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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.

[9 March 2010]

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

General Election in Sudan

The coming few weeks are very decisive in Sudan's future. The General Elections which are scheduled to take place in April 2010 have entered a critical stage. On 13th Feb. 2010, the election campaign at all level has started.

Preparations for election started since mid 2008 when the Parliament passed the Election Act, which gave when 25% of the total number of seats at the National Assembly and State Legislative Councils. According to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the Election was scheduled to take place in mid 2009, but for many unfinished businesses in the implementation of the Agreement, the Election was delayed many times until it has been fixed for April this year.

The election constituencies are built on a population census held in April 2008. However, the main partner in the Government of the National Unity, the SPLM, has rejected the results of the census in many occasions despite the fact that its President, who is also the First Vice President of the Country, has endorsed it.

Another milestone towards the election was accomplished in December 2009, when the voter register was closed. The registration for Election started on 1st Nov. 2009 all over the country. It was supposed to end on 30th Nov. but the National Election Commission NEC heeded calls from the opposition parties and extended the registration for one more week. Society Studies Centre (SSC) has been one of the local NGOs accredited to observe the Registration Process. In general our team of observers has reported that the standards were followed in registering the voters. The Centre was publicly announced, and was located in accessible venues such as schools, clubs or other public facilities. The officials normally ask for identification, and observe the age limit of 18 year and above. We witnessed at least two cases where young voters were not accepted because they could not prove that they had reached 18 years.

The opposition parties have raised many observations and reported claims of violation to the NEC, the Commission has responded publicly to the appeals of violation. Among the violations stated by the opposition are the registration of the regular forces in their place of work instead of their place of residence, and that some government vehicles were used in favor of the ruling party, and other. After the announcement of the judgment of the NEC on the appeals, the opposition parties were given the opportunity to appeal the NEC verdict on the Higher Court. Then the final voter registers were published and all political parties were given copies.

Another important step towards the Election started on 12th Jan. 2010, when the door was opened for the Nomination for the Presidency, and all other levels. The period for nominations was also extended by 5 days to allow all candidates to complete their requirements. By 27th Jan, 13 candidates for presidency submitted their applications, among whom there one woman and three independent candidates. Initially, the NEC accepted the nominations of 10 candidates and rejected 3 for failing to meet the requirement of having secondments for 15,000 registered voters, from 18 states, with minimum support of 200 voters from each of those states.

Two of three rejected candidates appealed the NEC's decision to the Higher Court which reinstated them to the presidential race, including Mrs. Fatima Abdel Mahmoud who is the first ever lady to run for Presidency in Sudan.

On 13th Feb. the election campaign started. The Society Studies Centre will be monitoring the election in Khartoum State which has most of the seats with about 500 observers. The Centre hopes that the political parties will refrain from using violence and incitement in

their attempt to attract voters. We are optimistic that the election will be fair and transparent as it is nationally and internationally monitored by renowned bodies such as the EU, the AU, and the Carter Centre. The SSC calls on all democratic countries to support the upcoming election in Sudan as it's the only way to end struggle for power in Sudan, and to end contesting for power through violent means.
