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Special Media Monitoring Report on the visit to Khartoum by Special Envoy Jan Eliasson

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(By Public Information Office)

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UN envoy in talks with officials in Khartoum

(AP, Akhbar Alyaum et al) United Nations Special Envoy for Darfur, Mr. Jan Eliasson, arrive Khartoum on Wednesday 4th July Eliasson and flew to el-Geneina, the capital of West Darfur, for a series of meetings on Thursday, U.N. Deputy Spokesperson Marie Okabe said on Thursday. His African Union counterpart, Salim Ahmed Salim is scheduled to arrive in Khartoum on Saturday.

Eliasson also held talks in Khartoum last Saturday with senior officials in the hybrid African Union-UN peacekeeping force, proposed to be sent in Darfur region.

Jan Eliasson, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Darfur, met Rodolphe Adada, the new AU-UN Joint Special Representative for Darfur serving as head of the existing AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and will then head up the hybrid force once it starts operation.

Mr. Eliasson also met AMIS Force Commander Gen. Martin Agwai, who will become the Force Commander of the hybrid operation as well, spokesperson Marie Okabe told reporters in New York. Mr. Eliasson was also scheduled to hold talks Saturday with ambassadors of the countries and organizations that are participating in the international meeting later this month in Tripoli, Libya, on the Darfur peace process.

Ms. Okabe said Mr. Eliasson is also meeting representatives of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Senior Assistant to the Sudanese President, Minni Minawi, who is also head of a faction of the Sudan Liberation Army/Movement (SLA/M).

He also met with senior government officials.

The U.N. and African Union envoys trying to promote a political solution to the four-year-old conflict in Sudan's western Darfur region have invited key regional and international players to a meeting in Libya in mid-July to discuss how to launch new negotiations.

U.N. Deputy Spokesperson Marie Okabe said Thursday that the July 15-16 meeting in the Libyan capital, Tripoli, will focus on a road map prepared by U.N. envoy Jan Eliasson and his AU counterpart Salim Ahmed Salim aimed at reviving peace talks and reaching an agreement to end the conflict.

Invitations to the ministerial meeting have been sent to Sudan, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, and the Arab League; the five permanent Security Council nations — the U.S., Britain, France, Russia and China — and key donors, including Canada, the Netherlands, Norway and the European Union, Okabe said.

Last month, Eliasson said the road to negotiations has become even more complicated because of the increasing number of rebel groups. In just three weeks, the number of opposition movements jumped from nine to 12, and he said that number could rise.

Okabe said "the purpose of the Tripoli meeting is to take stock of the progress achieved over the last two months, assess the implementation of the road map, and review proposals on the way forward, especially on how to launch the negotiation phase of the road map."

The meeting is a follow up to a meeting on Darfur held in Tripoli on April 28-29 which explored ways to persuade all the groups fighting in Darfur to sign a comprehensive peace agreement.

Speaking to the press in Khartoum on Saturday 7th July 2007, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Darfur stated that, despite the efforts made by the UN and the AU, the Darfur problem remains a purely Sudanese affair that can only be resolved by the joint efforts of the Sudanese people. At the meeting he held with the Foreign Minister, Dr. Lam Akol, Eliasson indicated that it was time for negotiations with the opponents of the Abuja agreement to kick off, stressing that they are now passing a critical stage in the process of realizing a peaceful political solution for the problem.

He added that the time and place for the impending negotiations between the government and the Abuja non-signatories will be decided following a meeting to be held in the Libyan capital, Tripoli, during 15-16 June. He revealed that he was in the process of a shuttle diplomacy to address an invitation to the UNSG and the chief of the AU mission to partake in the negotiations.

Eliasson disclosed that the mediation team, which includes himself and Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, has been supplemented by two additional mediators and that the team will within the coming days intensify communications with the Abuja non-signatories, the government, the signatory factions and the governments of Eritrea and Libya, expressing

his hope that the regional initiatives for settling the Darfur problem would be coordinated under the AU umbrella.

The government meanwhile explained that Eliasson's visit comes within the context of intensifying shuttle diplomacy prompted by the fact that the negotiations are now close at hand. The official spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Ali Al-Sadig, said that the Tripoli meeting will enable the parties to set a date for initiating the negotiations as well as signal the extent to which the non-signatory factions have managed to unify their visions. He denied that the Abuja file will be reopened, affirming that the DPA will remain valid and in force, though he added that the negotiations will decide whether the results reached will be annexed to the agreement or not.

On the other hand, the Presidential Advisor, Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail, reaffirmed at the talks he held yesterday with Eliasson in the NCP headquarters the government commitment to the Addis Ababa deal and revealed that the new proposals submitted by Eliasson would be discussed at the forthcoming meeting with the UN Chief and the AU envoy. He expected the Tripoli meeting to lay down a detailed road map for the negotiations, noting that the meeting will embrace, beside the government, the AU, UN, regional countries and some other players such as the EU and the United States.

Eliasson for his part disclosed that the contacts he made within the framework of resolving the Darfur issue had also included civil society organizations and tribal leaders, and, in conclusion, he conveyed the condolences of the UNSG on the grievous loss of Dr. Majzoub Al-Khalifa who was in charge of the Darfur file following a traffic accident.

Darfur peace talks will fail to start in August deadline

(Reuters) Darfur peace talks will fail to start by an August deadline but the contentious issue of which rebel groups to invite may have been resolved by then, the U.N. envoy to the region said on Saturday.

"We are hoping that we will be at a stage (by the end of August) where we will be ready to take a decision on sending invitations," Jan Eliasson, the U.N. Darfur envoy, told reporters at the end of a visit to Khartoum.

Eliasson said the choice of which rebel groups to invite was a difficult one, adding: "We are right now in the process of choosing the ones we are contacting."

The venue, the date of talks and which points could be reopened of the unpopular peace deal signed last year were also still to be agreed upon, Eliasson said.

The government has made clear it will not reopen the 2006 peace deal during new talks, leaving little diplomatic space for the fresh peace process.

Eliasson said the new talks were aimed at achieving only "amendments to the last agreement", something that will upset many rebel groups who want more than what the 2006 deal offered.

The invitations, once sent, would be the first major test of the political will of the parties to the conflict to find a negotiated settlement, Eliasson said.

It could then take months to convince rebels leaders to attend, drop any preconditions to talks and agree on a venue.

Eliasson warned those hindering the peace process.

"If there is no progress, if there is lack of cooperation, the signs are very clear from the international community not least the (U.N.) Security Council that there is a price to be paid for non-cooperation."

Seven months and four visits after his appointment, Eliasson, with his African Union counterpart Salim Ahmed Salim, still have many obstacles ahead.

"The main obstacle is to achieve the coordination of the positions among the rebel movements," he said.

Darfur's Abdelshafi, Diraij agree to unify political efforts

(SudanTribune.com) The Sudan Liberation Movement of Ahmed Abdelshafi and the Sudan federal Democratic Alliance of Ahmed Diraij have agreed to conjugate their political, diplomatic and negotiating efforts, a press release said today.

The two groups announced, after a meeting held in London, they would continue "the dialogue with all groups from other marginalized areas in Sudan and with all Sudanese political groups willing to create a new Sudan based on new foundation of peace, democracy and development." [Follow the link to the full text of the MoU [Darfur's Abdelshafi, Diraij agree to unify political efforts](#)].

AbdulWahid wants Salim Ahmed Salim off the Darfur case

(The Citizen) Opposition SLM leader AbdulWahid Mohamed Nur says African Union envoy Salim Ahmed Salim is the person responsible for the killing of thousands of people in Darfur.

"During the signing of th DPA, I gave a supplementary paper that included very simple demands of my people but Salim Ahmed Salim threw the paper in my face and threatened to sanction me. Today the same person is coming as a mediator for the African Union to resolve the Darfur conflict," he said.

He accused Salim Ahmed Salim and the Government of Sudan of every time creating new illusive movements and say all people want peace except himself. If these movements could bring peace, why then do they ask AbdulWahid to sign their peace deals, wondered AbdulWahid.

He advised the African Union to keep Salim out of the issue “because he has become part of the conflict”.