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## Office of the Spokesperson

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#### SRSG Promotes Darfur Peace Agreement among Sudan NGOs

**Khartoum 15 May 2005** -- The Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Sudan Jan Pronk Sunday met with a large group of representatives of Sudanese non-governmental organizations in his continuous campaign to advocate the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) and enhance the public understanding of the peace deal.

In two and a half hours of lively exchanges of views, arguments and clarifications, the SRSG urged NGO leaders to carefully study the 145-page DPA and even brought to the gathering copies of the document as part of efforts by the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) to enhance public awareness of the peace deal.

In response to criticism of the DPA by several participants, the SRSG defended the agreement and described it as a fair, balanced starter that can always be further complemented and improved in the future. "Peace can only hold if the agreement is not biased," he told more than 150 civil society activists in the Sudanese capital.

Pronk categorically denied suggestions by some of the participants that Minni Minnawi of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) was forced under pressures in Abuja to sign the DPA, but he said without the endorsement of the holdout Darfur rebel leaders sustaining full peace will be difficult. Pronk also emphasized the importance to continue efforts to secure Abdel-Wahid's signature.

The SRSG explained to the NGOs' leading officers that under DPA Darfur can become one state or region; if the people decide so in a future referendum. But he cautioned that laying down arms in Darfur was a precondition for DPA's implementation and that the Janjaweed and other militias must be pressed to stop violence.

Pronk said he was heading to Darfur to discuss with the Governors there how to bring fighting and attacks to an end so that some 2.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) can return to their homes and Darfurians can restore normalcy.

Under the peace deal, he said, there will be demilitarized zones around camps of IDPs and along roads used by humanitarian organizations, and that there will be buffer

zones between such areas. There will also be a “better ceasefire agreement” with a ceasefire committee to be chaired solely by the African Union.

The SRSG also pointed out that there will be one overall transition authority for the entire region to be headed by a Darfuri who will be appointed by the SLM. As stipulated by DPA, that person will also be the fourth highest-ranking official in the hierarchy of Sudan’s Government of National Unity.

Pronk added that SLM will also be able under DPA to get the majority of the seven highest-ranking positions in Darfur: one Wali (governor), two deputies and the above-mentioned chairperson. Furthermore, the region will regain its 1956 borders, as demanded by the rebel movements. He said the agreement includes good guarantees for implementation and that no other peace deal in all of Africa had such explicit and precise assurances for execution.

He said sharing of Darfur’s wealth and resources will be based on objective criteria and that a pledging conference for the war-torn area’s reconstruction is expected to be held for donors in September or October.

He also underlined the importance of paying compensation for victims of the conflict, noting that talks were under way to increase the 30 million dollars the Government of Sudan has already allocated for reparations.

Pronk expanded on the urgency for an effective, all-inclusive Darfur-Darfur dialogue among the various tribes, community leaders, political parties, NGOs, private enterprises, intellectuals, representatives of IDPs and all the other principal actors. He argued that the dialogue was extremely important in order to achieve tribal and social reconciliation that was imperative for achieving and sustaining peace and for fruitful reconstruction and development.

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