**PROGRAM: OSIEA SUDAN**

**PORTFOLIO REVIEW OUTCOME SUMMARY**

**PREVENTION OF STATELESSNESS IN SUDAN, November 2015**

The portfolio review of the work on statelessness in Sudan was presented to the OSIEA board in November 2015. Participants included Chris Maina Peter (board chair), Jok Madut Jok (board member), Stella Mukasa (board member), Akwe Amosu (OSF Africa regional director), Mburu Gitu (executive director), Sarah Mukasa (deputy director), Mugambi Kiai (senior advisor to the director and moderator), Joanna Oyediran (Sudan and South Sudan program manager and portfolio lead) and Suliman Baldo (board elder and discussant).

**Key questions and comments**

Overall, there was general sentiment that this was not the time to consider withdrawing from supporting the work because it was making meaningful contributions to building activism. It was felt that the work should be reframed and broadened with an approach seeking to connect the dots between different types of marginalization and discrimination and that more partners should be included. Other observations included:

1. There were differing opinions on whether the narrative of "risk of statelessness” was useful or not. One speaker felt this terminology was disempowering and objectifying. Another speaker felt that one could not escape the reality that statelessness led to a lack of legal recognition and denial of enjoyment of a broad range of rights.
2. The issue of statelessness was ignored by almost all Sudanese organizations due to lack of political space to discuss and by South Sudanese communities who were apprehensive of asserting their rights at the time of the separation of South Sudan due to their concerns about reprisals in a highly charged political environment. OSIEA engaged in outreach to groups with which it has not worked before in order to find groups which could undertake the work.
3. The failure of Sudanese civil society to address the risk of southerners becoming stateless is emblematic of the misconceived approach of civil society during the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) implementation period leading up to South Sudan’s secession. Civil society tended to focus on achieving CPA implementation rather than focusing on the impact of the peace process on the lived realities of Sudanese people.
4. OSIEA’s championing on this issue was pioneering amongst international actors focused on Sudan at the time of the referendum and the secession of South Sudan.
5. There was excellent collaboration with OSF’s Africa Regional Office and its previous components, the Africa Advocacy Office and the Africa Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project (AfriMAP). The intervention could have benefited from understanding the lessons learned from OSF interventions to combat statelessness during the break-up of the Soviet Union.
6. OSIEA’s support to People’s Legal Aid Centre’s (PLACE’s) strategy of engaging community leaders was significant as the “sultans” are the gatekeepers to the South Sudanese communities. PLACE’s success in convincing community leaders to embrace rights-based interventions was quite remarkable given their initial reluctance.
7. There was an objective reason for a sense of panic about mass deportation at the time of the separation of South Sudan, given the experience of mass expulsion of Eritreans from Ethiopia and Ethiopians from Eritrea following Eritrea’s independence. However, the threat of mass expulsion remains a risk due to failure of Sudan and South Sudan to resolve the post-referendum issues, particularly border demarcation.
8. There is now a broader risk of statelessness in Sudan, particularly for Sudanese from the “new South” (Nuba Mountains and South Kordofan), Darfur and other marginalized areas as the issue of who is and who is not Sudanese becomes more politicized.
9. Several speakers stressed the need to look at how OSIEA’s work in this area could be reinforced through its other investments and a more interconnected movement for social change could be built in Sudan.
10. The opportunity of social relations: Emphasizing that people need our presence regardless of whether or not we see ourselves as making a huge difference.

**Next steps and follow up**

The reaction from the program is that the process of reflecting on the work and writing up the portfolio review document was very helpful in gaining a better understanding of the issues OSIEA had been addressing. The program is convinced that using the lens of marginalization rather than statelessness is a better point of entry for successful and relevant interventions to improve the lives of southerners. This lens allows the multiple facets of southerners’ marginalization to be addressed in a more balanced way, whether related to nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, culture or class. It was discovered that the most successful interventions supported had been those that had tried to address the multiple aspects of “southerners” marginalization.

It is worth noting that the desire to support efforts to create more interconnected movements for social change in Sudan will be challenging as we are witnessing increased fragmentation inside Sudanese society and in parallel within civil society. Leveraging our relationships to build trust between different groups working within one movement to secure better protection of southerners has been extremely challenging and time-consuming. However we should leap on opportunities to support more interconnectivity when they arise, such as the Civil Society Initiative and the Framework Group.

There was broad consensus that the work we are supporting should be continued and extended to include members of other marginalized groups experiencing difficulties gaining recognition that they are Sudanese nationals of their broader citizenship rights. The work will be continued in the following manner:

1. In the short-term (2016) we will look for opportunities to extend this work through other partners using this broader approach as much as that is possible, bearing in mind the challenge of finding partners ready to work in this area.
2. In the medium-term, we will use the opportunity of OSIEA refreshing its strategy to redefine the portfolio using the marginalization lens.
3. We will update the board on the progress made with this shift in work in a years’ time.

**Most significant outcomes of the review**

We have always found it difficult to define this portfolio of work. We thought that it was primarily about statelessness. That was indeed our point of entry, but actually the work supported has tried to respond to the intersectional nature of the marginalization of southerners.

The portfolio review has helped us to understand and better articulate what we have actually been supporting and what we want to achieve – improved enjoyment of a broad range of citizenship rights, particularly the right to a nationality, the right to be free from inhuman or degrading treatment, the right to freedom of religion, the right to own property, the right to a fair trial, the right to equality before the law and the right to liberty and security of person, of a highly marginalized Sudanese group – southerners­.