



Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission
(JMEC)

OPENING STATEMENT

BY

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DURING THE PLENARY MEETING

OF THE

JOINT MONITORING & EVALUATION COMMISSION

26th APRIL 2017
JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN



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Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

1. I welcome you all to our April plenary.
2. At our last meeting in March, we posed three critical questions that have to be addressed – How do we stop the fighting? How do we stop people from dying of starvation? And how do we ensure inclusivity of the interests and concerns of all South Sudanese communities? Peace, relief and inclusivity. Since we last met, and pursuant to this agenda, I have undertaken a diplomatic tour to deliver our message.
3. In Addis Ababa, I addressed a meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council devoted specifically to South Sudan. Whilst there I also briefed the Chairman of IGAD, H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn, the Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.
4. In New York, I attended and briefed a special South Sudan session of the United Nations Security Council convened and chaired by the UK Foreign Secretary, the Right Honourable Boris Johnson.
5. In South Africa I met with the Vice President of the Republic of South Africa, H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa, in his capacity as South Africa's Special Representative to South Sudan, and then with Dr. Riek Machar, the former First Vice President of the Republic of South Sudan. I will elaborate further on this meeting later in my remarks.



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Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

6. March and April have been exceedingly difficult months for the people of South Sudan. In our assessment, the security situation continues to deteriorate and I wish to express my gravest concern over the terrible, vindictive violence that persists in this country.
7. There can be no doubt that we now face a crisis within a crisis. Security is the foundation stone upon which we build economic and social confidence. This foundation stone no longer exists, confidence has evaporated, commerce is seizing up, prices are escalating and as a result, we now face a crisis of hunger that is undermining all our efforts to make peace.
8. The mothers of South Sudan face a daily struggle with inflation, never knowing if the money in their pocket will be sufficient to feed their family. Insecurity creates food shortages, which in turn drives inflation, that in turn results in hunger. A hungry man is an angry man; and angry men do not make peace.
9. Food shortages and increasing hunger are now our immediate problems. Out in the country, beyond the reach of government, the situation is increasingly desperate. Instability and hunger has created a surge of survival-criminality that further exacerbates the problem through stealing, looting and the prevention of free flowing commerce.



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Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

10. I have appealed for peace directly to the President of the Republic of South Sudan, H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit, to the First Vice President, General Taban Deng Gai, and finally to the former First Vice President, Dr. Riek Machar. Despite these appeals from JMEC and international partners, Wau became a battlefield. The violence which ensued was an appalling failure of leadership and the reported thirty deaths that took place bore the hallmarks of retribution killings.
11. The border town of Pajok in Equatoria was attacked, reportedly resulting in the deaths of sixteen people and the destruction of the school and hospital; three oil workers were abducted in the North and eventually released; fighting broke out in Eastern Lakes state; and clashes occurred in Western Bahr El Ghazal, Upper Nile and Unity States.
12. Seven aid workers were killed in late March in an ambush along the road to Pibor, bringing to twelve the total number of aid workers killed in South Sudan so far this year, and seventy nine since the outbreak of fighting in 2013. It is simply deplorable that in 2017 we must still plead with a government for the safety of those who deliver humanitarian relief.
13. I utterly condemn all the violence that has taken place across the country but particularly in Wau and Pajok, and I ask that CTSAMM report their findings as soon as possible.



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Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

14. Violence and conflict on this level is either centrally directed or locally orchestrated. I fear it is now time to acknowledge that, across the board, among all armed forces and armed groups, central structures of command and control appear to have broken down. Violence around the country is increasingly based on local decisions taken at local level. Armed groups may declare an allegiance to one leader or another, but they seem no longer to take their instructions from them.
15. All armed groups must regain control of their forces and restore the ceasefire with immediate effect. I appeal to all South Sudanese leaders, both civilian and military and at every level, to remove the threat of violence and armed conflict and bring all hostilities to an end.

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

16. UNMISS will report to us directly later but there can be no doubt that the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan shows little sign of abating.
17. The internal displacement of people continues at an alarming rate as armed forces, militias and other armed groups wreak havoc in the countryside. The UN has reported that in the wake of recent violence over 100,000 people are displaced in Jonglei State alone and there are now 1.9m people internally displaced nationally.



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18. Over the past month refugees have continued to flee the violence and stream across borders into neighbouring countries, especially Uganda. According to OCHA, the number of refugees now sits at 1.7m.

19. Following the IGAD Heads of State Summit in Nairobi on 25th March, JMEC responded to a request to confirm the immediate opening of humanitarian corridors, without conditionality, to allow safe access to affected populations across the Republic of South Sudan.

20. We reported that:
 - some new humanitarian corridors have been opened and specific requests had been granted for humanitarian aid workers to access areas previously denied, such as Wau Shilluk and Wonduruba;
 - although TGoNU is cooperating, humanitarian assistance continues to be delivered at a greater cost and less efficiency and there is still a lot to be done to improve the overall humanitarian access situation, as the Central Government does not appear to control decisions taken on the ground;
 - widespread insecurity and escalation of violence further complicates an already dire humanitarian situation;
 - the parties must adhere to the ceasefire agreement and facilitate unfettered access;
 - finally, humanitarian operations in South Sudan continue to face challenges due to both a failure by State and non-State actors' to observe international humanitarian law.



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21. I can only repeat that this humanitarian situation is predominantly man-made and the result of violence, conflict and the deliberate denial of access. Men, women and children are suffering and dying of starvation because the leadership at various levels is failing to prevent it.

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

22. In the midst of the economic crisis, there were some encouraging signs towards the end of 2016. The Government's plan to stabilize prices and the exchange rate contributed to a large decline in inflation over the period October 2016 through January 2017. As a consequence, significant further declines in purchasing power for salary earners were temporarily arrested.

23. However, we are now back to a deepening economic crisis as these improvements appear to be short lived. Within the context of an annual inflation rate which peaked at 550 per cent in September 2016 and was down to 300 per cent in March 2017, monthly inflation amounted to 10 per cent on average in February and March 2017, as against 1.3 per cent in the previous four months. The exchange rate has weakened significantly, with depreciation accelerating through April, suggesting a risk of further worsening inflation in the months to come.

24. These developments suggest that government spending has out-paced available financing. The advances in stabilizing the economy that became



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evident in the last quarter of 2016 will soon be totally lost unless steps are taken to adjust spending in line with financing.

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

25. Turning now to the ARCSS, I wish to provide the following update on the implementation of the Agreement:

- a. Since the last meeting, I can report that the National Constitutional Amendment Committee has completed the first phase of its work. The Committee has drafted the Constitutional Amendment Bill (2017) incorporating the Agreement into the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan (2011). The Bill was handed over to the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs on 13th April, 2017. The Agreement requires him to present it to the Council of Ministers and to the Transitional National Legislative Assembly for ratification within seven days of receipt.
- b. It is envisioned that the Constitutional Amendment Bill will inform the Permanent Constitution making process. I therefore wish to appeal to the Ministry to expedite the process of enacting the Bill into law, as the Committee embarks on the next phase of its work.
- c. The SDSR Board has not met formally since December 2016. However, despite significant challenges the SDSR Board has now planned a three-day workshop to review draft Strategies. We urge the SDSR Chairman to expedite the work of the Board and we



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request that the TGoNU confirm funding and urgently address its slow progress.

- d. The Joint Military Ceasefire Commission has met six times since the last Plenary and are making progress towards establishment of a Cantonment support site at Molbor. The site is currently being assessed for de-mining. The JMCC has also established Working Groups for Cantonment and National Architecture Planning and reviews the progress of these working groups each week at the regular JMCC Board meetings.
- e. Despite the difficulties surrounding freedom of movement, CTSAMM patrols are being planned and executed and the CTSAMM Board is due to meet to inform members of progress. I look forward to hearing their report today.
- f. In the past four months, JMEC has formally submitted ten CTSAMM Board-certified violation reports to the SPLM and SPLM/IO and we have received no response or acknowledgement. I request that JMEC receives a formal response at the next Plenary in May.
- g. Around 1,000 Joint Integrated Police are currently engaged in training at Rajaf. Delays to the vetting and registration process that I noted in my last address have not been resolved. Once again I request that the Inspector General of the South Sudan National Police and the Ministry of Interior expedite the approvals required to enable this vital component of Chapter Two to progress. I hope that the composition of this cadre is inclusive and represents the demographic and gender diversity of the country.



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- h. As outlined in the Agreement there is a requirement to demilitarize Juba, bringing troop totals down to 4,830 within twenty five kilometres of the capital. I encourage the JMCC to work closely with the Joint Management Team of the Joint Integrated Police and the Joint Operations Centre to clarify and facilitate coordination of these troop adjustments.
- i. I am unable to report any progress in Chapter 5 (Transitional Justice).

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

- 26. Since the decision to adopt the proposal to establish six JMEC Working Committees, allocated as per the chapters of the Agreement and to work in close consultation with the three TGoNU clusters, I can report that five JMEC Working Committees have been constituted and have met. I wish to thank all the members of JMEC, including the TGoNU, for their strong support in ensuring that this initiative begins in a very positive and collaborative manner.
- 27. The tasks of these Working Committees are not only to monitor and evaluate but also to provide advice and recommend remedial action to be undertaken by the TGoNU and other bodies responsible for implementation of the ARCSS. We believe that, together with the strong commitment by all members and stakeholders, this will represent a considerable step forward in the discharge of our core mandate.



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Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

28. Across South Sudan and beyond, there remains a considerable misunderstanding of the role and responsibility of this Commission.
29. The role of JMEC is explicitly and specifically to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the 2015 Agreement, and to recommend remedial action where necessary.
30. Month after month, we have faithfully and accurately monitored, evaluated and reported to all the Institutions stipulated in the Peace Agreement for them to take the necessary corrective measures.
31. But JMEC is the sum of its parts – twenty eight members drawn from across South Sudan’s governance and civil society, and representation from the region and the international community.
32. JMEC is not an alternative government and it cannot direct or manage governance in any way; it does not have an army, nor any power to separate fighting forces or impose a ceasefire; and it is not the panacea for the peace we so desperately want.
33. Those truly responsible for the continued violence and the lack of progress in the implementation of the Peace Agreement are the leaders of South Sudan, both those present in the country and those outside it.



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Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

34. As I mentioned at the beginning, I have spent the past month engaged in a diplomatic mission with the leadership of the United Nations, African Union, IGAD, Special Envoys, South Africa and South Sudan.
35. In Pretoria three weeks ago, I met with Dr. Riek Machar, the former First Vice President of South Sudan. I want to be very clear about why I met with him and what I hope to achieve from this dialogue.
36. The fracture of the SPLM/IO that I mentioned in my last Plenary remarks, together with the emergence of other armed groups, has brought into sharp focus that a large constituency of South Sudanese people is excluded from the Peace Agreement – an exclusion that has led to a significant and unacceptable increase in armed conflict in South Sudan and created a humanitarian catastrophe.
37. To find a genuine and durable political solution, the South Sudanese leadership must be willing to listen, accommodate and compromise. But they must also first be engaged, for only when all the people and communities of South Sudan see that their interests and concerns are being addressed, can peace return to this country.
38. In the spirit of that engagement, I have now spoken to Dr. Machar and I will soon be speaking to other prominent South Sudanese political leaders, who could potentially contribute to the Peace Process. This is not



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about individuals. This is about achieving peace through an inclusive political process that accommodates everyone, and this is the cardinal principle within which all dialogue and engagement must be seen.

39. The message I conveyed to Dr. Machar was to renounce violence, declare a unilateral ceasefire and participate in the National Dialogue.

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

40. In Addis Ababa last week, I met again with the Chairman of IGAD, and separately with the UN Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan, Mr. Nicholas Haysom, and I briefed them on my consultations with Dr. Riek Machar.
41. With the Prime Minister, I discussed the way forward regarding the implementation of the Agreement and as a result, I will now reach out to other IGAD leaders as we seek to assert the influence of the region in the most constructive way possible.
42. I also took the opportunity to promote our 'One Voice' initiative – our request to the leaders and Special Envoys of IGAD, the African Union and the United Nations to engage with prominent political leaders of South Sudan and speak with "one voice". I hope this will drive a peaceful, open and transparent dialogue that is imperative if we are to achieve an inclusive political process and silence the guns.



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Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

43. I am encouraged by His Excellency President Salva Kiir Mayardit's visit to Kapoeta last Thursday and by the statement he delivered, in which he gave a commitment to guaranteeing safety of participants in the National Dialogue. As I highlighted during my speech to the last JMEC Plenary, the importance of inclusivity and trust-building among all South Sudanese stakeholders in the National Dialogue process is paramount.
44. In addition, we should always keep in mind that the National Dialogue is a platform to enhance and facilitate the implementation of the peace agreement in an inclusive manner. As such we must also consider critical questions regarding the proposed National Dialogue, including: how it will address the root causes of conflict; what considerations are in place for wider participation of all South Sudanese; what mechanisms exist for guaranteeing safety of participants; and how to approach the National Dialogue within the context of fractured communities and militarised peripheries.
45. It has now been over four months since the announcement of the National Dialogue and I am concerned that the launch is continuously delayed and we know little of its implementation.

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

46. I therefore recommend that JMEC must continue to demand:



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- a. the restoration and implementation of the ceasefire by the Parties to the Agreement;
- b. the total cessation of violence around the country and a clear understanding surrounding the deployment of the Regional Protection Force;
- c. the full and credible inclusion of all Parties and stakeholders in the political process;
- d. the constant encouragement to the TGoNU to ensure a genuinely inclusive National Dialogue that involves all the estranged parties to the Agreement, other armed groups, civil society, women's groups and other stakeholders;
- e. the continued support to the NCAC to pass the necessary legislation and complete their work;
- f. continued implementation of Chapter II Transitional Security Arrangements and cantonment activities; and,
- g. an immediate and sustained improvement of the conditions for delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

47. In conclusion, I expect this Plenary meeting to:

- a. receive a briefing from the TGoNU on recent progress made in implementing the Agreement;



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- b. receive an update from TGoNU and UNMISS on the current humanitarian situation and the cooperation of the TGoNU to facilitate unhindered humanitarian assistance;
 - c. receive summary reports on the status of the various boards and commissions of the Agreement and the progress towards their objectives; and
 - d. provide support to the new JMEC Working Committee process for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Agreement.
48. At the end of this Plenary meeting, I have invited a brief presentation from the JMEC representative of the Women’s Bloc so that we might better understand the devastating impact of insecurity on those most adversely affected within our society.
49. Finally, I take this opportunity to thank all our partners in TGoNU, the other South Sudanese stakeholders, IGAD, AU, Troika, EU, China, the UN, UNMISS, and the International Partners and Friends of South Sudan for their commitment and continued support to JMEC and the Peace Agreement for South Sudan.
50. May God bless us all and continue to guide us in the relentless pursuit of peace.