

Pledges versus commitments

by Toby Lanzer

Some 400 representatives from more than 60 countries and organisations met in Oslo in April 2005 for a donors' conference on Sudan. Six months on, have expectations been met?

The primary aim of the conference hosted by the Norwegian government was to solicit donor support for Sudan up to the end of 2007. Two types of support were sought. Firstly, \$2.6bn was sought as the international community's contribution to the first phase of the Joint National Transition Team's (JNTT) development plan. (This set out the costs of programmes identified during the Joint Assessment Mission and committed Sudan to provide \$5.3bn of the total \$7.9bn required.) The second request was for \$1.5bn for humanitarian and recovery requirements as identified in the UN's 2005 Work Plan, which outlines relief, early recovery and development initiatives. This overall figure of \$4.1bn did not include financial requirements for post-2005 humanitarian action, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) activities, debt relief or the African Union's Darfur mission.

During the conference, delegates made substantial pledges which totalled some \$4.5bn (although some of this was for the African Union). While donors recognised their responsibility in providing financial support for Sudan, they stressed their expectations that the Parties implement – in good faith and on time – the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed three months earlier. Some delegations went a step further, stating that significant improvements had to be seen in Darfur and with respect to human rights throughout the country before pledges would be completely committed. Overall, however, the donors struck a positive tone and it seemed as though the target of \$4.1bn had been met.

Deciphering \$4.5bn pledged by dozens of delegations for various purposes over three years was a challenge. At the conference's close,

the Norwegian Minister for Development, Hilde F Johnson, noted that some \$2bn was for longer-term recovery, \$500m of which was to be channelled through a newly created Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) managed by the World Bank. This left a gap of some \$600m for the longer-term. Some \$1.1bn was pledged for humanitarian and early recovery programmes, of which only \$306m was clearly pledged specifically for the Work Plan, leaving it heavily underfunded. What has happened since then?

Various UN officials around the world are continuing to work with donors to ensure that pledges materialise. Pledges for humanitarian assistance are tracked globally by the Financial Tracking Service¹ at the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Geneva. In the case of Sudan this is supplemented by a database run by the UN in Khartoum. Both show the same interesting story. In essence, pledges for humanitarian action and early recovery have been committed. In this sense, pledges made in Oslo have come through. However, given people's acute needs in many parts of the country, the UN has had to increase the Work Plan's requirements from \$1.5 to \$1.9bn, and it remains no more than 50% funded. Additional cash is needed **now** to support Sudanese, in particular in the South where tens of thousands of returnees are counting on relief and recovery programmes to help them re-establish their lives.

Tracking pledges for development aid is the remit of the Development Assistance Committee within the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development², and doing so takes considerable time given the longer-term nature of the programmes. Confirming that all pledges made in Oslo have been

committed is therefore premature but it is clear at least that commitments are lagging behind in one particular area. Of the \$500m to be channelled through the Multi-Donor Trust Fund during 2005-07, about \$102m has materialised so far, leaving a shortfall of \$80m for 2005. Six months after Oslo, it is time for donors to turn pledges into commitments. The funding is vital to underpin reconstruction and peace building in Sudan.

The Oslo Conference provided an important forum for the JNTT to outline its plans and for the international community to voice its support. The pledges are turning into commitments, albeit slowly. Only when all pledges – political and financial – are fulfilled can the conference be deemed a complete success.

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1. www.reliefweb.int/fts
2. www.oecd.org/dac/stats

Frustration in Juba

There is mounting frustration in Juba at delays in receiving funding. Salva Kiir, President of South Sudan, has chided donors for delaying the delivery of reconstruction aid. "All of the pledges made in Oslo have not materialised. People were talking about \$4 billion and that money has not yet come. We still look forward to those countries who made those commitments to deliver what they pledged," Kiir said. For their part, donors have argued they can only transfer funds according to the agreed CPA timetable. The fact that the Government of South Sudan was only formally inaugurated on 23 October has delayed disbursement.