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ACTIVITY REPORT ON MAJII PEACE CONFERENCE BETWEEN BUDI EAST AND KAPOETA EAST COMMUNITIES.

BACKGROUND

CDSS received funding from DT Global through USAID Shejeh Salam project to implement conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives that aimed at fostering dialogue between the Didinga and Toposa communities in Kapoeta East. The conflict between these groups threatens peace and hampers movement along Kapoeta–Nadapal road, which connects to Kenya. This road is a critical lifeline for youth, offering economic opportunities through trade to promote long-term peace and secure these livelihoods, the project engaged 300 participants (105 women and 195 men), drawn from local associations and groups from both tribes across Budi and Kapoeta East counties. Over a two-month period, the initiative involved pre-consultative meetings, trauma awareness training, a three-day peace dialogue, and six days dissemination of any agreed resolutions with dissemination of GBV messages to raise mass awareness. Cultural activities such as singing and dancing will be used to reinforce social cohesion during the rallies.

Activity 1 : Pre-consultative meeting

The pre-consultative peace meeting was conducted in Nakurumae (Lotubokol) of Katodori Payam , Lolim (Nangiya) and in Budi County bomas at Ngatuba, Lochioto ,Charit and Bohorora of Loudo payam.

The event was attended by Hon: Abdallah Lokeno, commissioner Kapoeta East, Hon: Akileo Mboya, Commissioner Budi County, State MPS from both Budi and Kapoeta East, chiefs from both counties, women and youth. The attendance was more than 300 capturing 173 Toposas and 200 Didinga (216 men and 157 women)

The event was officially opened by the Hon: Abdallah Lokeno, commissioner of kapoeta East as the host who, in his remarks told the two communities to openly air out what they have and accept the conference to be conducted for their peaceful co-existence. He said, “it is of its first kind that the two communities come together to understand each other and accept the peace to be conducted in Majii as suggested to elders”. Hon: Abdallah further told the gathering that, the government is standing firm to support the peace processes as we are heading to finalize with peace conference in Majii early Dec 2024.

Hon: Akileo Mboya, commissioner Budi County during his remarks emphasized on importance of living peacefully or co-existing peacefully with our neighbours compare to neighbouring communities, he told the two communities to own the peace and carry on sensitization within the communities while the process is ongoing for the forthcoming peace conference in Majii in Dec 2024.

Lopoyok Augustino who is CDSS representative appreciated the turn up of the two communities, especially in Nakurumae (Lotuboklo), Lolim of Kapoeta East and Charit, Ngatuba and Lorema of Lotukei



payam. In his overview, he told the gathering that, the peace was initiated by women from Ngatuba who visited Chukudum and knocked the doors for peace partners including Commissioner's office. In the response, CDSS as peace partner in Budi and across Eastern Equatoria, lobby for fund through Sheje Salaam and facilitated the peace dialogue between Budi East and Kapoeta East counties. He told the communities to own the peace and be peace ambassadors to their communities during this peace processes. While closing, he told the gathering that the peace processes have four events such as pre-consultative peace meetings, trauma training, peace conference and dissemination of peace resolutions in six selected locations

On the other hand, women representative from Lotukei payam, Regina Ikayak expressed her happiness and thanks CDSS through Shejeh salaam-USAID funding for having facilitating this women-led peace initiative by bringing the two communities together to pre-dialogue so that they understand one another and conduct mutual peaceful conference in Majji. She encouraged the two communities to support the initiative brought by women for our children to co-exist, and trade with their neighbours peacefully like any other tribes in East Africa who are bordering each other.

Regina emphasized that, in every event of conflict, women and the children the most vulnerable people and it is right time to say enough is enough since we haven't seen any side giving up for this issue of cattle raiding that has brought counter revenge and innocent killing of people.

She also emphasized on the illicit drinks which is excessively consumed by the youth as the contributing factor to conflict in the community. Regina told the government to ban the importation of such harmful drink or distillation.

She further advised the young people who are the pillars of the community to stop cattle raiding and diversify their livelihood on the income generating activities or other business such as gold mining, vegetables production and barter trade.

Youth Representative Mr. Nakoit Marko from Lotubokol during his remarks said, they as Toposa youth will abide by what the elders said, he emphasized that, the Didinga elders should also talk to their youth to avoid the issue of cattle theft which is commonly practice by both Didinga and Toposa youth.

He further told the youth to have one consensus that bind them together to minimize the cattle raiding which has negative impact in the lives of the community.

Lokure Paul from Charit (Loudo) told the gathering that both communities are not tired of cattle raiding and continues killing of each other, he emphasized that, the kraal leaders from both side should act as watch dog to monitor any suspicious foot marks related to cattle theft and should be followed strictly.

He told the youth that, most of their young wives become widows at early age due to loss of lives as a result of cattle raiding is a primary actor of cattle raiding, and should minimize this to maintain the Biblical commandment that said "do not kill", that has and can result to sin to any of the actor.





Activity 2 :Trauma healing training

The trauma healing training that targeted 50 participants from the two counties (Budi=25, Kapoeta East=25) was conducted from 8th -9th Dec 2024 in Napotpot (Buno). The trauma training was inclusive and its participants were drawn from Kraal leaders, Youth, women, chiefs, Representative from the State members of parliament and county authorities such, as Payam administrators and county commissioners of two counties (Budi and Kapoeta East County). This training was done to prepare path ways for conference which was finally conducted in Majii of Ngatuba Boma, Budi County.

Topic covered during Trauma Healing Training:

- 1- Trauma Healing Definition
- 2- Causes of Trauma
- 3- Types of violence
- 4- Cycle of violence
- 5- Breaking of violence
- 6- Illustration of sustainable peace through four elements(truth, mercy, reconciliation and peace)

During trauma healing training: Honorable Joseph Lokodo Colombo's the state member of parliament was touched on the trauma healing training in which he named the facilitators the **doctors of trauma healing**. In his speech, he gave himself as an example of the first person being affected by the trauma, because when hearing that one of the Toposa person or the Didinga died because of cattle rustling/theft, he felt bad about and make him to think a lot because of lost lives. He farther says he grew up in Kapoeta where he treated Toposa and Didinga as one family, not knowing that, he is a Didinga or Toposa that's why he is the most vulnerable person in term of trauma.

Hon. Joseph stated that, the analogies of trauma are as follows: Toposa are blessed with Livestock's and other resources such as minerals but, No access to Water and pasture. In other hand, Didinga are blessed with Water, Pastures, cash crops and crops as well as minerals and with few livestock such as cattle goats and sheep said Colombo.

Lack of water and pasture forces Toposa community to look for grazing land and water source which is deeper into Didinga community land. And because Didinga have vast farming land, with few livestock, sees the present of Toposa cattle grazing in their farming land is the source of income, took this opportunity to snatch the cows in whatever means, causing conflicts between the two communities of Toposa and Didinga hence; trauma.

Hn. Joseph Lokodo in his conclusion, appreciated CDSS for facilitation of trauma healing training through Seja Salam funding that are targeted only (25 participants from Didinga and 25 participants from Toposa) making a total of 50 participants attending the training on trauma healing are not enough to



disseminating or advocating the message on the causes of trauma and how to address and resolve the trauma in both communities.

Hon. Joseph urges that; CDSS, Govt and other NGOS should lobby for fund and continue with conducting many trauma healing trainings in both conflicting communities of Toposa and Didingaso that they fully have knowledge and understanding of what and how the trauma can be minimize or mitigated. Such trainings are helpful in realizing peaceful coexistence among/ between the conflicting communities.

Activity 3: Majii peace dialogue between Didinga of Budi and Toposa of Kapoeta East County

Majii peace dialogue between Didinga and Toposa of Kaoeta East County held from 19th -21st, Dec 2024. The dialogue was attended by the representative of Kraal youth leaders, chiefs, women and the representative of the government officials from both counties of Budi and Kapoeta East counties The dialogue was attended by more than 200 people (women 68 and 189 men). There were few women from Toposa side because majority of Toposa travelled from long distance to attend the meeting.

The dialogue was officially opened by administrator of Loudo payam Mr. Nyari Paul who was the representative of Hon: commissioner of Budi Count. During his opening remarks, Nyari appreciated CDSS through Sheje Salaam- USAID funding project for having facilitating peace initiative brought by women led group that bring the two communities together to dialogue and find solutions for peacefully co-existence, In his speech, he told the two communities to own the peace and be free to speak what can help the community to co-exist peacefully and should be related to the peace dialogue. He appealed to the participants to commit themselves and carry peace messages to their various locations as peace ambassadors.

Payam administrator further told the communities that, the government of Budi is committed to support whatever the outcome of the peace dialogue and will stand firm to support chiefs and youth to implement whatever the resolutions agreed at the end of peace dialogue.

CDSS representative Mr. Arkangelo Hiddi, in an overview welcomes all the participants and appreciated them for their tireless effort they have made to reach the destination, Majii peace dialogue centre. He told the gathering; the "facilitation came as a result of women-led initiative who visited peace partners and knocked different doors seeking for help including Commissioners' office. During women-led visit to Chukudum, Commissioner directed them to knocked CDSS office, ROG and other peace partners.





In response to their request, CDSS lobby and got funding from DT Global Sheje Salaam-USAID funded project, and this is what make us to be here today”, he said.

Arkangelo in his speech advised the participants from both communities to join hand and monitor the violators of peace process. He advised them to follow footmarks in case of any suspicious criminals of cattle theft. He also hinted to them to support any organization that supports the community either in livelihood or in peace dialogue.

Youth representative from Katodori Mr. Macharibok Lokuru appreciated CDSS for having facilitated peace program between Toposa and Didinga, that it is of its first kind that he witnesses an organisation facilitating community initiative. He advised the youth to support the peace and own it since it was community initiative that come from women who are giving birth to all men, that it should be respected. Macharibok during his speech told the participants that, their youth don't have any problem and say that, the pre-consultative peace dialogue has reached them all at kraal or grazing areas and they are ready to welcome whatever resolutions participants may come up with.

He further appealed to the chiefs, youth and Budi County authority to recover the cattle that were stolen between pre-consultative peace dialogue and trauma training. Macharibok told the youth of Didinga that, during pre-consultative meeting in Nakurumae (Lotubokol) the representative of both communities promised for the smooth peace processes program without hearing anything to do with cattle theft or any organise cattle attack but however, before the end of trauma training, cattle were stolen by unknown youth from Budi and that's what brought the blockage of road clearance from Majii-Napotpot.

He appealed to the state government to lobby for **communication facility to be put between Tebangura and Napotpot that can help them during any theft cases.**

He further added that youth should **form join peace monitors network** who will monitor and trace any suspicious footmarks in relations to cattle theft and report to the concern authorities.

He also encouraged youth to **conduct mobile market between Majii and Nakeho** to keep youth as part of exchange visit.

Women representative from Ngatuba mrs, Verenika Naibok appreciated both youth and men from the two communities for having turning up in a large number, that the peace initiative is not as usual for the preservation of Human being, she told the participants that cattle raiding and counter revenge have made many women remain widows and become vulnerable due to lost of their partners. Mother Verenika appealed to young men to stop cattle raiding and diversify their livelihood in doing business activities than involving themselves in this degrading activity.

She also appealed to the **government to implement the resolutions** of any peace dialogue to avoid violation of any peace talk.





Philiph Lopeam who was the government representative from Kapoeta East appreciated the women-led initiative on peace dialogue between the two communities and also encourages **CDSS to lobby for more fund to continue supporting the communities in disseminating resolutions, and follow up of the resolutions implemented. He emphasized on recovery of the cattle that were said to have been stolen during pre-consultative meeting in Nakurumae and Lolim by the youth of Didinga that have discourage many youths and elders from Toposa communities.**

He also encourages the two governments of Kapoeta East and Budi County to work hand in hand and monitor any violation of peace resolution in order to apprehend culprits suspected of any crime committed during resolutions implementation.

Chief Akileo Lotodohori of Ngatuba Boma during his speech appreciated Toposa representatives who turn up for the dialogue and argued them to share with the rest the message of peace and resolutions we are coming up with for our peaceful co-existence. He told them that, long ago, Didinga and Toposa were grazing and living together while respecting their different ways of livelihood, for instance, Toposa depend on cattle as their source of livelihood while Didinga depend on both farms produce and animals' and there was mutual respect among them during the movement of either people or animals with people. He told them that, God has given us resources and should share peacefully. **Chief requested partners to help them with either cash or food for work to open feeder roads such as Majii-Napotpot road, Majii- Nathilani road, and Majii-Natinga road. He told them these roads will act as security road that will help us to monitor any criminal case and for easy trade movement.**

Chief Akileo in his conclusion advised the participants that, to sustain peace, we must own it such that it last. He also emphasised on join grazing and mining to avoid any fear of cattle raid as communities stay and carry mining activity together or graze, this will minimize such fear and reduce trauma amongst the raiding communities.

Following a three-day peace dialogue between representative of Didinga and Toposa communities in Maji, Budi county facilitated by Community Development Support Services (CDSS) with generous funding from DT Global USAID Shejeh Salam project, the participants unanimously adopted the following resolutions to promote sustainable peace and coexistence:

Cessation of Hostilities

- I. Both communities commit to an immediate cessation of cattle raiding, cattle theft and revenge killing.



- II. Any grievances will be resolved through peaceful dialogue facilitated by the community leaders and government authorities.

Inter-community Communication

- I. Establish communication channels between Didinga and Toposa elders, kraal youth leaders, and local chiefs to address and prevent conflicts.
- II. Set up a joint peace committee with equal representation from both communities to monitor and mediate disputes.

Safe movement and Trade

- I. Guarantee safe and access to grazing lands, water points and trade routes for both communities, ensuring that no one is harassed or harmed while engaging in livelihood activities.
- II. Both communities commits to respect farmland and no animals or livestock should be driven into the farmland by whatever force.
- III. Open roads connecting Maji and Napotpot for easy access to Market and to promote inter community trade to build economic interdependence and barter trader.

Recovery of Stolen Livestock

- I. Both communities agree to return stolen livestock to their rightful owners, with the support of community leaders and local authorities.
- II. Mechanisms for tracing stolen livestock will be developed, including documentation and engagement of traditional structures.

Youth and Women Involvement

- I. Actively involve youth and women in peace building initiatives to promote inclusivity and ensure sustainable peace efforts
- II. Conduct youth focused activities to discourage participation in raids and violence such as sports, cultural events, agripreneurship, vocational skill programs and mobile school for cattle keepers.

Respect for Cultural and Social Boundaries

- I. Each community commits to respect the cultural practices and traditions of the others to foster mutual understanding and harmony.
- II. The communities commits to the ideals of asking for permission to graze in designated areas beforehand and such permission is granted, including water points.
- III. Avoid provocation actions, including unauthorized grazing, farming and settlement lands/areas.

Accountability for Peace Violation

- I. Penalize individuals or groups who instigate or participate in acts of violence/cattle raids, with the support of local and county authorities.



- II. Develop a transparent reporting system for breaches of the peace accord, including community based monitors to document incidents.
- III. Encourage the use of restorative justice, such as reconciliation and compensation, to address minor offenses and prevent further escalation.

Support from Government and Partners

- I. Request support from the state government as well as NGOs, for the implementation of peace resolutions, including logistical and financial assistance.
- II. Advocate for development projects that benefits both communities such as schools, health centers, and water points to address underlying causes of conflict.
- III. Request agricultural and livestock support programs from humanitarian organizations to boost food security and improve livelihoods.

Follow-Up Meetings and Monitoring

- I. Commit to periodic follow-up meetings to assess the progress on implementing the resolutions and address the emerging challenges.
- II. The first follow-up meeting will take place in February 2025 in Napotpot with participation from both communities and stakeholders.

CHALLENGES

- There was low turn up of women from Toposa community compare to men due to the animal's migration searching for pasture and water.
- Political interference after pre-consultative peace dialogue led to low turn up of Toposa Chiefs and elders.
- Unwillingness from Toposa side to pave the road citing need for cash for work
- Access to road between Majii- Napotpot.
- Lack of communication gadgets during Majii- Napotpot road paving.