

**The United Nations Mission In Sudan****Date: 5 October 2005****Office of the Spokesperson****PRESS BRIEFING**

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

Good afternoon ladies and Gentlemen and Ramadan Kareem,

Darfur: Political

- SRSRSG Jan Pronk was in Abuja on 30 Sept and 1 October where he had discussions with the AU Chief Mediator, Salim Ahmed Salim, as well as with the delegations of the parties (Government of Sudan, SLM/A and JEM) on the ongoing inter-Sudanese talks. His message to all parties was to move ahead from the procedural discussions that took almost six days and to start as soon as possible with the substantive talks. To the SLM/A, he stressed the need for the Movement to unify its structures, leadership and agenda in order to ensure the success of the current round of talks. He reiterated his call to all members of the SLM/A to remain at the negotiations table, indicating that other issues, including the holding of an SLM/A general conference, could be dealt with once the current round of talks is postponed during the month of Ramadan. He called on all parties to immediately end all attacks. Reacting to the opening today of the plenary session of the talks SRSRSG Jan Pronk indicated that he was pleased that the substantive phase of the talks has finally started. He calls on all parties to engage in these talks in good faith and with a tangible commitment to achieving a final peaceful settlement to the Darfur crisis.

-The SRSRSG will be holding a press conference next Wednesday 12 October upon his return from NY where he is attending meetings on UNMIS budget.

-PDSRSG for Political Affairs Tayé Zerihoun left today Khartoum to Addis Ababa where he will be representing the UN in the meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on the situation in Darfur.

Upcoming events:

- A UN Donor Principals meeting will be held tomorrow at the Friendship Hall. The Meeting will be chaired by DSRSG Manuel Aranda Da Silva and will be attended by senior officials from the Government of National Unity and the Government of South Sudan. The meeting has on its agenda the issues of returns programme, preparations for the Work Plan for Sudan 2006 and funding of the 2005 Work Plan and Common Humanitarian Fund for 2006.

- DSRS Da Silva will meet on Saturday 8 October with the EU Troika Delegation during its visit to Sudan. The delegation includes Javier Solana, the EU's High Representative for Common and Foreign Policy. Discussions will include the implementation of the CPA and the situation in Darfur.

- The Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Walter Kälin, is currently in Sudan in an official mission to the country from 3 to 13 October. The Representative will focus on human rights issues connected with the return of displaced persons to the South of the country as well as on the issues of displaced persons in and around the capital, Khartoum. At the sixtieth session of the United Nations General Assembly in October 2005, the Representative will answer questions concerning his preliminary conclusions on his mission to Sudan. In March 2006, the Representative will present the full report of his findings and recommendations to the UN Commission on Human Rights. For more details, we have a UN press Release dated 30 September.

I would like to inform you all that Mr. Walter Kälin will be holding a Press Conference on Thursday 13 October at 2 PM in this press room. You're all invited to attend.

-Visit of Mr. Dennis McNamara, the Special Advisor to the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator on internally displaced people (IDPs)

Dennis McNamara, the Special Advisor to the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator on internally displaced people (IDPs), visited Sudan from 23-29 September. He noted that while the UN would not be organizing returns until sometime in 2006, when conditions to receive returnees in the South were expected to improve, the UN did nevertheless have a plan to provide basic humanitarian support along routes of return, such as transport for extremely vulnerable or stranded people, way stations in major transit areas, and protection monitoring.

The UN Returns Unit, comprising all UN agencies involved in facilitating the return of millions of Sudanese to their home areas, recently launched an appeal for US \$55 million by November 1st to implement the plan in time for the dry season, from November 2005 until March 2006, when as many as 500,000 people are expected to make the difficult journey home.

The UN is calling on the Government of National Unity to invest heavily in the infrastructure and basic services needed to absorb several million returnees to southern Sudan. It is also calling on international donors, UN agencies and NGOs to do more to support returning populations and receiving communities in southern Sudan. To this end, Mr. McNamara will be meeting on October 14th in Geneva with representatives of major donor nations to brief them on the findings of his visit and to encourage them to provide the US \$55 million needed to help for the remainder of 2005.

Military Update

Strength: Deployment of Military Observers and Protection Force elements is in progress and as of now, there are 2,742 Military personnel deployed, including 167 Military Observers.

Egyptian and Indian troops are planned to arrive in the mission area by the end of this week. Egyptian troops are in total 475 and they will deploy to Kadugli on 8-9 of October. Indian troops are in total 196 they will arrive to Khartoum and after that they will deploy Malakal and Kadugli during 10-24 of October

Monitoring and Verification: United Nations Military observers, duly assisted by SAF and SPLA forces are carrying out routine monitoring and verification duties in all the sectors. Movement and formation of Joint Integrated Units is in progress and UNMOs have reported that units are being formed at Juba, Wau, Malakal, Kadugli and Abyei. Strength of JIUs in respective sector locations is being verified by the UNMIS. As of now, 12000 troops from SAF and 6000 troops from SPLA have been registered with UNMIS to form part of JIUs.

Medical Care by UNMIS Doctors: A Team of UNMIS doctors including doctors from Bangladeshi Contingent Medical Unit provided free specialised medical treatment to the patients in JUBA Teaching Hospital on Thursday. This was in response to the request made by the Hospital authorities to the BANCONTINGENT seeking specialised medical care (UNMIS).

Humanitarian

Darfur

West Darfur:

-The attack on Aro Sharow led to the displacement of approximately 1,000 IDPs. International NGO Concern distributed non-food items (NFIs) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) conducted assessments of the IDP site and has been waiting for those displaced to return to the camp in order to assess immediate needs. Nothing further has thus far been reported.

Other efforts: Heads of agencies met with the Wali of West Darfur after the Aro Sharow attacks and were not given much information; the Wali only stated that the 'problem will be solved'.

- Forty-five Child Friendly Spaces will be opened in Zalingei, Mukjar and Bendizi which will benefit approximately 9,000 displaced children aged 3-5 and 15-18 years through emergency, community-based, non-formal education and psychosocial services. 135 Community Animators will be trained to supervise and lead activities at each space with an additional three Youth Volunteers per centre to assist animators and encourage youth leadership, learning, and development.

North Darfur:

The attacks on Tawilla (29/9) led to the reported displacement of about 2,100 individuals who erected makeshift shelters near the AMIS group site camp in Tawilla. The three NGOs working in the area have not returned and thus far, the IDPs have survived on some of the food they managed to flee with, as well as some assistance from the AMIS forces. Water and sanitation remains a concern, despite the AMIS attempts at digging a shallow latrine on 30/9.

The number of IDPs reported to have fled to ZamZam camp since the 18/19 and 29/9 attacks in villages south of Tawilla, was 5,223. NFIs and food have thus far been provided to 700 families. Sheikhs are insisting that the current figure of displaced people is as high as 15,000. The Sudanese Red Crescent, WFP, the Spanish Red Cross and other humanitarian actors are planning a verification exercise to obtain the correct figures in order to provide appropriate assistance.

South Darfur:

During the last week of September, OCHA, UNMIS, and international NGOs MSF-Holland, AMI and Solidarites paid a one-day visit to Shearia to assess the situation in the area. Following the attack of Shearia by the SLA who allegedly looted all the fuel to be found in town, the population and the Arab militia also looted the market.

Southern Sudan

-Humanitarian agencies are concerned about the situation in Mundri, Western Equatoria, where 29 people have been confirmed killed over the last two weeks by fighting between the Moru and Dinka ethnic groups and at least 215 households have been displaced. Limited access to the region is preventing a full evaluation of the situation.

-In Bentiu, Unity State, the number of measles cases has risen substantially. Though not an epidemic, the situation is cause for concern. A vaccination campaign targeting key areas is therefore being planned, with participation and/or support of ACF, CARE, OCHA, MSF and the Ministry of Health. Selection and training of individuals in vaccination and cold chain maintenance will begin. However, unless funds and vaccines are made available, the campaign will not proceed.

-Also in Bentiu, humanitarian and human rights groups expressed concern regarding continued extortion of money - 500 Sudanese Dinars, or about US \$2.00 - from returnees by troops belonging to the South Sudan Unity Movement (SSUM). The issue has been raised with authorities of the SSUM and the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SRRC), and it is hoped that authorities will do their part to ensure the rights of returnees.

-Following the recent floods in Leer County, Upper Nile State, an inter-agency assessment mission including OCHA, UNICEF and WFP has just been completed. The agencies traveled throughout the county to assess the impact of the floods on the population and the IDPs in the area. The mission focused specifically on amount of crops destroyed, the amount of livestock lost, the number of households displaced by the floods, the number of villages flooded, the impact of the floods on water and sanitation and the extent to which schools still function. A report on the mission's findings will be available in the coming days.

Q & A

Q: The last two days saw some tensions between Sudan and Chad. Do you have more details to give us on these tensions? What is your assessment should these tensions continue in light of the fact that Chad has a major role in the Darfur issue and hosts the talks on ceasefire?

The second question is with regards the UN budget. When do you expect the new budget of UNMIS will be endorsed and what was the past budget?

Spokesperson:

On your question on the budget, the fact is that I do not have the figures but will look it up and let you know. The figures for the proposed and past budgets are not now in front of me but I will come back to you later and let you know.

On your question on Chad, in the first place, the issue is primarily an issue of bilateral relations between two sovereign countries. As Mr. Pronk said when asked the same question in his last briefing to the press, the information we have is not confirmed. We did have information on some incidents and clashes that occurred in some areas along the common borders but we have no information confirming who is responsible for these clashes. What we do know is that relations are good at state levels as we have noticed, between presidents Bashir and Debbé but should there be any problem, these problems should be resolved at the bilateral levels between the two countries.

On Chad's role in the talks, we expect it to continue and we expect Chad, as an African state charged with sponsoring the process and issues pertaining to security and the ceasefire, to present its report to the AU and we hope it will continue in its endeavours to assist the parties in their quest for solutions to the ongoing conflict and we hope coordination between Chad and the AU will continue. Finally, the AU is concerned with the issue. Should any problems arise, then Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim and the AU are the parties responsible to look into these issues and to play their role as mediators in order to resolve these questions.

Q: In his last press conference. Ambassador Baba Gana Kingibe said that the government used the colours of the AU on its vehicles to launch attacks on citizens in Darfur and that it used aircraft cover during *Janjaweed* operations in Darfur. Has the UN investigated on this incident with the AU or does it have any further information?

Spokesperson: Let me put things, again, straight. I will say it in English and then repeat it in Arabic myself.

First, again, the United Nations has absolutely no mandate to monitor the situation in Darfur when it comes to security incidents. That is the mandate of the African Union. So, although we have a presence there, that is a civilian presence. UNMIS has offices in Darfur, humanitarian agencies have offices, NGOs have offices; however we do not have the mandate to monitor or to verify incidents relating to security so there is no way for the United Nations to make sure or to verify what happened or what was used. What we do have in many of these situations are testimonials by eye-witnesses who are on the ground be it from United Nations agencies or NGOs or even the regular citizens of the Sudan who happened to be there and that's it. However, it is not the United Nations that will be making and asserting who is doing what and using what. That is the mandate of the African Union as provided to it by the parties themselves including the Government of the Sudan. In short, to answer your question, no we don't have any information and we do believe that the African Union is the one with the mandate and the terms of reference of the African Union are very clear and were agreed upon by everybody and that is what I have to say on this.

In Arabic ... [provides a near-verbatim interpretation of the above answer].

Q: A number of agencies, including UN agencies, have threatened to withdraw from Darfur following the recent events. Do you have a report of the number of organisations that have withdrawn from Darfur?

My second question is on the eastern initiative launched by the UN. There are talks nowadays that Libya will take charge of the issue. Will the UN participate in these talks should they take place in Libya?

Spokesperson: On Darfur and what has been said about UN agencies and their withdrawal from the Darfur region, there has been no withdrawal to the best of my knowledge. My conjecture is that the reason for your question may be the statements attributed to Jan Egeland. If this is your question Mr. Jan Egeland never said that the UN has withdrawn or will withdraw immediately. He strongly warned that should the situation continue as is and should the situation in Darfur not improve, the humanitarian agencies working in Darfur will not be able to continue operations. And he did give reasons for this – the main one being that the generosity of the donor states will not continue should the situation and humanitarian situation continue as is because these donor states want to see results on the ground. It is true that since the outbreak of the Darfur conflict, international humanitarian intervention was delayed but the donor states started to pump in financial support from late 2003 through 2004 to 2005 and it is almost two months to two years and the donor states will not continue in their generosity to Sudan or Darfur if the conflicting parties do not prove their commitments to put an end to the ongoing conflict.

I did mention to you today some figures of new IDPs and you are aware that even IDPs are not safe and have been attacked even in the camps. This is a precedence we have not experienced before. Despite tensions in some IDP camps, this is the first time that we hear of an attack targeting IDP camps.

The UN has not withdrawn. What we normally do in specific cases is that we withdraw our employees for a limited period of time until the security situation returns to normal or until we confirm that the security situation guarantees the basic safety of humanitarian workers. But the UN has not withdrawn and has no immediate plans to do so. What Jan Egeland said was just a clear warning to the parties that if they do not take their obligations seriously then humanitarian assistance may not be able to continue.

Q: (*indiscernible*: the question again is on agencies that have withdrawn from the Darfur area)

Spokesperson: These were not UN agencies. I have not heard the AU statement but what we do know is that INGOs and Sudanese NGOs are in a state of dilemma because their services are vital on the one hand, and that their security is at risk on the other. You are aware that despite the presence of UN agencies, NGOs continue to play a vital and crucial role because there is a big number of international NGOs (about more than 80 or 90) that come in with their people and funds to implement their programs and also to assist in the implementation of UN programs. The WFP for example may not be able to implement its programs without the assistance of partner voluntary agencies. This is also true for all the other UN agencies which alone can not carry out their programs but are assisted in it by the invaluable assistance of the NGOs.

Again, no UN agency has withdrawn. As for the NGOs, we do understand that some of them may wish to withdraw because – as we did mention to you in a number of occasions – of the problems they continuously face (attacks on their convoys, abductions, looting and even threats to their personal security and safety) – we did mention to you that some humanitarian workers have even been threatened with death. This is an issue that we all must understand and, in the long run, what we all should understand is that the security must be restored in Darfur and all should bear their responsibilities – be it the GoS or the rebel movements and that they should all exert efforts to first of all put an end to the clashes between them and secondly, put an end to the operations carried out by bandits and robbers in all parts of Darfur. All must bear their responsibilities on these issues and cooperate with the AU.

On your question on the issue of the east, I had mentioned in more than one occasion what the role of the UN was. The UN was not in any one time a mediator in this process. It was requested by the Eastern Front -the GoS accepted- to play use its good offices in order to enable the parties to agree on direct talks. The UN was only a party in order to link between the GoS and the Eastern Front in order to bring them to agree on the principles of direct talks and to select a venue and agenda. We have repeated more than once that the UN is not a mediator in substantive talks between the Eastern Front and the GoS. Our role is as mandated to us by the Security Council is to use our good offices in all issues should the parties request us to do so. We have done our role and continue to do so. UNMIS leadership had recently held talks with the Eastern Front and had conveyed to the Eastern Front GoS' acceptance to hold talks about talks and we are waiting for the Eastern Front so that we could inform the GoS on the Eastern Front's proposals on the venue for the talks, and who they propose to be a mediator in substantive talks between the two and the agenda for the talks. We are still waiting for the Eastern Front to respond and once it does, we will inform the GoS and then the process could start. Mr. Pronk had announced in his last press briefing that he hoped these talks about talks will take place in Nairobi in October – no specific date has been mentioned because we are waiting for the Eastern Front to come back to us with its specific proposals.

On the Libyan issue, I am not aware of it. We have been requested to play a role and our role is different. As I did mention, we have never been a mediator to substantive talks between the parties but will attend such a meeting if we are invited – and we do hope we will be invited – but, to date, there is nothing to make us believe that we will not be invited in direct talks between the parties. First of all I do not have any information on Libya's role. I did see press reports that the Beja Congress has decided to travel to Libya and hold talks there. But, of course, these issues are out of our jurisdiction and every country and indeed every party has the right to discuss any issue with the party it chooses.

Q: In your briefing you mentioned that some clashes have occurred in the Equatoria region between the Dinka and the Muru. What is the nature of these clashes?

Spokesperson: I have a very short answer to your question. These clashes, as I did mention, are tribal clashes. We at the UN follow such events because they relate to the general security situation in areas where we are deployed. But these issues are primarily the responsibilities of the GoS and the GoSS.

Q: Mr. Pronk, in his last press briefing, talked of movements of government and SPLA troops into the Abyei region. What is the situation there now, have these forces informed the UN of their movements, and how about the situation between the Misseiriya and the Dinka?

Spokesperson: I don't have details on the situation in Abyei. What I did mention was that there has been a build-up of armed forces from the regular forces and the SPLA and there also has been a build-up of SSDF forces. Mr. Pronk had expressed his deep concern over this issue not because these forces have come into Abyei – because it is the right of these armies to be in Abyei and this is part of what has been agreed upon in the CPA – but because these forces have moved into Abyei first of all without notifying the UN. Mr. Pronk did mention why we are concerned and that is because based on the CPA and especially on the issue of ceasefire, the UN has to be informed of any movement of armed groups because it is basically in Sudan to monitor the ceasefire. How can it monitor a ceasefire if the forces move without its knowledge – where did they come from, what are their numbers and why did they move into the area and what do they intend to do in that area – that is in the first place. Secondly, and this covers your question on the Dinka and Misseiriya, you are aware that the situation in Abyei was tense in the wake of the ABC report. The situation there is still tense. We are happy that the issue did not develop into direct conflict between the two tribes, but the situation remains tense. You are aware that the Abyei issue has not been resolved yet at the level of the Presidency. To the best of our knowledge, the issue of the ABC report is still in the agenda of the Presidency and has not been decided upon yet and the situation on the ground remains tense. Sending a large number of troops to an area which is basically still tense will only add to the tension. This is what I know of the issue at the moment.

As for relations between the Dinka and the Misseiriya, the only issue that was brought to our attention is one that occurred last Wednesday when an argument broke out between the chief of the Dinka and his Misseiriya counterpart and took a physical turn. The issue did not worsen after that despite fears that it may run out of hand and develop into clashes between the two tribes. We are happy that this did not occur and the UN immediately came in to organise an urgent meeting between the two tribes and thus defuse some of the tension. This, what I know about the situation between the two tribes.

Q: What is the guarantee of returning of the IDPs to the south that is already planned for November and March? What are the other preparations being made apart from the appeal?

Last week Mr. Pronk said that now there is a guarantee for peace in Darfur before the end of the year. Now discussions taking place in Abuja is now on power and wealth sharing. Here the government is already formed – the SPLM, the government and southern and northern parties. Will the government be reformed again in order to enable the people of Darfur to participate in government and if not, then how will the people of Darfur get their share in wealth and power?

Spokesperson: I wish I had an answer to all of this; I am not the negotiating party. Your last question is something to be addressed to the parties and even the parties can not answer that because this is why they are negotiating. They are negotiating to sort out the answers to your questions that you just asked me and I am in no position to answer that question. However what I can tell you, we already said that to our knowledge, even the parties said so, even the Darfuran rebel groups: nobody said that they should replace the CPA – nobody said so. So whatever negotiations and whatever solutions, we do understand that it is going to be within the framework of the CPA. It might add or build on it. That is our understanding.

For the rest, honestly, I do not have any answer to it. We will see, but your answer will be at the conclusion of the Abuja process and once we all see the long awaited comprehensive peace agreement between the GoS and the Darfur rebel groups.

On the guarantees for the return of IDPs and refugees and on the preparations side, I don't know how to answer this question. I told you that we have plans and I told you in that briefing about McNamara that he was talking about two issues: one; the assisted or facilitated return, and the other one, is organised return. And I told you that as far as the UN is concerned, we can not start organised return until sometime in 2006. However, meanwhile there are many people returning at their own initiative and in that case what we will do is to assist them with what we can provide them with. As I told you we have the plans but I do not know what the content of these plans is but please go back to my briefing and for further details I would rather have you speak directly to OCHA.

Q: (*In French*) Can you tell us what is the current situation with the UN executing threats of withdrawing from Darfur or not if the situation remains as is?

Spokesperson: (*answered in French*) I just reiterated to your colleague in French the answer to an earlier question on the UN withdrawing from Darfur or not. Please go back to my answer ... I am not going to repeat it in English again.

Q: In the first press conference held by the mission following the resolution on your mandate, there was a commitment of sorts from the Force Commander that the forces will be fully deployed in six months time. Now that these six months is almost over, only 25% of that deployment has been carried out. Will this not affect the efforts of the mission to carry out the tasks mandated especially in light of the fact that some tensions have sprouted out such as those between the Dinka and Muru, some incidents in Juba and the Abyei region. The deployment of these forces would have put such situations under control but it may seem that the mission itself assists also in not enabling its military carry out their roles.

Spokesperson: I don't know how many times I have to answer this question. I answered it so many times and actually I have to keep repeating what I said. And I can just refer you to my previous answers. You do know that we distribute to you these press briefings and the questions and answers.

Again, between the press briefing you just mentioned – and that goes back to the month of March – to this day, I did mention to you all the difficulties and changes that have affected our deployment schemes. Please go back to the reasons I mentioned that have delayed our deployment. I summarise these in the following: the difficult natural and climatic conditions – you do know that the south is now in the rainy season and there is a total lack of infrastructure to enable us carry out our deployment, that is the first factor. Another factor is that the SPLM, when late dr. Garang was still alive, had expressed some reservations over deployment of our forces. Thirdly, TCCs have delayed in sending in their troops for reasons of their own and we had requested New York to pressure these states in order to accelerate sending in their troops and to coordinate the sending in of their contingents in order that they may be an integrated unit. You are aware that among the reasons for the delay is that in more than one situation you will find we did have military monitors but the states that were supposed to send in protection elements did not do so and we could not deploy military observers without protection.

On our part as we mentioned more than once in the last three months, that we hope to complete deployment by November because the rainy season has changed a lot of things.

I differ with you on what you said about the UN contributing to these problems because the role of the UN is not basically conflict resolution. We are here only for monitoring and to use our good offices to intervene between conflicting parties to help end conflict but the UN has no mandate in Sudan to intervene in order to end a specific conflict, whatever the nature of that conflict. We do not have that mandate and consequently, I don't see how the UN could have contributed or added to existing conflicts.

Q: By not having its forces in their stations ...

Spokesperson: We do hope that the UN military presence will have such a deterrent effect as you mentioned but we do not rule out the possibility that such problems can continue with or without UN military presence. In any case, I do hope that we can have such a role – even if indirectly.

Q: My question will be very short and perhaps it will help in terms of the evaluation of the UN mission in Sudan. Last Sunday the 2nd of October within Khartoum and particularly Khartoum North, a group of soldiers who call themselves South Sudan Defence Forces and they particular said they belong to Paulino Matib's group in Kalakla in Khartoum South, entered one of the church compounds – a catholic church in Khartoum North – in order to arrest the parish priest and they said they have the right to take the parish priest to their prison in Kalakla. To the best of my knowledge, Paulino Matib seems to have his own government within the national capital. He has his own forces, his own court, his own prisons ... and this is actually a contradiction. Because on the 9th of July 2005 when the inauguration of the government of national unity took place, there were not supposed to be any forces between the government and the SPLA. And your mission in Sudan is to monitor the implementation of the CPA and to see to it that nothing wavers the smooth implementation of this CPA. What can you as the UN say or comment on such a situation taking place in broad daylight which is a deliberate crime? This is a threat to the nation ... the government is keeping quiet, the SPLM seems to be keeping quiet and other forces are coming up in the middle and it may not be a surprise one day to see an explosion taking place in Khartoum or any other city. That is one.

The second question and the last: on the 24th of September in London, the leader of the Catholic Church in Sudan, His Eminence Cardinal Zubeir Wako said that it seems that the presence of the UN peacekeeping troops in Sudan and in particular in southern Sudan, is not of great influence because there are so many atrocities being committed in the south, especially by the LRA, and so many people are indeed helping the LRA in the dark, as Pronk told us last week that there are forces acting in the dark helping the LRA and the *Janjaweed* in western Sudan. Why not the UN to light a candle in order to dispel this darkness since there are forces acting in the dark and the UN knows this very well; since the UN is here to help the civilians and to help the government and the SPLM to implement this peace process effectively in order to safeguard the lives of innocent civilians. What can you say about all this since the situation is changing to what I call a 'deplorable' situation in broad daylight and you are keeping quiet and things are going to the worse? Thank you for your comments.

Spokesperson: Thank you for being brief. To your first question on Paulino Matib, first of all I am not even aware of the situation but I am just going to give you a general answer on what is our role towards, possibly, SSDF or any other armed group and what we can do and what we can't. First of all the UN, and we said this many times, our mandate does not include intervention when it comes to other armed groups. When you look at the CPA itself, it is the

responsibility of the two signatories – at the time what we referred to as the GoS, and the SPLM. These two took it upon themselves to address the issue of other armed groups including the issue of the SSDF. SPLM in particular has undertaken the responsibility to deal with the armed groups emanating from southern Sudan, acting in southern Sudan or somewhere else in the country. Since we started our mission, one of the priorities which we highlighted to the late John Garang at the time was to expedite the south-south dialogue. Because without a dialogue with these factions that felt excluded from the CPA or did not take part in the Nairobi or the Naivasha process that eventually led to the CPA, you have problems. It is an issue that they have to be aware of and they have to address. And this is what we told them as a priority number one for southern Sudan and particularly for the SPLM at that time before even the government of national unity was established.

Now you said the government is silent or the SPLM is silent – that is their responsibility. What we do as the UN is that if what you described is a fact (I am not sure that this thing has been brought to the attention of the mission), any incident of this nature, we do report it to the Security Council because yes, our role is not all that aggressive on the ground – actually it is just monitoring and seeing what happens – but, and although as I told you the other armed groups and tribal conflicts are not our responsibility in the first place as our role there is very secondary, but in our report to the Security Council we are supposed to report on the overall implementation of the CPA including the implementation of the provisions that fall under the responsibility or the exclusive responsibilities of the parties. So we will report it to the Security Council and the Security Council is the one to address the parties. If they did not undertake their responsibilities, well, the Security Council will address that situation to the party. But our role is, unfortunately, only monitoring. We can not do more than that. We can not intervene and here, on the ground, if such a situation is brought to our attention, you know that there are mechanisms for it – there is the Ceasefire Joint Military Commission, that is the commission that looks at this sort of issues that have to do with activities of armed groups and so on and anything that has to do with the permanent arrangements for security and the ceasefire; and there is the other body which is the Ceasefire Political Commission. Unfortunately, the political commission has not started yet and it is the priority that Mr. Pronk highlighted so many times to late Garang, to Salva Kiir, to President Bashir and he told them that there are so many issues they have to tackle in the framework of the Ceasefire Political Commission. And, more importantly, there is the other commission that should be established as part of the priorities and we highlighted this to the parties as many times as we could, and we highlighted this in our report to the Security Council on the implementation of the CPA, that is the Evaluation and Assessment Commission. That is the ultimate body established by the CPA and that body is supposed to tackle such issues that are beyond, say, the framework of the military or political ceasefire commissions. You know that the Assessment and the Evaluation Commission is the one that oversees the whole process of the implementation of the CPA.

Now, the LRA – again, I did not hear the statement but I hear so many statements of a similar nature and believe me, we are more frustrated than you are about the fact that the LRA is wreaking havoc over there and nothing much is done to stop it. Actually, I don't know if you were there when SRSR Pronk briefed the media on his mission to New York. One of the strongest points he made to the Security Council was the need for the Security Council to come up with an actual strategy to tackle the issue of the LRA once and for all. And he said that maybe the military solution is not the most effective one so we have to come up with a strategy that will include the military side but also will encompass some kind of dialogue with the LRA because, whether we like it or not, they are there. They are obviously quite

powerful and they can destabilise lots of areas not only in Sudan, but in Sudan, Uganda itself and the DRC lately. So it is not only a problem of UNMIS. UNMIS does not have an explicit mandate towards the LRA, the mission of the UN in the DRC has no such mandate either, so we are here just to monitor what is happening and we can not do much about it and that is why SRSR Pronk asked for an actual strategy and not a piece-meal approach – like every time we talk about the LRA we try to address a little aspect of it – but a comprehensive one. So hopefully the Security Council – actually I think you should primarily address your question to the Security Council because the LRA is not a new happening but has been there for quite a while. Unfortunately so far, as Mr. Pronk said, there has been only a piecemeal approach on the issue of the LRA and Mr. Pronk put the appeal loud and clear to the Security Council to come up with a strategy to address the issue of the LRA. Having said that, the issue of the LRA has to be addressed on the ground, for the time being, by the two parties. And if you go back to the CPA, they said they will tackle this issue. We know that there have been some meetings between the two – that is the Sudan Armed Forces and the SPLA – on this particular issue. I don't know what transpired from that but what we keep hearing from both parties is that both are committed to put an end to the threat posed by the LRA in southern Sudan. Did that result in any tangible result? Why not tangible results? I don't know. You have to address that query to the two parties.

Q: I would just like for you to clarification something about tomorrow's meeting. You said preparations for the Work Plan. What we understand is the programs for the Work Plan are usually ready by October. So are you just going to start preparations for this Work Plan or are you going to announce it ...?

Spokesperson: Actually no. You know that we started already, in-house – UN specific we have started doing our work. And if you remember, Mr. Pronk spoke about that Port Sudan meeting, the inter-agency, I mean the UN Country Team actually, so we have so many things happening.

The important part here, and you know that the work Plan is not only UN exclusively – we have United Nations and partners and partners include donor countries. So it is part of a process and the start of the process. We do consult not only with the partners because, eventually, they are the ones who are going to finance it so you would understand why they have to be part of the preparation process, but the other level is also to consult with the beneficiaries – which is the representatives of the state of Sudan – with the GoSS when it comes to southern Sudan specific projects and with the GoS when it comes to the overall package in terms of projects. So, in short, it is not a preparation *per se*, it is part of a process.

Q: And what is the idea behind this common humanitarian fund? The Work Plan itself is part humanitarian and part development, so what is this common humanitarian fund?

Spokesperson: I am really sorry, I don't have the answer for that but I will ask my colleagues from OCHA. I really don't know the difference between the two, but they are different and I know. I would recommend to get in touch with OCHA – or Aisha from UNDP and she can get you more specific on that.

Thank you very much and, again, Ramadhan Kareem. Hopefully I will see you at the press briefing next Wednesday with Jan Pronk.

Thank you very much and thanks for the interpreters as well.

