



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE TO SIGNING CEREMONY
FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AGREEMENT IN SUDAN
Nairobi, 9 January 2005

*Delivered by Mr. Jan Pronk,
Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan*

This historic signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement by the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement is an important milestone. It heralds the possible definitive end of a prolonged period of brutal conflict that has killed at least two million people, uprooted four million more, and forced some 600,000 to take refuge in neighbouring countries. And it holds the promise of a new era of peace not just for Sudan, but for the region as a whole. I would like to warmly congratulate all the parties and everyone else involved in making this great achievement possible, foremost among them the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, led by the Kenyan Government, as well as the Chief Mediator, General Lazarus Sumbeywo, the international observers and the Troika in particular.

The real challenge now is for all the parties to show the same commitment, determination and courage in fully implementing the Agreement, which will entail equally daunting challenges over a very long period.

This Agreement is premised on the vision of promoting stability, rehabilitation and development in all regions of Sudan, through power-sharing and the equitable distribution of the country's wealth. It provides a unique opportunity to apply the principles enshrined in the Naivasha Protocols as a "blue-print" for addressing conflicts in other strife-torn areas such as Darfur, where the situation remains horrific and where the vital African Union Mission deserves greater support. I hope the parties in Darfur will be inspired by what has been achieved today, and pursue a wide-ranging political solution to their conflict without any further delay. It is hard to imagine that the full promise of the Agreement being signed today will be fulfilled without an end to the enormous suffering in Darfur. Peace in Sudan is indivisible.

Another urgent requirement is to create conditions for fully representative and democratic Government, in which all of Sudan's people feel they have a voice. The timely holding of an all-inclusive National Conference is thus of central importance. The conference should be open to all segments of Sudanese society. Other initiatives aimed at promoting intra-communal dialogue also have a key role to play in fostering genuine national reconciliation.

The United Nations will stand firmly by your side in these monumental tasks. Our humanitarian assistance and development activities will continue. The United Nations peace support operation in Sudan, the outlines of which I will shortly recommend to the Security

Council, will likely face immense logistical difficulties in a country with inadequate roads, airfields and communication facilities, but we are determined to field an effective operation. We will also continue to press the international community to support implementation of the Agreement.

As we rightly celebrate today's achievements, let us also recognize that a very long and difficult road lies ahead. There will be times when the parties may be tempted to abandon the course of action they have chosen to take today. There may also be moments when the international community might prefer to look elsewhere. Let us remember that today marks the beginning of a process, not an end. The long-suffering people of Sudan deserve a chance for peace. With good faith and hard work, it is within our power to achieve that goal.