

United Nations
16 May 2007

Following is the U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's address to the dinner celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Korea Society that was held in New York City on 15 May:

() Since taking office, I have been committed to a range of pressing priorities, from alleviating suffering in Darfur and working for a durable peace in the Middle East to addressing climate change and strengthening the capacity of our Organization. The challenges fall into three broad categories -- the geopolitical, those related to long-term vision and goals, and those of putting our house in order.

The most acute of these challenges is, of course, Darfur. Not only are innocent lives at stake, but also the authority of the Security Council, the image of the United Nations in the Arab world and the credibility of the United Nations.

I have been working with the Government of Sudan, regional actors and the Security Council to put a credible force of the United Nations and the African Union on the ground. I am encouraged that the Government has accepted the second package of UN support to the African Union.

But the Government of Sudan will have to honour its commitment to the implementation of this crucial support, and cooperate with the AU and UN as it is deployed. The package will also lay the groundwork for the eventual establishment of an AU-UN hybrid peacekeeping operation, the planning of which is being finalized with the African Union.

Enduring peace in Darfur, however, can only be achieved on the basis of a political solution. I have worked closely with AU Chairperson [Alpha Oumar] Konaré and the Special Envoys of the UN and the AU to accelerate the peace process and agree on a common strategy. We are currently finalizing a road map for the political process.

The international community must also continue to provide support and focus on the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, even as it exerts its full efforts to bring lasting peace to Darfur.

() In human rights too, we have an ambitious agenda. I intend to strengthen our mechanisms for the prevention of human rights violations and to work for steps to make operational the concept of the responsibility to protect.

To address effectively any of the global challenges before us, we must make the UN system more coherent in the areas of peacekeeping, development, humanitarian affairs and the environment. ()

Full text is available at:

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/sgsm10996.doc.htm>