



SUCCESS STORY

Training Empowers Parliamentarians To Build Peace



Parliamentarians trained with USAID/OTI support are addressing the challenges facing Sudan at Southern Kordofan State's recently rehabilitated legislative building.

“We not only gained a deep knowledge of the constitution...[we] also learned the importance of involving our constituents in legislative processes. So we went out to talk to people about what they need.”

– Member of Parliament
from Blue Nile State

December 2007 – In an effort to jumpstart implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) recently provided parliamentarians from the States of Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan with training to help them navigate the legislative process. Prior to the training, many of the parliamentarians lacked the capacity to carry out their legislative responsibilities, as most of them are former soldiers with little formal education and no experience with lawmaking. During a study trip to the International Law Institute's Training Center in Uganda, the legislators received training in policy formation, legislative analysis and drafting, and administration of parliament. USAID/OTI also assisted with the

rehabilitation of the legislative building and provided urgently needed furniture and supplies.

USAID/OTI's support to the parliamentarians comes at a critical juncture for CPA implementation. Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan States straddle the dividing lines of the conflict; each state reflects a mix of the cultures and identities that differentiate northern and southern Sudan. The states are governed jointly by the two main signatories of the peace agreement and are considered models for a united Sudan. The new joint government has an opportunity to address the underlying causes of the civil war and give momentum to the peace process, but it also faces tremendous challenges. Local progress with CPA implementation will have national repercussions.

The parliamentarians have begun to apply their new skills to address underlying causes of the civil war. They are actively engaging with their constituents, informing them of legislative plans and priorities and seeking feedback. The parliamentarians have already drafted new legislation, including the Forest Act, which ensures that profits from local resources stay within the region. In addition, the activity has catalyzed other improvements, as the Governor of Southern Kordofan State – upon hearing that parliamentary activities would have been severely limited without the USAID/OTI support – sanctioned the construction of an addition to the legislative building.