

His Excellency Salva Kiir Mayardit
President of the Republic of South Sudan
Address to the Joint Session of the Transitional National
Legislative Assembly

Freedom Hall, Juba

27/03/2023

Your Excellency, Dr. Riek Machar Teny, First Vice President of the Republic of South Sudan,

Excellences, Vice Presidents of the Republic of South Sudan,
The Right Honourable Speaker of the Transitional National
Legislative Assembly,

The Right Honourable Speaker of Council of States,

Right Honourable Chief Justice

Presidential Advisors Present,

Cabinet Ministers,

Members of Diplomatic Community and Representatives of
International Organizations,

Honourable Members of Parliament,

Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon,

Right Honourable Speakers, Honorable Members of our two Houses, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you back after your short recess. I am also very happy for the opportunity this opening session of the Legislature afforded to me to address you, and by extension the nation from this important House. Before I proceed with my remarks under the theme of: *Implementing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS)* Through the Roadmap, I would like to remind all of you, Honourable Members, that you have a packed agenda before you in the upcoming parliamentary session.

In the last session before you went on recess, you passed important bills that are critical to the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement. Your success in the last session came from your collective desire as lawmakers for a better South Sudan. This desire for a better country informed your cooperation and unity as you worked successfully on those bills. More

importantly, you delivered those bills not because of partisan considerations, but because of the same collective motivation to transform South Sudan, an objective that you felt was above any partisan interest.

As you resume today, I encourage you to continue with that commendable spirit in this session. We need that spirit now more than ever in order to finish implementing the provisions of the Agreement we did not finish through the Roadmap. This is important, because there will be no another transition when the Roadmap ends in elections in 2024. These elections will bring a new government in February 2025.

Honourable members, as I stated earlier, you have a lot of work to do before our country can hold, transparent, fair and credible elections at the end of the period specified in the Roadmap. I therefore call upon you to redouble your efforts and cooperate more in this session to pass the necessary laws that will enable us to successfully hold elections in 2024.

Right Honourable Speakers, Honorable Members of our two Houses, Ladies and Gentlemen,

While more work still remains, I must say that we have accomplished a lot in the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement.

Under Chapter I for example, 15 critical bills have been developed and reviewed by the National Constitutional Amendment Committee (NCAC). This leaves us with six (6) more bills to work on. Among the bills that have been reviewed and passed are: Security Sector Reform Bill, the Permanent Constitutional-Making Process Bill and the National Elections Bill. These three bills are fundamental to our transformative agenda of building South Sudan that is secure for all its citizen, that is governed in accordance to the law, and that will use peaceful democratic means to transfer power.

In order to operationalize these bills, the High-Level Standing Committee for the Implementation of the Agreement, comprising of representatives of all the parties to the Agreement, in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional

Affairs are currently reconstituting the National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC). As soon as this is realized, the Constitutional Development Committee and other organs related to the constitutional making process will be established and operationalized. These organs will greatly aid the timely passing of the Permanent Constitution because they will readily avail documents that will inform the process. In preparation for elections, the High-Level Standing Committee is also reconstituting the Political Parties Council (PPC) to allow parties to register and commence their political work in preparation for elections.

Right Honourable Speakers, Honorable Members of our two Houses, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Presidency have directed the National Transitional Committee (NTC) and Joint Defence Board (JDB) to expedite the completion of phase one of Chapter II on Security Arrangements. The directives to the two organs include, completion of the second tier of command structure in all the security sectors. This is critical as it will allow the forces graduated in the first batch of the Necessary Unified Forces to join their units as the first step in

their deployment. This is also a key step towards moving to phase II of the cantonment of the forces in the unification process.

As you are all aware, during phase I of the cantonment, we allow opposition forces to come to training centres without weapons. The end result of this decision was that we ended up graduating these troops with sticks, because the unjustified arms embargo imposed on us did not permit us to procure arms. Since the arms embargo is still in place and we are facing pressing security challenges at the sub-national level, the second phase of cantonment will require those joining the training to come in with their weapons. Doing this will help us greatly in maintaining internal order such as disarming of civil population.

Unless we totally remove unauthorized arms in the hands of civilians, we will not address the issue of persistent insecurity. Communal conflict, cattle rustling and conflict between pastoralist and agrarian communities have their roots in weapons in the hand of our civil population. These weapons do not permit this communities to seek redress for their grievances via peaceful

means, and unless they are removed, our people will continue to take law into their own hands.

Right Honourable Speakers, Honorable Members of our two Houses, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On Chapter five (5) of the Agreement, the Committee and the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs have started their work. They are preparing to hold a conference that will inform and enrich the draft bill for the establishment of the Commission of Truth, Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH) under Chapter-5 of the Agreement during the second week of next month. The conference will be a huge national event that will bring in individuals from countries that have gone through similar experiences as South Sudan. People will come from South Africa, Rwanda and the Gambia to mention a few, as well as experts in post-conflict justice. Further, work is also on going on the drafting of the Compensation and Reparation Authority (CRA) Bill. These two important bills will come to you for debate and enactment and I encourage you as law-makers to work on with due diligence.

Right Honourable Speakers, Honorable Members of our two Houses, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to conclude my update on implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement through the Roadmap by thanking our partners: especially UNMISS and UNDP, for accepting to work with the government High-level Standing Committee for the implementation of the agreement on electoral and constitutional making processes. Their support is crucial for the constitutional making process to be concluded on time and for the National Election Commission (NEC) to prepare the country for elections in 2024. Their help is also key in ensuring the National Elections Law is reviewed and made compatible to the newly developed Permanent Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan.

Right Honourable Speakers, Honorable Members of our two Houses, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Having spoken at length about the task at hand on the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement through the Roadmap, I would like to speak briefly on development, economy, environment, foreign policy and peace process with the

Holdout Group (Non-Signatories South Sudan Opposition Group).

Right Honourable Speakers, Honorable Members of our two Houses, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our goal on service delivery agenda has been affected by the status of economy. Since we gained independence and specifically after the senseless war, we fought from 2013, our economy did not grow to our people's expectations. It is one reason why we struggled to pay our civil servants for along time. The issue of salary arrears for civil servants has been resolved now, except for arrears owed to our diplomats who are serving in foreign missions. More importantly, the Government is now working towards timely and sustainable paying of a living wage to public servants as well as clearing the arrears owed to our diplomats posted abroad.

On Chapter three of our budget which deals with development, we have hardly allocated resources to it since 2013. This has put various development plans, including your own Constituency

Development Funds (CDF) on hold for a very long time. The CDF was created through the Act of Parliament to enable you, the MPs to directly fund projects identified by your constituents. It also intended to allow you, members of parliament to remained in touch with citizens at grassroots through projects initiated through CDF. Given the important role played by CDF in supporting local initiatives, I am directing the Ministry of Finance and Planning to work with you, the parliamentary where practicable to consider disbursing outstanding arrears owed to the CDF.

Right Honourable Speakers, Honorable Members of our two Houses, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We firmly believe that education is part of development, because we know without education, we cannot advance as a country. It is on this basis that I directed government ministries responsible for education to ensure that primary and secondary school be provided free of charge in all public schools. This was and still a crucial step in preparing our children for the future. It also came with the challenge that if we do not avail adequate resources, this

genuine desire to prepare our children for the future would amount to nothing. Now that we have taken this step, it is now our collective responsibility in the Executive and Parliament to ensure that resources are availed to schools to allow our children, especially girls to go to school.

With recent news of local and international organizations pulling out of some part of the country, all the service ministries need to put in place appropriate plans to fill the gaps left in areas where the NGOs have withdrawn. The exception would be in areas where the population is in dire need such places affected by massive floods last year. In these areas, I urge our international partners to join hands with us to extend support to these vulnerable communities.

Right Honourable Speakers, Honorable Members of our two Houses, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my previous address to this esteemed House, I laid out my plan to connect our population centres with production areas with the road network. Since this priority has not changed, I am not going

to repeat myself during this session. What I said then still remains my policy priority.

Right Honourable Speakers, Honorable Members of our two Houses, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I mentioned earlier, the Government recognizes that our economy has not been performing well due to both continued internal and external shocks. Our internal shocks are mainly a result of our dependency on oil whose prices often fluctuate in the international market. Externally, we have factors such as COVID-19 that grounded the world for almost two years, climate change and the war in Ukraine. These have one way or another had a negative impact on our economy, including the recent depreciating of our pound.

The Ministry of Finance and Planning and the Bank of South Sudan have tried their best to stabilize the situation, but these problems continue to persist. This call on us to take a broader approach, which is why I am today directing the Ministry of Finance and Planning to organize South Sudan's National

Economic Conference that will complement the ongoing Public Finance Management Reforms.

This Economic Conference should bring together all the sectors of our economy and the stakeholders, including our development partners. The objective of this conference will be to address the fundamental challenges that are holding our economy back. The recommendations from the conference will help us chart a way forward on structural reforms we need to undertake to revive our economy.

Right Honourable Speakers, Honorable Members of our two Houses, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On our foreign policy front, my government continues to pursue a balanced policy that is based on the principles of co-operation and none interference in the affairs of other countries. The international image problem that we have had as a result of war is gradually changing in some capitals, thanks to the significant progress that we have made in implementing the Revitalized Peace Agreement. After putting our own house in order, we have now

assumed our rightful place as a responsible member of our region who could be entrusted with peace-making as was the case with the Sudan's Juba Peace Agreement and our current peace-keeping mission in Eastern DR Congo under the East African Community.

As we work to earn our rightful place in community of nations, I am directing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to pursue our Foreign Policy Goals. These goals include, but not limited, to asking regional and international support to the successful implementation of R-ARCSS, lifting of sanctions and arms embargo and working closely with the African Union to amicably resolve border issues with our neighbours.

In pursuing these goals, I have directed that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs be provided with the necessary tools, including funds to clear the accumulated rental and salary arrears in our diplomatic Missions as well as subscriptions to regional and international bodies.

Right Honourable Speakers, Honorable Members of our two Houses, Ladies and Gentlemen,

South Sudan is currently experiencing the impact of Climate Change. The recent heatwave with temperatures of over 40 degrees, the frequent droughts and floodings requires are signed that climate change is already here with us. This means all sectors of the government must work to incorporate the strategies and plans of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) developed by the National Ministry of Environment and Forestry into the strategies and plans for the fiscal year 2023/2024.

This will enable the country to mitigate and adapt to the impact of Climate Change. Besides planting trees, the generation of 3000MW of clean energy from renewable sources such hydropower, Solar, wind, geothermal and natural gas must commence and the work of phasing out diesel generators must start immediately.

In order for the Minister of Environment and Forestry to deliver on its mandate, I am directing the Ministry of Finance and

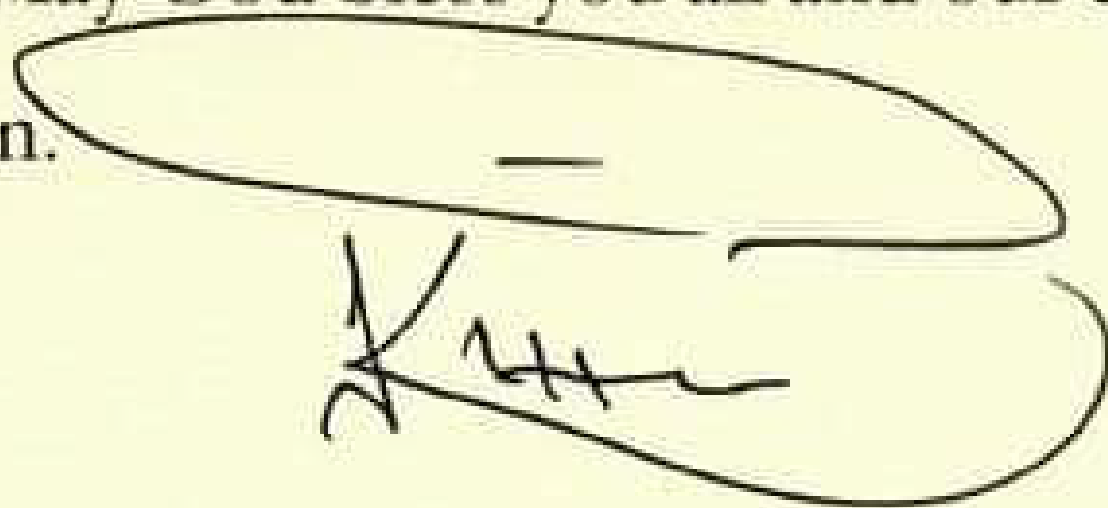
Planning to avail fund for the conduct of feasibility studies for environmental social impact assessment on the Naam River and for building resilience of flood affected communities.

Right Honourable Speakers, Honorable Members of our two Houses, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In response to His Holiness Pope Francis call for peace, I lifted the suspension I announced on the Rome Peace talks with the Holdout groups. I suspended the talks because of the numerous road ambushes conducted on our highways by elements of Holdout groups. The talks with Non-Signatories South Sudan Opposition Group resumed in Rome last week from March 20 - 24, 2023. While no noticeable progress was achieved in this round, it was important that the two parties met for the first time in over 21 months. The government will pursue these talks with the Non-Signatories South Sudan Opposition Group to build on what was achieved in previous negotiations and within the confine of the original intention of the Rome Peace Initiative. Anything outside this would be considered a new initiative and counter-productive to the quest for an inclusive peace in South Sudan.

In closing, I would like to call upon all of us to work hard to implement the remaining provisions of the Revitalized Peace Agreement during the period given to us by the Roadmap. It is our duty to give South Sudanese their fully deserved right to elect their leaders comes 2024. I urge your full cooperation as we walk this journey. Let us match the recent social successes of our sport teams in how we do politics. The successes of our basketball and football teams have given us a great honour. I thank them from the bottom of my heart for showing a different side of our country's potential.

Thank you very much for listening and I wish you the best of luck this parliamentary session. May God bless you all and our country the Republic of South Sudan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed within a hand-drawn oval. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'Salva Kiir'.

Salva Kiir Mayardit
President,
The Republic of South Sudan
Juba, South Sudan