Workshop Objectives and Scope

The workshop provides the ICWG and other coordination fora with a comprehensive and up-to-date nationwide analysis of the underlying factors that impact the humanitarian situation in South Sudan. It contextualised the situation in South Sudan, with an analysis of the current situation (April–June 2019) and the coming months (July–November 2019). It entailed regional (Greater Upper Nile, Greater Equatoria and Greater Bahr Ghazal) analysis, delving into a broad review of such themes as the conflict; socio-political dynamics, which included such issues as cattle raiding and inter-communal violence; cantonment sites; new boundaries redefinition; safety, security and access; the macro-economic developments and shocks; the prevailing and likely natural disasters and ecological shocks, including pests and livestock disease; population movements dynamics and the geographical external factors, such as ongoing political-socio-economic developments in neighboring countries, that may likely impact on South Sudan.

The workshop drew on the expertise and knowledge of both humanitarian and non-humanitarian expertise with extensive knowledge in these regions.

Key highlights from the opening presentations

Conflict, socio-political overview

Cantonment: One month into the six-month extension of the transitional agreement, the implementation of the security mechanisms are a key determinant of the success of the peace agreement. The assembly of forces continues with mixed success across the country. Some of the challenges associated with cantonment – delays, obfuscation, funding, bridging the trust gap – feature in other aspects of the implementation process too.

Inter-communal violence and cattle raids: Cattle raiding and related inter-communal exists as a parallel conflict dynamic and has escalated dramatically in many areas of the country taking political dimensions. Pakam youth in Lakes, the Mayom border between Unity and Warrap, cross border issues between Western Bahr el Ghazal and Tonj, the presence of cattle keepers in the Equatorias, are some examples and may draw the attention of the Government to consider deployment of more troops to contain the violence in those locations. The persistence of these community level tensions makes possible the (re)emergence of local community defense groups.

Boundaries: The Independent Boundary Commission (IBC) has been conducting consultations throughout the country on re-delineated borders and boundaries following the creation of 32 states and additional counties. The report is anticipated on 18 June. The IBC findings need to be endorsed by the members of the IBC or through referendum, and are likely to leave some people disappointed irrespective of findings. County boundaries likely to be more contentious than state borders due to revolving long standing land disputes and devolution of presidential powers.

Political Economy: 2019-2020 draft budget shows the main source of revenue continues to come from oil exploitation, with huge allocations for infrastructural development, mainly roads. There are concerns that funding peace process, the army’s financial quota, and payment of salaries of civil servants will suffer consequently.

Scenarios post-pre-transitional phase extension

Despite the pre-transitional phase extension, there is a lack of consensus or clear communication regarding the pre-transitional timetable, and the mission and intent of cantonment sites to perspective participants. This is likely to further delay attempts at cantonment. Peace process remains fragile.

South Sudan’s macro-economic developments

Oil production and humanitarian assistance form the major components of the South Sudan economy. However, despite their dominance in the economy, neither sector generates jobs needed for social and political stability. Agriculture and livestock – from which most people earn their livelihoods – have adversely been affected by conflict. Agricultural output collapsed in the Equatorias – the country’s breadbasket; many pastoral families have lost their livestock to cattle raids.

More people are slipping into poverty, which has increased from 52 per cent in 2009 through 77 per cent in 2015 to 82 per cent in 2016. Although poverty is higher in rural than urban areas, it appears to be increasing in urban areas since 2009.

The government continues to face financial crisis. Civil servants and army remained unpaid for many months. In addition, the GRSS proposed allocating 30,000bpd to road construction in the draft FY19-20 budget. This would represent an
unrealistically large share of the budget (45% of the total draft budget but possibly rising to nearly 70% of actual spending if the resulting deficit cannot be funded and so other spending is cut). All these make the economic outlook bad despite an increase in oil production. It was highlighted that the global oil prices having been dropping further adversely affecting the revenue generated for South Sudan. Without peace and security, the outlook remains extremely fragile, with continuing threats to macro-economic and financial stability, declining income and deteriorating humanitarian conditions - humanitarian needs likely to continue increasing.

Protection

There are ongoing reports of spontaneous returns and increasing requests for relocation. However, there is a likely continued upsurge in protracted displacements in hot spot areas, such as in Greater Equatoria. Weak rule of law institutions has incapacitated access to restitution for an increased number of housing land and property (HLP) claims. There is a likely increase of conflicts driven by border disputes and lack of clarity in cattle routes. Youth groups would continue being used as proxies of war and likely proportionately increase the proliferation of arms and increase cases of children abductions and conscriptions.

Regional analysis and key take-aways

Drivers of Need Map

1. Greater Upper Nile

1.1 Conflict, socio-political dynamics

Cattle raiding: hotspots: Jonglei: Greater Pibor–Lou Nuer/Duk Jonglei; Upper Nile: left bank of Sobat; Unity: all counties except Guit, Pariang and Abienhom. Increases in incidents most noted in southern and northern Unity with continuation expected given current cattle raids in neighbouring Lakes and Warrap, but potential slight reduction due to the rainy season.
Inter-communal violence: primarily revenge killings are prominent in Boma, Panyijiar, Mayendit/Central, Unity (this links with larger conflict), while in Maban and Melut they are due to land disputes. There is also some overlay with cattle raiding hotspots and has taken on a political dimension (Lakes and Unity).

Cantonnement: sites throughout Greater Upper Nile are a potential source of localized tension and human rights violations.

Oil fields: Tensions may increase around oil field spills in Unity (Koch, Pariang, Rubkona, Guit, Mayom) and Upper Nile (Melut, Maban, Longochuk).

New boundaries: The establishment of new boundaries remains contentious, mostly prevalent around Fashoda, Malakal, Rubkona and Mayom, Atar in Canal/Pigi and in northern Jonglei with land pressure also playing into this.

Safety, security and humanitarian access: West Nile remains fragile in terms of security due to the close proximity of armed actors (SPLA, IO + Olony) around Tonga, and four different commands in Mayom.

1.2 Macro-economic developments and shocks
In recent months there has been an increase in trade movements both along rivers (for example Shambe, Adok,) and roads (for example Bor to Lankien). As a result, there has been an increase in livestock trade from Unity to other markets. However, trade routes are likely to reduce again due to the rainy season. Due to the prevailing political situation in Sudan access to South Sudan may be further restricted, impacting on cross-border markets and trade routes. This is likely to remain in coming months. Malakal to Tonga river movement is open for humanitarian barges but not commercial. New roads linking Bentiu to Koch, Bor to Pibor are under construction or completed. Health facilities in many locations in Greater Upper Nile area, especially in iO areas, are closed or operating at reduced capacity due to staff strikes over the harmonisation of incentives.

1.3 Natural disasters and ecological shocks
Currently there is delayed planting reported in many parts of the region due to delayed rains, with the rains having started in May-June instead of April.

Outlook: flooding expected in flood prone areas – along River Nile; Duk, Ayod, Twic East, Fangak. Potential outbreak of acute diarrhoea and Rift Valley Fever in Panyijiar given cattle raids and movement dynamics in and out of Lakes. Related to flooding is congregation of livestock in one place: resulting in an expected increase in livestock diseases. Oil field spills in Unity (Koch, Pariang, Rubkona, Guit, Mayom) and Upper Nile (Melut, Maban, Longochuk) likely to impact on ecology and people’s health.

1.4 Population movements: IDPs and returnees
With regards to current internal displacements, compared to previous years, there are overall relatively low levels of new localized displacement, for example in Boma and Ulang with a potential for displacements over land issues in Malakal, Atar, Kaldak and Mayom. Returns however, are on-going in many parts of Greater Upper Nile. Internal returns are taking place in parts of Upper Nile (from Melut to Baliet), Jonglei (Bor South, Duk etc) and Unity (from Bentiu and Juba to southern Unity). Often populations remain in IDP-like situations in places of return and sometimes being held-up in transit locations (for example Adok and Tonga). Also external returns are happening from Uganda, Sudan and Gambella in Ethiopia to Upper Nile and Jonglei are taking place for different reasons.

It is expected that return movements will continue, likely to be reduced in intensity due to the rainy season, but increasing again in the dry season. Depending on the evolving political situation in Sudan, a considerable increase of South Sudanese refugees from South Kordofan and Khartoum may return to Upper Nile and then move further. Returns from Ethiopia are expected to reduce due to the rainy season and as a peace agreement was reached between the conflicting Nuer sub-ethnicities in Gambella.

1.5 Geographical external factors: political, socio-economic situation in neighboring countries
The political crisis in Sudan is likely to impact the South Sudan–Sudan relationship and the overall situation in Greater Upper Nile, and may affect the ongoing peace process in South Sudan. Uncertainty and strikes in Sudan may affect trade with South Sudan, and affect the production and export of oil from South Sudan to Sudan and the overall economy of South Sudan. Existing population movements from Sudan to South Sudan may intensify and new ones may be triggered, including new Sudanese refugees entering South Sudan. Access to health referral pathways in Sudan used for locations in Upper Nile and Unity along the Sudan border as well as to the humanitarian corridor in South Kordofan may be reduced. As inter-communal violence between sub-groups of the Nuer in Gambella, Ethiopia has been addressed and the rainy season has started, return movements from Ethiopia to Upper Nile and Jonglei are likely to reduce. It is expected that the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) will have a minor impact on the Greater Upper Nile area.

1.6 Key takeaways
In recent months there has been a shift from national-level conflict to high levels of localized inter- and intra-communal violence, including cattle raids, especially in Jonglei and Unity. Whilst new displacements have been relatively low, local-level conflicts and other factors, for example delayed planting and livestock disease, are having an impact on the humanitarian situation (see IPC figures).
These more localized conflicts negatively impact on humanitarian access and activities with mitigation measures becoming harder to institute in these situations. Return movements in the greater Upper Nile area, both within and across the three states, as well from outside South Sudan, have become more important than (new) displacements and are likely to further gain in importance, calling for a corresponding adaptation of humanitarian response and preparedness modalities.
Unity and Jonglei remain of key concern due to the prevalence of multiple overlapping factors, despite the national-level conflict having been reduced. Upper Nile has less overlapping negative factors but has the highest political tensions around Malakal and the Nile corridor concerning boundaries and HLP rights. Upper Nile is relatively stable at the moment. It is the state of the Greater Upper Nile area which has at the same time the highest potential to further improve or to get worse again. Should the political and economic situation in Sudan deteriorate, Upper Nile and northern Unity are likely to be considerably impacted (return and refugee flows, reduced oil production and export, reduced trade, contracting economies, etc.)

2. Greater Bahr El Ghazal

2.1 Conflict, socio-political dynamics
Cattle raiding and inter-communal violence: flash points: Jur River: Kuajena, Roc-Rocdong; Tonj South, Tonj North, Twic; Cuibet: Gok; Rumbek East; Rumbek Centre, North, Yirol East and Yirol West.
Cantonment sites: situation currently in flux but a possible factor in the future.
New boundaries: being experienced in Gok, west and east of Lakes, influencing displacement dynamics; unstable governance. Safety, security and humanitarian access: Yei /Mundri road remains insecure; and the Lainya-Wonduruba road due to the confirmed presence of mines, although improvement of access around Yei. Reports of increased GBV cases in Yambio and Mundri. Road insecurity on Kapoeta to Torit road, and Kapoeta to Narus; and Torit-Lafon-Mogiri due to the confirmed presence of mines. Lasu area, as of recently. Criminality along Nimule road.

Safety, security and humanitarian access: Western corridor partially inaccessible for humanitarians except with the use of force protection. Rumbek to Yirol road as trade route. Improved humanitarian access in Wau and Raja County. Recurrent and concurrent conflict induced access restraints impacting recovery and development.

2.2 Macro-economic developments and shocks
Closure of Sudan border causing disruption for trade, resulting in informal taxation. Greater Bahr El Ghazal region relies on Sudan trade for supply of essential goods and services — closure of this border will lead to price hike and create affordability difficulties. Disruption of the Western corridor (Western BEG route from Wau to Abiye via the Tonj route). Inflation and high prices, livestock pests and diseases are recurrent, especially Fall Army Worm. Health and nutrition related developments in the northern part of Warrap and eastern part of Aweil as these are the epicentre of declared measles outbreaks and have concurrent emergency levels of acute malnutrition, compounded by conflict induced displacement. Seasonal malaria and AWD upsurge anticipated.

2.3 Natural disasters and ecological shocks
Dry spell experienced resulting in delayed planting season and decreased pasture. This could lead to atypical migration of livestock and pastoralists that could lead to clashes. However seasonal flooding expected in northern Warrap and Northern Bahr el Ghazal will result in disruption of livelihoods; while livestock pests and diseases are recurrent, especially Fall Army Worm. Health and nutrition related developments in the northern part of Warrap and eastern part of Aweil as these are the epicentre of declared measles outbreaks and have concurrent emergency levels of acute malnutrition, compounded by conflict induced displacement. Seasonal malaria and AWD upsurge anticipated.

2.4 Population movements: IDPs and returnees
Complex and dynamic picture. There is currently simultaneous return and displacement trends around and in Wau town, northern Warrap; while in central and western Lakes there are mixed short-term displacements and forced relocations etc. Localized returns within Wau County, however the movement is insignificant on the overall movement. Limited Sudan returns expected to slow down even if peace develops favourably. Some attempted returns from Sudan close to border area, for example Kiir Adem and Majok.

2.5 Geographical external factors: political, socio-economic situation in neighboring countries
Sudan: monitoring situation to see if there is a potential deterioration of situation in Khartoum. Potential for increased push factors. Potential scenario of EVD in Western Equatoria State could lead to pastoral migration into Greater Bahr el Ghazal causing conflict.

2.6 Key takeaway
Conflict in terms of violent inter-communal and cattle raid incidents resulting in internal displacement, and economic crisis are the most prevalent factors in the region. There is a cocktail of overlaying factors – conflict on most borders, measles outbreaks and high GAM prevalence, severe to extreme food insecurity – which contributes to a high risk of increased morbidity/mortality for vulnerable populations in Warrap and Eastern and Northern Bahr el Ghazal. For Wau are the Jur River area: urban returns and rural conflict induced displacement. Geographic areas where multiple factors are overlapping – see map. Lakes – conflict, pockets of IPC 5 converge; Warrap – conflict, measles outbreaks, flooding.

3 Greater Equatoria
3.1 Conflict, socio-political dynamics
Although there has been a general lull on active armed conflict there has been recent incidents of political conflict in Lobonok, Lasu areas. In terms of cattle raids and inter-communal violence: there has been incidents of cattle raiding in Kapoeta (Boma), and Terekeka, tensions increasing between cattle keepers from Lakes and Jonglei in Mvolo and Magwi areas. Tensions with Ambororo along border with Central African Republic (CAR).

Cantonment sites: Ngiri, Lobonok, Panyume, Pageri – issues of recruitment around these sites, predatory taxation, in the longer term human rights violations potentially to increase.

New boundaries: No issues of significant concerns arising Except in Torit and Lafon; Among the Acholi and Lotoko and lopa and the Lopit respectively.

Safety, security and humanitarian access: Yei /Mundri road remains insecure around Wonduruba and Lainya, due to mines, although improvement of access around Yei. Reports of increased GBV cases in Yambio and Mundri. Road insecurity on Kapoeta to Torit road, and Kapoeta to Narus. Lasu area, as of recently. Criminality along Nimule road.

3.2 Macro-economic developments and shocks
Impact of health workers strike: 60 per cent of health facilities not functioning (Magwi, KajoKeji, Morobo, Yambio). This increases potential risk of EVD cases in Greater Equatoria and the country at large.

Increase of prices due to incidents along roads, for example Kapoeta, but also increased taxation at the border and seasonal cut-off of supply routes
Soldiers not paid salaries likely to lead to more criminality especially along key supply roads in Greater Equatoria.

3.3 Natural disasters and ecological shocks
Delayed rains and very irregular rains across most of the region (key point to note: Kapoeta, given IPC). Flooding around Juba and low-lying land areas, due to poor urban planning; potential increase in water-borne disease outbreaks in Juba. Measles in Juba, increased risk of malaria (seasonal). Malnutrition in Ikotos, Lafon and Kapoeta East. Fall army worm and livestock diseases due to concentration of cattle during flooding period in Terekeka.

Yellow Fever in Yambio (?), cholera risk in areas such as Kapoetas, along the Nile, fears of Rift Valley Fever.

3.4 Population movement: IDPs and returnees
Localized displacement in some areas due to conflict and inter-communal violence, for example displacement from Jur River to Tambura, displacement from Lobonok toward Karpeto and Pageri, displacement between Boma and Pibor. There is continued presence of IDPs in Rokon from Minga, all around Yei and within Yei. Lager scale IDP returns reported in some areas: Mundri area, Magwi and Torit.

Increased mobility along borders with Uganda and Kenya, mostly short-term and households returning to Magwi, Torit/Ikotos, Kajo-Keji hoping to cultivate (peaked around March), although no clear surge in permanent returns potentially due to continued uncertainty around peace agreement, while families are also having children in schools in refugee camps.

3.5 Geographical external factors: political, socio-economic situation in neighboring countries
High number of incidents affecting border with CAR, areas bordering Democratic Republic of the Congo – reports of armed groups from South Sudan fleeing and pursuing the other across these borders. Refugees from CAR reportedly in Tambura, as well as refugees returning as a result of these above tensions. Border issues likely to flare up again in Magwi.

Geopolitical issues in the region, for example Uganda and Kenya, impacting on market supply and market prices in Greater Equatoria and Juba as the capital city.
Potential for an increase in inter-communal conflict between Toposa and Turkana in Illemi triangle, following reports that Kenyan military had set-up outposts nearby.
Continued threat of EVD to the whole Greater Equatoria region considering the presence of South Sudanese refugees in Uganda and CAR.

3.6 Key takeaways
Uncertainty around the future of the peace agreement and trajectory of non-signatories. Potential of tensions rising around cantonment sites; increased movement of people (mixed flows); IDPs and refugees returnees; presence of cattle keepers in some locations where returns are taking place and/or expected; early signs of tension building-up, for example in Mvolo, Mundri, Magwi areas. Late rains in most areas in Equatoria especially Kapoeta.
Overlaying of different dynamics in specific locations: return of civilians against the background of tensions related to the ambiguity associated with the peace agreement. Potential for human rights violations as well as HLP issues to rise around cantonment sites. Lack of services in all of these areas.
Geographic areas where multiple factors are overlapping: Mundri area, Magwi area, Kapoetas, Terekeka, Yei River.

4. Conclusion and Key Considerations
Conflict in terms of violent inter-communal and cattle raid incidents resulting in internal displacement, internal return (within South Sudan) and external return (from across the border) movements, late rains affecting food production, economic crisis and uncertainty around the future of the peace agreement are the principal factors shaping the current humanitarian situation in South Sudan. This situation requires a continued discussion about the optimal response, mitigation and preparedness modalities to ensure relevant humanitarian assistance.

There is a noted shift and emerging new patterns in some of the factors, for example infrastructure destruction during inter-communal and cattle raids violence, necessitating review of the guidance on such factors by the ICWG to determine new inter-sectorial ways of responding. Further analysis required in locations and regions where factors overlap vis-à-vis ongoing responses considering the increased vulnerabilities due to protracted crisis, food insecurity, low immunization coverage etc. noting that over 80 per cent of the population is currently classified as living in poverty.
Annex 1: NAWG Drivers of Need Map