



**Republic of South Sudan  
Office of the First Vice President**

**STATEMENT**

**By**

**H.E. GEN. TABAN DENG GAI  
THE FIRST VICE PRESIDENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN**

**AT THE 72<sup>nd</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY, NEW YORK, USA.**

23<sup>rd</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017  
New York, USA

Your Excellency Miroslav Lačják, President of the 72<sup>nd</sup>  
Session of the United Nations General Assembly,

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

Honourable Ministers,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning.

**Mr. President,**

1. I am honoured to give this statement on behalf of H.E. President Salva Kiir Mayardit, the President of the Republic of South Sudan who unfortunately could not be present here today due to pressing domestic commitments back home.

2. I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election as President of this 72<sup>nd</sup> Session of the General Assembly. South Sudan affirms its commitment to play its role in supporting you as you lead this historic session.
3. I would like also to take this opportunity to congratulate Hon. Antonio Guterres and his deputy Hon. Amina Mohammed for winning the confidence of this August House, South Sudan stands ready to cooperate and work closely with you.

**Mr. President,**

4. The theme that you have selected for this Session *“Focusing on People: striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet”*, **resonates very well with the aspirations of our nation for peace, unity, development and prosperity.**
5. Your selected theme is in inline with the declaration of this year 2017, by H.E. President Salva Kiir Mayardit, as the *“Year of Peace and Prosperity.”* This solemn declaration is intended to cement our resolve that the aspirations our people have fought long and hard for are realised. However, **Realization of peace is greatly impeded with insufficient**

**resources.** We commend the efforts of the IGAD, African Union and international partners to shun and isolate political actors that seek power through violence. We urge all stakeholders to continue embracing this common position and renew our commitments to further build on the progress that we have made to ensure that our people inherit a future that we always envisioned and aspired to.

6. Nonetheless, we do not wish to delude ourselves that peace, unity and development can be achieved overnight, but require relentless and concerted efforts, dedication and commitment by all partners, which we are pursuing willingly, consciously and vigorously.

***7. We strongly believe that 'peace is not a one day affair or event.'*** For us and our friendly partners in peace, there is simply no other viable alternative than making peace. Nonetheless, ***realisation of peace takes time. Attaining peace in South Sudan is a process. It requires our collective efforts. It is a consistent and persistent build up of positive steps towards achieving a world that we envision for the future generations in our country, in our continent and the world at large.***

8. 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) as the only instrument pivotal to achieving this mission and vision.

By way of updating this August House, allow me Mr. President, to highlight some of the important steps that our government has taken to further enhance the achievement of peace in our young country.

9. **The TGONU continues to stand by its commitment to implement the unilateral ceasefire, which was announced by H.E. President Salva Kiir Mayardit in May 2017 with calls to estranged opposition groups to reciprocate this extension of an olive branch still ongoing.**

10. **With support from friendly partners, the government has embarked on implementing key aspects of the Transitional Security Arrangements such as the Security Sector Reform, Cantonment of**

forces and training of Joint Integrated Police (JIP) in an effort to demilitarise our communities. We hope that the recently graduated JIP for Juba will be an example, that can be emulated in other security sector institutions especially through the overhaul and restructuring of the SPLA into a professional National Army.

Mr. President,

11. **The TGONU is spearheading grassroots inter-communal peace initiatives** as ongoing communal conflicts characterised by cattle rustling, child abduction, high bride dowry and land disputes can be serious stumbling blocks to peace. It is absolutely important to find ways to transform the way our communities interact with each other and the international community should encourage and support government efforts and invest in efforts aimed at addressing these local conflicts, so that success stories can be replicated all over South Sudan at the different faces of dialogue. It is in this area that I would like to highlight the role of young South Sudanese as either agents or detractors of peace. If I may use an example of how an inter communal feud,

characterised by cattle rustling and child abduction escalated almost into an uncontrolled conflict simply because the youth from the different communities were incited to violence, makes us appreciate our collective effort in ensuring the situation in South Sudan can only be salvaged through no other means than embracing peace.

I wish also to highlight the **important role that South Sudanese women continue to play as peace builders** and custodians of these inter-communal peace initiatives.

It is against this background that the TGONU, with the support of religious leaders, UNMISS, UNDP and other partners, is engaging in grassroots “**people to people**” peace by way of investing in improving the economic activities between communities like building markets, rehabilitating schools, constructing fishing storage facilities and peaceful disarmament of armed communities have improved relations between warring communities, host communities and IDPs.

12. ***Currently in South Sudan, we are optimistic of the return of peace.*** Lately, we have witnessed

refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) gradually voluntarily returning to their villages and several steps within communities indicating the direction of co-existing and living in harmony.

There will be challenges and reversals, but the big picture should be the direction of movement. We are very much open to listening to counsel and joint action but we also expect our partners to acknowledge and reciprocate progress, demonstrate some sense of respect and trust. An overtly confrontational approach risks creating a siege and bunker mentality. However, we are confident that soon violence and wars shall be stories of the past.

13. The National Dialogue Initiative (NDI), which was declared by H.E. President Salva Kiir Mayardit, is making strong and steady progress with regards to government's commitment to address a number of political and security issues with the view of creating an enabling environment for dialogue. Amongst others, major steps taken include: (1) release of prisoners including journalists, (2) expansion of the Steering Committee to include all the relevant stakeholders in the country, (3) ongoing reach-out to

opposition figures, and (4) declaration of unilateral cessation of hostilities.

14. The National Dialogue initiative, a process whose primary objective is promoting reconciliation and enhancing confidence in the peace process so as to not only make dialogue the only viable option to resolving conflict but also as a foundation to the National Constitutional Review process.

At this juncture, I would like to note that the steering committee of the National Dialogue has began to embark on engagement with all shades of political opinion, in particular those living outside South Sudan, in order to ensure that: (i) inclusivity in the national dialogue is achieved. (ii) the outcomes of the National Dialogue are reflective of all the components of South Sudanese Community. The Steering Committee is also engaging teams of resource persons who will go to all the states, counties, Payams and Bomas (localities) to organize meetings with representatives of the relevant groups to seek their views on the grievances held by their people, and to ensure that these are effectively addressed and corrected. The results of these discussions in the states shall be

reported to the Steering Committee, which will in turn present these to the larger National Dialogue Conference. The process will end with recommendations and resolutions that shall be presented to the national leadership under the presidency and to the national parliament for final adoption and implementation.

15. ***Our government is supportive of the efforts aimed at revitalizing the implementation of the peace agreement*** - We recently convened, in our capital Juba, a meeting of IGAD Council of Ministers to deliberate on ways to further expedite the preparation for the establishment of the High Level Revitalization Forum, which is envisaged to focus on practical ways to expedite the implementation of the peace agreement.

16. ***Today South Sudan enjoys cordial relations with its neighbours.*** These countries, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda are: (1) hosting South Sudanese refugees, (2) providing corridors for humanitarian access and (3) supporting development projects, which further enhance the efforts of the TGONU to bring peace. We are dependent on these

good relations in order to revive and increase oil production; construct and maintain important road infrastructure; and provide electricity in the border towns, which are key ingredients for boosting the economy and work as incentives for peace.

17. ***On Abyei, our government reaffirms its willingness and readiness to implement the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) Proposal of September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012, which was accepted by H.E. President Salva Kiir Mayardit as presented by the Panel-*** We are hopeful that the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan will soon resume cooperation in implementing this proposal.

**Mr. President,**

18. ***I would like to report to this August House that our government is cooperating with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and facilitates the deployment of the Regional Protection Force (RPF).*** In the past few months we have witnessed the arrival of members of the advanced RPF as agreed with the United Nations. The government reaffirms its commitment to work closely

with the United Nations, AU and IGAD in seeing the smooth implementation and operationalization of the mandate of these troops in South Sudan.

**19. *The TGONU continues to work towards ensuring that humanitarian access to those in need is unhindered.*** This has been done through continuous and open dialogue with aid agencies and striving to have more humanitarian corridors opened up. With your permission Excellency, I wish to commend the concerted efforts of the various humanitarian agencies that positively responded and worked to reverse the famine situation in parts of South Sudan, and some gains notwithstanding, I would like to urge that continued support is necessary in achieving a hunger free South Sudan. I would like to take this opportunity to express our condolences and prayers to the families of those humanitarian aid workers who lost their lives in the line of duty in South Sudan.

**20. *While we appreciate that saving lives is important, we ought also save livelihoods.*** We cannot continue to clean the floor while the tap is open. The old paradigm that humanitarian intervention

first and development later is not a viable policy in the case of South Sudan. **It is important to incentivise peace and stability through a balanced approach to development and embracing a new way of working.** Stabilisation and Recovery initiatives are essential, and emergency support needs to be effectively complemented with some level of economic dynamism that provides new platform for social cohesion and resilience-building. As partners we all need to do business different. As government we will redouble our efforts to ensure access and improve the enabling environment for humanitarian intervention. It is our expectation that a smart combination and calibration of development and humanitarian support is needed to maintain the positive momentum.

21. Our ultimate goal and responsibility is to **give an opportunity for peace to all South Sudanese which will enable them to choose their own leaders through free, fair and credible elections.** Our focus for the remaining months of the transitional period, therefore, is to ensure that adequate preparation and creation of conducive environment for these elections are at the forefront of our priorities, and will see to it

peace is realised and that sufficient resources have been allocated in this regard.

**Mr. President,**

22. These efforts are core building blocks and prerequisites for boosting confidence among and within our communities, which will stimulate them to voluntarily and gradually return to their homes. I would like to reiterate our stand that we are of the opinion that these efforts can only be sustained '***if-and-only-if*** all political actors continue to respect and reciprocate the unilateral ceasefire declared by H.E. President Salva Kiir earlier this year.

23. Mr. President, the progress that we speak about can only be witnessed once we start to see progress in the reforms of the United Nations Security Council. It is an urgent task to realize the reforms of the United Nations Security Council, since the current composition and function of the Security Council does not reflect the realities of the international community in the 21st century.

In order to achieve concrete progress on the Security Council reforms, it is imperative to launch text-based negotiations in the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) during the 72<sup>nd</sup> session of the General Assembly.

24. In this regard, South Sudan wishes to add its voice in expressing its concerns regarding the rising tensions in the Korean Peninsula. South Sudan supports the call of the international community urging North Korea to fully comply with the relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches.

25. South Sudan urges North Korea to show sincere will and concrete actions towards the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

26. ***In regard to climate change, although South Sudan green house gas emissions are negligible, it is one of the worst Countries affected by climate change.*** The Country is experiencing recurring droughts and according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change it is the fastest warming Country in the region in terms of flooding, loss of

biodiversity and livelihoods. I am glad to inform this August House that South Sudan has ratified the Paris Agreement and has prepared its National Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Programme of Action to implement the projects embodied in both documents.

**Mr. President,**

27. Allow me at this juncture to extend my appreciation to the member states of IGAD, the IGAD plus, the AU, TRIOKA, China, Japan and the broader international community for their support to the peace process and development in my country. While we appreciate that South Sudan, as a nation, cannot operate in isolation, the direction of the way forward must be “**South Sudanese-Led**” and solutions “**home grown**” if we are genuinely striving to achieve sustainable results.

**Long Live South Sudan!**

**Long Live the United Nations!**

I thank you, Mr. President.