



**United Nations Advance Mission In Sudan
UNAMIS**

PRESS CONFERENCE

Mr. Jan Pronk Presiding
The Friendship Hall – January 3, 2004

Following is a near-verbatim transcript of the press conference of 3 January (1:30 PM) by the SRSG, Mr. Jan Pronk:

Thank you very much. I would like to talk on two points.

First of all, happy new year. This is the first conference in the new year and indeed it is quite a new year because 2005 can be the year in which indeed peace will become sustainable and thus a historic turn in the developments in the country. We are very pleased, you have seen, by the press statement that I did a couple of days ago on the same day that the peace agreements were initialed. I am going myself on Sunday to Nairobi in order to be there as a witness during the signing ceremony. There will be many who will co-sign, also the UN who will be asked to play a role in the implementation of the peace agreement.

You know that I am here as the head of the UN Advance Mission to prepare for the regular mission. As soon as the peace agreements are signed, there will be discussions in the Security Council on the basis of the report that I am preparing at the moment. I foresee that the discussion in the Security Council will take place in January and then the Security Council will give a mandate to the UN Secretary General and through him to us to prepare ourselves as a regular mission which will have to be complete and in full strength after six months. Those will be the six months of the pre-interim period which will start right after the Security Council will have taken that decision on the basis of that report giving the mandate. That is right after the signatures. Six months later, after the pre-interim period, the six years Interim Period will start.

You are familiar with the whole process leading after six years to a referendum. This is a very important year but of course it will require hard work because the peace has been initialed, it will be signed, but then it will have to be really given shape. It will be monitored, for instance, by the UN Peace Monitoring Force which is coming to the country in these six months. Up to now, we do not know exactly how many because the Security Council will have to take the decisions on the basis of the proposals, but I foresee something between say nine and ten thousand UN Peace Monitors. And then we will carry out many other activities all on the basis, of course, of the protocols. All these protocols will have some consequences for the work of the UN throughout the country, whereby we also will build a UN presence in the southern part of Sudan – I did mention to you some time ago that we will move by then from Nairobi to Rumbek.

So it is very hard work in the next couple of months on the basis of very important

decisions which has been taken by the Sudanese themselves. The final stage of the negotiations was an internal discussion, internal negotiations between Vice-president Taha and the leader of the SPLM Dr. Garang. No outsiders were present; your representatives – Sudanese representatives – took the final decision. You are signing and the international community is only witnessing and is being asked to help in the implementation. Of course there will be many problems ahead. It will not just be a rosy future and there will be many stumbling blocks on the road. But in the spirit of peace which I witnessed in the Special Session of the Parliament on Independence Day which was very clear and is a very positive atmosphere, in that spirit of peace it will be possible to remove possible stumbling blocks on the road in an atmosphere of cooperation.

There is one possibility to show that cooperation right from the beginning. Peace is not an issue only of the leaders of the country. Peace is necessary for the people in the country: for women, for children, for poor people, for IDPs, for refugees who can return, for people who so far on the ground have hardly any possibility to improve the process and are only being influenced by the process itself. Peace would make it possible to create a perspective in the field of health – just for an example – but a very relevant example.

I have here behind the table a Representative of the WHO working here and he is going to give you some information about the present situation in polio. Polio is a very devastating illness. It is increasing as a problem in the moment in Africa and it has already reached Sudan again. In such proportions that we are very afraid that there will be an outbreak. In order to stop an outbreak, people have to be reached throughout the country. Many people have moved through the country so that you do not know exactly where everybody is because there is no good system of registration who has already been vaccinated or not. So we need a massive campaign throughout the country because in many states at the moment there are already cases of polio. That is easy in a situation of full peace where you can reach everybody. But when there is no full peace and only the initials, and of course in Darfur there is no peace whatsoever because there is a ceasefire but, you have listened to me before, the ceasefire has been violated – sometimes even on the same day that the ceasefire or new agreement was signed. Then it is very difficult to reach the people and they have to be reached. Women and children have to be reached. So that is why we are asking for a very special action. I cannot ask for Darfur, for instance, to have a ceasefire in order to make it possible for the Ministry of Health, international organizations and all the health workers to reach the people because there is a ceasefire.

Why ask for a ceasefire if there is a ceasefire? So I cannot ask for a ceasefire because there is a ceasefire. We have to ask for something else which then cannot, should not be breached or violated and by which all leaders can show that it is serious - that they didn't initial for nothing – because it means a real perspective for people – and that they are not fighting in Darfur for their own sake but that they take action for and on behalf of people.

They can show it by doing more than just paying lip-service to a ceasefire. What we are asking is that, during the campaign, and our colleague will say something more about it, to have days of tranquility. And that means no action whatsoever. That means that all forces should stay in the camps, in the barracks, not outside, not

hampering any humanitarian action to reach the people in order to stop polio, to stop a devastating attack on the health of the people of Sudan. Three days of tranquility because the campaign will take about three days. We have a ceasefire (in Arabic waqf itlaq el-nar) but we need more than that. We need something that is not only theoretical. We need a real stop to all activities, to all movements, which are the beginning of an activity. Days of tranquility – al-hudu al-kamil – that is what we need. Otherwise the health workers can not reach the people. I am saying that in public. This week we will approach the government – that means not the Minister of Foreign Affairs, my contact in the JIM, because he is not in charge of domestic issues – but the ministers who are in charge, of course together with the Minister of Health, the Minister of Defense, the Minister of the Interior to ask them to declare these days of tranquility.

We would also this week approach the leadership of the SPLM, after the initialing, to do exactly the same. And we call on all the other movements also in the south to do the same, they are also acting for people. And we will do the same in our contacts with movements in Darfur – SLM, JEM, NMRD – they can prove that they work and take action for the people by stopping for three days any movement of any of their fighters. If they don't do it, they pay lip service. So we are asking everybody in charge to indeed observe days of tranquility - al-hudu al-kamil.

Salah El-Haithami, WHO Representative: Thank you Mr. Jan Pronk. I wish to thank Mr. Jan Pronk for his strong concern on humanitarian issues in the Sudan. I would like to give a brief on what he stated that Africa is in danger. This is a map – we will leave for you a couple of the same – that shows that the movement of the virus from Chad has affected 13 countries. Two weeks ago, Saudi Arabia reported a case in Jeddah of a Sudanese child infected with polio. The virus knows no borders. The virus can move to areas which have been cleared of polio. We have to stop the spread of the virus here in Sudan and must not allow it to spread eastwards to infect areas that have completely got rid of it. From 2001 to 2004, the situation in the Sudan was promising and the Sudan proved it can stop the spread of the virus. Indeed the last recorded case was in April 2001. From April 2001 to May 2004 no case of polio was reported. The first case of polio that was reported from Nigeria through Chad appeared in May 20, 2004. From there and as a result of movement of the increased movement of the population due to the conflict and anxiety, people moved from one place to another carrying the virus with them until to date it covers 17 states in all parts of the Sudan. There were 105 cases reported by 31st December. This, as defined in epidemiology in a country that has been polio free for a period of three years, is considered an epidemic and we now have 105 cases.

The reasons for the wide spread of the virus in the last five or seven months is that the virus has been present in the neighboring countries such as Chad and the Central African republic and because the virus was reported during the hot season, in May, and spread in the months of June, July, August, September and October and these are the months during which the virus is more active. The virus is less active during winter such as during this and the coming days. Unfortunately for the Sudan, the virus is more active in the hot season.

Children susceptible to the virus come together – there are many who have not been vaccinated – consequently the virus found fertile grounds to spread amongst these children.

Movement of non-Sudanese people through the Sudan. Port Sudan especially receives people from Central Africa who are en route to perform the *Umra* (lesser pilgrimage) in Saudi Arabia. Before the month of Ramadhan. This year many people traveled through western Sudan to Port Sudan on their way to Saudi Arabia. Most of these came with their families from west Africa where the virus is still widespread. Our opinion is that they carried along with them the virus from west Africa to Port Sudan. Consequently, 21 cases have been reported in Port Sudan, Khartoum with about 40 cases. records the highest number of infected.

The Ministry of Health with the help of the partners in the international community such as the UNICEF, the WHO and OCHA have conducted two limited campaigns in Darfur in July and August. Later on, two national campaigns were conducted in October and November. Now, and as I said earlier, the month of January is an appropriate time for national campaigns due to the cold season. A national campaign to stop the spread of the polio virus will be launched on January 10th. Another will take place at the end of February. We have great hopes that the virus can be stopped if, as Mr. Jan Pronk said, we can conduct a mass immunization campaign that will entail vaccinating all children below 5 years of age. We must reach all children in all parts of the Sudan without exception.

From this point and as a repeat to what Mr. Jan Pronk has said, we call upon all the armed parties to respect the three days – 10, 11 and 12 January – as this campaign targets all children in all parts of the Sudan. We hope that this period of tranquility will be observed in the right way, two days before and after the specified days because the teams and the vaccines will have to be moved to the different sites two days earlier and the teams will have to come back to present their reports two days after. We had an earlier experience during the days of tranquility observed by the GoS and the SPLM in 2001 and 2002 and we hope that such a successful experience will be repeated and that all brothers and armed groups present in Darfur hear us out because this is a humanitarian campaign to put a final end to the polio virus. Thank you.

Q: Mr. Pronk talked of about 10.000 or whatever number of forces. Are these monitoring or peace-keeping forces?

A: These are monitoring forces. We call our mission a peace support mission. We are not making peace – that is what you are doing – we support it through monitoring but that will be of course very active monitoring and not just looking in order to prevent violations of the ceasefire also. Monitoring, I mentioned that before, as far as Darfur is concerned, needs to take place in a pro-active manner. And it will take place in a pro-active manner.

Q: We have 105 cases of polio reported. This means that there is (*inaudible but the question is on lack of sensitization campaigns despite the fact that polio has reached endemic proportions in the country*)

A: (El-Haithami): Thank you. We are currently working along with the Ministry of Health for a multi-media campaign plan. This press conference today is part of the briefing. Mr. Da Silva had also briefed the governors and state ministers last

Thursday. We are following step by step the plan laid down in order not to cause a shock that will generate adverse effects.

The media campaign is there and is currently at the implementation stage. Thank you.

Q: The UN has appealed for 1.4 billion for the Work Plan for 2005. now that the Peace Agreement has been changed, will there be any change in this Plan?

A: (Mr. Pronk) The Work Plan was based on the assumption that there would be a peace agreement at the end of the year. That assumption is now true. If there would not have been a peace agreement, we would have had the necessity to change the Work Plan of course. That is not the case. The Work Plan was discussed before it was finalized with the representatives of the GoS and the SPLM so for that reason it is not necessary to change it. Of course it will not be fixed until the end of the year as you always will see developments which you did not expect. For instance, I don't think, but I may be mistaken, that we did not include in the Work Plan the possible cost of a campaign. And there may be another one which we did not foresee. We will have to review moments in the coming year on the basis of developments in order to adjust the Work Plan. But now it is not necessary. If I would have to announce already on the 3 January 2005 that we are going to change the Work Plan then it would not have been a good Work Plan.

Q: How do you see the current situation in Darfur and at what degree will it be affected by the peace agreement in Nairobi?

A: (Mr. Pronk): The situation in Darfur during the last couple of days has been rather calm. The Christmas period, the new year. In the last public statement whereby I criticized the government for the road-clearing operations. The government has made it clear that the road-clearing operations did have as an objective to clear the road to make them safe. For us, that objective has not been reached. It is still unsafe for the convoys, fuel and food to reach el-Fasher because there are still attacks on convoys by movements and also there are some looting by individual bandits. So the objective has not been reached. You may say perhaps that insecurity has been more or less spread more widely through the country and I am very concerned at the moment that due to that insecurity we will not be able to bring enough food from outside Sudan to the warehouses in Darfur. That may have some very negative consequences on the possibilities to give humanitarian assistance to the people. As a matter of fact, I have to report due to insecurity, that the percentage of the people which we are reaching is going down. The people who we are reaching at the moment are being reached adequately. They all get enough calories per head, per individual, per capita, in order to continue their lives. But people whom we are not reaching don't get anything. And the gap is increasing. That is the first comment that I am making.

My second comment: the agreement in Nairobi/ Naivasha, have politically created a possibility indeed also to make peace in Darfur. I was very pleased listening to the statements which were made in the Special Session of the Parliament on the first of January whereby the President and also the Speaker did indeed draw the line from Nairobi-Naivasha to Darfur and made it very clear that they now want peace to be extended also throughout the Sudan. As I said also in my statements, everybody, that is the government and all the movements to use the political momentum which has

now been created in Nairobi to also bring as soon as possible peace in Darfur. You could see a negative scenario whereby for instance the government would say, “well we have now peace in the south so we do not need our army anymore and we bring it to Darfur in order to solve the problem”. Skeptical people would say that. I have listened to the President in that meeting in Parliament and I did hear completely different statements. positive statements. The peace momentum now also has to be translated to Darfur - which is positive. Skeptical people might also say the movements in Darfur may think that they are no longer on the international agenda. So that they will have to fight stronger in order to get the attention back. That would not be a good reaction. SLM, JEM and NMRD would be very wise if they would see the results book at the negotiations table in Nairobi and Naivasha as the proof that it is possible to reach peace and meet your own political objectives at the negotiation table. You can say that there is peace but you can also say that the objectives of the SPLM that were defined about 10 years ago have been met. The Protocols really incorporate the objectives of the SPLM in a good spirit. So it is possible. SLM, JEM and NMRD could draw their lesson. It is possible to reach your objectives at the negotiations table. Use that political momentum that is there now. There is a spirit of peace throughout the country. People in Khartoum are pleased with that. People throughout the country are pleased with it. That means that there is a spirit of peace on the basis of which also the governmental negotiations will have to continue. So I call upon the SLM, JEM and NMRD and other movements that have been created recently to use the example and the instruments given to them by the GoS and the SPLM at the conference table and to now have a very serious talks in Abuja when they start in January again. More serious than that they had in December which was not serious. This is a chance. If they are going to miss the chance in January, they do themselves a dis-service.

Q: Mr. Pronk said that there are obstacles that may hamper the peace process. What are these obstacles?'

A: (Mr. Pronk): Peace will not just come from above to the people by mere signatures. You will have to do it. First, in the south there will have to be talks with the other movements which were not participating in Naivasha. That is an important issue that has to be taken into consideration in the next couple of months.

Secondly, I did mention already Darfur. You remember the Security Council meeting in November, many governments did say that you have to create peace in Darfur otherwise there is no peace dividend in terms of our assistance – and that also has to be solved.

Thirdly, there are movements in the northern part of Sudan in Kassala. It is highly necessary that there be a national campaign for peace in the form of a national conference to be organized by the new government of the Sudan. But not top-down so that the others just have to come to their conference at equal footing together with all parties. That is the third major operation.

Fourth; we have about 6 million IDPs and refugees who have to return. They have to be treated well without differentiating whether a person is a refugee or IDP and also no differentiation with the people who remained in the villages. They have to be helped and that is a major task and not a small one because the figure of 6 million including the people in Darfur is a very big number.

Five; the combatants have to be disarmed. There is a provision in the protocols. A percentage has to be disarmed. It has to be done for these people. A kind of a reintegrated place in society will have to be found. Not a bandit along the roads who then you shoot off the mark. But a job, or a piece of land or whatever that has to be done. That is the fifth major stumbling block.

Six; there are many mines in the country. When you have peace, people think that the country is free and accessible for everybody. There are also areas where there had been fighting so far which were no-go areas. There are many mines in those places. The mines have to be removed which is not easy – it will take years because there are so many mines. They were laid down by Sudanese by the way. That means that you will have accidents because people, and children in particular, think you can go now to places where you couldn't go. This is the major sixth stumbling block.

Seventh; and I stop at seven. On the basis of peace you will need development. And of course people have expectations that from now on it will be good. And of course the IMF has said that it is possible that the country will have a 7% growth rate. Well that 7% growth rate on the basis of oil income for instance has to be translated into an improvement in the life of just regular, normal people, citizens. A job, a big income, improvement in housing, in health, in education for their children. So they will have great expectations but they have to be translated into reality. If that is not taking place, not only because of perhaps the money from outside is not coming as soon as it will be possible, you may see that now because of the Tsunami in Asia the donor countries may have some problems, but also in Sudan itself there needs to be a reallocation of finance, of money. Not for arms and the war anymore but for the people. Expectations will have to be met soon. And if they are not met soon of course there will be frustration.

So I have mentioned 7 stumbling blocks. I didn't say that the future cannot be rosy, but you have to make it rosy by removing these 7 stumbling blocks. Otherwise, you have a problem.

Q: What about the budget for the polio campaign?

A: (El-Haithami): The budget covers the vaccines and the costs of operations that reaches upto 1.2 million dollars. This is in addition to government and state contributions. Maybe our colleague can tell you the cost of the vaccine.

The cost of the vaccine for this and the next round is about 600,000 dollars.

So 600,000 costs of vaccines and 1.2 million dollars for operations. All this is currently available and there is no shortage. The international community has availed these funds. We confirm however that the cost will be more than the budget available but the federal and state ministries of health will cover the deficit.

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A: (Mr. Pronk): Peace will not just come from above to the people by mere signatures. You will have to do it. First, in the south there will have to be talks with the other movements which were not participating in Naivasha. That is an important issue that has to be taken into consideration in the next couple of months.

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