



**Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission
(RJMEC)**

STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE

30TH RJMEC MONTHLY MEETING

THURSDAY, 06 JULY 2023

JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN

**Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning!

1. I welcome you to our 30th meeting of the RJMEC. It is our fourth meeting in the 24-month extended Transitional Period. We are now only seventeen months to elections scheduled for December 2024. To date, critical milestones as set out in the Revitalized Peace Agreement have not been accomplished in accordance to the timelines in the Roadmap.
2. In my recent engagements, both within the region and at the international level, it is clear that there is a growing concern regarding the slow pace of implementation of the Agreement in view of the timelines set in the Roadmap. There is therefore need for concerted efforts to fast-track its implementation.
3. My statement this morning will highlight the recent RJMEC engagements with the Parties, other South Sudanese stakeholders, regional leaders, and the international community. I will then provide updates on the progress made since our last meeting and conclude with my observations and recommendations.

Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

4. Since our last meeting, I had the opportunity to meet with H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of the Republic of South Sudan where I briefed him on RJMEC's assessment of the status of the implementation of the Agreement, as well as concerns over the slow pace of implementation of the critical tasks required for the conduct of credible elections by the end of the Transitional Period, namely redeployment of the Necessary Unified Forces (NUF); reconstitution of the National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC), and preparation for the conduct of elections. His Excellency the President acknowledged RJMEC's concerns, recounted the RTGoNU's ongoing efforts to expedite implementation, and assured RJMEC of his government's commitment to complete implementation of the critical pending tasks and to hold elections as scheduled.

5. I also met with H.E. Dr. Riek Machar Teny, First Vice President of the Republic of South Sudan, and discussed with him a wide range of issues about the implementation of the R-ARCSS, including the delay by the RTGoNU to complete critical tasks as per the Roadmap. His Excellency the First Vice President reiterated his commitment to

implementation of the R-ARCSS to the letter and spirit in order to have credible elections.

6. The RJMEC attended the 14th Ordinary Session of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Djibouti on 12th June 2023, which among others, deliberated on the crisis in neighbouring Sudan and the peace process in South Sudan. Regarding the South Sudan peace process in particular, the Summit in its communique, among others, took note of the RTGoNU's commitment to hold elections in December 2024 and urged the government to expedite implementation of key tasks critical for the conduct of the elections.
7. On 20th June 2023, I briefed the United Nations Security Council session in New York, on the RJMEC's assessment of the status of the implementation of the R-ARCSS and our role in support of the peace implementation. In the briefing, I appealed for international support to the peace process, including direct funding for some of the critical upcoming processes of the permanent constitution-making, election preparations, and the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) program. The Security Council members urged the parties in South Sudan to work collectively to honour their commitments in

the R-ARCSS and expressed their backing for strengthening the 35% quota for women as outlined in the R-ARCSS. However, they voiced concerns over the slow progress in implementing the R-ARCSS and failure to meet the agreed targets.

8. I also held separate meetings with the permanent representatives of the IGAD member states, AU C5 and UNSC A-3. I briefed them on the implementation of the R-ARCSS and appealed for support to the South Sudan peace process.

Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

9. In terms of the status of the implementation of the Agreement, I will now highlight key observations under each chapter of the Agreement.

10. Under governance, the Judicial Reform Committee (JRC) has so far held stakeholder consultations in Western Bahr el Ghazal, Western Equatoria and Upper Nile States as well as in the Greater Pibor Administrative Area. Perspectives from these stakeholders will be critical in informing the JRC's recommendations to the RTGoNU on judicial reforms.

11. In terms of legislative reforms, on 5th June 2023, the National Elections Act (Amendment) Bill 2023 and the Anti-Corruption Commission Act (Amendment) Bill 2023 were tabled before the reconstituted Transitional National Legislature (TNL) for consideration and enactment. I encourage the TNL to expedite this process and enact these laws.
12. Regarding the National Constitutional Amendment Committee (NCAC), the RTGoNU has extended its mandate for another four months to enable the Committee to complete its pending tasks, namely: to draft and complete amendments to the NGO, the Investment Promotion, the Mining, the Transport, the Pension Fund, and the Telecommunication Acts.
13. The delayed reconstitution of the Political Parties Council and other independent Institutions and Commissions at the national level continues to impede progress on the implementation of this chapter of the Agreement.

Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

14. On the Permanent Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements, the Permanent Ceasefire is still holding, which is a commendable achievement under Chapter II.

This notwithstanding, CTSAMVM reported alleged clashes between SPLA-IO forces and some defectors in Maiwut County of Upper Nile State. In Central Equatoria State, CTSAMVM reported increased National Salvation Army (NAS) attacks on both civilians and the SSPDF. There were also clashes allegedly between an SPLA-IO protection force from Panyikang County, Upper Nile State and an SSPDF protection unit from Ruweng Administrative Area which led to injury and loss of life. I would like to hear more from the JDB and CTSAMVM regarding these alleged clashes.

15. On the unification of forces, there is no new progress to report regarding the redeployment of Phase I Necessary Unified Forces, nor the commencement of Phase II NUF training. I would like to hear an update from the RTGoNU and the JDB on these pending tasks.

16. Regarding CTSAMVM's operational and administrative challenges as reported in the last plenary, I have held several consultations with the concerned parties, the CTSAMVM leadership and the Executive Secretary of IGAD to resolve the issues raised. Consequently, IGAD has reviewed and endorsed the Terms of Reference of the CTSAMVM Chairperson and the CTSAMVM Board. In addition, it has given guidance on the draft Terms of

Reference of the CTSAMVM Technical Committee (CTC). CTSAMVM leadership is therefore expected to brief the Board on these outcomes and to present the draft CTC Terms of Reference for endorsement.

17. I would like to commend the SSPDF leadership's efforts in inculcating discipline and holding the forces accountable as evidenced by its recent General Court Martials which tried 32 cases in Yei, Central Equatorial State. The accused soldiers and junior officers faced offences ranging from murder to sexual and gender-based violence. Sentences handed down included imprisonment, dismissal, reduction in rank, fines and compensation to the victims. It is encouraged that all other forces institutionalize accountability measures and take steps to prevent recurrence of such crimes, especially SGBV and for rehabilitation of victims.

18. On police reforms, efforts are being made to reform the National Police Service as outlined in the National Policing Strategic Plan 2020–2024. In this regard, RJMEC welcomes the ongoing focus on preventing and investigating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, including by strengthening the police capabilities in identifying and investigating SGBV cases.

Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

19. In terms of humanitarian affairs, the onset of rains and the influx of refugees and returnees from Sudan continue to exacerbate the already severe humanitarian needs in the country. However, it is concerning that there is growing population of returnees who are stranded in Renk, Upper Nile State where conditions are deteriorating. I appeal to the RTGoNU and the international community to mobilize additional support for resettlement of the returnees.

20. On resource, economic and financial management, it is noted that there is progress in the budget process. However, there is need for the RTGoNU to fulfil its budgetary commitment of funding Agreement institutions which have continued to face recurrent financial challenges. In this regard, the RTGoNU is urged to create the fiscal space needed to implement the R-ARCSS.

21. Further, the RTGoNU is urged to ensure the establishment of effective public procurement and payroll systems and grant public service concessions, public borrowing and debt management to facilitate transparency and accountability in the public sector, as per articles 4.12.1 of the R-ARCSS.

22. The importance of the private sector as the engine of economic growth cannot be overemphasized, especially in transition economies. It is therefore recommended that the establishment of the Enterprise Development Funds be prioritized in order to improve productivity and to provide the domestic private sector access to finance. In this regard, it is concerning that the legal frameworks for the Youth Enterprise Development Fund and the Women Enterprise Development Fund remain outstanding.

Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

23. On Transitional Justice, the drafting of the Commission for Truth Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH) and Compensation and Reparation Authority (CRA) Bills are in progress. It is understood that the two Bills have been substantially reviewed based on expert views arising from the recent Transitional Justice Conference and public consultations. I urge the RTGoNU to expedite completion of the two Bills.

24. Regarding the making of the Permanent Constitution, there is no further progress to report. The National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC) is yet to be reconstituted and the other mechanisms like Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC) and Preparatory

Sub-Committee (PSC) for the National Constitutional Conference, have not yet been established as required by the Constitution Making Process Act.

25. However, I am informed that the stakeholders have all submitted their lists of nominated representatives to reconstitute the National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC) and establish the Preparatory Sub-Committee (PSC). The Parties have agreed on the allocation of membership within the NCRC and PSC. I urge the Parties to submit the list of their nominees in order to hasten the reconstitution of the NCRC and establishment of the PSC.

Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

26. Overall, it is important to reiterate that in order to conduct free, fair, and credible elections as scheduled, there is need to achieve the following benchmarks in the R-ARCSS:

a. Reconstitution and operationalization of the institutions tasked with the preparation and conduct of elections, namely the Political Parties Council and the National Elections Commission;

- b. Judicial reforms to enhance the capacity and independence of the judicial institutions to deal with elections-related disputes;
- c. Completion of the unification and redeployment of forces in order to provide security throughout the electoral process;
- d. The making of the Permanent Constitution under whose provision elections shall be conducted; and
- e. Improvement to the overall political and civic space to enhance public participation in the constitution-making and electoral processes.

27. In view of the aforementioned, it is important to underscore the need to deliberately hasten the pace of implementation of the Agreement. I would therefore like to make the following recommendations to the RTGoNU:

- a. provide adequate and predictable funding for the implementation of all the critical pending tasks of the Agreement;
- b. continue to consult and dialogue in the spirit of collegial collaboration and consensus to address emerging issues during the implementation of the Agreement;

- c. prioritize efforts aimed at promoting peace, reconciliation and healing at national and community level;
- d. prioritize implementation of social service provision as outlined in the Budget Appropriation Bill 2023-2024 in order reduce economic vulnerabilty of ordinary citizens; and
- e. provide immediate support to returnees to enable them resettle and/or reintegrate in their communities or places of choice in safety and dignity.

28. In conclusion, as South Sudan marks its 12th independence anniversary, I would like to congratulate the people and government of South Sudan on this milestone and more importantly on sustaining the peace efforts over the last five years since the signing of the Revitalized Peace Agreement in 2018. South Sudan should seize this opportunity to consolidate the peace dividends and implement the critical tasks in the Roadmap so as to fulfil the aspirations of her people for justice, equality, respect for human rights and the rule of law.

I Thank You!