

Check Against Delivery

STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR SEYOUM MESFIN,

CHAIR OF THE IGAD SPECIAL ENVOYS

ON

THE CONFLICT IN SOUTH SUDAN

At

The UN Security Council Interactive Dialogue

27 June, 2014

Mr. President,

I wish to thank you for the invitation to have this interactive dialogue with the Security Council on the efforts of IGAD to end the South Sudan conflict. I wish to take the opportunity to thank the United Nations for the critical and timely support provided to us. What progress we have made is, in part, due to close cooperation that we have enjoyed with the AU, the UN, the Troika, the EU and the People's Republic of China, among others. However, I regret to inform this Council that the parties to the conflict are not demonstrating full cooperation, and unfortunately it is the people of South Sudan who are paying the consequences of this intransigence. It is in this regard, that I come to you today, to seek your collective resolve in demonstrating to the parties that this conflict, and their unwillingness to engage the process in good-faith toward peaceful resolution of the crisis, is unacceptable. We must, therefore, continue to demonstrate a unified voice that the international community will not stand idly by as the tragedy in South Sudan continues. We are absolutely convinced that this is the only way that we can succeed in sending the right signal. Therefore, unity of purpose is critical.

Mr. President,

The Republic of South Sudan was born with great hope. But in just two and a half years, it is in the middle of a conflict that has divided its people, distressed the surrounding region, and dashed the hopes of its many friends.

The effect of this conflict has been devastating: the loss of lives and livelihoods, the displacement, the flight to exile, the passing of the planting season resulting food insecurity, and a looming crisis affecting millions.

Mr. President,

When conflict erupted in December 2013, IGAD moved quickly to convene a Summit of Heads of State and Government, appoint special envoys to lead an IGAD mediation, call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and the start of talks inclusive of representatives of broad sectors of South Sudan society.

From the outset, what was essential was to stop the killings; but it was also obvious that to deal with the South Sudan crisis in an effective way, the dialogue that had been missing had to be given priority. Returning to the *status quo ante* by bringing the two sides into a power-sharing agreement would not resolve the crisis, but postpones it. South Sudan had to be assisted to deal with the underlying causes of the crisis and to

guarantee its peaceful future by ushering in a new political dispensation—one that would enjoy broad endorsement of the people of South Sudan. Thus, IGAD has facilitated an inclusive, multi-stakeholder negotiation toward a transitional agenda, including enactment of reforms, interim institutions, and reconciliation measure—to be implemented by a Transitional Government of National Unity in accordance with the May 9 Agreement.

Before outlining the challenges and the way forward, I would like to point out the efforts made and commitments expressed to-date:

- IGAD Heads of State and Government have met four times since hostilities broke out in mid-December;
- A Cessation of Hostilities Agreement has been signed along with its implementation mechanism;
- Monitoring and verification teams have started work in the three affected states of Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity, and the Protection Force has also begun deployment within UNMISS;
- The SPLM leaders detained by the Government have been released;
- The two parties recommitted themselves to facilitating humanitarian access and to the ceasefire and decided to mark a Month of Tranquility;
- The two sides agreed on an agenda for political talks and established working committees on political and security matters;
- President Kiir and Dr. Machar were brought to face-to-face meetings on two occasions and signed an Agreement to end the conflict in South Sudan, through an inclusive process that would set the stage in two months for the establishment of a Transitional Government of National Unity;
- Representatives of all South Sudan stakeholders including the Government and the Opposition came together for a symposium to set the stage for multi-stakeholder negotiations.

However, signing agreements and making pledges is one thing, and implementing them quite another. Despite the commitments expressed, the situation remains dire, and the challenges to the process persist. Among the challenges are:

1. **Lack of Political Will:** From what we observe, the parties appear not fully committed to a negotiated settlement of the crisis, as agreements signed have not been implemented;
2. **Continued Pursuit of Military Solution:** Although fighting has reduced in recent weeks, the warring parties do not appear ready to stop the war and to end the killings; have continuously violated the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, and continue to pursue a military solution to the crisis;
3. **Reluctance to engage in an Inclusive Process:** Despite their commitments to a truly inclusive process, and the government's more recent willingness to engage in a multi-stakeholder format, we continue to face fundamental challenges in bringing the two parties into meaningful dialogue

with other stakeholders, including the SPLM Leaders (Former Detainees), political parties, civil society organizations, faith based leaders; and

4. **Deteriorating Humanitarian Situation:** The war has caused the loss of lives of tens of thousands, displaced many more and destructed the planting season, creating a looming disaster and food crisis bordering famine.

Mr. President,

A symposium to enable a free exchange of ideas in an atmosphere of equality and shared responsibility was saved literally at the very last minute as one or the other side held out for concessions on representation.

Despite weeks of consultation in the wake of the 10 June IGAD Summit, multi-stakeholder negotiations towards a political transition have yet to commence. The two parties to the conflict create one excuse after another as they attempt to scuttle, narrow, or delay the process. Each party appears to be riding two horses at the same time. These compelled the mediation to adjourn the meeting at the beginning of this week.

This begs the question: 'are the two leaders ready for peace?'

Our answer is – they have to be. However, my fear is that they might be victims of a zero-sum mindset in which victory can only be gained by the total defeat of the other. Agreements are harnessed only insofar as they serve to constrain the other side.

Will this peace process succeed?

Our response is that we must succeed. We cannot allow one or the other side to make a mockery of the agreements reached, because the consequences are dire. We can also not be short-sighted, settling for the kind of false peace– that will only last until the next quarrel among political leaders. The people of South Sudan have in various ways expressed the view that they want a real and lasting peace -and just solutions that address the concerns of more than the two actors that have engaged in the fighting. They are calling for a peace in which those who have committed crimes in the past six months will be held to account. And we in the region are committed to a peace that contributes to the stability of the entire region. We believe that this is what the United Nations should stand for.

In the face of continued intransigence, we must now alter the landscape in which this peace process takes place. If not, we will continue to watch two parties advance military objectives and personal interests over the welfare of their people. If the friends of South Sudan and our partners stand together and apply the sort of considered and targeted pressure that will yield positive results in the direction of resolving the conflict,

success will come to the people of South Sudan. In this regard, we seek your understanding and sustained cooperation.

And then, let us not forget that South Sudan has abundant resources. It does not take much imagination to predict how the demand for resources would regionalize and even internationalize the conflict. We cannot allow this to happen.

I propose that the Council give priority to the following:

1. The Council should remain united, continue to provide political and other necessary support ^{to} our mediation efforts and demand the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement.
2. The strengthening of UNMISS protection mandate must be felt on the ground, particularly in the three states directly affected by the war. The Protection Force must start its work promptly. Mobility is vital. Time is of the essence.
3. If the parties continue to make a mockery of the agreements they have signed, there must be consequences, and here again we must act together to demonstrate our collective resolve. In this regard, IGAD heads of state called on all parties to refrain from behavior that would obstruct an inclusive peace process, and pronounced that it would take *'further collective action to pressure any party who fails to honor its commitments including through imposition of punitive measures'*. The AU PSC's 12 June, 2014 communiqué, likewise affirms its readiness to enact similar measures.
4. Inclusivity must remain the principle that guides the peace process, and this entails participation of stakeholders without discrimination. This should not be negotiable. South Sudan is a diverse country and its diversity should be reflected around the table as representatives negotiate their country's future. Parties have to implement what they have agreed, and for this, calibrated pressure must be applied from all sides.
5. The work of the AU Commission of Inquiry must be assisted and expedited. We should take heed of reports on human rights, and should not condone impunity to contribute to national reconciliation and healing.
6. Humanitarian assistance must be redoubled. Commitments made in Washington and Norway should materialize. Insecurity has disrupted the planting season and massive support must be directed to South Sudan if we are to avoid a looming disaster.
7. We understand that the UNSC is planning to visit our region including South Sudan. The Council should consider holding its session in Addis Ababa where the parties in the conflict could be available for engagement with the Council. The presence of the UNSC in South Sudan can only strengthen those that stand for peace and serve to pressure those that are preventing progress.

As IGAD we say, let us move forward along these lines.

In conclusion, Mr. President let me once again thank the Council for its well-placed concern about the situation in South Sudan and for the vital support you have been providing to help the mediation process in many ways. We look forward to continued productive engagement with you in the weeks and months ahead.

I thank you!