

## **Africa**

Yes we have seen positive changes in Africa, particularly in the area of death penalty; we have seen a number of countries that no longer execute people - that is a very good sign.

I am afraid the positive changes in Africa are over-shadowed by the negative. This is still a continent that is marked by entrenched conflict, Darfur, of course, is the one that is best known around the world. People around the world have mobilised support to end the conflict in Darfur and yet the situation in the ground remains unchanged. There is also poverty in Africa, made worse by global economic down turn.

The margin of survival is very very narrow and governments that are not responsive to their peoples needs, governments that are corrupt, that deny economic and social rights and that sometimes manipulate economic and social issues for political purposes are driving people into desperation in many parts of Africa.

My message to African leaders would be to take responsibility for their people, to take responsibility for the promise that they have made to respect human rights and to actually find solutions to African problems as African leaders. There is the burning situation of Zimbabwe - it's about time that African leaders found a way out of that very volatile situation. There are other conflicts in situations Darfur where the African Union has been more active but again more needs to be done to bring about change.