

MEDIA NOTE

Following is the text of a joint statement by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, Norwegian Foreign Minister Børge Brende, and United Kingdom Foreign Secretary William Hague.

Joint Statement on National Dialogue in Sudan

The Members of the Troika welcome the National Congress Party's stated intent to undertake a process of national dialogue in Sudan. We have long shared the view of many Sudanese that a sustainable peace and a prosperous Sudan can only be achieved through a fundamental review—and reform—of national governance systems that concentrate power at the center and marginalize the regions.

To this end, we are encouraged by the leadership's stated intent to confront questions regarding the country's ongoing conflicts, poverty, governance, political freedoms, and national identity. We note that a common understanding of the dialogue process, and the desired goals, will invite broad participation and offer the best chance for success. In this regard, we encourage Sudan's leaders to work in close coordination with the AU High-level Implementation Panel, led by President Mbeki, to ensure that those goals are met.

As history has demonstrated, a dialogue that involves voices only from Khartoum or from "traditional" political parties cannot yield the results that the people of Sudan demand. We encourage the political leadership to ensure the time and space necessary to deliver on their promise of a genuine, holistic, and truly inclusive dialogue that will include the armed and unarmed opposition, as well as civil society.

Unfortunately, the Government of Sudan has taken actions of late that have enabled some to raise doubts about the sincerity of this initiative. Most notably, the Government continues to wage a war and target civilians in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile and bears primary responsibility for intensifying the conflict in Darfur, where some 300,000 have been displaced this year. Tangible steps by all parties to bring these conflicts to an end are critical now to build popular confidence in the process. Similarly, the Government's restriction and increased repression of individual, political, and press freedoms limits the space necessary for a successful national dialogue; such a process will demand both goodwill and a conducive environment if it is to enjoy broad legitimacy.

We will continue to follow developments closely and stand ready to work with those who seek to advance meaningful reforms.