

Ethiopia urges international support for the two Sudans

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September 29, 2012 (ADDIS ABABA) - The international community should extend continued support for both Sudan and South Sudan, if the former civil war rivals are to reach a comprehensive and final agreement on the few remaining outstanding issues, said Ethiopian foreign affairs Minister, Birhane Gebrekirstos.

The Ethiopian minister was speaking at the Sudan-South Sudan Consultative Forum (SSCF), held on Thursday at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York this week.

While lauding the recent breakthrough achieved between Sudan and South Sudan, Gebrekirstos called on the international community to encourage the two parties to implement the agreements reached in Addis Ababa in late September and to finalize the remaining post-independence issues particularly on the status of the disputed Abyei region and other border areas.

The international community, he said, needs to continually assist the two countries to "ratify the cooperation agreement, establish mechanisms for the effective monitoring and implementation of the agreement; and finalize the outstanding CPA issues."

After addressing the Sudan-South Sudan Consultative Forum on the current developments between the two countries, Gebrekirstos reassured the forum that his country's firm commitment to continue extending all necessary support to help Sudan and South Sudan reach a final and comprehensive agreement.

He further assured that the new Ethiopian leadership under Hailemariam Desalegn will keep its position of being a neutral and honest broker between the two Sudans, after the death of long-time Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in August.

"The new leadership of the Ethiopian government is equally determined to maintain the legacy of the late Prime Minister and will continue to play a constructive role, based on strict adherence to the principle of neutrality, in order to assist both Sudan and South Sudan in dealing with the few outstanding issues."

The Sudan-South Sudan Consultative forum which was held on the sidelines of the 66th UN General Assembly on September 27, 2012 commended leaders of Sudan and South Sudan for demonstrating the political will to strike deals on a series of post-split issues.

The Forum however urged the two parties to similarly show a constructive spirit to reach final agreement on Abyei and other border issues.

The forum encouraged the two parties to urgently engage in Abyei negotiations before the Peace and Security Council meets to consider the report of the AUHIP.

The forum in particular commended the two parties for reaching comprehensive agreements on the critical issue of oil and transitional financial arrangements which will enable the resumption of oil production.

Juba stopped exporting its oil through Sudan in January because of a dispute with Khartoum over transit fees. The move had severe consequences on both economies.

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