

**THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**OPENING REMARKS AT THE SOUTH SUDAN SIDE EVENT**

**New York, 23 September 2016**

[as prepared for delivery]

We are here to support and consolidate peace in South Sudan.

We know that South Sudan is a long way from resolving its many challenges and problems.

When President Salva Kiir and Riek Machar came together in April to inaugurate the Transitional Government of National Unity, there was a sense of hope.

But that hope was lost with the resumption of violence in Juba in July, followed by the collapse of the security arrangements and power-sharing provisions of the peace agreement.

Fighting has now ceased in Juba. President Kiir has publicly committed to take forward the transition and implement the peace agreement.

Yet a number of factors are fuelling discontent and violence, including inter-communal violence across parts of the country. These include the marginalisation of Riek Machar and his supporters, the sidelining of other opposition groups, both armed and unarmed, and the continued implementation of the 28-States order.

As the guarantors of South Sudan's peace agreement, we must act collectively and urgently to facilitate an inclusive and credible political transition.

This will help stabilize the security situation in the country, including through the full implementation of the permanent ceasefire.

To turn a blind eye would be irresponsible. It would increase the likelihood of territorial fragmentation and risk undermining the country's fragile social cohesion.

The United Nations pledges to support the peace agreement and deliver on its mandate to protect civilians and provide humanitarian assistance.

But it is essential that South Sudan's leaders commit to an inclusive political transition.

I know many of you are engaged in discussions amongst yourselves and with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations to expedite the deployment of the regional protection force proposed by IGAD and authorised by Security Council Resolution 2304.

The regional protection force is an important enabler of the political process. However I propose that our discussion this afternoon focus on the strategic objectives that we are trying to achieve.

I see five benchmarks, five requirements as crucial to placing South Sudan on the path to peace, development and a life in dignity for its people.

First: the inclusion of representatives of the opposition, chosen by the opposition, in all key institutions of the Transition, in accordance with the peace agreement.

Second: the launching this year of a national, constitutional review process based on extensive popular consultations. This process should establish a system of governance which ensures respect for ethnic and regional diversity in all states and determines boundaries through consensus. In the meantime, the implementation of the 28-States order should be put on hold, as recommended by IGAD.

Third: the establishment of a competent and impartial National Elections Commission to ensure respect for international electoral standards, as a condition for UN, AU and IGAD support to the elections.

Fourth: the establishment and operationalization of the Hybrid Court by the African Union and start of a credible and independent truth, reconciliation and healing process before the end of 2016.

Fifth: the establishment this year of a credible, multi-stakeholder Strategic Defence and Security Review board to lead Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR) efforts, including by building police capacities.

I thank you for your commitment to restoring full peace in South Sudan.

I now invite you to share your thoughts on how we can work together to achieve progress in the key areas I have highlighted. I hope that at the end of this meeting, Presidents Mogae and Konare will have the political backing that they need to secure the agreement of the South Sudanese parties to inclusive representation in the peace process and its core institutions.

I first give the floor to President Mogae and then President Konare for brief remarks.

Thank you.