

IGAD

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY
ON DEVELOPMENT



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**OPENING REMARKS BY
AMB. SEYOUM MESFIN
CHAIRPERSON OF THE IGAD SPECIAL ENVOYS
FOR SOUTH SUDAN AT THE RESUMPTION OF
MULTI-STAKEHOLDER NEGOTIATIONS
FOR SOUTH SUDAN,
DELIVERED BY
SPECIAL ENVOY GEN. LAZARO SUMBEIYWO**

18 DECEMBER 2014

ADDIS ABABA

Distinguished delegates of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan;

Distinguished delegates of the SPLM/SPLA (In Opposition);

Distinguished delegates of the SPLM Leaders (Former Detainees);

Distinguished Eminent Personalities,

Distinguished representatives of Civil Society, the Faith-based institutions; and the women's bloc;

Distinguished representatives of the AU, UN, Troika, EU, China and diplomatic community;

Excellencies, my Colleagues the IGAD Special Envoys, members of the secretariat, and members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Welcome once more to Addis Ababa, and to what I hope will be a productive and intense session of negotiations. I make the following remarks on behalf of Amb. Seyoum Mesfin, who is not with us here today but will be returning to Addis Ababa in a few days' time.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

More than a year has passed since the onset of the crisis in South Sudan. Three days ago, I appealed to all the citizens of South Sudan to not be drawn into a return to violence, retribution and destruction; to not be influenced by rumours and unhelpful rhetoric, by hatred and vengeance, and to choose peace over war, harmony over division, creation over destruction and empathy over hate. The alternatives have only led to horror and tragedy. I urge you, their leaders, to make the same choices, and to bring this crisis to an end.

Let us make this the last, appalling year of horror and tragedy, and not an indicator of South Sudan's future. Let me assure you again of the region's commitment to help the people of South Sudan find a peace that is more than the absence of war. A peace that is meaningful, durable and prosperous. It is my hope, and my plea, on behalf of the IGAD leaders, my colleagues the IGAD Special Envoys for South Sudan, and the partners and friends of South Sudan, that the leaders and people of South Sudan make this choice, too: to consign the means of violence to history, and not to see violence as the way to resolve our political problems.

Unfortunately, fighting continues in South Sudan. Violations in Pigi and Fangak Counties have been verified by the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism established by IGAD, which has attributed responsibility for these violations to Government Forces. The Government itself has publicly claimed control of Fangak County, in violation of its commitments. I call for the Government to immediately end hostilities and respect the commitment of President Salva Kiir made to the IGAD Summit on November 7. Recently, I have also received a letter of protest from the GRSS accusing the SPLM/A (IO) of violations in Renk County. Our Monitoring and Verification Team has been instructed to immediately investigate this allegation and report to the mediation accordingly.

Furthermore, the SPLM/A (IO) issued a statement two days ago, in which their forces claimed to have escalated the conflict in the Equatoria region. Such actions are completely unacceptable and are direct violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. The Leaders of IGAD, the IGAD Special Envoys and the international community are profoundly disappointed by these outrageous actions by the parties. We renew our call to the warring parties to fully respect the numerous

commitments made to end the war. It is vital that you give peace a chance, and that the conflict end without further delay.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you recall, at the last IGAD Summit on November 7, the IGAD Heads of State and Government agreed to the request of the two Principals to conduct consultations on the question of the structure of the executive of the Transitional Government of National Unity, as discussed at the Summit.

Over the last few days, I have consulted with the Chairperson of IGAD, H.E. the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, who plans to convene a Mini-Summit imminently, comprising himself, the Rapporteur of IGAD President Kenyatta and the two Principals, to complete the Summit negotiations where they were adjourned. The date of the Summit will be communicated to you shortly. Until the Summit convenes, the negotiating teams must continue with the other outstanding thematic issues, as previously agreed at the conclusion of our last session of talks in November.

There is still much work to be done here. As you will recall, the transitional security arrangements committee and the resource, economic and financial management committee have outstanding agenda items to continue from where we adjourned on November 4. As requested, we have secured expert resource persons to assist the two committees: Mr. Jeffrey Mapendere and Mr. Richard Rands for transitional security, and Mr. Parminder Singh and Mr. Paul Lambers for the economic and financial management committee. Additionally, an expert on governance, Dr. Gheberhiwot Tesfai, of Addis Ababa

University, is available to assist the negotiations on the question of federalism.

Since this session will be very brief given the forthcoming summit and the adjournment for Christmas, we must work very hard towards a positive outcome, resolve outstanding differences, and move closer to a final agreement on these thematic areas. I would request that the committees plan to report to the Envoys on December 21, to indicate the progress made so far, and for a final plenary discussion to be made on the same date before the adjournment of this session.

It is my fervent wish that this Christmas season brings peace to South Sudan, and that the leaders of the country ensure that this is the last year of unnecessary suffering for their people. Let us ensure that this session of negotiations contributes to that aim. Thank you. ###