

Joint Communiqué

Between

The Government of Sudan

And

The United Nations

On Facilitation of Humanitarian Activities in Darfur

1. In his recent letter to the United Nations Secretary General (dated 6 March 2007), His Excellency, President Omer Hasan Ahmed El-Bashir pledged to continue to "support humanitarian efforts" and to extend "all necessary and possible facilitations through an energized fast track". Taking advantage of the visit of the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator to Sudan, the Government of Sudan re-affirms its commitment to continue to support, protect and facilitate all humanitarian operations in Darfur through the following:

1.1 Rapid, full implementation of all measures related to the facilitation of humanitarian activities in the Joint Communiqué between the Government of Sudan and the United Nations on the Occasion of the Visit of the Secretary-General to Sudan on 3 July 2004, ('Moratorium on Restrictions') specifically, inter alia, commitments on humanitarian issues, currently extended to 31 January 2008;

1.2 Implementation of all Presidential Decrees and Ministerial Resolutions, related to facilitation of humanitarian assistance (see attached list);

1.3 Implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement (5 May 2006), especially items related to humanitarian organizations and their activities and property.

2. Both parties recognise that significant progress has been made in addressing the humanitarian situation since the signing of the Joint Communiqué in 2004. Notable improvements in the levels of mortality, morbidity and malnutrition of vulnerable persons, (measured in accordance with international humanitarian indicators), have resulted from the efforts and facilitation of humanitarian activities by the Government (including the 'Fast Track' Procedures) and the generous assistance provided by the international community. Today, these key indicators remain at acceptable levels. However, both parties recognize the significance of coordinating more joint efforts to facilitate humanitarian activities, including securing access and solving emerging procedural problems.

3. The Government of the Sudan and the United Nations re-affirm their commitment to work in the spirit of transparency and accountability, to respect basic humanitarian principles of impartiality, humanity and independence of humanitarian actors, to respect freedom of access to all the population irrespective of their locations and to provide assistance based on assessed needs. All commitments listed below will be executed provided the agreed requirements reflected in the Darfur annex of the directory of procedures are met. In this respect, the Government of the Sudan reaffirms its commitment to the "Fast Track" Procedures and in particular the following actions as part of its overall commitment:

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- All current visas and permits, including stay visas, exit-entry visas/permits and work permits will be extended for the full period of the Moratorium. New or outstanding applications for all required visas and permits will be granted until January 2008, and will be issued within 15 days of application.
- All International NGOs' Country Directors and their families will be issued with multiple re-entry visas. Exit and re-entry visas will be granted for all international NGO staff within two working days of the submission of application.
- All Embassies and/or Foreign Missions of the Government of Sudan globally will process the initial entry visa within two working days of the submission of application.
- Resident international NGO staff can travel to the State capitals using only their passport and the Identification Card issued by HAC at Federal level. International NGO visitors can travel to State capitals with their passports and a notification issued by HAC at Federal level within one working day from submission. NGOs will notify state authorities of any movement outside state capitals, and will take into account the security advice of the Government.
- In order to ensure clear identification of staff and freedom of movement, all UN staff will be required to carry a valid UN identification card, which will be recognized as a travel notification for Darfur. The current coordination mechanisms between the UN and the Government concerning security advisories shall continue.
- INGOs will recruit and deploy international staff according only to the selection criteria stipulated by their individual organizations. INGOs will ensure that the best qualified professionals will be recruited according to the TOR of the position for which they are hired, and in the main interest of the beneficiaries. Those NGO staff practising as medical and civil engineering professionals will be recruited in accordance with the Labour Act 1997.
- INGOs will recruit and deploy national staff according to the Labour Act 1997. HAC will support and facilitate the speedy recruitment process of INGOs national staff.
- All items required for the Darfur humanitarian operation by any humanitarian agency will continue to be released from the Customs department with immediate effect. All further items required for the Darfur humanitarian operation by any humanitarian agency during the period of the Moratorium will be processed within seven days of arrival.
- The re-registration of INGOs already operational in Darfur has been completed for the period of the Moratorium, i.e. until the end of January 2008. Further re-registration and registration of all new NGOs will be facilitated through the Joint Procedures Centre within seven days.
- The annex of the Directory of Procedures for INGOs operating in Sudan relevant to Darfur will be finalized following negotiations with the UN and INGOs. Once completed, it will be released, disseminated and implemented with immediate effect in Khartoum and at the field level.

4. The United Nations agrees on the principle of strengthening the capacity of national NGOs and will encourage and support humanitarian organizations to identify effective ways to initiate this. Furthermore, the United Nations commits to providing technical support to the Humanitarian Aid Commission of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs to strengthen the capacity of the Joint Procedures Centre.

5. The Government of the Sudan and the United Nations strongly urge humanitarian organisations to provide timely reports on programme plans and achievements according to their signed agreements with the Government of the Sudan. Furthermore, they call upon the staff of humanitarian organisations to do their utmost to respect the national sovereignty, applicable laws and customs and traditions in the areas where they are operating.

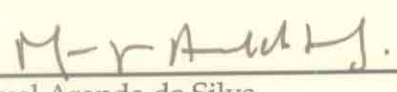
6. The United Nations commits itself to continue advocating with the donors in order to maintain their vital support and funding for humanitarian needs in accordance with agreed priorities. Both parties recognize that international donors have generously funded the large relief programme in Darfur since 2004.

7. It is recognized by both parties that in order to regulate and monitor the above commitments, and to ensure timely and continued assistance to the beneficiary population, a high level committee will be established by the Government of the Sudan that will meet on a monthly basis. The committee will be co-chaired by the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General/Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator of the UN. It will have as permanent members: the Commissioner General of Humanitarian Aid, a senior representative of the Department of Peace and Humanitarian Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator and two senior representatives of international and national NGO to be nominated by their respective communities. Three representatives of the international community (one from the three main humanitarian donors of the Darfur operation, one from the African Union and one from the Arab League) will be granted observer status. As per invitation of any of the co-chairs of the committee and as required by the agenda, senior representatives from other relevant government ministerial departments, UN and NGOs may attend. The Terms of Reference for the committee is attached.

Signed on behalf of the United Nations
Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. John Holmes



H.E. Mr. Ali Karti
Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs
The Government of Sudan



Manuel Aranda da Silva
Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-
General, Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator
for the UN System in Sudan

Wednesday, 28 March 2007

Proposed Terms of Reference
for High Level Committee

1. Co-Chairs:

- a. Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, Government of the Sudan
- b. Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General and Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator of the UN

2. Permanent members

- c. Commissioner General of Humanitarian Aid
- d. A senior representative of the Department of Peace and Humanitarian Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- e. Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator
- f. One senior representative from the INGOs
- g. One senior representative from the National NNGOs

3. Observers

Three members from the international community (one from the three main humanitarian donors of the Darfur operation, one from the African Union and one from the Arab League) will be granted observer status.

4. On Invitation only

As and when the agenda requires, and as per the invitation of any of the co-chairs of the committee, senior representatives of the Government Ministries and the International community may be invited.

5. Key Tasks

Within the frameworks of the Joint Communiqués of 2004 and the Joint Communiqué of 2007, the High Level Committee will address key issues relating to policy matters, implementation of the captioned communiqués and to ensure the effectiveness of the humanitarian operations in Darfur, including:

- 5.1 Provide supervision and guidance to the existing Tripartite Technical Committee tasked to look into detail any matter related to the 2004 and 2007 Communiqués
- 5.2 Monitor the consistent processing of visas, work and travel notifications for Humanitarian workers until January 2008 as they may arise.
- 5.3 Monitor freedom of movement of UN and NGO staff within Darfur and take appropriate action to ensure compliance.
- 5.4 Oversee and act on problem arising over recruitment of NGO staff and other labor law related issues.
- 5.5 Address issues arising over the importation and transportation of goods for Darfur Humanitarian operations.
- 5.6 Identify gaps in the implementation of the 2004 and 2007 Communiqués and find way to address them.

6. Schedule of Meeting

The meeting of the High Level Committee will take place on a monthly basis, and invitations and administration will be organized by the co-chairs. The agenda will be finalized between the co-chairs, following consultation with the permanent members of the group.

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