The Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague on Wednesday re-drew the boundaries of Sudan's contested Abyei oil region, ceding key oilfields and grazing lands to the north.

Diplomats and Sudanese politicians hailed the ruling as a resolution of a festering row over the boundaries of Abyei -- one of the most sensitive issues left unresolved in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended more than two decades of civil war between north and south Sudan.

But doubts remain whether the complex ruling will be accepted by deeply divided communities living around Abyei.

The following are some implications of the ruling:

\* The Hague decision appears to give something to both north and south Sudan -- but still leaves room for long term disagreements and even conflict.

\* On the positive side, it will give hope to diplomats who feel they now have something like a compromise over Abyei which they can sell to the populations of northern and southern Sudan.

The apparent willingness of the former foes to accept the Hague ruling as final, if taken at face value, is a rare glint of cooperation in the long and troubled roll-out of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Any long-term resolution of Abyei will allow Sudan's leaders to switch their attention to a long list of remaining flashpoints in the peace deal, not least elections, scheduled for April 2010. It would mean a significant boost to security, and a significant reduction in the risk of doing business in the region.

\* Southerners have some reasons to be cheerful. The decision preserves the bulk of the region that was defined as Abyei in 2005, including Abyei town, huge areas of fertile land and, according to maps of the new area produced by the United Nations, the Diffra oilfield.

This would be a significant addition to southern Sudan if Abyei's population chooses to join the south in a referendum promised under the peace deal in January 2011. It would also be symbolic boost for the south's dominant Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), which sees Abyei as something of an emblem after decades of fighting across Sudan's north-south border.

\* The northern government will be able to boast of significant gains to the north, west and east of Abyei, particularly in terms of control of oil fields.

The tribunal's decision to re-draw Abyei's western border means the railway town of Meiram falls securely inside north Sudan.

Abyei's new eastern border also means northern Sudan will be able to keep the key Heglig and Bamboo oilfields, whatever happens in the referendum. A large stripe of grazing lands that fell inside the 2005 borders of Abyei now stays firmly in the north.

These gains will all offset the fact that north Sudan was originally only willing to concede a much smaller slice of territory as belonging to Abyei.

Diffra, Bamboo and Heglig are part of a block of oil fields, run by the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company (GNPOC), a consortium led by China's CNPC.

\* There is still the potential for long term problems. It remains to be seen whether SPLM supporters will accept the loss of Heglig, Bamboo and other oilfields to the north, once the implications of the deal have sunk in.

This will mean an immediate loss of revenues, both to the Government of Southern Sudan and local Dinka and Misseriya communities, all promised a proportion of Abyei's oil revenues under interim agreements.

Diffra oil field is a significant gain for Abyei, but its production is though to be falling.

\* Another possible source of conflict could be the northern Misseriya nomads, who might interpret the demarcation as a threat to their traditional grazing lands.

Some may also feel disenfranchised. Misseriya tribespeople living around Meiram and other areas now firmly inside north Sudan will, theoretically, no longer be able to vote in the referendum on whether Abyei should join the south.

Officials from all sides, however, repeatedly said the Misseriya's rights to access the land with their livestock were guaranteed by the new agreement. (Editing by Giles Elgood)