



**Preliminary Assessment
by the Japan Referendum Observation Mission to Sudan**

Khartoum, January 18, 2011

1. The Japan Referendum Observation Mission to Sudan, headed by Mr. Yuichi Ishii, former Ambassador to Sudan, was dispatched to Sudan from December 23, 2010, to observe the Southern Sudan Referendum, which was held from January 9 to 15, 2011. During its assignment in Sudan, the Mission observed the preparatory process, polling and sorting in Khartoum and Juba. Consisting of 15 members from academia, NGO and government, the Mission deployed five teams; one in Khartoum and four in Juba. The Mission observed as many referendum centers as possible in cooperation with the Embassy of Japan in Sudan as well as with the assistance of local staff. The team dispatched to Khartoum observed 49 referendum centers, while the other four teams were engaged in observation at 81 centers covering all 15 Payams in Juba County, Central Equatoria State. The mission conducted a total of 241 observations during seven days of balloting.
2. Recognizing that conducting a free, fair, and peaceful referendum is a key to success in the implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and is of great importance for the consolidation of peace in Sudan as well as peace and stability in Africa as a whole, the Mission conducted observation to grasp the referendum process as extensively and intensively as possible. Meanwhile, the Mission members actively met with other international and domestic observers, UN officials and political leaders of both the Government of National Unity and the Government of Southern Sudan as well as the press.
3. The Mission recognizes and welcomes that the overall referendum process was generally carried out in a free, fair, and peaceful manner without any major disturbances. It has yet to be noted that the Mission witnessed several cases where some people without a Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC)-issued identification card were present in the referendum center, and where confidentiality of voting was not sufficiently guaranteed. The Mission also observed some technical issues such as the poor circulation of the SSRC's directions, lack of transportation for voters living in remote areas, insufficient food and water supply for the staff. Notwithstanding those cases and technical problems mentioned above, the Mission considers that they will not affect the fairness of the referendum.
4. The Mission expresses sincere congratulations on the completion of the polling on schedule despite the fact that the preparatory process had faced with some challenges for various reasons. The Mission also commends the efforts that the Government of National Unity, the Government of Southern Sudan, and the SSRC have put into carrying out the referendum. Finally, the Mission expresses its high regard for and congratulations to all the voters who actively participated in the polling and all the referendum staff who diligently performed their challenging tasks.
5. It is also important to note that the substantial support extended by the international community including Japan—e.g. logistic and technical assistance by the UN Integrated Referendum and Electoral Division (UNIRED), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other international organizations in Sudan and abroad, and observation activities by both local and international observers—considerably contributed to the smooth implementation of the referendum.
6. In completing its activities in Sudan today, the Mission expects that the sorting and counting process will continue to be carried out in a proper and transparent manner. Claims of irregularities must be addressed in accordance with the appeal stipulated in the law. The Mission emphasizes the importance of respecting the outcome of the referendum by all parties, and strongly hopes that the result of the referendum will contribute to the achievement of sustainable peace in Sudan as well as peace and security in Africa as a whole.

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