



SuNDE Assesses Referendum Processes on Eve of Registration 700 Observers To Be Deployed in Sudan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 13, 2010

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Juba – The Sudanese Network for Democratic Elections (SuNDE), a coalition of 75 non-partisan civil society organizations, released a statement today assessing the Referendum processes so far. SuNDE is encouraged that preparations for the registration process are moving forward and Referendum officials worked with observer groups to ensure that observers can be present in Referendum Centers on the first day of voting.

“We would like to thank the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau for giving SuNDE a letter affirming that SuNDE observers can be present in Referendum Centers on the first day of observation,” said Lony Ruot, Chairman of SuNDE. “Conducting the Referendum in a transparent manner with a high level of citizen involvement will help build public confidence in the process.”

To streamline accreditation procedures for domestic observers, SuNDE recommends that the SSRB delegate the authority to approve and issue accreditation badges to State High Committees and ensure that requirements that observers submit photos to be accredited are removed from the accreditation rules posted on the Internet.

SuNDE did note several troubling aspects of the Referendum process to date including:

- The Southern Sudan Referendum Commission’s (SSRC) failure to issue rules, regulations, and guidelines for the registration process in a timely manner, causing voter education activities to start late and compromising the ability of organizations to receive accreditation in a timely manner.
- Referendum Center lists were published very late and have not yet been widely disseminated to the public making it difficult for voters to know where to register.
- SSRC did not adequately clarify eligibility requirements for voters, specifically how Referendum Center officials will determine whether an applicant is Southern Sudanese. This leaves the registration process open to potential manipulation.

“SuNDE urges the SSRC and SSRB to immediately release the list of all the Referendum Centers in the North and in the South widely and work diligently to develop and release the rules and procedures for the polling day quickly,” said Edmond Yakani, Coordinator for SuNDE.

SuNDE observers are trained and ready to observe in 60 out of 78 counties in Southern Sudan and, with the assistance of our partner the Sudanese Group for Democracy and Elections (SuGDE), SuNDE will deploy observers in Khartoum and the 14 other Northern states.

