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THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION (AU) ENCOURAGES THE PARTIES IN THE DARFUR CONFLICT IN THE SUDAN TO CONTINUE WITH DIALOGUE

The Chairperson of the AU Commission today appeals to the Sudanese parties engaged in negotiations in Abuja, Nigeria, since 23 August 2004, to remain engaged in the talks to resolve the conflict in the Darfur region of the Sudan. The Talks are being conducted under the auspices of President Olusegun Obasanjo, the Current Chairman of the African Union (AU), President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The Chairperson further calls on the Sudanese parties to resolve their differences in the course of the ongoing negotiations in Abuja and reminds them that political dialogue is the only option for the Sudanese out of the current impasse.

He calls on all the parties to implement in good faith the Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement on the Conflict in the Darfur, signed in N'jamena, Chad, on 8 April 2004 and the Agreement with the Sudanese parties on the Modalities for the Establishment of the Ceasefire Commission and the Deployment of observers in the Darfur, signed in Addis Ababa, on 28 May 2004. In line with the provisions of these Agreements, the Chairperson calls on the Government of the Sudan for the rapid disarmament of all militias, in particular, the Janjaweed militia.

The Chairperson recalls the Decision adopted by the Peace and Security Council at its thirteenth meeting held in Addis Ababa on 27 July 2004 to enhance the effectiveness of the African Mission in the Sudan and calls on all AU Partners and the rest of the international community to assist the African Union in this endeavour.

The Chairperson congratulates the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for hosting the Talks and for providing the necessary facilities.

The Abuja meeting is a follow up of the one held in Addis Ababa from 15 to 17 July 2004, and which was attended by the GoS and the representatives of the two Movements, as well as a series of consultations that President Obasanjo, and Chairperson Konaré held with the Sudanese parties.

Addis Ababa, 28 August 2004