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Statement by the High Representative Catherine Ashton on the agreements concluded between Sudan and South Sudan in Addis Ababa

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission issued the following statement today:

"I warmly welcome the agreements signed by Sudan and South Sudan in Addis Ababa today. This represents a historic step for both countries. I congratulate both Governments on the leadership and spirit of compromise they have shown in reaching these agreements. It is now essential for both sides to implement the agreements without delay. It is particularly important that oil starts flowing and cross-border trade resumes as this will benefit both economies and improve the lives of ordinary people. The agreement on security arrangements will also contribute to stabilising the border area through the deployment of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mission. The EU stands ready to support the implementation of the signed agreements.

While today's agreements are a great achievement, there are still some outstanding issues to be resolved. Resolving the final status of Abyei is a critical part of the AU Roadmap and UN Security Council Resolution 2046. I look forward to the AU High Level Implementation Panel's recommendations to the AU Peace and Security Council for taking this matter forward. I hope that a process will also be agreed as soon as possible for addressing the disputed and claimed border areas.
I remain gravely concerned about the ongoing conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states and the resulting humanitarian situation. The fighting has caused human suffering on a massive scale. It is imperative that international humanitarian agencies are allowed to deliver immediate assistance to civilians caught up in the fighting. I also urge the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/North to enter immediately and unconditionally into direct talks to agree on a cessation of hostilities, to recommit to delivery of humanitarian assistance to all those affected, and to find a lasting political solution to the conflict, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2046.

I commend the commitment and determination of former Presidents Mbeki, Buyoya and Abubakr in helping to bring the Parties to this point. I also pay tribute to the critical contribution made by Ethiopia, including the late Prime Minister of Ethiopia Meles Zenawi."