Negotiations on Reducing Tensions between Sudan and South Sudan

Addis Ababa, 4 April 2012. The talks between Sudan and South Sudan, facilitated by the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), preparatory to an extraordinary meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) concluded today in Addis Ababa, with significant progress towards agreement on all items on the agenda. After several days of bilateral intensive discussion, the Parties yesterday invited the AUHIP to prepare a document for their consideration. This morning the Panel presented this document to the Parties, in the form of a draft Joint Decision for Reduction of Tension between the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan.

The talks were conducted against a background of escalating armed conflict along the countries’ common border and in Southern Kordofan State. The Panel is deeply concerned about this fighting, and its humanitarian and political implications.

In developing its draft, the Panel consulted closely with its partners, including IGAD and its Chairman, the United Nations, the United States, the United Kingdom, Norway and the European Union. Building upon the Memorandum of Understanding on Non-Aggression and Cooperation, signed by the parties on 10 February, and on UN Security Council Resolution 2024 of December 2012, and in the light of the Parties’ declared intention to proceed in a “new spirit” of partnership, the Panel’s proposal included the following six agenda items:

1. Immediate implementation of all previous JPSM agreements and decisions;
2. An end to negative media propaganda by both sides;
3. Immediate cessation of hostilities between the two states;
4. The withdrawal of the armed forces of each state that may be in the territory of the other state;
5. The establishment of verification mechanisms including the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mission, which is to be supported by the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA);
6. Preparations for the planned Summit meeting.

The proposal strongly emphasized the immediate activation of implementation mechanisms, including verification and monitoring in the border areas.

The delegation of the Republic of South Sudan accepted the AUHIP’s draft proposed Joint Decision. The Panel commended the delegation for its timely decision.

The delegation of the Government of the Republic of Sudan responded positively and will undertake further consultations in Khartoum before finalizing its position. The Panel acknowledged this position.

The Panel will immediately travel to Juba and Khartoum to meet the two Presidents and discuss with them the forthcoming Summit.

The AUHIP commends the co-chairs of the JPSM on their determination to continue negotiations at this time of heightened tension, in a positive new spirit of partnership, with a commitment to meet and finalize the document in the coming days.