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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Sudan - Council conclusions (19 November 2018)

Delegations will find attached the Council conclusions on Sudan as adopted at the 3652nd meeting of the Council on 19 November 2018.

Council conclusions on Sudan

1. Sudan remains crucial for the peace and stability of the wider Horn of Africa. With the 2020 elections on the horizon and the dynamics in the region opening a new chapter of cooperation within the Horn, the EU stands ready to engage in an evolving dialogue and cooperation with Khartoum. The EU engagement will depend on progress shown by Sudan in committing to internal reforms, including human rights and good governance, facilitation of humanitarian assistance, sustainable peace and a constructive role in the region. Despite some recent progress, an array of challenges remains with the country facing grave economic difficulties, a broad yet unfulfilled political reform agenda, large-scale levels of humanitarian need and unresolved internal conflicts. Progress in Sudan could have positive effects on the region and beyond, including with regards to the regional security, migration and humanitarian contexts.

2. The run-up to 2020 elections should be an opportunity for Sudan to demonstrate its commitment to reforms by allowing the full participation of all its citizens in an inclusive political process and without restrictions to individual rights. Under appropriate circumstances, the Council is ready to explore the best way to support the Government of Sudan on this issue. In this regard, the Council remains deeply concerned about the shrinking space for the civil society and the persecutions against human rights defenders, students, political activists, and independent journalists and other media workers, as well as with the situation for women and girls. The Council urges the Sudanese authorities to fully respect the rights to freedom of expression, press, access to information, association and peaceful assembly, in compliance with international human rights law. It is vital that all perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses are held responsible for their actions. The Council calls upon Sudan to fully cooperate with international justice to fight impunity, and recalls the obligation of the Government of Sudan to cooperate with the International Criminal Court pursuant to UNSC Resolution 1593. It remains essential that any process of constitutional review would be governed by the collective interests of citizens, regardless of gender, age, religious and/or ethnic background, and rely on broad-based consensus, as also stipulated by Article 10 of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.
3. The Council calls on Sudan to commit to an implementation of a sound economic reform agenda while also ensuring timely and adequate support to the most vulnerable, as well as to work closely with the international financial institutions and partners. The Council remains concerned about the ongoing economic crisis in Sudan. A sound economic management and a reliable judicial system are key to improving the country's investment climate to attract foreign direct investments, including from the EU.
4. The Council further encourages the Government of Sudan to work towards achieving sustainable development goals of Agenda 2030, and implementing the Paris Agreement. The Council also calls on all international actors engaged in support of Sudan, to do so in a transparent manner and in line with the development needs of the country.

5. The Council urges all parties to the conflicts in Sudan to seize the opportunity and demonstrate genuine commitment to make further progress in the peace negotiations. The mutual declarations of unilateral Cessation of Hostilities in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile have been a step in the right direction. However, the comprehensive implementation of the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) Roadmap remains the basis for a sustainable peace ending the long-standing armed conflicts. In this regard, the EU welcomes and supports the ongoing mediation efforts aimed at finding a political solution to the conflicts.
6. While conditions on the ground remain volatile and reversible, the Council notes that the security situation in areas affected by conflict has improved. The Council urges the Government of Sudan to do its utmost to provide security and basic services in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Ensuring full respect for the rule of law and human rights, protecting civilians, promoting intercommunal reconciliation and addressing the root causes of the conflict should be prioritized. The Council notes the importance of the United Nations – African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and reaffirms the call for a benchmarked exit strategy of UNAMID, as presented by the UN Secretary General. The Council reiterates the need to ensure that the gains achieved in the last decade in terms of stability and development in Darfur are further capitalised on and any gap in the protection of civilians, in the support to the peace process and in human rights monitoring is avoided. The Council calls on the Government of Sudan to cooperate with the United Nations, including the UN Country Team, in order to ensure a successful transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding.
7. The Council welcomes Sudan's participation in the Khartoum Process and in the implementation of the Valletta Action Plan and recognises its role in hosting a very high number of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. The EU, notably via the its Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF), remains committed to providing support to the refugees, internally displaced persons and their host communities in Sudan.

8. Sudan continues to be affected by large-scale humanitarian crises, linked to internal conflict, under-nutrition, regional instability, natural disasters and climate change. The humanitarian needs have further increased due to the continuing inward flow of South Sudanese refugees, and are further exacerbated by the economic crisis and soaring inflation rates. The Council calls on the Government of Sudan, as well as on armed movements to guarantee safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access, including by UN agencies, to all those in need, including in conflict-affected areas of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, in line with international humanitarian law. The Council calls on the Government to facilitate independent needs assessment and data collection, as crucial for an efficient and timely response to needs. The EU remains committed to providing support to people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. The EU will also continue to operationalise the humanitarian-development nexus, in coordination with peace and stabilisation efforts, through its interventions.
9. The Council calls on Sudan to constructively engage in support of stability in the region, notably through process led by relevant international and regional bodies. As a littoral state of the Red Sea and a riparian country of the Nile, Sudan plays a crucial geopolitical role in the wider Horn of Africa; as a member of Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), it is involved in the peace process in South Sudan. The Council positively notes the ongoing trilateral talks between Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. The Council also calls on Sudan to work closely with the AU and the international community in support of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic.