

Statement of the African Union Mediation on the Political Dialogue on the Crisis in Darfur.

At the invitation of the African union, Representatives of the Government of Sudan, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army and the Justice and Equality Movement, met at the AU Headquarters from 15 to 17 July 2004 to deliberate on conditions towards a comprehensive political settlement of the crisis in the Darfur region.

The meeting is a continuation of the process of dialogue between the Sudanese parties which led to the Agreements reached on 8 and 25 April in Ndjamena, Chad, including the Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement. This process is undertaken at the recommendation of the Peace and Security Council and the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government on their third meeting held from 6 to 8 July 2004.

The meeting was held in the full awareness of the serious humanitarian conditions unfolding in Darfur, and with a powerful sense of urgency to address the root causes of the conflict.

The parties gave their respective assessment of progress made towards the implementation of the N'djamena Agreements. It was strongly underlined that progress in the implementation of these Agreements was crucial to create a conducive atmosphere for progress in the political talks.

The Mediation felt that the Ceasefire Commission and the Joint Commission provide an adequate mechanism for the implementation of these Agreements. There is an urgent need to accelerate the implementation process, particularly in the area of ensuring security and commitments entered into must be fulfilled without delay by all sides.

It has been agreed that contacts and consultations with the parties will be intensified to determine the next steps of the political dialogue.

Addis Ababa, 17 July 2004