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Southern Sudanese in Juba, queuing to register in order to be able to cast their vote in the Referendum. (Timothy Mckulka/UNMIS, 2011)

## UN Volunteers play key role in Southern Sudan's referendum process

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme fielded 213 UN Volunteers with the United Nations Integrated Referendum and Electoral Division (UNIRED), through which the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) and UNDP provided assistance with the procurement of ballots and registration kits, voter registration campaigns, logistics, and technical support.

Following the recent announcement of the Southern Sudan referendum results, the Southern Sudanese people are being congratulated on the peaceful and transparent referendum process. In this closely watched referendum, nearly 99 per cent of Southern Sudanese voted for secession.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator Helen Clark lauded the leading role of the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission in Khartoum and its bureau in Juba, and further expressed her gratitude to all international partners who had supported the process.

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"The people of Southern Sudan will look to the future state to provide services such as security, health and education," said Ms Clark. "UNDP is working with the Government of Southern Sudan to build up core government functions and efficient processes, particularly in the areas of

rule of law, security, and public finance."

Flavia Pansieri, Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme said, "UN Volunteers can take pride in the role they played to ensure the peaceful completion of the referendum process, and will continue to engage in Southern Sudan to enable long term and sustainable development."

With assistance from international donors and neighbouring countries, UNDP has helped place more than 100 UN Volunteer accountants, economists, treasurers, engineers, police trainers and other professionals in the Government of Southern Sudan, and in all ten state governments. These skilled UN Volunteers build national capacity by working side-by-side with local civil servants.

In addition, the government of Southern Sudan, with assistance from UNDP, is now preparing to deploy 200 more civil servants from Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda to expand the capacity of the administration.

"Many actors have a stake in this process, as enabling strong government in Southern Sudan will improve the long term development and security prospects of the whole region," said Ms Clark.

The week-long referendum, which ended on 15 January 2011, is a key benchmark of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended two decades of civil war between the north and south.

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Sustainable Development Goal: