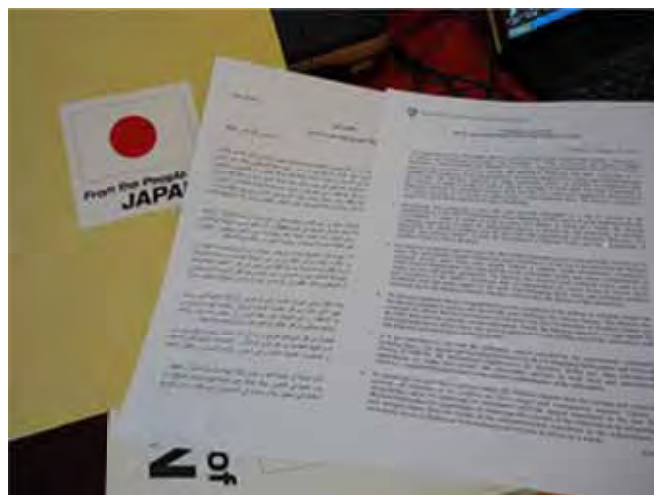


No. 26 17 January 2011

Today, we have an all staff meeting in order to wrap up the mission on the ground. The voting was completed on the 15th and currently the ballot counting is underway without delay. Our observation activity is almost reaching to the ending point. All the team members exchanged their views and ideas which they came to have during the mission. Some points were taken with regards to the progress of voting and preparation of voting material, etc. etc...



The views are to be reflected in the Preliminary Assessment Report issued by our Mission. This report will be shared by the Team Leader, Mr. Ishii, at the press conference scheduled tomorrow, the 18th, in Khartoum. Thus while the members in Juba work on the compilation of the report, the members in Khartoum prepare the press conference.



Referendum Observation Missions from other countries or entities also launched their assessment report. Gathering information on their analyses is an important task for us. Today, we attended press conferences organized by AU and the Arab League.



So, finally, our Team Leader, Mr. Ishii left for Khartoum to launch our report tomorrow. Best wishes for successful presentation!

Reported by Ms. Tsuyada

No. 27 18 January 2011

At 6:30 am, go down to the hotel restaurant. Nobody is seen. It takes me at least a half an hour till I find a waiter appeared from nowhere. I order orange juice, toast, omelet and a cup of tea as usual. Today they serve an omelet without red and green peppers.

At 7:50 am, depart from the hotel, heading toward the Embassy with the Team Leader.

At 8 am, some local staff helped me with final native check of the Preliminary Assessment Report in Arabic. I feel down and down as my draft being refined continuously.

At 10 am, accompany the Team Leader for his meeting with Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC) Chairperson, Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil.

I met him only 4 days ago but could not recall his face. After returning to the Embassy, I get onto writing the minutes.

At 11:30 am, along with the Team Leader, Mr. Kawanishi and Mr. Yamano, head to the Rotana Hotel, the venue of the press conference. Mr. Yamano has been out of shape since last two days, but he looks ok. Perhaps intravenous fluids of yesterday made good effect on him. He says that he will not eat anything in Sudan. He does not even bite a piece of pizza which the Team Leader has made delivered for him. He is amazingly strict on this.

At 1 pm, the computer which is to be used at the press conference is frozen. A desperate expression manifests on the face of Team Leader who is normally quite relaxed. He spends over 10 minutes trying to recover the file in vain. Press conference is kicked off despite the trouble.



At 1:40 pm, all head back to the Embassy after the press conference. Ms. Tsuyada emails off the English version of the Preliminary Assessment Report, only to receive 3 responses in a matter of minute, claiming the attachment is locked with password.



At 3 pm, accompany the Team Leader for his meeting with Mr. Rahmatullah Mohamed Osman, Director General of the Sudanese Foreign Ministry.

The juice of pear and mint is such an excellent mix to the extent that I was distracted and missed some lines.

Passed 4 pm, return to the Embassy. I write the minutes next to Team Leader who is still desperately trying to retrieve the file from the broken computer.

At 6 pm, arrive at the hotel. I come across with Mr. Kawanishi and Mr. Yamano heading towards the airport for the returning flight. I have never seen such a shiny smile on the face of Mr. Yamano. I go back to the room, polish shoes and iron the suit. I need time to think nothing. The suit will no doubt get wrinkled in the flight tomorrow. This is what repeated in human history. No medicine to apply.

At 7:30 pm, attend an internal dinner at the Ambassador's resident with the Team Leader. His philosophy of life and the way to spend the rest of his life after retirement. He says "Full moon, tonight". I reply to him "The stars in Juba were beautiful". Our conversation does not correspond much. Ms. Tsuyada mentioned to me that Orion could be seen in Juba. But my poor eyesight can't see it. This can be my life, one life in millions. There is no cookie cutter answer to this.



Before 10 pm, arrive at the hotel. Tomorrow, we will leave the hotel at 6:20am, and head back to Juba by the UN aircraft. I wonder if we can manage to jump onto the connecting flight to Nairobi at 3:30 pm. I wonder if all other team members will have far too much fun during the transit in Nairobi and Amsterdam on our way back. My worries may last until we step on Narita.

Reported by Mr. Yamada

No. 28 Special Report - Women in Sudan

I feel heat and excitement through the skin at this referendum. This special report is thus devoted for the strong devotion of the women in Sudan.



The towns are dotted with posters and announcement of the referendum. One of them has an illustration of an old lady who is heading the line of people, and a slogan to encourage people to vote.

So...I interview a real old lady. She says “we will go for referendum and divide the land into two.”



Finally reached the day, 9th January, the voting is kicked off. At the voting centers, many women wait their turn in line. There are even separate lines for men and line for women in some centers. All are well-dressed and go for vote!

Some look wondering for not sure how to vote. And there is always the leader of the voting center, Ms. “Gentle” Judit. “You gotta hold the ballot paper like this.” “You must stamp your fingerprint.” “Be mindful not to touch the ink when you hold the paper.” Ms. Judit normally works as the local administrative officer.





She has to look after a sick child.
She also has to prepare meals for family.
But she finally manages to appear at the center for claiming her right to vote.
She entrusts her baby to the voting center staff during she was voting!

“Everybody, at vote!” I come across some ladies who go around the village to make announcement. She is now resting out here (photo below).



The voting center staff does not forget to leave the mark on the finger with ink of those who have already finished voting. This ink is very important task. Some staff does not realize till mentioned that his hands are all black with ink (photo above).

Everybody carries a smiley face, which is a proof of her satisfaction to the referendum. Their hearts are full of hope and expectation.

Reported by Ms. Ogawa

Both teams returned to Japan from Khartoum and Juba on 20th and 21st respectively. Today we all gathered at the meeting room of the Secretariat of the International Peace Cooperation Headquarters (PKO Secretariat) to officially report their return and completion of successful mission.

Team Leader Mr. Ishii briefed Mr. Haneda, Director-General of the PKO Secretariat regarding the successful mission. Mr. Haneda rewarded the members for their hard work. All looked serious but the atmosphere was rather relaxed.



Afterwards, each member returned the equipments to the PKO Secretariat. Flash right, transceiver, satellite phone, mosquito net...



Indeed, it is good that we all were managed to return healthy. This issue is the end of our daily report (special report may continue). After the completion of referendum, we strongly wish peace and stability prevail in Sudan. Finally, we would like to thank all the readers for accompanying us all the way through the mission.