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CANADA WELCOMES BREAKTHROUGH IN SUDAN PEACE TALKS

Bill Graham, Minister of Foreign Affairs, welcomed the breakthrough achieved in the Sudanese peace process at the latest round of talks, which concluded in Machakos, Kenya, on July 20, 2002. The Government of Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement have agreed to a six-year transition period, after which a referendum on self-determination for the South will be held. In addition, both sides have agreed that the South will not be subject to Sharia law.

"We are pleased that both parties have expressed their determination to put an end to the civil war in Sudan. We look forward to seeing the parties demonstrate the sincerity of their words with deeds," said Minister Graham. "I would like to commend the Governments of Kenya, the U.S., the U.K. and Norway for the critical role that they played in mediating these talks."

Minister Graham went on to urge both parties to continue to work toward the implementation of a comprehensive peace agreement and cease-fire.

Canada strongly supports the formal peace process of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which has been mandated by the Organization of African Unity to lead efforts to end the civil war in Sudan.

"At this important juncture in the peace process, we urge both parties to abide by their agreement to cease attacks on civilians and to allow humanitarian organizations to deliver assistance to those in dire need," said Minister Graham. "We are deeply concerned by the obstacles being encountered by humanitarian organizations, in particular the UN's Operation Lifeline Sudan. Relief is critical for the thousands of vulnerable people affected by the civil war."

The IGAD-sponsored peace talks will resume on August 12, 2002, to discuss outstanding issues between the two parties, including a cease-fire and wealth sharing.

Since 1999, Canada has contributed to activities that support the Sudan peace process. This includes \$570,000 to the IGAD Peace Secretariat; \$178,000 to the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre to train international and Sudanese monitors of a cease-fire agreement covering the Nuba Mountains in Sudan; and over \$2.3 million toward multilateral and civil society initiatives aimed at building peace and fostering dialogue.

In addition, Canada has provided over \$30 million in humanitarian assistance and food aid since 1998 to alleviate human suffering.

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