



CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION MEETING

The history of Uganda has been marred with different types of conflicts since colonialism some of which have persisted up to today. These conflicts rang from tribal rivalries, kingdom competition and expansion, political competition for power and fight against marginalization, resource based conflicts, cross border conflicts to suffering the spillover effects of the neighboring conflicts from neighboring countries hence receiving many refugees. These conflicts have manifested themselves both violently and none violently in today's experience.

Currently, the government of Uganda is working towards coming up with a national peace policy for Uganda with an aim of addressing these violent conflicts. However, there is still a challenge of lack of meaningful involvement and effective participation of the majority of the civil society organizations in this process which has resulted into a gap that needs to be filled if this policy is to be fully owned by the different stakeholders.

It is upon this background that on Friday 26/08/2011, AISRGD in conjunction with UJCC organized a meeting where different CSO representatives met to discuss and come up with CSO resolution on how best they can support and complement on the efforts of the government in developing a comprehensive national peace policy for Uganda. It was argued that since CSO have a stake to make and are obliged to support the government's efforts in developing the policy, they should conduct countrywide consultations collecting and soliciting views and opinions of the different stakeholders so as to enrich on the government document on peace policy. It is going to be a It was further suggested that both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques will be adopted during this process.

Introduction

On the 26th August 20, 2011, African Institute for Strategic Research Governance and Development hosted 27 representatives from different civil society organizations with a purpose of discussing and coming up with the civil society organizations' resolution on how best they can support and complement the efforts of the government in developing a comprehensive peace policy for Uganda.

The meeting was chaired by Canon Joyce Niima of Uganda Joint Christian Council who in her welcome remarks gave a brief background about the peace policy concept paper that was developed a while ago by different stakeholders and the earlier investigations that were carried out in some districts but, largely left out most civil society organizations.

She concluded that it was for this reason that the different CSOs had convened so that they can discuss how they can meaningfully contribute towards the entire process of developing the national peace policy.

Objectives of the Meeting

Generally, the meeting aimed at increasing CSO in put in the development of the national comprehensive peace policy for Uganda. Earlier consultations had been made in some districts across the country but the voice and position of civil society had largely not been captured hence the purpose for this meeting.

Official Opening

The meeting was called to order at 2:15 p.m by Canon Joyce Niima of UJCC. She informed the members present that the meeting was on increasing CSO in put into the development of the national comprehensive peace policy for Uganda.



Left-Right, the chairperson of the meeting Canon Joyce Niima of Uganda Joint Christian Council, Chief Executive Director Dr. Martin Mwendha from Community Development Resource Network (CDRN) and Annelicke Van del wiel from Refugee Law Project (RLP).

The Presentation

The ED for AISRGD Mr. Okello Julius presented a roadmap which CSOs can adopt to make their contribution and support to the government in this process. This included, ways to enrich, supplement and complement the text in addition to working together with other departments which were left out. He recommended that some of these organizations should participate in the process.



The main presenter: Mr. Okello Julius of AISRGD

Supervision was another challenge handled which he said required even distribution of people to different location and clear mapping that is to say who should go where, the targets and the total number of participations and the house agreed that division of labour should be adopted and implemented during the data collection.

He also handled methodology which stressed that the paper should be carefully designed, both qualitative and quantitative techniques should be adopted, should be authentic and balanced to guide the government.

Open Discussion:

The chairperson of the meeting opened the discussion to the members attending the meeting. The reactions and comments and this session was characterized by a lot of tension, questions and quest for clarifications.

The chairman proposed a core team of 5 members at the national level to manage data that will be collected, some participants argued that this number was very small to do this work but later agreed to keep this figure at least for now. Other activities discussed included the collection of stake holders' views but with more emphasis put on workshops and questionnaires.



Madam, EUNICE from Uganda National NGO forum making her contribution as Sophie from Uganda Action Aid listening.

In Conclusion

The meeting ended with a prayer and all members were encouraged to work for peace since the country now has social and political challenges since the end of elections. We need to engage the government in the development of the National peace policy for our country. We need to look for funds to enable us develop national peace infrastructures for the future generation. We should help government and other development partners in managing the oil resource rather than make it a curse for our and future generation. We need to speak positively on behalf of the voiceless of the marginalized citizens and advocate for good governance and respect of human rights. We need to work as a team in achieving all the above we have discussed today.

We also need to thank the African Institute for Strategic Research Governance and Development for this effort and for being a whistle blower for peace and championing the need to have a peace policy. Particularly, we thank the Executive Director for being more active than most of us. Let us all applaud him with a thunderous hand clap. For God and My Country.