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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Humanitarian assistance to the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report describes humanitarian developments in the Sudan during the period from 15 July 2001 to 22 May 2003, as well as the geo-political changes that triggered those developments and the humanitarian challenges that remain.

Following years of impasse on issues of security and humanitarian access, there was an overall improvement in the programming and delivery of humanitarian assistance during the period under review. The peace talks begun on 17 June 2002 between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) resulted in agreements to cease hostilities and to uphold the principle of unimpeded humanitarian access, allowing United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations to reach an additional one million people in need. Significant progress was also made in cross-line operations and the use of less costly modes of transport, including road and barge deliveries to communities that had not been reached in over three years.

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Increased prospects for peace enabled donor Governments and the United Nations to work more effectively with national counterparts in planning the implementation of a peace agreement. The international community signalled its intent to assist the Sudan's post-conflict recovery and development in several meetings of the Donor Working Group. This reinforced the reconciliation process, enabling the Government of the Sudan and the SPLM to resume talks and to agree in May 2003 on the creation of a joint planning mechanism that included modalities for planning humanitarian and quick-start peace support programmes.

More than two decades of turmoil have nevertheless taken their toll. The Sudan has the unenviable distinction of being the country with the largest population of internally displaced persons in the world, estimated at more than 3.5 million. Thousands have had their livelihoods severely disrupted by the long-running civil war, which continues to force many to flee. Household coping mechanisms have been eroded, resulting in widespread food insecurity and high rates of malnutrition. The presence of militia, landmines and unexploded ordnance have severed access to markets and basic health services.

A key challenge is the urgent need for increased donor support to save lives and reduce human suffering. Provision of humanitarian aid and basic services must be expanded rapidly to reduce socio-economic vulnerabilities, to keep access routes open, to clear landmines and to facilitate the reintegration of internally displaced persons, ex-combatants and refugees. Significant and simultaneous support is required to build individual and institutional capacity, to reactivate the economy, to restore livelihoods and to effectively reduce the vulnerability of the Sudanese people.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/112 of 14 December 2001, by which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to mobilize and coordinate resources and support for Operation Lifeline Sudan, and to report to the Assembly at its fifty-eighth session on the emergency situation in the affected areas and on the recovery, rehabilitation and development of the Sudan. The report covers developments during the period from 15 July 2001 to 22 May 2003 and also includes a description of assistance foreseen.

II. Major humanitarian developments in the Sudan

2. During the reporting period, there were positive changes in the operational environment in which humanitarian aid is provided in the Sudan. Nevertheless, the need for such assistance remained as great as in previous years. Armed conflict and ethnic violence continued to destroy infrastructure, isolate populations, erode coping mechanisms and limit access to markets and also resulted in significant human rights violations. Natural calamities further diverted and drained vital government resources and caused additional large-scale displacement.

A. Magnitude of the crisis

3. Rebuilding the Sudan will present formidable challenges. The war has resulted in 2 million deaths. Some 4 million people have been displaced — the largest population of internally displaced persons in the world — and 500,000 Sudanese refugees are in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.

4. Work by the United Nations and Member States to increase access and restore livelihoods is bearing fruit, but efforts must be increased to facilitate an end to the war and to reduce the dependency and vulnerability that have plagued four generations of Sudanese. Since 27 September 2001, when the Secretary-General submitted his first report on humanitarian assistance to the Sudan (A/56/412), several geo-political events have occurred that have improved the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Those events underscore the importance of applying incentives and confidence-building measures to complement humanitarian strategies.

B. Geo-political context and change

5. Initial peace talks between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) failed in June 2001. In late September 2001 the Security Council lifted the sanctions that had been imposed on the Sudan for non-compliance with extradition warrants.

6. Bilateral cooperation on anti-terrorism improved relations with other Member States and humanitarian assistance by the United States of America to northern Sudan was restored September 2001 in the wake of the Sudan's worst flood disaster in 20 years. In October 2001, the United States appointed Senator John Danforth as

its Special Envoy and his four-point programme resulted in January 2002 in an agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the SPLM/A on a six-month renewable ceasefire in the central Nuba Mountains and the deployment of the Joint Monitoring Mission. In March 2002, the parties agreed to not attack or target civilians.

7. The use of arms against civilian targets and aid distribution sites exacerbated the deplorable humanitarian situation. It also escalated the conflict and prompted several member States of the Partners' Forum of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to provide financial and diplomatic support in bolstering IGAD peace initiatives.

8. Both aligned and non-aligned militia made their presence felt. Access to Unity State was abruptly curtailed, culminating in complete flight ban over the area in April 2002 and leading to travel restrictions and other impediments being eventually imposed on humanitarian access in all contested areas in May 2002.

9. Perseverance of the regional IGAD body and of individual member States led to a framework agreement between the Government and the SPLM on 20 July 2002 in Machakos, Kenya. The framework agreement provided for a cessation of hostilities in all disputed areas and outlined the objectives of a peace settlement, the process and time frame for implementing a comprehensive ceasefire and the institutions and monitoring mechanisms required.

10. The visit of the Secretary-General to Khartoum in July 2002 brought improvement in humanitarian access, but flight bans were again imposed in August-October 2002 as military activity intensified in Eastern Equatoria (Torit) and led to a suspension of the peace talks in early September 2002. Acts of violence against civilians and humanitarian personnel continued unabated and with impunity.

11. Resumption of the third round of peace talks in October 2002 was accompanied by the appearance of new insurgent groups, including the Sudanese Liberation Movement and the Darfur Liberation Front. New fronts were opened and in October 2002 the conflict widened to Kassala and Darfur States.

C. Influence on humanitarian assistance

12. The Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs for the Sudan intervened on several occasions to impress upon both parties the need for unimpeded access to affected populations. Those United Nations-brokered talks were successful in bringing a temporary reprieve and gave the parties an opportunity to find common ground on sensitive issues.

13. Parallel initiatives to improve access included démarches by representatives of Member States and the adoption by the US Government on 7 October 2002 of the Sudan Peace Act, which imposed sanctions and other inducements to expand humanitarian access and ensure a commitment to the peace process. The Act provided impetus for a 15 October 2002 memorandum of understanding on resumption of peace negotiations, in which the Government of the Sudan and the SPLM agreed to extend the cessation of hostilities and to facilitate humanitarian access.

14. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs facilitated a tripartite technical meeting on 25 and 26 October 2002, in which parties agreed on how to implement the provisions of the 15 October memorandum of understanding concerning access, including a monthly notification system for humanitarian flights to alleviate cumbersome flight request procedures. Access was to be subject to United Nations security assessments and clearances in accordance with United Nations security rules and regulations. Since October 2002, the agreement has twice been extended and no bans have been imposed on humanitarian flights.

15. The memorandum of understanding expanded access to an additional one million affected persons, but only through good faith and a reiteration of universal principles to which all parties had previously agreed in the Security Protocol and Minimal Operational Standards for Rail Corridors and Cross-line Road Corridors of 18 November 1998 and the Beneficiary Protocol of 15 December 1999.

16. Further progress on humanitarian access was made under the auspices of the Technical Committee on Humanitarian Assistance at its 5th meeting, in January 2003, which was chaired by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs for the Sudan. In a final communiqué, the Government of the Sudan and the SPLM reaffirmed their commitment to the fundamental right of access to populations in need in accordance with the Beneficiary Protocol and with the 26 October 2002 agreement. The parties also agreed to the establishment of a Tripartite Committee on Access and Cross-line Corridors, which held its first meeting in Nairobi on 26 April 2003.

17. Under bilateral agreements with the United Nations, the Government of the Sudan and the SPLM also agreed separately to permit expansion of humanitarian assistance to areas outside those traditionally covered by Operation Lifeline Sudan, specifically Blue Nile and Kassala States. That such agreements could be reached represented a major breakthrough. The status of the three marginalized areas of Abyei Province, the Nuba Mountains and southern Blue Nile State and their inclusion in the ongoing IGAD process remained contentious issues in subsequent and formal talks between the Government of the Sudan and the SPLM in March 2003.

18. Flight denials provided a means to test those mechanisms and the resolve of the United Nations and its Member States. Technical Committee Humanitarian Assistance forums were able to address the consequences but not the cause of the conflict. They provided no legal basis for or practical means of sustaining access in the event that the peace talks failed. It was also apparent that, unless benchmarks and deadlines were established, temporary gains would be lost and shifting lines of conflict would render humanitarian "space" the subject of constant renegotiation.

19. Guided by those concerns, the incoming United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and Chairperson of the Tripartite Committee on Access and Cross-line Corridors formed two working groups aimed at transforming previous commitments into tangible results, one for cross-line corridors and the other for humanitarian cooperation. The two groups met for the first time in Nairobi on 7 May 2003 and agreed to commence humanitarian operations along two key cross-line road routes and by river barge from Malakal to Juba. The same Government of the Sudan/SPLM/United Nations working groups will meet monthly to monitor progress and to agree on further solutions, including the opening of other road routes and possibly the Babanusa-Wau rail corridor.

20. At the time of reporting, significant progress was being made in cross-line surface transportation of food commodities by both river and land. The World Food Programme (WFP) had commenced road delivery of food aid commodities between Kadugli in the Nuba Mountains to Karkar and the surrounding villages, resulting in cost savings of \$250 per ton.

21. Barge operations on the White Nile between Malakal and Juba also began, with the aim of supplying emergency food to 300,000 newly accessible persons. A second operation along the Sobat corridor was also under way by both road and barge. A total of 90,000 beneficiaries were expected to receive 1,600 tons of assorted food commodities.

22. International financial and diplomatic support to the talks, combined with guarantees from Member States and the United Nations of support for post-conflict recovery, played a crucial role in encouraging the parties to resume the peace process, efforts that paved the way for improved delivery of humanitarian aid. The Humanitarian Aid Commission and the Sudan Relief and Recovery Agency, the respective aid arms of the Government of the Sudan and the SPLM, agreed to facilitate humanitarian operations in the early months of 2003. At the same time, the United Nations and its Member States reaffirmed their commitment to post-conflict priorities at the Sudan coordination meeting held in the Netherlands in early April 2003 and again at a technical-level meeting in Nairobi in May.

23. Convened under the auspices of the IGAD Partners' Forum, and facilitated by the United States Government, the meeting in Nairobi on 9 and 10 May 2003 culminated in the Sudanese parties' agreement to create a joint planning mechanism that defined principles and modalities for planning humanitarian and quick-start peace support programmes over a six-month pre-interim period. The joint planning mechanism is to be composed of representatives from the parties and technical experts from the United Nations and other sources as required.

D. Access and security

24. At the time of reporting and despite the cessation of hostilities agreement, fighting persisted in Unity, Kassala and Darfur States. Insecurity increased the number of displaced and vulnerable, while at the same time reducing the volume of assistance that could be safely delivered under United Nations security regulations. In the southern conflict areas, some 23 locations were categorized as "unsafe and off-limits".

25. The presence of militias in Upper Nile (Kiech Kuon and Mading), Kassala, Darfur and the Sobat corridor constituted a serious impediment to access. At the time of reporting, WFP had been forced to cancel an assessment of the road route from Malakal to Nasir and beyond to Jikau owing to insecurity created by the presence of the militias.

26. Road operations, in particular cross-line operations, remained hampered by the presence of landmines and conditions were yet to be established that would allow internally displaced persons, refugees and ex-combatants to return voluntarily to their homes.

27. From May 2003, some humanitarian workers holding Sudanese visas were not permitted to enter areas in the south. Staff members of non-governmental

organizations in the southern sector were required to hold work permits. The issuance of travel permits and visas took from three days to three months, complicating inter-agency planning. Some staff of non-governmental organizations continued to receive travel permits for one month only, which disrupted the implementation of development projects. Multiple re-entry visas were seldom issued to international staff of non-governmental organizations residing in Khartoum.

28. Satellite phones were still not permitted in the southern sector because of their global positioning system (GPS) facility. In the north, restrictions imposed by the authorities on radio and electronic mail (e-mail) communications placed humanitarian workers and others at risk. Apart from being contrary to the trilateral agreements, the inability of humanitarian staff to access radio equipment during non-working hours degraded safety measures as provided for in the Security Protocol of 1998.

29. There remained restrictions on humanitarian staff and cargo entering the southern sector by air from outside the Sudan except from Lokichoggio, Kenya. Those wishing to enter the country from Uganda to Equatoria were obliged, if road access became impractical, to travel via Nairobi and Lokichoggio, increasing travel costs threefold.

30. Highly versatile and essential Buffalo DHC-5 aircraft were being permitted to fly out of Lokichoggio on the understanding that they landed for inspection in Juba, Malakal or El Obeid. This requirement was adding significantly to the time and costs of operations.

31. At the time of reporting, all non-food cargo flights to contested areas in southern Blue Nile State were obliged to transit Malakal (or El Obeid). Furthermore, authorities required that all such flights should originate in the northern sector. This stipulation risked operations being delayed in the event of fuel shortages in El Obeid, which had already occurred.

32. Some impediments to the movement of staff and relief supplies could be attributed to cumbersome administrative procedures. Most were rooted in the question of sovereignty and the perceived need to maintain mechanisms of control. These became the subject of further negotiation, as provided for under the Declaration of Principles of 1994 and the Machokos Protocol of July 2002.

33. The above-described restrictions represented a breach of existing protocols. They were financially costly and reduced operational efficiency. Any peace agreement would need to include guarantees of free access to all affected populations for the purposes of assessing and meeting humanitarian needs. Such guarantees would require provisions for monitoring adherence to regulations governing travel and cargo inspection and for capacity-building to streamline administrative processes.

III. Humanitarian operations by the United Nations and its partners

A. Overall progress and impact

34. During the reporting period, agencies were able to maintain a safety net and to sustain life, primarily in areas where access had been granted on a regular basis. Of the 2 million deaths attributed to the war in the Sudan, a great number were caused by disruption or lack of basic services. Agencies were able to meet some requirements by using carry-over funds and tapping resources available for other operations, but only at the expense of those operations.

35. Shortfalls and delayed funding in the agricultural sector prevented the timely distribution of seeds and tools before the planting season, thus setting the stage for perennial food insecurity and dependence upon food aid.

36. Nearly all socio-economic indicators have remained at alarming levels, in particular global malnutrition rates. At the time of reporting, the volume of assistance being delivered was increasing. Improved access enabled over one million additional persons to be reached in areas where access had been denied for three years. However, restored access had also increased total requirements. Inadequate funding replaced impeded access as the most critical obstacle.

37. Communities chronically affected by natural calamities have become victims of the war-damaged economy and of the lack of basic services. Recovery assistance, which could otherwise prevent or mitigate the effects of such calamities in marginal areas, remains largely on hold pending further commitment by the parties to the peace process. Recovery and development assistance represents a potential exit strategy from recurrent drought, flooding and resource-based conflict for land, pasture and water.

38. As at 22 May 2003, priority humanitarian concerns included large population displacement in Unity State, western Upper Nile, Kassala and Darfur; followed by drought in Red Sea, Darfur, the Butana plains, northern Bahr al-Ghazal and Blue Nile; and increased dependency on relief assistance as a result of armed conflict and erosion of coping mechanisms. Resources are needed to assist 3.5 million Sudanese who remain dependent on relief aid for survival. Of that number, some 1,674,760 at present reside in areas held by the SPLM and 1,708,650 in areas held by the Government of the Sudan, including 800,000 drought-affected persons and 96,000 persons newly displaced as a result of conflict in Upper Nile, Darfur and Kassala States.

B. Coordination and facilitation

39. During the reporting period, United Nations coordination was weakened by the following difficulties: (a) the highly politicized crisis, which precluded the adoption of coherent action plans; (b) information-gathering and planning constrained by restricted access and telecommunications; (c) ambiguous agreements; (d) diffuse management structures; (e) increases in the number of actors, which resulted in (f) a proliferation of working groups, consultative bodies and steering committees. By 2002, the means and ends of coordination had necessitated pragmatic adjustments.

40. The United Nations is setting up in-country arrangements to strengthen and expedite international assistance coordination under the Office of the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and through the United Nations Country Team. Several joint and system-wide services have been established to bring efficiency to the United Nations effort while generating products and processes that benefit emerging Sudanese and international assistance cooperation arrangements. Area coordinators are being deployed to strategic locations to facilitate cross-line operations and to enhance field reporting. Thematic groups have been formed to bolster sector and intersectoral coordination and to ensure that realistic Millennium Development Goals, targets and indicators are pursued.

1. Coordination with donors

41. The newly established United Nations Donors Principals Group, which also includes representatives of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (ICRC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and non-governmental organizations, meets monthly in Khartoum and Nairobi on a rotating basis to ensure convergence of approach on policy and strategic issues. A smaller United Nations Donor Working Group now meets fortnightly (a) to address immediate operational issues; (b) to review planning; and (c) to undertake in-depth examination of other issues remitted by the Principals Group.

2. Coordination with regional bodies

42. As concluded at the Sudan coordination meeting held in the Netherlands in April 2003, capital-level donor coordination shall be carried out within the framework of the IGAD Partners' Forum. The United Nations would be expected to facilitate such meetings, including the pledging conference for the Sudan to be held in Oslo following the signing of a peace agreement. In an effort to generate more support for the Sudan from non-traditional donors, the United Nations has held meetings with representatives of the League of Arab States and facilitated a workshop of Arab non-governmental organizations in April 2003.

3. Coordination with international non-governmental organizations

43. Coordination with international non-governmental organizations has been vastly improved. Representatives of such organizations are members of the Principals Group and Working Group (see para. 41 above) and are also active participants in thematic groups on the Millennium Development Goals and issue-specific task forces. A monthly information exchange forum with a wide membership is held with international and national non-governmental organizations in both Khartoum and Nairobi. The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator also meets monthly with a steering committee of non-governmental organizations in both locations.

4. Coordination with Sudanese counterparts

44. The United Nations is fully committed to the principles of ownership, partnership and leadership by the nationals of the host country. There is now regular formal and informal contact with all authorities in the north and south. Regular interaction takes place with both sides on operational matters through working

groups on cross-line and humanitarian issues and, increasingly, on strategic planning issues.

C. Agriculture and food security

45. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) directed its efforts towards agriculture, livestock, fisheries and coordination of household food security programme interventions, aimed at increasing self-reliance and food production.

46. A chronic shortage of funds notwithstanding, FAO has joined with local and international non-governmental organizations in the implementation of food security projects in the war- and drought-affected zones. The following activities were undertaken:

(a) Agriculture

- (i) Seeds were distributed to over 500,000 beneficiaries annually in the affected areas;
- (ii) Some 250,000 households were provided with assorted agriculture farming tools;
- (iii) Peace-building efforts were supported in Abyei and Nuba, where 32,000 internally displaced persons and resettling households were assisted in 2002 and 2003;
- (iv) In the drought-affected areas of Darfur, Kordofan, Red Sea and Kassala States, some 12,690 hectares of devastated grazing land were rehabilitated;
- (v) Seed multiplication was promoted among internally displaced persons, which yielded indigenous seed varieties of sorghum in Bahr al-Jebel and groundnuts in Bahr al-Ghazal;
- (vi) Training in the promotion of vegetable production was conducted in all programme areas;

(b) Livestock

FAO and non-governmental organizations supported disease-reporting systems and vaccination of livestock;

(c) Fisheries

- (i) Community coping strategies were bolstered with the provision of basic fishing equipment;
- (ii) Training was provided to 800 beneficiaries in fish processing, preservation techniques, boat building and net making;

(d) Coordination

- (i) FAO coordinated planned interventions, strategies and priorities through sectoral working groups and quarterly information meetings;
- (ii) Together with partner agencies, the southern sector has been able to compile multisectoral baseline needs and intervention data into a widely distributed information system.

D. Food aid interventions

47. WFP emergency operations continued to save lives and to stabilize the food security situation in the most severely affected areas. During the reporting period, 217,400 tons of assorted food commodities were provided to over three million beneficiaries through the emergency programme alone at a cost of \$180 million.

48. Some 130,000 refugees were assisted with 41,177 tons of food aid commodities and a residual caseload of 91,772 refugees were assisted at a total cost of \$20.6 million.

49. Food aid was used to promote recovery with emphasis on improving the lives of women and children in rural areas. At the time of reporting, WFP and non-governmental organizations partners were assisting over 360,000 schoolchildren through school feeding programmes and some 180,000 beneficiaries through food-for-work to improve access to water by constructing *hafirs* (reservoirs). During the period under review 35,729 tons of food commodities were distributed to promote recovery and development activities at a cost of \$9 million.

50. WFP continued to provide logistical support to the humanitarian community by providing passenger air transport. This enabled United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations and national counterparts to implement humanitarian activities throughout the country as well as to provide security and medical evacuation.

51. Data from partner non-governmental organizations, national counterparts and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) continued to reveal alarmingly high rates of malnutrition, in particular in conflict areas, despite massive food aid interventions. At the time of reporting, most areas had surpassed the national average of 19 per cent for global acute malnutrition. The main causes were escalated conflict in the south, recurrent drought and extended hunger gaps resulting from the late rains, which coincided with breaks in the food pipeline. Since late 2002, WFP has been able to provide relief food aid to an additional 900,000 newly accessible beneficiaries in Unity, Blue Nile and Red Sea (South Tokar) States and along the Sobat and Nile river corridors.

52. Cross-line land transport has been possible from Kadugli in the Nuba Mountains to Karkar and the surrounding villages in SPLA-controlled areas with a significant cost-saving. In December 2002, WFP began cross-line operation on the Sobat River. In May 2003, barge operations on the White Nile between Malakal and Juba started, serving more than half a million beneficiaries.

E. Emergency education

53. Provision of scholastic materials and teacher training, as well as materials and technical assistance for school construction and rehabilitation, was hampered by insecurity and restrictions on movement. Consequently, the net enrolment ratio for primary education in areas affected by conflict remains exceptionally low, at 28 per cent, while literacy rates for 15 to 24-year-olds average 30 per cent.

54. In collaboration with national authorities, non-governmental organizations and communities, UNICEF continued to make progress in improving access to quality education, especially for girls, in accordance with the Education for All goals.

During the reporting period, some 460 new schools and learning centres were constructed or rehabilitated. Considerable progress was also made in improving the quality of education, the learning environment and rates of retention of students. Printing presses were installed in Yambio, Rumbek and Bahr al-Ghazal, enabling production, for the first time, of 100,000 textbooks within southern Sudan. Satellite radios were provided to remote communities to promote distance learning. Work on the construction of water points and latrines in schools throughout the Nuba Mountains, Upper Nile, Bahr al-Ghazal, Eastern Equatoria and Lakes is continuing. Major advances were also made in improving the quality of instruction, with 20,400 teachers and school administrators being trained.

55. Guidelines were developed for a peace education initiative in primary schools, involving the promotion of a culture of peace.

56. WFP continued its Emergency School Feeding Programme. During the reporting period, 64,973 children were assisted in over 145 schools.

F. Health and nutrition

57. Malaria, acute respiratory infection, diarrhoea and malnutrition continued to be the leading causes of death of children in the Sudan. Accessibility to health-care services remained limited, as over 40 per cent of the population live more than 10 hours' walking distance from any health facility. WHO developed a modified *Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses* package for complex emergency situations.

58. An estimated 8 million cases of malaria are reported per year, with a mortality rate of at least 30 per cent. In partnership with UNICEF, WHO intensified the Roll-Back Malaria programme. Insecticide-treated mosquito nets and rapid diagnostic tests for malaria were distributed to non-governmental organizations. Training and drugs were provided to 11 non-governmental organizations to implement intermittent presumptive treatment for pregnant women.

59. Tuberculosis continued to occur at epidemic levels in southern Sudan. It is estimated that 12,000 people develop tuberculosis and 4,800 people die of the disease annually in southern Sudan. WHO supports non-governmental organizations with drugs and capacity-building to implement the STOP TB programme. In northern Sudan, the STOP TB programme was extended to cover camps for internally displaced persons in 23 States and 297 laboratories were supported with training and supplies.

60. The leprosy programme was integrated at the primary health-care level in Mayen Abun (Bahr al-Ghazal), Old Fangak, Nyal (Upper Nile) and Lui (Mundri County). In the northern sector, the programme is integrated into the primary health-care system and the disability rate has decreased from 50 per cent in 1995 to 20 per cent in 2002.

61. Intestinal parasites are a major cause of anaemia, mental and cognitive retardation and stunting. Prevalence of intestinal parasites is higher than 80 per cent in children between 4 and 15 years. WHO supported eight non-governmental organizations to run school-based mass treatment with the provision of technical training and drugs.

62. In October 2002, WHO conducted two baseline studies on schistosomiasis in Lui (Mundri County) and Nyal (Upper Nile), which revealed prevalence at over 70 per cent. WHO provided medicine to several non-governmental organizations to start a school-based mass treatment of children.

63. The polio eradication initiative was intensified, with WHO, UNICEF, non-governmental organizations and national authorities collaborating to vaccinate over 6 million children four times annually. WHO expanded its surveillance programme for the polio eradication initiative throughout the Sudan and no case of wild polio infection has been detected since April 2001. The surveillance programme reached certification standard in both north and south Sudan in 2002 and is now used to target high-risk areas for future vaccinations.

64. In 2001, the Early Warning and Response Network was established to link communities with non-governmental organizations and international humanitarian agencies operating in Operation Lifeline Sudan areas. In 2001-2002, the Network was expanded to reach more than 400 communities. In 2002 the Network was also established in Government-held areas of southern Sudan, with 15 agencies covering 250 communities.

65. The human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) has reached a critical stage in the Sudan, with 2 per cent of the population infected. During 2001-2002, WHO provided blood kits to health facilities, trained laboratory technicians and established 42 surveillance sites in Blue Nile, Kassala, Upper Nile, Kordofan and Bahr al-Jabal.

66. Major interventions in the Government-held areas included measles campaigns covering hundreds of thousands of children in the drought-affected areas in Darfur and Kordofan States; training of hundreds of health workers; expansion of the integrated management of childhood illnesses approach in 14 States; and training of midwives and provision of midwifery kits in 9 States.

67. The emergency needs of 17,000 persons displaced as a result of the conflict in Raga were met by deliveries of drugs, food and equipment. The moderate outbreaks of meningitis in Equatoria and Upper Nile were addressed by providing vaccine to protect 150,000 persons and treating 4,000 clinical cases. Therapeutic food items and drugs were provided to centres in Juba, Malakal, Wau, Bentiu, Kordofan and Darfur. About 90 per cent of children received vitamin A supplements.

68. Major activities supported by UNICEF in Government-held areas included primary health-care interventions in Nuba. The agency also responded to the health, nutrition and relief needs of 110,000 flood-affected persons in Western Kordofan, White Nile and New Halfa, in addition to war-affected internally displaced persons from Mayom in Unity State, Kassala and Blue Nile. Over 90,000 persons at risk were protected with meningitis vaccine in Kordofan, Kassala and Gadaref. HIV/AIDS education for personnel of non-governmental organizations and government sectors in addition to at risk groups was initiated. HIV/AIDS counselling and the syndromic approach to AIDS treatment were strengthened in 14 States.

69. Activities aimed at improving the nutritional status of children included the provision of UNIMIX and BP5 for malnourished children in high-risk areas. The establishment of comprehensive nutrition centres in Southern Darfur and Northern Kordofan States and community-based nutrition surveillance in Northern Darfur,

Blue Nile, Southern and Western Kordofan and Upper Nile States contributed to the early identification and management of malnutrition in drought-affected areas. Nutrition-related activities included support for growth monitoring activities in 49 community centres and the provision of items to support therapeutic feeding programmes.

70. In the SPLM-held areas, interventions continued to focus on provision of primary health care, the Expanded Programme of Immunization and building the capacity of local health workers. Hundreds of thousands of children and women were vaccinated against measles and tetanus, respectively. Essential drugs were provided to primary health-care units.

71. Capacity-building activities included training of new community health workers, traditional birth attendants and village health committee members in the management of primary health-care units. Other activities included the provision of kits to health facilities in Rumbek, Yambio, Aburoc, Nyal and Mariel Bai.

G. Human rights and Peace-building

72. The Sudanese people continued to be subjected to serious human rights abuses, which have been documented in numerous human rights reports, including those of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Sudan. Such abuses include denial of rights of expression and association, restrictions on freedom of the press, harassment of certain opposition groups and religious bodies, arbitrary arrest and detention and arbitrary interpretation and application of laws. Abuses directly attributable to the civil war include forced displacement, intentional attacks on civilians, abductions, the forcible recruitment of children and other civilians as soldiers and forced labourers, hostage-taking, rape, looting, destruction of food supplies and the denial of access to humanitarian assistance.

73. The report of the Special Rapporteur to the General Assembly of 20 August 2002 (A/57/326) concluded that the human rights situation in the Sudan had not yet changed significantly. During the reporting period, amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act of 1991 and the National Security Forces Act, giving additional powers to security forces, and the extension by the National Assembly of a state of emergency reduced prospects for immediate improvement.

74. In January 2001, the Government of the Sudan took important steps to strengthen the Committee for the Elimination of Abduction of Women and Children by reconstituting it within the Office of the President. The Government of the Sudan and the SPLM made further strides in 2002 and 2003 towards respect for human rights and settlement of the 19-year civil war through a series of memorandums of understanding. However, those declarations lessened, but did not eliminate, military and militia attacks against civilians. In February 2003, the Civilian Protection Monitoring Team reported serious violations of agreements between the Government and the SPLM, including lethal attacks on civilian targets.

75. In 2002, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights held human rights seminars focusing on target groups such as police and security officers, government officials entrusted with reporting under international treaty bodies, members of Sudanese non-governmental organizations and Islamic

organizations working in human rights, peace-building and the humanitarian field, police officers and social workers working in prisons, journalists and parliamentarians. While it appears premature to assess the impact of those activities, no tangible progress was made in terms of creation of structures or legislation for the protection or promotion of human rights, nor did the Government of the Sudan launch any specific initiatives on a national plan of action. A certain number of recommendations made by participants in the seminars remain outstanding. Training sessions have helped strengthen trust between civil society and governmental institutions, however. With the launch of the technical assistance programme in the field of human rights, a constructive discussion on human rights within governmental institutions and civil society has been initiated.

76. Any peace agreement will need to include guarantees that all children under the age of 18 are demobilized from regular and informal armed forces, militia and armed groups within six months of the signature of the agreement. All children separated from their families and residing with or working for members of fighting forces would need to be registered for family tracing within the same period. Authorities would be responsible for mobilizing resources, both within the country and from the international community, to address the special needs of children in the processes of disarmament, demobilization, return and reintegration. UNICEF and other child protection agencies would be invited to assist in that process.

H. Mine action

77. Following a request for assistance by the Government of the Sudan and the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, the United Nations Mine Action Programme, in partnership with the United Nations Office for Project Services and UNICEF, established an Emergency Mine Action Programme in the Sudan in March 2002. Based on new opportunities such as the Nuba Mountains Ceasefire Agreement and peace talks, a concept of operations was developed and formally adopted on 19 April 2002.

78. Mine action technical advice was provided and a tripartite memorandum of understanding was signed between the SPLM, the Government of the Sudan and the United Nations on 19 September 2002. Under the terms of the memorandum, the United Nations will seek to help both parties to jointly develop a national mine action strategy that meets the needs of the emergency humanitarian situation and plans ahead to a post-war Sudan. The Government of the Sudan is a signatory to the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the SPLM has made commitments to comply with the Geneva Call, a parallel instrument subjecting non-State actors to the same obligations.

79. In accordance with the memorandum of understanding, mine action support is provided to the National Mine Action Office, with Mine Action Coordination Offices in Kadugli, the Nuba Mountains and Rumbek. Operations to clear mines and unexploded ordnance have commenced in the Nuba Mountains. Some 200,000 square metres have been cleared, enabling hand pumps and water wells to be put back into use and facilitating the return of entire communities. For the first time in 19 years, WFP has been able to deliver humanitarian assistance/food to SPLM-held

Karkar in the Nuba Mountains in a convoy originating from Government-controlled territory.

I. Refugee assistance

80. As at mid-2003, there were 104,500 refugees living in camps, primarily from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Uganda. An estimated 218,800 additional refugees were residing in urban areas. Of the total 323,300, some 62,000 had volunteered to be repatriated to Eritrea. Facilitating the repatriation continued to be the main focus of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its partners, along with efforts to protect and assist those remaining in the Sudan pending identification of durable solutions. In eastern Sudan, where the majority of refugee settlements are located, repeated rebel incursions and their occupation of two towns have not only created setbacks for repatriation but strained relations between Eritrea and the Sudan. As a result, the Government of the Sudan closed its border with Eritrea on 4 October 2002, thus forcing a temporary suspension of repatriation.

81. Under the “ceased circumstances” cessation clause for Eritrean refugees of 31 December 2002 (to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees), affected refugees are required either to register for voluntary repatriation, to apply for regularization of their status in the Sudan or to claim continued refugee status before the end of 2003. The Government of the Sudan does not favour local integration of refugees for whom repatriation is not an option. The ability of UNHCR to phase out assistance will depend on the success of its advocacy in that context. Refugees who do not wish to repatriate will be screened and their status determined on a case-by-case basis. The remaining Eritrean refugees, as well as refugees of other nationalities, continue to benefit from international protection and assistance, including basic food rations from WFP.

82. UNHCR works in partnership with the Government of the Sudan and seven non-governmental organizations to provide health care, water and sanitation, income-generating activities, skills training and agricultural inputs. The Office is rehabilitating deforested land, maintaining agro-forestry wood lots as a regenerative fuel source and distributing tree seedlings to refugees and locals for “greening” of the settlements.

83. The closure of the existing 18 refugee camps and their handover to Government is planned. A joint UNHCR/FAO mission was organized to develop projects for rehabilitating refugee-affected areas and to support relocation and livelihood creation in two remaining camps for the remaining Eritrean refugees who have compelling reasons not to return.

J. Water and environmental sanitation

84. Insecurity and inaccessibility have hampered projects to construct or repair water facilities in areas such as Upper Nile, Jonglei and Bahr al-Ghazal. Some 40 per cent of hand pumps and 60 per cent of water yards are not in working order. In war-affected areas more than 70 per cent of hand pumps and water yards need rehabilitation.

85. Approximately 670,000 Sudanese children under five die each year from preventable causes, of which deaths 40 per cent are attributable to diarrhoeal disease. Many deaths are also caused by Guinea worm infestation, which afflicts more than 4,000 villages in southern Sudan and represents 80 per cent of the caseload worldwide.

86. Gradual improvements in humanitarian access and service have enabled agencies to improve water supply, sanitary facilities and hygienic practices. UNICEF, non-governmental organizations and Sudanese counterparts have been able to provide over 1.2 million people with access to safe drinking water. Some 300 boreholes have been drilled. Hand pumps have been installed or rehabilitated to establish over 1,000 water points and hundreds of water yards and wells have been built and natural springs protected in war- and drought-affected areas. Sanitation and hygiene-related activities have included construction of thousands of household, school and communal latrines.

87. Activities in this sector significantly contributed to ceasefire initiatives in the Nuba areas where water supply and sanitation projects facilitated resettlement of internally displaced persons and returnees in Kadugli, Dilling, Talodi and Lagawa Provinces. Interventions in Jonglei and Lakes States (Lou and Aliab areas) assisted in resolving conflicts over water facilities. Efforts also continue to be made to increase access to safe drinking water and to reduce resource-based conflict in the Nuba Mountains.

88. Ongoing projects aim to increase access to safe drinking water and sanitation for an additional 1.9 million persons and to improve environmental sanitation and hygienic conditions for 150,000 persons living in war- and drought-affected areas and in Guinea worm endemic villages.

IV. Action taken by Member States

89. Positive political and security developments have prompted Member States to refocus energy on the future of the Sudan in a concerted and active manner. They have engaged in diplomacy on the sidelines of the peace talks and supported the Joint Monitoring Commission in the Nuba Mountains, the Civilian Protection Monitoring Team and Verification Monitoring Team. These démarches provided positive reinforcement of the peace process, as did the decision of the United States of 22 April 2003 not to impose sanctions under the Sudan Peace Act, on the grounds that the parties had shown good faith in the peace talks.

90. Donors balanced disincentives with signals of intent to support the rebuilding of the Sudan and to provide other incentives, should the Government of the Sudan and the SPLM further commit to peace. Three meetings of the Donor Working Group on the Sudan were held in Geneva, Oslo and Noordwijk, the Netherlands (October 2002-April 2003), to prepare for the implementation of a final settlement and the provision of international assistance.

91. Programme support will hinge to a large extent on the commitment of the Government of the Sudan and the SPLM to the peace process, but it cannot be guided or scheduled by political criteria alone. International law identifies rights and guarantees that are relevant to all Sudanese and at all times prior to, during and after political transition. Innovative and highly flexible funding facilities will need to be

established that support advance planning and pre-positioning of recovery resources by technical experts. Meanwhile, there is a risk that an inadequate response in meeting critical humanitarian needs and restoring livelihoods and stability could undermine the peace process and further infringe upon basic rights.

92. Despite clear evidence of persistently high levels of food insecurity and socio-economic vulnerability, funding of the United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal has remained low, averaging only 60 per cent of requirements for the period 2000-2001. Actual needs continued to rise because of expanded humanitarian access, drought and the outcome of assessments, resulting in overall 2003 requirements being revised upwards from \$255 million to \$272 million. As at mid-year 2003, the response remained low (30 per cent), forcing many programmes to put on hold and severely limiting the ability of agencies to maintain core competencies and readiness.

V. Non-governmental organizations

93. Non-governmental organizations have continued to play a vital role in the planning and delivery of emergency aid and in the provision of much needed technical assistance. During the reporting period, the number of active international non-governmental organizations increased from 63 to 74. They have a comparative advantage not only as regards numbers, but also given the variety of domestic and international interests that they represent. They have consequently been able to advocate for and bring a multitude of ideas to humanitarian and recovery agendas. Most are field-based, with first-hand knowledge of the country and the ability to respond quickly, through decentralized structures, and with a high degree of operational flexibility. Given their grass-roots approach and worldwide networks, they have been effective in raising visibility and consciousness concerning human rights and in advocating for expanded access and the welfare of disadvantaged groups.

94. The questionable actions of a small number of non-Operation Lifeline Sudan entities have raised concern among security organs that non-governmental organizations may usurp or undermine national interests. Such concerns, often exaggerated, were sustained during the reporting period as non-governmental organizations sought greater influence in governance and policy formulation. They generally demanded more accountability on issues of peace, security and human rights. As a result, organizations have encountered serious access difficulties, including unequal treatment in the issuance of visas, travel permits and telecommunications licences. Scepticism concerning the activities of non-governmental organizations gave rise to constructive partnerships as the organizations sought closer ties with the United Nations: the number of non-governmental organizations participating in the consolidated appeal process increased from none in 2001 to nine in 2003.

95. Acknowledging the important role of non-governmental organizations, United Nations bodies and Member States in March 2003 invited representatives of non-governmental organizations to become full and equal members of the United Nations Emergency Operations Group, restructured and renamed the Principals Group. The terms of reference of the Group were also changed to better tap the information and policy proposals of non-governmental organizations as well as

benefit from their substantial input to its deliberations. At the request of the United Nations and through the sponsorship of the Government of the Netherlands, non-governmental organizations were able to attend and contribute to the Sudan coordination meeting held in the Netherlands in April 2003.

VI. Outlook for peace and recovery

96. The foundations for substantive progress towards peace now exist, although expectations of reaching a final agreement on security and institutional arrangements by mid-2003 appeared improbable. During the past four decades, civil conflict has been the main cause of human suffering in the Sudan and will deserve vigorous attention in the months ahead with security improving, as well as internally displaced persons and refugees likely to be returning home. Many potential returnees will take a wait-and-see approach. Some 25 per cent, or 800,000 to one million, will likely return in the first year to areas lacking physical and social infrastructure. Soldiers, including children, will be partially demobilized and will return to the same communities, constituting a large, unskilled group that will threaten social stability if not gainfully employed.

97. It is crucial that a transitional programme be planned and funded in advance of any settlement. Meetings of the Donor Working Group on the Sudan have underscored the importance of supporting the existing consolidated appeal process as an effective tool to save lives and restore stability.

98. Humanitarian access to previously denied or war-affected areas is expected to improve with a peace agreement. It will also result in a corresponding increase in humanitarian needs for the next year or two. Should a peace agreement be concluded during 2003, the revised consolidated appeal process would remain valid as the overall basis for funding immediate humanitarian assistance to the Sudan, whatever the circumstances.

99. There is consensus on the need to provide incentives to sustain peace, targeted at defined groups and geographical areas. The outline of such a quick-start peace impact programme was presented at the meeting in Noordwijk, the Netherlands, along with the Sudan assistance framework, which underlines objectives, strategies and priorities for delivery of United Nations assistance to the Sudan in the foreseeable future. For 2004, the proposed mechanism for planning and resource mobilization is a consolidated Sudan appeal for humanitarian and transitional assistance. This would be guided by the Millennium Development Goals framework and allow potential investors an overview of the country's requirements for international assistance, including continued humanitarian relief, quick-start peace impact activities and support for capacity-building and funding of agreed Sudanese institutions. Equity in addressing needs countrywide will instil confidence in the new peace. The Sudan assistance framework sets out criteria for prioritization of resources, which will be refined in further consultation with Sudanese counterparts and through newly established thematic goal groups in the context of the Millennium Development Goals.

100. Work has commenced on the drafting of a poverty reduction strategy paper under Sudanese leadership, with technical assistance from the World Bank, which the United Nations expects will provide the framework for investment in reconstruction and development. The World Bank, which re-established its presence

in the Sudan in May 2003, is also preparing a capacity-building technical assistance programme and holding preliminary discussions on debt relief.

VII. Conclusions

101. Following a peace agreement, there will be a crucial and immediate need to ensure the security of the Sudanese people, in the form of cessation of hostilities and access to basic social facilities. Lessons drawn from other countries emerging from crisis will be applied to bring needed change.

102. Firstly, the United Nations Country Team has made progress in planning a common humanitarian action plan and consolidated inter-agency appeal for 2003 with appropriate humanitarian and other components. Donor working groups have endorsed the quick-start peace impact programme to complement the consolidated appeal process. Those plans will need to be further refined, integrated into bilateral assistance programmes, and endorsed by Sudanese counterparts so as to represent the first phase of a coherent transitional assistance programme for the Sudan.

103. Secondly, assistance partners must act urgently to ensure that effective mechanisms are in place for consolidating any peace that is negotiated but not fully implemented.

104. Thirdly, the present multifaceted approach, covering diplomatic, political and economic factors, must be sustained in a concerted manner, while non-traditional donors and regional bodies are encouraged to contribute to joint planning and cost-sharing. Additionally, there must be high-level strategic and operational coordination among the actors, who will need to ensure they have sufficient in-country capacity to engage effectively in coordination and joint planning.

105. Fourthly, the effort must be adequately planned and financed before a peace agreement is signed, requiring that existing funding facilities be made more flexible and responsive to humanitarian and transitional needs. Adequate attention must also be given to sectoral balance when allocating funds. Reintegration of internally displaced persons, ex-combatants and refugees into affected communities must be based on an integrated approach that provides food security while addressing long-standing gaps in the key areas of water, health and education.

106. Meanwhile, there is no time for complacency. The humanitarian imperative to save lives and reduce human suffering cannot await the completion of the peace process. Funding shortfalls in food security, health care, water and sanitation and other sectors are hindering attempts to stabilize the situation and to lay minimal foundations for recovery. An urgent infusion of funds is crucial to ensure that core competencies are retained and that agencies maintain their readiness, including sufficient planning and implementation capacity, as well as adequate material stocks and the means to deploy them. Only with such commitment will the possibility exist to set recovery in motion and to consolidate peace, which, once broken, would be enormously difficult and costly to mend.