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**BAR HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMITTEE OF
ENGLAND AND WALES**



LIBRARY RESOURCES PROJECT

SUDAN

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Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales**

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SUDAN

(I) BACKGROUND

1. This project, which provided computer resources and books to judges, lawyers, the university and the police in Khartoum, took place from 25 February – 7 March 2003. It was conducted by Sara Mansoori and Iain Christie on behalf of the Bar Human Rights Committee, sponsored by the Human Rights Policy Department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and supported by the British Council in Khartoum. It is the sixth in a series of similar projects in Africa, the others taking place in Tanzania, Malawi, Botswana, Uganda and Zambia. A future Library Resources Project in Sierra Leone is currently being considered, with Andy Hall QC and Stephen Powles conducting a feasibility visit in January 2003.
2. The decision to extend the Library Resources Project to Sudan was taken following a feasibility visit by Andy Hall QC in September 2002. During his stay Andy visited a number of judicial institutions, including the Sudan judiciary, the Khartoum Judiciary, Governmental institutions such as the Ministry of Justice and the Police Academy as well as legal NGO's such as PLACE and Mutawinat. The absence of up to date texts and authorities from the common law world led him to the conclusion that the project was needed in Sudan and that it would be welcomed enthusiastically by both the judiciary and lawyers. This need was evident during our visit, with some lawyers, such as those employed

at the Legal Aid Department, working in offices where no texts, authorities or computers could be found. A number of organisations were identified as having a particular need for common law texts and authorities, as well as digital resources. A copy of Andy's Report can be found at Annex A of this Report.

3. There are a number of other British Government funded legal projects which have been completed or are underway in Sudan. Other examples of recent British co-operation in the legal sector include: seminars on human rights for the judiciary (November 2002 and March 2002), workshops for legislative drafting to secure compliance with international human rights norms (February 2001 and February 2003) and a visit by Lord Bingham LCJ in April 2002. While we were in Sudan another project, run by Professor Alan Miller of the University of Strathclyde and Dr Kathleen Cavanaugh of the Irish Centre for Human Rights, on corporate responsibility and human rights was taking place. The Library Resources Project therefore also had the effect of maintaining and reinforcing links between lawyers and judges in Sudan and the legal profession in the UK. In addition, through our discussions with lawyers and judges in Sudan we identified other needs that could benefit from future projects by the BHRC (e.g. a commercial training programme). Discussions about these potential projects are currently taking place.
4. The aims of the project were to provide organisations which had been identified in the feasibility study with up to date legal resources, in both a paper and digital form, as well as training on how to use the legal software and the internet to conduct legal research. The potential benefits of the project are not limited to the ability to conduct up-to-date extensive legal research, but also encompass the potential for networking, exchanges of information and contact between lawyers throughout the world through the expansion of the internet.

5. Our objectives were:

- The setting up of the Exhibition which took place on 28 February 2003 and where all the books and computers were displayed available for use.
- The distribution of the books and computers to the various legal organisations.
- The presentations of the books and computers at each organisation, including the Human Rights Library at Khartoum University.
- The training of the judges, lawyers and police in how to use the legal software that had been pre-loaded onto the computers and how to use the internet as a legal resource.

(II) THE EXHIBITION

6. The Library Resources Exhibition took place on Thursday 28 February 2003 at the British Council offices in Khartoum. We had set up a digital legal library using the donated computers, which we had loaded with the software, and all the text books and software that had been donated by the various legal publishers were exhibited. It was a very high profile event with a number of officials attending, including the UK Ambassador to Sudan, HE Mr. William Pattey, the Director of the British Council, Paul Doubleday, the Deputy Chief Justice of Sudan and the UK peace envoy to Sudan, Alan Gouly. Each organisation that we were going to visit during the course of the project sent two delegates (a list of those that attended can be found in the Appendix). Members of the media were also present and a report of the Exhibition appeared in the Khartoum Monitor on 1 March 2003 (see the Appendix).

7. The Exhibition was opened by HE Mr. Pattey who said that the quality of law and delivery of legal service in Sudan was an important component of assuring citizens of the protection of their rights. He pointed out that the Library Resources Project was an important building block to having sustainable peace in the country and noted that it was part of a wider process of co-operation in which the UK was working with the Sudanese government to help Sudanese lawyers to improve the quality of justice in the country. Iain, on behalf of the BHRC, then outlined the Library Resources Project and explained why it was perceived that there was a need for such a project in Sudan. He set out the aims of the project and the benefits that it would have for lawyers and judges working in Sudan. He acknowledged the commitment to improving standards of justice which had been evident to Andy Hall during his feasibility visit. He then presented the Deputy Chief Justice with a gift on behalf of the Bar Human Rights Committee. This was followed by a break where the delegates were given an opportunity to use the digital legal library and examine the donated texts. Finally, Sara demonstrated to the group how to use the various legal software packages and the internet. The remainder of the time was allotted to basic computer training, where the delegates were provided with an opportunity to use the computers and ask questions.
8. The setting up of the exhibition took a great deal of time and effort. We are particularly grateful to Elamien Saeed of the British Council, who had almost completed displaying the texts and authorities when we arrived, and to Magdi and Hani, two computer consultants working with the British Council whose assistance and expertise was invaluable.
9. The nine computers were each loaded with the following software:
 - Blackstone's Criminal Practice
 - Blackstone's Civil Practice

- Blackstone's Human Rights Digest
- Sweet and Maxwell's Crime Desktop
- A copy of the Library Resources Handout with useful legal website hyperlinks (a copy of this document can be found in the Appendix).

In addition, one computer was loaded with a copy of the complete set of All England Law Reports from 1936 to 2002. We had intended to load this software onto all the computers in time for the Exhibition. However, due to Butterworth's copyright protection requirements, it was not possible to network the software and there was insufficient time to complete this task.

10. One aspect of the project was to set up a Human Rights Library in Khartoum University. A large number of specialist human rights books were donated for this, including all of the major human rights texts, some of which were in Arabic. The other texts included:

- 60 copies of Blackstone's Criminal Practice (including CD-Roms)
- 4 copies of Blackstone's Civil Practice (including CD-Roms)
- 10 copies of Archbold
- 5 copies of Blackstone's Human Right's Digest (including CD-Rom)
- 10 copies of O'Hood, Philips and Jackson's Constitutional and Administrative Law
- 10 copies of Hanbury and Martin's Modern Equity
- 10 copies Schmitthoff's Export Trade, the Law and Practice of International Trade
- 10 copies of Treital's Law of Contract
- 10 copies of Gower's Principles on Modern Company Law
- 10 copies of Contract Law, cases and materials

A full list of the books setting up the Human Rights Library is set out in the Appendix, as well as a table showing how the books were distributed.

(II) THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE COMPUTERS AND BOOKS

11. We used Andy Hall's guidance from his feasibility study, as well as assistance from Paul Doubleday and Elamein Saeed of the British Council in Sudan (e.g. as to which organisation already had computers etc) to decide who should be the beneficiaries of the books and the computers. A table was drawn up which set this out (a copy of this can be found in the Appendix). We visited two organisations each day, with the relevant books and technical equipment being gathered from the British Council offices each morning. Labels stating that the books had been presented on behalf of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, through the British Embassy in Khartoum, the Bar Human Rights Committee and the British Council and the date of the donation were put into each book and on each computer and printer. We are grateful to the British Council in Sudan for all their assistance in the organisation of the project while we were in Khartoum.

The Sudan Judiciary

12. Our first visit was to the Sudan Judiciary on 1st March 2003. We had been told that they had a fairly extensive computer library and therefore we decided to take the software and load it onto their computer rather than providing them with a new computer with the software preloaded. Our initial reception was slightly disappointing in view of the time constraints on the project, as we were shown to a waiting room where we were left for about 45 minutes. We were then shown around the main library and the computer library. The main library, which had only recently been completed, was very impressive, consisting of about 4-5 large rooms with a substantial number of legal texts covering both Sharia law, common law and foreign law. We noted that there were a number of new human rights texts, including a copy of Clayton and Tomlinson 'The Law of

Human Rights'. There was no label in this book to identify where it had come from but we were told that it was one of a number of texts that had been donated by Lord Bingham during his visit in April 2002. We noted both here and in a number of other organisations (including the Omdurman judiciary and the University of Khartoum) that there were a number of new books and authorities that had been provided by Book Aid, which was very encouraging and proved that the scheme was working. The computer room was the most sophisticated that we saw during our visit, containing about 16 computers which were networked. We were told that these judicial facilities were open to private lawyers and students providing they asked for permission. A number of such persons were working there during our visit.

13. We loaded all of the software onto one of the computers in the library, apart from the All England Reports. In order to load this software, a password is needed which can only be obtained by phoning the Butterworth's offices in London at the time of downloading. It transpired that it was not possible to phone outside Sudan using the telephones in the Sudanese judiciary (a fact that surprised one Court of Appeal judge, who commented that the situation needed to be changed, particularly as this was a time when Sudan was seeking to establish links with the outside world). Finally Iain managed to contact the Butterworth's offices using his mobile, only to discover that the relevant department was closed as it was Saturday. It had already been agreed that there would be another training session on Thursday 6 March, which was useful as, by the time the software had been loaded, there was insufficient time to conduct any training on the first visit.
14. In the event, due to confusion over the dates of the return visit, the training was not able to go ahead as planned. This was disappointing as the Sudan Judiciary was the best resourced organisation we visited and would have benefited greatly from the

training. Sara did conduct some training with three individuals, two of whom worked in the library and one judge and encouraged them to share their knowledge with their colleagues and others who used the library. In addition, Paul Doubleday, the Director of the British Council in Sudan, offered computer training in the British Council Offices for lawyers and judges and Sara informed him of the particular need of the users of the Sudan Judiciary library.

The Khartoum Judiciary

15. We visited the Khartoum Judiciary on 1 March 2003. They had a less well resourced library located in one small room in the court compound and were clearly grateful for the donation of textbooks. Iain explained the purpose of the project to the three members of the judiciary and library staff who attended. Sara demonstrated how to use the legal database, but because of the lack of internet access, was unable to demonstrate how to carry out legal research on the world wide web. The participants seemed genuinely interested but had limited computer skills.

The Omdurman Judiciary

16. We visited the Omdurman Judiciary on Sunday 2 March 2003. This is located about 20 minutes away from the centre of Khartoum to the north. The Omdurman judiciary consists of a large building containing a number of courts, including courts of appeal as well as offices and libraries. Our visit here was extremely rewarding as a large number of judges took part in the presentation and training session, as well as library and administrative staff.
17. On our arrival we were shown up to a newly decorated room containing about 12 new computer tables. The computer and printer that we were donating were the first ones in what is intended

to be a computer library. It was clear that this donation was very gratefully received and that it was a cause for celebration as the room had been decorated for our arrival.

18. Iain gave the presentation, explaining the background to the project, and its aims and the participants were then shown the books that had been donated (which we set out in the room). Sara then gave a demonstration of all the software packages which had been preloaded onto the computers and invited the participants to use the computer. A number of participants did.
19. We were then invited for a traditional Sudanese breakfast with three Court of Appeal Judges. We took this opportunity to discuss the Sudanese legal system. In particular, we enquired about the use of Sharia law and the penalties that could be imposed for offences such as drinking alcohol. We were told that this offence was punishable by a mandatory sentence of 40 lashes, which were administered in a room on the premises. We were then shown around the courts where we saw a number of contractual and family hearings, as well as one criminal matter. We were encouraged to note that the judge presiding over the criminal trial granted an adjournment as one of the defendants was absent and the remaining 3 defendants were not legally represented. It did not appear that the judge was influenced in his decision by our presence. The court proceedings were far less formal than in the UK, with the court halting the proceedings on our entry and the judge standing up to greet our hosts and ourselves and explain the nature of the case he was presiding over.
20. We were also shown around the library. It had a number of very out of date text books, including a 1949 edition of Archbold.

The Khartoum North Judiciary

21. On Sunday 2 March 2003 we visited the Khartoum North Judiciary. We were greeted by the Chief Justice of the judiciary and taken to a room where a large number of judges were seated. The Chief Justice had clearly made a special effort to ensure that all his colleagues attended. The Chief Justice welcomed us and thanked the Bar Human Rights Committee, the British Council and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for the donations which were gratefully received. Iain responded on behalf of the Bar Human Rights Committee, explaining the background to the project and its aims and objectives. We then had a discussion about use the legal profession in Sudan was making of the advantages presented by computer technology and we explained how lawyers and the courts in the UK were now benefiting from opportunities that computers offered, particularly in terms of word processing, e-mail and the internet.

22. We were then shown to another room where the computer had been set up, the books displayed and chairs set out. Sara demonstrated the various software packages and the participants (led by the Chief Justice) then experimented and carried out their own searches. Unfortunately there was no internet access and therefore it was not possible to demonstrate the opportunities the internet offers for legal research. However, we did show the participants how to access the internet and how to use the hyperlinks in the Library Resources Handout which we had loaded onto the computer. At the end of our visit the Chief Justice kindly presented us with gifts. We were also shown the library which had a complete set of the laws of Sudan and a number of books donated by Book Aid.

Mutawinat

23. The Mutawinat Benevolent Company (“Mutawinat”) is a non-profit non-political organisation that was established to assist Sudanese women and children by providing legal aid and representation. In addition, they provide human rights and legal education initiatives and had launched a legal literacy campaign. The organisation was set up by a small number of women initially working from home but following a visit to the Beijing Conference by one member of the group in 1995 funding was secured (including from the Dutch government) and they established an office. The building we visited contained 4 offices and a room that was used as a library. The organisation now has 15 staff, including 9 lawyers. There are 9 other branches in Sudan and the organisation is currently making links with other NGOs with similar aims in countries outside Sudan by using the internet and e-mail.
24. The lawyers that we met were all trained in computer skills and had used the internet. A number of them did not speak English very well and therefore one member acted as a translator during the presentation and the training session. A set of the important core textbooks were donated, plus a number of book dealing with rights of women and children:
- Human Rights of Women. National and International Perspectives, R Cook, (1994)
 - Women and Human Rights, K Tomasevski, (1993)
 - Women and International Human Rights Law, K Askin and D Koenig, (1999)
 - Gender Mainstreaming in Legal and Constitutional Affairs – Commonwealth Secretariat, Gender Management System Series, (2001)
 - Gender Perspectives on Property and Inheritance, A Global Sourcebook, Sara Cummings, Henk van Dam, Angela Khadar, KIT and Oxfam, (2001)
 - Women’s Rights and Human Rights, Amnesty International, (1995) (Arabic)
 - Religious Fundamentalism and Human Rights of Women, Howland, Courtney and Howland

- International Law on the Rights of the Child, Geraldine Van Bueren, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, (1998)
 - Human Rights of Street and Working Children: A Practical Manual for Advocates, Iain Byrne, Consortium for Street Children (1998)
 - The Child in Need: Children, the State and the Law, David Bedingfield (1998)
 - Justice for Children: Challenges for Policy and Practice in Sub-Saharan Africa, Celia Petty, Maggie Brown (1998)
 - International Campaigning Manual, Amnesty International, (Arabic)
 - Fair Trials Manual, Amnesty International, (Arabic) (x 2)
 - Take a Step to Stamp out Torture, Amnesty International (Arabic)
25. During the presentation all these books and the others were displayed in the library. Iain took the group through all the books that had been donated and Sara then conducted a computer training session. It was evident that the organisation was very grateful for the donation. Given the enthusiasm and determination of this group, as well as the steps that they have already taken to use the opportunities presented by the Internet, we were left in no doubt that they would make good use of the books and computer facilities that have been provided.

The Institute of Training and Legal Reform

26. We visited the Institute of Training, Studies and Law Reform on Monday 3 March 2003. This is an academic institution that was established in 1995 for legal training and reform of laws and judicial systems. Its membership consists of highly eminent and knowledgeable individuals, including past senior members of the judiciary, such as Prof. Khalfalla El Rasheid, who was the former Chief Justice of Sudan, and University professors. It is based in Khartoum but carries out functions and organises training sessions outside the capital.

27. The Institute has recently set up a very impressive and comprehensive website which lists all the Sudanese Laws. It is in Arabic and can be found at www.sudanlaw.org. The Institute also has its own website which can be found at www.sudanlaws.org.

28. The presentation and training session took place in the Institute's computer library. This is a large room containing about 12 computers, some of which have access to the internet. We had decided not to take a computer with the software pre-loaded onto it but rather to load the software and copy the Legal Resources Handout with the useful website hyperlinks onto the Institute's own computers. The presentation and training session was attended by a large number of students and researchers and we were impressed with their computer skills. The fact that the computers in the Institute are used so frequently did cause difficulties, as on two of the computers that we used there was insufficient memory for the computer to perform a relatively simple search. This was either due to a virus in the system or the fact that they were being used by a large number of students and researchers who were all saving documents onto the hard drive. We advised them to 'clean' the computers in order to be able to benefit fully from the legal software.

PLACE (Peoples' Legal Aid Centre)

29. We visited PLACE on Tuesday 4 March 2003. This is a NGO consisting of 5 lawyers who provide pro bono legal representation to those in need. The director, Riffat Makkawi, is a highly motivated, able and determined lawyer, who studied Human Rights law at Essex University. The organisation's offices are located up about 5 flights of stairs on a roof terrace, and only consist of two small rooms. Despite the lack of resources (the organisation only had one computer that had been donated by the Catholic Church and a few human rights books) they have brought a number of important

cases to court. They highlighted the case of an 11 year old girl who was alleged to have been raped by a number of police officers. Their involvement in this case had resulted in intimidation and they had had to report to the police every day for several months. They also represented women who have been accused of adultery (the penalty for which is death). They are keen to use human rights arguments before the judges.

30. We donated a computer and printer as well as a number of human rights text to this organisation and copies of the core common law texts. The human right texts are listed below:
 - Blackstone's Human Rights Digest.
 - The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – Cases, Materials and Commentary, Joseph.
 - The International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Craven.
 - Peace Agreements and Human Rights, Bell.
 - International Campaigning Manual, Amnesty International (Arabic) x2.
 - Fair Trials Manual, Amnesty International, (Arabic) x2.
 - Take a Step to Stamp out Torture, (Arabic) x2.

31. We set the computer up in the office where there was a telephone line in order to have access to the internet. Sara conducted a training session with Riffat Makkawi and Hamid Imam. Particular attention was paid to the Internet and the legal websites such as HUDOC and the UN website, as well as those of NGOs such as Amnesty International.

32. Lawyers from this NGO would benefit enormously from access to the Human Rights Library in Khartoum University. It was suggested to Sara that practising lawyers might be able to use this library but that they would probably need express permission in order to be able to enter the University grounds. We would urge that steps to be taken to allow this access if it is possible.

33. We also had discussions with Riffat about assistance that the BHRC might be able to provide to PLACE in the future, such as sending observers to attend important trials, acting as a go-between in order to assist getting articles and appeals by PLACE published in the legal press in the UK and sending appeal letters.

Legal Aid Department

34. We visited the Sudanese Legal Aid Department on Tuesday 5 March. The offices were located in a building next to the souk (market) and consisted of a number of rooms, all of which were bare, except for a table, chair and cupboard. We were told that there were only about 15 lawyers who worked in the department which is responsible for providing legal aid to the whole of Sudan. On asking how it was decided which applications for legal aid were granted and which were turned away, we were told, surprisingly, that all applications are granted, and that if they were not able to cope with the number in-house they were sent to private lawyers who acted for a set fee (approximately \$20 per case). We asked to see examples of some of their current case-load, and after some searching in the cupboards, we were shown an unusual case in which the legal aid department were acting for some police officers who were accused of manslaughter having accidentally killed a resident by recklessly discharging their firearms at an illegal party. It did not strike us as a typical legal aid case and would appear to raise some complicated issues of law which we were not sure the legal aid department were sufficiently well resourced to deal with.
35. We donated one computer and printer and a set of the core common law textbooks. These were all very well received. We conducted a training session on how to use the various software packages and left some training exercises for the lawyers to use once we had gone. Unfortunately there was no phone line in the room where the computer had been set up and therefore we were

not able to carry out any internet training. We did explain how the Library Resources Handout could be used to find out information about various topics and urged that a telephone line be set up in the room or that the computer be moved to a room with a telephone line to ensure that it the maximum benefit could be obtained from it.

University of Khartoum

36. On Wednesday 5 March, after Iain's departure for London, Sara went to the University of Khartoum. This is a very impressive University, consisting of a number of large, old buildings set in attractive gardens. Professor Akolda M Tier, the University's former Dean of Law Faculty, gave a tour of the University library. It was fairly large, with a number of different rooms. What was striking was the fact that all the foreign law reports (such as the All England Law Reports, Reports from France and the United States) suddenly stopped at a particular date when contact between the University and that country or State ceased. There were hardly any foreign law reports from the past couple of decades (although it was noted that some recent authorities and textbooks, such as the last edition of Victoria and Laddie on Copyright, had been sent by Book Aid). Some of the more recent textbooks were kept in a separate room and needed to be signed out by the students.

37. We donated a very large number of books to the University in order for them to set up a Human Rights library (a full list of the books is set out in the Appendix). These were all displayed in the Law Faculty Boardroom for the presentation, which was attended by Professor Akolda and Professor Elzaki, a former Chief Justice and former Dean of the Law Faculty, as well as a number of other lecturers. Professor Akolda M Tier said that the books were going to be placed in a room where the students could have controlled access. The donation is timely as the University is intending to introduce a new Masters course in Human Rights next year.

38. The computer was set up in the Law Faculty Boardroom and had access to the internet. There were no computers in the main library and this computer and printer were going to be for the use of the lecturers, with access being extended at a later date, if practicable, to the students.

Police Academy

39. On Wednesday 5 March Sara visited the Police Academy. This was established in 1993 and trains police officers from the rank of colonel and below who are in service within the different general and specialized departments with the stated objective of 'upgrading their capabilities, acquiring new experience, enriching their knowledge, to promote police activities so as to keep up with the progress in combating crime and achieving peace and security to confront recent forms of crime' (as set out in the 'Guidebook of Police and High Studies Academy').
40. We donated a set of the core common law texts, as well as some human rights texts and a computer and printer. Unfortunately, due to a power cut during our visit, the computer had to be re-located from the library in which it had been originally set up to an office where electricity was supplied via a generator. This worked for about 30 minutes which was sufficient time to give a brief demonstration of how the software worked. L.Col. Abu Bakr Awad Abbas was told of the opportunity for further training at the British Council should any be necessary.

Ministry of Justice

41. On Thursday 6 March 2003 Sara visited the Ministry of Justice. We donated a set of the core common law texts and a computer and printer. The computer was set up in a small room which already

contained 2 other computers and where it was possible to obtain access to the internet. The books were all gratefully received and the training session was well attended and successful.

42. Sara presented a gift on behalf of the Bar Human Rights Committee to the Minister of Justice and Fawzia Ahmed Mohamed, of the Ministry of Justice, kindly presented Sara, Elamein and Hani with traditional Sudanese gifts in return.

De-Brief

43. At the end of all the visits to the various organisations Sara had a de-briefing session with Paul Doubleday, Director of the British Council in Khartoum, where we discussed how the project had gone and any outstanding issues. Paul said that he was very pleased with the project and had had positive feedback. It was agreed that the British Council would visit all the organisations that we had made donations to in the next few weeks to present them with 'Certificates of Award' (these had been produced by the British Council at our request and a copy of the Khartoum Judiciary's Certificate of Award can be found in the Appendix). At the same time they would check that the computers were still working, that the organisations were not encountering technical problems and that the books that had been donated had all been put into the relevant library and were accessible, as well as offering further computer training if it was required. We also discussed other possible means of continuing links between lawyers and judges in the UK and Sudan and future projects.

(IV) SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

44. We were satisfied with the implementation of the project and felt at the end of our visit that it had achieved its short term objectives. All

the donations were very warmly received and the organisations were obviously pleased with the support and assistance provided by the Bar Human Rights Committee, the British Council and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Whether the benefits of the project can be sustained in the longer term, however, largely depends on how the equipment is used and developments in the Sudanese legal system which are beyond our control.

45. The delivery of legal textbooks is a very tangible offer of support and all the organisations were grateful for that support. It was clearly an extremely valuable donation in a number of the institutions that we visited, such as the University and the Institute of Training and Legal Reform. We are also confident that many of the books, such as the collection of international materials on women's and children's rights that we presented to Mutawinat and the texts that were donated to PLACE, will be of significant practical benefit and regularly used by the lawyers working there. It was unclear how much practical use would be made of some of the core English legal textbooks at some of the other institutions, such as the Legal Aid Department, where they had limited comprehension of the English language and their day-to-day work would not normally raise issues that would necessitate use of such resources. It would be beneficial to have had more texts in the Arabic language.

46. The donation of computer equipment, and in particular the demonstrations on how to use it, were more likely to be of significant benefit to these institutions. It was evident from a number of the organisations that we visited that they are keen to embrace the opportunities now available through the use of the internet and e-mail. A number of the organisations, such as Mutawinat, were discussing setting up their own website, others such as The Institute of Law and Reform, already have a website and the Sudan Judiciary is in the process of putting all its judgments on the internet. Given this climate and the enthusiasm for contact

with lawyers, judges and NGOs from aboard we hope that the computers will be put to good use and provide the means by which such communication can and will be made. We encountered a wide variety of computer literacy between some lawyers and judges who have computers at home and are already familiar with the benefits and those for whom our visit was their first experience of using a computer. Much will depend, therefore, on the willingness of those who have the basic computer skills to encourage and/or help the others to develop them.

47. Although there has obviously been a greater preparedness in recent years to consider international human rights standards in Sudan, it is unclear how far they can be complied with in practice without political intervention. Sudan is party to 4 of the main UN human rights Conventions (ICCPR, ICESCR, CERD and CRC) and has signed but not ratified the Torture Convention. We were informed at the Institute of Training and Legal Reform that it was possible that Sudan might accede to CEDAW in the near future, though presumably with significant reservations given the restriction on women's rights that is inherent in Sharia law. It is also party to the African Charter on Human's and People's Rights. It is evident from the examination of Sudan's reports to the UN, however, that the treaty monitoring bodies have serious concerns about current law and practice. For example, the Committee on the Rights of the Child in its most recent communication with the Sudanese government has requested a significant amount of data across the full range of issues affecting children (birth rates, education, health, employment, poverty etc) without which it cannot even start to evaluate whether Sudan is working towards meeting its obligations under that Convention. The general impression we got was that such statistics are not readily available.
48. At present the opportunities for progressing the full realisation of human rights through the Sudanese legal system appear limited,

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