



# UNMIS Photo Release

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## Groundbreaking ceremony at site of future U.N. Headquarters in southern Sudan

**JUBA** – The site of the future headquarters of the United Nations in southern Sudan was formally inaugurated at a groundbreaking ceremony outside the regional capital of Juba this afternoon. The Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary-General for Sudan, Mr. Ashraf Qazi, attended the ceremony, which was hosted by the Regional Coordinator for Southern Sudan of the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), Mr. David Gressly. The Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) was represented by its Presidential Affairs Minister, Dr. Luka Biiong Deng.

Located on the Juba-Yei road, the site was donated to the U.N. by the Government of Southern Sudan during the U.N. Secretary-General's visit to Juba in September 2007. Construction of United Nations House is scheduled to finish during the first semester of 2010, and the office complex will host the main offices of UNMIS and a number of U.N. agencies.

Approximately 1,200 mostly civilian personnel will work at the new facility, and an estimated 600 staff members will move into residential quarters on the property towards the end of this year.

“We are excited about this project because it reflects the United Nations' long-term commitment to promote peace and economic development in southern Sudan,” said Mr. Qazi. “This newly dedicated site will stand as an enduring symbol of the United Nations' intent to make its engagement with the people of southern Sudan a lasting and fruitful relationship.”

Minister Biiong hailed the work that the United Nations has done in southern Sudan. “You have done a remarkable job by giving hope and saving lives during the difficult times,” he said. “We are happy that the headquarters is affirming its commitment by having a concrete building for the United Nations.”

The GoSS minister also directed some personal words of thanks to Mr. Qazi, who will be leaving the peacekeeping mission in few days. “You have indeed been a good friend,” said Minister Biiong. “You've provided leadership when we needed you and for the parties to overcome some of the crises that we've had.”

The hour-long event featured a tree planting ceremony and a brief tour of the site.

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SRSG Qazi plants a tree as GoSS Minister of Presidential Affairs Luka Biong Deng looks on.



SRSG Qazi and GoSS Minister of Presidential Affairs Luka Biong Deng are given a tour of the site.



A security guard watches over construction at the site of the new U.N. Headquarters in southern Sudan.



SRSG Qazi and GoSS Minister of Presidential Affairs Luka Biong Deng are given a tour of the site.

Photos: Tim McKulka/UNMIS