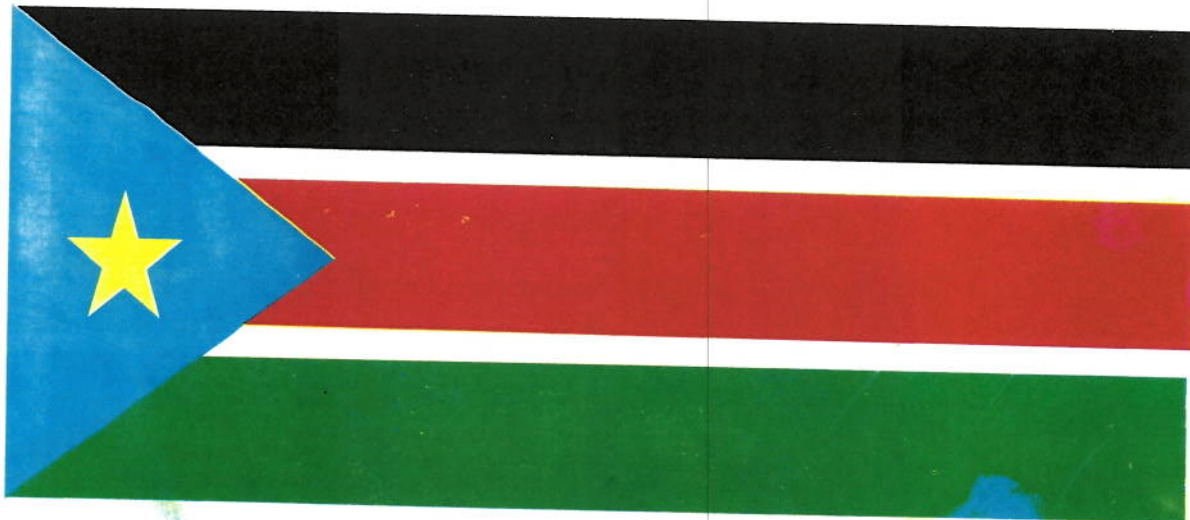




REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN
The President

**THE SPEECH OF H.E THE PRESIDENT ON THE OCCASION
OF THE OPENING OF THE TRANSITIONAL NATIONAL
LEGISLATURE (TNL) OF THE TRANSITIONAL
GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY**

FEBRUARY 21, 2017





Republic of South Sudan
Office of the President

Ref: RSS/OOP/MO/J/1.E.1

Date: February 21st, 2017

Rt. Hon. Anthony Lino Makana,
Speaker of Transitional National Legislature Assembly (TNLA),
Juba - Republic of South Sudan.

**Subject: Speech of His Excellency the President on the Occasion of the
Opening of the Transitional National Legislature.**

It is my pleasure and honor to forward to your esteemed office the copies of the speech of His Excellency the President on the Occasion of the Opening of the Transitional National Legislature's 1st Session of the year 2017.

Rt. Hon., please accept the assurance of my highest consideration and best regards.

Hon. Mayiik Ayii Deng, MP
Minister in the Office of the President
Juba – RSS.

Cc: File.

His Excellency, Vice President of the Republic

Rt. Honorable Speaker of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly

Rt. Honorable Speaker of the Council of States

Honourable Members of this August House

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Distinguish Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have come before you on this very important occasion to outline major policy priorities of the Transitional Government of National Unity for the year 2017. I am optimistic that this year will be a year of peace and stability for our country. Your Government will use a multi-pronged approach to ensure peace and stability this year.

First, we will pursue the National Dialogue to unite our people and restore peace and security in the country. I declared in this very House the call for National Dialogue on December 14, 2016. Since then, we have taken steps towards full implementation of this critical national initiative. Days following the announcement of the initiative, I formed the Steering Committee of eminent persons and a Secretariat to facilitate the process.

Although the Committee is yet to be sworn in due to my full schedule over the last two months and the need for further consultations, it will be sworn in early next month. Despite the delay to inaugurate the work of the Steering Committee, the Secretariat has been doing a lot of work behind the scene preparations for the process.

Equally, we have been consulting with our regional and international partners and guarantors of the peace agreement on this process. I want to thank them for overwhelming positive response and support to the National Dialogue.

I want to firmly emphasize in this August House that the National Dialogue is a key priority for this Government and an important national undertaking designed to unite the people of South Sudan and to consolidate peace and improve security in the country. It follows therefore, that the August House should swiftly approve a supplementary budget for the National Dialogue and help prepare the nation to enter dialogue.

I also want to make it absolutely clear to those who question and doubt our intentions and to our regional and international partners that the National Dialogue initiative we have rolled out is not a trick, a delaying tactic or a calculated strategy by the government to consolidate its grip on power as anti-peace elements claim.

We are not in the business of playing tricks, we are a government and our business is to work for the unity of the people of South Sudan, protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of this land and to uphold our constitution and international obligations.

I therefore call upon our partners and those in the opposition to cast any doubts aside and join the National Dialogue as we genuinely seek to restore peace and security through the unity of our people.

The National Dialogue is a genuine desire of the people of South Sudan and the Government is determined to push it forward as has been outlined.

To ensure that the process achieves its stated objectives, the National Dialogue is not written in a stone, it is designed with a great flexibility and so we are open to any inputs and suggestions to improve it and accommodate any concerns that may surface. However, I want to categorically state that this is a South Sudanese owned and led process and so our supporters should stand behind the Steering Committee and the Secretariat.

This is precisely the reason flexibility is a defining character of this initiative to accommodate concerns of many South Sudanese people. Like any initiative, it is obvious to state that the National Dialogue will draw from experiences in other contexts and while other experiences may be helpful, all efforts should be geared towards charting a unique course for South Sudan.

In order to expedite this crucial national initiative, the Government will make the initial financial contribution to kick-off the process in March. Thereafter, the Steering Committee assisted by the Secretariat would be in a position to mobilize additional resources to ensure successful implementation of this initiative. We are at an advanced stage of identifying an independent fund manager for this process. The Secretariat is working out some modalities with the UNDP to effectively establish the fund.

As the National Dialogue gathers momentum, I call upon the August House to take a lead in mobilizing the people of South Sudan for the grassroots consultations as well as the regional conferences.

Second, the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) is pressing forward with the implementation of the Peace Agreement. I am pleased to report to this House that the parties to the Peace Agreement are working harmoniously and the implementation of the agreement is on tract.

The parties recently resolved the differences over the creation of 28 states and so we have created four additional states as a compromise. We have also addressed the dispute over Malakal with the creation of the Central Upper Nile State and I appeal to both the Jieng and Chollo communities to embrace each other and enter dialogue to resolve any outstanding grievances.

In addition to the implementation of the Peace Agreement, the TGoNU plans to embark on major security stabilization initiative this year. This stabilization initiative is in line with the provisions of the Peace Agreement. As a start, we are now developing and implementing a new security program in the City of Juba, a program we call Smart City.

Many of you may have noticed the improved security situation in Juba as a result of these measures. The hope is to give our police new capabilities to respond to criminal incidents within 10 minutes anywhere in Juba. This will involve the use of technology such as street cameras as well as division of the city into security zones to allow for speedy response to security incidents.

Once this first step of the Smart City Program is complete, we are going to demilitarize Juba and leave it all in the hands of the police. This process will be replicated in all major towns in South Sudan and we are appealing to our partners to help us stabilize security in major population centers in the country.

Last year, I declared the need to integrate all the forces by the end of May 2017 in order to achieve the goal of one national army. We are working diligently to meet this deadline, but we are facing some serious challenges. One of the main challenges is the establishment of cantonment sites for SPLA-IO forces.

Although we have agreed on the cantonment sites, it has been difficult to get the soldiers into the sites. This is because when they get there, they are attacked on the sites by those who are anti-peace. Second, given the limited financial resources, TGoNU has not been able to resource the sites adequately. We are appealing to the guarantors of the Peace Agreement and our international partners to help the parties in achieving this object.

In Equatoria, the security situation remains largely stable, except for growing incidents of road robberies and activities of anti-peace elements around Yei River State. You are aware the First Vice President visited Yei and I also visited last month. My visit was both to celebrate 100 years of Christianity in Yei and to listen to the concerns of the citizens there. The security situation in Yei is stabilizing and we have instructed the army to protect civilian populations in and around Yei and to improve its relations with the citizens in the area.

I want to assure our citizens in Yei and around the country that the Government is taking all necessary measures to protect them and their properties.

Particularly, I am calling upon our citizens, who are living in very difficult conditions on the UN Protection of Civilians sites, to return home and I am instructing all state governors and the military to provide necessary conditions for the safe return of these citizens to their homes.

In Upper Nile, the security situation has largely improved and civilians are beginning to return home. The TGoNU plans to expedite this process for citizens to return home in time for the planting season. For example, in the Nasir area, citizens have begun to return to the town following sustained security improvement there.

The states of former Unity State are experiencing improved security and civilians are beginning to return home and the government is planning to reopen oilfields as a result of this stabilization.

Around Malakal, anti-peace elements stirred up a security situation recently when they ventured to attack SPLA positions and they were neutralized. Now the situation has returned to normal.

The security situation in Bahr el Ghazal is normal. Around Wau and Ragga towns, the Government is making efforts to completely pacify the security situation there and to allow civilians to return to their farms to prepare for the rainy season.

The government is aware of the failure of crops last year in the region and so steps are being taken to mitigate a potential famine there. Towards this end, the government will increase the supply of basic food commodities in the area with a provision for subsidized prices.

I would like to re-emphasize, the Government takes security very seriously and in order to achieve the goal of making 2017 a year of peace, stabilization of the security situation will take precedent. The government will pursue peace through the National Dialogue and take extreme measures to neutralize anti-peace elements anywhere.

Rt. Honorable Speaker, Honorable Members,

The third priority of the government is to reverse the downward spiralling of the economy. We have assembled a new economic team through recent changes in the Bank of South Sudan and Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. This team is working harmoniously to coordinate policy actions to put a stop to the free fall of our economy.

They are painstakingly working to rollout new economic policy to rescue our economy and address fast depreciating value of our currency. This team is working smoothly with the international financial institutions to implement necessary financial reforms per the peace agreement. The team is working hard to slowly build our reserves and recommend necessary actions to address exchange rate instability.

To support these efforts, the whole economic cluster is instructed to work as one team to achieve macroeconomic stability in the country. I recently appointed a new Minister of Trade, Commerce and Investment to work on improving investment policy. Combined with our efforts to restore peace and stability in the country and address any security challenges, we encourage investors to return to the country so that we can build the economy together. We must make efforts to make investment environment attractive so as to boost foreign direct investments in the country, particularly in the agriculture sector.

I have instructed the Ministry of Petroleum to reopen oilfields in former Unity State in order to increase oil production. The Minister and his team are working tirelessly to resume oil production in the aforementioned fields and to complete the Safinat Refinery. If all these measures are executed with a sense of urgency, we will be able to recover economically much sooner than expected.

We appeal to our partners to resume development activities in the country and to support the implementation of the Peace Agreement. Those governments and agencies that have already come back and resumed their work hearten us. The Government will ensure that all humanitarian and development organizations have unimpeded access to needy populations across the country.

I want to take this opportunity to personally thank and appreciate the Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, and the Japanese government and people for their continued support to the government and the people of South Sudan through developmental programs and in the Security Council.

Abdullahi Kiir

I am also grateful to the Japanese Ambassador to South Sudan, Mr. Kiya Masahiko for his exemplary diplomatic engagement efforts, which have strengthened bilateral relations between our countries. In this spirit, I am appealing to the Japanese Government to resume the important work on the Freedom Bridge and Juba Water Plant.

Rt. Honorable Speaker, Honorable Members,

The fourth objective of the government is to improve its diplomatic relations regionally and internationally. Despite attempts to isolate the Republic of South Sudan diplomatically, we continue to enjoy wonderful diplomatic relations in the region and around the world. South Sudan has a very good relationship with the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Republic of Kenya and the Republic of Uganda. We have also witnessed strengthened relationship with our sisterly country, the Republic of Sudan. In other words, our country has good working relations with all IGAD countries as well as members of the East African Community (EAC).

Moreover, our country enjoys great relationship with the Arab Republic of Egypt and South Africa. We are grateful to the Arab Republic of Egypt, Republic of Angola and the Republic of Senegal and all sisterly countries for opposing what were clearly unfair and unprovoked sanctions and arms embargo proposals against the people and the Government of South Sudan at the UN Security Council. We will continue to work closely with these countries for mutually beneficial engagements.

✓ We are hopeful that the election of the new African Union Chair, H.E. Alpha Konde, President of the Republic of Guinea and the election of AU Commission Chairperson, Former Foreign Minister of the Republic of Chad, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat will take our relations with the African Union to new heights.

✓ The recent visit by His Majesty Mohamad VI, King of Morocco is a proof of our growing influence and connection to the whole continent. The visit also validates the fact that the security situation in the Republic of South Sudan is normal. We have signed numerous MOUs on trade and investment as well as the agreement on the development of Ramciel, the proposed national capital.

✓ I would like to take this opportunity to register my appreciation for the King's visit and thank him for his field hospital donation, which has served thousands of our people. This is the beginning of what we hope is going to be enduring bilateral relations between the Republic of South Sudan and the Kingdom of Morocco.

Rt. Honorable Speaker, Honorable Members,

✓ We must admit our relationship with the United Nations has not been smooth over the last three years. However, the new UN Secretary General is a pragmatic man and my government pledges to work with him very closely to improve our relationship with the UN system in general. The new head of UNMISS is also someone I have confident will work very closely with the government to improve our relations.

While we are grateful for all the support we have received from the international community and the UN system in general, our main point of contention with the UN has been that the Republic of South Sudan was not accorded the respect that it deserves as a member state of this world body. We were treated with contempt and largely bullied and we hope this treatment will be put to an end and a new course is charted where this Republic is treated as equal member in the community of nations.

The Republic of South Sudan is also prepared for an improved diplomatic relation with the United States of America. It is no secret; we had a strong feeling that the previous US Administration might have sought a regime change agenda in South Sudan and largely complicated the peace process with all the threats of sanctions and arbitrary deadlines. We know that the new US Administration will take a different direction on South Sudan.

Your Government has taken and will continue to take all necessary steps to work very closely with the Trump Administration to achieve mutual interests. We believe that a strong bilateral cooperation between South Sudan and the United States of America will end all the destabilizing hands of external actors in our affairs.

It is therefore fitting, to reiterate that our priority is that South Sudan seriously aims to improve its image internationally and to strengthen both multi-lateral and bilateral relations. Towards this end, I urge the August House to support the Government's efforts in realizing this noble objective.

Right Honorable Speaker, Honorable Members,

The four objectives I have just outlined are the key priorities of the government in 2017. Your cooperation in achieving these priorities is critical. Your role as the oversight body over the executive is very important and my Government will ensure smooth working relationship with you. The role of the Legislature is not to oppose or antagonize the executive, but to make the government work more effectively and transparently.

I am instructing all members of the cabinet to respond in a timely manner to parliamentary inquiries. I want to stress that summon by the Legislature is not necessarily a rebuke of an individual minister but rather an important part of a normal functioning democratic system. This is the only way we can strengthen our democracy and the system of checks and balance in our government.

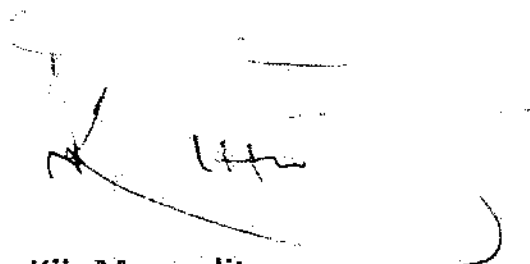
Rt. Honorable Speaker, Honorable Members,

I want to conclude by reiterating my optimism for the year 2017 as a year of peace and prosperity. We must work together to ensure a successful National Dialogue so as to achieve peace and reconciliation among our people. We must put all our efforts together to ensure stable security situation in our country.

We should collectively align our policies to achieve economic stability and improve our relations with other nations. If these priorities are realized, peace, stability and prosperity will be restored in our beloved country.

May God bless you all and may He also bless the Republic of South Sudan.

I now declare this August House open.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Salva Kiir Mayardit', is written over a faint, illegible background. The signature is written in a cursive style with some loops and flourishes.

Salva Kiir Mayardit,
President of the Republic of South Sudan
Juba, South Sudan.

National Anthem

Oh God
We praise and glorify You
For Your grace on South Sudan,
Land of great abundance
Uphold us united in peace and harmony.

Oh motherland
We rise raising flag with the guiding star
And sing songs of freedom with joy;
For justice, liberty and prosperity
Shall forever more reign.

Oh great patriots
Let us stand up in silence and respect,
Saluting our martyrs whose blood
Cemented our national foundation,
We vow to protect our nation.
Oh God, bless South Sudan!