

Training Workshop for Reconstituted South Sudan CEWERU Juba, South Sudan 27th-28 August 2020 – By Anthony Ochan



Participants and facilitators posing for a group photo inside SSPRC conference hall. Photo credit: Anthony Ochan

Introduction

South Sudan Conflict Early Warning Early Response Unit (CEWERU) organized a two-day training for new members of the reconstituted national steering committee under the theme “Empowering South Sudan National CEWERU Steering Committee” with support from the United Development Programme (UNDP). The training is organized for all members of the reconstituted National Steering Committee, it brought together 25 participants representing the South Sudan CEWERU National Steering Committee membership including South Sudan Peace and Reconciliation Commission (SSPRC), the National Research Institute represented by the University of Juba (UoJ) Institute of Peace, Development and Security Studies, Upper Nile University and Community Empowerment for Progress (CEPO), the National Police Services, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Organization for Nonviolence and Development (ONAD), Women and youth representatives. The workshop was also organized to brief new members of the Reconstituted National Steering Committee about their roles and responsibilities within the unit. The workshop is also meant to bring the NSC representatives together to network and familiarize themselves with each other as a way of building synergies required for robust communication and decision making to prevent and mitigate conflicts in the grassroots.

Opening Remark – Hon Chuol Rambang, Chair SSPRC & CEWERU National Steering Committee

CEWERU is mandated to deepen the government's response to conflict. It is a peace building unit within SSPRC as an early warning mechanism for averting crisis and humanitarian crisis. The unit is linked to IGAD's Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN), which is an indicator-based

mechanism focused on cross border pastoralists movement that is prone to conflicts. It is vital for preventing unforeseen circumstances that can emerge from conflicts. IGAD sees it as a vital tool for conflict analysis and response. Every IGAD country has a CEWERU, in South Sudan it operates at 3 levels; the National Steering Committee chaired by SSPRC chair, State Technical Committee headed state deputy governors and the County Response Mechanism headed by county commissioners. Plans are underway to create a fourth and possibly the fifth level at the Payam and Boma to be headed by Payam Administrators and Boma chiefs respectively.

The unit Started as a monitoring and tracking tool for cross border pastoral conflicts in the pilot areas of Karamoja cluster of Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan aimed at providing early warning on escalating pastoral violence, to articulate recommendations to prevent and mitigate violence using indicators that were developed by experts from IGAD region. Over time CEWERU expanded to its present scope, and is a vital mechanism for advancing CEWARN for national and IGAD level. This workshop is therefore very vital for building capacity to analyze and respond to conflict in a timely basis to avert crisis because it targets those who never had the opportunity to know and report information to be addressed, within the capacity of the unit and wider. CEWERUs information units at various levels are reference points. This workshop is an opportunity for new members to interact with each other and learn about their responsibilities in various capacities. He requests members to pay attention and learn from each other, he thanks the UNDP for providing the resources and the mother institutions for releasing members to attend.

DISCUSSIONS – DAY ONE (27th/Aug/2020

CEWERU Strategy – Oringa Christopher (Facilitator from UoJ)

Discussions were facilitated by Oringa Christopher who opened by asking the new members to learn about what CEWERU does at national, state and county levels. Discussions touched on the National Steering committee's relations with donors such UNDP and CEWERU's operations strategy, which is the backbone of the response mechanism. The strategy clearly indicates how Information is collected at Payam level where preliminary analysis is done before going through the county levels and reaching the national level for further analysis and response according to the situation.

Early Warning and Early Response – Edmund Yakani (CEPO)

CEWERU follows a universal format for early warning function, which relies on Collection of data on shocks e.g. covid19, floods, locusts, inter communal violence etc. that need to be responded to. The process first starts by establishing alert that something is going on e.g. youth preparing to go and raid cattle. Fact finding is the next step to verify data collected, establishing facts precedes decision making and action. Between alert and decision making, analysis happens to understand the nature of the crisis, and between the decisions and action, there is approval to be made to decide what action is required. There is also a guideline in place on how to respond in the short term, medium and long term. The universal format is based on the two principles of early warning and early response. Within the format, Universities are important in analyzing data collected by the civil society, while the government (politicians) make decisions – approval. And this is the basis for the current structure of CEWERU.

Operational procedure

CEWERU information collection starts when reporters across the country collect information at Payam, Boma levels. This includes collecting information on crimes committed by government, rebels, criminals, unknown gunmen, rebels and other types of violations which include child abduction, crimes at PoCs, inter communal violence, sexual gender based violence fire breakouts, humanitarian targeting, media violations, etc. **For instance**, information collected **by CEPO** is reanalyzed and posted on CEPO's website that provide detailed narratives of natures and geographical occurrence of conflicts across the country. This analysis is important to inform political decisions that affect the country at CEWERU's three thematic areas of political, social and economic.

Structure of CEWERU – Oringa Christopher

CEWERU at national level is made of a national steering committee headed by SSPRC chair and composed of the following;

- a) **Ministry** of Interior (Police)
- b) **National** Security Service
- c) **Ministry** of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management
- d) **Ministry** of Defense
- e) Ministry of Foreign affairs
- f) Women and youth
- g) CSOs (CEPO & CRS)
- h) Faith based Groups (FBOs)
- i) People Living with Disabilities (PWDs)
- j) National Research Institute (University of Juba & Upper Nile University)

At the States level, the State Technical Teams (STT), sit at state headquarters headed by deputy governors and comprise of;

- a) States ministry of local government
- b) Security organs (organized forces)
- c) NGOs and CSOS
- d) RRC
- e) Youth and Women
- f) PWDs
- g) Traditional Authorities
- h) FBOs
- i) UN Agencies

The State Technical Teams conduct grassroots visits to assess the situation and make their report to the CEWERU head. At a certain point it was the state ministry for local government that headed the state technical committees, but it varies from state to state **and there is therefore a need to have unified structures across the country.**

The county Response Mechanism (CRM)

Sits at the county headquarters and is chaired by the county commissioner and comprises of a number of organs including;

1. County Commissioner
2. Security Organs
3. NGOs (CSOs)
4. RRC
5. Youth
6. Women
7. PWDs

At the Payam level, CEWERU is headed by the Payam administrators and comprises of the following

1. Payam Admins
2. Chiefs
3. Council of elders
4. Women and Youth
5. FBOs and PWDs
6. Security organs

Traditional authorities such as rain makers and spear masters only appear at the Payam levels, but their wrangles are something that should be addressed in the nearest future.

Establishment of South Sudan CEWERU, Mandate & Mission – Oringa Christopher

South Sudan CEWERU was established in May 9th 2012 and placed under the SSPRC tasked with coordinating peace related issues in the country. South Sudan CEWERU's mandate within CEWARN protocol article 11, "To receive and share information concerning potentially violent conflicts as well as theory outbreak and escalation in the country and IGAD region". The Unit's mission is to operate an efficient, effective early **warning** and early response mechanism aimed at preventing, reducing and mitigating conflicts in South Sudan. This mission translates into its core functions; Collection of data using specific indicators, analyze and verify information and recognition of crisis development, promote the exchange of and collaboration among member states on EWER including information sharing with other organizations, to formulate best/worst and most likely cases scenarios and response option and to communicate recommendations on policy and response options to decision makers.

Duties and Responsibilities of Steering Committee

- a) Policy making
- b) Create structural linkage between governments, CSOs and other partners
- c) Approve annual action plans
- d) Lobby gov't and other donors for funds

Challenges

- a) Feedback issues
- b) Communication challenges – poor networks e.g. collapse of vivacel
- c) Insufficient funding
- d) Inadequate staffing

Way forward

- a) Need for closer collaboration between the CEWERUs across the region

- b) Establishment and strengthening of cross border peace committees
- c) Promote dialogue between and among conflicting communities
- d) Sharing of information among CEWERU at all levels (National, State, County and Payam)

Group Activity

Participants were divided into two working groups to address two issues in the security sector. Group 1, armed conflict and violence in the region. Each group was tasked to identify 3 indicators and 3 ways of addressing the problem from the policy level. Group 2, Torture and Terrorism – in the region why? And how can the regional body CEWARN address it? Look at the problem from a strategic perspective [Policy issue]. Each group discussed assigned questions and presented their findings based on regional strategic perspective.

DISCUSSIONS - DAY TWO (28th/Aug/2020)

Day two started with a recap of discussions and presentations from the first day and some follow up questions to the facilitator for the purpose of clarity on some covered topics.

Communications Functions/Data Collection and Distribution Within CEWERU – Anthony Ochan & Taban Charles

CEWERU works to ensure collection and management of efficient data and information on conflict build to scale up timely mitigation and prevention response. To that CEWERU has put the following in place:

- Established a situation room to monitor information on a 24/7 basis
- Developed a top level basket /lists if indicators
- Developed adequate data collection, compilation, management and distribution systems
- Put in place tools for data collection and analysis.

NRI Experience/The Role of National Research Institute (NRI) – Dr. Ter Majok (UoJ)

CEWERU data analysis is done by the 3 clusters (University of Juba, University of Upper Nile and CEPO) situated within the National Research Institute; Security, Governance, Social, Environment. NRI has compiled its first and quarter report and second quarter report and a validation meeting at SSPRC upon which it was submitted to Addis Ababa. The audit report has also been submitted to SSPRC for Addis submission. The NRI's Key areas of Collaboration with CEWERU was initially for two years, 2019-2020, now extended (reconstituted) 2020-21. To conduct research on the sectors of governance, security, social, environment.

Governance - Completion of the R-TGONU – 9 governors in place with only Upper Nile governor missing State governments pending including independent commissions, dissolution and reconstitution of the Revitalized Transitional National Legislative Assembly.

Security – Cease fire continues to hold between signatories to agreement (R-ARCISS) except pockets of communal fighting, disarmament in Tonj and subsequent challenges, defections of some members of the security forces from one group to another – a continued challenge to reunification process – cantonment sites/barracks challenges, implementation of Transitional Security Arrangement including

timely execution of pre transitional arrangements, conditions in cantonments site and training continue to be a concern. The announcement made by Joint Defense Board ON MAY 6 2020 to accelerate training process and graduate all trainees within 30 days raised concerns due to logistical and infrastructural challenges

Economic and Social – High level of unemployment, economic downturn due to covid-19, human rights abuse and violence at family levels/sexual gender based violence, rapes, divorces etc. High number of pregnancies among girls and married women, a continued challenge to addressing, rushed government decision of lifting the lockdown leading to increase in reported cases of covid-19 infections, cumulated cases by august 21 2499, 1293 recoveries and 47 deaths.

Environment - Lack of environmental standards and guidelines to safeguard the exploration and exploitation in the extractive industry, Pollution in the oil fields and on the surrounding areas, rainy season and flooding impact on the environment and this includes wildlife.

Closing Remarks

Hon Betty Oboy who is an executive member of SSPRC closed the workshop on the chair's delegation – she thanked participants for their active participation and excused non participants owing to various challenges that might have contributed to their absenteeism. Going forward, she encouraged continued communication through emails amongst and within the reconstituted CEWERU Steering Committee – encourages the committee to frequent the commission to keep in touch and address some challenges instead of waiting for issues to emerge and to continually network because it allows for interpersonal relationship building and networking for better working relationship. **She stated that she will discuss** with the chair, to schedule regular CEWERU meetings so that information is shared regularly for timely action.

Conclusion

The workshop came to a close with remarks from various participants who thank CEWERU and UNDP for organizing and providing logistics for the training. Participants expressed their optimism to wholly contribute to CEWERU and ensure timely communication and decision making to prevent and mitigate violent conflicts in the country and IGAD region. However, the participants feel that the **biggest** challenge remains with the decision makers in using information and making decisions. Most reports and analysis are not acted upon, and decision makers hand pick people outside of the institution to carry out activity based on information collected by people within the institution who are subsequently sidelined – only to be consulted upon failure by the handpicked people.