

Press Release

18<sup>th</sup> January 2008

## **Five Talents Announces New Microcredit Programme in Sudan**

Five Talents announced today it will be funding an innovative microcredit programme in southern Sudan, an area that is transitioning from more than 20 years of war. Almost three years after a peace agreement, hundreds of thousands are still internally displaced and others who have found a home are looking to rebuild their shattered lives.

Working with a consortium of partners including the Episcopal Church of Sudan, Five Talents will be assisting a village banking project in Wau Diocese, which was started in September 2005, and currently has 270 members. This is one of the first projects of this type in southern Sudan.

“We have a Christian imperative to reach those who are living in extreme conditions,” said Craig Cole, executive director of Five Talents International. “Life must get better for those affected by generations of war. Creating jobs is one way to transform these communities.”

The services provided through this project will include adult education (beginning with literacy training), local savings mobilization, business development training, small enterprise investment and rural microcredit provision.

“This programme starts by teaching fundamentals and, over time, members build on those fundamentals and are able to support their families through businesses,” said Suzanne Schultz, Five Talents International Director of Programme who visited the project in December 2007.

Five Talents’ invitation to participate in this consortium, which includes World Concern, World Relief, Economic Projects Trust Fund of the Navigators, Stromme Foundation and Integra Foundation, was based on Five Talents’ experience in working with church leaders and in business-training and microcredit relevant to start-up entrepreneurs.

“Because of the turmoil, many organizations are not working on the foundations for long-term development,” Cole said. “We are one of a few organizations attempting to rebuild the economy and communities’ ability to be self sufficient.”

Five Talents hopes this programme will be a model that can be expanded and replicated into other parts of Wau and across Sudan, if funding is found.

Tom Sanderson, UK Director of Five Talents said “This is an exciting and brave step for Five Talents. Using the church network we hope the project can be replicated to other parts of Sudan as the needs of the people move from relief to long term development.”

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“Master,” he said “you entrusted me with five talents. See I have gained five more.” (Matt 25:20)

Notes to Editors:

Sudan Photos: Contact the office for trip photos from December 2007.

Five Talents is a registered charity that supports the Sudan programme as well as microfinance programmes in 8 other countries around the world as listed below:

- |                             |              |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Dominican Republic       | 5. Indonesia |
| 2. Kenya (2 partners)       | 6. Peru      |
| 3. Philippines (2 partners) | 7. Uganda    |
| 4. India (3 partners)       | 8. Tanzania  |

Five Talents is a Christian charity, whose International Patron is the Archbishop of Canterbury. The charity aims to help the poor in developing countries and to fight poverty, create jobs and transform lives through provision of microfinance services – business training, savings schemes and small loan programmes.

The name Five Talents comes from the Parable in the Bible in which the Master gave five ‘talents’ of money to his servant who went and traded and earned five more. Five Talents’ partners provide services in local communities irrespective of religion or tribe, based on need not creed. . The UK charity, together with its US counterpart Five Talents International, support almost 19,000 clients worldwide.

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