



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN
REVITALIZED TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL
UNITY
OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Statement by the Head of South Sudan Delegation
H.E. Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior
Vice President

At the 76th United Nations General Assembly
September 24, 2021
UN HQS, New York, New York

Your Excellency, President of the General Assembly,
Your Excellency, Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Excellencies, Heads of Delegations and Fellow Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of President H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit, I stand before you to share the recent developments in our country. I intend to do so in the spirit of constructive engagement.

On July 9, 2011, we emerged from a long liberation struggle against oppression and domination. Yet, less than three years later, the country collapsed into another war triggered by a power struggle among our leaders. That war was preceded by two agreements mediated by IGAD, the AU, the UN, and other keys, friendly nations. The Agreement created a conducive environment that enabled the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity in 2020.

Unfortunately, our determination to implement the Agreement has met many challenges, including the global Covid-19 pandemic outbreak and the limited resources needed for its implementation.

President Salva Kiir launched the National Dialogue to complement the Agreement while the revitalized peace process was underway. The National Dialogue followed a bottom-up approach, conducting grassroots consultations that covered all the regions in the country. The President received the report of the National Dialogue in May 2021 and pledged to implement its recommendations.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

The Revitalized Agreement and National Dialogue are necessary historical steps in our country's quest for peace. But we are still far from building a nation that can provide essential services and development for our people. I am not here to deny our past mistakes as national leaders. Nor do I intend

to be defensive in response to our friends and the world's disappointment in us. Instead, I am here to participate in a constructive dialogue with our international partners. Permit me, therefore, to highlight a few points.

First, I would like to acknowledge that although our independence was the product of the struggle and sacrifices of our people, we could not have won without the political and material support from our friends, allies, and partners from around the world. We are deeply grateful to them.

Second, I want to assure our friends and partners that we are determined to open a new page by committing ourselves never to go back to war. We pledge to pursue the promises our liberators made to our people. We must ensure peace, security, and dignity for all without distinction. We must replace the destruction of war with the productive use of our vast natural resources for the good of our people.

Third, we fully realize that the responsibility for pursuing this vision is our own as a people. We believe that the partnerships we seek can only be accomplished through constructive mutual engagements.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

The failure to fulfill the promises of our struggle is due to objective reasons for which our partners and ourselves must cooperate in finding practical solutions.

While there should be no doubt about the goodwill of President Salva Kiir and the government he leads to secure peace and general welfare, we need to identify and address the objective reasons for these failures.

President Kiir has recently stated that it is now time to correct the past mistakes and open a new page for building a better future of peace, development, and prosperity for our people.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

We should recall that at our independence, the international community pledged to help build the capacity of our infant country in all areas of nation-building. As a result, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) was created to help establish the foundations of our new nation.

However, after the outbreak of the war, that vision was abandoned, and priority was placed on protecting civilians and providing humanitarian assistance. As a result, support for capacity building was terminated.

Of course, protecting civilians must be a priority. As the Vice President responsible for the Humanitarian Cluster in our government, I fully endorse that priority. But it should not be at the expense of capacity building. On the contrary, building capacities enables the state to govern responsibly and effectively. However, we must also guard against the unintended consequence of dependency on humanitarian assistance.

It is a painful and shameful situation for a country endowed with vast fertile land to be regarded as poor. We must ensure peace and security in the country and encourage our people to return to their areas of origin and cultivate.

I am glad to note that encouraging steps have recently been taken in this direction. For example, our security forces and their UNMISS counterparts

have begun to promote rural peace and security. We also understand that UNMISS is planning to expand its mandate to include feeder roads construction. The government welcomes and appreciates such developments.

To fulfill the vision of our liberation struggle, we must use our oil revenues to fuel economic growth through investment in agriculture. We must invest in infrastructure to connect our rural communities to the markets. We need the public and private sectors, including foreign investors, to join hands in turning South Sudan's potential wealth into a reality.

The cooperation we desire with our international partners must be based on three fundamental principles that are outlined in the UNMISS mandate:

- 1) Political strategies drive peace operations.**
- 2) Partnerships are essential for success, and**
- 3) People are at the center of peace operations.**

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

Let's look at the implementation of the various chapters of the Agreement. First, we have formed Executive and Legislative organs at the national and state levels in line with the power-sharing formulas in Chapter One of the Agreement.

More importantly, we have made significant progress in implementing public financial management reforms in chapter four. These measures have met the expectations of international financial institutions and other external partners. In addition, the constitution-making process has recently taken a

significant step forward with convening a workshop that charted a roadmap toward the drafting and adoption of the permanent constitution.

In chapter six, the

The implementation of Chapter Five on transitional justice, accountability, reconciliation, and healing is moving forward at a relatively slow pace. This is not for lack of political will, but rather for objective reasons that we are addressing with our regional and international partners.

We can, therefore, say that the glass is half full in the implementation of most chapters of the Revitalized Peace Agreement. Where the glass remains, half-empty is in Chapter Two on a permanent ceasefire and transitional security arrangements. There is an urgent need to form a unified professional army under one command and control. The security sector reform is the most challenging part of the Agreement as it contains elements at the center of the violent conflicts in the country.

The parties to the Agreement and other stakeholders should continue dialogue to build the mutual understanding and confidence needed to address and resolve longstanding differences. Building sustainable peace requires inclusivity, collective investment, determination, diligence, and patience.

Mr. President

Having celebrated the 10th anniversary of Independent this year, the next decade, the United Nations Decade of Action to deliver on the SDGs by 2030 is an opportune moment that coincides with our efforts to develop the country's economy by investing in agriculture. Moreover, with the youth estimated at 73.6

percent of the population, the government promises to leverage women and young people's contribution to agriculture and economic development.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen

Climate change has already impacted the lives of some 800 000 people across South Sudan. In addition, torrential rains have resulted in worse flooding in 60 years and have submerged villages, towns, land, and life stocks. Therefore, I call on the international community to help save the lives of more than 5.5 million people in need of a humanitarian assistant.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates

I am happy to report that the bilateral relationship between South Sudan and Sudan has significantly improved. We have cooperated effectively to resolve our internal problems, positively reinforcing our mutual relationship. There are, however, issues that still need to be resolved between our two countries. First and foremost is the issue of the contested area of Abyei. The Abyei protocol of the CPA clearly states the basis for resolving this issue.

Unfortunately, since then, we have disagreed on implementing the Abyei Protocol and have entered into several additional agreements without a final solution. Now, Khartoum has called for the withdrawal of the Ethiopian forces in the United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei. Any alternative arrangements will take time and leave a dangerous security gap in the area.

This issue can be resolved peacefully through an arrangement that will give Abyei people their freedom and dignity. Moreover, that will enable them to play a positive role at the border between the two Sudan's.

We are determined to learn from the past and look forward to engaging in a constructive dialogue, revitalize cooperation, and being more effective in pursuing our shared objectives.

We must make the Revitalized Peace Agreement succeed, and we can only do that with the support of our regional and international partners. Simply stated, South Sudan desires and is ready to turn a new page.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates

I have come to this assembly with the spirit of my late husband, Dr. John Garang de Mabior, and all those who paid the ultimate price in the struggle. It was a dream for Dr. John to liberate his people and address the global community at this very podium. But being here as a female Vice President from an independent South Sudan realizes Dr. John's dream.

Thank you, Mr. President and Distinguished Delegates, for your attention.