

| The EU and the Sudans

*Dame Rosalind Marsden**

As EU Special Representative, I have a wide ranging mandate from EU Foreign Ministers covering all aspects of EU policy towards Sudan and South Sudan. At the core of this mandate is the promotion of peace and stability in Sudan and South Sudan. This is one of the European Union's top priorities in Africa.

Both Sudan and South Sudan face considerable challenges. These continue to cause human suffering as well as instability and insecurity in the wider region. The conflict in Darfur continues, with 1.7 million Darfuris still living in IDP camps and 300,000 in refugee camps in Chad. The fighting that erupted in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states in 2011 has caused large-scale civilian casualties, displacement and an exodus of over 240,000 refugees into South Sudan and Ethiopia. More than 100,000 people have been displaced from Abyei. Inter-communal clashes in South Sudan, particularly in Jonglei state, have also resulted in displacement and loss of civilian life.

In order to address these challenges, EU Foreign Ministers decided last year to pursue a Comprehensive Approach to Sudan and South Sudan. This is designed to promote the emergence of two viable, stable and prosperous states. The EU is using a wide range of instruments - political, diplomatic, development assistance, security and stabilisation, and human rights, as well as humanitarian assistance - in a more coherent and joined-up fashion.

A cornerstone of the Comprehensive Approach has been to support the African Union's mediation efforts between Sudan and South Sudan. The EU has lent political, financial and technical support to the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), led by former President Thabo Mbeki. The EU also welcomed the clear leadership demonstrated by the AU Peace and Security Council, in particular when it adopted the AU Roadmap on 24 April, subsequently endorsed by the UN Security Council in Resolution 2046. My team and I have been present in Addis Ababa during the negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan in order to support the AUHIP.

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I also coordinate closely with key regional players and Special Envoys from the UN, US, and Norway, and, of course, my Chinese counterpart. This coordination, together with the strong lead given by the AU, has ensured an unprecedented degree of international consensus that has been indispensable to making progress in resolving the outstanding issues.

The Addis talks culminated in the signing of nine agreements by Sudan and South in Addis Ababa on 27 September. These agreements represent a major step towards normalising relations between the two countries. The implementation of the agreements will benefit the people of both countries. The EU stands ready to support the implementation process.

While the agreements are a great achievement, the critical issues of the final status of Abyei, the disputed and claimed border areas and the conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states remain unresolved. Resolving these issues is essential for full normalisation of relations between Sudan and South Sudan and for full implementation of the AU Roadmap and UN Security Council Resolution 2046. The EU supports the clear lead given by the African Union.

The EU remains gravely concerned about the fighting in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states and the serious humanitarian situation this has caused. The EU has repeatedly insisted on immediate access for international humanitarian agencies to all civilians affected by the conflict. It is also imperative that the Government of Sudan and SPLM/North engage immediately in direct talks in order to reach a cessation of hostilities and a political settlement on the basis of the 28 June 2011 Framework Agreement and with a view to an inclusive national dialogue that meets the needs and aspirations of all Sudanese citizens within an open and democratic framework. There can be no military solution to this conflict.

Darfur is also an issue of major concern for the EU. The security situation in Darfur is serious with an increased threat of physical violence to civilians from armed groups, inter-communal tensions, aerial bombing and fighting between forces of the Government and the armed movements, particularly in North Darfur. The EU is concerned about continuing restrictions on humanitarian access in some parts of Darfur, including the eastern Jebel Marra, and on UNAMID's freedom of movement, particularly to areas of recent conflict. Forty seven UNAMID peacekeepers have been killed in Darfur but none of the perpetrators has yet been brought to justice.

Also in the case of Darfur, dialogue and negotiations are necessary to resolve the conflict. That is why the EU welcomed the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) signed in May 2011 as the basis for reaching a comprehensive and inclusive peace. The EU has urged the signatory Parties to redouble their efforts to achieve rapid and tangible progress in implementing the DDPD.

The EU remains strongly committed to helping the people of Darfur. We will continue to demonstrate that commitment through our support for the peace process; and political and financial support for UNAMID to fulfil its protection of civilians mandate (EU Member States fund 45% of UNAMID's budget through their assessed contributions to the UN). The EU is also funding a large humanitarian assistance programme, including support for some early recovery activities. The EU would like to do more to help but our ability to do so depends on progress in three areas: access for international humanitarian and development workers, security and implementation of the DDPD.

The EU is committed to promoting democratisation, good governance and human rights. The EU supports the promotion by the African Union of a holistic approach to the quest for peace, justice and reconciliation and the need to prioritise democratisation in both Sudan and South Sudan as a sine qua non for stability and equitable governance. Local civil society groups in both Sudan and South Sudan have an essential role to play in this endeavour. The EU is a strong supporter of civil society organisations in both countries.

Besides our political engagement, humanitarian and development assistance is a core part of our engagement in both Sudans. Since 2005, the EU has committed development assistance of over 650 million euros to South Sudan. Since 2010, the EU has committed 285 million euros to developing the following sectors: education, health, agriculture, food security and democratic governance. The EU has also deployed a Common Security and Defence Policy mission in order to strengthen security at Juba Airport.

Development assistance to Sudan is more limited given the Government of Sudan's decision not to ratify the revised Cotonou Agreement. Even so, in 2011 the EU provided around 47 million euros to vulnerable populations in conflict-affected areas in the agriculture, health, and education sectors. In 2012, the EU provided 10 million euros for agriculture and basic services in North and South Darfur.

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Humanitarian assistance continues to be another core strand of the EU's policy towards Sudan and South Sudan. There are still considerable humanitarian needs in both countries. The EU's humanitarian programme for the two Sudans is one of the largest EU humanitarian programmes in the world. The European Commission's budget for Sudan and South Sudan towards the end of 2012 was 127 million euros.

The EU will remain closely engaged in Sudan and South Sudan and will continue to work with our international partners to promote two stable, democratic and prosperous states.