

EU PLEDGING STATEMENT

**BY EUROPEAID DIRECTOR FOR EAST AND SOUTHERN
AFRICA FRANCESCA MOSCA**

at

the International Donors Conference for Darfur

Doha, 8 April 2013

II. Statement

Your Excellency Ahmed Abdullah Al Mahmoud, the Deputy Prime Minister of Qatar; Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

First of all, I would like to pay tribute to the generosity of the Government of Qatar in hosting this conference and express our appreciation for the untiring efforts of Deputy Prime Minister, Ahmed Al Mahmoud.

It is quite fitting that this Conference takes place in Doha. Less than two years ago, this great city hosted the signature of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, a document that, if fully implemented, offers fresh hope

for real peace for the Darfuri people. This Conference has offered a good opportunity to refocus international attention on the plight of the Darfuri people and the multiple challenges they face.

Undeniably, there have recently been some positive developments in the wider context, notably the recent progress in starting to implement the 27 September Addis Agreements between Sudan and South Sudan which we hope will pave the way for further progress, in implementing UN Security Council resolution 2046, particularly on ending the conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile and allowing delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The EU welcomes recent calls by the Government of Sudan for an inclusive national dialogue and its decision to release all political prisoners. We have observed as a first step the release of an initial group of detainees and hope that this will soon be followed by the release of all political detainees, as announced, to pave the way for a national dialogue.

In the Darfur context, the agreement signed the day before yesterday by the Government of Sudan and a group of commanders from the Justice and Equality Movement/Sudan led by Mohamed Bashar was a useful step forward.

However, these positive steps are not enough by themselves to consolidate a comprehensive and inclusive peace in Darfur and lay the foundations for socio-economic development. Threats to further progress are real: the security situation has deteriorated in parts of Darfur, particularly in North Darfur, Jebel Marra and areas around Nyala; recent tribal clashes over gold has led to large-scale displacement; armed confrontation continues between rebel groups and government forces; and humanitarian and development actors, in spite of what was said yesterday, still face access

restrictions that compromise donors' ability to plan and monitor their programmes.

As is always the case, it is the most vulnerable who are hit the hardest.

So today, I urge all the parties in the conflict in Darfur to choose political dialogue rather than armed confrontation. The problems of Darfur can only be solved through peaceful means.

If they choose to pursue dialogue, they will find in the EU a trusted partner. The EU is committed to help the Darfuri people to achieve a real and lasting peace that is long overdue. The EU is already a major donor to Darfur. The EU has been providing significant humanitarian assistance for many years to mitigate the suffering of the most vulnerable, as well as assistance for early recovery activities in areas where access and security permit. and EU Member states finance some 45% of UNAMID's budget.

In addition to this ongoing support, I am pleased to announce that the EU today pledges €27.5 million (35 M USD) to support the implementation of the Darfur Development Strategy. This pledge will contribute to lift the vulnerable people of Darfur out of extreme poverty. It will contribute to enhance access to basic social services, including health and education, and facilitate the improvement of agriculture and livestock productivity, as well as the management of natural resources.

This pledge is proof of the EU's continuing commitment to the people of Darfur. But it is primarily the responsibility of the Government of Sudan, the Darfur state authorities and the Darfur Regional Authority to ensure that the right conditions are in place for today's pledges to be translated into concrete peace dividends.

The EU stands ready to do more to support recovery and development in Darfur if the Government of Sudan facilitates implementation of the development activities to be funded by today's pledge, if there is tangible progress towards full implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, if there is a significant improvement in the security situation and if the Government of Sudan's new Directives for Humanitarian Work lead to a sustained easing of restrictions on access for aid workers to the Darfur state capitals and beyond.

Let me finish by highlighting an issue that did not receive enough attention during yesterday's presentations: the need to support and invest in women and girls. If a girl stays in school, gains useable skills and is safe from sexual and physical abuse, she will be able to use her education to increase agricultural production, improve the health of her family, adapt better to droughts and other natural hardships and even play a leading role in her community in helping to resolve local conflicts. She will earn a higher income that she will invest back into her family, thereby breaking the cycle of poverty in her community.

This is not theory; it is a fact.

This is a lesson the EU will promote and will seek to incorporate in all our work in Darfur.

Thank you.