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SRSR PRESS CONFERENCE

Below is a near verbatim transcript of the press conference by SRSR Pronk held on 21st September, 2006.

D. Spokesperson Bahaa Elkoussy: Thank you for coming to this press conference hosting SRSR Jan Pronk.

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

SRSR Pronk: Thank you.

I think it is my first press conference since many weeks and you may have read the text of my statement to the Security Council and you may have read also one particular passage in my statement which I would like to read out in full because this is the first press conference where I am meeting the press not only before I left in early August but also since the atrocious crime against one of your colleagues.

Let me read out what I said to the Security Council to which statement all members of the Security Council did listen.

I did say, and I repeat, that:

I am alarmed at the kidnapping and the beheading in Khartoum of Mr. Mohamed Taha, the chief editor of the AlWifaq daily newspaper in Sudan. This brutal murder has been claimed by the AlQaeda. True or not, the style of the execution is alien to the Sudanese environment and is indicative of foreign presence.

More journalists have received similar threats. This is an attack on the Freedom of Expression. This heinous claim can roll back any progress made in liberalizing the media through forced self-censorship. That would be a setback.

Since the adoption of the constitution mid last year, the Sudanese press has become politically more diversified and agile. Using its rights and freedoms as it should be in a country striving for democracy.

I apologize for quoting my self but I think it is important that I am saying this not only in the front of the Security Council but also in Khartoum itself. I have been told by Mr. Bahaa Elkoussy upon my return from Security Council that indeed one of the fears that I had expressed - more censorship - following that attack has happened and at the same time, in the meantime also that something had been lifted again. Despite the fact that we had some engagements which is positive, I have always had great admiration for the way in which the Sudanese press was developing itself in a critical, independent, diversified platform which is, as I said, necessary for any country. I hope that that you feel in a position to continue to do so. To be as critical as you want to be yourself to the authorities but also to me and to the people behind me - to United Nations - only free exchange of information, views and opinion which can breed some consensus and coexistence of people of different views in a society.

Today is the Day of Peace which is one of the official days of the United Nations. There is some celebration here this morning in Khartoum. There is a message by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and my Deputy Mr. Zerihoun, is at the moment at that celebration. He is reading out the text of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. After this press conference I will take the plane to do the same in Juba and have some discussion of course at the same time. But I will be in Juba at a rather big ceremony of the United Nations Day of Peace and I hope also to meet be able to meet some of your colleagues in Juba. I will have the opportunity also to say something about the Day of Peace through Radio Miraya. The United Nations' Radio Mirror, as you know, is at the moment in Southern Sudan broadcasting I think 24 hours a day, 7days a week. And I understand there is a free contact between Radio Miraya and the public and that is very well appreciated. I hope that we together will also see the day that radio Miraya can broadcast here in northern Sudan and be a platform – because that is the whole idea - a platform of discussion and not a one-way street of information engaging as many as possible representatives of the population.

Yesterday, I returned from the meeting of the Security Council; not that the meeting is over, because the Security Council's meetings are nearly daily as you know. I delivered a statement to the Security Council on Monday. It was the statement based on our 3-months' report on the implementation of the UN mandate. You know that the report is always being drafted by us here but then presented to the Security Council by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It is available in Arabic also here. That is the report for the 3 months of July, August and September.

In my speech, I did dwell on our main mandate on the north-south – the CPA and I did say that the CPA is on track but there are a number of very major important difficulties. On track, but as I said in my speech in the Security Council it is a bumpy ride and the train can very easily derail. And I mentioned a number of problems which have not been solved and are familiar to you: Abyei, oil the borders. I am not so worried that the problems are not being solved. My worry is that there is hardly effort to solve the problems and that everything is being stalled and postponed. Because time can solve problems but if people on the ground do have the impression that politicians do not solve the problems and the institutions are not being used very well, then you get violence on the ground and you see that there is tension. And that is reflected also, as I said in my speech, a “widening gap of confidence” between people in the north and people in the south and that is, in my view, a source of great concern.

I did, of course in my speech which is self-evident, devote time to Darfur. My speech also will be available and translated also into Arabic version because in New York they don't do that and we have to do that ourselves. This will be available soon which means latest tomorrow, earliest today. But let me tell you, very briefly, the gist of my message to the Security Council.

I did say, and I mean that, the Darfur Peace Agreement is in coma. Something which is in coma is not dead but is nearly dead. It is in coma but there is no intensive care because then you have to take care of somebody who is in coma. You may even say, to continue the expression, the life-support system is not functioning. And that the issue for great concern

If you say a thing like that then you have to come with suggestions on what to do and I came with the kind of a program which is not completely new to you. It is a sort of a program of short-term measures for the next couple of months until, I said, the end of the year. And I repeat them here now:

Firstly, a truce, a truce. A truce is a cessation of hostilities. A ceasefire is an end of negotiations. We have all the ceasefires - you know never worked and the ceasefire which was included in the DPA also doesn't function because after the adoption of the DPA the parties started to attack each other, etc. I am not apportioning blame but I can draw the conclusion that after the adoption of the DPA there was more violence than in the month before, in particular in North Darfur. And I, in my speech, did blame the government of bombings and for attacks. But not only the government. But no apportioning of blame. We need a truce; we need a cessation of hostilities between, on the one side, government and on the other side the NRF plus the G19. And that doesn't mean new negotiations but means a truce so that you can start talking again. Not the end of talks but the beginning of talks in order to make the spirit of the DPA alive.

I did say that I hope that Minnawi can function as a mediator between his former allies

In order to make the spirit of the DPA alive, I did say that I hope that Minnawi can function as a mediator between his former allies as the commanders in the G19 and the NRF and his present allies - his colleagues in the government. If there is anybody who could mediate between the parties then it would be Minnawi and I call upon him to do so. And by the way, I did have discussions with him and am not speaking from the blue, and I understand that he is willing to try and I have offered him our assistance but I have also said at the same time that I don't want to do anything in secrecy - we can help but everybody has to know and also the government. Without a truce, soon the DPA will not be in coma but there will be no DPA anymore.

Secondly; all these violations take place without being addressed. The CFC does not function. I am proud that the strongest institution of the CPA is the ceasefire commission in the south, the CJMC - you know that - the Joint Military Committee; it functions. Dozens of meetings have taken place between the military of SAF and the military of SPLM chaired by General Lidder, the United Nations Force Commander. It functions. it is the best institution. Never has a meeting not taken place. And in the meetings there are decisions and the decisions taken are being monitored. We go to the fields and we see if the decisions are being implemented or not. Sometimes they are not being implemented because there are OAGs destabilizing the south but then these are discussed again. That is a system that works.

That system is totally absent in the CFC. It is exactly the same situation of the CFC following the N'Djamena Ceasefire Agreement. It is badly chaired; violations are not being addressed - 70 violations we have counted; not being addressed. The United Nations is being silenced in the CFC. I have sent as my representative to the CFC the Deputy Force Commander of UNMIS - not just somebody. He is not allowed in the meetings to raise violations. By the way, also another observer is not allowed to raise violations. I have taken the decision to withdraw the Deputy Force Commander from such meetings because it is a waste of time – he is being silenced and sidelined.

The CFC is being hijacked by the parties. All non-signatories are being excluded from the talks. In civil war people fight, they bomb and kill. And if you want to address that you have to talk with each other. You can not only talk with one party and the other party is not present. You can never discuss the fighting.

The exclusion of the non-signatories from the main body to monitor the implementation of the DPA is a built-in failure of the institution.

I am therefore calling and that is my second point, for a reform of the CFC to bring everybody on board to make it fully respected and authoritative so that it function and can take decisions and can sanction violations of the DPA. When that doesn't happen, if that continues, there is then indeed no life-support system; then there is nobody to take care intensively of the patient and then the patient who is in coma will die.

The second short-term measure is the renewal of the CFC.

The third short-term measure which is necessary is indeed to bring all the parties in the institutions and to broaden the support of the DPA. The DPA and I repeat what I said, was not a guarantee for peace but was a major hurdle on the road. It was not a finish. Without the other parties and, approaching it from a tribal point of view, without the Fur, there is no sustainable peace in Darfur. That is essential and the international community would also have to understand that, they have to be brought on board. It will be more and more difficult because there was one party in the SLM and the JEM but now we have seven – you know them. We have contact with everybody. I am organizing it but it is so difficult, also for security reasons, because in the past we had only one person of the SLM and we talk with that person and he would guarantee with the commanders that we could go to the field and help people. We do not know with whom to talk anymore in order to help the people and to give humanitarian assistance. More and more commanders speak for themselves so you get a kind of a Somali warlord situation which is the result of the breakdown. The DPA is in coma; bring everybody on board – that is number 3.

Number four; I said that the DPA is a good text and I repeated this to the Security Council. Theoretically it is a good text – I like it and I discussed it also in Abuja. From a theoretical, mathematical point of view, you can say that it is in the centre of extreme positions. But that doesn't mean that it is politically a good text. If people don't believe in it then you have to think again. I believe in it. Two-thirds of the people in the camps say they don't like the DPA and they don't want the DPA. If that is the case, then you have to take a new initiative and I am calling on parties and on the international community to make it possible to start re-discussions. Don't call it a re-opening of the negotiations, be creative; add a lot to it without reducing it; improve.

And I think that there are possibilities. The most important worry of the people, of course, is the non-disarmament of the Janjaweed. That is one of the problems. The plan to disarm the Janjaweed had been presented by the government but the CFC didn't discuss it. And the CFC has to approve it so that it can be implemented. Nobody is doing anything. And that is the worry of the people and the people see that the government is using the argument, "we have to protect the people by bombing; we have to protect the DPA; by bombing" and then of course the people don't believe in the DPA anymore. The DPA is used against itself. You have to start new talks in order to save and further improve the text in order to instill the confidence amongst the people on the ground in Darfur.

And that is my fourth point: new consultations on the text - not re-opening but improving.

All these four issues are issues of today and not for tomorrow.

I added a fifth point which is, in my view, crucial. I did say, and I repeat, "Get off the collision course in Sudan but also internationally". I am critical about the quality of international diplomacy at the moment. There are too many loud statements criticizing each other; too many statements for home consumption here in Sudan but also in New York, in Washington, in London. Rather than solving a problem as differences through quiet negotiations in order to get a solution, everybody is blaming everybody; everybody is accusing everybody and the language becomes more and more harsh and then it is very difficult to get off such a course. Get off the collision course. Don't accuse each other openly; don't always say, "You have a hidden agenda", don't always preach the problems of the past; don't continue talk about genocide. At the moment it is different from 2003 and 2004. Whether it was genocide then, but the committee of the United Nations which was established by the Secretary-General did say it was not genocide but it was as bad as genocide. But that was the situation in 2003 – 2004. At the moment people are being killed but not at that mass scale of 2003. Don't inflate; don't accuse; don't blame; find a solution; get off the collision course. Also here, in Khartoum, I see too many statements about war: Any country that is willing to help United Nations in implementing the UNSC resolution is at war with Sudan. War language does not help. Please get off the collision course. I said so openly and publicly in the Security Council. It was directed at the members of the Security Council but I am also saying it here.

You may ask yourself a question now, why didn't I mention the transition. I did not mention the transition of the African Union to the United Nations as one of these five points. I said in my speech, "De-link what has to be done today to save the DPA (and these five points were made to save the DPA) from what has to be done tomorrow to get a better and stronger force on the ground. If the DPA is not in coma but also dead, then you don't have peace and then a protection force to monitor the peace which was there but is no longer there, doesn't make sense. Peace, as I said in the Security Council, is the target; the DPA is an instrument to get peace; a monitoring force is an instrument to keep the DPA alive. Don't change. The target is more important than the instrument. Don't make the instrument target, be logical. That has to be done tomorrow.

Today, the most important thing for the people is to keep the force that is there on the ground. and I am very pleased that yesterday when I returned from the Security Council, the meeting of the African Union Peace & Security Council did decide that they can stay for another three months until the end of the year and that the African Union would be given support by the international community through the United Nations in order to make that effective. That is

extremely important because, if they would leave, the road to the camps is open and everybody would want to attack the people in the camps.

I have always been as straight as possible and did say to the Security Council that the African Union is not as effective as last year. That is the truth. It is not their fault but the fault of the international community that didn't support the African Union. We did have a meeting in Brussels that guaranteed finance for the African Union until the end of this year and it turned out that the money was not enough. We have a new promise now. Of course it is not their fault but I have seen so many of the African Union commanders in Darfur who have who are frustrated – it is not their fault; everybody can prove that but don't blame the African Union itself because they are being attacked also. They have to stay. If they would leave, the camps and the villages are open. Stay and do a better job and with the better resources that are guaranteed because the promise has been made.

And I am pleased that the government has changed its position. The government had said at the end of August that you go away. We are now exactly in the same situation after the meeting of the African Union Peace & Security Council yesterday as we were two months ago after the meeting in Brussels. The government was turning the screw and they loosened the screw; the international community gave the money, it was not enough and now it seems to be enough; the African Union said in Brussels they are going to stay until the end of the year and then they can not and now they are going to stay until the end of it. So we lost another two months but we are there in the same situation. Now we have to use that period between today and the end of the year to implement my Five-point Program. Otherwise, we would be exactly in the same situation on the 1st of January.

So I call on all authorities and all politicians and all diplomats to do this rather than only be thinking about the transition. And for that reason I did say “De-link tomorrow from today”. Don't make everything dependent on the transition.

I think that a strong, lasting, well-financed United Nations force is always better but if you preach what you think is better and say that it is the only possibility and you leave all the other options out, you create animosity and you feed also distrust. Don't forget what has to be done today – my five points.

We will ourselves continue working in the next couple of months as the United Nations force, independently, honestly, fairly and always with two considerations in mind: how to protect the people, save the people, support the people in Darfur and how to, of course, respect the sovereignty of the Sudanese nation – that is the dilemma. And we call on the authorities to make it possible for us to carry out these activities.

We are in Ramadan starting Saturday. Last year we had proposed to issue a Month of Tranquility during Ramadan. I am pleased, when I look back, that the parties did respect it last year. I am sending letters today to the President of the Republic and to all the 7 movements and asking them to respect a Month of Tranquility during Ramadan and to get off the collision course – a cessation of hostilities. Don't fight; don't war; don't change your positions; make it possible for the United Nations also to help all people everywhere and also in all those areas which are at the moment being closed to us because we can not get in due to insecurity. A Month of Tranquility to help the people who need help and also creating an atmosphere whereby you can start talking again rather than shouting against each other.

In that respect, I would like to ask your attention for the situation in Kalma Camp where, again, the Norwegian Refugee Aid has been relieved from its duties by the authorities. I don't understand that. They were relieved from their duties a couple of times and I negotiated and their return a couple of times and the last time was in August with the Wali himself. The NRA did promise – it was not necessary but they did promise – that they would report violations of human rights not publicly to you (the media) for instance but only to the authorities, which is quite something that an international NGO reports not publicly but to the authorities. That is what they did. They kept their promise. They reported rape – and there is rape and I report publicly to the world. I said in my speech to the Security Council that rape is still being used as an instrument of war and terror and that it is again on the rise. They reported to the authorities and the authorities didn't like that and they have again said that the NRA should go. This is unacceptable.

I understand that the authorities are embarrassed if rape is being mentioned time and again in the press. I think you have the right and you have the duty to report about it but I understand they are embarrassed. And if they then say to an NGO that “please report only to us,” it is quite something that an NGO does that. But if they do report it only to the authorities and, because of the fact they are reporting rape, are being relieved, it is unbelievable. No other international agency would accept to take over the leadership of such a camp.

So I will discuss that of course with the authorities and hope that they will again come to senses because such NGOs don't report in order to get to the press; they report in order to help the women and report to those who are responsible for the situation.

Could I make a similar comment on the situation in Dar-es-Salam Camp? First, very positive, I can say and I said also in my speech to the Security Council, that I am very pleased that the Wali of Khartoum has kept his promise of no forced relocations. I did send him a letter in August and I got a very positive response from him. He wants to continue discussions with us on what can be done for the people in the institutions which we have set up but I also did say that now in Jezeera State where Dar-es-Salam Camp is, forced relocations have taken place and that we are being denied access. We can't help the people. And that is not only for our human rights monitors but also for OCHA and those people who want to give assistance to people who have been swept out of their huts and manhandled, terrorized.

So I am pleased with what the Governor of Khartoum did but totally displeased with what is going on in Dar-es-Salam Camp.

I just had to report that to you in order to not only say things like this somewhere in New York but also here because when I am giving information and I am using language, I do that in exactly the same manner and wordings in Khartoum as well as in New York.

I hope that a plea like this will have some success: get off the collision course and please do everything together as authorities in order to get a life-support system for the DPA in order to make it get out of its coma so that it can function again, perhaps in a renewed fashion, as an instrument to get peace in Darfur.

Thank you very much.

D. Spokesperson Bahaa Elkoussy: Thank you Mr. Jan Pronk.

The floor is now open for your questions.

Q & A

Q: If the mandate of the African Union forces can be changed and the forces strengthened, how significant would that be?

SRSB Pronk: I think it is significant. These talks are taking place at the highest levels between the presidents and the African Union has a good mandate but it can be stronger and if it is willing to accept that, I would be pleased. A stronger mandate also would imply enough forces with enough resources to implement that mandate.

I have the impression that one of the options which I mentioned in the Security Council, for the short-term anyway, is a stronger African Union; bigger; with more support from the United Nations and not only from individual countries and not only financially but also with staff, could be a way out for the short run. And I really hope that the government would accept something like that for the next couple of months or, perhaps, for a somewhat longer period.

Q: So far the push has come only from United Nations members to try and introduce a United Nations peacekeeping force. An absence though has been caused by African leaders and also leaders of the Chinese community have been reported as saying that they wish the Sudanese government's position to be respected. Do you think there is a place for African leaders to be pushing much harder?

SRSB Pronk: I think you are mistaken if you really think that the African leaders do have a different view and do not push.

In the Security Council, and that is the main body of the United Nations, the representatives of Tanzania, Congo and Ghana – the three African members of the Security Council – were very clear. They said that the only solution in the long run is a United Nations force. They were not at all using different language from representatives of other countries in the Security Council. I met a Security Council which was unanimous.

But it is unanimity about the longer run – about that specific issue. I am drawing attention in particular to what has to be done until the government would accept the invitation ... because that is all it is. The Security Council in its Resolution 1706 said, "This is what we want and we invite the government of Sudan to agree, to give its consent". It is good language; there is no intervention, there is no invasion; there is no re-colonization – we invite the government to agree to consent but the government has not yet accepted that invitation so you need diplomacy in order to do so and then there are two points which are important. Firstly what are you going to do until the government accepts that invitation? That is what I did try to highlight in my five-point program.

I went one step further in the Security Council and I said, "Well would you please also think about the long-run if the government continues not to accept your invitation". That is also important to discuss because you are not going to interfere – you have said so to the government here. And I think that the authorities in this country should be more responsible. The authorities should tell their own people that the Security Council does not interfere and that the Security Council has said, "Please we invite you; please give your consent. We are

not going to do anything against your consent”. And, quoting the Secretary-General of the United Nations, “without the consent of the government, there will be no transition; there will be no United Nations deployment”. That is a fair, honest statement. I think authorities here should also be honest and tell their own people that they don’t have to be afraid that there would be any intervention. The fact that the authorities are not telling that to their own people is, in my view, also a problem. They also have to get off the collision course.

So, the African countries do a good job in staying with the other countries in favor – and I am not present in meetings of individual Heads of State with President Bashir; I don’t know how they speak – but for instance and just to give one example, I know that President Wade of Senegal, during his visit here, I think it was early August, was very clear and very outspokenly spoke in favor of a transition. And I know that President Debe in July also was clear. I did read newspaper clippings this morning, which is the most recent example, about President Mubarak who also spoke in favor.

But please today, let us focus not only on tomorrow – the transition – but let us focus on what has to be done today in order to keep the DPA alive or to give it some new life. Because too much thought is now only on the long run; only about the transition. And the differences in view that have been spoken out in public about the transition make it impossible at the moment to discuss what has to be done today in order to save the people in Darfur on the basis of a DPA which is out of a coma.

Q: Can I just ask you to give us an indication on the greater role you see China having?

SRSB Pronk: China is extremely important. It is the most important international economic partner of Africa and also Sudan. I know that at a recent meeting in Beijing that the Chinese have made very clear to the Sudanese authorities that they had exactly the same views as the other countries in the Security Council – there is no difference of opinion. But then the Sudanese delegation in Beijing also said to authorities in Beijing, “we are not in favor of a transition” and the Chinese have reported. But they took exactly the same position and there is no difference of opinion. They also say, “But we need the consent of the Sudanese government”. But everybody is saying that – there is no difference about this.

I am not present in individual meetings of a bilateral character; I don’t know the exact language and the specific impression, but when I talk with all their representatives and when I meet them there is no difference of opinion. And I think it is wise that countries like Egypt and China, anyway, don’t speak harsh language; don’t join the collision course. I hope that they will say the same also to the authorities here, “Please stay out of the collision course”. They have to say that also because the government here is listening also to some countries more than to other countries and that is the same to all countries in the world. And the way in which authorities here are reacting to the invitation – because it is no more than an invitation – is also not helpful. They are not obliged to accept the invitation but they should not put that invitation into a bad light.

Q: What, in your views are the likelihood that Sudan and the United Nations can come to an agreement within the 3 months or so when the African Union mandate will again expire? If there is no agreement reached within that time, what is the implication?

SRSB Pronk: I said in the Security Council that I think that the Security Council resolution 1706 is a good resolution and that it is a Chapter VI with a good Chapter VII paragraph and

that Chapter VII paragraph is very helpful – it is strong – but it is within Chapter VI and would really enable a force to protect people and to also stop attackers. It is a good text.

If you speak as your first colleague from the BBC about the mandate to the African Union; if they would have a mandate in the same language of resolution 1706, they could do a good job - read the text of that resolution - but that would need, of course, the resources for it.

If, indeed, in the next couple of months, it would be possible for the African Union to do that, i.e. to bring in the resources, the money, and also weapons in order to stop the attacks and more troops, then it would be hand-in-glove. And if United Nations staff would come – and the United Nations staff can come from Pakistan, from African countries, from Jordan, etc. (they don't have to come all of them from countries overseas), then you would have a gradual process whereby, maybe (some of you were here two years ago) African Union plus United Nations that can also become a kind of a modality. Be creative. The African Union can be the core of the United Nations, the African Union can be the African Union, the African Union can be together with the United Nations – be creative. Again, the important thing is not how you label a force but that there is an effective force; a robust force. You remember I had always used the language, “big, broad and strong”. Big enough, large enough, everywhere. Strong enough and with a robust mandate. And we can gradually go int. if you do it in the form of a process then it would become on the ground and also here in Khartoum, gradually perhaps, more and more accepted.

So I would like to be in favor of such a process of silent improving and adding to an African Union force and may be the start could be made in the next couple of months and then we can see later on the first of January.

Q: As you said, let us talk about today. We heard in press reports today that Minnawi [indiscernible] can you elaborate more on this?

My second point is that there is an initiative of [indiscernible] to the DPA initiated by some Sudanese from Darfur [indiscernible] are you aware of this?

Another thing is that a week ago, I interviewed Sam Ibok of the African Union who said that the problem of the African Union is not the mandate but the capacity to do its duty and that if this capacity is not made available then there is no use for the African Union staying in Darfur even for one day. Will the international community provide that capacity for the African Union until the end of the year or will it just be promises?

SRSB Pronk: I am of course aware of the talks which you referred to by Mini Minnawi and I hinted to that I had my meeting with Mini Minnawi last Thursday before I went to New York and I discussed at length. Of course I can not disclose it but I did say that I am quite willing to help, to be present and whatever, because we have also our good contacts with all movements. We are still being trusted. But I also did say that as far as I am concerned, nothing should be done with our help behind the backs of the government because I want to have good contacts with them. I hope that is possible and I did mention in my speech to the Security Council this particular possibility.

I don't know the text of what you were mentioning as point number two. But I am in favor of all efforts by people who do not have direct allegiance to one of the groups and who are Darfurians or wise people of Sudan, in order to bring people together. I am also in favor of

the position of some wise people who came with some ideas of solution on the problems of Sudan and I am pleased with the reports that both President Bashir and also Mr. Mirghani, Mr. el-Mahdi and Dr. Turabi were in favor. I will have discussions with the group and also with the opposition leaders on this. If they need our assistance on this, they can get it but if they think they can do it themselves then it is even better. But any solution which is being made by the Sudanese themselves is always better. And if that is the same group, I have the contacts with them.

Thirdly; one of your colleagues did talk of the mandate. I was clear. I said that they have a good mandate – it can be better but I have always said that the mandate is not the problem, though; I want also to tell you that African Union commanders on the ground have a different view from Sam Ibok. They do say that they do not have a mandate. They may mean that the interpretation of the mandate by the top commanders of the African Union is not helpful. So it is very often the mandate and the interpretation of the mandate. If you have a mandate you can use it in a very strict sense but you can also be very lax in your interpretation and that makes quite a difference.

But, I agree, more important than the mandate is the resources and that is what I mentioned. I can understand if you have a mandate but you don't have the resources. The African Union can not pay the soldiers anymore; they have food problems; by the way they also have fuel problems. Let me not say more about the fuel problem which could be said but are better not revealed in public. If you don't have food and if you don't have fuel, you can not use your weapons and you cannot use your soldiers.

We, the United Nations, are offering assistance. The problem is that we need a budgetary basis for this and the United Nations rules are very strict and I have argued in New York for a change in the rules of the system of the United Nations and I have also argued for that in the Security Council itself.

Promises were made by countries in July in Brussels. I came back rather positive after that meeting and I said I think it [assistance to the AU] is now guaranteed until the end of the year but my colleague, Mr. Kingibe, after coming said he made the calculations and it is not true because it is not new money but is, to some extent, old money. And I think he was more right than I was although I had been very cautious in my own calculations, he knew better. The countries now have been told in New York that they have to do better and now it seems guaranteed until the end of the year but the proof of the pudding is in the eating – countries promise and don't keep their promises. It is true for the government of Sudan as it is also true for other countries – promises, promises, promises ... broken, broken, broken very often.

Q: [inaudible].

Second question, if I understood correctly from your statements, a United Nations force will be deployed alongside the African Union within the next couple of months. Will some of these forces be drawn from countries hostile to the Sudan for instance?

SRSB Pronk: Of course the African Union force consists of countries from Africa and I don't think there is any African country which is hostile to Sudan at the moment which means that the African Union forces can come from all African countries.

There will be staff members from the United Nations which also will be made available to the African Union and, you know my position, a United Nations staff member doesn't have a nationality anymore if he is here. It means you are no longer Irish or Dutch or Nepalese if you are with the United Nations. You have a blue helmet and your nationality does not count. You have only one boss and that is the international community as a whole represented by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. So that nationality of United Nations staff should not be an issue. That is the big advantage of the United Nations and a big disadvantage of so-called 'coalitions of good-will'. The United Nations and members of the United Nations are neutral and not hostile. Your nationality does not mean anything and I am not going further in that discussion.

The most important thing to improve the DPA is, of course, the Janjaweed. There was a plan by the government. I don't think the plan was good enough but anyway it was good because there was a plan in itself and you could start a process. And I blame the CFC for not discussing it which means that I also blame the government because the government is also a member of the CFC. Otherwise it is a failed plan if the plan can not be discussed and you only have tabled the plan and nothing can be done with it. That is the very first most important thing to improve the DPA. To have an approved plan with very clear deadlines and with guarantees that attackers be stopped and disarmed.

Two; is the old issue of compensation. The 30 million is peanuts in terms of compensations for what happened to these people. I am not going into numbers on how many people have been killed but many have been killed. If you really see compensation as blood-money as in Darfurian tradition, then you have to do [indiscernible]. And that 30 million, for so many is peanuts. The government can and there is money enough.

I made a call in the Security Council also to make some international money available. That is the second improvement.

Thirdly; there are arrangements in the DPA which are of an institutional character – numbers, how many seats – and they are as a result of long discussions in councils, etc. I don't think it is very important to stick exactly to specific numbers. You could increase some percentages of representatives in order to have an institutional agreement in the framework of the DPA which could be solved to the constituency of some of the leaders as something better.

Could I add to this that it is not the DPA but the implementation. One of the functions, the Minnawi faction, now has everything: the position of the chief advisor, the chair of the transitional authority, everything. I think that can be changed in talks. Then you don't have a basic change of the DPA itself but you have a better distribution of power given the DPA. These are just some suggestions; it is not for me, I am not the negotiator but I could give some advice. If you really want to have a DPA that is being believed in by all parties, maybe some of those who gained a lot in Abuja could retreat a little bit and give way to some others. Maybe that such discussions are already taking place between SLM Minnawi faction and others – it is quite possible – but just to say to all other groups that you didn't sign, which is not wise, and you should sign, will not help. You have to do something in order to make it attractive. It is exactly the same as what I am saying to members of the Security Council – just to say to the government in Khartoum that you don't accept the invitation and should accept it does not help. Make it attractive to the government of Khartoum; negotiate. If you want AbdulWahid and all the other non-signatories to accept the DPA, you have to make it attractive for them. Do something. If you want the government of Khartoum to accept the

invitation to accept a transition then you have to make it attractive. And that can be done. It is a matter of mature negotiations rather than shouting at and blaming each other.

Q: You have not told us anything about the results of the pledges made in Brussels some months ago to strengthen the African Union on the ground?

Now that the African Union has given three months to continue until the end of the year, are there resources to enable them to continue on the ground?

SRSB Pronk: In Brussels, there was a request by the African Union to make available about 350 million dollars in order to continue operations until the end of the year. I reported to you when I came back from there that in my calculations that about 225 million what was made available to them. I did not add up every figure because I thought that some figures ought to be taken with some suspicion. But if you add all figures, then you would come up with 280 million. I thought that anyway Brussels would make it possible for the African Union to stay beyond the 1st of October which was the original date and then you would come close to the 31st of December. And I repeat what I just said, my colleague Kingibe said, “It doesn’t work because even the 225 is not new money because some of these commitments were made before to us and we had taken them already into consideration. So it is just October and no more than that”.

The meeting of the African Union Peace & Security Council in New York takes place against the background of the presence of all the other countries and they have spoken with the African Union countries. I don’t have it on paper but I assume that there are now real guarantees to the African Union that they will now have the resource until the end of the year. I would be greatly disappointed if even this, for the second or third time, would not produce the resources. We have said often that these resources should be made available in cash. Just to promise 10 million or so; just to promise that you are going to airlift new troops for rotation, doesn’t make it possible for the soldiers to eat. You have to make the money available in order to feed the soldiers; you have to make the money available to buy the fuel. I expect that these guarantees are now there and that is why I said “promises; promises; promises”.

Well that is my answer to your question. I would be greatly disappointed if this again would not work out.

D. Spokesperson Bahaa Elkoussy: No other question?

In this case, we conclude the press conference and thank you very much for attending today. Copies of the Statement of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the occasion of International Peace Day are available for you as well as the Quarterly Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Sudan – which was presented by SRSB Pronk to the Security Council. There are both Arabic and English copies.

Thank you again and see you in our next press conference.