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(By Public Information Office)

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HIGHLIGHTS:

UN/ AU-UN Transition

Kofi Annan to establish direct dialogue with President Bashir over assessment mission

(*AlRai AlAam* – 10th May. **Agencies**) UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan says he will exert great efforts to convince the parties that have not signed the DPA to join in.

Annan who was addressing members of the Security Council at a special meeting at ministerial levels yesterday called upon the parties to the conflict in Darfur to observe the ceasefire and respect the agreement reached.

He said the UN will face a major challenge in the implementation stage of the DPA. "Our primary goal at the moment is to strengthen the AU forces in Darfur with strong elements that will guarantee security for the IDPs and their returns and a transition to the UN is necessary as the operations will require logistic and technical support," the UN chief is quoted as saying.

The UN Secretary-General further said that the UN and the AU are carrying out direct field assessments and consulting with the Government of National Unity in Sudan and the other parties on the requirements for the implementation of the DPA.

"I have wrote to President Bashir requesting support for the assessment mission and hope to hold direct dialogue with him on the issue because his support is necessary for the success of such a mission," adds Annan.

USG Egeland

On request for government help to fill food deficit: (*Reuters/ST, the local media in Sudan* – 10th May. **Khartoum**) U.N. humanitarian chief Jan Egeland met Sudanese government officials on Tuesday to ask them to ease travel restrictions and bureaucracy which have hampered aid workers in the past.

"The humanitarian operation is unsustainable ... and we are here to work together with the government but they have to help us help their people," Egeland, who met Humanitarian Affairs Minister Kosti Manyebi, told Reuters.

Manyebi said big aid operations were always difficult but denied restrictions were deliberately imposed on aid workers.

"What we are trying to do is to bring all the ministries together ... so that there is a one-stop shop for NGOs (non-governmental organisations) to come to," he told reporters.

There are more than 13,000 aid workers in Darfur, one of the largest operations in the world. But food rations to millions were cut in half in May because of funding shortages.

Egeland said this cut would last until October, as donor nations had pledged money too late to stockpile food ahead of the rainy season from May to September when Darfur's dirt roads become impassable.

He asked the government to help fill the food gap.

Manyebi said the government had already released 10,000 bags of food from its strategic reserves and would lend the United Nations more food, which the world body should pay back once the food arrived in later months.

Egeland also said he wanted the government and rebel groups to work towards reconciliation now a peace deal had been signed.

Calls on the parties to seize the opportunity and work towards reconstruction in Darfur: UN humanitarian chief Jan Egeland has called on the parties in Darfur to seize the opportunity and to work for the reconstruction of the Darfur region.

Speaking at a press conference yesterday, the UN USG for Humanitarian Affairs said that the international community will assist in the consolidation of peace in Darfur and that the UN Emergency Coordinator has donated an amount of 20 million dollars to meet the requirements of IDPs who have fled the recent events in Darfur.

Egeland also called on the AU to take preventive measures to protect civilians and expressed hopes that the security situation will improve and peaceful coexistence will return to Darfur to enable the return of over 2 million IDPs to their homes.

Egeland also expressed concern over the rise of child mortality rates.

On deployment of international troops to Darfur: Asked on prospects for the deployment of UN troops to Darfur, the USG said that he has received some positive signals from the government in that regard but did not elaborate.

He said he does not think the government will reject a deployment of international troops to Darfur but added he did not want to speculate. He said international forces will not be on the ground in Darfur today or tomorrow and that the AU forces remain on the ground and continue to do "miracles" in Darfur despite the dearth of resources.

On the situation on the ground in Darfur: USG Egeland has expressed concern over the future of the Darfur region and has warned of possibilities of a new outbreak of war in the region should the current scenario be left to continue as is.

Egeland who is has just concluded a tour of Darfur drew a bleak picture of the security and humanitarian situation in the region against the background of the recent events in Kalma Camp in which one AU interpreter of Sudanese nationality was killed by an unruly mob.

Egeland who yesterday concluded a 5-day tour of Sudan expects a food deficit in Darfur in the next four months unless the Sudan government and the international community combine efforts to fill that gap.

He said attacks continue against innocent civilians and women and children and pointed out that 10,000 civilians have recently fled to Gireida recently. He said that commitment from the government and the armed groups of Darfur to the DPA is the only way out of the crisis.

On the recent incident in Kalma Camp during the USG's visit: Asked to comment on what exactly what happened in Kalma, USG Egeland said that the cause of the tensions in Kalma could be traced back to the period prior to his visit. He said that the direct cause of the problem was the state government's decisions to expel the Norwegian Refugee Council that was responsible for the camp.

Asked on who was responsible for his safety and security during the visit, Egeland pointed out that responsibility for his safety rested on the government and the UN.

On disarming the Janjaweed: USG Jan Egeland said that they welcome the government declaration to disarm the Janjaweed as good news.

Egeland described the DPA as a genuine moment of truth for Darfur and a time for a change for the better and for reconciliation.

SRSB holds talks with tribal leaders in Darfur

(*AlAyaam* – 10th May. **Khartoum**) SRSB Jan Pronk is in North Darfur in a bid to create a popular consensus on the DPA.

UNMIS Spokesperson Baha Ekoussy says the SRSB will urge the tribal leaders to exert pressures on the parties that have not signed the DPA to do so.

Sudan is committed to deploy UN forces in Darfur – FM*

(*ST* – 9th May. **Vienna**) Sudanese Foreign Minister Lam Akol has stated that his government is committed to its promises to deploy UN forces in Darfur as part of the peace agreement that was signed in Abuja last week, but added that this would happen at the right time and with Khartoum's agreement.

He said in an interview with the London based Al-Sharq al-Awsat that the security arrangements in the documents talked about a UN role according to which it would play the peacekeeping role, precisely as had happened in south Sudan.

He added: "The UN has not contacted the Sudanese government so far and Sudan has not asked it to do so. All the present talk about this matter is carried out unofficially."

Akol launched a vitriolic attack on the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) that refused to sign the peace agreement and said it is known for its lack of seriousness. He also pointed out that AbdulWahid Mohamed al-Nur, leader of one faction in the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), was the only one who refused to sign, while all members of his delegation signed it. He pointed out that his country does not fear those rejecting the peace because they are a minority.

The interview with Akol was conducted during a short visit he made to the Austrian capital Vienna, the current EU president, where he is attending a coordinating conference between the current and next presidencies in Africa and Europe.

** See full text of the interview in the separate attachment*

Sudanese official opposes UN, US intervention

(*Xinhua/ST* – 9th May. **Rabat**) The United Nations and Washington have no ground to intervene in the Darfur crisis following the signing of a peace agreement, a Sudanese official said Monday.

The UN and the United States have no political or legal basis to step in, Ghazi Salah Eddine, adviser to Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir, told reporters here.

Salah has attended a pan-Arab conference in Casablanca.

On Friday, the Sudanese government and the Sudan Liberation Movement faction led by Minni Arkou Minawi signed a peace agreement in the Nigerian capital Abuja to end a three-year-old armed conflict.

The United States is proposing that a UN peacekeeping force be moved into the region from southern Sudan to reinforce a 7,000-strong African Union force.

The Sudanese government has refused to deploy UN peacekeeping personnel.

Ghazi also called on rebel factions staying out of the peace treaty to join.

Friday's peace agreement was rejected by two armed groups, which maintained that security and compensation for war victims have not been guaranteed.

No Canadian troops for UN mission in Darfur - PM

(*ST* – 9th May. **Ottawa**) Canadian troops are unlikely to help shore up a fragile peace in Sudan's bloodied Darfur region as part of a UN mission, Prime Minister Stephen Harper indicated, but Ottawa is keen to offer humanitarian aid.

"The government of Canada has been in consultation with our allies on how we can assist the United Nations ... in regards to peace initiatives in Darfur," Harper told the House of Commons.

"We are expecting requests for assistance on governance and humanitarian assistance. At this moment it doesn't appear that there will be any requests for military assistance," he said.

"But, we stand ready to work with our international allies to improve the situation in Darfur."

His comments come one day after Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor told a Senate national security committee that Canada's military is stretched thin after deploying 2,300 troops to hunt down Taliban and Al-Qaeda militants in Afghanistan in February.

Thus, Canadian troops would not be able to participate in a UN mission in Darfur, he said.

"We would be greatly challenged to take on a commitment anywhere else in the world," O'Connor said.

Last week, Canadian Senator Romeo Dallaire, ex-commander of the UN mission during genocide in Rwanda in 1994, beseeched Ottawa to commit about 1,500 troops to a "robust" UN mission to bring peace and stability to Darfur.

Canadian lawmakers also debated Ottawa's position on the conflict in the House of Commons a week ago, but made no firm commitments.

Canada currently has 47 soldiers in Sudan: 32 with a United Nations mission and 15 with the African Union in Darfur.

ICC queries 500 Darfuris; starts drafting report to the Security Council

(*AlRai AlAam* – 10th May. **Khartoum**) The ICC prosecutor has started drafting his report to the Security Council following investigations with 500 witnesses from Darfur.

The report will be presented in June.

Sources say that the witnesses are all from the victims in Darfur and the investigations carried out outside the Sudan.

The sources further add that the prosecutor has had a look at the names of 51 “suspects” that has been circulated but points out that that list does not concern his work.

CPA

82% redeployed north, says SAF general

(*Khartoum Monitor* – 10th May. **Khartoum**) The top commander of the army in Equatoria, Mjr. Gen. Jamri A. Jamri, told reporters in his offices last Monday that over 82% of the SAF have moved north of the 1.1.'56 line as stipulated by the CPA.

He said the SAF redeployment will beat the deadline set by the CPA.

He further pointed out that accusations of SAF support for the Lord's Resistance Army are not true. He said the Lord's Resistance Army is no longer in Equatoria and has moved to the DRC but that the Lord's Resistance Army is always cited as the culprit when some elements of a militia group come together and commit atrocities.

On SAF burning down their barracks as they redeployed, the general said that the trenches being buried by the redeploying forces are for security purposes and are a duty for such an army.

He said that with the CPA, the door is now open to all SAF troops to choose whether they want to continue in the soldiering trade or retire.

With regards to the question of landmines, the general said that they are working together with the UN as the Joint Integrated Units. He said that some main roads are now cleared of landmines and cited specifically the Juba-Torit, the Juba-Yei and the Juba Maridi roads.

Regarding armed civilians, he said that their disarmament will be done by the DDR programmes both in the north and the south.

Another SAF officer, Major Mohamed Gureshi said that some SAF officers have been arrested in Kapoeta, Yei and New Site. “with the CPA there should be freedom of movement all over the country without any restriction and arrest,” he said.

GoNU

SPLM parliamentarian says parliament should have been informed about the DPA

(*AlAyaam* – 10th May. **Khartoum**) Atim Garang, SPLM parliamentarian, protests that parliament was not formally been informed of the signing of the DPA.

Garang who is also the Deputy Speaker and who chaired yesterday's session of the National Assembly said that parliament should have been the first to be informed of the details of the DPA immediately after the Presidency.

“It seems that they are just coming out of a totalitarian system that regards the National Assembly (Parliament) and the Council of Ministers (Cabinet) as one institution and not the different institutions they are,” says the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly.

He said that this has to come to an end.

A member of parliament had asked the chair why parliament was not represented at the celebrations of the signing of the DPA in Abuja and the Deputy Speaker pointed out that the National Assembly only knew of the development through the media.

It is worth noting that Dr. Majzoub el-Khalifa who headed the government team to the Abuja talks will today be briefing the National Assembly on the DPA.

SPLM accuses the National Congress Party of monopoly over state media

(*AlRai AlAam, Khartoum Monitor* – 10th May. **Khartoum**) Yassir Erman says the SPLM is not happy wit the performance of the media in the country.

Erman who heads the SPLM caucus at the National Assembly pointed out that the SPLM believes state media only expresses the opinion of a single party and not the policy of the Government of National Unity.

He said that the media must reflect the entire spectrum of opinions in the country.

Erman stated that these shortcomings discourage the implementation of the CPA.

He described the forthcoming referendum on unity or secession as a litmus test for the media to shop concern for the political and cultural diversity.

Erman announced that the SPLM is about to launch its own satellite channel.

Erman's comments come after the Minister of Information briefed the House of the performance of his ministry.

Salva Kiir and Taha discuss the DPA

(*AlRai AlAam* – 10th May. **Khartoum**) Vice-Presidents Salva Kiir and Taha held talks yesterday on the DPA signed recently in Abuja.

The talks also covered progress on the implementation of the CPA and preparations for the forthcoming talks between the SPLM and the National Congress Party scheduled to take place at the end of this month.

Darfur/ Abuja talks/ Chad

SLM's al-Nur says peace deal misses core concern of Darfur people

(*Daily Trust/ST* – 8th May. **Abuja**) The AbdulWahid al-Nur head of a faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) has in strong terms denounced the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) signed on Friday 5 May by the Sudanese government of Sudan and the Mini Minnawi faction of the SLM/A.

In a press conference held in Abuja on Sunday 7 May, al-Nur described the peace agreement, brokered by the African Union in conjunction with the international mediators and partners as totally deficient in addressing the core concern of the Darfur people and predicted that it would not stop genocide or ethnic cleansing in Darfur, the Nigerian Daily Trust reported.

According to al-Nur, the peace agreement as currently presented lacks effective and clear mechanism for the disarmament of the Janjaweed militia, an Arab mounted gunmen suspected to be proxies of the Sudanese government. He further admitted that tremendous international good will and concern has been expended on Darfur crises but said that his movement cannot accept the peace agreement in its present form as it would make them the employees of the Sudan government in Khartoum.

He however, stated that the SLM/A would continue to abide by N'djamena ceasefire agreement but would however, defend themselves if attacked.

The SLM/A, he said, has come under tremendous pressure from the international community to sign the peace agreement, the latest been a telephone call from the European Union foreign policy chief, Javier Solana. SLM/A leader, however regretted that he could not give in , to these pressure because his contact in Darfur proper, which cut across the movement's commanders, internally displaced persons and refugees convinced him that the overwhelming people of Darfur which he estimated at 92% completely rejected the peace agreement.

AbdulWahid however stated that both he and his movement would be available for further negotiation on acceptable document that would bring peace to Darfur.

He commended and expressed gratitude to Nigerian President Obasanjo, his US counterpart, George Bush, the AU chief mediator and special envoy, Salim A. Salim for sustained concern to the people of Darfur and implored them not to loose interest in Darfur on account of his movement's refusal to endorse the agreement.

Minnawi's SLM seems divided over Darfur accord

(*ST* – 9th May. **Abuja**) The main stream of the Sudan Liberation Movement of Minni Menawi seems affected by the signing of Darfur Peace Agreement. Divisions appeared inside the group over the next steps to be taken.

In a letter addressed to the United Nations Secretary General, the Political Advisor of the main faction of SLM, Ibrahim Ahmed Ibrahim, demands to investigate the circumstances of

the signing of their leader. Ibrahim said Minnawi had been pressured into signing an "incomplete agreement" that would likely fail to solve the crisis.

The letter created a row among the group. SLM's Minnawi spokesperson Mahjoub Hussein said the letter was not representative of the entire movement.

SLM-Minnawi and a splinter group of SLM-AbdulWahid led by Abdelrahman Musa both signed the DPA.

The Abdelrahman group is made up of people belonging to different ethnic groups that include the Birgid, Berti, Daju, Tunjur and Arab groups of south Darfur who were associated with AbdulWahid. They are saying that there are Massaleit commanders in their ranks.

Such developments make clear that if AbdulWahid didn't join the accord, the Fur tribe will be excluded from the deal and politically isolated in the region.

Khalil Ibrahim Justice and Equality Movement formed mainly from Zaghawa could be contained on the ground because Minnawi faction is also a Zaghawa one.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's special representative in Sudan, Jan Pronk, headed to Darfur on Tuesday in an attempt to secure the support of all rebel groups for the peace deal.

"Jan Pronk will resume the efforts he started a week ago in Abuja. But now on the ground he will prod the rebels who didn't sign the agreement to join the peace process," UN spokesman in Khartoum said.

Holdout Darfur rebels urged to join Darfur peace deal

(AP/ST – 9th May. **United Nations**) Eight foreign ministers have led a U.N. Security Council meeting to demand that holdout rebel groups in Darfur join a peace deal signed last week, and warned that the fate of the Sudanese region would be a test for the powerful U.N. body.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan warned the ministers who sat around the council's horseshoe-shaped table not to become complacent now that the peace deal has been signed to end violence in Darfur that has killed some 200,000 people since 2003.

He told them now was "not a moment for anyone to bask in congratulations or rest on their hands. Darfur is still far from being at peace."

He and other ministers urged other nations Tuesday to contribute more money for humanitarian aid in Darfur. A severe shortage in contributions has forced some aid groups to drastically scale back their work there.

"The plight of the people of Darfur stirs the conscience of all human beings," U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said. "But conscience alone will not feed starving people and save innocent lives or bring peace to troubled lands."

Rice was among several ministers who told their colleagues of recent or new pledges to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Darfur. The United States recently requested another \$225 million for Sudan, well above what others have sought.

Several diplomats said the council's handling of Darfur was a crucial test. Annan warned that the task that the council would soon undertake would be "one of the biggest tests this organization has ever faced," comparable to Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia.

"Since its inception, this Council has stood at many moments of history," Britain's Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett said. "Now is such a moment. For the first time in three long hard years of war the people of Darfur have some hope."

Several diplomats pressured rebel groups to join the peace deal. The main faction of the Sudan Liberation Army had agreed to join the deal, but so far, another branch of the fractured Sudan Liberation Army has refused to do so.

"The remaining leaders of the movements - who are yet to accept the agreement - must be made aware that by hesitating they fail their own people, who most of all want to see peace and security for themselves and future generations," said Ulla Toernaes, Denmark's minister for development and cooperation.

Sudan's temporary ambassador to the United Nations, Mohamed Manis, pledged that his government would not back out of the peace deal and urged the council to pressure all of Darfur's rebels to join.

"This agreement did not come about by a quirk of coincidence, rather it has been a result of hard, strenuous and exhaustive endeavours to reconcile the parties and promote negotiations," Manis said. "Hence, abandoning it is unthinkable as it has ended that crisis."

Diplomats who spoke at the meeting also expressed near-unanimous support efforts to give the United Nations control over some 7,200 African Union peacekeepers in Darfur.

Diplomats at the meeting agreed to a joint statement that welcomed the Abuja deal and urged Sudan to allow a peacekeeper assessment team into the country to prepare for the new mission.

The statement also asked Annan to consult with potential troop contributors but stressed the future U.N. force should have "strong African participation and character."

AU Mediators address open letter to reluctant Darfur rebels*

(*ST* – 9th May. **Abuja**) In a pedagogic effort, the African Union Mediation team wrote an open letter to the Reluctant Darfur rebels who didn't sign Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA).

The signatories of the letter appealed Darfur rebels to join the deal. They presented it as "a very strong deal in each of three main areas: power-sharing, wealth-sharing and security arrangements". They further added that the DPA "has stronger guarantees for implementation than any other peace agreement in this African continent".

According to the mediators the DPA create favourable conditions for the rebel movement to pursue their political objectives by peaceful means. It is also offer them the possibility to "gain power in Darfur and establish governments at the level of State and Region, through democratic processes".

* See full text of the Open Letter in the separate attachment

Russia pledges continuing support for Darfur settlement

(*ST* – 9th May. **United Nations**) Russia intends to continue assisting the political settlement in Darfur, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said, speaking at a meeting of the UN Security Council on Sudan.

"The Russian Federation will continue to offer every possible assistance in consolidating the political settlement on Darfur in the interests of Sudan's unity and territorial integrity and peace in the region. Russian peacekeepers will also make their contribution to the UN's efforts to promote stability," Lavrov said.

He noted that Moscow was pleased by the signing of a peace agreement between the national unity government and the main faction of Sudan Liberation Movement in Abuja, the RIA Novosti reported.

"For the Darfur peace process to become truly irreversible, all the participants in the Abuja talks had to use this historical chance and subscribe to the comprehensive agreement," the Russian minister said.

According to him, the move towards a political settlement in Darfur should help change the critical humanitarian situation in the region, where hundreds of thousands of people are only just managing to survive.

Libya to organise meeting between Chad and Sudan

(*Sudan Vision* – 10th May. **Khartoum**) Libya announced yesterday that it would resume efforts to normalise bilateral relations between Chad and Sudan.

A Libyan official said a tripartite summit will be held soon in Tripoli between the foreign ministers of Chad, Sudan and Libya.

Southern Sudan

Refugees still pouring out of southern Sudan

(*ST* – 9th May. **Nairobi**) Thousands of southern Sudanese are still pouring into refugee camps in Kenya, far outnumbering those who have returned home since a peace deal was signed last year, the United Nations said Tuesday.

More than 10,000 people from southern Sudan have been registered at northern Kenya's Kakuma camp since the country's long-running civil war ended in January 2005, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said.

The influx has far outpaced the fewer than 600 refugees who have voluntarily returned to their villages in south Sudan to take advantage of what had been hoped to be a peace dividend after 21 years of conflict in the region.

"We have received more than 10,000 refugees, mostly from the Upper Nile region," UNHCR spokesman Emmanuel Nyabera told AFP. "They are fleeing hunger, looking for educational opportunities, and others are fleeing insecurity."

At the same time, only 3,000 refugees have signed up to return home and only 555 of those have actually gone back since the UNHCR's voluntary repatriation program began in December, he said.

Although the peace deal ended fighting between Khartoum and the ex-rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), southern Sudan is still a hotbed of instability, and its infrastructure is shattered.

The Upper Nile region is plagued by militia activity and inter-tribe clashes, while elements of Uganda's notorious Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebel group have been carrying out raids in the Equatoria region.

The UNHCR has in the past warned that ruined infrastructure, threats posed by lurking landmines as well as persistent insecurity would hamper refugees' return to various parts of oil-rich southern Sudan.

More than four million people were forced from their homes during the 1983 to 2005 conflict that claimed some 1.5 million lives in what was Africa's longest-running civil war when it ended.

South Sudan discuss conflicts over grazing rights

(SRS/ST – 9th May. **Nairobi**) Governors of the 10 southern Sudan states met in Juba last Wednesday 3rd May to discuss among other things how to prevent conflicts over grazing areas, water points and agricultural lands, which have fuelled violent inter-tribal border disputes in the south.

The governors discussed the current state borders, which were drawn up by UN relief agencies during the war. The UN also attended the meeting, referred to as the governor's forum.

The chairman of the meeting, Central Equatoria State governor Clement Wani, criticized the current state borders and maps saying they were drawn without consulting with the local authorities. Wani also criticized the change of names of rivers, mountains, valleys and international borders.

Meanwhile, the governor of northern Bahr El Ghazal state, Joseph Maring, said that maps drawn by the colonial Anglo-Egyptian government should be used as references to justify any new maps as states dialogue with their neighbours.

Unity State governor Taban Deng Gai termed the border issue as "a big headache", citing the oil wells in his state annexed to southern Kordofan, which he said is unacceptable.

SPLA refutes torture claims

(*Khartoum Monitor* – 10th May. **Khartoum**) The Chief of Staff and Deputy Commander of the SPLA, General Oyay Deng Ajack, has branded allegations against his forces as "agitation intended to spoil the image and reputation of the SPLA".

General Oyaya was reacting to a story rung by *Alintibaha* daily last Monday in which it alleged that an Islamic scholar has been detained and is being tortured by the SPLA in Juba.

The paper had reported that the scholar was subjected to continued harassment before his arrest just for carrying out his daily worshipping.

The SPLA general said he did not think the SPLA can do such a thing and pointed out that there is no SPLA in Juba but only JIUs and the police.

He said he was aware that there were people arrested last week on charges of supplying ammunition and other supplies to the Lord's Resistance Army and that if the *Sheikh* is among those who support the Lord's Resistance Army then he is likely to be among those arrested.

The SPLA officer pointed out that there are many Muslims in Juba and that the SPLA has no reason to target any Muslim person or organisation.