



STATEMENT

By

H.E. GEN. TABAN DENG GAI

THE FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

AT THE 73rd SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

28th SEPTEMBER 2018

New York, USA

Check Against Delivery

Your Excellency **Maria Fernanda Espinosa Graces, President of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly,**

Your Excellency **Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations,**

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

Honourable Ministers,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning

Madam President,

It is my utmost honor to deliver this statement on behalf of **H.E. Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit**, President of the Republic of South Sudan who unfortunately could not be present here today due to his engagement in consolidating and streamlining the implementation of the peace process.

Madam President,

I would also like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your election as **President of this 73rd Session of the General Assembly and being the 4th woman to hold this position**. The Republic of South Sudan affirms its commitment to play its role in supporting the implementation of the agenda you set for this historic session.

On behalf of the people of the Republic of South Sudan, and my Government I would like to reiterate our heartfelt condolences to the family of the former UN Secretary General H.E. Kofi Annan who passed away recently and to the entire UN Family. He played a crucial role in supporting the people of the Republic of South Sudan by ensuring that there was peace and was instrumental in formation of the Republic of South Sudan.

Also, I was happy to witness the centenary of Late Madiba. It was indeed befitting that the UN dedicated 24th September for the Nelson Mandela Summit. He was an icon of peace, whose legacy will live forever.

Madam President,

The theme that you have selected for this session ***“Making the United Nations relevant to all people: Global leadership and shared responsibilities for peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies”***, resonates very well with the vision of the Republic of South Sudan for peace and prosperity.

Madam President,

Your Excellencies,

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Allow me at this juncture to share with this August House some of the successes we have made in our long walk to peace and prosperity: Last year, I stood before you as the First Vice President of a country amidst violent conflict. Today, I stand before you as a testament of what members of this body have helped achieve in the Republic of South Sudan, especially the dedicated UN Agencies operating in our country, the IGAD, AU, EU, TROIKA, China, IGAD Partners Forum (IPF), international partners and friends of South Sudan.

I am pleased to inform this August House, of a more united Republic of South Sudan, that is heading towards peaceful stability. With the continued support and goodwill from our regional and international partners, we are on schedule to hold free and fair general elections after a transitional period of 36 months.

The path towards this agreement begun at the 31st Extra-Ordinary Summit of IGAD Assembly of Heads of States and Government on the Republic of South Sudan of 12th June 2017 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. They aligned on the need for a High-Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF) of all the parties to the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS). ***This process included new stakeholders and the inclusion of various groups including civil society, women groups, religious leaders, youth and eminent personalities as observers.***

The purpose of the HLRF, as stated by the Extra-Ordinary IGAD Heads of State Summit held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was threefold. Firstly, to **institute a Permanent Ceasefire**, second to **give fresh impetus to the inclusive implementation of the provisions of the ARCSS** and thirdly, to **agree on new realistic timelines and implementation schedules towards democratic elections at the end of the Transitional Period.**

The Government of the Republic of South Sudan unreservedly embraced the IGAD-led High Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF) for the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS). ***Its objectives were crystal clear and to that extent, the Delegation of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan attended the HLRF meetings fully prepared to utilize the opportunities to bring about the achievement of comprehensive and lasting peace.***

The 32nd Extra-Ordinary Summit of IGAD on the Republic of South Sudan entrusted H.E. Field Marshal Omar Hassan Ahmed El-Bashir, President of the Republic of Sudan to facilitate a second (2nd) round of face-to-face discussions between **H.E. Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit and Dr. Riek Machar Teny and other political leaders** to resolve the outstanding issues on governance and security arrangements of the IGAD-led High-Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF).

Madam President,

The Signing of the **Khartoum Declaration of Agreement** between the Parties to the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan took place on the **27th June 2018**. **H.E. Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit and Dr. Riek Machar together** with other political leaders approved under that agreement: i) Declaration of Permanent Ceasefire throughout South Sudan based on the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) signed on 21st December 2017. ii) Adoption of Security Arrangements in order to build one national army, police and other security organs of an inclusive character and iii) Conclusion of the Agreement on the Revised Bridging Proposal before the closure of Khartoum Round of talks.

On 12th September 2018, all the parties (Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU), Sudan's People Liberation Movement/Army- In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA), Former Detainees (FD's), Other Political Parties (OPP) and other stakeholders to the ARCSS signed the final Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS, 2018) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This was graciously attended and witnessed by the IGAD Heads of State and Government, the international community (AU, EU, UN, TROIKA, China, IPF, international partners and friends of the Republic of South Sudan).

In addition to the recently signed Revitalized Peace Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan on 12th September 2018 (R-ARCSS) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. We have also embarked on the National Dialogue and the 'Grassroots People to People's Peace Initiatives since December 2015. It is our belief that this complementary three-track approach is the only way to consolidate the efforts for peace on the ground. Moreover, this ensures the return to accountability and the upholding of human rights in my country. ***In a unique environment such as the Republic of South Sudan, a multilayered approach like the one adopted by my Government is the best way forward.***

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It is, therefore, against this background that the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGONU) has embraced the full implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS, 2015) as the only instrument pivotal to achieving this mission and vision.

The Government of the Republic of South Sudan is ready to welcome forces from the guarantors of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) to monitor the implementation of the Peace Agreement and encourages the IGAD & AU to dialogue with the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on how the Regional Protection Force (RPF) can help in monitoring and ensuring that peace holds in the Republic of South Sudan.

With regards to security sector reforms, which are a major pillar of the Revitalized Agreement on Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R- ARCSS, 2018), my Government reiterates its commitment and resolve to implement transitional security arrangements. Indeed, they encompass a range of security sector reforms, including the cantonment of forces. Moreover, the Government is committed to transforming the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA), and structures are already in place to achieve the aim of creating a professional national army.

I am very pleased to inform this August House of the formation of the **National Pre-Transitional Committee (NPTC)**, which is comprised of all the stakeholders, that shall be entrusted with the functions of oversight and coordination of the implementation of the Peace Agreement activities of the Pre-Transitional Period.

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Connoted with the aim of achieving lasting peace is the establishment of mechanisms to tackle impunity and accountability. In the recently decided Terrain case, the Government interviewed the victims in order to hold the individuals responsible to account. A detailed investigation formula and evidence gathering process with the support of the US Government through the FBI meant that the victims were able to identify their attackers and enable the law to prosecute those accountable to the full extent. ***Since the eruption of the conflict in December 2013, the Military Court Martial has tried 204 cases, including the Terrain case. The Terrain trials demonstrated the commitment of the SPLA to make its members account for their crimes, including abuse of civilians.***

It goes without saying that war has blighted the economy of the Republic South Sudan. We have seen tremendous loss in life, property and human dignity.

No report can cut to my heart as the sight of our young and the infirm dying needlessly and suffering deprivation. ***Indeed, I have been asked specifically why my Government believes that it is a permanent peace this time? There is an African proverb that advises “to look where you have slipped, because it is there you will find what made you fall”. It is through a change of leaders’ attitude from entrenched positions that we have moved towards a reconciliatory and accommodating Government of national unity. My President, H.E. Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit has compromised on many positions and worked with more stakeholders for the sake of peace. The IGAD led peace initiatives have demonstrated the way in which African solutions to African problems, can lead to an agreement.***

Madam President,

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I extend my heartfelt appreciation to IGAD, in particular the Republic of Sudan and the broader International community, without their critical role, this Revitalized Peace Agreement would not have happened.

In this regard, given the positive role being played by the Republic of Sudan in the peace process in the Republic of South Sudan and the region, we appeal for the speedy normalization of the relationship between the Republic of Sudan and United States of America. Moreover, we call for the total lifting of sanctions against the Republic of Sudan.

We urge the Government of the Republic of Sudan for a speedy resolution of the contentious issues in Blue Nile, Southern Kordofan and Darfur. This emanates from our strong belief that stability in these areas is critical for total and lasting peace in the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Sudan and the region as a whole.

On Abyei, as we await the settlement of its final status, the Government of the Republic of South Sudan reiterates its support to the recommendations of the UN Secretary General to the UN Security Council on August, 20th this year. We also commend the good work of UNISFA and remain grateful to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the sole UNISFA troops contributor. We also, urge this August House to support efforts still at the level of the African Union to find a political solution to the Abyei matter, in particular we call for the implementation of the AU High Implementation Panel's (HIP)/ Mbeki proposal of 21st September 2012, which has been accepted for more than six times to date by the AU Peace and Security Council. It is high time that we bring an end to the suffering of the Ngok Dinka people.

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Conflict by itself can be a vehicle for positive change, if we are aware of where we came from, where we are now and where we are heading to. As brothers and sisters, we have hurt each other. As we seek national healing, my President H.E. Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit, empowered a cross-section of community representatives and mediators to set up a National Dialogue and other Grassroots 'People to People' Peace Initiatives.

The National Dialogue was launched to conduct a multilayered approach to repairing the social fabric. It has been heavily criticized by some external observers, mainly because of the misconception that it was considered as a substitute to the Peace Talks. ***At the launch of the National Dialogue in 2015, its aim was to create a forum in which the causes of conflict could be discussed, and among others things to ask the populace important questions such as those of national identity, governance and the relationship between the communities, including causes of inter communal conflict.***

The Grassroots component has been the most effective, members of the committee visited regions starting from the community level asking questions designed to identify the causes of division whilst also searching for solutions to those divisions and how to heal them. ***The process allowed for those who didn't have an opportunity to have their voices heard, to begin putting across their various viewpoints. The reports from the Grassroots were candid in their nature, as the communities were allowed to express their opinions freely without fear of repercussions.*** We look forward to seeing the next steps of this process as we enter the Transitional Period.

Madam President,

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In “**Making the United Nations relevant to all people: Global leadership and shared responsibilities for peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies**”, I would like to reiterate that my Government welcomes the presence and support of the United Nations Agencies. ***However, the terms of this relationship need to be reconsidered, specifically in protecting the vulnerable citizens in the host country. It is only through a reflective approach that we can move forward towards adapting the nature of this institution to make it fit for the environment today.***

Last but not least, as I speak of reviving peace in the Republic of South Sudan, it is only right to mention ***John F. Kennedy who said “Peace is a daily, a weekly, a monthly process, gradually changing opinions, slowly eroding old barriers, quietly building new structures”.*** I call upon members of the UN family, including those who are skeptical, to give peace a chance in the Republic of South Sudan by supporting the critical implementation phase of the Peace Agreement. The Republic of South Sudan will continue its cooperation with the United Nations, the regional bodies, IGAD, EAC, AU, EU, TROIKA, China, other International partners and all our friends as we work to enhance conditions in our country. ***We undertake to consolidate Peace, Justice, rebuild strong Institutions in our country, and stabilize our economy.***

We call upon you all as partners to support, cooperate, consult and dialogue as we together partner in achieving your agenda for “***Making the United Nations relevant to all people: Global leadership and shared responsibilities for peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies***”. This is our agenda too.

Thank you for your attention.

