



UNMIS

Press Release No. 008/07**On International Women's Day, the UN calls for redoubled efforts to prevent gender-based violence and for ending impunity for violence against women**

Khartoum, 7 March 2007: The International Women's Day will be observed worldwide on 8 March under the theme "*Ending impunity for violence against women*". In Sudan, the Government, the UN and civil society groups are marking International Women's Day across the country with workshops, marches, speeches and concerts.

On this occasion, the United Nations reiterates its recognition of Sudanese women to be full-fledged partners in all matters that concern the shaping of their society and the building of the country's future.

The United Nations in Sudan expresses solidarity with the women of Sudan who have been enduring the devastating toll of war, particularly in Darfur, where violence against women and girls, including rape, continues unabated and is used by some as a tool of war.

In recognition of this year's theme, the United Nations urges all concerned to engage in discussions and take requisite action to protect women and prevent violence against them, in line with the CPA, the Beijing Platform for Action, Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (2000), Security Council Resolution 1590 (2005), and the Outcome document of the Twenty-third United Nations General Assembly special session, issued under the title "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century". The United Nations also urges all actors in Sudan to redouble their efforts to end impunity for violence against women and ensure that human rights, including the rights of women, are strengthened, promoted, respected, and protected.

In accordance with its mandate, UNMIS has been assisting the parties to the CPA parties in ensuring the protection of and respect for the human rights of women and girls in the processes of peace-building, reconstruction and development in Sudan, as well as decision-making. For its part, the humanitarian community has been keen, since the start of humanitarian interventions in Darfur, to ensure that the issue of Gender-Based Violence (GVB) remains central to policy and programme decision-making. The UN has also developed an interagency Multi-Sectoral Strategy on GVB to consolidate the efforts of all the agencies to address collectively this critical issue. The Government has developed a National Plan of Action to combat GBV in Darfur and stated its commitment to addressing it, which is a welcomed development. However, action on the ground must be taken to ensure that women and girls are protected and feel safe and secure wherever they are, in the IDP and refugee camps, in their communities and in their villages.

The UN family in Sudan pledges to make every effort to continue working in partnership with the Government of National Unity, the Government of Southern Sudan, civil society and NGOs, to ensure that Sudanese women are empowered to assume active responsibilities in the public sphere, working along-side their male counterparts to rebuild Sudan.