Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton
at the end of Foreign Affairs Council (Development)

"It is just over 6 weeks until South Sudan's independence and we held a very useful discussion on
the situation there.

I intend to attend the Independence Day ceremony on 9th July in Juba and we will upgrade the
office we have there to a fully-fledged EU Delegation.

We are committed to helping both North and South Sudan, and yesterday adopted an extra 200
million euros from the EDF for the South. We are working hard to have a comprehensive EU
strategy for South Sudan for the June Foreign Affairs Council.

That said, we are very concerned about the security situation. The Council strongly condemned the
recent violence in Abyei, which saw Sudanese Armed Forces occupying the town and civilians
being driven out.

We consider the use of force against civilians to be totally unacceptable.

It's crucial that hostilities cease immediately, and that the northern forces withdraw from Abyei, to
prevent a serious setback for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

We call on all parties to redouble their efforts to resolve all outstanding issues with the help of
President Mbeki.

Today marked the first time the Foreign Affairs Council in development ministers formation has
adopted a report on Official Development Assistance.

Before I ask Andris to go into greater detail on this, a few points:

While of course, developing countries themselves bear the responsibility to make the best use of
their resources we are committed to supporting their development efforts.
In 2010, we gave collectively €53.8 billion for Official Development Assistance. This is 57% of total development assistance from all donors of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee.

In other words, we are by far the biggest donor in the world.

However, we did not reach the target set for 2010, so ministers agreed that substantial extra efforts are needed, and reconfirmed the EU commitment to increase aid to 0.7% of EU Gross National Income.

We also had a very interesting discussion on the Hungarian Presidency's initiative on water management.

Clearly, we want to see water and sanitation integrated better into the EU's future development policy and we look forward to taking those discussions forward.

We have also touched on Cote d'Ivoire and I'd like to ask Andris to brief you on that."