

## **Diaspora Meeting**

**Bergen - 08/04/2006**

**Attendance:** Ibrahim Elnur, Anita Fabos, Cordula Weisskoeppel, Abdessalam Sidahmed, Osman M. Salih, Khalid El-Hassan, Manzoul Asal, Amira Ahmed, Bashair Ahmed

**Apologies:** Leif Manger, Abelghaffar M. Ahmed

**Others to be informed and invited:** Ruqaia Abu Sharaf, Nada Ali, Sondra Hale, Asma A/Halim, Gamal A. Adam, Diana Shandy, Carla Doughtry, Stephanie Akwi, Victoria Bernall, Viva Nasar

### **A. Introduction:**

After delivering two successful panels covering issues pertaining to the Sudanese diaspora, in the 7<sup>th</sup> International Sudanese Studies Conference in Bergen – panelists and other interested scholars discussed the possibility of establishing a collaborative research initiatives in this particular area. The meeting enthusiastically endorsed the idea and the brainstorming session that followed dealt with issues related to the initiation of such project. The meeting discussed the following:

### **B. The Sudanese Diaspora Research Network (SDRN):**

The meeting agreed on SDRN as a tentative name for the working group on Sudanese diaspora. The format of network building was thoroughly discussed with reference to previous similar experiences. It was agreed that the focus will be initially on individual researchers and through them the project will develop institutional linkages.

### **C. Data-Base on Sudanese Diaspora:**

It was agreed that an initial task is to build up a data base on Sudanese diaspora. The first step is to compile a bibliography of academic and other materials on the Sudanese diaspora. Anita Fabos volunteered to compile such a bibliography and to make it available for all the members of the network. Further steps in the build up of data base will be discussed and the expected cost will be included in the estimate for the initial fund raising efforts (the seed money phase).

### **D. Research Agenda and Priorities:**

It was agreed that the research agenda of the group will build on members' research interest and will highlight both synergies and complementarities between various individual research projects. Within this context the need to study diaspora at both sites of sending and receiving ends was highlighted; the need to establish the magnitude and patterns of Sudanese diasporic communities was also stressed; policy relevance to the ongoing process of peace-building was stressed; and the need to elaborate on these issues and further development of a full fledged research agenda will be dealt with in the first meeting of SDRN.

## **E. Tentative Programme:**

The meeting agreed on a two phase programme:

**A. Phase I:** Involving build up of data base, preparation for the first workshop and publications. Sources of funds for this phase (seed money) should be identified by the coordinator (Ibrahim) with the help of all members. Anita Fabos agreed to undertake the task of compiling a bibliography of academic and other materials about the Sudanese diaspora. The bibliography will be made available for the network member through internet. All are expected to provide entries known to them from their own work or other on Sudanese diaspora. It was also agreed that situations similar to Sudan will be included (e.g. Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan). It was also agreed that a joint publication based on panel presentations as well invited contribution should be considered as a priority before the second phase of the project (e.g. special issue of a journal).

**B. Phase II:** Development of a long term collaborative research project. The proposed December 2006 meeting of the group will undertake the responsibility for finalizing the proposal for this phase and fundraising. As agreed in the meeting electronic means of communications will be the major tool for the preparation for the holding of the first workshop. Therefore, it is anticipated that the first draft of the proposal will be made available before the first workshop.

## **F. Housing of SDRN:**

No formal housing site was agreed upon. It was agreed to maintain a flexible option in this respect. It was tentatively agreed that the first workshop (largely organizational and confined to SDRN members) will be held in Cairo (AUC). The second workshop or conference will be held in Sudan. The following institutions were considered as possible housing/collaborative institutions: AUC, UEL, A. Karim Merghani Center (Omdurman), University of Khartoum, University of Kansas

## **G. Fund Raising:**

The meeting identified the following as possible donors: Ford Foundation, NORAD, CIDA, IDRC, and EU. More potential sources will be identified and communicated by the SDRN members.