

South Sudan Peace Talks Phase 111, Final Session

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

19th February to 3rd March 2015.

Statement of Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) during the Opening Session on 23rd February 2015 at the premises of UN Economic Commission for Africa.

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also the interests of others”, Philippians 2:3-4.

“And of them are some who accused you in the matter of the alms. If they are given part thereof, they are pleased, but if they are not given thereof, behold! They are enraged!” Holy Qur’an 9:58.

Overview

We the delegates of FBOs are grateful to IGAD special envoys for the invitation to attend this Phase 111, final session of the South Sudan peace talks. By divine appointment, this important phase of peace talks has coincided with the season of Lent in the Christian Calendar. Traditionally, during Lent season, Christians reflect on their relationship with God and fellow human beings, confessing sins committed against God and against one another with the aim of seeking forgiveness and reconciliation.

It is also worth noting that this final session is coming after the signing of Arusha Agreement for reunification of the divided ruling party, the Sudan Peoples’ Liberation Movement (SPLM). The agreement among other things has given a lot of hope to the suffering people of South Sudan that at long last the leaders of SPLM have come to realize the need to resolve their differences peacefully instead of through violence. In particular, we note with great appreciation the acceptance by SPLM leaders of their shared and collective responsibility for the political crisis that erupted on 15th December 2013 and the resulting violence which has led to loss of many lives, suffering and displacement of civilians and destruction of property. It is our hope, therefore that their promise to make apology to the people of South Sudan will be fulfilled very soon because it is an important step in our long journey of justice, peace, reconciliation and healing in our beloved country.

It is also our hope that the Arusha Agreement has not only enabled the building of confidence and trust among SPLM leaders, but also that it has given them courage to rise above personal differences and narrow individual interests to look at the larger interests of the people of South Sudan for peace, justice, reconciliation and socio-economic development. In this line, we also commend the commitments made in January 2015 in Addis Ababa on the sidelines of IGAD Heads of State and Government summit by the

two principals, President Salva Kiir and Dr. Riek Machar to resolve the remaining issues of conflict and reach an agreement by 5th March 2015 on establishment of a Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU).

Challenges and prospect for peace in South Sudan

Undoubtedly, despite the many challenges in the peace process such as the frequent violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement by the warring parties, we strongly believe that there is a need for decisive political will to achieve peace through compromise. In this respect, as FBOs we shall continue to pray to Almighty God/Allah the creator of the universe, to give his unlimited wisdom to the SPLM leaders and with vital inputs from delegates of other stakeholders in the peace process to resolve the remaining issues of conflict as listed in the agenda of this final session so that the long awaited peace is achieved this time.

Based on our mandate as outlined by IGAD, we the FBOs also stand ready to mobilize the grass-roots for peace, reconciliation and healing using our comparative advantage of having networks of religious institutions on the ground and the trust bestowed upon us by the people of South Sudan. This will be our contribution towards local peace efforts together with other peace actors.

Conclusion

In conclusion, FBOs delegates would like to express our sincere appreciation to IGAD special envoys, staff, heads of state and government and IGAD partners for accompanying the people of South Sudan in the process of achieving a lasting peace. We also wish to thank the ruling party in Tanzania Chama Cha Mapinduzi for its great efforts to re-unify the SPLM.

We will continue to pray, lobby and work together with all other peace actors to support peace and reconciliation in the Republic of South Sudan.

May God bless you all.

Regards

Bishop Enock Tombe

Leader, FBOs Delegation

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