

Parliamentary Consultative Meeting on Darfur

Final Communiqué

1.0 Preamble

- 1.1 The members of national parliaments of African Union (AU) member States from ten countries (Eritrea, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda), as well as the Pan African Parliament (PAP), hosted by the Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania, met in Dar es Salaam between 26th and 28th May 2007 to consider the responsibilities of national parliaments in responding to the humanitarian crisis in the Darfur region of the Republic of Sudan.
- 1.2 In the course of the meeting parliamentarians were briefed by His Excellency Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, the African Union Special Envoy to Darfur, a representative of the PAP, the Darfur Consortium civil society coalition on Darfur and academic experts.
- 1.3 The meeting was opened by Honorable Kingunge Ngombale Mwiru (MP), Minister for State, President's Office, representing the President of the United Republic of Tanzania. In attendance were members of the diplomatic corps with a special goodwill message from the Parliaments of donor countries, delivered by His Excellency the High Commissioner of Canada to Tanzania.

2.0 Context

- 2.1 The conflict in Darfur is complex and multidimensional with national, regional and international implications.
- 2.2 The Darfur Peace Agreement, signed by the Government of Sudan and one of the opposition factions, has been hindered in its implementation. The challenge therefore on the ground today in Darfur is formidable. Despite the existence of a cease fire agreement, fighting is continuing between the Government of Sudan, its militia, and opposition forces. Mounting frustration and the circulation of small arms has fuelled an increasing militarization of the camps. The beleaguered AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) is ill-equipped, under-funded and lacking the robust mandate which would permit it to provide protection to those under threat.

3.0 Noted

- 3.1 There is an urgent need to bring the military action by all actors in the region to a **halt**.
- 3.2 The territorial integrity and unity of Sudan and its neighbors is essential, not just for peace and security in the region, but as a reflection of the unity and security of the African continent. Dimensions of the Darfur conflict are reverberating across the region.
- 3.3 Ensuring the security and protection of the population is the primary responsibility of every State. However in situations where an AU member State is unable to protect, the AU has a collective responsibility under Article 4 (h) of the Constitutive Act of the AU. The AU therefore has a vital role to play in mediating and resolving conflicts on the continent.

4.0 Concerned

- 4.1 Non-implementation of the ceasefire agreements by all the parties is creating a highly volatile security climate in which civilian protection is under threat.
- 4.2 Women and children in Darfur are bearing the brunt of the conflict with recourse to rape and gender based violence as a weapon of war a widespread phenomenon.
- 4.3 Darfur continues to be the most acute humanitarian crisis on the African continent. The challenges facing humanitarian access and provision, both as a result of administrative obstacles and the general insecurity, are deeply worrying.
- 4.4 Despite the best efforts of AMIS, the mission is suffering from severe logistical challenges and insufficient mandate to respond to the need for protection and maintenance of the security of the displaced.
- 4.5 In the light of grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, we are concerned that a general trend of impunity persists in Darfur.
- 4.6 National parliaments as institutions of governance and direct representatives of African peoples have not raised a common voice to respond to the Darfur crisis.

5.0 Resolved

- 5.1 Parliaments have the duty to uphold the dignity of persons and respect for human rights in Africa, and must act in situations of violent conflict, not just in Darfur, but across the continent, in the search for sustainable solutions.

- 5.2 Parliaments have a direct responsibility to engage the executive, in the exercise of their oversight responsibilities, in the field of foreign policy, to protect the lives of the most vulnerable.
- 5.3 Parliaments should continue to make sufficient appropriations to enable African countries to fulfill their obligation to the AU, in the areas of regional peace and security, humanitarian operations and civilian protection.
- 5.4 Parliamentarians from national parliaments should continue these consultations through a mechanism to be agreed, as proposed at this meeting.

6.0 Recommended

6.1 Immediate ceasefire

- i. The parties engaged in the conflict in Darfur must implement an unconditional and immediate ceasefire.

6.2 Peace process

- i. Peace negotiations must be re-energized through a coordinated central mediation, led by the African Union. An all-inclusive base must be built for the new negotiations, including involving civil society. Opposition movements must be encouraged to agree a common platform, increasing the possibility of securing a sustainable agreement.
- ii. Women's participation in the peace negotiations must be prioritised ensured and promoted as stipulated in UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

6.3 Security and civilian protection

- i. AMIS must be provided with appropriate mandate, resources, equipment and logistical facilities for it to carry out its responsibilities in Darfur.
- ii. Support from the United Nations (UN), in particular through the implementation of the three step hybrid force arrangements agreed by the AU, UN and the Government of Sudan, and reflecting the decision of the UN Security Council in Resolution 1706, must be immediately provided.
- iii. National parliaments should explore their capacity to ensure budget allocations from national budgets in favor of the AMIS mission and response to humanitarian needs in Darfur.
- iv. Parliaments should condemn the widespread use of rape as a weapon of war in Darfur.
- v. Provision must be made for the prevention and prosecution of rape as a weapon of war including using international agreements concluded by Sudan which provide for such jurisdiction.

6.4 Humanitarian responses

- i. The Government of Sudan must ensure effective humanitarian access to the now almost 4 million Darfurian war affected remaining in the region,

including abiding by the terms of its humanitarian agreements, including that concluded on March 28th 2007.

- ii. All parties in the conflict must respect the exclusively civilian and humanitarian character of camps.
- iii. Securing a lasting peace in Darfur will necessitate ensuring justice for the victims of grave violations of human rights and humanitarian law.

6.5 Role of civil society

- i. The contribution of civil society to the resolution of conflicts and the provision of humanitarian assistance and protection, including Sudanese civil society, must not be hindered.

Made this 28th May 2007, at Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania