

Global Day for Darfur Canadian Unity Statement

Protect Darfur NOW: Time is Running Out

September 17, 2006

I. Security

- **Strengthen the African Union peacekeeping force in the near term**

The African Union (AU) forces in Darfur are under-funded, undermanned, outgunned, and need significant help now. The AU simply does not have the capacity to end the violence and protect the people of Darfur, but until a stronger UN force can be deployed, they are the only game in town. Canada must lead the international community to offer the AU immediate financial support or more civilians will die as a result.

- **Transition to a stronger UN peacekeeping force as soon as possible**

The United Nations has been slowly progressing towards a peacekeeping force for Darfur for many months now. The people of Darfur – especially women and girls who are victim of intense sexual and gender-based violence - cannot be made to wait any longer. *Canada must persuade the key players on the UN Security Council for the immediate passage of a resolution authorizing a robust UN peacekeeping force for Darfur with a strong Chapter VII mandate to protect civilians. Canada must also use its diplomatic clout to increase pressure on Khartoum to accept a strong UN peacekeeping force.*

II. Humanitarian Aid

- **Increased aid levels**

Earlier this year, food rations in Darfur were cut in half due to lack of funding. They have since been raised to 2/3 of the UN's minimum daily level, but shortfalls continue to mean that men, women, and children are going hungry. *Canada and the international community need to make sure that the humanitarian aid life support system that has kept millions of civilians alive in Darfur does not break down due to lack of resources.*

- **Humanitarian access**

Food and medicine alone cannot save lives if they don't get to the people who need them. *Canada must work with the international community to maintain diplomatic pressure to ensure that humanitarian organizations retain unfettered access to all who need their help.*

III. Peace Process

- **Implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement**

The signing on May 5 of the Darfur Peace Agreement was a step towards peace, but by no means a final one. For the agreement to become more than just another failed ceasefire, it is imperative that strong and sustained international pressure be brought to bear in order to ensure that;

- all parties to the agreement, and in particular the Khartoum government, live up to their responsibilities, including the verified disarming of the Janjaweed militias; and that
- all who hinder the peace process through violent action are held accountable for their actions; and that
- the Darfurian people are brought fully into an inclusive Darfur-Darfur dialogue to continue the ongoing peace process.

In order to ensure that the required pressure is maintained, Secretary General Annan should immediately appoint a UN Special Envoy for Darfur to compel implementation, and if necessary strengthening, of the agreement.

Canada must lead the international community with a sense of urgency, committing resources and making Darfur a top diplomatic priority, to ensure a strong UN force is deployed to protect civilians in Darfur. Canada must uphold the doctrine of *Responsibility to Protect*, a Canadian initiative adopted by the UN, which mandates the international community to protect innocent civilians from extreme harm when a sovereign nation is unable or unwilling to do so.