



For Immediate Release

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Momentum builds for Darfurian civil society initiative with high-level backing from across the world

Mandate Darfur gains support from US Government, European Union, Arab League and United Nations

Mandate Darfur, an initiative to give voice to the Darfurian people, today welcomed endorsements from across the international community as momentum continues to build for the Darfurian civil society conference in Addis Ababa from 12-16 May 2009.

Leading a chorus of voices lending their support to this civil society initiative, J. Scott Gration, President Obama's Special Envoy to Sudan, said, "I believe strongly that solutions to the present conflict in Darfur must come from Darfurians themselves. Your efforts and the broad representation of civil society you plan to gather in Ethiopia will play an important role in adding more momentum to our mutual goal of peace and security in Darfur."

Demonstrating the breadth of support for this initiative, Mandate Darfur also welcomed the endorsement of Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the Arab League. Moussa said of the initiative, "It gives me great pleasure to welcome your important initiative in this regard, and [I] would like to express the Arab League's total readiness to cooperate...in order to ensure a positive role for the representatives and components of the Darfur civil society in the settlement of the crisis and mending the social texture in Darfur."

Adding European backing for this civil society solution to the Darfur crisis, European Union Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid Louis Michel said, "International efforts have hitherto tended to focus on the Government and armed groups rather than on the civilians having taken the conscious decision not to take up arms. I therefore welcome your initiative, which addresses this weakness and raises awareness among the conflicting parties of the concerns of the people of Darfur."

In addition, Mandate Darfur is pleased to welcome the endorsements of:

- Ambassador Torben Brylle, EU special representative for Sudan
- Abdoulie Janneh, Executive Secretary UN Economic Commission for Africa
- Alain Le Roy, UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations

Welcoming this support on behalf of Mandate Darfur, Mo Ibrahim, founder and Chairman of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, said, "We are pleased that the international community is coming out in support of this important Darfurian civil society initiative. We know that without the consideration



of the Darfurians themselves, no peace agreement will be sustainable or legitimate. It is our hope that the international community will continue to stand on the side of the Darfurian people when the Mandate emerges.”

During the course of the conference, Darfurian delegates from across tribal, ethnic, geographic and religious communities will debate the numerous political, economic and developmental issues in order to build a more sustainable peace in the region. Their discussions will lead to an agreed mandate that will provide the building block for future peace negotiations.

Following the conference, Mandate Darfur will work to deliver the Mandate around the world to ensure that leaders within Sudan, Africa and the wider world pursue the interests of the Darfurian people to find a lasting peace in the region.

Ends

Notes for editors

1. Mandate Darfur is being facilitated by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation after it was approached by Darfurians seeking support to amplify the role of civil society in the peace process.
2. Media are welcome to cover the opening and closing sessions of the Mandate Darfur conference in Addis Ababa.
3. All media representatives will be required to present valid media/press card at registration.
4. For media accreditation please send your name, media organisation and contact details to Risha Chande: (Chande.R@MolbrahimFoundation.org or +44 (0)20 7535 5063)
5. Further details of media arrangements and facilities will be posted on the website shortly.
6. For more information about Mandate Darfur, please contact Jon Steinberg: (Steinberg.J@MolbrahimFoundation.org or +44 (0)20 7535 5060 / +44 (0)7534 993 279)