



No. 146

June 16, 1989.

PEACE TALKS BEGIN IN SUDAN

The Minister of External Relations and International Development, the Honourable Monique Landry, today welcomed the announcement made in Addis Ababa, June 11 that the Government of Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) have agreed to enter into peace talks and to convene a Constitutional Conference in September.

Six years of conflict in southern Sudan have resulted in untold thousands of deaths due to hostilities and starvation. Mrs. Landry commented: "Canada is encouraged to see concrete signs of progress aimed at bringing this terrible conflict to an end. Goodwill is being shown by both sides towards resolving the issues which have blocked serious peace negotiations since November 1988 - Canada fully supports this important breakthrough."

In a related development, on June 13, in New York, Mrs. Landry reviewed with James Grant, Executive Director of UNICEF and the UN Secretary General's personal representative for Sudan and Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), the progress of the international rescue operation for southern Sudan. OLS has met with moderate success in the face of very difficult circumstances. Sufficient emergency relief supplies have been prepositioned in southern Sudan to reduce substantially the possibility of the mass starvation which occurred last year.

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Minister for
External Relations and
International Development

Ministre des
Relations extérieures et du
développement international

The partial success achieved by OLS has been in no small part the result of the cease-fire observed since May 1 by the Government of Sudan and the SPLM and their respect for the transportation "corridors of tranquility."

"It is crucial to the continuing success of the operation that the cease-fire be extended and made permanent. I urge both sides to do so," said Mrs. Landry. She praised the international relief organizations for the tremendous job that they have done under harsh and dangerous conditions in southern Sudan and congratulated the Government of Sudan and the SPLM for their support of the operation.

Today Mrs. Landry announced a further contribution of \$300,000 by CIDA in support of OLS through the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) bringing total contributions to UNICEF for southern Sudan to \$800,000. Mrs. Landry noted that Canada now has contributed \$10.4 million to relief operations in southern Sudan.