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PRESS RELEASE

The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission in Sudan Concerns with the latest deterioration of the security situation in Sudan

The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission in Sudan, Amb. Baba Gana Kingibe, has expressed his deep concern over the latest deterioration of the security situation in Sudan, occasioned by the launching by unconfirmed rebel groups, of large scale attacks on the town of Ghubaysh in West Kordofan which borders the troubled Darfur region.

These attacks launched on the 27th December 2004 and the consequential retaliatory attacks by Government forces both inflicted not only serious casualties to civilians but also led the UN's World Food Programme to suspend further deliveries of much needed food aid to North Darfur. This suspension by the WFP involving nearly one and half million tons of food aid will seriously affect some 250 000 people who depend on it.

Ambassador Kingibe, reiterated that all breaches of the April 2004 Ndjamená ceasefire agreement by the Sudanese parties are condemnable. He said it is particularly unacceptable that any hostile action should be mounted by any Sudanese Party whether in Darfur or elsewhere, which would impede the smooth delivery of humanitarian assistance to the traumatized civilian population of Darfur.

Ambassador Kingibe, therefore, urged all Sudanese armed groups to rededicate themselves to the path of negotiated peaceful settlement of their conflicts, abide by agreements they have already signed, and refrain from any further attacks on or affecting any humanitarian relief convoys delivering essential food, medicine and other supplies to civilians caught up in these conflicts.

Khartoum 30 December 2004