

## African Union mediator to make proposals on Abyei next Wednesday

Saturday 20 October 2012

October 19, 2012 (KHARTOUM) - African Union chief mediator, Thabo Mbeki will brief the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) next Wednesday about the cooperation agreement signed by Sudan and South Sudan and he is expected to make a proposition on Abyei issue.

On 27 September the two countries inked nine deals on the unsettled issues between the two countries since the independence of South Sudan in July 2011. However the parties failed to agree on Abyei and disputed border areas.

Mbeki who had to visit Khartoum and Juba before this meeting finally will report on 24 October to the AUPSC about the signed deals and steps taken by the two capitals to ensure their implementation, one month after the signing ceremony. The meeting will decide to refer its decisions to the United Nations Security Council which will discuss the issue accordingly.

Sudan's Ambassador to Ethiopia and member of its negotiating team, Abdel Rahman Sir Al-Khatim, told the Sudanese radio on Friday they expect that Mbeki will brief the peace and security council about the AU proposal to end the disputes over Abyei and contested border areas.

Abdel-Rahman expressed hope that the former South African president would make propositions which would boost the march of security and peace the two countries have already started, he said.

Wednesday's meeting will be attended for the first time by the new African Union Commission chairperson, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. South Sudanese and Sudanese foreign ministers are to participate in the ministerial meetings also.

Dlamini-Zuma, in a statement released on Friday, welcomed the ratification of cooperation agreement by the parliaments of the two countries. She further reiterated its commitment to support the implementation of the Agreement and the quick resolution of the outstanding issues.

Asked about what the AU would propose over Abyei, the Ambassador stressed that there is a need for solutions that promote peace and good neighbourhood between the two countries and prevent a return to war.

Sudan refused last September a proposal aiming to hold Abyei referendum in October 2013, and blamed the meditation for backing the South Sudanese position which calls to exclude the nomad Misseryia from the referendum.

The referendum will decide whether Abyei residents want to remain part of Sudan or join the newly independent state of South Sudan.

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