

Press Statement from the Permanent Mission of South Sudan to the United Nations on the South Sudan – Sudan cooperation Agreement

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On 27 September, the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Sudan signed a Cooperation Agreement which covered a number of areas of vital importance to the two countries. These included Oil; Security Arrangements; Economical Matters; Status of Nationals of the other States; Framework for Cooperation on Central Banking; Borders; Payment of Post Service Benefits; Trade and Related Issues.

This achievement is the outcome of the tireless efforts of the African Union High Implementation Panel (AUHIP) under the leadership of Former President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and the unwavering support of both the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council. The Government and People of the Republic of South Sudan deeply appreciate the contributions of these organizations and their respective leaderships.

Together, the agreements comprise most of the issues that have continued to divide the two states since the conclusion of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). This bodes well for the future of relations between the two states in their mutual interest and to the benefit of their people.

Two sets of issues will however continue to challenge the realization of cordial relations between the two countries. One is the chronic problem of implementation of agreements summed up in the famous subtitle of a book by the statesman, Abel Alier, Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured. Reticence to implement agreements or flawed implementation can undo agreements and unravel positive achievements.

The second is the crisis over the status of Abyei and the disputed and claimed areas of the border. Here too, a series of agreements have been dishonoured. The 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement, which ended the first war, granted the Ngok Dinka of Abyei the right to decide whether to remain under the administration of the North or rejoin South Sudan from which it was severed in 1905. That provision was never implemented. This eventually triggered a local rebellion that contributed to the resumption of the war in 1983.

The CPA and its Protocol on Abyei granted the Ngok Dinka nine chiefdoms the same right, but that has also not been implemented. The report of the Abyei Boundary Commission, (ABC) whose demarcation of the Ngok Dinka borders was supposed to be final and binding, was rejected by Khartoum. The decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, which revised those borders by reducing the territory the ABC had demarcated for the Ngok Dinka, though initially accepted by both parties, has not been acted upon. The terms of the June 20, 2011 agreement following the military occupation of Abyei by elements of the Sudan Armed Forces have yet to be fully implemented.

The creation of the Ethiopian led United Nations Interim Force for Abyei (UNISFA) mandated to protect populations in the area, and the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) are positive developments. And so is the recent proposal of the African Union High Implementation Panel (AUHIP) on Abyei as mandated by Security Council Resolution 2046 and which was to be final and binding. Although the proposal does not fully meet the demands of the Republic of South Sudan over Abyei, South Sudan has accepted it in the interest of peace and cooperation. The Republic of Sudan on the other hand rejected it outright. Sudan's rejection of this proposal now places the responsibility on the AU Peace and Security Council and the UN Security Council to take appropriate measure to ensure its credible implementation.

Failure to find a solution to the Abyei problem will continue to pose a serious threat to the peace, security and stability of the two states of Sudan and South Sudan. On its part, South Sudan is committed to continuing to negotiate with the Sudan in good faith, to cooperate fully with both the AU Peace and Security Council and the UN Security Council, and to strive toward a genuine peaceful and cooperative relationship with the Republic of Sudan