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Directorate of Information and Communication

## Press Release N°127/2016

### Darfur votes in referendum to determine its administration status

**Khartoum, 10 April 2016:** Darfur votes in the referendum to determine its administration status. The voting that commences on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2016 will be held for the next three days. The referendum would give the electorate a choice between either the creation of a unified Darfur region composed of the region's five States or the retention of the status quo of five States.

Organized and supervised by the Sudanese National Election Commission, through Darfur Referendum Commission (DRC), the voting will take place in about 1,400 registration and polling centers in all 65 localities of Darfur's five States. According to the DRC, 3.5 million out of 4 million people, who are eligible to vote in the region, have registered for the referendum. The results are expected to be announced within ten days after the end of the vote.

The referendum is a fulfillment of Abuja peace deal of 2006 and the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur of 2011, signed between the Sudanese government and the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) Minni Minnawi faction and with the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), respectively. Both peace agreements called for the conduct of a referendum in Darfur and that its result is to be included in the country's permanent constitution.

The referendum offers two outcomes for the citizens of Darfur: for the region to return to one administrative unit or to continue as five separate states.

Upon receipt of an official invitation from the Government of the Sudan, the African Union (AU) has deployed an AU Technical Election Observation Mission to the referendum in Darfur, comprising a team of ten independent election experts from nine AU member states.

The deployment of AUEOM follows a consultative meeting between the Sudanese delegations led by the Chairman of the Darfur Regional Authority, Dr. Tijani Sisei held

with the AUC Chairperson, H.E Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma on Wednesday 9 March 2016, and the recommendations of the AU Pre-referendum Assessment Mission to the country that took place from 30 March to 3 April 2016.

AUEOM have been on the ground since the 8th of April 2016 and will be there till 18th April. Its objective is to make an independent, objective and impartial assessment of the organization and conduct of referendum in Darfur.

The deployment of AUEOM comes in line with the relevant AU instruments, notably paragraph VI (d) of OAU/AU Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections and paragraph 4.6 of the AU Guidelines for Elections Observation and Monitoring Missions, as well as in accordance with the special role of the AU as one of the moral guarantors of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) signed in July 2011 between the Government of the Sudan and the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM).

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