



## **Press Release**

### **The Communities of Tiero and Marena Agree to Reconcile**

**Koukou-Angarana, 14 November 2009** – A ceremony to reconcile communities of displaced persons took place on 14 November 2009 in the twin villages of Tiero and Marena located some 50 km east of Koukou-Angarana near the border between Chad and Sudan. The event is part of the intercommunity dialogue started in eastern Chad last May. Saturday's symbolic ceremony sought to revitalize the reconciliation process amongst the different communities through newly created conflict management committees.

Back in 2005 and 2006, Tiero and Marena were home to several thousands of IDPs originating from villages located along the Chad and Sudan border. On 31 March 2007, Tiero and Marena came under attack by armed groups, resulting in hundreds of deaths, and causing 10,000 villagers to flee for safety to nearby sites around Koukou-Angarana. As peace and security took hold, the displaced populations started moving back to their villages in April and May 2008. The population of returnees is estimated today at 18,000 in the Tiero-Marena region. The scarcity of natural resources is the principal cause of conflicts between natives and outsiders in the region. MINURCAT and UNHCR have both pledged support to the returnees, and have appealed to the international community to follow suite.

Saturday's ceremony took place in the presence of the highest administrative and traditional authorities of the region, including the Governor and the Sultan of the Dar Sila. The United Nations were represented by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Deputy Representative of the UNHCR-Chad.

In his address to his constituents and the IDPs gathered for the occasion, the Governor said that "more than words, reconciliation is an attitude." "The United Nations in particular and the international community in general can help you only if you can demonstrate your desire for true reconciliation," he added. For their part, the Representatives of MINURCAT and UNHCR urged the population of Tiero and Marena to do everything in their power to make peace a reality.

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