



S U D A N

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Statement by
Magdi A. Mofadal, First Secretary

Before
the Second Committee

On Agenda Item (53) C: Sustainable Development:
Implementation of the International Strategy for
Disaster Reduction (ISDR)

NEW YORK,
26 OCTOBER 2006

Mme President,

My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of South Africa on behalf of the G 77 and China. We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports pertaining to the vital issue of sustainable development.

The impact of natural disasters on sustainable development can not be over emphasized since the former negatively affects the three pillars of sustainable development: namely; economic growth, social development and environment protection. Disasters negatively impact production and productive assets, infrastructure, education, public health, and natural resources. They lead to unemployment, displacement, price hikes, environmental degradation and spread of epidemic diseases.

The least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS) are the most vulnerable to disasters due to their weak national institutions and lack of adequate financial and human resources that are needed to address and mitigate the risk of disasters. Disasters obstruct their efforts to achieve sustainable development, eradicate hunger, poverty, and their efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs. They help perpetuating the vicious circle of poverty and underdevelopment.

Mme President,

Sudan suffers from around 17 types of disasters the most important of which are floods, drought and desertification, landslide, locust plague and sometimes seismic activities. Their impact varies according to many factors such as geographical location, frequency, duration and the timing in which they appear. The latter is important because it directly affects the preparedness and response of the local communities and national authorities to disasters. For instance, the floods which swamped ten of villages last July were exacerbated by the fact that the Government of National Unity was and is still faced by the daunting challenges of reconstruction, IDPs and refugees' resettlement, DDR programmes, humanitarian assistance to Darfur, etc.

An illustration of the far-reaching negative effects of natural disasters on developing countries can best be seen when studying the situation of the poorest region in Sudan such as Darfur. The drought which had struck the Sahel region including Sudan in the last three decades is one of the most important causes of the conflict in Darfur. It intensified the competition over

the scarce resources between nomads and farmers in a region which is one of the poorest in the country, and has led to skirmishes between the two groups. Combined with internal and external factors, these skirmishes, developed later into a full fledged conflict.

Mme President,

The evident nexus between disaster and conflict warrants careful attention. Our experience in the Sudan has shown us that disasters and conflicts are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Disasters generate conditions conducive to conflicts while conflicts increase the vulnerabilities of countries to disasters and contribute to environmental degradation. Conflicts divert the much needed resources away from disaster-related spending. On the other hand, peace enhances the capacities of governments to prepare for disasters, manage them, and mitigate their effects.

Mme President,

It is obvious that the most optimum disaster reduction strategy is the one which is holistic in nature. In order to enable a country like Sudan to effectively deal with disasters, the international community should provide assistance in fields such as early warning systems and capacity building. For such a support to be meaningful and constructive it needs to be addressed in a comprehensive approach i.e. by providing assistance in fields such as peace support, rehabilitation and reconstruction, debt relief, investment and trade. The impact of such a package will transcend in its benefits the borders of Sudan and will positively affect the whole region in areas such as food security, poverty eradication and the fight against hunger.

Due to the negative impacts of disasters and their huge human and material toll, and while appreciating the efforts exerted so far by the international community in disaster reduction, we would like to stress the importance of regional as well as international cooperation in this respect. We, therefore, call on the different stakeholders to multiply and coordinate their efforts in order to achieve the objectives of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. My delegation is looking forward for the adoption of the resolution on the Implementation of the International Strategy on Disaster Reduction to enhance international cooperation in this vital issue.

I thank you Mme President.