

EU Blames World Bank for Delaying South Sudan Reconstruction

In a revealing article which appeared in the Sudan Tribune of Friday, 19 January 2007, we read the following:

Jan 18, 2007 (KHARTOUM) — The representative of the European Union in Sudan has blamed the World Bank for delaying use of the Multi-Donor Trust Funds for reconstruction in southern Sudan.

In an interview with Sudan Radio Service in Khartoum, EU Special Representative to Sudan Pekka Haavisto said European states have fulfilled their Oslo pledges, but the money has not been released because of World Bank bureaucracy.

"It is unfortunate that the implementation of the those promises that were made in Oslo have been quite slow, from the European Union/European Commission I still have good news to say because we have donated to the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) all that we promised to fund, but we are little bit unpleased of the process on the World Bank's side who is administrating the MDTFs. Some of the administration, some of the approvals of the project have been too slow, and we have been actually criticizing and communicating this to the World Bank and hope that things are moving more rapidly." The EU official told the radio.

Following the signing of the CPA in 2005, two Multi-Donor Trust Funds (MDTFs) were set up, one to finance rehabilitation of war-affected areas in the North, and one for reconstruction and development in Southern Sudan.

The MDTF for Northern Sudan has received pledges totaling 195.1 million dollars, of which 113.7 million dollars has been paid, while MDTF for South Sudan has received pledges of 342.6 million dollars, of which 214.8 million dollars has been paid in as of December 31, 2006.

Haavisto hopes that the World Bank will release the funds soon to enhance development in southern Sudan. The EU official also urged Sudan's northern opposition political parties to work with the Government of National Unity to promote peace and harmony throughout Sudan, especially in Darfur.

The World Bank reopened its Sudan office in 2005 after twelve years of absence because of Sudan's default on its debt repayment. The World Bank has staffed two offices in Khartoum and Juba in order to meet the growing demand for assistance in implementing the two MDTFs.