



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

# Guide on the National Dialogue Process in South Sudan

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Forewords	<b>04</b>	Who owns the National Dialogue?	<b>12</b>
Introduction	<b>07</b>	What does it seek to achieve ?	<b>12</b>
<b>Part One</b>		What are the enablers of success/what would improve the chance of success?	<b>13</b>
National Dialogue in the Context Of South Sudan	<b>08</b>	Who and how will people participate?	<b>14</b>
What is the National Dialogue?	<b>09</b>	Timelines	<b>19</b>
Why the National Dialogue and how is it different from the Peace Agreement?	<b>10</b>	Deliverables	<b>19</b>

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## Part Two

Community sensitisation

20

### A. Creating key messages

Identify your purpose

20

Develop key messages

21

Be willing to adapt

22

### B. Communicating with communities

Know your audience

22

Make it local

22

Practice

22

Choose the right channel for communication

23

## Part Three

Key messages

24

Added Value of the Dialogue

25

Credibility and Legitimacy of the Dialogue

25

Operational independence

26

Shared Values and Stakeholders

27

# Preface

South Sudan is at a crossroads. The humanitarian, security and development challenges are unprecedented. For a decisive change of direction away from conflict and towards recovery, development and peace, the country must take bold, determined actions to support this shift. Every opportunity must be found for peace to succeed.

One such opportunity is the National Dialogue.

The National Dialogue presents an excellent means for all South Sudanese to come together to collectively devise and agree on solutions to challenges facing the country.

Yet, for the National Dialogue to succeed, it is essential that an enabling environment is created for the dialogue. The key elements are: inclusive participation; cessation of hostilities; neutral convener; release of political prisoners; freedom of expression and transparent constructive dialogue.

Significant progress is already being registered in most of these areas. We welcome the release of political prisoners; amnesty to some rebels; the recusal of the President as the patron of the dialogue; enlargement of the leadership of the Steering Committee to reflect the diversity of the country; increase of women participation in the leadership of the Steering Committee, and initial efforts to engage political actors outside the country.

In this respect, we are pleased to be supporting the Guide on the National Dialogue Process in South Sudan. This toolkit is based on our conviction that the National Dialogue must empower all South Sudanese, rural and urban, to express themselves. To this end, the toolkit is a guide and reference for Civil Society Organizations to inform, empower and mobilize communities to participate in the National Dialogue process. »

Going forward, we will continue to engage and lend our support to all relevant actors, when required. Our assistance is based on the UN joint position on the National Dialogue which recognizes the primacy of national ownership, and the need to promote inclusiveness, transparency and participation.

We sincerely thank the Steering Committee and the Secretariat of the National Dialogue for the leadership and guidance they have provided so far. We are grateful to CSOs and all who contributed to compile this advocacy toolkit, especially our colleagues and friends at UNDP and the Secretariat of the National Dialogue.



**Kiya Masahiko**

*Ambassador of Japan  
to South Sudan*



**Kamil K. Kamaluddeen**

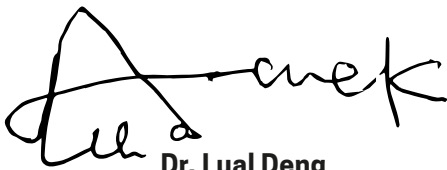
*Country Director,  
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# Foreword

There is always a critical turning point in the history of nations. The South Sudan National Dialogue (SSND) is, in my view, such a turning point that occurred on 14 December 2016 when President Salva Kiir Mayardit announced it. First, the SSND is a home-grown initiative, though benefiting from the emerging international best practices in the National Dialogues processes.

Secondly, the SSND is premised on a constituency-based system in which all the segments of society effectively participate in the deliberations of all issues facing the country by selecting their own delegates to represent their perspectives at various dialogue forums. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have an important role to play. That is, the booklet is an important framework for ensuring full participation of the CSOs in the SSND as facilitators on the one hand, and on the other participants/delegates at the local, regional, and National Dialogue forums.

Third and finally, the booklet places the SSND in both historical and contemporary contexts.



**Dr. Lual Deng**

*Coordinator, National Dialogue Secretariat*

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# Introduction

A credible national conversation on the future of South Sudan must be anchored in the individual and public consciousness on: why the National Dialogue; what does it seek to achieve; how can South Sudanese participate in the dialogue process; how is it different from other peace processes; and how will its outcome be implemented and monitored?

This booklet does not seek to provide compressive answers to these questions. Rather it summarises the outcomes of a workshop on “*Facilitating Grassroots Peace Initiatives conducive to an Inclusive and Credible National Dialogue*” held from 8 to 9 August 2017 in Juba. The workshop was organised by the United Nations Development Programme ((UNDP) South Sudan with Japan’s financial support and attended by UNDP’s civil society partners. In doing so, the booklet is intended to serve as a guide and reference for civil society organisations to develop comprehensive messages and strategies to empower communities to participate in the National Dialogue process. Given the peculiarities of each community and CSOs, this booklet is conceived as a flexible template that can be adapted to fit the need and purpose of each community and organisation.

It does so by providing an overview of key facts about the National Dialogue process as well as steps for community sensitisation. It also provides a list of key messages to be used during the National Dialogue sensitisation process. The messages were jointly developed by CSOs and the Secretariat of the National Dialogue during the workshop and have been approved by the National Dialogue Steering Committee.

# Part One

## NATIONAL DIALOGUE IN THE CONTEXT OF SOUTH SUDAN





## What is the National Dialogue?

The National Dialogue is both a forum and process through which the people of South Sudan shall gather to redefine the basis of their unity as it relates to nationhood, redefine citizenship and belonging, restructuring the state and renegotiate social contract and revitalize their aspirations for development and membership in the community of nations.

For this to be realized the process of National Dialogue must be seen as credible, genuine, and open to all South Sudanese and it should have reliable guarantees for its outcomes to be accepted and implemented.

<b>Inclusiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Equitable and effective participation for all actors</li> <li>▪ Giving a voice to actors that are often excluded from decision-making</li> </ul>
<b>Joint ownership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Commitment to the process</li> </ul>
<b>Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reflecting on what others say and think</li> <li>▪ Listening with openness to better understand the problem</li> </ul>
<b>Humanity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Willingness to put oneself in somebody else's place</li> <li>▪ Expressing what one really is and truly believes</li> </ul>
<b>Confidentiality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Respecting the trust developed during a dialogue</li> <li>▪ Encouraging the freedom for participants to express different viewpoints</li> </ul>
<b>Long-term perspective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Search for sustainable and lasting solutions</li> <li>▪ Seeking to transform relationships</li> </ul>
<b>Good faith</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No inclusion of hidden agendas or intentions</li> <li>▪ Showing integrity in sharing knowledge</li> </ul>

## Why the National Dialogue and how is it different from the Peace Agreement?

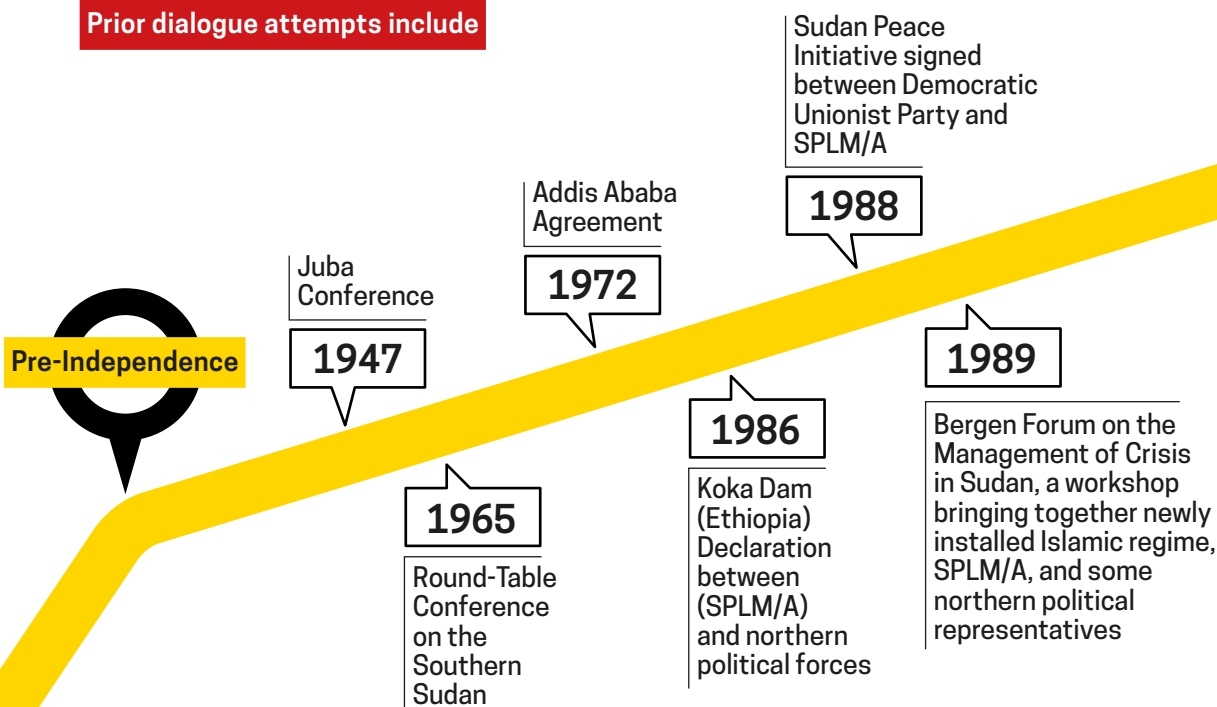
After the July 2016 conflict, the National Dialogues was conceived as a process to generate consensus among a broad range of national stakeholders, on how to move forward the faltering peace process.

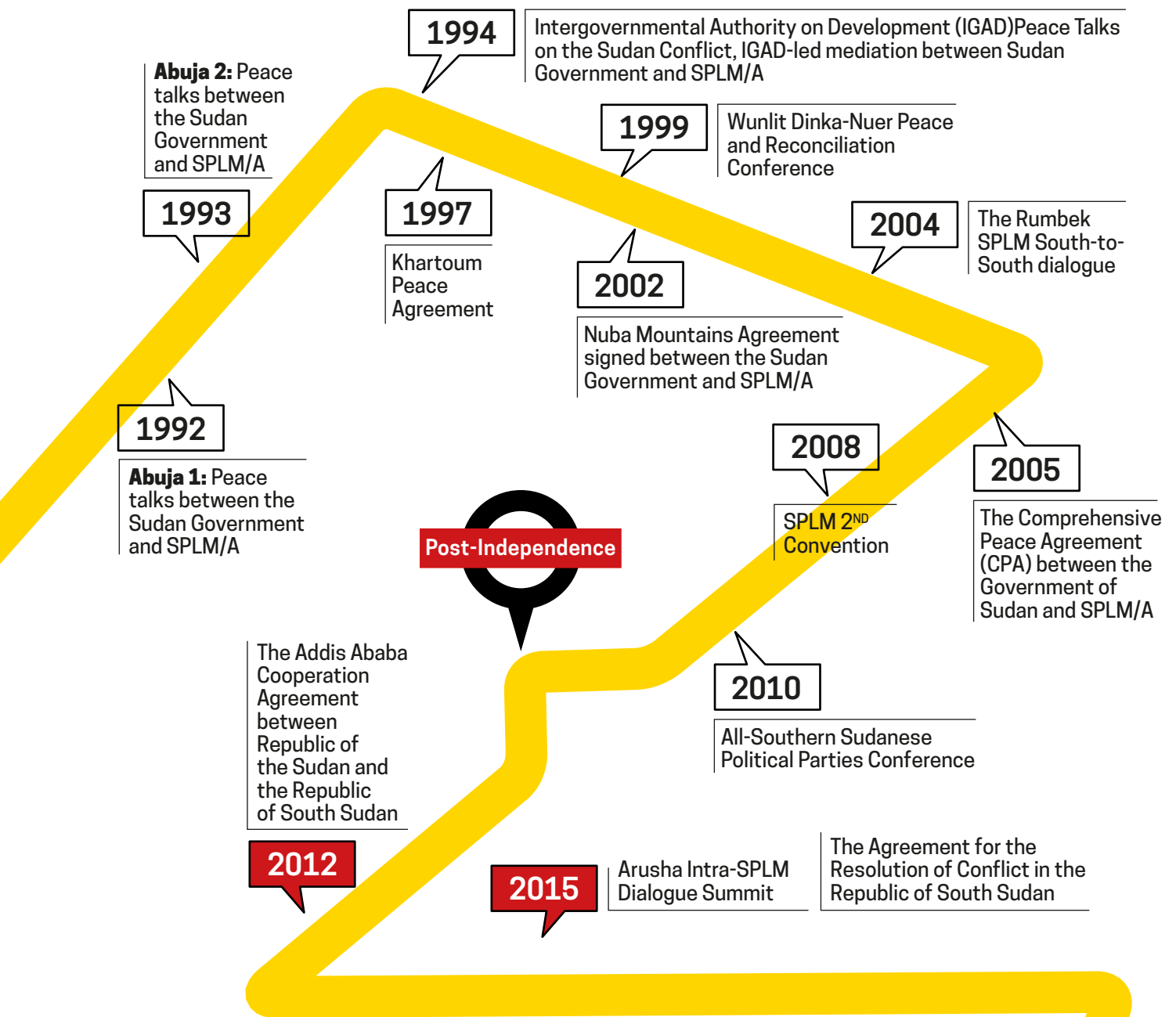
- The National Dialogues seeks to broaden participation and bring together all relevant national stakeholders and actors (state and non-state) on key conflict issues, such as state reform and state-building.

- The National Dialogue will also serve as a platform for a national conversation, not just between the belligerents, on the reform called for by the peace agreement.
- The National Dialogue will also broaden the scope of issues for reflections that are not covered in the peace agreement. e.g. issues relating to communal violence.

The South Sudanese have a rich history of mediating and talking to and amongst themselves. However the National dialogue is the first truly national conversations, since independence, amongst all South Sudanese about the future conversation of the country.

### Prior dialogue attempts include





The National Dialogue will not replace the peace agreement. The National Dialogue is an opportunity to create a conducive environment and broaden participation of all relevant stakeholders to develop consensus and implement the reform called for by the peace agreement. For example engagement with local communities who were never consulted and inclusion of local issues on the reform agenda.

The National Dialogue is also different from the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing in that the Dialogue is not about dispensing transitional justice as stipulate in the peace agreement, rather as mentioned, it is about finding common and shared solutions to the crisis facing South Sudan.

## Who owns the National Dialogue?

The National Dialogue was announced by President Kiir on 14 December 2016 and officially launched on 22 May 2017. Whilst initiated and launched by the President, the National Dialogue is not a government owned process. The Dialogue will be owned and led by South Sudanese. It is a chance for all South Sudanese to define and shape the future of their country. The President of the Republic or any government entity/institution does not control the National Dialogue. Even government resources for support to the National Dialogue will be managed by an independent entity.

The leadership of various opposition groups have broadly welcomed the concept of a National Dialogue in principle, but expressed concerns about the political context, venue and implementation modalities. External

reactions to the announcement have been more positive. The IGAD countries of Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Sudan, as well as the JMEC Chairperson, voiced their support for an inclusive National Dialogue process. Development partners (e.g. Germany and Japan) have embraced the concept of an inclusive National Dialogue process, but outlined the importance of allowing the UN and other international actors to carry out their duties without obstruction. On 10 February the UN Security Council issued a press statement, stressing that ceasefire is critical for the success of any genuine, inclusive political process, including National Dialogue, and that such a process should be based on the framework provided by the ARCISS and aimed at achieving national reconciliation and enhancing the trust among all stakeholders in South Sudan.

## What does it seek to achieve?

The overall objective of the National Dialogue is to:

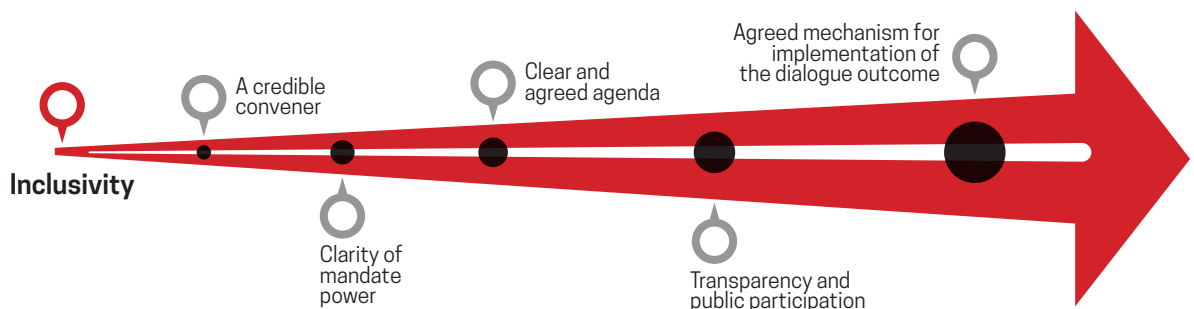
**“End all violent conflicts in South Sudan, constitute national consensus, and save the country from disintegration ...”**



## What are the enablers of success/what would improve the chance of success?

### Principles for Success

Based on lessons learned from previous National Dialogue processes, the following principles should be applied to allow for an effective National Dialogue process.<sup>1</sup>



1

Some of the principles are drawn from the publication *National Dialogues: A Tool for Conflict Transformation?*. Published by UN Institute for Peace.

### Functional and Independent Operational Structure

The organs of the National Dialogue consist of a Leadership Team (9 members), a Steering Committee (112 members. This include the 9 members of the leadership), and the Secretariat (13 members):

The National Dialogue Steering Committee has established 15 sub-committees:

Sub-Committee	No.
Sub-committees corresponding the former ten states (10); and the Pibor and Abyei Administrative Areas (2)	12
Sub-committee focusing on refugees/international outreach	1
Sub-committee focusing on the national capital (Juba)	1
Sub-committee focusing on security	1

## Who and how will people participate?

### Transparency and Monitoring the Dialogue

The proceedings and all information about the National Dialogue will be made public. A dedicated website and other communication channels will be established to ensure that, when possible, the deliberations at the National Dialogue conference will be broadcast in real-time.

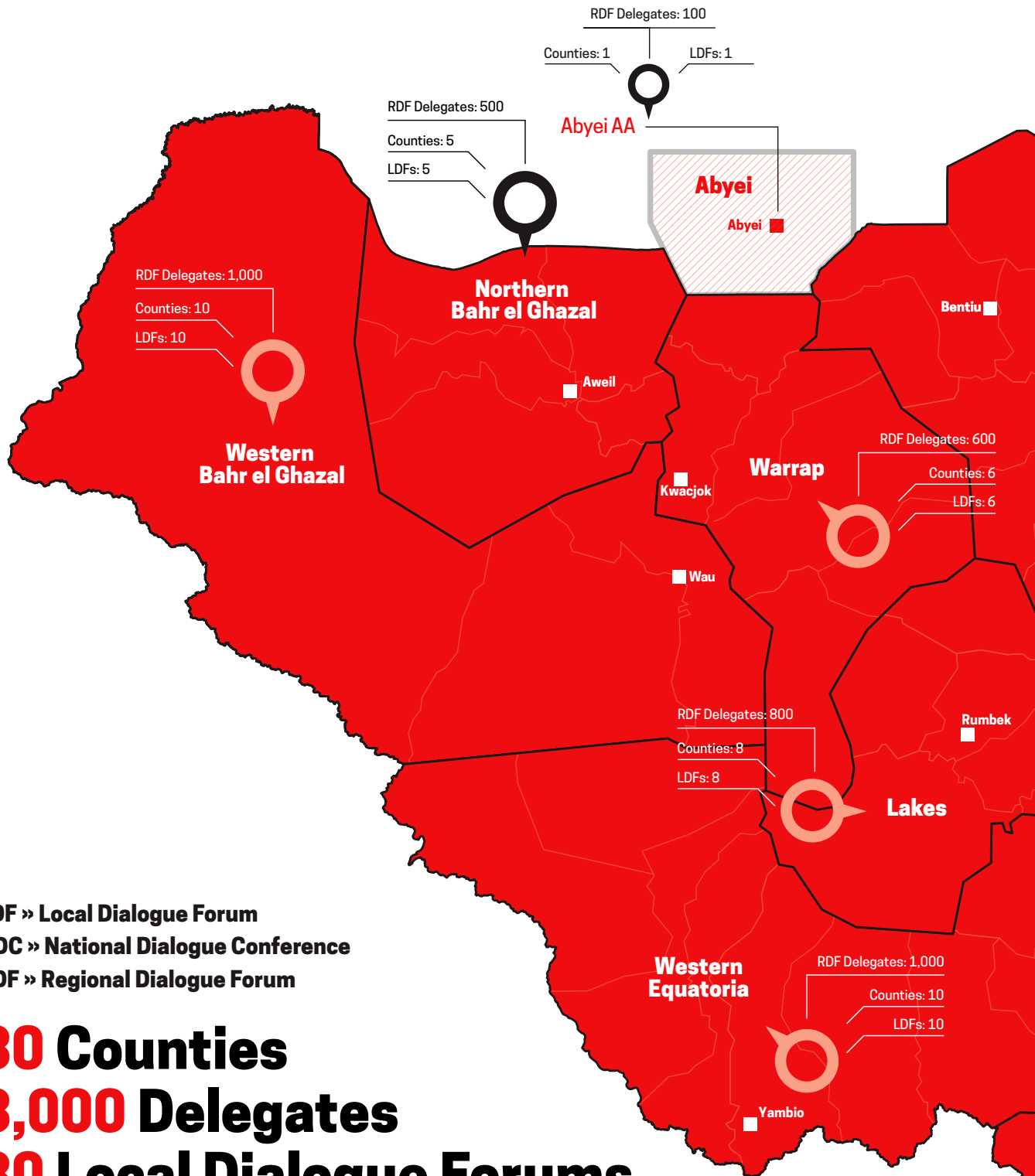
Also the communication will ensure that people can share their perspective online and the Steering Committee and Secretariat will reserve the right to respond. The documentation of the proceedings and recording of outcomes will be done by an independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party.

***Every citizen will have the chance to participate and contribute to the dialogue. Through community meetings, public hearings, local CSO dialogues, National Dialogue website and social media, citizens can add their voices and ideas to solving the challenges facing South Sudan.***

Citizens will participate through a delegate systems. Every South Sudanese will have the chance to participate at the Local, Regional and National segment of the Dialogue. The general formula for allocating seats to the Dialogue forums is based on constituency as given in the table below.

Percentage Allocation of Delegates by constituency at Local dialogue forum (LDF/grassroots level)	
Stakeholder or Constituency	Percentage (%)
1. Women	25
2. Youth	25
3. Political parties, MPs & Counsellors	12
4. Traditional Leaders	05
5. Organised Forces	05
6. Traders	05
7. Farmers & Pastoralists	05
8. Teachers	05
9. Faith-based	05
10. CBOs	06
11. Persons with special needs	02
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

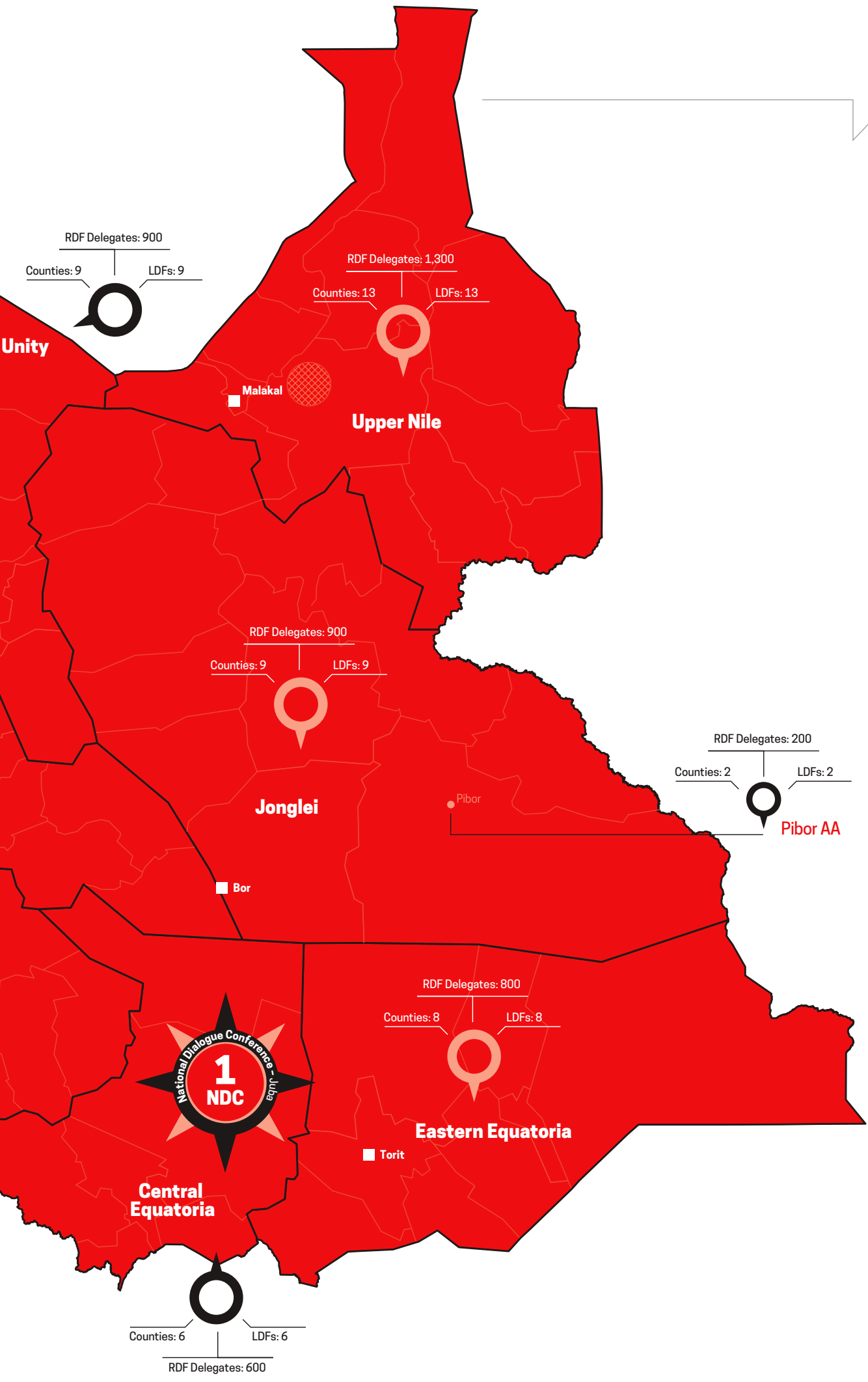
The total number of delegates to the NDF is **1,200** of which **996** will be coming from 12 Regional Dialogue Forums (RDFs) as given in the table below. The formula is based on the number of counties per region as defined in 2008. The three subcommittees: National Capital, Security, and International Outreach and Refugees - will determine the distribution of the remaining **204 delegates** of NDF.



**LDF** » Local Dialogue Forum  
**NDC** » National Dialogue Conference  
**RDF** » Regional Dialogue Forum

**80 Counties**  
**8,000 Delegates**  
**80 Local Dialogue Forums**  
**12 Regional Dialogue Forums**  
**1 National Dialogue Conference**





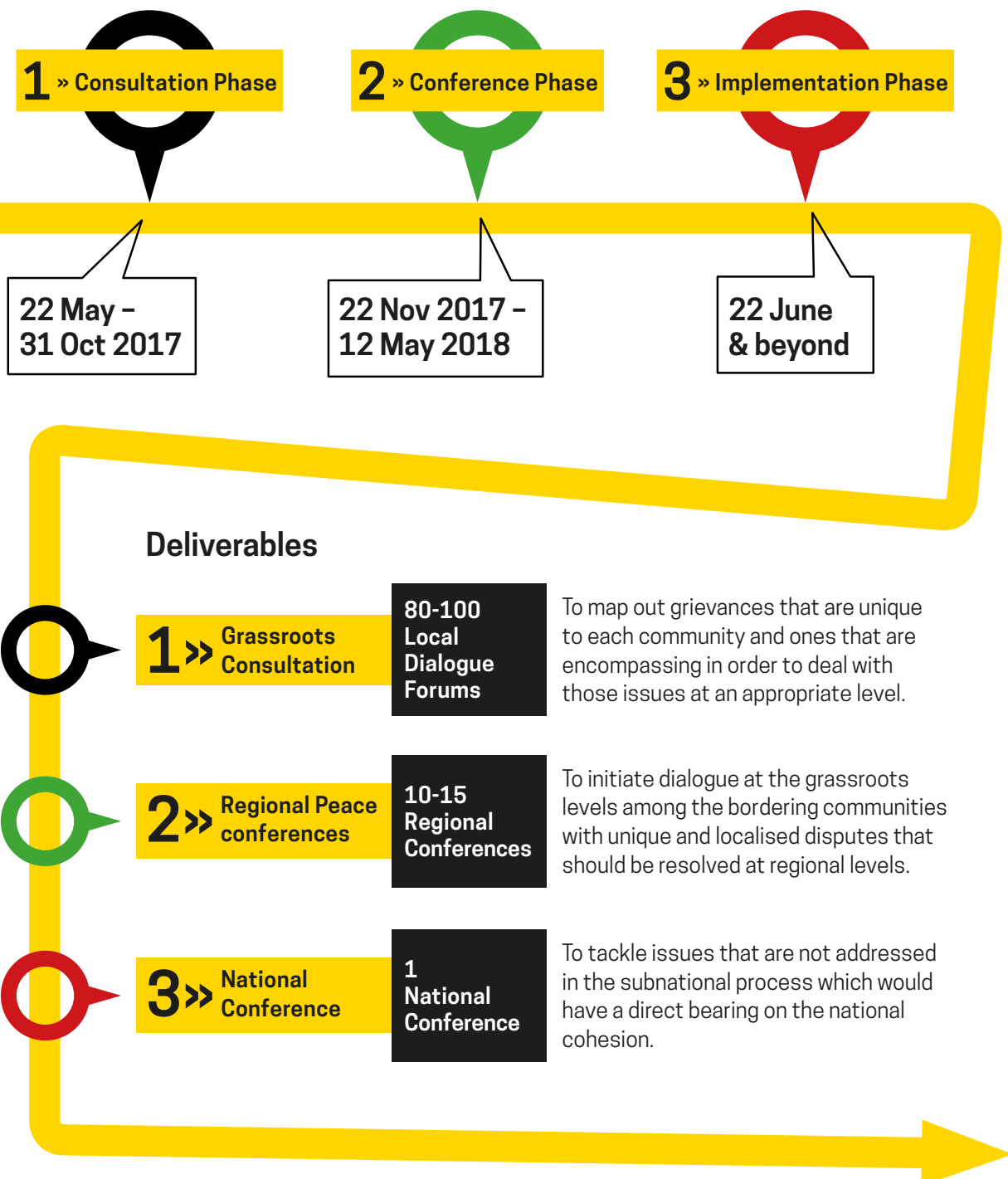
Distribution of delegates by region and local dialogue forum							
Area	Number of Counties	Local Dialogue Forum (LDF)	Regional Dialogue Forum (RDF)	National Dialogue Forum (NDF)	Total number of Delegates (i.e. 30% of total Number of delegates)	% of total number of 996	Total number of delegates
		Number of LDFs	Total number of Delegates				
Upper Nile	13	13	1,300	1	390	16.25	162
Jonglei	9	9	900	1	270	11.25	112
Unity	9	9	900	1	270	11.25	112
Lakes	8	8	800	1	240	10.00	100
Central Equatoria	6	6	600	1	180	7.50	75
Eastern Equatoria	8	8	800	1	240	10.00	100
Western Equatoria	10	10	1,000	1	300	12.50	124
Western Bhar el Ghazal	3	3	300	1	90	3.75	37
Northern Bhar el Ghazal	5	5	500	1	150	6.25	62
Warrap	6	6	600	1	180	7.50	75
Abyei AA	1	1	100	1	30	1.25	12
Pibor AA	2	2	200	1	60	2.50	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2,400</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>996</b>

## Timelines

The National Dialogue is divided in three phases:

1. **The consultation phase;**
2. **The conference phase; and**
3. **The implementation phase.**

Specific outcomes were defined for each phase of the dialogue process:



# Part Two

## COMMUNITY SENSITISATION

The following steps will ensure effective and clear communications.

### A. Creating key messages

#### Identify Your Purpose

Establish a framework for what you are going to say by asking the three questions “**who, what, and why**”:

**Who** needs to hear what you have to say?

**What** do you have to offer for your audience?

And **why** does your message matter to the audience?

## Develop key messages

When creating key messages, ask yourself the following questions:

Question	Details
Is the message believable?	Make sure your key messages are supported by evidence.
	Key messages are factual.
	Key messages are memorable and easy to share with the public.
	Believe in the information you are sharing.
	Avoid all speculation. It is better to follow up later with concrete accurate information than to guess and be required to correct false information later on.
Is the message easy to understand?	Keep it simple.
	Make your language concise and to the point.
	When communicating with communities/constituencies, use familiar words and structures.
	Adapt messages into the local languages without changing the meaning.
	Simplify complex concepts into relatable terms.
Is the message positive?	Don't "talk down" to your audience but tailor specifics and examples in a way the constituency is familiar.
	Always be positive: in language, in tone, in presentation.
	Use active language.
	Be inspiring.
	Think about and anticipate tough questions.
	Re-frame negative information in a positive way:
	Challenges versus setbacks
Solutions versus problems	
Is the message purposeful?	Lessons-learned versus failure
	What do people need to know?
	How does the information help them?
	Why should your audience want to hear from you?
	Always keep in mind your objectives.
	Sharing information which will add value to someone's life will always be most memorable.

## Be willing to adapt

- You will need to update your messaging as things change.
- Adapt your messages as you learn more about what people want to know.
- Test different ways of saying the same thing, find the message that is most effective.
- New messages should improve, not contradict, previous messages.

## B. Communicating with communities

### Know your audience

Be specific about who your target group is going to be?

- Location
- Ages
- Genders
- Languages
- Occupations
- Level of education

What are the target group's preferred modes of information sharing?

- **Word-of-mouth:** if so, where do they gather to get new information?
- Do men, women, and children get their information differently?
- **Media:** radio, newspapers/print, online?

## Make it local

- **Localise** “the National Dialogue” in unique ways based on the context of the communities.
- **Translate** your messages into local languages.
- **People** will prioritise things that add value to their everyday lives.
- **People** identify with people, and with those who have qualities like them: put a human face on your communication wherever possible.
- What role can **storytelling** play? Songs? Theater?

## Practice

- When you know which messages you want to convey, and you know which method of delivery is working, practice, practice, practice.
- Key messages should be memorised, not read from a paper.
- Hesitation, “um” or “uh” in speech will impact your credibility and trust in the information you are sharing.

## Choose the right channel for communication

The following channels for communication can be used:

Local radios (talk shows, adverts)	Focus Group Discussions
Mobile videos	Church / Mosque services
T-Shirts	Music
SMS	Public address system
Drama (radio and street)	Town hall meetings
Sports campaign	Water points
Wrestling for peace campaigns	Markets
Market	Social media
Radio jingles	Banners and posters





# Part Three

## KEY MESSAGES







#### Added Value of the Dialogue

- The National Dialogue will not replace the peace agreement;
- The National Dialogue is an opportunity for the people of South Sudan to come together to discuss their views and directives on unity, nationhood, peace, citizenship, belonging, and social cohesion;
- The National Dialogue in South Sudan is a process not an event. Implementation of the outcomes of the Dialogue is key.

#### Credibility and Legitimacy of the Dialogue

- Though initiated by the President, the National Dialogue is not a government initiative. It is a people driven process;
- The National Dialogue is the first truly national conversation and its participation is much broader;
- The National Dialogue will bring together all relevant stakeholders and all kinds of people, including women, youth, and other marginalised groups.

- Every South Sudanese is entitled to participate in the National Dialogue provided they are nominated by their communities or constituency;
- Majority of the delegates from the National Dialogue will come from the community and women will constitute 25%;
- The agenda of the National Dialogue will be defined by delegates and the outcomes of local and regional consultations;
- The key principles of the National Dialogue in South Sudan are: inclusivity and public participation; a credible convener of the process; transparency and accountability; a conducive environment for participation; and national ownership.

### Operational Independence

- The Leaders of the Steering Committee can't censor the deliberations and discussions during the debate;
- The active role of civil society organisations in the National Dialogue in South Sudan is critical for it to be credible process and one that contributes to the peace process;
- Civil society groups are working to mobilise local communities to participate in grassroots initiatives as part of the process;
- The structure of the National Dialogue consists of a Leadership Team (9 members), a Steering Committee (112 members), and the Secretariat (13 members); and
- The National Dialogue Steering Committee has established 15 sub-committees (12 for former states; and one committee each focusing on refugees; diaspora; and security).

### Shared Values and Stakeholders

- Peace is a process; Peace starts with you and me; Peace starts from home;
- In brotherhood, we are one people one nation;
- National Dialogue is for peace and unity;
- For community leaders: Focus on dialogue instead of conflict;
- For community leaders: Stand up for peaceful co-existence;
- For religious leaders: Preach for peace and coexistence;
- Dialogue is a responsibility for all;
- For Youth: It is your responsibility to promote peace for future generations;
- For Women: Dialogue is today's mission for tomorrow's vision;
- The National Dialogue is a community to community dialogue for peace, reconciliation and unity; and
- The National Dialogue is a vehicle to heal the South Sudan nation.



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