



## SUCCESS STORY

### Water Yards Promote Peaceful Coexistence on Contested Border



The rehabilitated water yard at Al Mugabi serves thousands of nomadic and semi-nomadic Misseriya.

*USAID/OTI's support for the rehabilitation of three water yards along the Central Murhaal is helping to reduce tension along Sudan's contested and undefined north-south border.*

**September 2008** – In an effort to quell tensions between the pastoralist and farming tribes that inhabit Sudan's contested north-south border region, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) supported the rehabilitation of three water yards along a key migratory route known as the Central Murhaal.

The route is used by the Misseriya Ajaira, pastoralists who spend roughly half the year in Southern Sudan in search of water and pasture for their cattle. However, the migrations often damage crops, triggering violent clashes between the Misseriya and Dinka Ngok farmers. The increased access to water is expected to slow the pace of the annual southward migration through Dinka lands and provide the farmers with sufficient time to complete their autumn harvest.

While age-old methods exist for maintaining peace between the pastoralists and their stationary neighbors, many of these mechanisms broke down during Sudan's long-running north-south civil war. Deterioration of watering points along the Central Murhaal forced the Misseriya to begin their migrations earlier in the year – before the Dinka Ngok had completed their second harvest. The earlier arrivals and longer stays in the South have led to a greater number of conflicts, which have increased in scope and intensity as armed movements have sought to provoke the tribes.

Since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, the Misseriya and Dinka have continued to express deep frustration over the lack of tangible peace dividends in the border region. Both groups recognize that access to water for the Misseriya is a pressing issue that is likely to trigger renewed fighting if unaddressed. The rehabilitated water yards offer to restore some balance in the region, as the increased availability of water will delay the onset of the migration and will likely reduce the numbers of animals going south by enabling some smaller herds to remain in the northern grazing areas during the dry season.

By reducing tensions in potential CPA-spoiler areas along Sudan's north-south border, USAID/OTI seeks to open the door for engagement between the Misseriya Ajaira and Dinka Ngok and reestablish mechanisms for peaceful coexistence.