



THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

A COMMUNION OF CHURCHES – EINE KIRCHENGEMEINSCHAFT – UNA COMUNIÓN DE IGLESIAS – UNE COMMUNION D'ÉGLISES
LUTHERISCHER WELTBUND – FEDERACIÓN LUTERANA MUNDIAL – FÉDÉRATION LUTHÉRIENNE MONDIALE

General Secretariat - Office for International Affairs and Human Rights

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
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Oral statement by the Lutheran World Federation, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Human Rights Situation in Darfur

Mr President,

On behalf of several partners providing humanitarian relief in Darfur, the Lutheran World Federation welcomes the calling of this Special Session of the Human Rights Council. It is a step that was long overdue, in view of the many credible and consistent reports of grave human rights violations in Darfur. Nonetheless, we particularly welcome the broad cross-regional support the calling of this Special Session has finally received. This is an encouraging sign for the future of the Human Rights Council.

We wish to express our strong support for the urgent dispatch of an impartial, independent, professional and expert human rights mission - of the type that has been mandated by other recent Special Sessions of the Council - to assess the human rights situation in Darfur and to report back to the Human Rights Council expeditiously.

Mr President,

The signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) in May 2006 offered a tenuous hope of peace for the people of Darfur. But today, it is the lack of adequate implementation of the DPA that provides the context in which the reported violations continue to take place. Greater efforts must be made, by the international community generally as well as by the signatories of the DPA, to ensure broader support for and implementation of the DPA. First and foremost, all parties - non-signatories as well as signatories to the DPA - must recommit to the N'djamena ceasefire.

Based on the experience of several partner organizations active in Darfur, we are especially concerned by the absence of full access to all areas where people are in need. The Government of Sudan has committed to providing such access, and should fulfil this commitment. We are also deeply concerned by reports of obstruction and harassment of humanitarian workers and agencies, preventing them from providing relief and humanitarian assistance and operating effectively in Darfur. Any such obstruction and harassment should cease immediately.

Mr President,

As Bishop Mark Hanson, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and President of the Lutheran World Federation, observed in a statement issued on 19 May 2006, “[t]he situation in Sudan is politically and historically complex. These complexities can overwhelm and paralyze us, so that we do nothing. We must not let this happen.”

