

**P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on Sudan**

The EU welcomes the latest round of negotiations between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement which were held in Addis Abeba from 4 to 7 August 1998 in the framework of IGAD, and the agreement of the parties to convene a fourth round of negotiations within six months in Nairobi. The European Union nevertheless notes with regret that the Government of Sudan and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement were not able at this stage to reach an agreement on major questions of contention, like the geographical definition of the area to be subject to a referendum. The European Union underlines the importance of the mechanism of shuttle diplomacy as a means of narrowing the gap between the parties on outstanding issues and recommends its continuation.

The EU remains very concerned at the current humanitarian tragedy of the populations in South Sudan. In order to allow full access to those in dire need of assistance, the EU, recalling its declaration of 1 May 1998, welcomes the 3 months' cease-fire in Bahr al-Ghazal which has been agreed upon by the Government of Sudan and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement, and the declaration of a unilateral cease-fire issued by the Government of Sudan on 4 August 1998. The EU urges both parties to extend the cease-fire geographically and beyond the above-mentioned period. This should be done for humanitarian purposes and as a confidence building measure. The EU emphasises that food aid will be required for at least another year.

The EU calls on all parties involved to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need, to provide, where requested, international humanitarian relief agencies with all possible assistance and to ensure full respect for international humanitarian law. The Union further calls on all parties to respect and guarantee the security of all personnel of the aid organisations and relief flights and their crews and other means of humanitarian transport and supply depots. It encourages the parties to work with the Technical Committee on Humanitarian Assistance in this regard and calls on them to facilitate, as agreed and without further delay, the implementation of the UN humanitarian needs assessment mission in the Nuba mountain region.

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The EU reiterates its full support for the IGAD peace negotiations as well as for the role of the IGAD Partners Forum and in so doing it urges the negotiating parties to agree to hold their next round of peace talks in Nairobi at an early date.

The Central and Eastern European countries and Cyprus associated with the European Union and the EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.

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