

# Women and the Darfur Peace Agreement

In 2005, a Gender Experts Support Team, composed of 20 women members and backed by the governments of Canada, Norway and Sweden and by the UN Development Fund for Women was invited to participate in the seventh and decisive round of the Darfur Peace Agreement negotiations. The team gathered women from a variety of tribal and ethnic backgrounds in Darfur to create a unified platform of women's priorities and gender issues. The outcome document, 'Women's Priorities in the Peace Process and Reconstruction in Darfur', contains a number of key provisions related to women and children, including:

- Specific protections for women and children in conflict situations.
- Priority treatment for women and children in assessments related to compensation/reparations for damages and destruction caused by the war.
- An appeal to the government to pay particular attention to the education of women and children as a means of ensuring security.
- Provision of secondary education in the camps for refugees and internally displaced persons.
- A call to the international community to focus on the education needs of refugee girls.
- The creation of an institution to provide legal support, psychological counselling and other relevant services to women and children.

During the three short weeks that women were allowed to participate in the talks, they were able to negotiate for the inclusion of an impressive number of their priorities in the final agreement. The accord includes language that is gender-sensitive and, among other priorities, calls for the participation of women in decision-making bodies and in peace-building.

*See References, page 88.*