

STATEMENT BY MR. S.M. KRISHNA, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER AT THE HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON SUDAN [READ OUT BY AMBASSADOR HARSH V SHRINGLA, JOINT SECRETARY] AT THE 65TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON SEPTEMBER 24, 2010

**Mr. Secretary General, Foreign Ministers, Excellencies,**

At the outset permit me to compliment you for convening this very timely Conference on Sudan. The United Nations has been at the forefront of the international community's attempts to stabilise the situation in Sudan. As one of the prime contributors to the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), India shares the principles and purposes behind the United Nations involvement in the country. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate India's commitment to contribute fully to the shared goals we have for this troubled region.

Sudan today is on the threshold of profound change. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed by the warring Sudanese parties has brought peace, after a prolonged and bitter civil war, to Sudan. The culmination of the CPA process will take place in a few months with the referendum of 9 January 2011 when the people of Southern Sudan will decide whether they favour unity of the country or opt for secession. We are happy to note that the referendum process is on track and is expected to be concluded by the stipulated date. I would like to take this opportunity to compliment the Government of National Unity in Khartoum and the Government of Southern Sudan in Juba for their statesmanlike approach in resolving the difficulties at hand and in ensuring that the referendum time schedule is maintained.

We trust that the referendum will be conducted in a timely, transparent and credible manner and the outcome of the referendum will be respected by all parties in accordance with the provisions of the CPA as also the international community. India hopes for a peaceful resolution of the issue.

Insofar as the situation in Darfur is concerned, we would like the issue to be resolved in a manner consistent with Sudan's unity and territorial integrity. We are aware that there are several sets of on-going efforts in progress at achieving peace in Sudan and we wish the efforts, including the Doha Peace Talks, to bring peace and prosperity to Sudan.

India is extensively engaged with Africa and highly values its relations with the region. The Pan-Africa E-Network Project, the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of which was inaugurated by me recently, is one of the finest examples of the growing partnership between India and Africa. We value Sudan's participation in the Project. It is the biggest project of distance education and tele-medicine ever undertaken in Africa. Extension of concessional lines of credit to countries in Africa, including Sudan, has been another way of assisting our partners in the development process.

India and Sudan share the most cordial of relations. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru successfully argued for Sudan's inclusion at the 1955 Bandung Conference even before Sudan became independent. Our age old ties have been cemented in modern times with people to people contacts, trade and commerce, investments and a broad commonality of outlook on global issues. India is, therefore, deeply committed to the stable development of Sudan. India looks forward to peaceful development of this region which will depend, irrespective of the outcome of the referendum, on maintaining close cooperation between Southern and Northern Sudan and its neighbours, and the world community

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