



Ellen Margrethe Løj

*Special Representative of the Secretary-General
United Nations Mission in South Sudan*

SRSG's Statement on the Celebration of UN Day

24 October 2016

Honourable Richard K. Mulla, Minister of Federal Affairs

Distinguished senior government officials;

Excellencies, members of the diplomatic community;

Distinguished guests;

UN staff members, fellow colleagues;

Ladies and gentlemen;

As the United Nations Special Representative in South Sudan, I have the honour to read to you the statement from the Secretary-General on this year's United Nations Day. I quote:

“This year’s observance of United Nations Day occurs at a time of transition for the world and for the United Nations.

Humanity has entered the era of sustainability – with a global commitment to fulfil the great promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this, the UN Organization’s 71st year, we have 17 goals to propel us towards a better future for all on a healthy planet.

The world is also moving at long last beyond the mindset which viewed the burning of fossil fuels as the path to prosperity. At a time of record heat, Member States have embraced the Paris Agreement on climate change in record time. This landmark measure will enter into force on 4 November. Across that historic threshold lies our best chance for greener, cleaner, low-carbon growth.

The United Nations is also in transition, from its eighth Secretary-General to the ninth. I, the SG have been honoured to serve

“we the peoples” for the past ten years. Together, we have put in place some solid foundations for shared progress – which we must build on by working even harder to empower women, engage youth and uphold human rights for all. But we have also suffered enormous heartbreak – including unresolved conflicts causing immense suffering throughout the troubled Middle East, South Sudan, the Sahel and beyond. On these and other frontlines of violence and disaster, courageous UN staff continue to rise to the occasion and respond to the plight of the vulnerable.

I thank people across the world for their support -- and urge all to give their full backing to Secretary-General-designate Antonio Guterres in continuing our global mission of peace, sustainable development and human rights.”

This concludes the statement of the Secretary-General. Allow me to add a few remarks of my own

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen;

As we are gathered here in Juba one year ago to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, we expressed optimism and hope for what the future holds for South Sudanese people: hope that the fighting and senseless violence had finally come to an end; hope that the people displaced could return to their homes; and hope that the children could go back to school.

The peace agreement, which had just been signed in August of last year, brought optimism that the enormous potential of the people of South Sudan who yearn for peace, could be put to building this nation rather than being squandered by the destructive forces of those who pursue war.

In 2016, the fifth year of South Sudan's independence, we expected that the leaders of South Sudan would unite to set the country on a new path; a path towards stability, peace, and prosperity.

Regrettably, the renewed fighting that took place in Juba in July represented a grave setback which derailed the peace process.

But as we come together here today, to celebrate UN day, we must be steadfast in our faith that South Sudanese can put aside their differences and unite for peace. The Peace Agreement remains the most credible vehicle to revive the peace process and should be fully implemented in an inclusive manner, for all the people of this country so that they can achieve their dreams and aspirations.

To achieve this aim, there must be an end to the fighting. It is time to lay down the weapons and commit to inclusive dialogue, reconciliation and justice. I urge the Transitional Government of National Unity and the parties to the conflict in South Sudan to put the interests of their people first. The suffering must simply stop.

We must redouble our efforts to foster peace because we owe it to the people. We owe it to those who have lost their lives and those

who were left behind. And we owe it to the women, girls, boys and men whose basic human rights have been denied or abused.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen;

The United Nations stands ready to support South Sudan in the challenging times ahead. Allow me to explain some of the ways that the UN is contributing to protecting civilians, promoting human rights, providing humanitarian assistance, and assisting with early recovery and development.

Currently there are more than twenty UN agencies present in South Sudan. If you take a tour of the various exhibitions here today, you will realize that while we serve the same values, and operate under the same flag, the UN in South Sudan is a collection of entities, people, activities and specialities. For example, while UNMISS is engaged in supporting the protection of civilians, promoting human rights, and assisting with the peace process, UNHCR, WFP, IOM, UNICEF, UNFPA, FAO, OCHA as well as others are delivering life-saving basic

services to millions of people in need. And while UNDP, UN Women, and UNESCSO are supporting reconciliation, access to justice, and the freedom of the press, the World Health Organization and UNAIDS are monitoring, reporting and responding to the outbreak of dangerous diseases.

The activities I have just mentioned represent merely a snapshot of the significant work done by UN agencies on the ground in South Sudan. The contributions of these agencies are simply too many to mention. But let me say that a common characteristic embodied by the staff in these organizations – national and international staff alike – is that they are contributing to a cause greater than themselves. They are here to support the people of South Sudan; they are your partners for peace, reconciliation, justice, development and so many other efforts that are aimed at improving the lives of ordinary people.

So, today, dear colleagues, I wish to express my immense gratitude to all of you for your professionalism, enduring commitment

and selfless sacrifices in the service of the people of South Sudan. The past two years have reminded us all of the dangers of living and working in areas affected by conflict. I salute your courage, professionalism, and dedication.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen;

This year's UN day celebration is unique in that it is the first time that we have opened it up to the public, celebrating here at the Nyakuron Cultural Center rather within the premises of a UN base. Let us take this opportunity to engage in dialogue, learn from each other, and be inspired by the theme of this year's celebration: *UN for the people of South Sudan*.

In conclusion, let me return to the opening statement of the Secretary-General. We are at a time of transition for the world and the United Nations. This sentiment is certainly true for South Sudan. The road ahead will be challenging but I look forward to the day that peace

will prevail and that this young nation can finally live out its great promise.
