• **Abstract:**

• The author argues that amongst the factors which have led to the increase of tribal conflict in southern Sudan is the dissolution or weakening of native administration as in the case in northern Sudan. Native administration weakened in the south due to political manipulation and exploitation of the southern tribes in order to realize political objectives. In this context the author has referred to southern tribes which have played an important and key roles in the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement and the subsequent division of the south into regions so as to avoid domination of certain tribes (i.e. Dinka).

• The author has also focused on dispute resolution mechanisms in southern Sudan through *Agaweed system* which is also followed in other parts of Sudan (i.e. Darfur, southern Kordofan, and central Sudan). In this respect, the author argues that the *Agaweed* mechanism in the south is key and fundamental in resolving tribal conflicts and other types of disputes. The author also pays special attention to tribal Courts in the south which entrusted to apply customary laws in most civil cases. The *Sultans* courts, for example, play pivotal role in issuing judgements. These courts constituted from *Agaweed* members who are neural to the dispute in question.

• The author argues that tribal dispute resolutions is normally realized through certain steps or procedural measures including the following: (a) outreach to the parties to the conflict to convince them to come to the negotiation table; (b) conclude an immediate ceasefire without conditions; (c) identify loss of life and property; (c) offer condolences to families of the victims and provide necessary support; (d) invite the parties and listen to their concerns and grievances; (e) reach a consensus on
contentious issues; (f) set up special arbitration or conciliation committees; (g) provide *diya* (blood money) and other forms of reparations in accordance with recognized customs of the disputing parties; (h) provide guarantees of non-repetition that the conflict will not resume; (i) parties to the dispute sign an agreement including modalities of implementation or follow up to what shall be honoured and implemented; (j) the government or rebel movement controlling the territory may attend to witness signing of the agreement. The ultimate purpose of the above steps is not to punish one of the parties or to take sides but to resolve the root causes of the dispute in accordance with the recognized tribal customs.

- The author strongly argues that dispute resolution based on tribal customs is essential to ensure communal peace as well as conflict prevention. Therefore, strengthening these tribal mechanisms through dissemination of tribal 'conciliatory' customs is of utmost importance. Traditional mechanisms can be regarded as a national heritage and aids the federal system of government.