



Office of the Spokesperson

Below is a near verbatim transcript of the press conference held by the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sudan and UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Manuel Aranda da Silva, and the Deputy Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for southern Sudan, Mr. David Gressly.

23 May 2007, UNMIS Headquarters, Khartoum

UNMIS Spokesperson: Good morning everybody and thank you for coming to this Humanitarian Press Briefing that we re-scheduled from last week to this week because Mr. Manuel Aranda da Silva, the Deputy Representative and also Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the United Nations in Sudan had other compelling commitments at the time. He is here with you with Ms. Kiki Ghebo and we are expecting also Mr. David Gressly who is the Deputy Resident Coordinator for Southern Sudan to join us shortly.

Without further ado, I give the floor to Mr. Manuel Aranda da Silva, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan and the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the United Nations System in Sudan. He will be giving you a humanitarian briefing on a number of issues including the implementation of the Work Plan and related issues.

Mr. Manuel Aranda da Silva, the floor is yours.

DSRSG-RC/HC da Silva: Thank you very much. I am sorry to be a few minutes late but I was in a very important meeting, which is still ongoing, on reviewing our returns of IDPs and refugees operations. Today there will be a policy committee meeting on this issue with the government at one o'clock. My Deputy Mr. Gressley is still in the meeting and will be joining me in the next minutes.

I promised you that we will come back to you when we have a final report on what happened in 2006 – what has been done; how much achievements we made and what was not achieved in 2006 – as compared with what we had planned on our United Nations and partners Work Plan for Sudan.

The final report is out and is available to you as a CD. You also have the benefit of having in that CD the 2007 Work Plan which includes everything that you can use and save in your computer.

Let me now highlight a few things:

First, I want to highlight that the environment in 2006 particularly in South Kordofan, Blue Nile, the eastern region, and southern Sudan was relatively secure and there was a continuation of the implementation of the CPA, which created a positive environment for the implementation of our humanitarian, recovery and development activities.

In Darfur, our assumption was that there was going to be a peace agreement. Actually it we had a peace agreement and we assumed that after the peace agreement, everything will be calm. However, as you know, it was not so much like that and there were still many problems after the DPA was signed. Actually the period of June-July 2006 was the one when we lost more people in Darfur – 12 people on the humanitarian side killed in one month last year. Although the DPA was signed, the security environment in Darfur has remained still difficult, and that is no secret.

I want to say that the United Nations has continued to play a major role in terms of capacity-building of the Government of National Unity and the GoSS in many areas of activities, from economic governance, to Rule of Law, the judiciary, to capacity-building of the mine-action offices.

We don't talk very much about these activities, but it is an enormous and silent work behind the scenes.

I can give you figures on some activities, and one that I will give you is that 18,000 judges, law-enforcement people, and civil society lawyers went through vital training all in one year. And that is continuing and actually increasing much more this year.

I want also to highlight some other specific achievements: we have over 5.8 million people between refugees, IDPs and vulnerable communities across the country to which we provided food support. We have 6.7 million children – a very important percentage of the total population of children in Sudan – who receive Vitamin-A supplements during the year, which is critical for their growth. Through the United Nations and partners Work Plan – I am not speaking about other achievements through government interventions, I am speaking only of the ones made through our direct intervention to support the Government of National Unity and the GoSS – 1.2 million additional children were enrolled in schools, of which 507,000 are enrolled in Southern Sudan. Since 2005, the number of children enrolled in schools in Southern Sudan has doubled. Is that good? No, it is bad because I am talking about 15 to 30% of the children of Sudan going to school. We only will be happy when 90% or 100% go to school. But these figures were achieved in two years and a half, and last year alone 500,000 were enrolled in schools. All these figures I am mentioning here are verified and not propaganda figures. We are very cautious on this and it takes some time to produce the final report to be sure. And actually we are evaluating this information by independent evaluators – people outside the United Nations – and not on our own.

In Darfur, an additional 400,000 children were enrolled in school. This is mainly through the development of the education program particularly in IDP camps. As you know, in 2005 there were no schools in IDP camps. And this was done in the framework of partnership between the United Nations, NGOs, and the government in several occasions to provide payment for some of the teachers. We are doing this ourselves but, step-by-step, the government is joining in this endeavor.

We distribute 4, 137,000 school books from our direct intervention, of which 4 million were distributed in southern Sudan. These are books with the new curriculum introduced in the south. I was very pleased personally, and I think David (Gressly) could confirm that – he is more familiar than me with southern Sudan – that even very remote schools in the south that may not have a building and may still be operating under a tree had those books in time for the school year. That is the first time that almost all schools in the south got schoolbooks in time for the school year. That is a major achievement and was a joint programme financed by different parts including the World Bank, but was led by UNICEF and, of course, the Ministry of Education in Southern Sudan.

800,000 children get food at school in all parts of the Sudan through our programs last year – mainly in eastern Sudan. As you know, the east of Sudan is a region with higher malnutrition rates and school dropouts. This program is national but very concentrated in the east.

1.9 million Sudanese got new access to clean water in 2006 through our Work Plan. Is that good? It is a lot. It is around 5% of the total population of Sudan. These are numbers achieved through our programs, which mean that other programs could have done the same activities and achieved additional figures.

2 million people have access to new sanitation facilities and 45,000 new proper latrines were built through our programs in Sudan last year.

1.8 million children under 5 were immunized against polio – you heard and have reported about the campaign. And as you know, there were no cases of polio reported in the last month in Sudan, and we had an outbreak in 2005, as you remember, which came from western Africa and was very dangerous. That was a massive-scale immunization program carried out by the Ministry of Health of the north and south and also by the WHO, UNICEF and many NGOs and health services, but with our direct support. We provided the vaccines, the cold-chain and all the support for the campaign. Also, 2.4 million people were immunized against measles through our direct program.

I could continue to go on but you will get the paper with all these things. But I want to highlight that we never speak about what we do. We only speak about what we don't do. This is normal for us because we are worried about what we don't do. This time here at this press conference, I came to tell you that this is what we do with the money we get from the donors because many people ask what happened to the money. Only to provide food to 5.8 million people requires a lot of money, and I am very pleased that this year these numbers will go down because the need has decreased.

But I want to give information on some other achievements that are very important. One of these is on mine action – those massive de-mining activities particularly in Southern Sudan but also in some areas of the east and the Transitional Areas. We have all the details of how many kilometers of road cleared, how many square kilometers were cleared of mines, how many Unexploded Ordnances have been destroyed and so on. We have all the figures and all these are verified figures because we have contractors working on this and we are supervising them. Actually, there was an external evaluation to verify these numbers just to make sure there are totally accurate.

Furthermore, about 554,000 households – that is between five and ten million Sudanese – received through direct intervention of the United Nations and partners, seeds and tools to boost production last year. We are very proud of it because last year also we managed quite reasonably to achieve success in that program – it was our first priority. On the funding side, seeds and tools come first always in our programs.

I would want to go back to money issues. The United Nations and Partners' Work Plan received 1.2 billion dollars last year from the international community. I want to say that there were also some direct contributions from the Government of National Unity and the GoSS to the Work Plan. One of them was 30 million dollars from the GoSS for our roads' program in the south paid from its budget. It is included in the 1.2 billion cited, but about 80% of the 1.2 million is from the international community. Of this, and that is the point that I want to make, 90% was still contributions for humanitarian activities. 10% of the contributions were for recovery and development. Of course the weight of Darfur on the 90% figure was high. Darfur received about 50% of the total funding, while close to 30% went to Southern Sudan and the other 22% went to the rest of the country – Blue Nile, South Kordofan, Abyei, the east, and other places.

I am not going to run you through all the figures, but I would like to highlight the issues. One big issue for us is that the recovery and development part of the Work Plan was only funded at 60% of our requirements. Our requirements were limited but the funding also was limited. Part of the issue is the fact that the recovery and development money is going through the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) managed by the World Bank and not through the UN. So there is limited funding coming in for recovery and development. For 2007, our Work Plan contains much more recovery and development activities than humanitarian ones in comparison to 2006. It will be a big challenge to see if the international community will come through on that or not.

We are concerned that there was a negative impact of security issues on our Work Plan in 2006. On the security side, as I said, we were hoping that after the DPA there would be a reduction of violence in Darfur, but there was no big reduction. In some periods of time, there was even an increase of violence after the DPA. The same happened in Southern Sudan where the year 2006 was marked by the outbreaks of violence. I can just mention a couple of them that had impacted on our programs. We had serious incidents in Western Equatoria last year; we had problems, you remember, in Malakal that were very serious and paralyzed our programs for a couple of months. I could mention tens of them, but these were not planned incidents, they were isolated.

We still are confronted with the problem of capacity, particularly on the GoSS side, because we cannot conduct our activities without the government. Our major problem in Abyei is the absence of an administration. In Southern Sudan, we have an administration but the new ministries are still in the child-phase of growing. We have ministers, but the structures of the ministries are still very weak. We don't have a proper middle leadership. There are very competent people out there, but the

whole system is not yet fully in place. It is not like in the north. In the south we are talking about building a new a system with new institutions.

I want to stop my introductory note here and you will get, as I mentioned, all this information in the document and the CD distributed to you. We have got a summary of the Work Plan Final report but I don't want to read too much from it. I advise you to read the document – it is good reading if you want to read it. I will stop here, and if David wants to add anything...

Deputy RC/HC Gressly: No I don't but I will answer questions..

UNMIS Spokesperson: Thank you very much and I would like to welcome Mr. David Gressly. He is, as I said earlier, the Deputy Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the United Nations System for Southern Sudan. Please don't hesitate to ask him questions since you have him here in Khartoum, he is actually based in Juba. It is a good opportunity for you if you have any questions to him on what is going on in his area of competence.

The floor is open for your questions.

Q: The humanitarian community is here for quite a while now and we keep on hearing of emergency programs. We also hear of development and infrastructure programs but do not see them on the ground. How long will we be seeing no development on the ground?

Deputy RC/HC Gressly: Thank you very much. Let me just say first of all that we are in a period of transition between humanitarian assistance and recovery and development. I think the most dramatic example of this is the WFP, which is shifting approximately 80% of its assistance away from pure humanitarian free distribution of food to recovery-oriented usage of food. That is a significant component of our program in Southern Sudan and, as I said earlier, symbolizes a major shift in how work would be carried out in the future.

I would like to highlight a couple of other issues that I think are very important in terms of recovery. The number of kilometers of road that have been built in Southern Sudan is quite significant – over 2,000 kilometers of road have been built. This, combined with increased security in Southern Sudan, has led to the economic revival of the south which I think is quite positive. You could see evidence of that quite clearly in Juba today. The support given to mine action, de-mining, is quite significant. Over nearly 7,000 kilometers of road have been surveyed and cleared of mines. We hope to see over 16,000 kilometers cleared by the end of next year – once again a move from humanitarian towards recovery. Enrolment of children in school is another demonstration of the move from humanitarian assistance. We have gone from 300,000 children enrolled in school to over 800,000 in the last months. That is a significant change once again – in this case led by the GoSS.

We are very much moving in that direction but we will ultimately be limited by the funding that we receive and, quite frankly, it is easier to receive humanitarian assistance.

There is also a need to continue to address those areas that, prior to the peace agreement, received very little humanitarian assistance, and therefore have very few services. We continue to promote the use of humanitarian services in those areas and there is very much a need to continue that. So there will be a need to continue both the humanitarian aspect as well as reinforcing recovery and development. I continue to see the need for humanitarian assistance for certainly this year, next year and perhaps sometime in the future.

DSRSG-RC/HC da Silva: If I can just highlight a couple of things; the roads built in the south are all-weather roads. They have been de-mined, re-built and the number of kilometers built in the last two years is higher than the last 30 years in the south. That has opened markets, permitted people to communicate, permitted trade, and you just should go and see for yourself how different it is.

People are always complaining about the half-glass empty, but I myself am surprised by the amount of work that is being achieved. It is amazing, and I am very hopeful that next year, before May, there will be ten times more kilometers of paved roads in the south than in the last 30 years because roads are currently under construction. It's not us who are doing it, it is the GoSS, with some

funding also from the MDTF. There were delays on implementing the MDTF fund – it was a mechanism that was not fast but, finally, after two and a half years, it is picking up speed.

The number of children enrolled in schools in the last two and a half years is more than double the number of children in schools before. The number of teachers that went through intense training is over 2,500. These were not short trainings in workshops. These were months of training to upgrade teachers capacity and competencies.

UNMIS Spokesperson: I just wish to say that United Nations Mission in Sudan is organizing a number of trips to the field and Juba is the one location we will be organizing a media trip to hopefully next month. It will be a great opportunity for all of you to see things by your own eyes. We will contact you on that when we have the actual time determined.

Q: Could you give us highlights on child soldiers and any figures you may have concerning the security situation?

Deputy RC/HC Gressly: Starting with the second question, I have to say that I have been working in Southern Sudan since October 2004 and we have, at this point in time, the greatest access for humanitarian recovery and development activities than we had ever had since I arrived, and probably since the conflict began. There really is, at this point in time, no part of Southern Sudan that we cannot operate in and I think that is a significant achievement within the context of the CPA. We are very comfortable operating in the south and I think it is symbolic of the general sense of security in Southern Sudan. There are ongoing issues which will require the efforts of the GoSS that, with our support, we would like to see resolved, but in general the situation is steadily improving.

In terms of child soldiers, that is an ongoing issue. It is a part of the Interim DDR Program to demobilize all children. We have ongoing efforts. We had recently 24 children demobilized through the assistance of UNICEF in one location in Southern Sudan just a little over a week ago. These efforts are continuing. We are concerned that there are continued reports of ongoing recruitment. Where we find evidence of that, we work with those concerned to try to reverse that, but in general we do find the authorities responsive and we are working for the complete demobilization of all children.

DSRSG-RC/HC da Silva: I can just add on the total figure. Last year, a little over 1,000 children were removed from armed forces and integrated into communities. It was not a very high figure but it was a difficult process. I am very pleased that this year the number of children removed from armed forces has picked up recently in the north and in the south. We may be able, with the exception of Darfur, to soon be able to declare that children have been removed from armed forces in all Sudan with the exception of Darfur.

Q: Based on this report that we have long been waiting for, it seems that your plan to shift from relief to recovery has not gone as expected. Do you think there are better prospects for improvements in 2007?

You mentioned in the paragraph before the last one about relations with the MDTF. This was one of the main obstacles in implementation of many projects, i.e. the relation between the MDTF, the World Bank and the United Nations agencies. Is it still the going on the same?

According to the statement, last year [*indiscernible figure on relief*] is this reduced and transferred to development or is it still going on? And why is such a big amount of money being spent on humanitarian assistance in the south while the war has nearly stopped since 2005?

DSRSG-RC/HC da Silva: On the report, we could not have had a report of this dimension earlier. This kind report needs time to be prepared and finalized. We didn't want to release a report that has not been fully verified – when we give a figure, we want to be totally sure about it. So it is a long

process, but the report is ready and you can take it with you. But the delay was not that long, I must say. These things take time.

On humanitarian and recovery activities, we need to be a little bit cautious here. Of the 1.2 billion dollars we received, 633 million was for Darfur. Darfur is a humanitarian operation and this influences the percentage of humanitarian funding. If we discount Darfur, we have 600 million of which 150 million was recovery and development. So recovery and development becomes are around 25% of the total funding – that is if you take away Darfur. But you are right. By the way, 80% of the recovery and development money did go to the south. It is increasing in the Transitional Areas and in the east following the peace agreement in the east. But all programs funding was around 200 million. We got 135 million or 60%. For this year, our program for recovery and development funding was 600 million. It is higher than 2006, so the trend is in the right direction.

Going to the issue of the MDTF, I don't think the problem of the MDTF is a question of relations between the World Bank and the MDTF. It is not. I wish it were because then it would have been easy to solve. It is a problem of the mechanism. I told you before and am repeating here that this mechanism was decided by the Government of Sudan and by the SPLM at the time. We objected to it and thought that it was not going to work. Any of you who were in the October 2004 meeting in Oslo – not the conference – would know that. I was there and said it is not going to work and it would take two years before you see anything. All ministers of the government know that. We said it. But when the donors and the government decided it should be like that, we as the United Nations are obliged to accept it. But we said publicly in October 2004 in Oslo that we propose having two windows. One window for a normal bank process and a window for fast tracking. Why? I come from a development background myself. I have been a minister in my government and I have dealt with banks for many years. Banks work through governments. A project takes two years to be fully developed after its initial design – 18 months. Go to any book or bank website and check that out – 18 months minimum. Based on that knowledge, in Naivasha in February 2005, the United Nations made a strong statement and said that this mechanism was not going to be fast enough for urgent needs. However, donors and the Government of Sudan at the time and the SPLM continued in this process and we can not overrule the parties, and can only give advice. I wish I was wrong because it would have been better. But unfortunately, what we said in October 2004, and repeated in Naivasha in February 2005, in a very important meeting where the final decision was taken, was true. Our job was to make it work – even if we didn't agree, we try to make it work. And by the way, 80% of the money spent went through the United Nations agencies. My only mistake was that I didn't scream loud enough in Oslo. If you were there in Oslo, the reaction was that, "... oh they just want to get the money" as you say yourself sometimes. I don't care whether or not the money comes to the United Nations. What is important is that the money gets to the people. The faster mechanism is what is important and I will keep defending that. If it is not fast, then I will not defend it. The United Nations are not concerned about getting money for itself – it is not our job. Actually our job is to make ourselves not needed. The moment we are not needed, we have done our job. Because the United Nations is you; it is the countries and the people of the world. That is my concept of the United Nations, and I always said that the best solution is the day when the government mechanisms are so strong, credible, and reliable that all money coming from the international community goes to their budgets. But these processes take some time and things do not happen in a day. We may wish it to happen but there is a process. It is like a child whom you may wish already knows mathematics but he needs to grow up first, be taught first and so on. The systems need to mature for this and we should be proud to say someday that the United Nations role in Sudan is over, because this means that we have done our job.

This is in reply to your first question.

Deputy RC/HC Gressly: Thank you. This is somewhat similar to the first question I was asked but I will try to elaborate a little bit more.

2007 very much is a transition year from humanitarian to recovery and development activities. I have already described what is happening with the food and how a large portion of that will now be used for development purposes as opposed to free distribution. And food assistance is by far the largest component of humanitarian assistance historically in southern Sudan. So that alone will make a major change in the kinds of figures that you see in future. The second largest component really is roads. We had categorized roads as “humanitarian” in 2006 and as “recovery and development” this year. Frankly speaking, a kilometer of road is pretty much the same however you categorize it, but once again, this will reflect differently in the figures for 2007. Roads have had a significant influence on how we do business and I just wanted to highlight this: Prior to the construction of these roads – actually prior to 2006 – 80% of the food that was brought into southern Sudan came by air. Starting with 2006, 87% came by road – a significant reversal of how we moved food in 2006; a reflection of both the increased security and the increased quality of the infrastructure in Southern Sudan. A further transformation this year from free distribution to recovery and development, particularly focusing on school feeding, will go a long way for further development of education in Southern Sudan.

But it is important to know that we will be having ongoing needs in the humanitarian area. We have seen outbreaks of cholera and meningitis in Southern Sudan and we need to be able to respond to that in support of the GoSS. As I mentioned before, there are many areas that really have very little in the way of services – water, health, education – there are still counties in southern Sudan that don’t have functional boreholes for water. So we need to be able to get into those areas. And the very lack of basic services, in our view, constitutes a humanitarian crisis that needs to be addressed.

So what we will do is that we will change over time, but there still will be a need for a humanitarian component, though scaled back, as we re-orient our assistance to recovery and development.

The last point I want to make is that I have already started to see in a few areas where humanitarian assistance has been reduced, a draught in services – particular in the health sector. We need to monitor this very closely as humanitarian assistance declines. If we are not careful, we will actually see a deduction in services to people as opposed to the increase that everybody is expecting and that is very important.

One final point is returns. People are returning in large numbers and will need to continue receiving support as they return to Southern Sudan. We do continue to fund this through humanitarian assistance and will have to maintain that component, both for those that we assist to return as well as those that return spontaneously on their own.

DSRSG-RC/HC da Silva: Let me just add two points. One is that what we do as humanitarians in southern Sudan is not the same as what we do in Darfur. In southern Sudan, our activities are much more recovery-oriented. The use of the funding is much more for what we call “recovery”. We are not yet at the point of long-term project - not five-year projects but still one year projects. David mentioned roads; we are now doing bridges and have to have tens of bridges built in the south in the next months. But I want to give you one figure, if you go to the CD and look at the 2007 Work Plan for the south, you will see that for the first time for the last 30 years, the total recovery and development program we put together for the south is 348 million dollars – a higher funding for recovery and development than humanitarian for the first time.

But as David said, humanitarian is going down, recovery is going down and we don’t want the sum of the two to be lower. We want the sum of the two to be higher and that is very important.

I want also to highlight that on recovery and development, the fact that the GoSS has continued to receive transfers as per the CPA the wealth sharing agreement and using it, not only to pay civil servants but also for development, is very good. The budget of the Government of Sudan is six or seven times the amount of international assistance. That budget could have a major impact and benefit the people.

Q: My question is to Mr. David. You spoke of child enrolment in schools in Southern Sudan. Is this only confined to the larger urban areas or does it also cover rural areas?

Mr. da Silva mentioned that more than 5.8 million people received assistance from the United Nations. Was this your original target? Are there no other IDPs or does the figure only represent those IDPs you had access to?

On funding from the international community to the United Nations, you said that 1.2 billion dollars was what you received. What about the 2007 figures [*indiscernible*]?

Deputy RC/HC Gressly: On your question on where these children are returning to school, I don't know the exact figures, but we can get those from UNICEF. But it is a combination of rural and urban areas that are benefiting from this. But there are still areas, as I mentioned earlier, that really have very low levels of access to services whether it is health, water, education etc. and this is a particular concern of ours. We are trying and succeeding in directing assistance to those areas. We are targeting certain states and counties that have very low levels of services and are channeling our resources specifically to them through the coming humanitarian fund. This has been a very effective way of giving resources to other areas. We targeted five states in particular for this and highlighted the need to that in water health and education, we asked our colleagues on the ground, United Nations agencies and NGOs, to work very closely with state governments and authorities to identify those specific areas that are underserved, and particularly those that are going to receive a large number of people returning back home. This work has already been completed. We have made allocations designed to increase services in those areas and this will help promote a greater increase in children enrolled in school in rural areas.

The answer therefore is, yes it is benefiting both rural and urban children but we have a lot of work to do in the rural areas to bring them up to bring them up to the same levels as here.

DSRSG-RC/HC da Silva: I want to reply to the question about the 5.8 figure, and I want to highlight that maybe we were very close to achieving 100% of our target projected for 2006 on the number of people to be fed. That is because on the funding side, we got almost 100% of the resources. We don not always get the funding required and achieve that level of food assistance – we are not perfect, I must say.

The 5.8 million people are not in the south. They include almost 3 million in Darfur. If you remember, we were airdropping food in Darfur in 2005; 2006 there was almost no airdropping or air lifting; for 2007, our plan was that there should be no food air-lifting for Darfur. Another thing I want to highlight, because sometimes we forget, is that we are buying from within the Sudan over 100,000 tons of food – from Gedharef and other regions that have surplus of production. And that supports the producing farmers and creates a demand in the internal market. There are food items still coming from outside Sudan, but we are buying sugar, salt, sorghum and wheat from inside Sudan and that is the policy. We hope that starting this year, we will start buying from Western Equatoria to bring to other parts of the south. The best thing one can do for a farmer to develop the economy is to have a market for his product. It is our job also to support them and help the markets to develop. We are very pleased that in 2007 we are buying such large quantities of these items because there was a very good harvest in many parts of Sudan last year. I want to highlight this because tens of millions of dollars are used to buy locally and not to bring food items from outside, and that's our priority.

On the funding for this year, we are close to 1 billion dollars by now and we are in May – it's not bad. So funding is getting better over time. I can not tell you that by the end of the year we will get more than last year, but what I can tell you at this time is that we have had funding a little bit earlier than last year. I can give example; for all needs of Darfur, almost 100% of the needs for food in Darfur have been covered including from local purchase. We have pre-positioned this food before the rainy season, so when the rainy season comes, we can stop transporting food items because they are already where they are supposed to be. There were some delays with taking out some food items

from Port Sudan because of concerns that the government had, and that you heard about, and that was resolved. These concerns were addressed as there is no genetically modified sorghum by the way – it doesn't exist in the whole world; it exists at the search phase only; not commercially. There is other genetically modified food stuff but we are not bringing them to Sudan. So that delayed delivery bit but I don't think it will be disastrous. We will still get all the food needed in Darfur before the rainy season.

So that is quite different from and better than 2005 when we had to airdrop food. And in spite of insecurity, we are still reaching most of the people. For instance this month, we are not reaching a lot of people in North Darfur because of military activities there, but in general, we don't get cut off for more than one or two months and then we are able to go back. What we do is that in when we can go to areas where the security situation is uncertain, we provide food for two months because we don't know when we can go back. Not a single day passes when I come to work, and have a meeting early in the morning to have my reports, without being informed and inform my colleagues that yesterday two cars were hijacked; two workers abducted and we don't know where they are. This is happening everyday - and people still continue to do the job. I must say sometimes I don't understand why the mass media don't recognize the heroism of these humanitarian workers, most of whom by the way are actually Sudanese – 90% of them are Sudanese and not foreigners. I must say I respect these people on the ground that are really doing their job and taking risks to save lives.

Q: The United Nations Mission in Sudan News Bulletin said yesterday that some humanitarian workers withdrew yesterday from Khazan Tungur. How many areas in Darfur have humanitarian workers been evacuated from?

What is the number of those affected by the conflict that lack access to humanitarian assistance?

DSRSG-RC/HC da Silva: I didn't get the name of the location where people were relocated from. We have people moving in and out everyday. Everyday we have places where people are obliged to withdraw – I wouldn't say evacuate; and everyday there are places that we go back to. It is a very dynamic situation there. I could go on and on with many places but we go through Radhia – she is our Spokesperson by the way and everything she says is in our behalf, it is not of her own making in spite of what is being said, so if you want to blame her, you should blame us. And it is clear, everything she gave to you in writing is cleared, approved, by the Head of the Mission, Mr. Tayé Zerihoun [the ASRSG]. But I want to say that yes we have still many cases where we have been obliged to withdraw everyday. We go back the next day sometimes or one or two weeks later. Northern parts – like Furo Barang, Um Ray – have been difficult to access in the last weeks. As I speak, my colleague of UNICEF was yesterday in the center of the Jebel Marra and communicated with me but two months before, he may not have been able to be where he was yesterday.

I don't want to mention a specific place because I could be talking for hours. A daily brief is to give you what happened before and that is why we do it. Some people get upset when we say, "yesterday we withdrew". I am not saying that we are not doing our job. I have told you many times what is bad in the situation in Darfur – security and the lack of a political solution. The humanitarians are doing their job and we are watching, and for instance malnutrition has been under control in spite of the security situation. Sometimes it deteriorates for one or two months in one region, but we don't have anybody starving today. We had it in 2005 and we have reversed that. All this money, all these efforts have saved hundreds of thousands of lives if not more. The humanitarian situation has stabilized but it is not the solution. We need a political solution in Darfur. It is not my job but it is the number one priority job. A Political solution will bring security and security means the end of humanitarian operations. It is a lot of money being spent. I don't consider it a waste because keeping people alive is not a waste but an important job. But it is not a solution. When everybody says that Darfur is a humanitarian crisis, I don't like it. Darfur is a political crisis; it is a security crisis, and the humanitarian situation is the consequence. And my job and the job of my colleagues on the ground, is to deal with those consequences together with our partners there. And it is a tough

job I tell you. I never know when I wake up if I still have all my staff alive. Never have we taken so many risks in any humanitarian operation. I have been humanitarian coordinator four times; I was the first one in the world and the first person with this title in 1993 in Angola. I have done this four times and never have we taken so many risks like the ones we are taking in Darfur, because we can not just abandon people. But we are going beyond the limits in terms of risks.

For us, Sudanese are international. I don't make any distinction between international staff and national staff. They are the same for us from a driver to an engineer; they are to be treated and protected the same way. If it is a militia or a rebel targeting them, it is the same – I don't care. I will blame anybody who does it.

On the numbers of people not accessible, as I said, it is not always the same people that are not accessible. This doesn't mean that people die the next day. If you don't access people for three weeks, people will not die during that time. If you don't access people for six months in the same place, that will be a problem. If we are obliged to withdraw for a long time, there will be problem. People don't die in one day; they have reserves, they have coping mechanisms, but if they are not helped in time, they die of hunger. I have seen many times in my life people dying of hunger. It is awful. I have seen it in my own country in Mozambique, I have seen it in Sudan, in Malakal in 1992 after the fighting within the SPLA, and people were dying in the streets of Malakal; I have seen it in southern Sudan during the war; I have seen it in Angola; I have seen it in Ethiopia. All of us should be proud we are not seeing this in Darfur – including yourselves, because you are part of this when you report. We should be proud of everybody who prevents this from happening, and it's worth mentioning because we don't see that in the news. I have seen a case in Angola where we had 250 children dying of hunger every night and it took us three months to stop it. Have you seen that in Darfur? No. It could have happened. If the government had not authorized this humanitarian operation in 2004, I tell you that by March- April 2005 you would have seen it in Darfur. But the humanitarian operation was permitted in July; by February 2005 we managed to control it. There was still some of that happening in 2004 but not at a massive scale. The last time I saw people dying from hunger was in 2001 in Ethiopia – hundreds of people dying. Again this is a half-empty glass issue. We never speak of the good things that we are doing – only of the problems because we have so many problems, people being killed, cars hijacked, etc. It is also a heroic work but the solution is political. And we humanitarians we don't solve problems but only deal with the consequences of unsolved problems.

Q: You told us about what was achieved in the Work Plan Could you tell us what was not achieved and what difficulties were encountered and prevented implementation of such activities?

You said that the situation in eastern Sudan has been negatively affected by Darfur. What plans do you have to remedy the situation?

DSRSG-RC/HC da Silva: These are two good questions. I give you examples of things we should have done better in Darfur, for example. We should have dealt with education in the camps, including promoting skills from the first days in 2004. That was difficult of course because we were trying to keep people alive. It took some time to move humanitarian efforts to the next level. We performed much better in 2006 in the field of education. There is always the risk that if you do too much, then people never go back. But I don't think we should stop doing what we are doing because of that. We should give people opportunities and then they will go back. Maybe some may not chose to go back but that is part of life.

I think we should have done better last year in terms of water. But I would like to tell you that we are doing an evaluation by independent evaluators – not United Nations staff but universities over whom we don't have influence – in three sectors this year on our Work Plan. Two of them started last month. One is food security. They are going to look into our food security policies and their implementation and see if what we are doing is good, bad or should be better. What I can promise is that we will show you our own criticisms about our performance. I think there will be criticism in the area of water and sanitation. The third area is health and that will come later.

We just got an evaluation on the returns process. The experts didn't produce a report – I have not seen it. An evaluation was done on how we are dealing with Gender Based Violence in Darfur. The report will be out soon. What I can promise you is not only to share good things - today's briefing was the purpose for that- but also share with you how people have evaluated us on both our good performance and our bad performance. I don't mind making this information available to you.

On your second question on the east and Darfur, I must tell you that the money spent on Darfur not only influences the east, but also the people of Chad, the people in the Central African Republic, and the people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). There is so much money spent in Darfur. Last year, we got almost 80% funding of what we asked for Darfur. But the DRC didn't get more than 40% of what they asked for and this is because Darfur needs are high and the situation has been so intense. I want to say that maybe we got these funds partly because we did a good job in Darfur. But that is not the only reason. It is also because there has been so much focus on Darfur and it is easy to get money when there is such focus. The total amount of funding in the world is limited and when you put 1 billion dollars in Darfur, somebody who may probably be suffering more and having more right to that money does not get it.

On the east, I don't think the response for the east should be humanitarian. The response for the east is development. If humanitarian assistance in the south is being phased out, then it should move more so in eastern Sudan. What I can tell you is that we have a very strong focus on the United Nations this year to boost recovery and development for the east. We are talking with the government about this and we actually had negotiations with the *wali* last month on this issue. We have agreed on the mechanism- how we can be present - because we have had many restrictions of movement in the east in the past. That has been solved now and we want to do much more, not only in the humanitarian area, but mainly in the area of development. The east is the poorest region of Sudan – and the Red Sea region outside Port Sudan is extremely poor.

Thank you. I have a meeting with Government ministers waiting and I need to go.

UNMIS Spokesperson: Thank you very much and see you hopefully in the next briefing.

