



STATEMENT

By

H.E. GEN. TABAN DENG GAI

THE FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

AT THE 73rd SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

28th SEPTEMBER 2018

New York, USA

Check Against Delivery

Also, I was happy to witness the centenary of Late Madiba. It was indeed befitting that the UN dedicated 24th September for the Nelson Mandela Summit. He was an icon of peace, whose legacy will live forever.

Madam President,

The theme that you have selected for this session ***“Making the United Nations relevant to all people: Global leadership and shared responsibilities for peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies”***, resonates very well with the vision of the Republic of South Sudan for peace and prosperity.

Madam President,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at this juncture to share with this August House some of the successes we have made in our long walk to peace and prosperity: Last year, I stood before you as the First Vice President of a country amidst violent conflict. Today, I stand before you as a testament of what members of this body have helped achieve in the Republic of South Sudan, especially the dedicated UN Agencies operating in our country, the IGAD, AU, EU, TROIKA, China, IGAD Partners Forum (IPF), international partners and friends of South Sudan.

I am pleased to inform this August House, of a more united Republic of South Sudan, that is heading towards peaceful stability. With the continued support and goodwill from our regional and international partners, we are on schedule to hold free and fair general elections after a transitional period of 36 months.

The Signing of the **Khartoum Declaration of Agreement** between the Parties to the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan took place on the **27th June 2018**. **H.E. Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit and Dr. Riek Machar together** with other political leaders approved under that agreement: i) Declaration of Permanent Ceasefire throughout South Sudan based on the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) signed on 21st December 2017. ii) Adoption of Security Arrangements in order to build one national army, police and other security organs of an inclusive character and iii) Conclusion of the Agreement on the Revised Bridging Proposal before the closure of Khartoum Round of talks.

On 12th September 2018, all the parties (Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU), Sudan's People Liberation Movement/Army- In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA), Former Detainees (FD's), Other Political Parties (OPP) and other stakeholders to the ARCSS signed the final Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS, 2018) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This was graciously attended and witnessed by the IGAD Heads of State and Government, the international community (AU, EU, UN, TROIKA, China, IPF, international partners and friends of the Republic of South Sudan).

In addition to the recently signed Revitalized Peace Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan on 12th September 2018 (R-ARCSS) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. We have also embarked on the National Dialogue and the 'Grassroots People to People's Peace Initiatives since December 2015. It is our belief that this complementary three-track approach is the only way to consolidate the efforts for peace on the ground. Moreover, this ensures the return to accountability and the upholding of human rights in my country. ***In a unique environment such as the Republic of South Sudan, a multilayered approach like the one adopted by my Government is the best way forward.***

Madam President,

Your Excellencies,

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Connoted with the aim of achieving lasting peace is the establishment of mechanisms to tackle impunity and accountability. In the recently decided Terrain case, the Government interviewed the victims in order to hold the individuals responsible to account. A detailed investigation formula and evidence gathering process with the support of the US Government through the FBI meant that the victims were able to identify their attackers and enable the law to prosecute those accountable to the full extent. ***Since the eruption of the conflict in December 2013, the Military Court Martial has tried 204 cases, including the Terrain case. The Terrain trials demonstrated the commitment of the SPLA to make its members account for their crimes, including abuse of civilians.***

It goes without saying that war has blighted the economy of the Republic South Sudan. We have seen tremendous loss in life, property and human dignity.

No report can cut to my heart as the sight of our young and the infirm dying needlessly and suffering deprivation. ***Indeed, I have been asked specifically why my Government believes that it is a permanent peace this time? There is an African proverb that advises “to look where you have slipped, because it is there you will find what made you fall”. It is through a change of leaders’ attitude from entrenched positions that we have moved towards a reconciliatory and accommodating Government of national unity. My President, H.E. Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit has compromised on many positions and worked with more stakeholders for the sake of peace. The IGAD led peace initiatives have demonstrated the way in which African solutions to African problems, can lead to an agreement.***

Madam President,

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Conflict by itself can be a vehicle for positive change, if we are aware of where we came from, where we are now and where we are heading to. As brothers and sisters, we have hurt each other. As we seek national healing, my President H.E. Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit, empowered a cross-section of community representatives and mediators to set up a National Dialogue and other Grassroots 'People to People' Peace Initiatives.

The National Dialogue was launched to conduct a multilayered approach to repairing the social fabric. It has been heavily criticized by some external observers, mainly because of the misconception that it was considered as a substitute to the Peace Talks. ***At the launch of the National Dialogue in 2015, its aim was to create a forum in which the causes of conflict could be discussed, and among others things to ask the populace important questions such as those of national identity, governance and the relationship between the communities, including causes of inter communal conflict.***

The Grassroots component has been the most effective, members of the committee visited regions starting from the community level asking questions designed to identify the causes of division whilst also searching for solutions to those divisions and how to heal them. ***The process allowed for those who didn't have an opportunity to have their voices heard, to begin putting across their various viewpoints. The reports from the Grassroots were candid in their nature, as the communities were allowed to express their opinions freely without fear of repercussions.*** We look forward to seeing the next steps of this process as we enter the Transitional Period.

Madam President,

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