

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN

STATEMENT BY

H.E. Mr. MOHAMMED ALI AL MARDI

**MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CHAIRMAN OF THE
ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
REPUBLIC OF SUDAN**

**HEAD OF SUDAN DELEGATION
TO THE FIRST SESSION OF
THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

Geneva, 20th June, 2006

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Mr. President, H.E. Luis Alfonso de Alba,

At the outset, let me on behalf of the Sudan Government extend to you our sincere congratulations for the trust that has been bestowed on you to steer the work of the Human Rights Council. We are confident that you will lead this session to fruitful conclusions.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We heartily congratulate the members of the Council, hoping that the inception of this newly established body will trigger a new and a strong beginning for the promotion and protection of Human Rights. We are hopeful that the Council will perform its obligations without political manipulation or double standards, thereby reflecting adequate balance in the treatment of sets of both individual and collective human rights. Violations of human rights, as you may all agree with me, are the wholemarks of armed conflicts and civil wars. To end such conflicts and uproot their causes in our country, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) with the SPLM in Southern Sudan has been concluded, putting an end to the longest civil war in the history of Africa. As stipulated in the CPA, the Government of National Unity, the autonomous government of Southern Sudan and the 25 state governments have all been formed; power and wealth were equitably shared; various commissions were established. A draft on the National Commission on Human Rights has been reviewed by UNMIS, NGOs, academics and parliamentarians and will soon be passed by Parliament.

Tremendous constitutional changes have taken place following the CPA whereby it has been provided in the Constitution a Bill of Rights through which all human rights and freedoms are very clearly stated without any discrimination on the basis of race, religion, culture, sex or political affiliation. These rights and freedoms are preserved and protected by an independent and impartial Constitutional Court. There is not now a single political detainee in the Sudan.

The Constitution for the State of Khartoum (the National Capital) has been promulgated, providing for sufficient guarantees for Non-Muslims in all their religious, cultural, social and political activities. The state constitution specifically provides that Sharia Laws should not be applied to Non-Muslims.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Peace in Darfur is now a reality following the signing in Abuja of the Darfur Peace Agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the biggest rebel movement (SLA), thanks to the sincere efforts exerted and help extended by the African Union and the International Community. It is the genuine aspiration and hope of the Government and people of the Sudan that the remaining rebel leaders who have not yet signed the Agreement would respond to the fervent desire of the Sudanese People and the whole international community for the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in Darfur.

We pledge before this august forum our commitment to implement the Darfur Peace Agreement in letter and spirit. Efforts to implement the Agreement have in fact started. The President of the Republic has issued on 12, June 2006 a general pardon for all those who raised arms against the Government in Darfur; a batch of 23 prisoners from armed groups have been released. Khartoum will soon be receiving the SLM leader, Mr. Minni Arkoy to start practical steps for the formation of the regional governing organs in Darfur as stipulated in the Agreement.

However, and inspite of the substantial progress that has been made, there is still a lot to be done. Sincere efforts and help are needed from the international donor community to materialize their pledges to support programs for the rehabilitation of IDPs and refugees both in Southern Sudan and Darfur.

It is the absolute conviction of the Government of the Sudan that only lasting peace and stability constitute the best means to ensure full realization of all human rights for all people. In this regard, my Government would like to underscore and commend the vital role that has and is still being played by the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS). This role after the signing of the Peace Agreement in Darfur has to be preserved, strengthened, augmented and encouraged to follow through. We would also like to make it crystal clear that we look forward to seeing a vital, constructive and objective role for the UN in Darfur. This role is to be agreed upon between the Government of Sudan and the UN.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As part of a larger effort to bring peace to the whole country, the Government and the Eastern Front fighters have already started open talks in Asmara in a bid to end the conflict in Eastern Sudan.

Finally, I seize this opportunity to pledge and stress our firm commitment to cooperate fully with the Human Rights Council and the international community to uphold the principles laid down by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, other related instruments and to realize the objectives and goals of this Council.

Thank you all.