



SUCCESS STORY

Devolved Governance Structures Take Root in Abyei



Community leaders celebrated the arrival of the new Abyei Area administrators in November 2008.

USAID/OTI is supporting the efforts of the newly appointed Abyei Area Administration to promote peace and stability in Sudan's most contested north-south border region.

February 2009 – Recognizing that peace in Sudan is contingent on a durable solution to troubles in the contested north-south border area of Abyei, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) began assisting the local government with a recovery and development plan for Abyei town following its destruction in May 2008.

Last November, just a month after the long-awaited appointment of the Abyei Area Administration, OTI funded the delivery of office furniture and equipment to the Administration and Legislative Council's temporary offices to help kick-start the local government's work.

In addition, despite conditions that presented severe challenges to access, such as unexploded ordinance left behind during the

recent fighting, OTI provided funding to an engineering firm in Abyei for a land survey. The survey will help the local Administration develop a comprehensive and technically appropriate urban plan for the town. This timely support has strengthened the new Administration's capacity to address key issues affecting peace and stability in the region, including security, infrastructure, basic services, and the return of displaced residents.

The citizens of Abyei suffer greatly because they live along Sudan's fiercely contested north-south border. Although the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) granted the Abyei Area an autonomous administrative system and a share in the area's oil revenues, a protracted deadlock over boundaries created a vacuum in governance and paralyzed development. When fighting between the signatories' armies razed most of the town and displaced an estimated 50,000 residents, the CPA partners were finally compelled to establish an administration as prescribed in the Protocol on the Resolution of Conflict in Abyei.

OTI's support for the people of Abyei will continue in 2009. At present, international urban-planning experts are advising the Administration on how the maps from the land survey can be used to plan the location of key public places and infrastructure and to prepare for the return of tens of thousands of displaced citizens. OTI is also assisting the Chief Administrator and his staff with the design and construction of the new Administration's office and residential compound.