

**Statement attributable to the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan  
Mr. Georg Charpentier**

**Abyei, 24 May 2011.** The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan, Mr. Georg Charpentier has expressed deep concern about the impact of the ongoing fighting on civilian populations in the Abyei Area during a visit to the region.

Since the latest outbreak of heavy fighting in Abyei area, which began on 19 May, most civilian inhabitants of Abyei town have fled to neighbouring villages and across the Bahr El Arab/Kiir River, towards the town of Agok, 40 km to the south. Prior to the recent outbreak of fighting, the civilian population of Abyei town had been estimated as at least 30,000 people. This is a vulnerable population which has suffered in recent months from temporary displacement and inadequate access to basic goods and services, and whose coping mechanisms were already stretched to the limit before the outbreak of fighting.

During his visit, the Humanitarian Coordinator witnessed first hand that thousands of people have already reached Agok and its surroundings. UN aid agencies and NGOs are mobilizing emergency relief supplies from pre-positioned stocks in Agok itself and further south in Warrap and Unity states, and are providing most of the response around Turalei where many of the displaced are at present.

Following his visit to Abyei, Agok and Turalei, the Humanitarian Coordinator called on all parties to take the necessary measures to protect the civilian population and their property, to ensure the safe passage of civilians on the move and to safeguard the right to return. Mr. Charpentier called for unimpeded humanitarian access in order to ascertain the whereabouts of the displaced population, conduct assessments and provide the necessary emergency relief. The Humanitarian Coordinator also called for the provision of a safe and conducive environment for humanitarian workers, including respect for humanitarian assets and emergency stocks.