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Follow-up to Human Rights Council decision S-4/101

Situation of human rights in Darfur

Statement by

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on behalf of the European Union

Geneva, 16 March 2007

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**HRC 4
Follow-up to Human Rights Council decision S-4/101
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Mr President,

On Darfur, we achieved a lot together in this Council. Let us continue on this path.

On behalf of the European Union, I thank the members of the High-Level Assessment Mission, in particular the chair, Jody Williams, for their work.

Today, we are discussing the follow-up to the decision taken at the 4th Special Session of the Human Rights Council.

Before turning to the substance of the report, allow me therefore to take a step back and to briefly recapitulate why we held the Special Session last December.

We convened the Special Session because of the extreme seriousness of the human rights situation in Darfur. At the time, the then-Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated in no uncertain terms: the Council has to act. And the Council did act.

The Council decided to task a High-Level Mission with assessing the human rights situation in Darfur. As you all know, this was not an easy decision. Finally, however, we reached consensus – this cannot be stressed enough. Moreover, the Government of Sudan as concerned country welcomed and supported the decision.

This consensus decision therefore constituted the strongest possible basis for the Mission giving it full legitimacy. You, Mr President, then set up the Mission exactly as stipulated in the decision of the Council.

However, the Government of Sudan did not extend its co-operation to the Mission. We regret this very much.

Neither the fact that the Mission was not able to visit Darfur nor the resigning of one member puts in question the legitimacy, let alone the legality of the Mission. The problem is not the legitimacy of the Mission. The problem was that the Mission was not let in.

By reporting to the Council, the Mission has fulfilled its mandate. And it is a good report. Now it's time for the Council to act.

Mr President,

The report reaffirms the extreme gravity of violations of human rights as well as of international humanitarian law taking place in Darfur.

The European Union is particularly concerned about both human rights violations by the Government forces and acts of violence by rebel groups. Women and girls are victims of rape and

other forms of sexual violence. Forced recruitment of children into armed groups continues. Hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons are forced away from their homes. Humanitarian workers are hindered to provide assistance or they even become targets.

Given such an extremely bleak assessment, it is imperative for the Council to remain seized of the matter.

There exists already a wealth of recommendations on how to improve the human rights situation in Darfur. This is why an effective follow-up should focus on the **implementation** of those recommendations directly related to human rights. That is what is needed now.

We owe an effective follow-up to the people of Darfur. The Council has to initiate concrete measures aimed at preserving their human rights.

We owe an effective follow-up also to our own new institution. By taking further concrete steps, we can demonstrate that the Human Rights Council is indeed able to respond promptly to human rights emergencies as set out in the founding resolution of the Council.

Dear colleagues,

I appeal to you: let us seize this opportunity to work together –also with the Government of Sudan– towards improving the human rights situation in Darfur. This is essential for the people of Darfur. This is essential for the credibility of our Council.

Early next week, we will share with all of you suggestions for a credible follow-up.

We must act together on this.

Thank you.
