

United States Catholic Mission Association Resolution to Support *Solidarity with Southern Sudan*

Approved during the 2009 Mission Conference

“Solidarity is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, near and far. Rather, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good.” (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis)

Let it be resolved that:

The USCMA affirms its support to the *Solidarity with Southern Sudan* applauding its early accomplishments and encouraging religious congregational leadership, mission groups and diocesan efforts to continue both financial and human resource support of this noble effort.

Rationale:

After 21 years of war, a fragile Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) exists with sufficient potential strength to permit the re-establishment of fundamental human services in Southern Sudan. Against this background, the ICC indictment of President Omar al-Bashir, armed incursions of the LRA, inter-clan and inter-tribal conflicts, increased military augmentation in both the north and the south, delayed elections mandated under the CPA, and environmentally-induced food insecurities all threaten a precarious peace for millions of Southern Sudanese.

With over 85% of the country having been displaced, social structures for health and education have been completely disrupted in an area replete with chronic needs on many levels. Southern Sudan ranks as the most illiterate country in the world with eighty five per cent of its population illiterate. Less than 10% of its teachers have had any kind of training and there is a current unmet educational need for 26,000 English-speaking primary and secondary school teachers. From a health perspective, the need for trained health personnel is equally grim: one out of four children will die before the age of 5 due to health related illness in a country where there is only 1 physician per 100,000 people.

Solidarity with Southern Sudan originated with an urgent request for help from the Sudan Conference of Catholic Bishops to both the USG and the UISG. *Solidarity with Southern Sudan* is a courageous, vital, inter-congregational response which addresses critical needs by establishing teacher training centers and a health care certification program through the combined efforts of Roman Catholic religious. On the ground are 19 missionary Sisters and Brothers at four different locations in Southern Sudan from 12 different religious congregations. [Four additional sites are contemplated.] In total, over 90 congregations have pledged personnel or support to this challenging work. Together, these congregations are providing financial support and professional expertise to help put a fractured country on the road to recovery and stabilization.

Suggested Actions:

- Urge the U.S. Government to intensify collaborative efforts with its international partners to ensure the Sudanese signatories to the CPA implement all provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of January 2005. Talk to your Congress Representatives regarding the matter.
- Publicize and help increase visibility of the current situation in Southern Sudan.
- Encourage charitable contributions to the *Solidarity with Southern Sudan*.

Resources:

http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/projects/csmg/2009-02_sudan_backgrounder.pdf
<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/documents/2009-04-20-Special-Envoy-Letter.pdf>
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/110114.pdf
<http://www.solidarityssudan.org/index.html>