



**SUDANESE ELECTIONS SHOW SIGNIFICANT DEFICIENCIES
AGAINST INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS, BUT PAVE THE WAY
FOR FUTURE DEMOCRATIC PROGRESS**

Khartoum, 17 April 2010.- The European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) published its preliminary statement about the executive and legislative elections held on 11-15 April, in which the EU EOM stressed the importance of the first multiparty elections in 24 years, as a crucial step in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, but also highlighted important deficiencies against international standards which have undermined key aspects of the election process.

The statement was presented by Veronique de Keyser, Chief Observer and member of the European Parliament, who congratulated the Sudanese people for their commitment to democracy shown by a considerable turnout in these long promised and awaited elections.

"The organization of genuine elections represented a tremendous challenge due to its complexity. Unfortunately competition was reduced as opposition candidates, considering they could not participate on an equal footing, withdrew from the race in the North. In addition deficiencies in voters lists and weak organisation hindered the voters participation. I am also concerned that polling was affected by intimidation and threats. Although these elections pave the way for democratic progress, it is essential that the shortcomings are addressed to achieve a genuine democratic environment for future elections", said Veronique de Keyser.

The EU EOM acknowledges the hard work of the NEC in conducting these elections under very challenging circumstances and the involvement by the Sudanese civil society in domestic observation, which contributed to the transparency of the electoral process.

"In the North there was no real competition after the withdrawal of several parties, and there was too much organisation, with the ruling party busy shuttling people into the polling stations. In the South there was competition, but voters were frustrated by poor organisation. We were, nevertheless, impressed by the commitment shown by the Sudanese to a process of democratic transformation in these complex conditions", stated Ana Gomes, head of the European Parliament delegation which fully endorses the EU EOM statement.

The European Union Election Observation Mission to Sudan was launched on 28 February, following an invitation from the National Elections Commission and the Government of the Republic of The Sudan. The EU EOM findings are based on the information submitted by 134 observers deployed across the country. The mission will remain in the country to observe post-electoral developments and, within two months after the conclusion of the process, a Final Report will be published offering a detailed evaluation and recommendations towards improvements for the future. The EU EOM is independent in its findings and conclusions.