



## **Transcript of Statement of Chief Observer, Veronique de Keyser**

### **Press Conference Launch European Union Election Observation Mission Hotel Burj Al-Fateh Hotel, Khartoum, Sudan**

**20<sup>th</sup> December, 2010**

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for being here. Welcome to the launch of the European Union Election Observation Mission for the Southern Sudan Referendum 2011.

As stated by the EU Council on December 13<sup>th</sup>, the EU is committed to assisting both the North and south of Sudan, for the rest of the interim period and beyond, regardless of the outcome of the referendum. A peaceful and credible referendum process is crucial for the stability of Sudan, in order to fulfill the obligations of the historic Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The EU was a witness to that Peace Agreement and we are here to support its fulfilment.

We were pleased to be invited by the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission and the Government of Sudan. I was already Chief Observer for the Election Observation Mission for the general elections in April of this year.

The EU has a lot of experience in observation missions and an established methodology – the EU has conducted some 80 observation missions in over 50 countries around the world since 2000. We will observe the extent to which the referendum process is in line with international standards for democratic elections and referenda, as well as Sudan's own legal framework, including the CPA.

Our methodology allows us to provide a comprehensive analysis that cover all aspects of the referendum process from beginning to end. We will assess the logistical and technical aspects of the referendum, from voter registration through to the aggregation of results and the complaints and appeals process. We will also analyse the legal, political and media environment, and the treatment of women and minorities.

We will consult with all relevant stakeholders including observation missions. The EU Mission is completely independent, however, and will provide a neutral and impartial assessment, based on facts. We do not interfere in the referendum process and do not have the authority to correct any potential shortcomings. The mission will ultimately assess whether the referendum represents a genuine expression of the wishes of the people of Southern Sudan.



European Union Election Observation Mission  
Southern Sudan Referendum 2011  
بعثة الاتحاد الاوروبي لمراقبة الانتخابات في السودان  
استفتاء جنوب السودان - 2011



The EU Mission is made up of about 110 observers from 27 different EU member states, as well as Norway, Switzerland and Canada. The Mission includes 10 Core Team experts, 32 long term observers and over 60 Short-Term Observers who will observe polling and counting procedures, including Sudan-based European diplomats accredited to the mission. 7 Members of the European Parliament will also join the mission.

We have already deployed 3 experts and 16 Long-Term Observers in country since early November to assess the voter registration process. This was comprehensive and generally peaceful and we will say more about this in our preliminary statement. .

With our large team we are able to assess a critical and representative sample of Referendum Centres. We plan to deploy to as many states as possible in Southern Sudan, as well as to the states in the North where there are the most Referendum Centres. Two days after voting is over, we will issue a preliminary statement on our findings and then a Final report at a later stage, after the announcement of final results.

We are fully aware that this Referendum is a very sensitive process. There are a number of challenges ahead.

These include some legal challenges to the process, lodged with the Constitutional Court, and we are closely following these developments. It is up to the Sudanese institutions to resolve these issues. Another challenge will be to maintain a peaceful atmosphere allowing for a free and balanced campaign, without intimidation and with respect for different views.

Finally, a key challenge is that this outcome should reflect the true wishes of the people of Southern Sudan and be accepted by all parties, marking a period of greater stability for the region. Those who are taking part in this Referendum are building history. I wish them a peaceful future.