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**SUMMARY REPORT OF CONTAINERS OF HOPE DISTRIBUTION IN BOR,
JONGLEI STATE, SOUTH SUDAN**

By Nyiel C Jok, Project Officer

Introduction Background

Container of Hope initiative started out in the midst of war when the conflict erupted out in the capital of South Sudan (Juba) in December 15, 2013. This war started out as a power struggle within the ruling party (SPLM); however, it ended up killing thousands of civilians and displaced thousands of civilians. The war is now estimated to have killed 50,000 according to the UN report. However, these numbers have been disputed by the government. Sadly, majority if not half of the population have lost their properties and are either internally displaced or in various refugees' camps in neighbouring countries. However, last year the warring parties signed a Compromised Peace Agreement (CPA) in Addis Abba, which led to ceasefire in the country.

This agreement led to the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity in which warring parties were accommodated in various ministries. Thus the question of the displaced remains still a huge burden on the government and those who wish to help the vulnerable populations. Therefore, it's with great pleasure to take this opportunity to avail to the Good Samaritans (sponsors & donors) who had contributed immensely on making this container reached its final destination in Bor, Jonglei State.

Nevertheless, this report will discuss the challenges Container of Hope had faced in Australia and in South Sudan, especially in Bor, Jonglei State. Moreover, the report will elaborate on its advantages to the needy people in South Sudan and its way forward.

Challenges faced in Australia (South Australia)

Container of Hope has had many challenges in Australia, however, we cannot forget to acknowledge the support from the Uniting Church congregation under Pastor Amel Manyuon, South Sudanese Community in SA and especially the Rotary Club.

- One of many challenges we had faced was due to lack of man power to load goods into both containers at the Project Officer's house (Mama Nyiel Jok) and the Rotary Club site. Often Good Samaritans would have dropped off things at the house, but once they reached the site, safety loading them into the containers became an issue. It was until the Rotary Club provided us with more volunteers to load everything into the containers that we were able to successfully completed the task. Also, our own South Sudanese volunteers whom we were able to reach join hands after a long struggle to complete the task.
- Secondly, receiving shipment documentation took us time to obtain from the right authorities, but eventually our team from the Rotary Club work diligently to process everything. Perhaps the issue might have been due to lack of sensitization of the community about the project otherwise, we would have more man power.

Challenges faced in South Sudan, Bor, Jonglei State

When it comes to South Sudan, one cannot speak but to sympathized with the State government due to lack of infrastructure. The country gained its independence in 2011 and as a results things are not as smooth as they should be. Getting tax exemption letter for the containers was a major issue because of varies bureaucracies from the national government. The government of South Sudan, however, initiated a new policy in which official tax exemption aren't granted to clients due to growing corruption in this sector. The government however can grant its customers letters only to receive the official documentation at the time of clearance. To curb this corruption, the government made a unilaterally decision only to give tax exemption at the border when items arrived. Thus explaining this to our sponsors in Australia made no sense at all. It was until the government of Jonglei State and the Bishop of Bor Diocese wrote supporting letters to the Rotary Club team leader stating that the containers will not be taxed and will be stored at the church's compound was when the shipment began. Though this had caused us time the trust we have among ourselves made everything possible.

Arrival and distribution of items in Bor, Jonglei State

The containers arrived in Bor in February 7, 2016 and were stored at Saint Andrew Cathedral's compound. Unloading of the items began the following morning starting at 10 am to 4PM.

Challenges

One of the major challenge we encountered was due to lack of machinery to remove the containers from the carriers. The only crane available was privately owned by an NGO, however, its driver was out of town and we couldn't use it. Hence we ended up pulling out the containers using ropes tied to two different cars. However, we were lucky to have Rev. Agou Kur and Agol Mayen Kur, Director of Education and Saint Andrew School children and staff to help us with unloading. On Feb 8th, 2016, Rev. Agou Kur invited all 7 Diocese of

Jonglei State for distribution of items to the needy populations to Saint Andrew Cathedral. The Diocese are as follow: Malek Diocese, Athooc Diocese, Twic East Diocese, Kongor Diocese, Duk Diocese, Ayod Diocese, and Akobo Diocese. All these Dioceses are all under Bishop Akurdit in the State of Jonglei.

How things were distributed?

Before getting into details of how things were distributed, it would be good to acknowledge what kinds of items were shipped to Bor. See the attached list of the items. The items were categorized into five groups: clothes (bundles), hospitals materials, school stationaries, computers, and food items (see the attached items list). Before distribution began, we counted all bundles of cloth and distributed them equally to the above mentioned dioceses so they can go and distributed them to the needy populations in their territories.

Over thirty team members which we picked to help us distributed counted the items on the floor and gave each designated team member his/her share. However, due to insecurity at the time we were advised that the Dioceses should take the items to the grassroots, hence we accepted church's recommendation. Secondly, we gave all hospitals materials to the representatives of Bor State Hospital. Lastly, all school materials, computers, and food items were donated to Saint Andrew Orphanage Primary School. The distribution took us four days to complete the entire process. According to our inquiry we have approximately served

5,000 civilians in the state of Jonglei State. Some items which were given are (generally used by everyone) and cannot quantify how many people but the number of students at Saint Andrew Orphanage plus the report of the Dioceses was able to determine how many people we had served. The health items which were donated to the State hospital cannot be quantified; however, the Ministry of Health was very thankful for the assistance.

Certainly these items helped those who lost all their properties during the war, especially those who didn't have clothes to wear. The students were able to get pens, books, computers, and food to make them breakfast and lunch. The Ministry of Health really appreciated all the donation they had received from the Container of Hope and so do everyone who received any item from us. Nonetheless, the church allowed us to store our containers in their compound until we are able retrieve them in the near future.

Pay It Forward

One of Container of Hope's cornerstone principles is Pay It Forward. This means that if someone is kind to you, you be kind to someone else. Yes, the needy population extremely felt the courage of other fellow human being for the support they had unexpectedly received from Good Samaritans (Australian citizens). Precisely, they called it "A gift of God".

Nevertheless, Hon. Mamer Ruk, a Good Samaritan who happens to be a Commissioner of Bor County also promised to give Container of Hope a land once land allocations began, so we can have a place of our own to continue our mission in South Sudan. The question that I/we often asked ourselves is, will this be the end of Container of Hope or can we do more for other vulnerable human beings? FYI: We have more pictures and a video clip of the entire process, which is available upon request. We aren't able to share everything on this report, but we hope this gives everyone a glimpse of how we started the project and how it served the most vulnerable population in South Sudan. At this juncture I wish to thank you all for your time and contribution to this great cause.

In Jesus' name, Amen!

Nyiel C Jok, Project Officer and a member of Uniting Church Congregation