

**DRAFT STATEMENT OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION ON THE  
OCCASION OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN**

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Excellences:

On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Her Excellency Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, I have the distinct honor to bring to the Government and People of the Republic of South Sudan the congratulations and well wishes of the Commission on the occasion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of independence of the Republic of South Sudan.

Excellences:

The Chairperson applauds His Excellency President Salva Kiir Mayardit and his Government for their dedication in confronting the challenges in the building of the young Country of South Sudan during these past two years. The Chairperson acknowledges the very difficult challenges, as well as the courage with which you have confronted them.

The Chairperson also conveys her appreciation to Excellences the Presidents and representatives of participating Governments in today's celebrations: the Republics of Botswana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, and of the Chair of the African Union, Ethiopia. It is our belief that your attendance is an expression of the Union's solidarity and commitment to accompany South Sudan in its path to development.

Excellences:

The presence of so many dignitaries and the throng of South Sudanese, communicates further appreciation of the efforts of their leadership, but it is also an expression of the expectation that this leadership will continue to approach governance with the desired urgency, bearing in mind the singular objective of the welfare of the people of South Sudan.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The African Union Commission remains mindful that many of the challenges of the past two years are yet to be resolved. However, the Commission is encouraged that these tests are not insurmountable. We have followed your gallant efforts to address existing risks to State stability, such as communal violence, cattle raiding, militia activities, refugee influx, and even the environment.

We have also observed your efforts to foster harmony through a national peace and reconciliation commission. We recognize your work to plant as a fundamental, a national constitution, towards which you are currently reviewing the transitional national constitution that has governed national life since 2011. In line with this principle we have observed with commendation the formation of a national electoral commission to guide all your electoral processes, and plans for nationwide census in 2014 to aid development planning, equity in governance, and in the distribution of national resources.

We applaud you for the successes you have achieved and encourage you not to be daunted by seeming obstacles. In these nation-building endeavors, the African Union will remain with you and avail its institutional resources and capacities to assist you attain your goals.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentleman:

As the newest of its Members States, the African Union also remains close in how South Sudan builds and strengthens its relationships with neighbors, in particular Sudan. The Union immersed itself with the country, more deeply during the past three years, dating back to the period immediately preceding the independence of South Sudan, with a particular focus on relations with Sudan. The AU's focus has always been, and remains, the fostering of two viable states, recognizing that the historical linkages between the two states cannot be broken, and the peoples' of these two sisterly countries will forever be bound together.

In these efforts, the Commission commends the tireless efforts of the African Union High Level Implementation Panel which, under the leadership of Their Excellences Thabo Mbeki, Abdusalami Abubakari and Pierre Buyoya, have worked unstintingly for four years to promote this noble end of mutual viability and harmonious co-existence.

The Commission remains fully conscious of the linked but surely needless challenges confronting the implementation of the Cooperation Agreements. For example are the sadly avoidable events in Abyei that continue to hold hostage recent and long-standing agreements for reaching a final solution to this contested territory.

The situation casts a bad light on one of the distinguishing features of South Sudanese and Sudanese identities: openness and accommodation both to diversities and homogeneity. Thus, how Abyei is handled will

stand as a test to the two States – to distinguish your commitment to pluralism and diversity.

Second, is the preventable impasse over issues of the buffer zone agreed by the two states as an interim measure while the issue of the dispute over your common boundary is resolved. Advanced by charges and counter-charges of support to proxies, this matter sadly is stalling the mechanisms for establishing the boundary, affects effective production of oil and needed revenues, and threatens your two peoples' aspirations for co-existence.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Nonetheless, the African Union, the Continent, and the partners of both States of South Sudan and Sudan still stand with you, mindful that these challenges are only temporary. We will not abandon unto you the challenges you both face, as peace between you is a positive force desired all throughout your neighborhood in Eastern Africa and the Horn, to contribute to the attainment of the important regional and African objectives of stability and development.

Excellency, Mr. President:

It is in this regard that we feel confident by the recent goodwill outreach of South Sudan to Sudan, to mend the difficult relations. The reciprocal hand of reconciliation extended to Juba by Sudan illustrates the spirit that the African Union hopes will be nurtured by your two States in the years ahead, as a further stalemate simply will return us to an unnecessary brink, and reverse the gains we have achieved.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen:

With these remarks I take the opportunity once again, on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, to wish the Government and People of the Republic of South Sudan a joyous second anniversary of independence and prosperous year ahead. I also reiterate the AU's commitment to walk with you as you move along the path to peace and prosperity.

South Sudan O Yeeeh!

I thank you!