



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

14 February 2004
RCHC/SUD/Note 34

NOTE TO MR. EGELAND

Darfur Access – Flash Update

1. Further to my Note No. 32 of 12 February, I am pleased to report that we managed to get our chartered plane off from Khartoum to Darfur with a contingent of 2 UN international security officers, 1 international and 4 national UN humanitarian officers, 3 international and 1 national NGO workers, and 2 staff for HAC of GOS. Unfortunately, we had to off-load 3 international UN staff, whose travel clearances had not been received by 13:30 hrs local time - by which time I had to authorize plane departure to allow safe daylight arrival in Darfur. We will put these people onto available commercial/other flights tomorrow morning, as we have just received their clearances.
2. I have also requested WFP to bring into-theater as quickly as possible a dedicated "Darfur aircraft" to provide daily flights from Khartoum to-and-between the 3 Darfur Capital Cities to ferry humanitarian staff (including from NGOs) and essential equipment and supplies, as well as to provide greater capacity for any medical or security evacuations that may be forced upon us. I propose to fund this by an allocation of US\$ 0.5 M from the 1.2 M Euro Darfur grant which we have received from Netherlands through the UNDP-administered Trust Fund for Sudan.
3. Security: The situation on the ground (outside the 3 capital towns) in all three Darfur States is reported to be deteriorating, as more and more incidents of militarized violence are reported on major surface routes inside the Darfur region. The latest setback is new fighting in the Eastern part of Southern Darfur, which means that, in my Designated Security Officer role, I have had to withdraw clearance for a WFP truck convoy which was on the way into the region from El Obeid, carrying much-needed food replenishments. We assess that the increased in security is due to intensified SLM/SLA activity responding to GOS claims of victory over the rebels. A separate Note outlines eyewitness accounts of Janjaweed militia attacks that compound this insecurity. These incidents, along with new concerns over mines and UXO (a new problem for Darfur), add to the current operational complexity.
4. Ambassador Vraalsen has started his programme of official calls in Khartoum, and his advocacy efforts here have been very helpful. We shall report further in due course.

Dr Mukesh Kapila