will win, you will lose. But this is a case where if they cannot find a makeable settlement to the oil issue, both will lose -- not one winner, one loser; two losers. And the reason is very simple -- their economies are so integrated at the moment, there is no way they can all of a sudden be separated without two losers. And as I said, do you find people in southern Sudan believing that a separation -- they will get most of the oil and they will prosper, but it will take many, many years to have any benefit for that. Four years without oil revenue at all in southern Sudan would be a catastrophe for any government. How to keep southern Sudan united for four years without a state budget?

If an agreement can be found to this on sharing the oil, both North and South will benefit from that. That's very clear. I am hesitant to impose a formula. I think the starting point is that both parties understand that they must find a solution, and I think there are lots of ways of sharing it if the political will is there. But they must start with the starting point -- this is not a zero-sum game. Both will lose if they cannot agree to the sharing. But if you look to other parts of the world, you would find lots of formulas which can be used.

On the UN, I mean, there are many more people with experience on that, here. I think at least two issues are crucial. The UN should play a role in making certain

that there are not tens of dozens of different initiatives competing. Again, the National Congress Party, Khartoum, and Juba, SPLM, they must be in the driving seat. They must decide what international support they need. They must decide who will be the mediator they need. If they need a congregation of different mediators to explain different roles, they should define the roles, but the UN should make it very, very clear that this is how it works. Parties are in the driving seat. We will support it, and the UN will use all its powers to make certain that the way they want the process to move forward will be supported by everyone.

Then of course the UN will have to prepare for different possible outcomes here -- most certainly, there will be a need for development assistance. That's already there. It has not been very successful. The multi-donor trust fund set up with the World Bank has been far from satisfactory. While it worked very well in Eritrea, it has not worked well in Sudan for many reasons. So to the UN, to use its good efforts on development is obvious. You must prepare for possible negative humanitarian scenarios; they may not be very likely, but you cannot avoid having some preparation for that. And the UN must prepare for being flexible on the military component. I mean, there is already the military mission there. There is no way the UN can enforce peace in Sudan, but it must have a flexible setup for addressing the needs which possibly could come up prior to or after the referendum. But again, whatever we think, the parties must be in the driving seat. They are responsible. That's their nation, not ours, and not the UN's.

Edward Luck: Great, thanks very much.

Erik Solheim: Yeah, then, Nile Basin, of course -- obviously, I mean, Egypt is very worried what can happen. That's a legitimate concern in a nation -- the geographical location as Egypt has every right to take an interest in what is happening upstream in the River Nile. Again, no one can resolve these problems for the region, but the international community can do whatever we can to support the solutions they will agree to.

Edward Luck: Great, thanks very much. Adonia.

Adonia Ayebare: Briefly, on the Nile Basin Initiative Treaty, we have a project at IPI, looking at that issue. And this is a neglected issue. The international community, of course, has been looking at CPA and has not focused on -- there have been negotiations going on, under the Nile Basin Initiative, on how to get the comprehensive framework agreement on how to utilize the waters of the Nile. As you all know, the waters of the Nile - 80% of the waters, we have an old colonial agreement on the Nile that gives 80% of the water to Egypt and Sudan. And other regional countries upstream have been indicating that that status cannot continue. And these negotiations have been going on for ten years now, and nothing is coming out. And the implementation of the CPA sort of feeds into that process, and the rhetoric has been hitting up. Countries in that region are embarking on major economic developments - you know, that they need hydroelectric power. And basically, their hands are tied, and I think, as they implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement goes on, we need to start looking at the power negotiations within the Nile Basin Initiative to make sure that they are concluded.

Of course you are right, Minister, Egypt is concerned. And Khartoum is also concerned, but the rhetoric between, you know, Khartoum and Cairo on one side of the equation, and other regional countries on the other side. And these discussions tend to be very heated and divisive, and can feed into the implementation of CPA and make it difficult -- even with a new southern Sudan nation, can be very, very difficult. Thank you.

Edward Luck: Thanks very much. I saw one in the back first. There is a woman there, please, back there, and then we'll come up front.

Kayon Watson: Kayon Watson with Mennonite Central Committee. My question is how do you foresee other Arab countries as stakeholders, concerning the separation in the South?

Edward Luck: Please, right here in the front, and then we go there.

Speaker: It is mainly a point of information -- the reason between water and oil --now I'm from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo. As you know, the minister has said we've done a lot of work on the oil. Now, the estimation -- our knowledge of the present resources, known resources, in the Sudan, the Sudan will become a net importer of oil in five to six years, because water is a permanent resource. So clearly, that's where the strategic interest is. And of course, yes, we have to negotiate a role for the South, if there is secession. It's very easy to overestimate the importance of oil on the basis of the current situation, but the long term, the oil will be gone, and then water is the most important.

Edward Luck: Please, right here in the aisle.

Colonel Li: Thank you for your excellent presentations. I am Colonel Li from Mission of China. The international community did a lot to approach both sides of Sudan to reach the agreement, the CPA, and also the establishment of the UN missions. If the final outcome of the peacekeeping operations and mediation is a split of the country, do you think in the future other failed countries will be dissuaded to accept the UN peacekeeping operations and also international mediations? Thank you.

Edward Luck: Just in front there. Njambi.

Njambi Ouattara: My name is Njambi. I just had a comment. I work at IPI, but this is more independent, my own thoughts, regarding leadership and authority, and also regarding the question of mediation -- the mediator mediating between other mediators. And if you would allow me, I will just read a little passage. It comes from Paul, who writes in the Bible, and he says:

"Prayers should be made for all men -- for kings, for all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all Godliness and honesty, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our savior, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, for there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself for ransom for all to be testified in due time." So just -- that was my own thought to share.

Edward Luck: Thank you, Njambi. Patrick Hayford?

Patrick Hayford: Thank you. My name is Patrick Hayford from the United Nations. What, Minister and Ambassador, what do you see as the role of the international community, especially the United States and the others who played a key role on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. And then secondly, there is a lot of concern about political divisions in southern Sudan. In the lead-up to the referendum, do you see -- how do you see things unfolding in view of the warring divisions among politicians in the South? Thank you.

Edward Luck: Thank you. That's quite a few questions. Minister?

Erik Solheim: As I understood the first question was about the role of Arab states in the conflict in Sudan. I think Arab states should take the same view as the rest of the international community, and I think they do -- that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement should be adhered to. That is the basis for action and should be the basis for everyone. A number of Arab states have played a crucial role in supporting peace. Qatar has made peace initiatives in Darfur. A number of Arab states are also crucial in development efforts in Sudan, making a lot of money available for that. But we should make no distinction between Africa and Arab questions -- whatever states, everyone should give support to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the timeline set down in that agreement, because that's what the parties agreed to and what the international community has endorsed.

The lady proposing that we should pray for the leaders there, I fully agree. We should pray both for President Bashir and his lead group and we should pray for Salva Kiir and the others. They need all of our prayers and that is also very mobilizing -- mobilizing support.

The issue raised by the representative of China on the need for UN efforts I think is clearly there. It's hard now to know exactly what needs to be there in the future -- I think that's why I think you have to prepare for different possibilities and have flexibility, but I think the UN presence on the ground is always difficult. This is

crucial. And I think also that the Chinese component -- I met a number of your military people in Sudan -- is essential. We should never forget that the main bulk of the peacekeeping operations, these days, is done by United Nations. Not only China, but also in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and many others. And that is, at this stage, key to the role of the United Nations in peacekeeping missions. There are also a few Norwegians in the mission, but the bulk of the soldiers in the mission and those officers are from nations like China.

What should international community do? I think it will be a reflection of what I've already said: we should keep the focus on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. That should be implemented. We should make it very, very clear that the driving seat is occupied by NCP and the SPLM. They will get support if they move positively ahead. We can support them in many different ways -- politically, economically, through the UN, even militarily. There are so many ways of supporting them, but they will lead and the UN should prepare for different possible developments.

Clearly, there are different points of view in a movement like the SPLM. There are different personalities. I mean, quarreling between people, this is normal. It happens everywhere. I mean, the only place that it doesn't happen is of course Norway, but except for that, everywhere else, it happens. There are ethnic division lines. This is also why I believe that they show the neighboring states being supportive of southern Sudan, and the ability of southern Sudan to have a good relationship to the neighborhood is so crucial, because there are so many possible contradictions to play on, if we want to play on these contradictions.

There is also of course the upcoming issue that SPLM is a nationwide movement, and the main bulk of the leadership are people from the South, but there are also SPLM leaders originating from the North. Some of them will remain in the North, if there were to be a secession, what will be the role of the SPLM North in such a situation? I have a lot of issues, here, to be resolved. But with all -- I mean, there have been some conflicts regarding the different governorship in southern Sudan and during the election now, but by and large, still SPLM has shown an ability to stick together. I think most likely, they will be able to stick together after the referendum.

Let me just finally say -- I just got the message here that they have now declared Bashir as the winner of the national election with Yasir Amman as the number two, and they also declared Salva Kiir as the winner of the southern presidential election. Neither of them very surprising, but seems to be official.

Edward Luck:

Thank you. I recall you predicted that about half an hour ago, so you're obviously prescient. Adonia, a few comments on this?

Adonia Ayebare:

A few comments on this. I think to speak on Patrick's question on differences within southern Sudan. I think it's a very important question. I think we need to look at dynamics within SPLM in run-up to the referendum and how they rate to the National Congress Party. And what is revealing is that Yasir Amman, after withdrawing from the presidential race, 90% of the people in the South voted for him. You know? There was a disconnect between the SPLM leadership position and the civil society and the population in southern Sudan that failed, that Yasir Amman would have stood a chance. And you are right that these differences sometimes are necessary, but we need to see how this plays out towards -- of course, we know that there are people who are pro-unity. We know others who are pro-independence of the South. Now, on this I think Ambassador Rugunda is right, that they have managed to really run the South very well. But after, especially, the death of their leader, John Garang, who had a vision of Sudan.

But it is very important, the destabilization of SPLM can really be significant to what is the referendum. And another question, which I think was asked earlier is the process now towards the referendum, and I'd also want to -- when you become a panelist with the Minister, of course, you are liking all of the questions to deflect to the Minister, but I would want to sort of pick your ideas on the recognition process, because if NCP fails to recognize the referendum, the National Congress Party, the Sudan government in Khartoum, if there is -- will that slow down the process of recognition, or do you think the two parties need to agree that whatever the outcome

of the -- and they stated beforehand that they will recognize the results of the referendum, so not to complicate for the already divided international community on the issue of the South going on its own.

Edward Luck: Do you want to respond to this now, or rather take another?

Erik Solheim: Yeah, I can take it.

Edward Luck: Okay, good. Uh, we have time for a few more questions. Please. On the far left here.

Lulamah Rulumeni: Thank you very much, Minister, and thank you very much, Ambassador Ayebare. My name is Lulamah Rulumeni, from the South African Permanent Mission. My question is please, that I'm looking at the peacebuilding activities in a country as big as Sudan. How can peace building efforts make an impact in this regard?

Edward Luck: And if you didn't hear, the question is about peacebuilding and can it make a difference there? I notice there has been no discussion of the UN's peacebuilding structure, architecture, so far, even though it's being reviewed this year. Maybe this tells us something. Anyone else for this round? Patrick?

Patrick Hayford: What role do you see for the African Union?

Edward Luck: Very succinct questions, but very big answers, probably. Please, John Hirsch.

John Hirsch: Minister, nobody here has yet mentioned the pending indictment of President Bashir by the International Criminal Court. First of all, does Norway have a view on this with regard to the referendum? And more broadly, what is your sense of this? Should this simply be postponed indefinitely in the name of facilitating the referendum and the outcome thereafter -- all the many, many points have been made here about how complicated it is to move ahead. Or do you think that the NCP should be encouraged, at some point, to remove him and have a government without him, and let him face the consequences -- assuming he can be found, transferred to the Hague. Just what is your view on the role of the pending indictment of President Bashir on this whole process?

Edward Luck: It does raise an interesting scenario. Let's say south Sudan does become a new country, is recognized, decides to become a state party to the ICC, does this mean that President Bashir can't travel to the South? Anyone -- any other comments? This is the last chance. Please.

Colonel Li: I've been to Sudan several times and I've talked with the local people, and they -- some of them, they think Mr. Bashir is too weak to deal with the South. So I just wonder, after that, if finally, the South declares independence, would it be a problem for Mr. Bashir's government, if there is unrest, turmoil in the North? Thank you.

Edward Luck: Thanks very much. Any other takers? Please, Ambassador Rugunda.

Ruhakana Rugunda: Yes, I should comment about the relations between southern Sudan and the neighbors. As you know, because of the conflict, many people from southern Sudan, in the millions, took refuge in the neighboring countries. Secondly, SPLM leaders have also been heavily interacting with people in the neighboring countries. So the impartiality of good relations between the people of southern Sudan and the government of southern Sudan presently, and in the future, whether there is separation or not, is basically good. And in fact characteristic of many countries in Africa, you find same people living across borders, so at the moment, relations between southern Sudan with Uganda, with Kenya, with Ethiopia, with Central African Republic, is excellent, because of historical linkages, because of so many other related issues. Even if the South decided to become independent, I do not see this situation just out of the blue changing. I would expect the same relations to continue and for that matter to even improve. I think the critical point is that when the time of the referendum comes, that the people of southern Sudan decide and then the international community, including the neighbors, should just respect what the people of southern Sudan have decided, either way.

Edward Luck:

Thank you very much. I will reverse the order, here, so that the Minister can have the final word, both responding to questions and any other comments that he wants to make to conclude. So I'll see if Adonia has any comments, first.

Adonia Ayebare:

Thank you. On the issue of peacebuilding, my sister from the South African mission raises I think several important points. I remember in 2000, after the CPA was signed, South Africa was given a law by the African Union to lead the post-conflict reconstruction of southern Sudan to not only mobilize the African opinion, but also the international opinion. And this is something we don't hear much about these days. And I think the role of South Africa in this is very crucial. It was deliberately chosen by the whole summit of the AU.

And I'll briefly comment about the answer, about the role of the African Union, I think that's a very important question. As we all know, the African Union's position on borders, I don't think we have a consensus among African countries on that issue, and the AU, I think, reflecting its membership, has sort of stayed back. It will be interesting to see whether the issues the Mbeki Panel will pick on this issue of implementing the CPA, but I think that it's very freaky for the organization. They're trying to have an entry-point -- and this is the point I raised earlier about the possibility of some key countries in IGAD, like Kenya, for example, which mediated to sort of individually tackle it because they know the parties, rather than the whole AU as an organization. You know, AU meaning the AU commission. I don't think Addis Ababa has a strategy -- when you ask them, it's something they don't want to address now. They want to see how things play out up to the end of the referendum. Thank you.

Edward Luck:

If I could say, Minister, that does raise an interesting question about your idea of a soft border. I don't recall the AU ever sort of blessing a soft border before. Maybe it's a precedent that needs to be set, but it raises a lot of very interesting questions. But you have the last word, and we have eight or ten minutes, as you would like, and again, thank you very much for sharing so much with us today.

Erik Solheim:

I think I won't bore you with eight to ten minutes more, but a few comments, first, on the road of Bashir. Of course it was asked, "What about indictment by the International Criminal Court?" Because Norway stands by the International Criminal Court, wherein we have been a key supporter of that institution, so we will oblige, obey their decisions. However, we should always bear in mind that the main issue in Sudan is peace. We should not act in a way which will make peace less likely to happen. So what we would do is to make certain of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement is adhered to, the timeline is held, the referendum is taking place, and that peace is kept, and the outcome of the referendum is accepted by everyone. That is the most important.

And as a personal comment, which might not be shared by everyone, we should also avoid bringing the International Criminal Court into position where it is seen as an institution mainly focused on Africa. If we look into some of the issues brought up recently, there has been a very heavy Africa focus, which may not be seen by most Africans as fair because there have clearly been major war crimes taking place on other continents as well, without being brought up in the same way. And if the institution is seen as mainly focusing on Africa, I think it will, in the long run, not be acceptable to most.

And then the issue, "Is Bashir strong enough to survive a secession?" Of course, no one can tell, but I think there are very good reasons to believe yes. Although the election now has not been absolutely acceptable, still it will give him a stronger mandate. He has support by many northerners. I mean, there has been speculations as long as I have been involved with Sudan, I mean the speculation that someone will oust Bashir and the new group will take power. I mean, this has been in the media all the time. It has never happened. And it seems that the National Congress Party leadership has been able to stick together under Bashir's leadership. It's a very essential question to raise, but I think most likely yes, also for the reason that most northerners do not take a deep interest in the South. They have never been there. They don't take a very big interest in the territory, nor in the people living there. Of course, many northerners are biased towards people in the South -- everyone knows that.

So if an agreement can be found to oil, water, all these main issues, I think personally, he will definitely survive and you can get closer to international parallel. There is no parallel, but I mean, situations where this kind of -- been able to remain in power throughout such a difficult time. The role of African Union is a huge issue. It, of course cannot easily be separated from the role of the UN, either, as all African nations are also members of both. I think the Mbeki Initiative is the key initiative by the African Union. As I said, it's to the party to decide. It's clearly not decided as yet, but still I think there are many reasons to believe that it will be one of the most important -- maybe the most important initiative in the months to come. It's an African Union initiative, but should be supported, if that's the case, by the UN. It's not just Mbeki. Again, it's also Buyoya. You mentioned General Sumbeiywo, the Kenyan general who had such an important role in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. His deep knowledge in Sudan is most needed and could, in one way or another, most certainly fit into such a framework.

Peacebuilding, brought up by South Africa. Well, I mean, the UN is already playing a crucial role in that. Going to Abbaye, there's a huge UN military presence in Abbaye. It's key to the calm in the region. As we all know, it flared up two years back, was it? Hundreds of deaths. The UN presence on the ground, there is a guarantee that will not happen again. So I think peacebuilding at the local level in the most difficult hotspots of Sudan is key. Of course, economic development and prosperity is also, in the long run, a key to everything. If people have and experience economic growth, their likelihood to go back to war is much less. Take one of the most successful peace processes in Africa, that of Mozambique. I mean, no one at all is afraid that Mozambique will go back to war. Normally, after conflict, the next decade is a huge chance of a fallback, and one of the reasons for that is of course that Mozambique has experienced, now, rapid economic growth after peace.

So I think yes, peacebuilding in the sense of development, economic growth, is essential. Those are local conflict resolution wherever there is potential for conflict, and there are many potentials in southern Kurdufan, in Abbaye, and in many other regions on the demarcation line.

Finally, your issue about recognition -- again, the international community has accepted the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. It was agreed by the parties according to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, there shall be a referendum, and according to it, we should all accept the outcome of that referendum. If the vote for secession should be accepted, if the vote for unity, that should also be accepted. It's their choice, not ours. And we should expect everyone to recognize the outcome. But the more rules for the referendum, the preparation of the different issues related to the -- more they are negotiated and accepted both by North and South and by the region, the more likely it will be a success, the whole process, and then the result, if it is a separate, seceded southern Sudanese state.

Edward Luck:

Terrific, and a nice way to end. Thank all of you for coming. Thank you, Adonia, for filling in so well, and thank you, Minister, for terrific remarks throughout.