



COMMUNIQUE

THE AFRICAN UNION HAILS THE 5TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AGREEMENT AND HIGHLIGHTS THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SUDAN

Today marks the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) by the Sudanese parties. On this auspicious occasion, the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Jean Ping, congratulates the people of Sudan and the Government of National Unity for this historic achievement. Not only does the Agreement remain as a landmark event in bringing an end to the longest running civil war in Africa, but it is also a possible model successfully to manage the diversity characteristic of virtually all African states, based on respect for the principle and practice of unity in diversity.

Since the signing of the Agreement, important achievements have been made, including the establishment of the Government of National Unity, the Government of Southern Sudan, a number of other national and regional institutions, as well as a broader security arrangement and a permanent ceasefire that made it possible to keep the peace until today, in spite of the serious security challenges that continue to confront Southern Sudan.

With this anniversary, Sudan, this microcosm of Africa, is also entering one of the most critical phases of its history, with the holding of general elections, currently scheduled for April 2010, as well as the Referendum on self-determination for Southern Sudan, slated for January 2011. These are national sovereign decisions that have been taken by the people of Sudan, enshrined in the Interim National Constitution adopted after the conclusion of the CPA.

For the African continent, the successful completion of this landmark Agreement is of utmost importance. Should Sudan succeed in overcoming the legacy of its past, its democratic transformation will be a shining example to the rest of the continent and a catalyst for the acceleration of the processes of the entrenchment of democracy and development. Should it

fail to do so, the consequences of a renewed national crisis will spell disaster for both the immediate neighbours and Africa as a whole.

The AU is confident that, with genuine support from the international community, the Sudanese people have the capacity to seize this historic opportunity to triumph over the seemingly bitter divisions among them, and avail their country new opportunities to redefine their common identity on the basis of shared values, including unity amid diversity.

The progress made recently by the Sudanese parties for the preparation of the referendum in Southern Sudan and Abyei, as well as for the popular consultations for South Kordofan and Blue Nile, the steps taken towards the holding of the elections and the efforts being made to implement the ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration on Abyei, are all indications that bear testimony to the capacity of the Sudanese people to meet the challenges facing their country.

The Chairperson of the Commission urges the Sudanese to redouble their efforts and rededicate themselves to the search of lasting solutions to the problems confronting Sudan, in particular in Darfur, through renewed efforts for the resumption and completion of the political process, taking advantage of the process initiated in Doha, and in the South, by resolving all outstanding issues in the CPA implementation.

On its part, the AU will pursue and intensify its efforts, working closely with the Sudanese stakeholders to assist them deal with the myriad of challenges facing their country. In so doing, the AU will be guided by the holistic approach articulated in the Report of the AU High Level Panel on Darfur (AUPD) and the decision adopted by the Peace and Security Council in Abuja, in October 2009.

The Chairperson of the Commission expresses the hope that 2010, which is the Year of Peace and Security in Africa, whose motto is **“MAKE PEACE HAPPEN”**, will witness remarkable strides in the journey of the Sudanese people towards peace, security and stability.

Addis Ababa, 9 January 2010