

21 April 2011

Secretary-General' press encounter following visit to Children's Physical Rehabilitation Centre

Q: [inaudible] on Libya, and my second question is, do you expect to get Russia's support for your re-election for a second term as Secretary-General

SG: On your first question, the United Nations' priority at this time is to extend our humanitarian assistance to the many people leaving because of this continuing fighting.

More than half a million people have fled the country, and if we do not handle it properly, maybe more than 3.6 million people may be affected.

My Special Envoy, Mr. [Abdul Ilah] al-Khatib, and the Humanitarian Coordinator, Valerie Amos, visited Tripoli and they received an agreement from Tripoli that the United Nations will establish a humanitarian presence in Tripoli.

At this time our priority is to bring about a verifiable and effective ceasefire so that we can expand our humanitarian assistance in parallel with these efforts we are going to engage in political dialogue.

I urge again the Libyan authorities to stop fighting and stop killing people.

On your second question, as you know, this is my fifth year as Secretary-General. Since the beginning of this year I have been extremely busy. Most of my time and energy have been occupied in addressing pressing world affairs.

You have seen the tsunami and the earthquake in Japan and the nuclear reactor accident; and the burning desire in the Middle East and North Africa for democracy and greater freedom, and we have to help them. I will have an opportunity, when I express my own plan, but not this time.

[Inaudible whispered consecutive interpretation]

SG: I have met several children with disabilities. I feel very sad and moved knowing that these children are not able to walk and play freely with their friends. About ten per cent of the world's people live with a disability - whether physical, emotional or sensory. That is quite sad.

We need to help these children, but we need to support them with great care and patience. I am very grateful to teachers here, as well as parents who are trying to take care of these children with great love and devotion and patience. Promoting children's health is one of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals priorities.

The United Nations has adopted an international convention on the rights of people with disabilities. That means that the United Nations is committed to working for the well-being of these people so that they can be part of an inclusive society.

I appreciate UNICEF for their great work and devotion, as well as the presence of this children's rehabilitation [centre]. The UN will continue to work for them.

Thank you. Spasiba.