

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR H.S. PURI, PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA AT THE OPEN MEETING OF THE UN  
SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE SUDAN ON JANUARY 18, 2011**

Thank you, Mr President. I would also like to join other colleagues in thanking President Benjamin Mkapa, Head of the Secretary General's Panel on Referenda, and SRSG Haile Menkerios for their useful briefings and, more important, for the commendable work they have been doing.

2. It is a matter of great satisfaction that the referendum in South Sudan, over a one week period, has been completed successfully and peacefully. A very large number of eligible voters are reported to have cast their ballot. By all accounts, the turnout was well above the required threshold of 60%. The South Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC) and UNMIS, as also other international and regional organisations which partnered the Sudanese authorities, deserve our highest appreciation for the conduct of the referendum. That this was conducted peacefully and without violence is all the more remarkable.

3. Successful conduct of the referendum has met an important element in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement reached between the Sudanese parties. The commitment of these parties, expressed at the highest levels, to respect the outcome of the referendum is equally praiseworthy. We commend this commitment and hope that the same spirit of cooperation and commitment will be shown by the parties to resolve post-referendum issues which remain to be agreed upon.

4. While the referendum has been held without violence, we witnessed during the course of the week a high and worrying level of violence in the region of Abyei which led to loss of lives. This is a cause of concern. We urge the leaders of the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities to show restraint and faithfully implement the agreement which was reached with the mediation of the SRSG. We commend Mr Menkerios and the UNMIS for their roles in facilitating the parties reach agreement.

5. The violence witnessed last week in Abyei should remind us of the need to remain vigilant about the ground situation, which continues to remain fragile. We hope that the parties will cease their support to the proxy forces and seek to resolve all issues through negotiations and dialogue.

6. Mr. President, the situation in Darfur also remains a cause for concern. The problem there requires dialogue with participation of all groups, not only those armed but also civil society at large. We, therefore, urge all parties to return to the negotiating table and reach an agreement expeditiously.

Thank you, Mr President.

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