

UN ideals can benefit from synergy of Afro-Arab cooperation, says Ban



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

11 October 2010 – Cooperation between African and Arab States can boost United Nations efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts in the two regions, promote tolerance, combat drug trafficking, terrorism and corruption, and strengthen the campaign against unemployment and climate change, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has said.

In a message to the second Afro-Arab summit that brought together members of the League of Arab States (LAS) and the African Union (AU) in the Libyan city of Sirte yesterday, Mr. Ban commended the efforts by African and Arab countries to promote peace and development in countries emerging from conflict in Africa, particularly Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Sierra Leone.

“Your Summit is an opportunity to explore ways to strengthen ties with each other in support of United Nations goals and ideals,” the Secretary-General said in the message, delivered on his behalf by the head of the UN Office to the AU, Zachary Muburi-Muita.

He welcomed the recent rapprochement between Chad and the Sudan, which he said had reduced tensions along their common border.

Mr. Ban also expressed the UN’s gratitude to the Arab League and the AU for their continued support to the people of Somalia.

He said while Somalia’s Transitional Federal Government (TFG) faces considerable challenges, it has made progress in its outreach to a broad range of Somali groups with respect to joining the reconciliation process.

“I am counting on you to provide more political and financial support for the TFG in this final year of the transition. The United Nations will continue to provide the logistical support package to AMISOM [AU Mission in Somalia] and technical expertise to the AU for the planning, deployment and management of AMISOM,” Mr. Ban said.

On Sudan, the Secretary-General urged both parties there to resolve all outstanding issues before the referenda on the self-determination of southern Sudan and the Abyei area, scheduled for January, and to ensure that the process is credible.

"The African Union High-Level Implementation Panel led by former [South African] President [Thabo] Mbeki and the United Nations Mission in Sudan [**UNMIS**] are working closely together to facilitate negotiations on post-referendum arrangements.

"I have also established a Sudan referenda panel, headed by former President [Benjamin] Mkapa of Tanzania, to encourage the holding of credible referenda," the Secretary-General said.

On Darfur, Mr. Ban voiced concern over the deterioration of the security there, but noted that the joint AU-UN peacekeeping mission (**UNAMID**) is working hard to protect civilians, while the joint AU-UN mediation is working to secure a peace agreement in Doha, Qatar.

"The international community, including the AU and the LAS, must deliver a unified message to the parties [in Darfur] to immediately cease all hostilities and commit to the political process," Mr. Ban said.

On the Comoros, he said it is important that the LAS and the UN continue to actively support the AU's mediation efforts and the electoral process in order to ensure the implementation of the recently signed political agreement.

Turning to the Millennium Development Goals (**MDGs**), the internationally agreed targets to eradicate extreme poverty by 2015, Mr. Ban said much more remains to be done, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable populations, despite considerable progress in both African and Arab States.

"I reiterate the abiding commitment of the United Nations to strengthening our partnership with the AU, LAS and the people of both regions to realize the widely held aspirations for peace, stability, dignity, democracy and well-being for all," the Secretary-General added.

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