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Sudan

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Note to the Secretary-General

**HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN SUDAN**

1. This is to update you on the humanitarian situation in Sudan since my last update // (29-03920) to you of 9 April.
2. The humanitarian response in Darfur continues to struggle as efforts to fill humanitarian gaps are not yet meeting all the needs of the population, not least due to continuing violence and uncertainty faced by the humanitarian community. Although the food and water sectors are partially covered, humanitarian actors are finding it difficult to ramp up operations and no new organizations have yet been registered. The health and sanitation sectors remain areas of particular concern and vulnerability, with the threat of disease outbreaks as we near the rainy season.
3. Given these serious shortcomings, it has been important to move as quickly as possible to address fundamental operational framework issues with the Government, i.e. track 3. We now have consensus from key stakeholders, including NGOs, UN agencies and humanitarian donors, on how to start to restore trust between the humanitarian community and the Government of Sudan, in particular on the over-arching principles of this approach, namely: 1) the establishment of a properly respected operational framework that facilitates relief operations; 2) an effective monitoring mechanism at state, national, and international levels, with some wide international muscle behind it; and 3) a strengthened aid delivery system, in part to help protect NGOs in the future.
4. We began negotiations on this basis with the Government earlier this week and the initial indications are very encouraging, both in detailed areas such as multiple entry and exit visas for NGO staff, and in acceptance of broad international monitoring by a group of both traditional donor and so called non-traditional partners of influence, including countries such as China. We are also working hard to engage the African Union and the League of Arab States behind what we are trying to achieve.
5. US Special Envoy Graton's separate discussions with the Government during a visit in early April have complemented our efforts and helped yield some important results, notably the issuance of a Ministerial Decree on 21 April, delivering on many of the promises the Government made. The Decree addresses some of the long standing bureaucratic impediments to humanitarian risk, including a commitment to replace the cumbersome travel permit regime in Darfur with a simple notification system. If implemented, this would greatly facilitate humanitarian operations. There is also agreement in principle that three or four US - based NGOs who had been expelled should be able to return under different labels. Overall, while negative rhetoric, including from President

Bashir, has not stopped, we have noticed a tangible improvement in the Government's approach to the UN and humanitarian community in the last two weeks. We hope that this will result in real improvements in the working environment, and enable us to fill the capacity gaps on a more lasting basis.

6. I plan to visit Sudan in the first week of May to help finalize our negotiations and if possible, attend a first meeting of an expanded High Level Committee, the main federal level supervisory body for humanitarian work, together with US Special Envoy Graton.

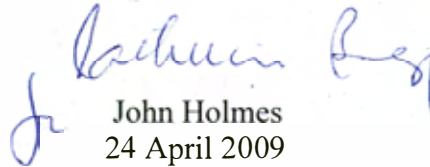
  
John Holmes  
24 April 2009

cc: Mr. Le Roy  
Ms. Malcorra  
Mr. Qazi  
Mr. Adada  
Ms. Haq

Note to Mr. Nambiar

**HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN SUDAN**

Please find attached a note to the Secretary-General regarding the humanitarian situation in Sudan.

  
John Holmes  
24 April 2009

