Sudan Civil Society Meeting Notes

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1. **Introduction**

Civil Society Organisations in Sudan have played a pivotal role not just in the struggle for political reform and democratization in the country, but in peace making and peace building initiatives. The Bank has occasionally engaged with CSOs; As part of the stakeholder consultations, the Bank held consultations on the Country Brief with CSOs on March 23, 2021.

2. **Key Issues that were discussed for consideration in the new CB included:**

- **Education:** Education is a basic foundation for any sustainable growth and development. Participants observed that Sudan has had major challenges with providing quality education; They highlighted that the girl child was more marginalized from accessing education in the country due largely to cultural and religious barriers. Participants called on the Bank to look beyond the support of Higher and Tertiary Education, but to also consider investing in basic education with the aim or promoting Girl Child Education
- **Capacity Support:** There is need for Bank to consider providing capacity building support to CSOs to enable them provide high quality, evidence based feedback to the Bank on its performance on the ground; and to help them improve the quality of programming as well
- **Bank Flexibility and Accessibility:** Participants expressed their concern that the Bank is too rigid in the way it operates and engages and that there is need for it to be more flexible and accessible especially to CSOs. Explore windows of opportunity that exist in the Bank and may offer support CSOs e.g. Jobs for Youth, AFAWA etc.
- **Information-sharing and Communication:** The Bank needs to improve on its communication with CSOs; Of significant importance, CSOs would like to ensure that communication reaches CSOs and CBOs that are operating in communities and experience language barrier as they do not understand English; There is need to reach out and involve these CBOs in various dialogue platforms with the Bank

3. **Prospects for Future Bank Engagement with CSOs**

Based on the issues discussed above, the new CB could explore the following areas for continued engagement with CSOs operating in Sudan

- Identify and have a regularly updated list of CSOs that are aligned to the Bank's High 5 and Thematic Priorities
- Explore possibilities of involving CSOs in the initial consultations (appraisal level?), monitoring and giving feedback on the quality of the Bank's Projects and any impact that they may be creating in changing the lives of the people; The Bank can identify **ONE** project that can be used as a pilot to involve CSO participation (e.g. in community mobilization, information sharing and awareness raising; collection of evidence and giving regular feedback/reporting on project implementation; gaps, opportunities, risks etc; having at least one or two CSOs in the oversight committee of the project
- Set up a platform for regular dialogue with CSOs to update them on progress; discuss topical issues and trends that may be relevant to the Bank's operations; receive feedback on the Bank's performance – **through hosting CSO Open Days**

- Involve CSOs in various policy dialogue spaces e.g. when developing PBOs, CSPs etc; Tap into their local level expertise, knowledge and evidence to inform policy documents and dialogue platforms with Government, private sector, development partners etc
- Identify key opportunities for involving CSOs as implementing partners in some Projects e.g providing services in Peace-building; Women's Rights/empowerment, Youth empowerment; material supply in support of a Bank funded projects at the local level.