



SUCCESS STORY

Workshops Set Stage for Intertribal Reconciliation



Two hundred Misseriya representatives gathered in Muglad ahead of the Abu Haraz conference.

“We would have never traveled to the conference if we had not been given a chance to address internal issues in the preparatory meeting.”

—Misseriya representative

December 2009 – As Sudan’s Council of States moved forward with plans for an intertribal reconciliation conference last October, internal divisions within the Misseriya and Rizeigat tribes began to cast a shadow of doubt over the future of the initiative.

In a last-minute attempt to boost the conference’s chances of success, preparatory talks were held to consolidate intra-group positions ahead of the event. USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) enabled nearly 200 members of each tribe to participate.

Just two days before the conference was set to begin, Misseriya and Rizeigat representatives gathered in their respective homelands to try to reach a consensus on

divisive issues. Members of all the Misseriya sub-tribes reached an agreement to resume shared responsibility for the *dia*, the traditional compensation paid to redress wrongs. The Rizeigat groups also defined acceptable measures for compensation, increasing the likelihood that negotiations between the two tribes would move forward.

On October 28, following 17 days of challenging negotiations near the Sudanese capital, Misseriya and Rizeigat leaders reached an agreement on how to resolve a long-standing conflict. The resolution details steps for the demarcation of tribal boundaries and *dia* payments to be made by both groups. Although the return of peaceful relations between the neighboring tribes will depend on both parties’ commitment to implement the agreement, an important step has been taken toward mitigating future conflict.

Misseriya and Rizeigat representatives applauded the preparatory workshops supported by USAID/OTI for contributing to successful negotiations at the conference. One Misseriya leader said, “We would have never traveled to the conference if we had not been given a chance to address internal issues.”

Since 2008, violent clashes between sub-tribes of the Misseriya and Rizeigat have destabilized Southern Kordofan’s western border and indirectly threatened security along Sudan’s north-south border. More importantly, the unresolved conflict has drawn attention away from north-south peace processes, distracting the leadership of both tribes from negotiations with their Dinka neighbors to the south, whom they will meet during the upcoming dry season migration.