South Sudanese civil society calls for one year extension of National Constitution Review Commission

Tuesday 26 February 2013

Statement from South Sudan Civil Society Organizations

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Press Statement

Civil Society organizations call for a one year extension of mandate of National Constitution Review Commission and budgetary allocation to the Commission

On February 23rd, 2013, representatives from civil society organizations met to discuss the ongoing process reviewing the National constitution of South Sudan and the mandate of the National Constitution Review Commission (NCRC) currently being discussed by the National Legislative Assembly.

The civil society expresses deep concern about the amount of time the commission has taken to start the citizen consultations which form the core of the review process. . We are further concerned that to date there has been no clear report as to what the commission has done so far in regard to reviewing the constitution. In this regard, as civil society organizations, we strongly support the proposal to extend the mandate of the National Constitution Review Commission. We propose that the commission's mandate be extended by at least one year. We recognize the implications of this extension and therefore urge the government to assess and address the factors that resulted in the delay and underperformance by the commission to date. This must be addressed so as to ensure the commission facilitates meaningful popular participation leading to full consideration and inclusion of the views and aspirations of the people of South Sudan.

Acknowledging the great importance of the constitution making process to the people we the civil society urge the Parliamentarians to consider the following as vital points to be discussed in their next sitting;

- We recommend that the mandate of the NCRC be extended by at least one year from the date of signature or amendment act
- Resources should be made available for the work of the Commission to run smoothly immediately when the one year period is to commence
- The composition of the National Constitution Conference should include all the following categories of the society: Persons with disabilities, women, youth, religious leaders, academia, traditional leaders, professional associations and political parties
- The total number of the delegates to the conference should be restricted to 250 and each of the above mentioned categories should be equally represented to reflect a national picture
- Adequate time be allocated for citizen education and popular consultation to ensure a people driven constitution
- We recommend that the Constitutional Conference should be conducted within three months period
- We recommend the process of the president presenting the constitution to the parliament to be accomplished within two months
- We recommend that the period for the review of the constitution by Parliament be extended to six months to give adequate time for their appraisal

We call upon the Government of the Republic of South Sudan under the Leadership of Salva Kiir Mayardit to support the constitution making process in good will. The Constitutional making process is an opportunity to foster unity and harmony among the people of South Sudan and Must therefore reflect their views and aspirations. We remind the international community that their support is much needed for the success of this process.

Signed by Civil societies groups in Juba:

- South Sudan Youth for Peace and Development Organization (SSYPADO)
- South Sudan Law Society (SSLS)
- South Sudan Human Right Society for Advocacy (SSHURSA)
- Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO)

- South Sudan women Lawyers Associations (SSWLA)
- South Sudan Union of people with disabilities (SSUPD)
- Sudan Domestic Election Monitoring and Observation Program (SuDEMOP)
- Environmental Protection Society (EPS)
- Generation Agency for Development and Transformation-Pentagon
- Equatoria Rehabilitation and Development Association (ERADA)
- Voice for Change (VFC)