



UNMIS

Press Conference

14 August 2008

Opening remarks by SRSB Ashraf Qazi

Thank you for coming. On Saturday I leave for New York where I will brief the Security Council next week about the work of the mission and implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the bedrock for sustainable peace in the Sudan.

These have been challenging months in which the CPA process has been put to the test by the JEM attack on Omdurman and the violent clashes in Abyei. Each points up the fragility of the peace process. Each serves as a cautionary reminder of the potential consequences for Sudan and its people should the peace process unravel or derail.

Whether in the north, the south or in Darfur, peace in the Sudan is indivisible and interdependent. And we do well to remember that the one over-riding framework and context for that process to be effective is embodied in the provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

UNMIS will continue to pursue the mandate given us by the Security Council in support of the peace process. In this regard, we welcome the Government's assurances that it will continue to cooperate with and respect its obligations to UNMIS.

On the positive side, the implementation of the Abyei roadmap agreement provides a strong indication of the parties' commitment to peace. I hope it will also serve as a catalyst for progress on other outstanding issues in the framework of the CPA.

I hope that the appointment of a Chief and Deputy Administrator will soon be followed by the full establishment of the interim administration and move us all closer to the day when those displaced by May's fighting can return in safety and dignity to resume their lives in a secure environment. UNMIS and the UN humanitarian community stand ready to support and assist these efforts.

The focus on Abyei should not overshadow other CPA-related concerns and accomplishments. For example, ongoing delays to the demarcation of the 1 January 1956 boundary only encourage the two sides to deploy along border areas in a bid to strengthen their respective bargaining positions.

On the plus side is the fact that the results of the National Census, once available, will provide a vital planning tool for development and public services and assist with delineation of administrative/electoral constituencies. In the meantime, the electoral law has been passed, and the parties are at work setting up the National Electoral Commission.

As for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), the CPA mechanism that turns soldiers into civilians stands ready to benefit from the help of a donor-supported jumpstart which, I hope, will happen in the coming months.
