



European Union calls for the implementation of Doha and Asmara Agreements



Ambassador Tomas Ulicny, Head of Delegation of the European Union to Sudan (EU) and Geert Cappelaere, UNICEF Representative in Sudan launched yesterday at Corinthia Hotel two newly EU-funded projects to strengthen access to quality primary education in the states of Gedarif, Red Sea, Kassala, Blue Nile, South Kordofan and the Darfur States.

The objectives of the two projects are to increase children's access to and , improve the quality of primary education and to help Sudan make direct progress towards the Millennium Development Goal targets for education.

On that occasion, Ambassador Tomas Ulicny reaffirmed the engagement of the European Union to work for sustainable development and peace in Sudan. He added that Sudan has an international commitment to complete the enactment of the Asmara and Doha peace agreements to fortify peace in both East Sudan and Darfur.

Ambassador Tomas Ulicny added that the recently launched programs reinforce the European Union's commitment to embrace peaceful solutions, dialogue, reconciliation and consensus in Sudan. The European Union Ambassador stressed that the EU has fully satisfied its commitments pledged at Kuwait and Doha Donors Conferences to sustain the humanitarian assistance and development in both Darfur and East Sudan. Ambassador Tomas Ulicny highlighted the importance of continued cooperation from the Sudanese government to provide access for implementation of the two education programs.

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Ambassador Tomas Ulicny announced at the launching of the programs that the European Ambassadors will conduct their next annual visit to Darfur. He added that the purpose of the next visit is to assess the developments in Darfur and to visit the humanitarian and development projects in the region.

UNICEF Representative in Sudan, Geert Cappelaere, commended the EU for their support to the education sector and emphasized that the funding has come at the right time and will be utilized to overcome some acute challenges. The Representative said: "in Sudan, there are over three million children out of school and 18 per cent of students are at risk of dropping out before they complete the eighth grade. A poor rural girl's chance of accessing quality education is 25 per cent lower than that of a well-off urban boy in Sudan. UNICEF, the Ministry of Education and other partners have been working together by engaging in the Out-of-School Children Initiative." The OOSCI aims to reduce the number of out-of-school children and ensure that every child in Sudan has access to education.

Geert added that "the funds will be allocated to provide education services for marginalised children in Darfur states where insecurity and lack of access to education are big challenges. UNICEF and the Ministry of Education will ensure that the funds are used to expand coverage and reach the most vulnerable children including nomadic children, IDPs and conflict-affected children, girls and children with disabilities". UNICEF will work together with partners in Darfur to strengthen the education sector by improving the quality of education and by engaging communities to play an active role in shaping the future of Sudan's children as part of efforts to ultimately achieve the Education For All and Millennium Development Goal targets and post 2015 targets.

Save the Children Sweden (SCS) Country Director, Eltayeb Omer Eltayeb, highly valued the partnership with EU and Ministry of Education for the implementation of the PERP in Red Sea and South Kordofan State. Eltayeb described this opportunity as a perfect match to SCS's global vision: 'Every child receives a good quality education and learns the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in the 21 century'. He sees PERP as a platform to advance children rights to education in Sudan, and complement other efforts by the organization and its partners to promote children rights to protection, survival, participation and to live and develop in a food and economically secure households.

The EU-funded six million euro Primary Education Program (PEP) in Darfur will be implemented by UNICEF in all states of Darfur (North, South, West, and East and Central Darfur). In particular, it aims to educate 100,000 children, train 1,500 teachers, build the capacity of 300 headmasters and train 100 education management personnel by 2017.

The EU-funded 12 million Euro Primary Education Retention program (PERP) will be implemented by both UNICEF and Save the Children Sweden to educate 500,000 children, train 10,000 teachers, build the capacity of 1,000 headmasters and train 200 education management personnel. By 2016 the project will be implemented in South Kordofan, Red Sea, Kassala, Gedaref and the Blue Nile States.

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