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PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS, CIVIL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

**Written statement* submitted by the Society Studies Centre (SSC),
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is
circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[25 August 2008]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the
submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Exercising the Right for Development in Sudan

Article (1) of the Universal Declaration for the Right for Development which was adopted by the UN General Assembly resolution 128/41 on 1st December 1986, says “The right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized”. The Declaration gives the states full right to exploit the natural resources of their countries for the benefit of the people of that country.

Building on that Sudan has embarked in wide business activities to utilize the resource. Examples of these projects are the Merowe Dam hydropower project, and Kahjbar Dam project. Construction in Merowe Dam started in 2003, in the 4th Cataract on the River Nile. Although the area is mostly desert, there are communities living along the river sides. The largest three communities affected by the Dam are Hambad, Amri in the Northern State, and Manaseer in River Nile State. The first group was resettled in the New Hamdab since 2003, while the resettlement of the second group started in 2006, and the last groups has starting movement in the new resettlement towns since 2007.

The affected people have been compensated in cash for the loss of their farms and plantations, and in kind for their houses. Each family has been given a house of 600-1200 square meter, supplied with electricity and water services, in addition to schools and health care services, and a farmland irrigated free of charge for 3 years.

Our visits to the areas reveal general satisfaction with the compensations and new services and homes, however, the construction process did not go uninterrupted. In April, 2006, the dams authorities started a survey process in Amri with the purpose of gathering data about the actual properties of the community so that they can prepare their compensations before moving them to the new resettlement area. But, some affected people tried to obstruct the survey process by force and burned the cars, equipments and documents used in the survey. This put them in confrontation with the police force and the clash resulted in 4 killed. On 13th June 2003, the local people in Kajbar tried to obstruct the studies carried out in the area to assess the feasibility of having a dam in the area. In doing so they clashed with police protecting the equipments and the properties and the incident resulted in 4 killed.

The former Special Rapporteur for Adequate Housing Mr. Miloon Kothari has raised the incidents in his reports of 2007 (A/HRC/4/18/Add.1) and 2008 (A/HRC/7/16/Add.1)

to the Human Rights Council. The Society Studies Centre shared him his concerns over the use of force to disperse unarmed demonstration. However, the Special Rapporteur issued an alarming press statement on 27th August 2007, on which he wrote “I urge the companies involved in the projects, such as Harbin (China), Lahmeyer International (Germany), and Alstom (France) to put a halt to their activities until a full and impartial assessment of the impact on the human rights of the population is made.”

Our organization was deeply shocked at such a call as it contracts the Right for Development. The dams projects and other developmental projects constitute great hope for the people of Sudan. They also constitute a mean to realize the Millennium Development Goals specially Goal (1) which aims at the eradication of extreme poverty & hunger. Without such project, it would be impossible for poor nations to address the poverty issues.

We regret any call for halting a development project under any excuse, because the Right for Development, is group right. It is the right for the whole nation as stipulated in the

Declaration of the Right for Development and reaffirmed in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of 1993.

At the same time, we call upon the Government of the National Unity in Sudan to respect the rights of affected people in all development projects in the country, especially in Meroew and Kajbar, and to continue to negotiate with them on the compensations and resettlement options. We specially call for full compensation for those who lost their lives in the two incidents, and close this issue, and make utmost effort to make development projects chances for celebration and joy rather than sadness and sorrow.

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