

PRESS STATEMENT

ON THE UNFORTUNATE DECISION BY THE ICC: NOT IN THE INTEREST OF PEACE

It is to be recalled that the indictment issued by the ICC prosecutor against the President of Sudan was viewed with a great deal of concern and anger by Africa and by the countries of our sub-region. No one in Africa saw the ICC initiative as balanced, even-handed and fair. The AU has taken a firm position on the matter as has IGAD. Both have asked for the deferral of the whole exercise, pointing out that the issuance of an arrest warrant by the Pre-trial Chamber of the ICC would not be wise, prudent and in conformity with what would be in the interest of the people of the Sudan, our sub-region and Africa as a whole. Nor, in the view of Africa, would such a course of action be in the interest of the international community.

It was in view of this that right at its first meeting on the matter, the Peace and Security Council of the AU decided to request the Security Council, in conformity with Article 16 of the Rome Statute, for a deferral. In doing so, the AU did also take a firm position on the need not to tolerate impunity.

This would have been a wise course of action and a balanced move motivated by concern for the peace of Sudan, for the effective implementation of the CPA, for the creation of a conducive situation for a movement towards peace and mutual accommodation in Darfur.

The ICC did not feel the opinion of Africa matters all that much. The international community has not chosen to give serious consideration to the concerns of the AU and the countries of the region, either.

Ethiopia does not believe that the latest step taken by the ICC is in the interest of peace and stability in the Sudan, in Darfur or in our sub-region in general. Nor, will it advance the cause of justice,

human rights and humanitarian concerns, in Darfur or in the rest of Sudan as a whole. In short, the decision of the ICC is not wise, prudent and constructive. It is, in fact, dangerous. The decision does not enhance the creditability of the Court in the eyes of Africa and that of Sudan's neighbours. It does not require much to realize that the decision will not be seen by the people of Sudan as a friendly act. The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has been saddened by this latest development and requests the Security Council to respond favorably to the request already made by the AU, a request which reflects the sentiments of Africa as a whole and, no doubt, the sentiments of all those who care for the peace, security and stability of Sudan and the sub-region and Africa as a whole. This is a serious development which warrants an urgent meeting of the Security Council to consider the matter. Ethiopia also calls on the AU Peace and Security Council, of which it is a member, to meet urgently and consider this serious matter for the appropriate decision and action.

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
March 5, 2009
Addis Ababa