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FOCUS: FAO IN SOUTH SUDAN



left photo - Commissioner Piebalgs and H.E Dr Itto at the FSTS; Center photo - Food security Technical Secretariat premises; Right photo Commissioner Piebalgs and Dr Okech visit private farm in Rejaf

European Union's Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs Applauds Government of South Sudan and FAO effort in Food Security

The European Union (EU) Commissioner for Development, **Mr Andris Piebalgs**, visited the Food Security Technical Secretariat (FSTS) at the Center for Census, Statistics and Evaluation (SSCCSE) on **14 May 2011**. The FSTS is a programme supported by the Sudan Institutional Capacity Programme: Food Security Information For Action (SIFSIA) funded by EU to support food security information management in South Sudan. The Commissioner was accompanied by the GoSS Minister for Agriculture and Forestry, H.E Dr Anne Itto Leonardo, FAO Head of Office Dr George Okech and EU officials from the Khartoum and Juba Offices as well as journalists.

In his welcoming remarks, the Chairperson of Southern Sudan Center for Census, Statistics and Evaluation (SSCCSE), **H.E Isaiah Chol Aruai** thanked the Commissioner for the opportunity of this special and high profile visit. He expressed profound gratitude for the physical, logistical, human and technical capacities provided through EU funds to address information gap in SSCCE which is critical for sound policy development and strategies.

The Coordinator of the Food Security Technical Secretariat (FSTS) within SSCCE, Mr Asega Charles gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation on the work of the secretariat since its establishment in 2008 with SIFSIA support. The Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, H.E Dr Anne Itto Leonardo thanked the EU on behalf of the government for the SIFSIA project. H.E Dr Anne reiterated the government appreciation of the EU funded SIFSIA project in building the institutional capacity for food security information, collection and analysis both GOSS and

States levels. The government needs such information to formulate realistic policies that are based on reliable data. She added that food security has been made the second priority of the government. Decision makers have now begun to appreciate the value of credible information. H.E Dr Anne appealed for the continuation of the SIFSIA activities for sometimes.

"I have won many battles in the Council of Ministers through use of evidenced based data on the status of food insecurity in South Sudan. This enabled my Ministry to secure additional budget allocation". H.E Dr Anne Itto Leonardo

Commissioner Piebalgs thanked the government for the attention being paid to food security, despite the competing priority. He assured the government of the EU's commitment to support the new nation which will be facing several challenges. He urged his team to take into consideration the gains of this food security support in line with some of the EU's priorities such as health, governance, etc.

The visit to the FSTS was followed by a trip to Rejaf Farm where the Minister showed the Commissioner an example of private sector investment in agriculture. 'South Sudan is losing over 700 Million Sudanese Pounds to food imports, despite the potential for local production,' the Minister said. The Minister wanted to demonstrate to the Commissioner a successful example of foreign investment in the agriculture sector.

The Government of Southern Sudan and FAO are implementing a programme on food security: Sudan Institutional Capacity Programme; Food Security Information for Action (SIFSIA). The programme is funded by the European Union (EU).

