

Thank you for the kind introduction.

On behalf of the Honourable Maria Minna, Minister for International Cooperation, who unfortunately could not attend today, I would like to thank the organizers of this event, the Sudan Inter-Agency Reference Group, for their work ... and, on a personal note, their hospitality.

It's a pleasure for me to speak to you on such an important issue, and affirm Canada's support for those who are fighting for their survival, for peace and development in Sudan.

We would like to extend an especially warm welcome to those guests who are visiting from Sudan and the region.

It is extremely important that we Canadians — in civil society and government — have such opportunities to listen to you in order to better develop our understanding and better ways to support your work.

You are no doubt aware that the Canadian International Development Agency — CIDA for short — has provided assistance to Sudan in various forms.

Since 1990, we have provided over \$100 million in food, basic medicines and other health and emergency assistance.

This has been delivered — mainly in the South, but also in the North — through the UN system as well as through Canadian NGOs and their local partners, some of whom are represented here today.

About one year ago, CIDA reviewed its policy on Sudan and came to the conclusion that, in addition to emergency assistance we should become more active in supporting the search for peace.

Of course, CIDA works very closely with the Department of Foreign Affairs here in Ottawa and in the region as well as with Canada's Special Envoy for the Sudan Peace Process, Senator Lois Wilson.

CIDA provides resources to support the peace process because we believe that — whatever we do, however many resources we channel — the people of Sudan will not enjoy their basic rights for development and human security until there is a lasting peace.

A *lasting* peace is a goal I know all of us in this room are seeking. But achieving that goal will not be easy.