

A POSITION STATEMENT AND SUGGESTED STRATEGIES FOR NGO ACTION ON DARFUR

Sub-Committee for the Elimination of Racism, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance of the NGO Committee on Human Rights

8 February 2007

On 10 January 2007, the NGO Committee on Human Rights and its Sub-Committee for the Elimination of Racism, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance hosted a meeting on Darfur for a little over 60 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) at the United Nations in New York City. The purpose of the meeting was to provide a briefing on the status of the crisis in Darfur and to develop strategies for assisting in bringing it to an end. The following narrative consists of a position statement and strategies generated at that meeting, edited at a followup meeting on 1 February 2007, now offered to NGOs for their consideration and suggested use.

Position Statement

The situation in Darfur, Sudan remains dangerous, fluid, and volatile. News reports inform us that advocacy efforts to date are having a positive impact. This tells us that it is important to maintain the forward momentum of our efforts.

At this time the dying continues, the rapes continue, the starvation and severe health risks continue, the displacement and sense of hopelessness continues, and these conditions are spreading across borders.

We assert that this is a human rights tragedy that is caused by racism, discrimination and targeted intolerance and is unconscionable and contrary to the United Nations Charter and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We affirm in accordance with the General Assembly Resolution on Holocaust Denial (January 2007) that “all people and States have a vital stake in a world free of genocide.”

We recognize that the UN NGO community has an obligation to seek, find and use every opportunity to expand global awareness of the Darfur crisis, and to hold those who choose culpable silence and egregious indifference publicly accountable for the persistence of the crisis.

The genocide in Darfur must be condemned without reservation. To withhold condemnation is to support by complicity and to condone the injustice being perpetrated.

Therefore, we pledge ourselves to exert tireless efforts to discover and utilize every feasible strategy to be a positive influence to end the Darfur crisis, to involve, influence and hold publicly accountable those in positions of power. We implore the general public to compassionately and conscientiously end the agony in Darfur.

Proposed Strategies

Send a letter to Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon applauding his efforts at the beginning of his tenure as Secretary-General to end the genocide in Darfur. In order to realize this swiftly, we should request that he

(1) ask China to pledge 10% of the total UN peacekeeping troops needed to protect the people of Darfur; and (2) ask North African countries and NATO to send peacekeeping troops as well. Send a copy of the letter to the Secretary-General to Jan Eliasson, UN Special Envoy to Sudan.

Send a letter to the Human Rights Council requesting the Council's urgent attention and action on the Darfur crisis. While the decision of the Council expressing concern about the seriousness of human rights in Darfur and dispatching a high-level mission to Darfur is welcome, we are concerned at the deteriorating situation and wish to exhort the Council to act urgently to protect civilians.

Send a letter to the Security Council urging them to take immediate action on Darfur to protect civilians, reverse ethnic cleansing and ensure full humanitarian access to all people in need throughout the region. Remind the Security Council of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity agreed upon at the World Summit in 2005.

Advocate at the United Nations for stronger, more effective assistance for African Union Troops in the form of funds, supplies, and UN peacekeepers.

Direct advocacy efforts toward Russia, China and Arab countries to exert their influence to stop the genocide.

Advocate among African missions for a public condemnation of the Darfur crisis.

Send a letter to the EU requesting that their member states end the export of weapons to Sudan.

Publicly support the International Criminal Court indictments to be issued in February.

Send a letter to leaders of various faiths to form a broadly representative interfaith delegation to Khartoum.

Put pressure on companies/corporations investing in the Sudan, calling attention to the negative consequences of their investments.

Send a letter to Mr. Bill Richardson, Governor of New Mexico, appreciating his efforts to bring about a ceasefire, asking about the conditions of the ceasefire, if they are being implemented, and who is monitoring the implementation and send copies to members of the US Congress and Nicholas Kristoff, journalist at the New York Times.

Send a letter by email to the Co-Chairs of the Congressional Women's Caucus of the 107th US Congress, Representative Carol B. Maloney (D-NY) and Representative Sue E. Kelly (R-NY), and the members of the Caucus requesting that they go to Darfur, observe conditions on the ground, speak to women and aid workers and report back to the US Congress and their constituencies.

Put pressure on the various sponsors of China's hosting of the Olympics. Contact the USA Olympic Committee to obtain the list of corporate sponsors.

Generate letters for NGO participants to sign on to and a model letter for NGO participants to adapt to their own advocacy uses.

Prepare a handout of a position statement and actions strategies to be distributed at the first 2007 DPI/NGO Briefing.

