

Access to Justice for All

Monday 18 February 2013

Access to Justice for All

Press Statement for Immediate release.

17th-Feb-2013

South Sudan Law society in partnership with the Civil Society Resource Team on the Constitution and with support from Justice Africa, Cordaid and IKV Pax Christi has concluded a three day dialogue on the constitution and the constitution review process in Bentiu, Unity State. The dialogue brought together participants from all nine counties in the State. The dialogue commenced on Wednesday 13th and ended on 15th of February 2013 at Traditional Authority Hall (COTEL), in Bentiu. The dialogue was officially opened by the Unity State Deputy Governor.

The Bentiu Dialogue is part of the on-going CSO constitution process whose main objectives are;

- To enhance the participation of the citizens of South Sudan in the constitution making process
- To promote civic education and the sharing of information on the constitution
- To enable a coordinated effort of lobbying and advocacy for a people driven constitution
- To prepare citizen's at state level for the National Constitution Review Commission's consultations

The project is premised on the conviction that the process of constitution making is equally as important as the final substance and it is therefore necessary that the people are included in this process. The dialogues are facilitated by members of the Civil Society Resource Team on the Constitution.

The attendance of the Bentiu meeting was 100 participants, drawn from the following categories of society;

- Community leaders
- Parliamentarians
- Religious Leaders
- Women groups
- Youth
- Local authorities
- Academics,
- NGOs and CBOs

Methodology and facilitation

- The principles of good governance and democracy were outlined and an overview of the content of the Transitional Constitution given.
- Participants were given an opportunity to put forth what they believe should be incorporated in the Transitional Constitution.
- The views of the participants were recorded and will be subsequently submitted to the National Constitution Review Commission for possible inclusion in the permanent constitution.
- The facilitators have been trained to role playing, small group problem solving, simulations etc. Lecture-based civic education was minimal.
- The programme acknowledges the fact that participatory methods are more effective in informal learning processes

Main Discussion Issues were;

- An outline and analysis of the key features of the transitional constitution
- The Constitution as a Power Map - with analysis of the power dynamics and power balance between three arms of the government.
- The set-up , role and responsibility of the local government, councils and state governments with a keen analyses of federal and Unitary Political structures
- Parliamentary and Presidential political systems
- Human rights and citizens obligations with an emphasis on the rights of minority groups such as women, youth and people with disabilities

- Limitation of powers , Checks and balances and Resource Management among others

Thanks,
Peter Gai Manyon,
Information and Communications Officer, SSLS