

# Coordination at the Crossroads: NGO coordination in Southern Sudan 2007-2011

"The transaction costs of coordination for INGOs in emergencies are traditionally justified on three levels: first, with limited resources, specialist or small INGOs seek to maximise their impact through collaboration and integration with input from others; second, by demonstrating their additionality, INGOs can attract added funds from bilateral donors; third, common advocacy is essential, especially for mutual security and access."

P47-48, Coordination of international humanitarian assistance in tsunami-affected countries,  
Tsunami Evaluation Coalition 2006

## Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background to the Evaluation.....	1
An NGO-led Coordination Structure .....	1
The Context of Coordination.....	2
Description of the Evaluation .....	3
Part 1: 2007-2009 EVALUATION .....	4
Findings .....	4
Commentary .....	6
Part 2: 2009-2011 NEXT STEPS.....	7
Priorities.....	7
Recommendations .....	8
Governance.....	8
Coordination .....	9
Capacity.....	10
CONCLUSION.....	11
APPENDICES .....	12
Appendix 1: Interview Record.....	12
Appendix 2: Progress Scorecharts .....	14
Progress against Proposal .....	14
Progress against Logframe.....	16
Appendix 3: Options for Cost Recovery .....	19
Appendix 4: Steering Committee Workshop Agenda .....	20

## INTRODUCTION

### Background to the Evaluation

Southern Sudan has presented a unique operating environment for the NGO community for the better part of 22 years. During the civil war, Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) defined the space for NGO activity regardless of participation in OLS itself; and since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, Southern Sudan has been in a political purgatory that has presented the NGO community with a series of problems in principle and practice.

The NGO Forum was created in 1996 to bring together international NGOs associated with OLS, which had itself been established in 1989 as the umbrella operation for UN agencies and NGOs working in Southern Sudan. The Forum was created to discuss common issues around programming, access and aid, meeting monthly in Nairobi and represented to the UN and donors by an elected Steering Committee of seven to eight NGOs.

The signing of the CPA between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement led to political stabilisation of the region and formation of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS). The NGO community based in Nairobi began to move back into Southern Sudan, and were joined in the Forum by non-OLS members, local NGOs and a range of NGOs new to the region. The migration and growth of the Forum had two results: first, the NGO Forum grew in size and scope; and second, Steering Committee members became overloaded by their responsibilities, despite expanding the membership to 12 elected NGOs.

To deal with these problems, a new Country Directors meeting was initiated – essentially to recover the focus that the NGO Forum itself had initially – and a Secretariat function was created to support the Steering Committee and meetings. The Secretariat was funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) for 22 months with a staff of four based in Juba. With funding coming to an end in January 2010, the Steering Committee commissioned an evaluation to evaluate the structure and contribution of the NGO Coordination Structure and to look at models for enhanced future coordination.

### An NGO-led Coordination Structure

In this report the term *NGO Coordination Structure* is used to refer to the four components of the NGO-led coordination structure in Southern Sudan:

1. The NGO Forum (referred to here as the *Forum*) is a voluntary body established in 1996, representing over 150 international and 180 local NGOs operational within Southern Sudan.
2. The NGO Forum Steering Committee (referred to here as the *Steering Committee*) is a decision-making committee of 10 INGOs and 2 LNGOs elected by the membership of the Forum.<sup>1</sup>
3. The NGO Forum Secretariat (referred to here as the *Secretariat*) was established in 2008 to support the Forum, and reports to the Steering Committee.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As at January 2010, the Steering Committee comprised CRS, GOAL, Malaria Consortium, Medair, NRC, Oxfam, PACT, PSI, Save the Children Alliance, Tearfund, Nile Hope Development Forum and Rural Action Against Hunger (the latter two being members of the Indigenous NGO Forum Steering Committee).

4. The Country Directors Meeting (referred to here as the *Country Directors*) started in October 2008 as a monthly meeting open to the Country Directors of international NGOs.

In addition to these functions, the NGO Coordination Structure has been instrumental in creating and supporting a parallel arrangement for local NGOs. These bodies operate independently, but are linked through the support of the Secretariat and (to a lesser extent) the presence of two local NGO representatives on the Steering Committee of the original Forum:

5. The Indigenous NGO Forum is open to all local NGOs, modelled on the original NGO Forum.
6. The Indigenous NGO Forum Steering Committee is elected by the membership of the Indigenous NGO Forum and serves the same function as the original Steering Committee.

The Secretariat maintains an office in the UN OCHA compound in Juba, and a virtual presence through a website and three mailing lists:

Service	# Users
Website	5573 since May 2009
NGO Forum	2459
NGO Security Focal Points	395
NGO Forum Steering Committee	29
Country Directors	165
Indigenous NGO Forum	204
<i>HR Managers (dormant)</i>	94

### The Context of Coordination

Coordination mechanisms in Southern Sudan are confused and confusing, with bodies created at different levels and in different sectors by the GoSS, donors, UN agencies and NGOs with no overall framework connecting them. Coordination meetings identified during the evaluation include:

Forum	Lead
Agriculture	FAO / Ministry of Agriculture
Conflict Management Group	UNMIS / Civil Affairs
Crisis Management	UNMIS
Education Development Partners Forum	Ministry of Education
Emergency Preparedness & Response Taskforce	UNOCHA
Health & Nutrition Consultative Group	Ministry of Health
Humanitarian Coordination Forum Meeting	SSRRC
Livelihoods Analysis Forum	Ministry of Agriculture / FAO
Logistics Coordination Meeting	UNJLC
NFI Sector Coordination	UNJLC
NGO Health Forum	NGO-elected chair and Sector co-lead
NGO Security Meeting	NGO Secretariat
Protection Working Group	UNMIS
Security Cell / Security Management Team	UNMIS

<sup>2</sup> The Secretariat currently comprises a staff of 4 persons – an NGO Secretariat Coordinator, Assistant NGO Secretariat Coordinator, NGO Security Focal Point and Driver.

UN Country Team	DHRC's office
WASH coordination meeting	MedAir / Tear Fund

Secretariat staff also observe or have member status in a wide range of meetings, including: the UN Country Team and Security Management Team; the Steering Committees of four multi-donor funds (SRF, BSF, CHF and MDTF); GoSS Budget Sector Working groups; monthly meetings with UN DRC/HC, UNMIS Regional Coordinator and Joint Donor Office; Liaison with Ministry of Regional Cooperation, Southern Sudan Relief & Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC), Ministry of Finance and other ministries; GoSS/Donor Forum and Governor's Forum. In addition there are coordination and/or security meetings at State level, which are only loosely linked to the meetings listed above. In the past Budget Sector Working Groups have been used as the main vehicle for developing the GoSS Budget, although it seems that they have been used for planning rather than co-ordinating.

The future of coordination in Southern Sudan will be defined by three main developments. First, the UN intends to strengthen the existing coordination system, particularly for humanitarian activities, based on a proposal issued in January 2010. NGOs should welcome any attempt to improve coordination while remaining aware that UN-led coordination requires a strong NGO contribution. Second, the GoSS is likely to become more assertive in managing NGOs, particularly should the region secede from Sudan. Third, significant decrease in the stability of the region will necessarily impact on coordination, particularly should security and access concerns become more pressing.

### Description of the Evaluation

The consultant visited Southern Sudan between 12<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January 2010, based in Juba with a one-day visit to Aweil. The evaluation consisted of three main elements, a document review, observational evaluation of NGO Secretariat activities and a series of semi-structured interviews with a range of stakeholders. The interviews included former and current Steering Committee members, international and local NGOs, government, donor and UN staff, and were supplemented by a roundtable discussion with donors and informal conversations with other NGO staff. At the end of the evaluation this report was drafted and presented to Steering Committee members. A workshop was held with Steering Committee members to discuss findings from the last two years and develop a plan for the next two years.

I would like to thank the staff of the NGO Forum Secretariat for their co-operation and support of this evaluation; the interviewees who agreed to give their time for the evaluation; and the members of the Steering Committee for facilitating the evaluation, with a special thanks to PACT for allowing me to accompany them on the visit to Aweil.

The evaluation was funded by DfID as part of NGO Secretariat project funding, and administered by Catholic Relief Services. I have no conflict of interest regarding any of the parties to this evaluation.

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January 2010

## Part 1: 2007-2009 EVALUATION

### Findings

1. The NGO Secretariat is viewed positively by all actors interviewed in Juba, particularly the international NGO community which is its primary constituency.
2. This positive view is based on two factors: first, the quality of the services provided by the Secretariat, and second, the attitudes of the staff providing those services. Those services have been developed largely on the basis of demand, which to some extent explains their positive reception by the NGO community, rather than through any strategic plan.
3. The biggest problem faced by the NGO Coordination Structure described here are coping with the increase in the number and variety of NGOs operating in Southern Sudan, as well as the changed external environment. The current NGO Coordination Structure is not well equipped to deal with these changes and need to be revised.
4. Secretariat capacity does not meet the demands placed upon it, and it does not receive sufficient guidance from the Steering Committee, with the result that Secretariat staff are stretched extremely thin. Partly as a result of this, the Secretariat is unable to capitalise on its position, particularly in terms of shaping policy and influencing coordination arrangements.
5. The Steering Committee has collectively been unable to meet its responsibilities according to the requirements laid out for Steering Committee membership. This evaluation does not identify specific members as bearing particular responsibility, and at an individual level there are frequently good reasons for this (mainly due to the other commitments that Steering Committee members have as Country Directors); however the result has been that the Secretariat has taken on more duties than it has the mandate or the capacity to carry out.
6. The Steering Committee was elected by Forum members at a time when the Forum was the primary vehicle for INGO action. The Forum's role has changed and Country Directors now prefer to attend the Country Directors' meeting, sending other staff to the Forum. There was confusion about which of the two bodies had elected the most recent Steering Committee, indicating that the link between Steering Committee and their constituents needs to be clarified and renewed.
7. The NGO Forum and the Country Directors meeting need to be re-examined to ensure that they are providing value to their participants and to clarify exactly how the Steering Committee represents the membership in external meetings.
8. Although the Secretariat was created to take some of the burden from members of the Steering Committee, over time more of the Committee's representational role has been placed onto Secretariat staff without sufficient guidance. Due to the calibre of the staff this has not been a problem and INGOs have been well-represented, but this raises questions of accountability.

9. Since the CPA was signed there appears to have been no attempt to develop a strategic framework for building local capacity. While it is not the responsibility of international NGOs to do this, it would benefit both international and local NGOs to ensure that the former invest more to bridge the existing gap between indigenous NGOs and the international community.
10. The two biggest concerns amongst the NGO community are security and funding; primarily the former for INGOs, primarily the latter for the LNGOs. While these are valid concerns, they reflect a disappointing unwillingness to engage with policy issues at a critical time for Southern Sudan and illustrate that NGOs have not successfully made the transition to the development phase.<sup>3</sup>
11. Although there are many coordination mechanisms in Southern Sudan, there is very little actual coordination. Most meetings are based on information sharing – and while information sharing is a prerequisite for coordination, it is not coordination – and many of these meetings are “broadcasts” rather than discussions, which limit collective action.
12. Awareness of the NGO Secretariat outside Juba is limited, primarily focused on security information services. Various coordination meetings happen at State level in various sectors, but there has been little to no discussion about how to support these activities, and the NGO Secretariat does not have sufficient resources to reach out to the States.
13. This report does not attempt to evaluate overall coordination. However respondents were clear that the Secretariat plays a valuable role in helping the NGO community to navigate the baroque coordination system, and some felt that this was the Secretariat’s biggest contribution to the NGO community, especially when it came to the pooled funds.
14. It was universally agreed that the role of Security Focal Point was critical for the NGO community and that the Secretariat was providing excellent service. However there was some disagreement about exactly what role the SFP should play in future and concerns were raised about potential liability issues around the services provided; this will become a more pressing question should security deteriorate, leading to an increasing workload for the Focal Point.
15. High levels of staff turnover were consistently identified as a significant obstacle, undermining the personal relationships essential to coordination and preventing institutional memory from forming. The NGO Secretariat to some extent acts as the collective memory of the NGO community, but this service is in turn dependent on continuity of the staff of the Secretariat.
16. As a result of its presence at nearly all critical meetings, combined with its extensive network of NGO contacts, the Secretariat is viewed by the UN and to some extent by the GoSS as both their primary means of reaching out to the NGO community, and as representing the interests of the INGOs. This puts the Secretariat in an astonishing strategic position – both enviable and problematic – at the centre of coordination in Southern Sudan.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, although NGOs are the primary health providers for Southern Sudan, few of them have developed position on issues such as handing over health facilities to the GoSS.

## Commentary

The NGO Secretariat has provided excellent service, not just to the NGO community but to all stakeholders in the aid architecture of Southern Sudan, and is considered an essential component of coordination. However an important qualification must be attached to this broad conclusion: the Secretariat has not achieved many of the objectives laid out in the initial DFID proposal. The proposal was perhaps unrealistic in its assumptions, and lack of progress has been partly due to external constraints (such as the GoSS failure to pass NGO-related legislation) and partly due to problems mobilising the NGO community (specifically Steering Committee members). While the evaluation must note this failure to achieve stated objectives, that should not detract from the Secretariat's considerable achievements.

Focusing exclusively on the NGO Secretariat, however, obscures the other components of the Coordination Structure. The NGO Forum itself was agreed by most respondents to be a shadow of its former self, and questions were raised repeatedly about whether it should be continued or not. The Country Directors meeting was agreed to be a useful forum for discussion of issues of common concern, but at the meeting attended by the consultant very little discussion was evident. The Steering Committee members were aware that the Committee was not functioning as well as it should, which was confirmed by observations that Secretariat staff have taken on an increasing number of duties that would previously have been the role of Committee members.

In particular the Secretariat Co-ordinator role has taken on more responsibility for representing the NGO community than appropriate for a non-elected position. It was agreed by all respondents that the current Co-ordinator has met this responsibility well, but this is a reflection of the character of the Co-ordinator rather than a clear definition of the role or guidance from the Steering Committee. The upside is that there is a consistent NGO presence and position at most coordination meetings, even when other members of the NGO Coordination Structure are not present, and stakeholders identified the existence of a single focal point for reaching out to NGOs as being extremely valuable.

The downside is that the visibility of the NGO Secretariat as a focal point obscures the view of a diverse NGO sector operating in Southern Sudan and excuses the members of the Steering Committee from playing a more active role in representing that sector. It appears that the Steering Committee is largely invisible to external stakeholders, since the NGO Secretariat is the NGO presence at most meetings – reinforced by the physical presence of the Secretariat office in the UNOCHA compound – and awareness of the Steering Committee's role was vague even amongst NGOs participating in the Forum and Country Director meetings.

These problems to some extent reflect the central challenge facing the NGO Coordination Structure – dealing with changes in both the environment and the membership, both of which affect its ability to achieve collective goals. A larger and more diverse membership means that it is more difficult to have focused discussions – particularly on policy issues – and consequently more difficult to develop coherent advocacy. It makes the Forum and Country Directors meeting more difficult to manage, as well as placing a larger number of ad hoc demands on Secretariat staff, and both of these make it more difficult for the Steering Committee to address and represent members' concerns effectively.

While these external factors are outside the control of the Steering Committee, their responses to those factors is not, and the next section recommends some possible approaches.

## Part 2: 2009-2011 NEXT STEPS

### Priorities

- **Government of South Sudan**

The lack of capacity across all elements of the GoSS is acknowledged by everybody, not least the GoSS itself. While it is not the mandate of the majority of international NGOs to build government capacity, it is in the interests of both the beneficiaries and INGOs themselves to support the government where appropriate.

- **State Level Coordination**

It was universally agreed that the key to effective operational coordination is at the State and County level. The GoSS has indicated its intention to reach out to the States in the coming year to improve both support and oversight, and the NGO community should respond positively to this while at the same time building their own coordination mechanisms where possible.

- **Security**

The security situation in Southern Sudan is likely to deteriorate in the 2010-2011 period, a combination of North-South political tension, internal political tension in the South and exacerbated communal conflict in certain areas. The NGO community needs to increase its investment in the security of its own staff and programmes, and also of affected communities.

- **Funding**

Existing funding arrangements in Southern Sudan are likely to remain complex for the foreseeable future, although there is likely to be some streamlining if Southern Sudan becomes an independent country. In particular INGOs must remain engaged with the various pooled funds, both to ensure that they continue to receive funding and to monitor the decisions made by those funds.

- **Local NGOs**

Local NGOs will be expected to take a larger role in service delivery in the future, both by their INGO partners and by the GoSS, but their capacity remains low. Developing a more coherent approach to INGO-LNGO partnership is essential if that partnership is to secure the delivery of basic services in the region, and to make local civil society more resilient.

- **Existing Coordination**

Due to lack of capacity within the GoSS and the UN system, coordination has been variable across different sectors and even where coordination meetings exist, proceedings tend to focus on Information-sharing rather than active coordination. INGOs have a responsibility to fill gaps in coordination where they exist and to shape coordination to meet the needs of affected communities.

- **Policy and Advocacy**

Thanks to the efforts particularly of the NGO Secretariat, the NGO community has a seat at the table of most (if not all) of the important decision-making bodies in Southern Sudan. This type of opportunity is extremely rare but is in danger of being squandered – while it requires extra investment to pursue advocacy, once again there is some INGO responsibility to do so.

- **Accountability**

The accountability questions within the NGO Coordination Structure must be addressed as soon as possible by the Steering Committee with the support of the membership. Lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities of NGO coordination in the difficult 2010-2011 period will see the ability of the NGO community to act collectively to influence events deteriorate.



## Recommendations

These recommendations focus on what the various bodies discussed in this evaluation can achieve, rather than on what international NGOs can contribute individually to Southern Sudan.

### Governance

#### 1. Re-articulate the roles and responsibilities of the NGO coordination structure.

The representation problems described in Part 1 need to be addressed quickly in order to avoid a credibility gap with other stakeholders and within the NGO community, but also to ensure that the NGO community has the tool necessary to play a significant advocacy role. In order to do this the priority is to clarify and (where necessary) formalise existing arrangements. This report proposes:

**1a. The NGO Forum should be reviewed by the Steering Committee.** To avoid duplicating discussions in the Country Directors Meeting and to cut down on the workload of the Secretariat, it should either be retired or re-launched as a series of public talks to allow a wider range of NGO staff members (not just Country Directors) opportunity to hear external speakers discuss key issues.

**1b. The Country Directors Meeting should be clearly identified as the primary forum for NGO discussion of policy issues, and the constituency responsible for electing the Steering Committee.** Terms of reference, clear membership guidelines and relations with the Steering Committee should be drawn up immediately and circulated amongst members. Efforts should be made to generate real discussion within the meeting rather than the basic information-sharing that is currently the norm.

**1c. The Secretariat should be supported both financially and organisationally at this critical time.** However the Steering Committee must consider carefully how much to adjust the size and mandate of the Secretariat to ensure that it does not merely continue to provide good service but also builds on that record. The proposal to create a new position within the Secretariat dealing with funding reflects the priorities of the NGO community, and refocusing of the Local NGO co-ordinator position is also to be welcomed; and these positions will allow the Secretariat Co-ordinator to take on more of the roles envisaged in the original proposal. However the Steering Committee must ensure that all of these positions are given adequate guidance in the future to ensure representation is appropriate.

**1d. The Steering Committee should review its procedures to ensure that its members are able to discharge their responsibilities appropriately.** The disengagement of the Steering Committee is understandable given the pressure of being Country Directors of their own organisations, but this cannot continue. There are four options available to Steering Committee members:

1. Stand down from the Committee and allow another NGO to take their place;
2. Change the TORs to make Steering Committee membership less onerous;
3. Disband the Steering Committee and seek alternative governance mechanisms;
4. Re-engage with the issues facing the NGO Coordination Structure and move forward.

**1e. Once these issues are resolved, the Secretariat should develop a brief paper on the NGO Coordination Structure,** approved by the Steering Committee and circulated to the Country Directors meeting. This paper should clarify the roles and relationships of each of the components, including how they interact with other stakeholders.

## Coordination

### 2. Enhance coordination across Southern Sudan.

There are two main aspects of coordination – to avoid duplication and to ensure coverage. Given the huge needs and limited resources in Southern Sudan, avoiding duplication is not a major issue, but ensuring coverage is critical. Coordination is usefully seen as an ecosystem, with a range of sectoral and geographic niches that need to be filled for coordination to function effectively. From the perspective of those receiving assistance, it is not so important which organisations fill those niches as it is that they be filled. However from the point of view of the GoSS, donors, UN agencies and NGOs the question of which organisations fill which niches is frequently a point of contention.

**2a. Map coordination arrangements across sectoral and geographic space to identify gaps.** As far as the evaluation could tell, no organisation working in Southern Sudan has a clear overview of the complex web of coordination that has developed. In their most recent Humanitarian Update OCHA presented a table showing Sector Membership per State, but this table did not reflect the actual experience of NGOs on the ground. Working with the GoSS and OCHA, the NGO Coordination Structure should identify where and when sectoral coordination meetings are happening, who is attending them and how effective they are. This can then be used to encourage NGOs and other stakeholders to participate in the meetings, provide support to those meetings and build a reporting mechanism between the States and Juba.

**2b. Promote NGO coordination at the State level<sup>4</sup> in support of GoSS capacity.** Even before the mapping exercise described above is finalised, increased support to coordination should be developed. While Secretariat staff in particular have many demands on their time, many of the meetings held in Juba are not productive from the point of view of NGO coordination, and support could be extended to NGOs in the field through:

1. Ensuring existing staff make frequent and regular visits to the field;
2. Placing dedicated staff in State capitals to provide coordination support;
3. Assigning NGO Focal Points at State level to act as vectors for Secretariat support;
4. Recruiting a State Coordinator to travel around Southern Sudan.

This evaluation recommends the third option as being the most cost-effective, but the first option should be built into future funding proposals.

**2c. Create Working Groups drawn from the NGO community to address key issues as necessary,** rather than relying on the Secretariat to deal with every issue that affects the NGO community. Examples include addressing local NGO capacity-building and creating Contingency Planning Guidelines (see Recommendation set 3 below). Working Groups should be explicitly limited in size and duration, and have clear terms of reference. Although this will create more work for Secretariat staff in supporting these Groups, it will ensure that NGO positions are more representative and therefore more credible.

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<sup>4</sup> It was noted that many NGOs operate at the County rather than State level, while the government plans to roll out support to the State level, and that this tension will need to be managed carefully by NGOs.

## Capacity

### **3. Address issues of capacity more strategically for GoSS, local and international NGOs.**

The lack of capacity in Southern Sudan lies behind every discussion, yet the NGO community continue to treat this as if it was a natural development that they have no control over; the resulting lack of INGO activity in three critical areas – GoSS, local NGOs and international NGOs – is surprising.

**3a. Form a Local NGO capacity Working Group consisting of INGOs and LNGOs to develop a Good Practice guide to partnership in Southern Sudan.** The Group should consist of INGOs/LNGOs already working successfully in partnership who can talk with authority about what has worked and what hasn't from the perspective of both sides. The Good Practice guide should then be circulated to the NGO community, the GoSS and the donor community as the starting point for the development of a strategy for local NGO capacity building.

### **3b. Re-engage with the Government of Southern Sudan around the issue of NGO status.**

The starting point for re-engaging the GoSS is formalising the status of NGOs through passing the necessary legislation. While this legislation has stalled in the GoSS legislative, it remains a prerequisite for securing NGO status, cutting down on transaction costs and building effective coordination mechanisms. Lobbying by the NGO Coordination Structure has tailed off over the months, and the Steering Committee must lead in developing a better advocacy strategy to ensure that the NGO Bill does not remain in legislative limbo until after the results of the 2011 referendum.

**3c. Develop an advocacy strategy to provide guidance to Secretariat staff and to engage the NGO community in addressing key policy issues.** This recommendation is problematic because it is essentially urging the NGO community to change its behaviour. Partly because of the history of NGOs in Southern Sudan, they have accepted to some extent a role as contractors in basic service delivery, overlooking the wider role they have to play in developing policy. How the Steering Committee, Secretariat and Country Directors might respond to this recommendation needs extensive further discussion.

**3d. Review the level and nature of support provided by the Security Focal Point.** While the Focal Point provides good service at present, respondents raised questions about how far that role should go. While nobody specifically views the Focal Point as a security manager for the NGO community, the role has expanded beyond information-sharing into advisory work. While the Steering Committee may wish to discuss whether a more active security function is required, the priority in the next 12 months is ensuring that the current position is not overwhelmed by requests, something that will become an increasing problem should security deteriorate. One option may be to make use of the Working Group option to bring together NGOs with adequate security management to develop guidelines on e.g. contingency planning for general distribution, or to establish an emergency mechanism which could be activated to support the Focal Point when necessary.

## CONCLUSION

The challenges outlined by former Steering Committee members Adele Sowinska and Wendy Fenton in their 2005 FMR article “NGO coordination in south Sudan” continue to face the NGO community in 2010. In addition a new set of complications is being added to the working environment as Southern Sudan prepares for the 2010 national elections and the 2011 referendum.

Although NGOs are in many ways at the heart of the challenges facing Southern Sudan, and there is an obligation for the NGO community to address them more substantively, at present the NGO community is not prepared to meet these challenges. NGOs are almost entirely reactive to events, placing them at a disadvantage in a rapidly-changing situation; and their service delivery role (one donor confirmed that NGOs provide 85% of basic services in Southern Sudan) seems to have caused them to shy away from contributing substantively to policy discussions.

Although most of these challenges are out of direct control of the NGO community, NGOs are well-placed to develop appropriate responses, both individually and collectively. The NGO Coordination Structure examined in this evaluation is in a unique position to support this process, but only if it can resolve the issues described in this report. If those issues remain unresolved, the Structure will not collapse – it will continue much as it does today, playing a vital role in sharing information but little more than that. This would be a tremendous missed opportunity, for two reasons.

First, the history of NGO coordination in Southern Sudan goes back to 1996, a rich history of collective action by NGOs. Second, the work of the Secretariat staff has given the NGO community access to nearly every forum and with nearly every stakeholder at work in Southern Sudan. This length of experience and breadth of access is unprecedented in the global NGO community. Failing to capitalise on this enviable position will lead to undesirable outcomes for the NGO community further along in Southern Sudan’s progress.

As an example, if GoSS engagement is not prioritised now, while the situation is in relatively fluid, relations with any future and more formalised government in an independent Southern Sudan (if this is the result of the referendum) are likely to be more difficult than they need to be. By taking a reactive position in Southern Sudan, NGOs will become hostages to fortune rather than actively shaping the development of the region.

It should be borne in mind that increased policy and advocacy activities will change perceptions of the NGO community, possibly leading to a decrease in access – but if that access was not being used, then losing it will make little difference. The foundation for effective advocacy is credibility based on the claim to represent a wider constituency, which explains why this evaluation has focused so much on accountability within the existing NGO Coordination Structure.

Overtaken by events, the NGO Coordination Structure has met its original objectives but failed to build on those objectives to meet new challenges. At this stage, then, the most practical concern – identified across nearly every other NGO coordination experience as the key to success – is clarity: clarity of purpose, clarity of roles and responsibilities, clarity of funding and duration. If clarity, accountability and engagement can be ensured, then Southern Sudan will lead the way in demonstrating what can be achieved through NGO coordination.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Interview Record

Interviewee	Position	Organisation	Capacity
Adele Sowinska	Country Director, Kenya	CRS-Kenya	Former Steering Committee Member
Beatrice Khamisa Wani	Director General of Multilateral Relations	Ministry of Regional Co-operation	GoSS
Cicely Clarke	NGO Security Focal Point	NGO Secretariat	NGO
Claire Simmons	WASH Advisor	TearFund	WASH NGO Forum lead
Dan Chambers	Shelter Manager	NRC	NGO
Darren Hercyk	Country Director	CRS-Sudan	Northern Sudan NGO Forum Steering Committee Member
David Gressley	Regional Co-ordinator / Deputy Designated Official	UNMIS	UN
Deidre Keogh	Country Director	GOAL Ireland South Sudan	Steering Committee Member
Donald McPhee	Country Director	PLAN Sudan	Northern Sudan NGO Forum Steering Committee Member
Callixte Mina	Medical Coordinator	AAA	Local NGO
Fionnuala Lucey	Head of Office	UNJLC	UN
Giovanni Bosco	Head of Office	OCHA	UN
Hannah Bryce	Project Manager South Sudan	Mines Advisory Group	NGO Forum Member
Ivor Morgan	Secretariat Co-ordinator	Northern Sudan NGO Secretariat	NGO
Jann <i>Frangnes</i>	Country Director	NRC	Steering Committee Member
John Adone	Area Coordinator / Logistics Manager	Malaria Consortium	Field staff
Judy McCallum	Country Director	PACT Sudan	Steering Committee member
Kees van Bommel	WatSan Project Manager	MedAir	WASH NGO Forum lead
Kelsey Hoppe	Secretariat Co-ordinator	NGO Secretariat	NGO

Coordination at the Crossroads: NGO coordination Southern Sudan 2007-2011

Leonard Tedd	Head of Office, EP&R	OCHA	Emergency Response & Preparedness
Lily Omondi	Head of Office	Plan	NGO Forum Member
Lise Grande	Deputy Humanitarian Resident Co-ordinator	UNMIS	UN
Lony Ruot	Director	Standard Action Liaison Focus	Local NGO
Louis Kanyara	Assistant Secretariat Co-ordinator	NGO Secretariat	NGO
Melissa Phillips	Consultant	Independent	Former Secretariat Co-ordinator
Moses Mabior	Director of Aid Coordination	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning	GoSS
Paul Biel Otoang	Executive Director	Nile Hope Development Forum	Steering Committee member (INGO and LNGO)
Paul Koulen	Head of Office	Technical Secretariat, Sudan Recovery Fund	UN
Paul Savage		PACT Kenya	Former Steering Committee member
Paula Tenaglia	Country Director	Action Against Hunger	NGO Forum member
Ross Duffy	Country Director	MSF-Holland	International NGO
Sarah Karimbhoy	Country Director	Intermon Oxfam	NGO Forum Member
Sarah Petrie	Co-Sector Lead Health (NGO)	Ministry of Health	Co-Sector Lead
Shaun Hughes		DfID	Donor
Stephen Moore	Country Director	Malaria Consortium	Steering Committee Member
Tom Mugabi	Country Director	World Relief Southern Sudan	NGO Forum Member

## Appendix 2: Progress Scorecharts

This section uses a colour-coded scheme where Green indicates good progress, Yellow indicates limited progress and Red indicates little or no progress.

### Progress against Proposal

NGO Forum Purpose		Consultant Notes
1	It provides a critical service of information sharing with and among NGOs on issues pertinent to the diverse participants such as the changing security environment throughout S. Sudan.	The Forum continues to fulfill its original purpose very well. All four of the purposes mentioned in the original proposal to DFID have been effectively met.
2	Operational and administrative issues such as work permits and taxes, the anticipated NGO framework, funding mechanisms and UN and GoSS planning processes.	
3	The Forum also engages in limited advocacy on these and other issues.	
4	Provides a conduit for the UN, the GoSS, donor representatives and other stakeholders to communicate and coordinate with NGOs.	
<b>Changing Demands</b>		
5	Representation with new GoSS entities, donors, UN agencies, and governments.	These representational roles have been made possible by the hard work of the Secretariat staff.
6	Participation and input into important policy and planning processes such as the UNDAF Technical Working Groups and UN Workplan.	
7	Developing and highlighting best practices on information sharing coordination and advocacy.	This has not been prioritised by the NGO community.
8	Consultation and subsequent shaping of Forum positions on key documents such as the NGO Framework.	While the Secretariat has represented the NGO community on these issues, it is not true to say that there has been a "Forum position" based on a transparent consultation process.
9	Advocacy in a variety of fora including with GoSS, UN, World Bank and donors.	
<b>Additional Elements</b>		
10	Heightened need for coordination among INGOs/Sudanese NGOs as the country context demands a shift from primarily relief to relief, recovery and development activities particularly around issues of geographic targeting and needs identification, duplication of effort, best practices and knowledge management.	While the Forum has provided continuity, it has not increased the quality of coordination and the NGO community has faced problems as coordination bodies have multiplied.

Coordination at the Crossroads: NGO coordination Southern Sudan 2007-2011

11	Managing the changing role and relationships between the INGO/Sudanese NGOs sector and emerging GoSS, State and County actors in an operating environment where roles and responsibilities are still being sorted out.	Relations with the GoSS are generally good but need to be improved in order to work in partnership more effectively.
12	Greater demands for NGO representation on various fronts including: with the GoSS and various line Ministries through, for example, Budget Sector Working Groups; with the UN on the UN & Partners Workplan for which NGOs now act as co-sector leads to tighten coordination particularly around recovery; with Donors to harmonize and share visions, perspectives, and their concrete expressions in operating plans, budgets and projects.	This has happened in the sense that NGOs are represented on all these groups and have participated in these process; but this involvement has not been capitalised on in order to achieve strategic NGO goals.
13	Increased need for better/more complete and verifiable information on issues such as work permits, taxation, and licensing—all requiring close follow-up on the details of the NGO Framework and improved information dissemination.	Information is available from the Secretariat, but is constrained by the lack of clarity within the GoSS itself.
14	Heightened need for a stronger, more coherent and articulated message from the INGO/Sudanese NGO community on issues germane to the sustainable recovery and development of Southern Sudan.	The NGO community has not been able to develop a more coherent approach to advocacy or self-governance.
15	As NGOs proliferate and diversify in the more secure post-conflict environment, a heightened need for NGO self-governance (particularly until an NGO Framework is enacted).	
16	Across the ten southern States, security issues require significant communication and coordination.	The Security Focal Point has paid attention to this but has been unable to make significant headway.
17	Increased collaboration, dialogue and exchange of experiences and best practice, where possible, within similar Forums in other post conflict countries in order to identify lessons and insights that could be useful in the particular post conflict setting of the Sudan	Links have been made with some contacts in other locations, but no mechanism exists to develop such exchanges further.



**Progress against Logframe**

	<b>Intervention Logic</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Consultant Notes</b>
<b>Overall Project Goal</b>	National and civil society are aligned with and support a GoSS lead recovery and development agenda	M1: SSNGO Forum a respected and effective partner of GoSS and the UN in driving forward the recovery and development agenda	While the NGO community is a partner to the GoSS and the UN, it is difficult to say that it helps to drive the development agenda.
<b>Project Purpose</b>	The NGO Forum is a proactive, effective and accountable partner supporting humanitarian, recovery and development interventions in South Sudan	MI 1: By EOP SC/NGO forum contributes to GoSS policy development	While the NGOs have a seat at the table, this has not lead to significant involvement in policy development.
		MI 2: By EOP SC/NGO Forum members align implementation to comply with GoSS policies and best practices	GoSS policies and best practices remain unclear.
<b>Output 1</b>	SC/NGO Forum is recognized and engaged at the policy level by GoSS, the donor community, the UN and regional political actors	MI 1: Improved understanding by Forum members of GoSS and UN budgeting and planning processes as demonstrated by better NGO participation in GoSS and UN planning exercises.	Inclusion of NGOs in GoSS Budget Sector Working Groups indicates that this has been achieved, although attention is still needed to ensure that engagement remains active.
		MI 2: By EOP - Improved understanding of and access to policy and decision makers in GoSS, UN and donor representatives community as demonstrated by the level and quality of NGO participation in GoSS and UN key decision making fora.	Access has been achieved, but the level and quality of NGO participation remains relatively low; the access is largely informal and not leveraged.
		MI 3: SC/NGO Forum is a formal and effective way to contribute to key policy discussions (example: Governor's forum, Council of Ministers, Oversight Committee, Donor Conferences)	
		MI 4: SC/NGO Forum Policy and Position papers are recognized and utilized at a national level (example: the UN Workplan)	The Forum has only produced one position paper due to resource constraints.

Coordination at the Crossroads: NGO coordination Southern Sudan 2007-2011

<b>Output 2</b>	SC/NGO Forum structure and systems are formally established, functioning and sustainable.	MI 1: 6 months from project inception, forum constitution, by-laws and SC TOR are adopted	SC TORs were issued but the other documentation has not been developed.
		MI 2: By 6 months, better communication and coordination with North Sudan INGO Forum and NGOs at State level	Communication does exist between the two Forums, but there communication to the State level still relies mainly on Country Directors.
		MI 3: By the 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of project operation of an on-site Resource Center is established (much of this will also be internet-based as part of MI 4 for those operating outside of Juba)	The OCHA-provided Resource Centre filled this role, but it was closed unilaterally without warning in January 2010.
		MI 4: By mid-term SC/NGO Forum website is operational using web 2.0 open source platforms to enable online participation, dialogue and shared ownership/content development.	The website has been successfully launched although questions remain about its utility within Southern Sudan.
		MI 5: By mid-term the Secretariat and SC have established a Sectoral Sub-Committee structure.	No sectoral co-ordination has taken place within the existing structures.
		MI 6: By March 2008, membership criteria developed and adhered to including the implementation of a sliding-scale membership fee for sustainability.	This was not developed; membership criteria should be clearly established, but membership fees are not recommended.
<b>Output 3</b>	Increased involvement of Sudanese NGOs in the NGO Forum and SC	MI 1: By mid-term, increased engagement and communication by Sudanese NGOs in the Forum, SC, agenda setting and external representation	The creation of a separate Indigenous NGO Forum has given LNGOs their own space, but has not facilitated exchange between INGOs and LNGOs.
		MI 2: Increased number of Sudanese NGOs in the NGO Forum from X to Y	
<b>Output 4</b>	Improved security for NGO Forum members throughout South Sudan	MI 1: 3 months from project inception, security procedures/protocol established for NGOs operating both inside and outside of Juba.	NGO Security continues to be a cause of concern, but activities are underway to improve security management.

Coordination at the Crossroads: NGO coordination Southern Sudan 2007-2011

MI 2: All NGO Forum members regularly updated on security issues and responsive to security related information as demonstrated by the number and frequency of security bulletins issued.

The Security Focal Point has fulfilled this task well.

### Appendix 3: Options for Cost Recovery

The only financial costs for the NGO Coordination Structure are those associated with the Secretariat, but options for making the Secretariat self-sustaining are limited. Possibilities considered during the course of this evaluation include:

- a. **Subscriptions** have been used in other locations (including Liberia) but these rarely cover core costs and require supplementing by donors. In addition they have their own overheads, not just financial – since subscriptions require management – but also in terms of generating policy – for example, setting subscription fees on an equitable basis.
- b. **Service charges** can generate income, either for physical products (such as maps) or for services such as security updates, but it is difficult to persuade people to pay for services that they have previously received for free. The Secretariat could explore other potential services<sup>5</sup> but it is unlikely that such services will generate much income and they may simply alienate NGOs.
- c. **Donor diversification** is the most obvious strategy given the goodwill that donors have shown towards the NGO Secretariat. Simply bringing more than one donor to support will avoid the possibility of a complete funding collapse, as well as generating further investment through the demonstration of confidence in the Secretariat.
- d. A **Consortium** is possible if a small group of larger NGOs agrees to fund the Secretariat on behalf of the entire NGO community. Although donor support will still need to be gained, this approach can be very sustainable if actively managed by consortium members. However it can create accountability issues as non-participating NGOs run the risk of being left out of decision-making.
- e. **Seconding core staff** is a similar approach to a consortium, where larger organisations take on the cost of staffing the project on behalf of the community, getting donor support for including Secretariat staff in their project costs.
- f. A **Shareholder system** treats the Secretariat as a ‘company’ in which NGOs may ‘buy shares’ through financial or other support. Every NGO should receive a basic share, and shares can be passed on or held as proxy, but the number of shares gives the NGO a larger or smaller voice in Forum decision-making processes.

It may be possible to mix two of these approaches in order to create an approach that is both more sustainable and more accountable. The most obvious choice for ensuring that core funding is built up is **donor diversification**, which the Secretariat Co-ordinator has already begun to explore. I am hesitant to recommend **subscriptions** because of the additional work required to manage them, because they require a high level of commitment from members and they rarely cover costs. My second recommendation would be the **consortium** approach, where the self-selected consortium would probably replace the need for an elected steering committee; although this would ensure the support of the Secretariat, it would decrease the accountability of the rest of the structure.

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<sup>5</sup> Enhanced security management, charging for publications (such as a guide to NGO registration or Who’s Who in the GoSS), analytical reports such as those provided by AREU in Afghanistan, training management and provision, monitoring and evaluation support.

## Appendix 4: Steering Committee Workshop Agenda

### Planning Workshop

#### NGO Forum Steering Committee

Juba, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010

#### Background:

Facilitator: Paul Currion

Participants: NRC (Julie McKay), Tearfund (Jane Petty), Oxfam (Melinda Young, Maya Mailer), PSI (Tony Mwangi), Rural Action Against Hunger (Henry Taban), MedAir (Jeri Westad), Malaria Consortium (Stephen Moore), PACT (Judy McCallum), GOAL (Deidre Keogh), Nile Hope Development Fund (Paul Biel), Secretariat Coordinator (Kelsey Hoppe), Secretariat Security Focal Point (Cicely Clarke)

Objectives: 1. To review the evaluation of the NGO Forum  
2. To decide ways forward for the NGO Forum

#### Provisional Agenda:

0920-0945	Introduction
0930-1030	Review of Evaluation Report
1030-1050	Q&A
1050-1100	Break
1100-1145	Exercise: Progress Scorecharts
1145-1215	What do we do next?
1215-1300	Discussion: Cost Recovery
1300-1400	Lunch
1400-1430	Discussion: Cost Recovery (continued)
1430-1545	Discussion: Governance
1545-1600	Break
1600-1700	Discussion: Strategy