

Remarks of the Chairperson of AU High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan

UN Security Council, New York, 9 February 2011.

Mr. Thabo Mbeki

Your Excellency, President of the Council,

Your Excellency, Secretary General of the United Nations,

Your Excellencies, Members of the Council,

Ladies and gentlemen:

The African Union High Level Implementation Panel for Sudan would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to address the Council once again.

Your meeting today provides an opportunity for all of us once more to commend and congratulate the people of Sudan on the success of the South Sudan referendum.

Our Panel had the privilege to observe at first hand the people of southern Sudan as they cast their votes. Given the historic significance of the referendum, it was of the utmost importance that it was conducted in a credible and peaceful manner.

Our own observations, which coincide with those of the UN Panel on the Referenda, led by President Ben Mkapa, and other national and international observers, are that indeed the Referendum met all the criteria of legitimacy, leaving no room for challenge regarding its outcome. Happily and because of this, the Government of Sudan has duly accepted the result.

With this referendum, the people of northern and southern Sudan have decisively put behind them their history of animosity and conflict. We are confident that they will never return to war.

In this regard once more we commend and congratulate the people of Sudan, their political parties and their leaders, including and especially President Omar Hassan al Bashir and First Vice President Salva Kiir Mayardit, for their courage, their steadfastness, and their unwavering commitment to peace.

We also reiterate our commendation of the South Sudan Referendum Commission, UNMIS and SRSG Haile Menkerios for everything they did to ensure the success of the referendum. We must also thank the rest of the international community for the resources it made available to help finance the referendum.

Ten days ago, the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government unanimously adopted a Solemn Declaration on Sudan. It included the following words:

“Sudan has the utmost importance to the African continent. It spans the diversity of our continent, bringing our peoples together in a great melting pot. The achievement of peace, democracy and development in northern and southern Sudan promises to help lift the entire continent. Sudan’s ability to overcome the formidable obstacles in its path stands as a testament to Africa’s capacity to resolve its

conflicts and achieve our common goals. Conversely, Africa cannot afford to see Sudan again plunge into turmoil...

“We express Africa’s solidarity with the entire Sudanese people, and welcome equally North and South Sudan and the emerging post-referendum situation, as building blocks for the ongoing project of African integration. Having achieved peace, the Sudanese people are now able fully to participate as effective actors and beneficiaries in the common African endeavour of shared prosperity and continental unity.”

As part of Africa’s commitment to assist the Sudanese people to achieve these goals, in the months ahead our Panel will continue to facilitate the negotiations to finalise the outstanding issues in the CPA.

These include Abyei, the demarcation of the north-south border, the resolution of disputed areas along this border, and the completion of the Popular Consultations in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. In all these matters, we work in exemplary partnership with UNMIS and SRSB Haile Menkerios.

We also continue to facilitate the negotiations between the parties on post-referendum arrangements which include issues of economic cooperation, the relief of the country’s onerous and unsupportable debt, security, citizenship and people-to-people relations within the context of two viable and mutually supportive states. We are happy to inform the Council that the Sudanese Parties have made significant progress towards a final agreement on these matters.

Mr President:

The Council will recall that in December 2009 we spoke in this Chamber and informed the Council that the Report and Recommendations of the AU Panel on Darfur had been adopted by the African Union Peace and Security Council on 29 October 2009.

One of the most important of these Recommendations, which became African Union policy for the resolution of the conflict in Darfur, was that only an inclusive process of negotiations in which all Darfur constituencies would be able to participate would produce the necessary comprehensive and lasting agreement. This reflected very directly the demand presented to us by the various Darfur constituencies.

The people of Darfur continue to demand an inclusive political process that will allow them to determine their own future, including through negotiations with the Government of Sudan. Indeed, in successive meetings of the Sudan Consultative Forum in May, July and November 2010, the African Union, the United Nations and other international partners endorsed this approach, without dissent.

Accordingly, to implement a decision taken by the African Union together with the people of Darfur 15 months ago, we will soon begin the political process, working with UNAMID, which will lead to the holding of an inclusive conference of Darfurians, who will then engage the Government of Sudan. In this regard we will fully take on board the outcomes of the Doha peace negotiations.

Further, in this context, our Panel and UNAMID have agreed and are working with the Government of Sudan to establish the required environment for the success of the Darfur Political Process, as happened when we engaged the people of Darfur as we prepared our Report and Recommendations in 2009.

Together with JSR Professor Ibrahim Gambari we are determined to do our best to ensure that a Darfur Global Political Agreement is concluded before the end of the CPA Interim Period on July 9, 2011. This is

vitaly important in terms of the future of Northern Sudan, and indeed of both states which will emerge in five months after the secession of the South.

Throughout the CPA period, President Bashir and First Vice President Kiir have demonstrated their personal and political courage, statesmanship and good faith. We have every confidence that they and their respective governments, and the Sudanese people as a whole, will continue to do everything necessary to address the various challenges which confront Sudan.

In this context we are pleased to reassure the Council that these leaders and their colleagues are fully conscious of and sensitive to the challenges they face, enjoying greater familiarity with Sudan than we, non-Sudanese, could ever have.

Accordingly our task is to assist them to the best of our ability as they confront these challenges. We are very pleased with the cooperation they have extended to us in this regard.

We trust that the Council will also continue to extend its invaluable assistance to the Sudanese people as they take their country through the momentous few months ahead of us.

In addition, we are very pleased that Africa stands ready to assist both African states which will emerge after July 9th as they confront the even greater challenges of nation building than those they face today.

We trust that the Security Council will use its influence to encourage the rest of the international community also to continue to extend its support to the peoples of Northern and Southern Sudan to assist them to establish two viable states.

I thank you.