Contemporary Africa Seminar Speaker Series
March 26 | 4:00pm – 5:30pm | PY 109

Hon. Jehan M. Deng
Consultant and Board Member,
South Sudan Women Empowerment Network (SSWEN)

“Development vs. Humanitarian Aid: Race Amidst Conflict in South Sudan“

The Continent of Africa, enriched with natural resources and significant minerals that attract global inquisitiveness more than investors; nevertheless the 54 States of the continent continue to struggle to develop its infrastructure with external aid, known as Development Aid, while some states still under rubbles of revolution and liberation movement and continuous civil wars that destroyed structures and displaced the population under mercy of Humanitarian Aid.
Emerging from overlapping liberation movements and civil conflict, the youngest nation of South Sudan continues to struggle from self-conflicting politics that left its population with broken dream of peace dividend after the historic referendum and independence to be the 54th member state in Africa and 192 UN member state.

Though soon after Independence, the South Sudan Development Plan (SSDP) was launched to be implemented in two phases, short-term 2011-2013 and long term 2011-2040, and with pledges from the international community to support with development aid, it’s unfortunate to witness the negative shift from development focused funding back to humanitarian funding programs, a reverse toward worse under-developing status.

However, there are many unreported efforts by civil society organization as SSWEN to empower women with knowledge about their role in decision-making as well economic empowerment through focused program to resist and eliminate Gender Based Violence (GBV) in partnership with the government ministry of Gender and UNHCR. SSWEN led the organized debate and the review of the transitional constitution at the grassroots level across the Republic, and raise the banner towards the affirmative action of UN Resolution 1325.

UN agencies as the WHO (World Health Organization) significantly continue to support the health services, along with WFP in food distribution and UNHCR/OCHA in supporting the displaced, they all work in partnership with the government of South Sudan in attempt to fulfill the SDG, access to social services from health, food, education and clean water, respectively.

The quest remains in balancing the humanitarian and development aid in partnership with the people and their leadership.

Biography: Hon. Jehan Mechak Deng

- An advocate of peace through development, with diplomatic and leadership skills, advancing the empowerment of women and the establishment of socio-political and economic organizations.
- A board member of the founding board of the South Sudan Women Empowerment Network (SSWEN) that advocates the empowerment of women in the public sector and sustaining the UNSC 1325, calling for an affirmative action and engendering all level of governance and leadership and advocating the eradication the gender base violence (GBV) among the devastated community.
- Former constitution post-holder as State Minister for Health and Environment, held two sequential assignments at Jonglei State and Eastern Nile state in the Republic of South Sudan April 2012 – May 2014 and February 2016 – April 2017, respectively.
- A consultant and member of assessment team for a pilot program sponsored by USAID, to review the mechanism of Diaspora Skills Transfer (DST) to support the capacity and human resource development for the government of the Republic of South Sudan.
• A pioneer team member that established the diplomatic mission of the government of Southern Sudan to the United States of America, as stipulated by the comprehensive peace agreements-CPA in 2005. Held several diplomatic assignments in the mission, including a Minister Plenipotentiary in the Embassy of the Republic of South Sudan to the USA and Acting Charge de Affairs for three months.

• Privileged member of the supervisory team during the vote for Referendum by the South Sudanese Diaspora in the USA, prepared and advocated the process from the registration and casting of the vote at the historic Referendum and successfully witnessing the birth of the Republic of South Sudan on 9th Jul 2011.

• Engaged “The Council of Women World Leaders Forum” in Washington DC, where world women leaders share aspiration and experiences, challenges and achievements to encourage each other.

• Participated at a three months certificate program by the United States Institutes for Peace (USIP) developing the mechanism improving the economy of countries in conflict “Economic Empowerment of Countries emerging from conflict”

• Participated in conferences and retreats for the continent’s women leaders. The “African Women in Politic” in South Africa, a political retreat across the continent in 2013.

• Was privileged to share the role of women during conflict at the “African Women in Power” year 2014 with the topic “Economic Empowerment of Women in South Sudan, a Country emerging from two decades of conflict” and received an Award on account of “Leadership Achiever” for leading positive and encouraging role of the South Sudanese Woman!

• Currently a post-graduate student at Regent University, MPA in School of government and MA in Organizational Leadership and Business certificates.