

Remarks of the Chairperson of the AUHIP, during the High-Level Meeting on Sudan at the margins of the AU Summit Meeting:

Addis Ababa, 31 January 2011.

Mr. Thabo Mbeki

Co-chairs;

Your Excellencies;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

In the last three weeks, the people of Sudan have accomplished the exceptional feat of carrying out a timely, peaceful and highly successful South Sudan referendum for self-determination in the face of an international chorus of pessimism that painted a picture of Sudan's future only in the darkest colours possible.

We are happy to confirm that the eminent Sudanese leaders present here today, whom Africa and the world must thank for the holding and the success of the referendum, remain determined to do everything necessary between now and the end of the CPA period on July 9 to implement all outstanding CPA provisions as well as negotiate the necessary post-referendum arrangements.

In this context they have taken the vitally important decision that they will work together to build two viable African states which will be characterised by a high level of cooperation between northern and southern Sudan in all areas, including the economy, security, and relations among the people.

Our Panel continues to enjoy the privilege of working closely with the Sudanese leaders and Parties to address all the important matters on the Sudanese agenda. In this context we must mention that we also enjoy close working relations with JSR Ibrahim Gambari and SRSG Haile Menkerios both of whom are doing sterling work at the head of the two important missions, UNAMID and UNMIS.

We have agreed with their Excellencies, President al-Bashir and First Vice President Kiir, that they will engage each other to resolve the issue of Abyei by the end of March.

Matters relating to the issue of citizenship will be finalised in the near future, which will ensure that nobody is rendered stateless and that no citizen will suffer any negative socio-economic consequences as a result of the formation of two states, with the citizens free to continue to reside where they were at the moment of the separation of South Sudan.

The demarcation of the agreed sections of the common border should resume at once and the disputes relating to five areas along the border will be addressed immediately. Discussions will also take place shortly to develop the details for the functioning of a "soft border", which will facilitate free movement of people and goods across the common border.

The parties have agreed on the great majority of the security issues concerning northern and southern Sudan, and will discuss the outstanding ones within the next few weeks.

Our Panel will be facilitating negotiations to finalise cooperation on economic issues, in addition to assisting Sudan and its creditors to find a speedy way to relieve the country of its onerous external debt.

One of the immediate tasks of our Panel, working in partnership with UNAMID, is to organise an inclusive Darfur Political Process, culminating in the Darfur-Darfur Conference, which will build on the Doha outcomes, and which will enable the people of Darfur to participate in the process finally, and as early as possible, to bring peace to this important region of Sudan. It is imperative that this process is completed before the end of the CPA period.

Over the years, President Bashir and President Kiir have demonstrated their personal and political courage, statesmanship and good faith. For this they deserve the highest commendation by everybody genuinely interested in a better future for the Sudanese people, as was done yesterday by the AU Assembly. We have every confidence that these eminent leaders and their respective governments, as well as the Sudanese people as a whole, will continue to live up to their responsibilities during the remaining months of the CPA and thereafter.

We congratulate them and embrace them, and all the people of Sudan, as proud and free Africans, fully capable of determining their destiny and contributing to the renewal of Africa.

It will be vitally important that the AU, Africa as a whole and the rest of the international community extend all necessary support to the people of Sudan, both North and South, as they continue to respond to their complex challenges.

I thank you.