



UNMIS

## Office of the Spokesperson

### ***Press Release No. 25/06***

#### **SRSG Pronk Wins Darfur Peace Assurances**

Khartoum 20 May 2006 – Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Sudan Jan Pronk has returned to Khartoum from Darfur where he pressed local government and community leaders to close their ranks behind the two-week-old Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA).

In three days of intensive meetings, discussions and field visits in the state of West Darfur, Pronk focused on explaining terms of the new agreement to various segments of people in Darfur and on urging tribal and community leaders to lend it their support and to demand its endorsement by holdout rebel leaders.

“To achieve peace and security for your people, regain your rights, get your fair share of power, receive compensation and attain reconstruction, you must accept and support the peace agreement,” the SRSG told a large crowd of displaced Darfurians in a makeshift camp in Mournei. During a series of similar gatherings and meetings, almost all internally displaced persons (IDPs) pleaded to Pronk for immediate protection by U.N. peacekeeping forces and for more food rations and other relief supplies.

In visits to three IDP camps in Mournei and Zalingi, the SRSG was keen to speak to women and children in order to get first-hand information on their real grievances and opinions and on their actual needs. They all echoed the demands of male IDPs for rapid protection by U.N. troops against Janjaweed attacks and for better foodstuff and other necessities.

In his extensive camp visits and meetings, Pronk assured IDPs that the Government of Sudan is committed under the DPA to come up within 37 days after signing the agreement with a plan to disarm the Janjaweed militia, but he warned that sweeping them out of Darfur will not happen overnight. In his meeting with the Governor of West Darfur and his Cabinet members, the SRSG vigorously emphasized the need for strict compliance by the Government with DPA's terms and provisions and in particular with the stipulation of disarming such militias.

Pronk discussed at length with representatives of international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in West Darfur obstacles hindering their work, which range from bandits stealing their vehicles to government red-tape impediments. The complaints were on the agenda of Pronk's meeting with the Governor of Sudan's westernmost state and he promised him to address them effectively and in good faith.

The SRSG also stressed to NGO representatives the need for development-oriented organizations to start coming into Darfur in order to ultimately achieve the goal of shifting the international community's effort from relief to reconstruction and development. He proposed a greater focus on support for community service activities "like food for work, food for education, etc."

Pronk agreed with local government leaders to hold regular meetings between them and the U.N. Mission in Sudan in order to ensure the optimum implementation of DPA. They also discussed practical steps to strengthen Pronk's efforts to inform commoners in Darfur about the peace agreement and promote grassroots support for it. They pledged to the SRSG full support. The Governor, from his side, proposed to organize statewide tours for that purpose.

The SRSG also met twice in three days with commanders and troops of the African Union's protection force in two different deployment locations in Darfur. Topics of discussion included the security situation in their respective areas, protection they were providing for IDPs and humanitarian groups, their modus operandi vis-à-vis ceasefire violations and how they investigate and follow up on them.

When AU commanders raised the issue of insufficient resources for such a large-scale operation, Pronk assured them that the international community was currently preparing to start strengthening the African force in terms of resources and capability. He said repeatedly this will be a transitional measure pending the deployment of better-equipped U.N. peacekeeping forces.

For further information please contact Mr. Bahaa Elkhoussy, Deputy Spokesperson, UNMIS. Tel. 0912396539; (249)018706029; e-mail: [elkoussy@un.org](mailto:elkoussy@un.org)