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**OFFICE OF UN RESIDENT AND HUMANITARIAN CO-ORDINATOR
FOR THE SUDAN**

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RCHC/SUD/Note 18

Note to Jan Egeland

Government of Sudan demarche on the UN's public handling of Darfur

1. I would like to advise that on 6th January, the Acting RC/HC (in my absence on leave) was called to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the Chief of Protocol (CoP) who stressed that that he was directed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to raise "issues relating to requirements from the Government on press, media and consultation" over Darfur. This is a near-verbatim account of the meeting.
2. The CoP stated that "ongoing statements from the UN, in the Press, on Darfur, are unacceptable", i.e. statements to the effect that "the Government is not taking up its responsibility in relation to Darfur (both political and humanitarian)". The CoP also highlighted "UN accusations and finger pointing the Government" with statements like "the Government is escalating war and is responsible for the deterioration of the Darfur humanitarian situation". The CoP went on to say that "the Government of Sudan is the most concerned party for the welfare of its people", and continued that "the Government is doing its best to bring about a peaceful solution to the Darfur crisis and to reach its people". The CoP cited the current Naivasha talks, as an illustration of the good intentions of the Government.
3. The CoP referred to the Crisis Management Committee within MFA that had been established to tackle Darfur issues, and stressed that "the Ministry wishes the UN in Sudan and New York to consult the Ministry before sharing with the media statements and exposing the Government of Sudan as the guilty party". The CoP went on to say that, "at least, the UN should take on the views of the government as we are all working towards the same goal". The CoP referred to the recent GOS/UN security assessment and inquired about the results of this assessment and stressed that the information and data coming out of this joint assessment is what should be referred to the media.
4. The RC/HC ai took note and replied that the UN's "intention is to keep visibility on a deteriorating humanitarian crisis and to urge everybody, both the Government and rebels, to work towards a peaceful resolution and, in the meantime, to ensure humanitarian access and the protection and security of civilians".
5. The RC/HC ai asked if the Government's expressed concerns related to the accuracy of UN assessments on Darfur triggered by specific incidents, or whether this was a more general concern. The CoP answered that the "UN projection of the Government as the guilty party as well as the inaccuracy of numbers does not reflect,

with accuracy and balance, the political situation". The CoP went on that "the rebels are responsible and that the Government has to act and react to danger". The CoP elaborated that "the Government is trying to bring about solutions and that, in this respect, it seeks the assistance of Chad and it has tabled at the UN Security Council an accusation pointing to Eritrea's involvement in the Darfur crisis". The CoP reiterated the Government commitment to a peaceful solution, as "there is no other solution" and expressed hope that the international community will exert pressure on the rebels, not just on the government.

6. The RC/HC ai informed the CoP of having received (on 6 January) a letter to the UN Secretary General from Darfur students demonstrating outside UN premises, expressing concern on Darfur and calling for an end to hostilities. The CoP replied that "government officials, and leadership, besides the students, are also concerned about the Darfur situation".

7. The CoP replied to the RC/HC ai's expressed concern over the lack of access by the international community to Darfur, that the Government's main concern is people's security and not to prevent access.

8. The RC/HC ai asked on whom the UN should contact in relation to the Crisis Committee, to which the CoP replied that the Crisis Committee will address this issue and determine the most appropriate channel of communication with the UN.

9. Atmospherics. Though a strong message, it was delivered in a gentle and polite manner, and the meeting itself was pleasant and cordial.

Dr. Mukesh Kapila