The Conflict Management Work of the Civil Affairs Division of the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS)

December 2010

Contents

Acronyms

ACCORD	The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
AU	African Union
CAD	Civil Affairs Division
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DFS	Department of Field Support
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
GoS	Government of Sudan
GoSS	Government of Southern Sudan
IMPP	Integrated Mission Planning Process
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
ISF	Integrated Strategic Framework
PDSRSG	Political Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General
QIP	Quick Impact Project
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SSLA	Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SSPC	Southern Sudan Peace Commission
TOB	Temporary Operating Base
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMIS	United Nations Mission in Sudan
UNPOL	United Nations Police

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) in 2005, the Civil Affairs Division (CAD) has gained considerable field experience with local-level conflict management in the complex conflict environment in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas. In this context, CAD commissioned in 2010 an assessment of its conflict management experience, including developing recommendations for CAD's future conflict management work, in a post-referendum mission.

The findings of this report are based on the experiences of CAD officers working in the field. Their co-location and constant engagement with communities and actors in government at all levels means that for many CAD officers their view of conflict management is often coloured by the perspective of their particular region or state, rather than the overall 'big picture' of the North or the South or all of Sudan. Thus the findings speak to the importance of local context, the establishment of relationships of trust, linking traditional and external approaches to conflict management and the importance of sustained engagement with communities.

The findings emphasize the importance of limiting the role of CAD's conflict management work to supporting, facilitating and advising, i.e. stopping short of implementing instead of, or on behalf of, local actors. In this context, the importance of personalities and personal relationships in carrying out the conflict management work of CAD was stressed - the development of interpersonal relationships is essential for developing trust with counterparts, and trust is an essential pre-requisite for being open to advice and for accepting support.

The 'success' of any particular initiative is dependent on the dynamics of the conflict and the commitment of the parties involved to resolving the conflict. Many CAD officers interviewed were of the opinion that it would be difficult to identify 'things that work' if the assumption is that one can then replicate them elsewhere. The study found that most CAD officers in the field had the ability to understand why a certain approach was more successful than another in a particular context – thereby placing greater emphasis on the context specific process rather than any specific tool or mechanism.

The most recognisable, and contested, approach to conflict management encountered was the peace conference. While opinion is divided amongst CAD officers regarding the value of peace conferences, there seems to be a widely held view that many of these conferences do not live up to their potential. Peace conferences remain, however, the primary vehicle used for managing conflict. These conferences are often characterised by top-down imposed agreements - perhaps better understood as statements of intent from the parties - and they typically lack implementation or follow-up. It would seem as if the peace conference approach is often indicative of a once-off intervention, rather than a sustained engagement, and the study recommends that the CAD make a special effort to strengthen and widen the approaches of peace conferences, particularly with views that these conferences are part of a larger process in which parties, namely relevant communities, traditional and government entities, are able to sustainably engage with each other.

The 'niche' or 'value-added' role of CAD can be summarised as local-level presence - which implies access to government, traditional and community leaders; locally informed data-gathering and analysis; and the ability to link the Mission with other international actors active at the local level.

It was found that there was a close link between CAD's conflict management and governance related work. CAD was able to have a constructive influence on mitigating and managing violent conflict, but resolving conflict requires long-term investments in building stronger government institutions.

CAD officers work in an extremely challenging environment. UNMIS, as with all Missions, is fraught with frustrations that often combine with the challenges of operating in such a complex environment. Participants of the study identified a number of often practical areas, that if improved would significantly enhance their ability to carry out conflict management work. The most significant, and in some cases crippling, challenge facing CAD is understaffing.

Summary of Recommendations:

Perceive conflict management as an ongoing process. The study recommends that CAD support sustained process-type engagements, rather than once-off or ad hoc peace conference-type engagements. CAD can be key to facilitating processes that help their counterparts to make this transition, both by providing support, advice, knowledge, encouragement and by supporting community peacebuilding projects that help communities to do this for themselves.

Strengthen information gathering, analysis and dissemination. In order to have a stronger capacity to implement conflict management strategies, the continuing emphasis on building stronger systems for data-gathering and dissemination is essential.

Use creative ways to enhance the implementation of conflict management initiatives. CAD has a competitive advantage in identifying the root causes of violence and conducting conflict analysis. The study recommends using this position to put in place partnerships with UNDP and other partners to ensure practical, well-directed conflict management initiatives.

Strengthen output in training and capacity-building. Increase training for government counterparts and local communities in conflict management.

Take steps to improve access to financial support. Address the frequent misunderstandings that many CAD officers have in terms of potential access to petty cash allowances. There is a need to resolve any procedural issues that require the processing of external applications and managing of funds; CAD officers need to be trained to access these external funds; and there is a need to invest CAD resources at Headquarters (HQ), regional and sub-offices to manage the flow of applications and reports between the field and HQ.

Involve the right people. Apart from the government and SPLA, CAD can improve existing ties and extend capacity-building with civil society actors.

Stay focused on field activities. CAD officers pointed to the importance of developing and maintaining contact with communities and local authorities – spending more time in the field extends and strengthens existing trust-based relationships.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sudan is fast approaching a crossroad that will bring with it irrevocable change. The milestones of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) are being realized and the referendum for Southern Sudan is drawing steadily nearer - and with it the future of the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) will soon be redefined. In this context, the Civil Affairs Division (CAD) decided to commission an assessment of the local-level conflict management work it has been engaged in, both in terms of identifying best practices, as well as with a view to informing the work of the United Nations in Sudan.

The CAD of UNMIS has gained considerable field experience over the years with local-level conflict management in the complex conflict environment in Southern Sudan. The experience CAD officers have gained in building and developing relationships with local actors, whilst supporting and facilitating local-level conflict management initiatives, can provide important learning, not only for any future mission in Southern Sudan and/or in the Three Areas (of Abyei, Southern Kordofan State and Blue Nile State), but for other peace missions across Africa. As UNMIS is likely to undergo significant changes over the coming months, the UNMIS CAD leadership has recognised that this institutional memory might be lost if not captured at this point in the Mission's history.

1.1 Objectives

It is in the above mentioned context that UNMIS CAD has approached the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) with a request to undertake a study aimed at capturing these experiences, including, with a view to developing recommendations for CAD's future conflict management work in a post-referendum mission.

1.2. ACCORD

ACCORD is a civil society organisation that encourages and promotes the development of knowledge in conflict management through training and education; and promotes research in the conflict management field in order to develop, document, analyse and apply innovative local concepts, trends and approaches to improve conflict management and resolution. Amongst its programmes is the Training for Peace (TfP) in Africa Programme, which works to improve civilian capacity to prepare, plan, manage, and monitor multidimensional peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations in Africa. The TfP Programme is funded by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

1.3 Methodology

In undertaking this study, the ACCORD team conducted approximately 50 extended qualitative interviews across 10 locations in Southern Sudan and two of the 'Three Transitional Areas' as mentioned above. The team comprised Jeremy Taylor, Gustavo de Carvalho and Zinurine Alghali.

Preliminary planning meetings were held in Khartoum and Juba in June 2010, with a team of three ACCORD researchers conducting the field interviews over a period of five weeks during July and August 2010. The researchers visited Juba, Torit, Bor, Malakal, Bentiu, Rumbek, Wau, Kwajok, Kadugli and Abyei. Interviews were conducted with Civil Affairs Officers, other substantive sections within the Mission, United

Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and State Government and South Sudan Peace Commission (SSPC)[1] representatives.

Interviews were 'semi-structured', non-attributable discussions designed to draw out the key experiences of CAD officers in the area of conflict management. Interviews with non-CAD participants were intended to develop alternate perspectives on the work of CAD, as well as better understand cross-mission coordination and cooperation.

To further supplement the understanding of CAD's work in conflict management, individual case studies were explored to unpack the processes and approaches of CAD. ACCORD relied on the assistance and support of CAD officers in each location to provide documentation, including existing reports, on the specific cases. CAD officers also facilitated interviews for the ACCORD researchers with relevant stakeholders at each location.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Role of UNMIS

UNMIS was established under the UN Security Council Resolution 1590 of 24 March 2005, conceived primarily as an observer and verification mission for the CPA. The objective of the mission is centred on achieving four broad mandated tasks, namely:

1. Support the implementation of the CPA;
2. Coordinate and facilitate the voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs);
3. Assist the mine-action sector; and
4. Protect and promote human rights.

Resolution 1919 of April 2010 requested UNMIS to start planning, in consultation with the CPA parties, the UN's presence in Sudan in the post.-referendum period. The current mandate of UNMIS ends on 30 April 2011, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1919 (2010).

2.2 Role of Civil Affairs

In contemporary UN peacekeeping operations, Civil Affairs performs the critical task of linking the peacekeeping mission with the local community – in the case of UNMIS this can include GoSS level Commissions, GoSS Legislative Assemblies and Ministries, Office of the President, State Governors, State Ministries, SPLA (GoSS and State levels), County Commissioners and local level leaders. According to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)/ Department of Field Support (DFS) Civil Affairs Policy Directive (2008) refers to the "civilian components of UN peace operations that work at the social, administrative and sub-national political levels to facilitate the countrywide implementation of peacekeeping mandates and to support the population and government in strengthening conditions and structures conducive to sustainable peace."[2] Civil Affairs entities globally are tasked with three core roles:[3]

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1   The South Sudan Peace Commission has since been merged with the Ministry of Peace and Comprehensive Peace Agreement Implementation.

2   Ibid.

3   United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support. Policy Directive: Civil Affairs, 1 April 2008.

1. Cross-Mission representation, monitoring and facilitation at the local level;
2. Confidence-building, conflict management and support to reconciliation; and
3. Support to the restoration and extension of state authority.

In the UNMIS context, CAD is a substantive civilian component reporting to the Political Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (PDSRSG), and acts as the primary liaison channel between UNMIS, and GoSS, State-level authorities and local communities. The CAD consists of a head office in Khartoum, a regional office in Juba and a network of field offices. A team of 45 national and international professionals and 28 national and international UN Volunteers work in field offices in the Three Areas and in the 10 states in Southern Sudan.

Overall, Civil Affairs within UNMIS has five main action areas:

1. Political analysis and actions in the field;
2. Support to UNMIS coordination;
3. Conflict Management;
4. Governance and Political Space; and
5. Special projects (including being the UNMIS lead on Border Demarcation, Popular Consultations, and North-South Migration)

The activities include conflict monitoring and reporting - providing analytical information to assist in conflict mitigation, with special focus on root causes, actors, dynamics and interests, and the impact of local conflicts on CPA implementation. CAD also supports and coordinates local-level peace and reconciliation initiatives in coordination with GoSS and State-level authorities and traditional leaders. Under the 'pillar' of support to state authority, CAD assists in the development and support of government institutions, and coordinates with the UNDP on the development of governance structures. Under the 'pillar' of political space, CAD conducts regular consultations with political parties and civil society groups at the state level on issues of political participation as well as institutional, legal and capacity challenges.

2.2.1 Key Concepts

Conflict management activities can be defined as "the comprehensive management of intractable conflicts and the people involved, so that they do not escalate out of control and become violent".[4] Conflict management activities are not only core to the Civil Affairs role in itself, but are also integral parts of the core business of UN peacekeeping operations.

This importance can be particularly highlighted through the context of the core functions of UN multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations, as per the UN Peacekeeping Operations Principles and Guidelines (2008) (Section 2.3) which entrusts UN peacekeeping missions with the responsibility to:

a. Create a secure and stable environment while strengthening the State's ability to provide security, with full respect for the rule of law and human rights;

b. Facilitate the political process in the host country by promoting dialogue and reconciliation and supporting the establishment of legitimate and effective institutions of governance; and

c. Provide a framework for ensuring that all UN and other international actors are able to pursue their activities at the country-level in a coherent and coordinated manner.

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4   De Coning, C. and Henderson, I.(2008) *Conflict Management for Peacekeepers and Peacebuilders*. Durban, ACCORD. p. 177

Whilst conflict management roles are not exclusive functions of Civil Affairs, their widespread field presence and their direct contact with communities on the ground positions them as part of the Mission most consistently engaged in confidence-building, conflict management and support to reconciliation initiatives. It is also important to note that conflict management activities are not undertaken in isolation from the other roles of Civil Affairs, but conflict management constitutes a substantive priority for CAD leading up to the referendum.

3. KEY INSIGHTS

This study captured the experiences and assessed and analysed the work of UNMIS CAD in local-level conflict management. Outlined below are some of the key insights and challenges that emerged from the interviews conducted with CAD officers, their counterparts in government, other substantive sections within the Mission, and UN Agencies. What follows below are those areas that were consistently identified as the most significant features of the conflict management work of CAD. It is important to note that the conflict environment in which CAD operates is complex and evolving, and therefore the fluid situation does not allow for a straightforward prioritisation of approaches to conflict management. The outcomes of this study reflect this.

Constant engagement with communities and actors in government, at all levels, means that for many CAD officers their view of conflict management is often coloured by the perspective of their particular region or state rather than the overall 'big picture' of the North or the South or all of Sudan. Thus without a detailed quantitative study that compares all the conflict management approaches of CAD and their outcomes, individual case studies are described in the context of what the individual concerned believes are key factors and variables in undertaking their conflict management work. These descriptions tend not to be overly methodological or theoretical, but rather focus on personal experiences and have allowed us to arrive at the conclusions that follow. This study has attempted to capture and record the aspects of CAD work that is perhaps taken for granted when carrying out conflict management initiatives. In undertaking this study, the difficult and often frustrating conditions in which CAD officers work became apparent. Understaffed, with innumerable administrative and bureaucratic challenges, the CAD officers impressed the ACCORD team with their ability to nevertheless achieve more than could otherwise have been expected.

3.1 The importance of context

The 'success' of conflict management initiatives – measured by the lack of violent conflict over a period of several months in a certain location – can often be attributed to the specific conditions in an area or personalities involved rather than the technical content or mechanisms relied upon. Further, it is clear that in any conflict situation, the protagonists themselves are the most crucial players, combined with factors such as the depth of their grievances or ambitions. In this context, the role of external conflict management actors, such as CAD, is to identify, empower and support those factors that are most critical to the process, and that have the potential to tip the balance. Overall, their role is to catalyse and improve the timeliness, quality and sustainability of the peace processes.

In addition, while the nature of the conflicts across Sudan can be broadly understood to be resource-based with varying levels of historical, ethnic or political undertones; the reality in each particular instance needs to inform the specific conflict management intervention. A response in one instance that is undertaken in the context of annual migrations will require a different approach to that around border disputes or cattle-raiding. The Misseriya/Dinka conflict has a traditional conflict management precedent that can be tapped into, whereas conflicts that can be understood as 'post-CPA', for example involving returning refugees; unresolved

antagonisms from the war; or (newly emerging post-elections) politically motivated conflict, will have different dynamics.

Thus although there is no magic formula that can be applied to the management of conflict in Sudan, those interviewed for this study identified a number of critical areas that will influence the likelihood of a long-term solution to a conflict situation. These are based upon a strong foundation of understanding and analysis of the conditions, personalities and history surrounding the conflict before an intervention can be undertaken. The need to develop a relationship based on trust with their counterparts was stressed throughout the study – be they in government or with traditional leaders and community members - because these relationships determine the ability of CAD to engage and influence tactical approaches to conflict management.

3.1.1 The challenge of replication

Many CAD officers interviewed for this study stressed that it would be difficult to identify 'things that work' if the assumption is that one can identify discrete conflict management tools and then replicate them elsewhere. The predominant view was that CAD has particular abilities in understanding why a certain approach was more successful than another in a particular context – thereby placing greater emphasis on the approach or the process rather than the mechanism itself.

CAD works closely with a range of partners such as County Commissioners, State Governors, the Ministry of Peace and CPA Implementation (formerly the South Sudan Peace Commission – SSPC), State Legislators, community leaders and local chiefs to better understand the conflict. CAD may offer technical advice, facilitation and logistical support to any intervention undertaken by its partners. Thus, the role of CAD in conflict management is intended to be based on supporting the work of local actors. CAD officers are not supposed to take over or supplant the role of the local actors, and should not implement activities on their behalf. This means that the level of influence that CAD can exert over a conflict management initiative will be dependent on the particular context, and does not allow for the use of pre-determined mechanisms to bring conflicting parties to an agreement. The level of influence that CAD can bring to bear upon the government officials responsible for leading the actual implementation of conflict management work will be dependent on the strength of the relationship and trust that has been developed between CAD and their counterparts. The success of the conflict management initiative, however, depends on a range of factors, including the capacity and political will of the responsible authorities or traditional leaders to act. The role of Civil Affairs should be evaluated on the degree to which they have used their capacity and resources to facilitate and support such conflict management initiatives.

3.1.2 Starting out with a humble, sensitive and respectful attitude

Despite the 'limited' role of supporting the lead of local actors in conflict management initiatives, CAD can point to considerable success based on the understanding that although there is no magic formula that can be applied to the management of conflict in Sudan, there are a number of critical areas that will influence the likelihood of a long-term solution to a conflict situation.

The following attributes were identified as necessary to undertake the work of a CAD officer:

1. patience
2. cultural sensitivity
3. impartiality
4. understanding and analysis of the environment
5. the ability to build personal relationships.

The importance of the UN presence

In some instances, the mere presence of the UN alone will reduce violence with greater effect that any identified conflict management approach. This was apparent in the complex 'tit-for-tat' conflict between the Lou Nuer and the Murle in Akobo and Pibor counties, Jonglei State, which resulted in more than 1,000 casualties in 2009, including a week-long battle that by some accounts left as many as 750 dead. As part of the Jonglei Stabilisation Plan, UNMIS established Temporary Operating Bases (TOBs) in Pibor and Akobo Counties between May and July 2009 with 120 military, police and CAD-led civilian contingents. For the three months that the TOBs were in place there were no major clashes, though once the bases closed clashes continued and an estimated 120 were killed in the following weeks. It is therefore noteworthy that physical presence is important but not sufficient – the UN presence reduced the violence but did not solve it.

3.1.3 Personalities matter

An overriding feature of this study is the importance of personal relationships and inclusive style in carrying out the work of CAD. The development of interpersonal relationships is essential in developing contact with local counterparts, as well as facilitating cooperation and coordination amongst the various components of the Mission. The importance of personal relationships was also apparent in the interaction between CAD and external partners and agencies such as UNDP and PACT Sudan.

The question of personalities is a complex one to unravel – especially in the context of trying to better understand the conflict management work of CAD and identify those processes and mechanisms that can be successfully replicated. Repeatedly throughout the study CAD officers explained that the success or failure of a certain initiative could be linked to the commitment, intransigence or agenda – hidden or otherwise – of those counterparts with whom CAD works. It was not uncommon to hear that "successes are not institutional, but individual". Whilst this cannot be empirically measured, it is testimony to how the work of CAD is perceived by those working across the Mission at the field level. It also confirms and emphasizes the importance of context-specific arrangements and solutions in the kind of weak institutional environment that is the current reality in Southern Sudan.

The role of leadership and personality

The Dinka (Malual) and Misseriya (El-Merram) agreement that was singed in Aweil in 2008 is a case in point. It is believed that the continued presence of Northern Bahr el Ghazal Governor Paul Malong is central to the continued success of the agreement and the relative lack of violence between the two pastoralist communities that straddle the north-south border. Malong has a long history with the issue and is seen to have developed a mutually beneficial approach to the problem, and this, combined with Malong's personal involvement and commitment over time, has resulted in the agreement remaining in place. CAD officers interviewed confirmed that the longer term prospects for many of the peace agreements signed between communities depend on the personalities of the parties concerned, along with follow up by the governmental and traditional institutions that committed themselves to the process.

3.2 Understanding the niche of CAD

The primary conflict management functions of CAD comprise early warning (information gathering); analysis; intervention support (advice to and facilitation of conflict management activities); and peacebuilding support (support to following up agreements, addressing causes and drives through peacebuilding projects, linking

local actors with external agencies and resources, training and capacity development for government and traditional or community structures).

The conflict management arena, however, is inhabited by a number of players. In undertaking this study we have attempted to unpack the role of CAD in the context of the various actors involved in initiatives designed to respond to, mitigate and resolve conflicts in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas. CAD officers who participated in this study offered a number of suggestions as to the 'niche', 'value-add', or unique function that CAD plays in the field of conflict management.

At the heart of these suggestions was a single concept - 'access.' This refers to access to State level and GoSS authorities, civil society representatives, as well as traditional leaders and mechanisms. However, as one participant observed 'in terms of what we actually do in conflict management, it is not clear or formalised – it tends to be ad hoc and reactive'. Indeed, the question of support to government initiatives and other actors can include everything from advice and conflict analysis, to fundraising and logistical support.

Participants from CAD, other substantive units within the Mission, and UNDP all felt that the core advantage CAD had in undertaking conflict management initiatives were the established relationships with key government officials and traditional or community leaders. This is an advantage that is strengthened by the fact that for many traditional and community leaders, or government representatives at state and lower levels, CAD is the 'civilian face of the Mission' and thus remains the primary conduit for contact with the Mission.

The niche roles for CAD in conflict management, from an UNMIS perspective, can be summarised as:
1. local-level presence, which implies access to state and local government as well as traditional leaders and communities;
2. locally informed data gathering and analysis;
3. ability to convey Mission messages to local communities;
4. information sharing about the progress or delays of the overall peace process; and
5. linking the Mission with other actors active at the local level.

CAD thus provides dedicated professional human capacity (with relevant knowledge, skills and enabling resources); the ability to link their local counterparts with other networks, at all levels; and the ability to identify and generate additional support and resources, as needed.

3.2.1 Information management and analysis

Participants in the study identified information-gathering and analysis as another area that CAD offered as a unique competitive advantage. Conflict monitoring and analysis is a key component of the conflict management work of CAD that is a benefit to CAD's government counterparts, but is also derived from being well-connected to those same counterparts. Strong relationships with the Governor's office and State Legislators as well as local communities mean that CAD information sources are wide and varied. CAD entrenches this position as the key information conduit by meeting with local chiefs, listening and assessing rumours, and maximizing the insight of national staff to determine tensions and better understand their environment. It is often in the space between information-gathering and response that CAD applies its skills in motivating and advising on a response. Information is the first step in any conflict management initiative and determining key indicators for potential conflict can be used as a tool for early warning; but information and strong analysis is more commonly used as the basis for a coordinated response to conflict.

Participants in this study emphasised the value of reliable information in carrying out their conflict management work. Information-gathering is intimately linked to analysis and developing a suitable response, it is also a key component in developing and sustaining relationships with their various counterparts. The type and quality of information gathered about violent clashes or threats of conflict impact on the approach taken in managing the conflict. Information can be gathered from a number of sources –counterparts in government, community members, and other UNMIS sections. For example, an UNPOL or military report that a patrol encountered a broken water pump can indicate that a certain community will now be looking elsewhere for water – this could result in a possible cause of conflict and spark for revenge attacks.

The ability of CAD to identify, disseminate and analyse conflict data was demonstrated during the elections, where CAD officers used their wide network of contacts to provide an accurate and timely assessment of events as they unfolded. These strengths are also called upon on a daily basis to provide the Mission with accurate reporting and analysis of the conflict environment. In fact, in many instances a significant component of the conflict management work undertaken by CAD is in the area of information-gathering and reporting, as well as feeding this information up the chain within the Mission and through briefings with the UNCT.

3.2.2 Logistical Support

The issue of logistical support is in many ways central to the role that CAD plays in conflict management; and yet there is no unanimous view on its true value to conflict management in Sudan. Many felt that the value of this type of support cannot be underestimated in the context of the poor infrastructure in Southern Sudan. In many instances it is the inability of the government to access the regions where conflict is occurring or to meet with warring groups that leads to the lack of implementation and follow-up of peace agreement resolutions. In this context, logistical support provides an incredibly valuable initiative, not only for CAD, but also in terms of the need to get government officials closer to the communities they are intended to serve. However, whilst CAD officers should be cognoscente of the importance that logistical support can have in overall conflict management roles, they should continue to reiterate the other value CAD can bring beyond that activity.

Given that CAD has no funding of its own, it was felt by some participants that providing logistical support was overplayed and that at times UNMIS, through CAD, was taken advantage of by the government in Southern Sudan in particular. CAD officers pointed to instances where SPLM officials had requested flights to attend 'peace conferences' that were in fact party political rallies. Instances such as these placed the Mission in general and CAD in particular, in a very difficult position with the other political groupings in the region. A recommendation that emerged from participants in the study was that CAD should strive to be more focussed in discussing with those officials what the meetings are, how they are organised and what will be the expected outcome with these types of requests. The feeling that was expressed is that logistical support can be better leveraged when dealing with government representatives.

3.3 Conflict management mechanisms and approaches

CAD has an advocacy role in conflict management – providing support, analysis, advice, and in some instances 'good offices.' CAD officers interviewed outlined various approaches and mechanisms to conflict management that can be broadly understood as 'traditional' conflict management, in the Sudanese context. These approaches were identified by CAD officers as the most commonly understood mechanisms of government actors in interacting with warring groups and undertaking conflict management initiatives.

Participants were divided on the value of the so-called 'traditional' approach. Noting that there was a frustration that cattle-raiding is perceived as a traditionally acceptable 'cultural activity', whilst it is a major factor in the ongoing violence in many parts of Southern Sudan. The role that CAD often plays as a facilitator, rather than driver of conflict management initiatives, means that CAD has to work in support of the approach taken by local authorities and community leaders, and they generally accept cattle-raiding as a 'normal' cultural phenomena, as long as it stays within certain parameters. Some CAD officers expressed frustration and questioned how best to develop conflict management strategies when the more long-term solutions to conflict require fundamental changes to societal norms, such as these. There was a feeling that the current locally-led approaches will merely continue to produce 'more of the same', that is, temporary conflict management solutions rather than long-term conflict resolution approaches.

On the other hand, in addressing for instance the Misseriya/Dinka clashes, CAD officers reiterated the importance of developing approaches to conflict management based on tried and tested 'traditional' methods in dealing with resource conflict during annual migrations. It was noted that the violence associated with resource conflict is occurring in feudal or semi-feudal communities and that without respecting local traditions (and this includes approaches to conflict management), CAD would not be able to participate in the process.

> **The importance of locally accepted mechanisms for conflict management**
>
> Experience from the Nuba/Hawasma clashes in Southern Kordofan shows that CAD has been most effective when working through locally understood and accepted conflict management mechanisms - based on meeting with local community leaders to identify their understanding of the root causes of conflict and suggesting their own solutions. Through partnership with locally-driven initiatives, the government has also shown commitment to tradition and locally accepted methods of conflict management by paying 'blood money' to aggrieved groups in accordance with local traditions.

Persons interviewed also identified problems with conflict management initiatives that are imposed in a 'top-down' manner. For example, agreements are reached by leaders without including or consulting community members. They observed that agreements that were imposed were not likely to hold, as the key constituents were not involved in reaching the agreement, and the causes of the conflict often tend not to be addressed in these kinds of agreements. Many examples were given of a Governor, or other senior political figures, attending peace meetings where they would 'lay down the law' and force an agreement among the parties, only for these agreements to break down as soon as these figures have left the scene.

The challenge appears to be balancing the involvement of senior, and respected, leaders in peace conferences, while at the same time involving the numerous other players - that could, depending on context, include state legislative councils, county commissioners, community and *payam* leaders – in ongoing conflict management processes. CAD can play a meaningful role in reminding these stakeholders that managing these situations requires an ongoing engagement in a conflict management process that

necessitates the building of trust, sustained engagement over time, and mechanisms that can monitor and manage the implementation of agreements reached.

The involvement of senior leaders can be very effective, but needs to be carefully timed and complement the ongoing work required at other levels. CAD's supportive role can facilitate such a process approach, especially when it can make use of peacebuilding projects that can create the need, and provide the resources for, regular meetings among stakeholders. Among the most glaring challenges facing conflict management generally in Sudan appears to be competition, or confusion, over who is responsible for taking the lead on peace initiatives, for convening meetings, and taking responsibility for implementation and following-up on agreements. CAD can play a useful supportive role by prompting stakeholders at various levels to take appropriate action at their level, as and when needed. This is linked to questions of who has the assets to follow up, where the resources are coming from, and who makes the decisions.

Active engagement in the peace process

The ability of CAD to play a more active role in the conflict management process is often determined by the nature of the relationship that has been established with the parties from the outset, or the extent to which the government actors driving the process allow 'space' for greater involvement. However, the successful Great Gogrial Kalkwel conference agreement that was signed in Tonj South, Warrab State in 2008, is significant in that CAD played a significant role in monitoring the outcome of the agreement and identifying spoilers throughout the negotiation process. The two Dinka communities had been fighting each other since 1981 – predating even the formation of the SPLA in 1983 – and the peace process brought together chiefs from neighbouring communities and states, representatives of the youth and Salva Kiir. While the negotiations were conducted with a 'traditional' conflict resolution approach that was accessible and acceptable to the parties, it also allowed space for CAD to contribute through conflict analysis and negotiation strategy. By identifying spoilers and advising government counterparts driving the negotiations on tactical approaches, CAD played a significant role in ensuring that the conference resulted in resolutions that were obtainable and within the capacity of the authorities to enforce.

3.3.1 The value of peace conferences

The most recognisable, and contested, approach to conflict management that ACCORD encountered in undertaking this study was the peace conference. While opinion was divided amongst CAD officers regarding the value of peace conferences, there seems to be a widely held view that the vast majority of these conferences achieve very little. That being said, however, it was also felt that one should be careful about referring to the peace conference concept as having 'failed'. Clearly, many did not work as they could have, or they have largely not been as successful as many would have wanted, but they are still positive initiatives in that they do bring people together. It was felt that in many circumstances any dialogue is better than none.

Peace conferences remain the primary approach in resolving conflict. Experience indicates that these conferences are characterised by unrealistic agreements – perhaps better understood as statements of intent from the parties - and a patent lack of implementation or follow-up. This is often further compounded by leaving key stakeholders out of the process, such as important politicians, community youth, or young men from cattle camps. The overwhelming trend appears to be one of cooperation at the time of the conference, but with violence resuming within weeks (in extreme cases within days or even hours) of the agreement being signed.

For government officials especially, and UNMIS CAD to a slightly lesser degree, there is the danger that credibility in the eyes of local communities can be severely compromised by a lack of implementation of these agreements and popular perceptions of 'broken promises'. Consequently, the importance of implementation is intimately linked to the process of building trust in the newly formed state institutions in general, and the individual governors or commissioners in particular.

A case in point: the Yirol Peace Conference

The neighbouring counties of greater Yirol, Yirol East, and Yirol West in the Lakes State are home to the Dinka clans of Apaak and Ciec and have seen increasingly violent cattle-raiding in recent years with hundreds of reported deaths. Following a number of initiatives such as ceasefires and a truce, the Yirol Traditional Chief's Peace Conference was held in July 2010 between representatives of the Apaak and Ciec clans and sought to bring peace to the area. However, despite strong commitments, the signing of resolutions and the presence of both County Commissioners, violence erupted less than a week after the agreement was signed. A cattle-raid and subsequent reprisal left twenty-two people dead and thousands of head of cattle stolen.

It was also expressed that a large number of these conferences were being held purely because they are a visible output that can show 'something is being done'. In many cases it was felt that these conferences become self-justifying and that government; donors; and International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) are all guilty of pushing for peace conferences to meet their own output targets and to cement their positions as relevant players. In addition, the necessity for donors to spend allocated resources combined with exaggerated funding requests from conference organisers has created a phenomenon where peace conferences are known to have unnecessarily inflated budgets. There is often a pressure to spend rather than ensure that the (correctly identified) participants in the conferences are suitably prepared, and willing to engage in meaningful dialogue that will address the root causes of the conflict – in effect, the *peace conference should be the culmination of a process of dialogue rather than the beginning*.

The overall challenge is perhaps with the perception that a conflict can be managed with a peace conference, when in fact peace conferences should be used as a milestone in a long-term conflict management engagement. Peace conferences can be used to affirm progress reached, to re-energise a stalled process, or to disseminate an agreement reached among a few leaders to the wider community. Peace conferences should thus be seen as a mechanism that can be used to achieve a specific goal as part of a larger process, and not as an end in, and of, itself.

CAD's involvement in these conferences varies and is largely dependent on staff availability and the relationship with the Governor or Commissioner responsible for leading the process. CAD's participation can range from the initial planning, including preliminary meetings with the two contesting parties; securing the funds to host the event; and logistical support with the provision of flights, or merely attending and giving support to the government during the conference itself.

CAD is in a strategic position to advise the stakeholders on the whole process, including on the timing of the peace conferences and to ensure they are integrated into broader conflict management initiatives. These initiatives have to be undertaken and led by the relevant government or traditional authorities. This approach provides CAD with the space to support and reinforce peace conferences, given that they are accepted as successful mechanisms by the government and local communities. The support can include conflict mapping; capacity building in areas such as mediation; problem solving; and conflict analysis.

Successful involvement of CAD in a Peace Conference

The experience of the Bari-Mundari peace conferences in Central Equatoria State demonstrate the positive and re-enforcing role that CAD can play in attempting to bring about more sustainable resolutions to entrenched conflict. CAD responded to the increasingly aggressive 'tit-for-tat' violence between the Bari and Mundari by accompanying the County Commissioner to meet representatives of both communities before a peace conference was proposed. The conference was postponed several times when the Bari refused to participate in the conference unless their raided cows were returned to them first. Paramount chiefs from all the six counties in the state engaged in dialogue with Bari leaders that eventually led to a meeting between the two groups. Tensions were high and the first round of meetings were not a success – CAD then arranged for further meetings to be held on the neutral ground at UNMIS. A further area of contention during the negotiations was the fact that the Bari were blocking Mundari access to Juba. CAD proposed that a police station be constructed at the 'border' between the two communities and undertook to secure funding to build the police station - eventually obtaining support from the African Union (AU). The police station is currently being constructed.

3.4 The importance of governance

While this study is ostensibly designed to unpack and analyse the work of CAD in conflict management, it is apparent that three key strands of CAD's work – conflict management; governance (or support to the extension of state authority); and political space (political space for citizens in political processes) – are intimately intertwined. In this context many participants in the study identified poor governance, the lack of the rule of law and an inability to manage violence, as central to the continuing conflict in Sudan.

Some CAD officers that were interviewed felt that conflict management initiatives are especially popular with donors, and as a result it is easier to obtain funding for initiatives that target conflict management, for example, funds to host a peace conference. This is resulting however, in the governance function of CAD's work being overlooked and is further exacerbated by severe understaffing in some locations. Yet the message that is continuously reinforced throughout this study is that to mitigate, manage, and ultimately resolve conflict in the long-term, stronger government institutions will be required and by implication more integrated approaches to conflict management.

Governance and conflict: Atar / Khor Flus conflict

Weak governance structures impact on societies and conflict dynamics in a variety of ways. In fragile post-conflict environments, access, location and quality of governance structures all contribute to the ability of the state to entrench peace.

The conflict between the Atar and Khor Flus Dinka communities in the Upper Nile State is an interesting example, as the conflict can be linked to the establishment and location of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) county government/civil authority. Prior to the establishment of the formalised county governmental structures, the two communities co-existed peacefully. While the disagreement between the communities can be understood to have deep roots in old rivalries between local leaders, the conflict manifested itself over the civil administrative structure of Khor Flus. The establishment of county headquarters in Khor Flus was challenged by Atar Dinkas who consider themselves to have the longest-standing loyalty to the SPLA/M, and as a result, believe they are more deserving to host the county administrative headquarters. However, perhaps more tellingly, Atar is also less represented at the county level. Out of the four seats allocated for the County, which includes the Commissioner and membership in the Constituents' Assembly in Jonglei State; none has been allocated to Atar. Thus the perception of marginalization led to the Atar community rejecting the jurisdiction of Khor Flus County and creating a new conflict dynamic in an already volatile environment.

The stark reality in South Sudan especially, is that the capacity of GoSS is often woefully below what is required when considering an environment where 'everything is a priority'. Most Ministries have very weak capacity to deliver, and the expectations of the population are often beyond the reach of GoSS. Thus, there has to be a balance between what can be realistically expected from GoSS in terms of conflict management in the short to medium-term; and the long-term needs in addressing the root causes of conflict through poverty alleviation and socio-economic development.

Several CAD officers that were interviewed expressed the view that the larger issue accompanying conflict management is the ability of the government to enforce the rule of law – without it, communities take the law into their own hands, revenge attacks proliferate and the situation spirals towards even greater violence. This is compounded by previous failures of the state, where communities remember broken promises and it becomes more difficult to instil trust and enforce decisions. While the impact may be at the state or local level, the decision-making and resource level remain with GoSS. Unfortunately it is unlikely that the GoSS's capacity to enforce the rule of law will considerably increase in the short- to medium-term, and the communities and local authorities, supported by CAD and UNMIS and its successor, would need to try to better utilise existing social capital and coping mechanisms to manage conflicts and to prevent the outbreak of violence. At the same time, they need to continue to work with state government and GoSS to allocate the resources and re-enforce the rule of law and local security institutions.

One key area for improvement is an attempt to transform the multi-layered approach to conflict management engagement from an ad hoc activity to a continuous process. The ACCORD team got the sense that conflict management was often seen as something that the authorities and traditional leaders engage in after there was an outbreak of violence to restore the situation to 'normal'. However, it many situations conflict is endemic and will result in regular outbreaks of violence if not managed in a systematic manner. CAD can assist their counterparts to approach conflict management as part of their routine 'governance' function. Conflict management in these cases requires continuous monitoring and regular engagement with the stakeholders so that any increase in tensions can be identified and addressed, before it spirals into violent conflict. Where agreements have been reached, a useful 'best process' is to include, as part of the agreement, the establishment of a follow-up mechanism that can be used to monitor the situation and manage future outbreaks of violence. Where such mechanism has been agreed upon in the past, it often seems to lapse due to neglect and poor follow-through. CAD can play a facilitating role in encouraging the stakeholders to follow-through on these arrangements.

The recognition that the conflict management work of UNMIS and its successor, in support of GoSS and state and local authorities and communities, should be undertaken in a context of weak governance and the reliance on the coping mechanisms and social capital of local communities, does not imply that the GoSS, CAD and other international actors should or will abandon building government capacity, but this is recognized as a long-term undertaking that is critical for Southern Sudan's long-term development.

Generational conflict

Many young people have lost faith in traditional leadership and yet this important societal role is not being replaced by the government. For example, in what could be termed 'a generational conflict', young men from Lafon in the Eastern Equatoria State attempted to overthrow the traditional village 'elders' – in this case men in their 30s and 40s – in July 2010. Both sides were well armed and the violence left several elders dead and a number wounded on both sides. Thus the break-down of traditional structures of authority in Southern Sudan is further weakening the security situation and complicating the conflict management approaches of government, as the legitimacy and authority of state structures are frequently not recognised by local communities.

3.5 Addressing the root causes of conflict

Many participants interviewed for this study felt that the majority of the conflict management outputs, such as peace conferences, could be best understood as post-conflict peacebuilding initiatives, and that in many instances it was the lack of a tangible 'peace dividend' that led to the collapse of local-level peace agreements. The feeling expressed was that communities did not support or see value in the conflict management initiatives over time unless 'peace' was accompanied by tangible benefits for them and their communities.

The positions outlined in this section are a reflection of the *experience* and *views* of many CAD officers operating at the field level. Many participants interviewed, felt that the extreme developmental backlog in Sudan offered CAD the opportunity to leverage peace consolidation gains with relatively small project-type peacebuilding initiatives – such as the construction of a borehole, road maintenance, or a shared initiative such as a ferry service.

The conflicts in Sudan can be broadly understood to be linked to competition over resources. In some cases, peacebuilding projects can create opportunities to increase the 'size of the cake' or to transform localized conflicts by providing an alternative access point to a shared resource. However, these alternate solutions need to be carefully thought through, both in terms of down-stream costs, such as maintenance, but also in terms of potential side effects on local power and cultural dynamics. Any potential alternatives need to be thoroughly discussed by the community in question, as they would need to integrate such new technologies, or arrangements, into their daily lives.

Some participants felt that if the conflict management approach is to have an impact, and ensure the Mission's legacy, it will need to be more proactively engaged in linking conflict management initiatives with tangible outcomes for communities. Coupling conflict management with tangible outcomes – either peacebuilding projects, or follow-on mechanisms to monitor and manage grazing and migration routes – is a key to building lasting peace. This can be done by more effectively working with the UNCT and especially UNDP so that their programming is going to those areas that can consolidate peace. The feeling expressed by many participants is that from their experience, in the eyes of local communities, peace will not be entrenched without improvements to their daily life.

3.6 Coordination within the Mission

The question of coordination within the Mission and with the other actors and agencies operating in the conflict management environment is of particular relevance when considering the role of CAD in a post-CPA Mission. Understanding how the various players operating in the conflict management environment in Southern Sudan work together is just as important as identifying the particular 'value-add' of CAD to the field.

While it was universally accepted that CAD's primary role was to address areas of interaction with government – either linked to conflict management or not – frustrations were expressed that CAD 'monopolised' relations with government counterparts. In some states there are meetings set up by CAD with the Governor that bring in all sections of the Mission, and it was expressed that these approaches could be generalised and expanded.

There does appear to be space for a practical implementation description to be added to the mandate of CAD. It was suggested by some participants that CAD should clearly define what their methods of

engagement are, so that they don't have to work it out on a case-by-case basis with the other sections operating at the field level.

3.6.1 UNDP

As with the conflict management initiatives themselves, the role of coordination with the UNDP also appears to be dependent largely on personalities and context. Apart from the processes of securing funding, CAD field officers indicated the perception that there is no universally identifiable framework for coordination in the area of conflict management. UNDP has programmes in the area of 'Conflict Prevention and Recovery' throughout the country, and interacts with CAD through these initiatives.

The dominant perception expressed was that the primary area of interaction and cooperation between CAD and UNDP is through the funding and support of peace conferences. However, the success of these initiatives is often dependent on the variables of personality and location, and as such it is difficult to draw conclusions about the levels and success of interaction with CAD. There are however, other opportunities to collaborate in early recovery, support to the expansion of state institutions to the country level, and working with the Legislative Assemblies and the judiciary.

While there is an understanding that the Mission and UNDP should work together within the Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP) and Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF), it is understandable that CAD and UNDP approach conflict management from different perspectives. These perspectives and approaches in themselves presents two stages in the conflict spectrum and thus should be utilised, in a coordinated manner, as stages in a process to resolve conflict.

As was highlighted earlier, peacebuilding projects that backstop and support ongoing conflict management initiatives can be a very important catalyst for ongoing engagement and follow-up among stakeholders. It would seem useful if CAD's focus shifted from peace conferences, as ad hoc events, to ongoing conflict management initiatives in communities where conflict is endemic, and in this context, the relationship with UNDP could also meaningfully shift from funding peace conferences to supporting peacebuilding projects that follow-up on, and are aimed at, supporting the implementation of peace agreements.

Perhaps there is scope for a formal agreement between CAD and UNDP to cooperate on conflict management initiatives across a range of areas, including conflict analysis; risk mapping; conflict management support; and peacebuilding projects.

3.6.2 National Staff

The importance of national staff to the ability of UNMIS CAD to carry out conflict management work cannot be overestimated. In many respects CAD operates as a political interlocutor between the Mission and government authorities. For this to occur, CAD relies on the networks and personal relations of their national officers, as well as their understanding of, and insights into, the political environment. This level of local knowledge is vital and forms the foundation for many of the conflict management interventions undertaken by CAD. Indeed, without it, CAD would largely be blind and unable to work effectively with government or communities that are in some cases exceptionally isolated and traditional in their outlook.

However, there is obviously also a risk that the political and ethnic allegiances of the national CAD officers can influence their work, and thus ultimately generate a number of side effects for the Mission, of which the most important is the perceived loss of impartiality. While some national staff actually requested to be placed outside their home areas, so as not to be pressured by their own communities, examples were

provided of situations where such political allegiances have seriously compromised the ability of CAD to remain neutral and operate as a trusted intermediary between communities. These examples were not however universally expressed and are unlikely to have a widespread impact on the ability of CAD to carry out its conflict management work.

3.7 Training

The area of conflict management training has particular interest for ACCORD and as such this study provided an opportunity to identify new areas for training as well as measure the impact of training already provided. Much of this learning will be used in the development of future training materials.

CAD officers who participated in the study identified a number of areas where more training would assist them in carrying out the conflict management work of CAD. The first of these is conflict analysis. It was noted that while CAD works primarily through supporting and facilitating the efforts of government in managing conflict, it should be able to offer greater assistance in assessing and understanding conflict dynamics. Political analysis often depends on the professional background of the individuals concerned, and CAD officers are drawn from a variety of backgrounds. While the Section no doubt benefits from their diverse experiences, there is also value in developing a certain uniformity of approach when undertaking political and conflict assessment.

While conflict management is a core function for CAD, it was felt by some participants that they are not suitably equipped to train their government counterparts in basic conflict management, namely negotiation, mediation, and facilitation. In addition, easily reproducible basic training in mediation and alternate methods of conflict management would be a useful tool in training community leaders. However these community training approaches would need to be targeted to communities with little or no literacy and must be light on theory and heavy on practical local context.

A further component is consistency in approach and content – various organisations offer training in conflict management, but use different 'tools' or approaches to understanding the concepts. If CAD is to replicate any of this material it would need to identify an approach that could be replicated consistently.

A practical and often overlooked component of training offerings is reporting and political analysis. A number of participants indicated that there is a need to improve the reporting standards across CAD. Arguably, once a CAD officer can report on and provide an assessment of a conflict situation, they are better positioned to be a sounding board to their counterparts in government. Thus, a training product that could assist CAD officers to provide insightful and well-structured reports on conflict would go a long way to making CAD more effective in carrying out its mandate.

Participants felt there was a universal need to increase the technical competencies of CAD officers, yet training is not always practical or possible. In this regard, structured mentoring and supervision was recommended. By developing opportunities for inexperienced staff to spend time working closely with more experienced staff creates opportunities to develop key skills grounded in the practicalities of the local context.

A final observation is that CAD needs training in understanding their role in conflict management within current realities. CAD does not have the means or agency to 'solve conflict,' thus, CAD officers need to better understand that their role is to support conflict management efforts, and they need to be given better tools to do that. The key questions to be asked are: how do you support conflict management efforts as opposed to doing it yourself? How do you leverage local capacity and identify social capital? How do you

encourage and sustain ongoing processes rather than ad hoc peace conferences? How do you support and facilitate community peacebuilding projects that can in turn support peace agreements, build trust and invest in relationships on which future conflict management initiatives can be built? In other words, how do you build robust and resilient conflict management systems?

4. KEY STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES

CAD officers work in an extremely challenging environment. UNMIS, as with all Missions, is fraught with frustrations that often combine with the challenges of operating in an environment such as Southern Sudan. GoSS is enormously under-capacitated, often struggling to address the issues at hand, and this understandably creates a discouraging backdrop against which to undertake a largely facilitating role in conflict management initiatives.

Yet quite apart from the general environment in Southern Sudan, participants identified a number of often practical areas that if improved, would significantly improve their ability to carry out conflict management work. The following areas were identified by CAD officers as the most significant, practical and in their view, easily improved, hurdles that make carrying out their work challenging.

4.1 Staffing

The most significant and in some cases crippling challenge facing CAD is understaffing.

The challenge of filling vacancies at UNMIS has been a problem since its inception. It is estimated that in Sector III, for example, CAD was running at 60% of planned staff in August 2010. Under conditions such as this it is almost unnecessary to outline the impact that such staff shortages have on the ability of CAD to carry out its mandate.

Participants in the study indicated that with the current staff shortage they are effectively hamstrung and planned patrols, engagement with local communities and other initiatives simply do not happen. For example, in the Lakes state, CAD involvement in government-led conflict management initiatives has been severely affected by staff shortages with no CAD representation at the last three peace conferences.

4.2 Administrative overload

Another significant factor that participants in the study pointed to – and which is undoubtedly linked to staff shortages – is the time and effort expended on dealing with the considerable administrative burden generally associated with CAD activities at the field level. The logical result of CAD being the 'civilian face of the Mission' and the point of contact for government is the daily barrage of special flight requests, funding requests and any number of logistical requests such as flying the body of a government official to a funeral.

CAD officers interviewed, expressed considerable frustration at the time expended dealing with purely administrative functions such as special flight requests. Often the first casualty of this tends to be the time to assess, review and report on conflict management work. Experience has shown that as a situation de-escalates so to does the reporting – meaning that deeper analysis and assessment of the situation often simply does not happen. In locations where conflict situations arise more frequently, CAD staff feel as if they move from crisis to crisis without getting enough time to undertake planned patrols, or even complete the reporting requirements from the previous crisis.

4.3 Access to funding

The extent to which a lack of funding is a severe obstacle to carrying out the conflict management requirements of CAD is a somewhat contested issue. While some felt that this merely necessitated more creative approaches and ensured that the proposed response initiatives of CAD were in line with donors or UNDP funding initiatives; others felt that without any budget CAD was severely hamstrung.

It is important to note the difference between what could be termed 'petty cash' and funding for more substantive initiatives such a large peace conference. Most participants do agree that having some form of budget within CAD would most definitely be a help, for example a petty cash allowance that would pay for refreshments when holding a meeting. The ACCORD team encountered countless examples of CAD staff buying water for meetings with their own money, or unable to host community leaders because basic costs could not be covered. The research found that there was a significant level of uncertainty regarding the policies in place for petty cash in the mission.

The process of securing financial support for a response initiative can be complicated by a number of factors. Participants noted that there is no universal institutional process to acquire funding and a number of factors seem to become involved. Team-site locations that do not have decision-making UNDP representation, for example, felt that their funding requests are disadvantaged because they cannot 'lobby' decision-makers to approve their requests in the same way that those 'closer to power' in Juba are able. Factors such as personal relations and previous experiences with 'successful' proposals were all seen to be factors that played a role in securing funding.

4.3.1 Quick Impact Projects (QIPs)

While Quick Impact Projects were highly sought after by local communities and appreciated where implemented, concerns regarding the significant challenges in obtaining funds or getting timely approval for proposed projects were frequently mentioned. The QIPs process was often reviewed as too complex and in the worst cases took upwards to 2 years from proposal to authorization. By that time community goodwill would have diminished along with the intended impact of the project for the identified communities. Bad experiences with QIPs have resulted in some offices avoiding them altogether.The extent to which these perceptions are as a result of lack of capacity or training on the part of CAD officers, or due to the complexity of the processes, could not be determined by this study. Thus in terms of capturing the views and experiences of CAD staff at a field level, the perception of QIPs was largely negative.

5. CAD IN A POST-CPA MISSION

The exact mandate and role for CAD in a post-referendum Mission will be determined by the outcome of the referendum, nature and extent of the UN presence in Southern Sudan, and by the expressed needs of the parties to the CPA – defined by a high-level political discussion between the host country and UN member states. Yet while the post-CPA role for CAD is still to be determined, participants offered a variety of positions on the contribution of CAD to a new Mission(s) in Sudan.

Any future CAD role is likely to be somewhat similar to that of the current Mission because the context will be similar. Thus, the way to manage this transition is not to be radically altering the approach or the work of CAD, but to guide and adjust the expectations of the CAD officers, so that they better understand what is possible, and what is not, and how to get the most out of the situation. One of the most important assets is the social capital of the local communities, and CAD needs to improve its understanding of how to leverage, and further support and strengthen the social capital of the local communities with external resources and opportunities. The balance is not to fundamentally change current approaches as that is just not feasible, nor to replace existing approaches with something else, but to identify what local capacities exist, to unleash and support them, and to backstop them with whatever the mission can provide - people, equipment, access, networks - and what can be leveraged from other externals like UNDP, NGOs, and donors.

What remains clear is that CAD has a strong technical ability in the area of conflict management; CAD does not necessarily need money to be effective. Perhaps for some CAD officers there is a need to adjust their expectations from resolving conflict to managing conflict. Resolving or transforming the conflict requires extensive social, political and economic changes that are unlikely to be realised during the life of the Mission. Thus CAD can start to contribute to that process through capacity building for government and community actors in southern Sudan, especially community leaders. CAD officers should remain focused on understanding the conflict management mandate of their current Mission - to consolidate the peace and protect civilians, through supporting the enforcement of the CPA and by preventing a relapse into violent conflict.

5.1 Recommendations

1. *Perceive conflict management as an ongoing process*. Participants felt that the key to meaningful conflict management was to move from ad hoc, or once-off, peace conference-type interventions, to continuous or ongoing process-type engagements. CAD can play an important role in helping its counterparts to approach conflict management as a process, by providing support; advice; knowledge and encouragement; and by supporting community peacebuilding projects that help communities to do this for themselves.

2. *Strengthen information-gathering, analysis and dissemination*. In order to have a stronger capacity to implement conflict management strategies, the continuing emphasis on building stronger systems for data-gathering and dissemination is essential.. In particular, it would be beneficial reinforcing conflict mapping, and the development of a conflict flashpoint matrix for each state. The conflict environment is unlikely to change in the short- to medium-term and information and understanding of the conflict will continue to be of great value.

3. *Use creative ways to enhance the implementation of conflict management initiatives*. CAD has a competitive advantage in identifying the root causes of violence and conducting conflict analysis. The

study recommends using this position to put in place partnerships with UNDP and other partners to ensure practical, well-directed conflict management initiatives.

4. *Strengthen output in training and capacity-building.* In identifying CAD's competitive advantage, the next question is what can CAD offer, and where are the gaps? And then what can CAD do to fill those gaps proactively? Participants identified a gap in training government counterparts in Southern Sudan and local communities in conflict management. Arguably the real work in conflict management and long-term peacebuilding will be 'on the ground'. Consequently there is an opportunity for CAD to increase training for government counterparts and local communities in conflict management.

5. *Take steps to improve access to financial support*. Address the frequent misunderstandings that many CAD officers have in terms of potential access to petty cash allowances. In addition, there may be creative avenues available to pursue with the mission administration (e.g. DMS). However, a lack of funding must not be an obstacle to improved conflict management output. Develop internal CAD capacity in writing and targeting external funding proposals, while strengthening internal CAD mechanisms to assist in identifying possible donors. The following is recommended:

    a. Resolve any procedural issues that require the processing of applications and managing of QIPs funds;

    b. Better train CAD officers to access these funds; and

    c. Invest CAD resources at Headquarters (HQ), regional and sub-offices to manage the flow of applications and reports between the field and HQ. If this process can be improved it has major potential to give the field offices what they want – access to funds to undertake community peacebuilding projects to support conflict management initiatives.

6. *Involve the right people*. Apart from the government and SPLA, CAD can improve existing ties and extend capacity-building with civil society actors.

7. *Stay focused on field activities*. CAD officers pointed to the importance of developing and maintaining contact with communities and local authorities – spending more time in the field extends and strengthens existing trust-based relationships. Go on more patrols, more often. Meet more community leaders to develop and sustain a wider network of contacts.

ANNEX 1: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Key Insights

* The importance of context:

  • The 'success' of conflict management initiatives can often be attributed to the specific conditions or personalities involved rather than the technical content or mechanisms relied upon.

* The challenge of replication:

  • Many CAD officers interviewed stressed that it would be difficult to identify 'things that work' if the assumption is that we can identify discrete conflict management tools, and then replicate them elsewhere. The predominant view was that CAD has particular abilities in understanding *why* a certain approach was more successful than another in a particular *context* – thereby placing greater emphasis on the approach or the process rather than the mechanism itself.

* Start with the right attitude:
  • patience
  • cultural sensitivity
  • impartiality
  • the ability to build personal relationships.

* Personalities matter:

  • The development of interpersonal relationships is essential in developing contact with counterparts, as well as facilitating cooperation and coordination amongst the various components of the Mission.

* Understanding the niche of CAD:

  • local-level presence, which implies access to government at all levels, and traditional leaders, community leaders and civil society;

  • locally informed data-gathering and analysis;

  • ability to convey Mission messages to local communities;

  • information-sharing about the progress or delays of the overall peace process; and

  • linking the Mission with other actors active at the local level.

* Conflict management mechanisms and approaches:

  • 'Traditional' approaches were identified by CAD officers as the most commonly understood mechanisms of government and community actors in interacting with warring groups and undertaking conflict management initiatives.

  • The value of peace conferences remains contested. Those peace conferences that were part of a process that ensured continued engagement and follow-up were the most sustainable.

* The importance of governance:

  • Participants identified poor governance and the lack of the rule of law as important factors that weaken conflict management in Sudan, and argued that without these capacities in place, disputes can easily escalate into violent conflict without being checked.

* Addressing the root causes of conflict:

  • Some participants felt that if the conflict management model is to succeed, and ensure the Mission's legacy, it will need to be more proactively engaged in linking conflict management initiatives with tangible outcomes for communities.

Key structural challenges

* Staff shortages:

  • Participants indicated that with the current staff shortages they are effectively hamstrung and planned patrols, engagement with communities and other initiatives simply do not happen.

* Administrative overload:

  • CAD officers expressed considerable frustration at the time expended dealing with purely administrative functions such as special flight requests; and that often the first casualty of this tends to be the time to assess, review and report on conflict management work.

* Access to Funding:

  • The extent to which a lack of funding is a severe obstacle to carrying out the conflict management requirements of CAD is a somewhat contested and much debated issue.

  • However, beyond funding for larger projects or major peace conferences, it is the access to smaller day-to-day expenditure that is most desired by CAD officers.