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PRESS RELEASE

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Femmes Africa Solidarité calls for protection of women in Darfur 5th Session of the Human Rights Council – June 2007

Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) made a statement to the 5th Session of the Human Rights Council, urging the council to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the report on the situation of human rights in Darfur. The Session was held on Wednesday 13th June, during which Ms Sima Samar, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Sudan presented a report compiled by a group of experts. FAS welcomed this report and its recommendations, urged the Sudanese Government to commit to its promises, but warned that immediate action is required. The 5th Session of the Human Rights Council began on Monday 11th June and is scheduled to continue until the 18th June 2007.

The group of seven mandate holders was convened by the 4th Session of the Human Rights Council after the adoption, by consensus, of resolution 4/8 on 30th March 2007. The group was mandated 'to ensure the effective follow-up and to foster the implementation of resolutions and recommendations on Darfur.' The group therefore identified and reviewed priority areas of concern, highlighting the practical measures which have been recommended, as well as new policies which could be implemented to improve the human rights situation. It also monitored the implementation of relevant human rights mechanisms, and, in its recommendations, urged the Government of Sudan to ratify other regional and international frameworks, such as CEDAW and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

Speaking to the Council, Ms Samar noted that:



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‘While the commitment of the Government and its planned initiatives are important, it is the improvement in the Human Rights situation on the ground which will provide the measurement of any real progress.’

During the interactive section of the session Roberta Méan, speaking on behalf of FAS, stated that:

‘We strongly urge the Sudanese Government to act upon its promises. Its ultimate responsibility is the protection of civilians and there can be no justification for disregarding this duty.’

She also went on to note that:

‘Whilst we appreciate the recommendations by the group of experts we feel that there have been enough agreements acknowledging the dire humanitarian crisis. There have been enough assurances that this situation will change and there have been enough recommendations. Now there must be action.’

At the 4th Session of the council in March, FAS advocated for the integration of a gender perspective in any further reports on Darfur, and held a panel on ‘Women and War in Africa’, in which Professor Yakin Erturk (the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences) took part. The inclusion of Professor Erturk in the group of experts on Darfur was a real acknowledgement that women in Darfur face specific challenges, requiring unique solutions and FAS welcomes the particular emphasis of the report on the protection of women against violence, and its recommendation for improved access to justice and more accountability.

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For more details about FAS, please visit our website www.fasngo.org

FAS is an international women’s organisation with the ECOSOC Consultative Status working to empower African women to assume a leadership role in peace building, and conflict resolution. FAS programmes operate mainly in war-torn countries such as the Mano River and the Great Lakes regions. FAS also works closely with African sub-regional and regional organs such as ECOWAS and the African Union to ensure greater involvement of women in decision-making processes for peace and development.



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