Juba, Southern Sudan, 15th March 2010

To the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) and the Church in the Sudan

‘I Know the Plans I Have for You, Declares the Lord, Plans to Prosper You and Not to Harm You, Plans to Give You Hope and a Future’. Jeremiah 29: 11.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We greet you in the spirit of the Gospels that imbue us with the vision for justice, sustainable peace and true and lasting reconciliation.

We make this pastoral/solidarity visit at a critical time in your country’s history as you prepare for key transformational events as envisaged in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA): the national elections; the popular consultations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile; the referendum in Abyei; and the self-determination referendum of the people of the South.

We appreciate the enormity of the onerous responsibilities you are faced with. These include among others:

- Fostering communal peace, reconciliation and unity to ensure the CPA is not jeopardized by infighting among the people of the South;
- Promotion of popular participation in the elections and referendum including ensuring that voters make informed choices;
- Sustaining the focus on the goals of democratization and self-determination;
- Encouraging civility and neighbourliness in dialogue among political parties and between the North and South; and
- Constantly advocating for a smooth transition after the referendum.

We commend your unrelenting struggle for justice, peace and the democratic transformation of your country. For your people who have suffered for far too long desire a life of dignity, sustainable peace and development. We affirm your support on the right of the people of Southern Sudan to exercise their right to self-determination as agreed in the CPA. We commend you for your rallying call to the people, ‘Let My People Choose’, with which you continue to stand by the right of all Sudanese people to determine their own future.

We commit ourselves to engage closely and accompany the church in the Sudan through prayers, regional and global advocacy for timely implementation of the CPA and in observation and monitoring of the
electoral process, the referendum for Abyei and the self-determination referendum for the people of the South.

In this light, we join you in calling upon the Government of National Unity and the Government of Southern Sudan to:

**Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) Implementation**

- Protect the achievements so far realized by the CPA;
- Resolve all outstanding issues in CPA implementation towards successful and timely completion of the implementation;
- Seize the historic opportunity presented by the democratic transformation to bring the country new opportunities to redefine your common identity on the basis of shared values, including unity amid diversity;
- Ensure that the rights and fundamental freedoms of association, assembly and speech are fully protected and effectively exercised;
- Provide an open and free political environment that assures the constitutional right and freedom of individuals, civil society organizations and political parties to operate without fear or restriction; and
- Provide an environment for an open and honest competition for power.

**Completion of the Demarcation of the North-South and Abyei Border**

- Facilitate the full implementation of the ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration with the support of local communities;
- Resolve outstanding questions to allow full demarcation of the border on the ground before the referendum; and
- Expeditiously allow the Ad hoc North/South Technical Border Committee to complete its work.

**Self-Determination Referendum for the People of the South**

- Prepare well for this key benchmark in CPA implementation;
- Expeditiously establish the Southern Sudan and Abyei Referenda Commissions; and
- Treat as binding and respect the choice of voters.

**Post-Self Determination Referendum Arrangements**

- Agree on the requisite arrangements for the post-2011 referendum transition. This entails agreeing on post-referendum arrangements covering relevant issues on the two scenarios of unity or secession. These include: the interdependence of the North and South Sudan; the lives and
livelihoods of people and communities in border areas; issues of sovereignty transfers, wealth transfers and sharing including the division and transfer of state assets; shared debts; citizenship; repatriation; property rights; the concerns of national institutions and other transitional issues;

- Facilitate civic education to the people of Southern Sudan and the North to prepare them for the referendum and socialize them on the implications of their choice so as to psychologically prepare them for any eventuality; and
- Advocate for an internationally coordinated management of the transition period. This could entail the appointment of a United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy to oversee a three to five year transitional period (2011 to 2013/2015) in the Sudan. The envoy would oversee the referendum process, assist in resolving emerging disputes and engage the two governments in proper planning for the various possibilities and scenarios.

**Popular Consultations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile**

- Raise awareness to ensure voters in the two areas know how the election of members of the state assembly will relate to the subsequent process of popular consultation which will be conducted by the elected legislators; and
- Conduct in a credible manner this key element in the final stage of CPA implementation.

**Security**

Serious security challenges continue to confront Southern Sudan. Communal violence has been reported in Jonglei, Upper Nile and Lakes states. Concerns have been raised about the timing of the sudden increase in insecurity in these parts of Southern Sudan and the violent clashes between communities that have resulted in deaths of many civilians. The people of Sudan have suffered for far too long and desire a life of dignity, sustainable peace and development.

While we appreciate the difficulties involved, we reiterate that it is the government’s first and foremost duty to provide security to its people. The Government of Southern Sudan is therefore obliged to check and reverse the rise in violence and ensure the respect of the rule of law.

We call upon the two parties to the CPA to:

- Ensure peace and security prevails in Sudan and particularly Southern Sudan during the electioneering period. This calls for an effective response to the causes of insecurity, communal violence and displacement in Southern Sudan;
- Unite and protect all citizens whenever they are in danger of attack irrespective of their ethnicity; and

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1 The Sudanese church, for example, is concerned over the future of the church in the North if the South opts for secession. Christians in the North may suffer hardships should the North adopt Islamic Law.
Facilitate a smooth transition whatever the outcome of the self-determination referendum for the people of the South.

Signed on behalf of the FECLAAHA Ecumenical Delegation from the Great Lakes region and Horn of Africa by:

Fred Nyabera,

Executive Director.