

Chair's Statement

Friends of Sudan Meeting, Paris, 7 May 2020

The seventh Friends of Sudan meeting was held in Paris on 7 May 2020 by videoconference.

The meeting was opened by the French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian, who reiterated the determined support of Sudan's partners for the Transitional Government and for the fulfilment of its objectives, as set down in the constitutional declaration and political agreement signed on 17 August 2019 and by the Sudanese Minister of Finance, Dr Ibrahim El-Badawi, who presented his Government's updated plan to respond to Sudan's economic difficulties, reviewed in the light of the new challenges brought by COVID-19.

The meeting was chaired by the French Africa and Indian Ocean Director, Mr Rémi Maréchaux, and Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, Mr Jean-Michel Dumond.

In addition to France and Sudan, Canada, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Norway, Qatar, Spain, Sweden, the African Development Bank, the African Union and the European Union, the International Monetary Fund, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the League of Arab States, the Netherlands, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Nations, the United States and the World Bank also took part.

The Friends of Sudan reiterated their support for the civilian Transitional Government led by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok in the face of the challenges faced, further heightened by the COVID-19 crisis.

During the meeting, the Mutual Partnership Framework (MPF) between the Sudanese Government and the partners of the Sudanese transition was agreed. The MPF, attached, is a good base for close partnership. It sets down guiding implementing principles of international assistance to the Sudanese Government in order to achieve the objectives of the Sudanese people and fulfil its legitimate aspirations to freedom, peace, justice and prosperity.

In this respect, the Friends of Sudan welcomed the reforms already undertaken and the ambitious program presented by the Sudanese Minister of Finance, Dr Ibrahim El-Badawi in order to resolve the major structural problems facing the country. The Friends of Sudan again highlighted the shared responsibility of the Sovereign Council and the Transitional Government in this respect.

Given the two-fold economic and social crisis, the Friends of Sudan stressed the priority of the program to mitigate the social impact of reforms, which will initially involve support to the most vulnerable families.

The Friends of Sudan welcomed the fact that the Multi-Donor Trust Fund proposed by the World Bank is now in a position to receive the funds provided by Sudan's partners. Several of them, including the European Union, France, Norway and Sweden already announced their intention to contribute significantly, up to €100 million. Additional contributions are expected ahead of the Berlin Conference.

Several bilateral and multilateral donors also confirmed their commitment in terms of humanitarian assistance and announced redirected or additional funding to combat COVID-19.

A number of partners also stated that they were preparing additional financial support to be announced during the donor conference in June. At the invitation of Germany, Sudan, the United Nations and the European Union, the donors will meet in Berlin for a “Partnership Conference”, along with all partners committed to the success of the Sudanese transition.

The Friends of Sudan noted that Sudan was affected by COVID-19, like other African countries, and underlined the importance of the International Financial Institutions (IFI) seeking extraordinary, flexible approaches in order to ensure they are not excluded from the new facilities established.

The Friends of Sudan also recalled their interest in the creation of conditions for the creation of an IMF staff-monitored programme and the launch of the debt-relief process under the HIPC Initiative. Several participants stressed the importance in this context of a removal of Sudan from the list of state sponsors of terrorism.

In this respect, France recalled its intention to organize a high-level conference, involving the participation of the international private sector, on the political, economic, financial and also investment prospects of the Sudanese transition, and to mark the launching of the debt-relief process.

Lastly, the Friends of Sudan commended the will shown by the Sudanese Government to take the lead in the coordination of international assistance. They confirmed their commitment to align their support with the priorities of the Transitional Government.

Concerning the peace process, the Friends of Sudan encouraged all parties concerned to take part in good faith in the negotiations in order to achieve just and lasting peace as quickly as possible. They also recalled the importance of establishing the Legislative Council and designating civilian governors as quickly as possible, in accordance with the declaration and agreement of 17 August 2019.