

Gender influence, challenges and implications of the Sudan's 2010  
General Election: How to vote, where and for whom?

**(To be ratified after the workshop)**

Dr. Jaafar K. Juma (Assistant Professor of Statistics)

Director, Centre for Distance Education

University of Juba, Sudan

A Paper to be presented in a workshop on election enlightenment 2009 organized by the Southern Sudan Women Group, University of Juba, College of Computer and information Technology, Khartoum, Sudan, and 5 December, 2009

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## **Introduction:**

Generally speaking, although 53 years old since independence of the Sudan in 1956, voting or election as called for by the CPA is completely a new activity for the Sudanese people. Focus group discussions held recently in Khartoum and Juba on the subject of election and referendum by the author of this paper revealed that, many people including even intellectuals did not participated in election before and therefore, election is not a necessity for them. Most if not all, did not know who to vote for, how and why?

This paper is concern with election enlightenments. It emphasizes on the importance of women in the election, how to vote, how to choose a political party, where to vote and argued that very few people particularly women do not turn out for the general election due to the fact that the candidates are not their favored candidates.

## **Why women must vote?**

Looking at the population pyramid for the Sudan, it is important that women and youth vote for the success of this coming election. It is worth mentioning that, about 48% of the Sudan's population is female. i.e, out of the 39,154,490 people, 19,080,513 people is females.

In terms of election age, and if those 17 years old will be 18 years on the Election Day, our total voters will be around 20,692,131 people with 10,272,533 being female voters.

Now, coming to the target of this workshop, if women are not informed about the election and if a sizable number of them will not turn out for the election, then what will happen to the CPA that granted women the 25% share, yet not fully observed by governments in Sudan? To illustrate on the importance of voting to women and status of gender given the CPA South Sudan is taken as a case study in this presentation. The table below shows the gender composition of south Sudan.

Table 1: Gender Composition of South Sudan (SS)

Institutions	Female	Male	Total
SS Legislative Assembly	33(20%)	136(81%)	168
States Legislative Assembly	8(17%)	40(83%)	48
Council of Ministers	3(12%)	23(88%)	26
Chairpersons in GOSS	2(9%)	20(91%)	22
Governors	1(10%)	9(90%)	10
Speakers of States Legislative Assemblies	1(10%)	9(90%)	10

Source: Extract from the Statistical yearbook for SS 2009

Today, any one in Sudan (citizen or non-citizen) is complaining about the current political state, but in my opinion, meetings like this are good initiatives to do some thing about it. As Sudanese citizens and women in particular, it is our responsibility to make our voices hard on a variety of issues that affect us. In order to do so, we need to get out and vote.

### **Implications**

Usually, voters are only allowed to vote for one political party say SPLM or NCP and any other party but not both. As a result, some parties form alliance against a particular party for some reasons. For instance, SPLM/DC may ally with NCP and

other South Sudan political parties against SPLM. And this causes myriad of issues in the election. Although, People may want to be good citizens, they are overwhelmed by issues and candidates and sorting all these issues out seems too difficult. Consequently, many people do not vote. The author of this paper has been a victim of this situation for years. For him, this is going to be his first national election leave alone women voting or not voting.

The reality is that, more than a half of the registered voters do not turn out for the general elections why? The argument is that, the general election is not as important as the primary election. Our problem is not the election where the president will ultimately be chosen, but an election which decides which candidates should contest. But unfortunately this is not the system being practice here in Sudan.

The interim conclusion is that, very few women and the majority of the registered voters do not turn out for the general elections simply due to the fact that the candidates are not there favored candidates. Secondly, it could be because the chances of winning the election for some few favored candidates who made their ways to the general election is very insignificant. Never the less, Voting is the voice of a country e.g. Sudan, America etc. it could be the voice of women in our situation here now. So, without voting you lose your voice. And off course all of us know very well what it means by losing voice. Therefore, to become responsible citizens' ballots must be casted.

### **How to vote?**

Every one will be familiar with the process of casting a vote on the Election Day. Learning how to vote on Election Day is simple. Usually, there are guidelines and people to support you. For this, I will not waste time explaining all the steps on how to vote. However, deciding who to vote for is quite a difficult issue in every election. Therefore, I would like to emphasize that before casting your vote, you should familiarize yourself with that candidate's platform. Voting is a wonderful opportunity to make a difference, but first you have to be registered. For more

information on the registration you are advised to visit the nearest point in your locality (Mahaliya)

Note that, some people can't vote. Persons with a felony conviction can't vote. Individuals under the age of 18 can't vote. And you can't vote if you aren't a citizen of the Sudan.

Remember, you will need to register now (---- days or more) prior to the election. And you need to get a voter registration form. I'm not sure, but in developed countries like the US there are limited numbers of States where you can register on the same day as Election Day.

### **How to choose a political party?**

Political parties are government organizations that strive to have a certain level of power, on a state and national level via elections. (Sonyaa2). Henceforth, choosing a party that matches your beliefs is a key in contributing to a governed Society.

### **Where to vote?**

One year ago there was that question of where to be counted during the census. It was reported that, many south Sudanese staying in the northern part of Sudan were not counted. In fact, this caused some political raw in the census result. Seemingly, the same situation will recur unless otherwise. Therefore, even if there shall be Polling centre all over the country, it is advisable to vote in your own constituency to minimize political biasness, possible anger and frustration on the Election Day.

### **Conclusions:**

1. In terms of election age, and if those 17 years old will be 18 years on the Election Day, our total voters will be around 20,692,131 people with 10,272,533 being female voters. Therefore, participation of women in the 2010 election is very vital

2. Voting is the voice of a country e.g. Sudan, America etc. it could be the voice of women in our situation here now. So, without voting you lose your voice. Therefore, to become responsible citizens' ballots must be casted.
3. Choosing a party that matches your beliefs is a key in contributing to a governed Society.
4. You need to register and get a voter registration form now (---- days or more) prior to the election.
5. Some people can't vote. 1/Persons with a felony conviction can't vote. 2/Individuals under the age of 18 can't vote and 3/ if you aren't a citizen of the Sudan.
6. Every one should be familiar with the process of casting a vote on the Election Day.
7. Usually, voters are only allowed to vote for one political party say SPLM or NCP and any other party but not both. Thus, information such as telephone number, county(Mahaliya), home number and political party though very important in the voting process should be handled with care
8. Finally, as Sudanese citizens and women in particular, it is our responsibility to make our voices hard on a variety of issues that affect us. In order to do so, we need to get out and vote.

### **References:**

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