



United Nations Mission In Sudan
UNMIS

SRSB Press Conference
14 June 2005
Press Room
UNMIS Offices
Khartoum

Following is a near-verbatim transcript of today's weekly briefing (12:30PM) by the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Sudan, Jan Pronk:

Spokesperson: Good afternoon all and welcome to our press briefing of today hosting SRSB Jan Pronk.

Mr. Pronk will be briefing us on a number of issues but will basically focus on the two issues of the ongoing talks in the Nigerian capital of Abuja and the visit of the Joint Implementation Mission (JIM) to the states of Darfur starting tomorrow.

Without much ado, I give the floor to Mr. Jan Pronk.

SRSB: Thank you very much. It is not the regular day but tomorrow, Wednesday (when we do have our regular press conferences), we will start the first leg of the mission of the JIM – the Joint Implementation Mechanism – you know that is the institution chaired by Minister Mustafa and co-chaired by me – we will, in June, go to Darfur. Three sub-missions: one to Geneina, West Darfur, tomorrow and Thursday; then on Sunday and Monday a second group is going to Nyala, South Darfur, and on Tuesday and Wednesday a third group is going to el-Fasher, North Darfur.

You remember we did have such joint groups' missions already last year. They are composed of representatives of the government, representatives of the United Nations and representatives of the donor community – ambassadors very often. They are tripartite. The idea is to jointly assess the situation in Darfur with the view to drafting joint report. The joint report will be attached to the report by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Security Council early July. Early July means 12 months after the establishment of the JIM. You remember that it was established when the Secretary-General was here last year and agreed together with President Bashir on a Joint Communiqué already a year ago. That Joint Communiqué has given rise to a number of activities in the field of humanitarian assistance, human rights, etc. The idea is to have a joint assessment one year after we started the whole operation. We don't want to do that as the UN alone or the UN plus donors but together with the

government. And the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, has promised Minister Mustafa when he was here, that a joint report will be submitted to the Security Council - and that is the report in which the GoS will also have a say. It doesn't (the GoS) only have to read the assessment made by others but can also, jointly with the others in the joint mechanism, assess (the situation). Of course, the Secretary-General writes his own report but this is a jointly written attachment to the report publicly available as a part of the report itself.

I will not go not to all the three visits but I will go tomorrow to western Darfur with a minister being appointed by the government. Mr. Da Silva the Humanitarian Coordinator, my deputy, will go to el-Fasher, North Darfur, and his deputy will go to the south, to Nyala.

So we really hope to be able -of course there are always problems, we know that, but we really hope to be able to show in that report- I can not yet anticipate- that the situation on the whole has improved. Anyway it has improved which is self evident with regard to the situation one year ago – you know that and I know that. We also know that there are still many problems. But we also know that many people outside Sudan are regularly saying that the situation is going worse, going down. That is not true. I want to say that already now. It is not true. The situation is improving. It is necessary to spread the message: the situation is difficult but anyway it is improving. That is important. It also means that activities; humanitarian activities, political activities, military presence like peacekeeping forces, does pay out – does have effect. Not throughout (Darfur), not every day, not everywhere, but in many places, very often, it is functioning and that is important. This is one point.

Second point: I was in Abuja and was present during the opening of the talks. I went there on Thursday and I came back on Saturday and, of course, I am in regular contact with my deputy, Mr. Zerihoun, who is still in Abuja.

I made also a speech in the opening session. I will not repeat that speech because I spoke off the cuff. I mentioned ten positive developments, 10 objective factors which have created a better atmosphere at the beginning of the fifth round –the fifth round of the Abuja talks which started last Saturday – as compared to the 4th round which was in November. You know that of course but it is important to keep that in mind because there is a completely new situation: because of the fact that there is a peace agreement with the south, AU troops have arrived and will be increased, the international community has committed enough money to make that possible, etc. Many objective factors have contributed to a better climate.

Is that wishful thinking? May be ... sometimes wishful thinking is important in politics because then you can make things happen. However, if I listen to the contributions from the parties then I am also quite positive. Minister Khalifa made a very constructive opening speech – not aggressive but constructive – which is important. The SLM and the JEM made rather aggressive speeches – let us face it – but less aggressive than in the 4th round. Count your blessings. It means it is toning down. And in my talks with all the three - I had talks with JEM – Mr. Khalil was there and his group, not all JEM groups were there but Mr. Khalil is still considered to be the leader; I had talks with Mr. Minawi and Mr. AbdulWahid of the SLM – they were constructive and they really meant it when they said, ‘we want this round to result in

peace'. I am cautious. There won't be peace before the 9th of July, but you remember I have always said before the end of the year. And what is important is that there is tangible progress towards such peace. Tangible progress before the 9th of July – that is important and that is possible. It is possible for instance if there is agreement on the Declaration of Principles. You know that the Declaration of Principles has been already on the table for quite some time. It has been discussed during the last couple of months; parties got it, would study it to come forward with amendments. The talks concentrated on Saturday, Sunday and Monday on bilaterals on the Declaration of Principles. The parties have been asked to present their comments on the Declaration of Principles, government has done so, JEM has done so, SLM has asked for some more time to put it on paper but they will do so.

These talks are extremely important – talks by Mr. Salim and the parties separately and together. You should know that I am very strongly in favor of a bit more secretive talks behind closed doors in small rooms where only the parties are present. One of the problems, and I will say that outright, is that everybody at the moment tries to be in the room. All countries want to be there. I think it is extremely important to say, that this is a negotiation on a domestic problem; it is a negotiation on a civil war between fighting parties within a country – government on one part and the movements on the other part. They have instead of fighting to talk, to negotiate. You don't negotiate in a big public room with everybody present and many cameras. It is not at all best for western countries to be here – if they are being asked, they can help but they don't have to do the job. There are many other examples of talks. For instance the Oslo Conference many years ago between the Government of Israel and PLO helped by the Norwegians. Nobody was there, only the parties themselves and it was fruitful. It wouldn't have been the case if everybody was there and watching. I am saying that about western countries, “please stay away a little bit”. And of course also to African countries; Eritrea and Chad, neighboring countries, that it is not a conflict between Sudan and Eritrea or Sudan and Chad, it is a domestic conflict. So countries should exercise restraint and leave it to Dr. Salim who is an extremely competent facilitator of negotiations. Other countries should not complicate matters by trying to get their own interests in one way or the other also being supported in the talks. That is not helping but complicating matters. That is exactly also the view of Dr. Salim. Having said so, I think it is possible, if we allow parties some time - government, SLM and JEM - that they reach an agreement anyway on the Declaration of Principles. But I think more is necessary. What they should agree upon is a Declaration of Principles just like between the north and the south – you remember Machakos – and then an agenda for further talks, subjects and a timeframe. Not a very long period. A period with deadlines so that parties can start trusting each other. That is possible.

So the situation is better than a year ago. I am quite hopeful that as soon as the new year starts, 2006 -and you have a major African Union summit here, it will be an African Union summit in a country without any war any more within its borders. That is the objective – that should be possible.

Two other points: I am quite interested and pleased also I may say by the fact that the government did announce a special court. I know that there are some doubts in some circles about the special court. I want to say two things:

First thing: I consider the special court to deal with perpetrators of crimes in Darfur as an answer to what was asked from the government already in the Joint Communiqué last year. Then, the government was asked: 'try the perpetrators yourself; bring them to court.' I have already said in these press conferences that the government is not doing enough. In my speech to the Security Council in January I said to the Government, 'please do it now quickly otherwise you may get the ICC.' The government was slow and they got the ICC in the resolution. Now they do it. They are doing it late but they are doing it and that is positive. Of course, special courts have to fulfill their function on the basis of international criteria for special courts. If you read the speech of the Special Adviser dealing with genocide to the Security Council in February this year, he refers to special courts. It is positive as a mechanism. But he also said that special courts should function on the basis of internationally agreed criteria. I have no reason, of course, to assume that that will not be the case but I want to make the case that that is necessary. It is important that it takes place and it should take place on the basis of internationally agreed criteria for special courts.

I hope that all main perpetrators will be brought to court in Sudan – all main perpetrators - and I do not know names. And if there is a start with the small perpetrators, that does not mean that the government will not be after the bigger perpetrators. Also, we had situations before - we have seen that trials started with smaller ones and then gradually build up. You can do it in two ways; start with the big ones then go to the smaller ones or the other way round. There is no rule. What I expect is that it will not stop and that all main perpetrators will be brought to court. That is my first point.

My second point on the court is of course it is positive but it can not be a substitute for the International Criminal Court but I also did say, you remember, in one of my previous press conference, that the International Criminal Court is not a substitute for the domestic courts. It is both ways – domestic and international; international and domestic. That is the way it is.

There is, of course, an interesting timing: the ICC announced last Monday that it will start its investigations here and they are welcome, I understand, and that is positive in itself. And in the same week that special court announcement was made. That may be a coincidence; it may be no coincidence – it doesn't matter – both tracks have to be followed. The two can be related to each other but that is to the courts and not to us.

Finally; and then I will have your questions, during the last couple of days I had very intensive discussions with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and his officials and the Minister of Justice and his officials and also with MSF with regards to the decision by the President that MSF officials who had been brought for questions, you remember, would have to be set free. They have been set free, which is positive. They also did not have to go daily to court in order to show their presence – which is also very positive. A very important question of course is to clear them completely so that also the charges can be dropped. I have reasons to assume that charges against the two MSF officials will be dropped today. That will be very positive because that might make it possible that MSF which has, and I am repeating my statement, saved the lives of tens of thousands of children in Sudan in general and Darfur in particular, can continue that humanitarian work.

Thank you.

Questions and Answers

Q: Reports that Reporters without Borders issued a statement yesterday asking the United Nations to come up with some sort of statement on the freedom of press after the *Khartoum Monitor* was closed down and its license withdrawn. Can we have that statement from the United Nations and an update and what is being done to promote the freedom of press?

The second question is on the national special court on Darfur. Considering all the judges are actually from the Sudanese Judiciary and the United Nations appointed Commission of Inquiry issued a statement saying that they did not think that the Sudanese Judiciary would be as a whole credible enough to deal with crimes in Darfur. Do you think these courts, and the government has said it hopes, will be able to prevent officials from being out from the country to the ICC?

SRSG: First, on the *Khartoum Monitor*, I deplore that the government not for the first time has taken the decision to close down the *Khartoum Monitor*. I would deplore that as far as any newspaper is concerned. This closure has been in effect already for a couple of days – I understand about a week or so- it is quite long. I deplore it, it is a bad sign and I will raise it in my contacts with the respective officials in the government that we are in contact with in the JIM. I deplore it in particular because *Khartoum Monitor* has paid quite an attention to the incidents, to use politically correct language, in Soba. They wrote all about it than in a number of other newspapers. I know that that is risky for individual newspapers. I applaud it that they did it. It was a good source of information for me next to also other sources of information which we did have. Newspapers should be free to publish about events going on in the country even if they are not considered to be very pleasant to elites. I have been a minister myself for 17 years in my country and we had very often statements in the Dutch press which I didn't like at all, my colleagues didn't like at all but a politician has to fight for the freedom of his opponents to oppose him; for freedom of the press. That is one of the hard elements of democracy. And if Sudan gradually becomes a more democratic country following the signature of the Peace Agreement, it will be wise that it allows freedom of the people in the country to speak out, to exchange opinions. That is healthy for democratic development and that includes, of course, the freedom of the press.

I am not commenting on what may be specific legal elements which are relating to the past; I am only commenting on the fact that I am missing a newspaper which I can read. There are only two newspapers which I can read and I have only one – which of course is my mistake (I should be able also to read Arabic and I will do my best to qualify a little bit in the future) but there are only two English newspapers and now I have only one which is a pity. That is number one and I will raise it.

The second question was on the credibility (of the Special Court). If the government takes a decision to do something which it has been asked to do late, you only have to criticize that they are late. You should not have to criticize that they are doing it. Give the government the benefit of the doubt. Doubts are legitimate; doubts are useful. Always express your doubts. That is necessary. Say it is good but please mention your

conditions. Make it possible. And then look at the facts; look at the way in which the courts are going to take place; study the terms of reference of the court; study the proceedings; watch – and the press has to watch. I hope it will be possible for the press to be present in public sessions of the court. They should of course not be closed sessions. It should be open and transparent so that the public, including the press, can report about statements made by those people who are being accused - and nobody is guilty until proven guilty – statements made by prosecutors on behalf of the victims and also to watch how the official authorities, for instance the judges, are reaching a verdict. Open, transparent trials. Give them the benefit of the doubt, again, doubts are legitimate, but give them the benefit of the doubt and show your presence.

Q: There are clashes and fighting between the rebels in Darfur. Don't you think this will affect the round of talks in Abuja and did you discuss these issues in your talks with them?

They had also refused to receive the African Union investigation committee. Have you talked on this issue with them?

SRSB: The fact that they refused to meet the African Union investigation committee was well-known, it was a couple of weeks ago I deplored it. I don't think that that will have very important consequences in Abuja. One of the developments may be that in Abuja where political talks take place less emphasis is being given to the security issues. You remember last year that security incidents on the ground in Darfur always did have a direct effect on the political talks where, then, the SLM or JEM said for instance, 'we can't talk anymore because you are taking our people on the ground.' Security, insecurity had a negative consequence for the political talks. You can solve that by keeping away from security talks - which should take place in particular in the framework of the Ceasefire joint commission away from the political talks in Abuja.

Parties are now more willing to make that separation. Very impressive that, for instance, in answer to your first point, nobody in the speeches and nobody in the talks which were held either with Dr. Salim or with me, referred to the fight between the JEM and SLM. They could have done it in order for instance to say, 'we don't want to talk because we are being attacked.' Nobody referred to it; everybody was feeling ashamed. I remember there was a good statement made by, I think the SLM and JEM on Wednesday, more or less apologizing for the fact that their people are fighting each other. So you can see it as perhaps more of an incident. I was concerned myself because you could see such fights as efforts by individual rebel movements to strengthen their positions on the ground just in order to have a stronger position at the negotiation table. That may be and some analysts say so. I didn't get that impression. I think it was much more activities on the ground by individual commanders than that it was inspired by the political and diplomatic leaders who had to go to Darfur. Let us see it as a sad incident which was not supposed to be, and probably will not, impede the talks in Abuja.

Q: My question is how does Mr. Pronk view the recent announcement by the GoS and the SPLM to postpone the formation of the new government for after 9th July?

You said that the ICC was welcomed. By whom was it welcomed?

Mr. Pronk also said that Eritrea and Chad (inaudible)

SRSG: The government has decided not to say “no” to ICC coming to Darfur. I call that a welcome. That is what I meant. The important thing was - I remember in the beginning there were very negative statements on the ICC, a big demonstration – that the government has decided to talk and not to impede the ICC. Of course they have not been invited to come by the government - but that is a political reality – but they will not be impeded. I call it welcome; a political welcome or a factual welcome. That is what I meant and that is positive in itself. They will not obstruct.

Nobody asked from the government to say “hooray”; of course nobody expects that neither in The Hague nor New York. But what is expected from the government is to make it possible for the ICC to work and that is what they do. That is good.

Second, Eritrea; I said something about Eritrea already and may be the question could be repeated by you in order not to go to the wrong direction. What was the question exactly?

Spokesperson: The question was that Eritrea and Chad are viewed to be an impediment or an obstacle to the talks. Did you talk to both of them raising this issue?

SRSG: I spoke about it just ten minutes ago in general terms. I said, ‘please stay away a little bit. Don’t try to have your own interests being taken care of by the talks between the government and the rebels.’ And I didn’t say that only to Chad and Eritrea but also to other countries because quite a number of western countries also would like to get a place in the table which is not healthy. Stay away; leave it to the parties themselves.

Eritrea; I had a discussion with the representative of Eritrea and he said, ‘we do not want to create a problem.’ And that is possible in itself. There were talks on how to solve it and it has been solved. And they are now sitting (Eritreans), I understand, at a table without a name tag – just as advisors of SLM. But that is a solution. You can find many solutions which are practical and pragmatic.

Chad; I didn’t have discussions with the Chad representative myself because when I left they had not yet arrived. But my deputy did have discussions yesterday with the Chadian delegation and also with others. And the Chadian delegation has been informed about the views of the others that Chad is really having a role as far as the security issues are concerned because they are a facilitator of the talks on the basis of the ceasefire. But they don’t have a role in political talks because there is only one person and that is Mr. Salim. He is the facilitator and he decides whether he would like to have some resource people around him in the chair. And as far as that is concerned, Chad is exactly in the same position as the United States or France or whatever. Mr. Salim decides. I think all countries understand that.

Spokesperson: The other question was on your reaction to the announcement made on the delay of the composition of the Government of National Unity.

SRSG: I don't consider that a delay. What they have said as how I understand it is the following and I think they should make it clear themselves, 'we will keep the date of the 9th of July. Then the new government will be constituted.'

In the previous press conference, I gave some information to you about my talk with Dr. Garang and I said to you that Dr. Garang said, 'I keep the date.' The principals of the government will be sworn in on the 9th of July which are the President of the Government of National Unity and the two Vice-presidents of the government of national unity. Then you have a new government. You don't have all people yet in the government. If you, for instance, look at the United States elections - it is not the only example but everybody knows how things go - you have first the election in November; and the new president being sworn in in January; and then you get all the ministers appointed and some will go to Congress and the Senate and some are rejected. You have a process of a gradual composition of the government and as long as these new people are not yet sworn in then others are caretakers. So you always have a transition period. There is a new government because there is a new president - and he is the Head of Government - but not everybody yet in place. Same in my country: you have elections, we have a new person and then gradually negotiations on who will be the members of the government and the previous government is a caretaker. It is not a delay but is a transition in order to make it possible for a country to continue to function. Imagine that everybody leaves and we don't have yet all the new people and then you have chaos. So it is a wise decision - in my view, looking from the outside - for the government and SPLM to say together, 'we want the void to be filled.' and that augurs well for the future because it shows that there is cooperation between the outgoing government and the representatives of the new people in the incoming government. It is positive.

Q: Did you ask Eritrea and Chad to leave Abuja? On MSF, what was reason you said you have to believe that charges will be dropped?

SRSG: I don't ask them to leave Abuja. I want them to stay in the building but not in the room where the parties are talking. The parties have to talk themselves. No party should ask somebody else to talk for them. You are a mature movements (rebel groups) and you want really to be mature movements. Then you have to do your own talk. They do their own fighting; they also have to do their own talking. If they even cannot do their own talking, can you expect them at a certain moment to be good people to govern? So they have to do their own talking. But others have to be around as witnesses, but to be there as a witness is different than to be there as a substitute in the talks.

Moreover, and I have said that also to SLM and JEM, you have friends but friends have their own interests. Please understand that you are being used and can be abused by your friends. Keep some distance from your friends - and that is what I mean. Your friends should be there when necessary. They should not take over. And that is why I support Dr. Salim very strongly when he concentrates on talks in particular with the parties themselves. They are the parties. Let us not make the Darfur conflict an African or a world conflict. It is a Darfur conflict; it is a Sudanese conflict to be solved by political negotiations amongst the Sudanese parties themselves.

MSF: I can't say much. I was told just before I came down that within a couple of hours it will be solved. And then I said, 'does that mean that I can say to MSF that they may expect today a note saying the charges will be dropped?' and they said, 'yes, you may assume that that can happen today.' Am I going to disclose my source? No.

Q: Mr. Pronk stated that the special courts formed by the government will not be an alternative to the ICC. Yesterday, the Minister of Justice said that these courts will be an alternative to the ICC and that the government will notify the United Nations, Mr. Salim and Mr. Annan.

Doesn't Mr. Jan Pronk take seriously the justice minister's statements that these courts will be an alternative to the ICC?

SRSB: If the government would have been serious they should have started the whole operation in July last year as demanded and as promised. If the government would have been serious, they should have answered my request in January when I said, 'now you have a chance to prevent a resolution to get the ICC.' They didn't ... so they got the resolution on the ICC. The ICC does not substitute domestic trials. That is a clear statement also by the ICC. Take it for granted. The other way around, exactly the same: domestic courts are not a substitute. That is no longer possible – the resolution is there. So do it both ways. It is not new. Look at Rwanda – of course it is a different situation – but you had the Rwanda Tribunal in Arusha and you had the courts in Kigali. The Rwanda Tribunal never said to President Kagame you shouldn't have the court in Kigali. And in Kigali they accepted – of course also they had to – the court in Arusha. You can have it both ways. It can also take place here. The government has perhaps a different political ideal but I think the train has left the station. It is there now and so you have to do it both ways. Do it both ways in such a manner that indeed a combined result is an end to impunity as soon as possible.

Q: My question is on the donor conference held in Oslo and made some pledges. To date, the GoS says the money is not forthcoming as required and that there are doubts that these monies will not be spent by the government on the right channels. What is the mechanism the government can engage in to appease the international community?

Second question is on the humanitarian or food situation in south Sudan in particular and what has the international community done about the issue?

SRSB: Oslo was on development and not relief. Development assistance always comes slower always after commitments are being made. You need peace, you need the possibility to carry out developmental activities. As long as there is really no peace in Darfur, there is no developmental investment – definitely not, it is not possible.

In the south, yes indeed, and there are at the moment talks on how to institutionalize it both in the framework of the multi-donor fund. First discussions have started already with a meeting in Paris two weeks ago. So I think the money will go to the multi-donor trust fund this year.

I myself made proposals – and that is an important answer to your question – how government could guarantee also in the future that G8 will come to establish a consortium. I cannot elaborate on that but the consortium is a very specific mechanism whereby all donors, international positions and the recipient country itself are institutionalized in one group which guarantees good expenditure and also the resources to flow. And I have proposed to have the first meeting of the consortium to take place somewhere in September-October. If it is established and the government is in favor and SPLM has said they are in favor, there might be a good institutional guarantee.

In the south, we have a big problem – a very big problem because there is not enough money coming to finance return and relief in the south. Most governments have transferred the money which in the past was meant for the south to Darfur and Dr. Garang is complaining justifiably. Now we have added our voice to his voice and also Kofi Annan, when he came to the south, made very clear statements also following his visit to the Security Council. We need more money for the south because only, I think, 15% of the needs of the south as were defined by us were covered. We are now revising our work plan for this year – a work plan for relief and recovery money and very probably we will present a revised work plan early July in Geneva.

Q: Do you think, Mr. Pronk, that the delay of the deployment of the peacekeeping forces will not affect the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement - if there is a delay? This is one question.

SRSG: Next question? I thought you said this was your first question so there is a second coming. I have got the impression ...

Q: I don't want you to forget the second one. Its' about the delay in deployment. Would it affect the implementation of the CPA?

SRSG: All right, fair enough. There is a delay and there are two major problems. Firstly; some countries delay the coming of their troops, yes, and that is a planning problem. For instance, and I am not going to mention individual names, a country has promised to make available medical troops, then other countries say, 'we can not bring our troops because there is not available medical assistance if something happens to them.' Then they will not bring in their protection forces. And then countries who sent the Military Observers say, 'if there is no protection we can not send the Military Observers.' So there is a delay due to the fact that there are some problems with some Troop Contributing Countries with a snowball effect.

I am working daily on it at the moment. I can't solve it here. That is an issue which has to be solved in New York because they have to talk with Troop Contributing Countries.

Now your question is not is there a delay, yes, but will it affect the implementation. I don't think so. Between the government and SPLM there is harmony so they are not making life difficult for each other. Moreover they always did say, 'we don't need these people,' so if they are not coming very soon it doesn't matter. But, let me not make a joke about this, we have the problem of LRA and we have the problem of

some other armed forces which have not yet been incorporated yet and can not be monitored. So I am quite concerned.

There is a second problem; there is an additional delay because of the rains. The rains at the moment are posing an impediment to the deployment in a number of southern states. Some airfields can no longer be used for instance; some roads we can't drive on anymore in order to prepare the sites – so that is an additional problem. But that will not, as the first reason, have, in my view, an impact on the implementation of the peace agreement itself. It will only impact the possibility to monitor the implementation of the peace agreement.

Q: Sir, I was very happy when I heard you talking about participation of Sudanese in the operations of the UN Mission. But so far, as we see, there are more expatriates than Sudanese. How are you handling this? Do you have special programs for training the Sudanese to replace foreigners?

SRSG: At the moment we have, if my figures are correct, about 450 Sudanese nationals in the Mission and 150 are being recruited at the moment. So that means we have nearly about 600. My target is 40% of the total operation. The total operation, according to the budgetary estimates - would be above 4,000, somewhere less (indiscernible) some 2,400. 40% is 1,600. At the moment I cannot go to 4,000 because there is a budgetary problem as a whole. We are going to have at the moment, I think, a budgetary line of 2,500 of which 40% is 1,000. You never can do that within a couple of months. So we are on our way to the thousand which is 40%.

I don't think that will be a big problem. The bigger problem, of course, is will these people also be in the higher ranks? And that is important – that is what I want and I deal with it weekly. We have recruitment meetings and we sometimes stop recruitment of non-sudanese in order to create a balance. So it is being monitored very closely at the highest level.

In the south, of course that is part of it, we will in particular recruit people from the region. Of course Sudanese are Sudanese and you can also recruit people from the north to the south but capacity building means people from the south, give them a job, give them training on the job, etc. in order to make it possible for them to stay on in the region themselves and also in other capacities thereafter. That is an important part of our policy.

Q: In your meeting with the JEM, the SLM and the GoS in Abuja. According to your opinion do you think that the parties will sign agreement in order that they can joint the government that is being formed next month?

In case they didn't sign, what catastrophe do you think is going to happen? Is it going to affect the formation of the government?

SRSG: The jargon is “power-sharing”. What is, in my view, on the agenda is power-sharing in Darfur. That has consequences in terms of who is going to get which position in government or whatever in Darfur.

The talks don't include in the agenda power-sharing in Sudan. These are not talks on the future of Sudan – it is a talk on the future of Darfur: power sharing in Darfur; wealth sharing in Darfur; Declaration of Principles of how to deal with the problems in Darfur.

Power sharing in Sudan firstly has been dealt with in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Of course many powers or would-be powers were not at the negotiations table in Nairobi. They will have their chances first in the so-called “national process” leading to a kind of a national conference on peace and stability in Sudan as a whole. They will have the chances also in national elections. At the same time you also know that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement does provide, in some percentages also north-south, for others to participate.

But again, Abuja, the main thing at the moment is power sharing in Darfur and on that basis there will be, I suppose, also other ambitions but that is a next stage.

Did I leave a second question? Oh yes, catastrophe. It is awful and parties have to be extremely serious now. It is not a catastrophe for the elite who were themselves at the negotiation table. But it is a catastrophe for the people; it is a catastrophe for Darfur. There is hardly food being produced anymore in Darfur. So food security is a major problem. The international community is gradually diminishing its assistance. So you need more because people are not producing and you get less. Who are the victims? The weak, the vulnerable, the children, the women, people who have been chased away from their villages. And that is a joint responsibility of those parties to make it possible soon to resume normal activities. But peace is a pre-condition. That is also one reason why I said in my speech, ‘now you have to be serious – don't jockey for power; don't extend your own disputes. If you really are claiming to represent the interests of your own people to fight for your people, their interests should guide you and not your own interest as the leaders.

I think that that has to be the last question because I have another meeting.. Sorry.

Spokesperson: Thank you very much all.