

**AS DELIVERED**

**Statement of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of  
UNMISS, Mr. Nicholas Haysom  
Meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council  
16 November 2023**

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**Chairperson,**

**Members of the Peace and Security Council,**

**Representative of South Sudan,**

**Excellencies,**

1. I thank you for the invitation to brief this Council on the situation in South Sudan. I have the privilege of speaking after my articulate and collegial brothers with whom I work closely in Juba. So I apologise if I repeat some of the issues already mentioned -what is noticeable is our common understanding of the situation.
2. As pointed out, with only 13 months until elections in December 2024, time is of the essence.
3. Over the last three months, there has been some progress in the passage of critical legislation to enable the elections and constitution-making processes. As we heard, at the start of November, the two elections related commissions the NCRC and the NEC, as well as the PPC were at last established. While commending the establishment of these critical bodies, let me underscore that they must be operationalised and resourced to fulfil their critical mandates.
4. Despite these modest gains, the timelines set out in the Roadmap are behind schedule. With every passing week, the options for practical compromises are diminishing, particularly in relation to the type and scale of the elections, and the constitution making process. The contrasting statements

on election preparedness from the parties to the peace agreement indicate that more should be done to achieve consensus on the conditions that need to be in place.

5. As part of the Trilateral mechanism mandated by this Council, the African Union, IGAD and UNMISS have recently called on the government to ensure that the commissions have the confidence and buy-in of all the parties. With the electoral architecture beginning to take shape, technical, legal, and operational decisions are urgently required to enable the elections to take place as scheduled. Together, we continue to leverage our comparative advantages to provide technical assistance to these critical processes and urge consensus and practical compromises where timelines have already lapsed.

**Excellencies,**

6. Apart from the management architecture and the functional institutions, credible and peaceful elections require a safe and secure environment. While the permanent ceasefire has held, we should not lose sight of the security and political tensions that continue to simmer across the country, with the potential to intensify as the electoral date draws closer. We have witnessed a spate of military defections which threatens to undermine the much-needed trust between the parties.

7. If there is one thing that we have learnt from the conflict in Sudan, it is that a country should have a single and unified security apparatus. Hence, the inability of the Transitional Government of National Unity to finalize the Transitional Security Arrangements remains an overarching concern.

**Excellencies,**

8. As a factor of uncertainty and social anxiety, in addition to the Transitional Security Arrangements, the humanitarian situation in South Sudan is expected to deteriorate in 2024. This is compounded by the outbreak of the conflict in Sudan and will require critical support from the government and the

international community. Meanwhile, the situation in some border areas is shifting from a humanitarian challenge to a security crisis as host, returnee and refugee populations contend for diminishing aid. Our humanitarian partners note that, to date, a total of 373,094 people fleeing the conflict in Sudan have entered South Sudan.

9. Overcoming a situation of chronic humanitarian crisis must, however, be balanced with a longer-term outlook anchored in sustainable development. In that regard, I commend my brother Amb. Biswaro and the African Union Mission in South Sudan for convening the Special Reconstruction Fund (SRF), which is essential for South Sudan's reconstruction and infrastructure development. I also welcome the post-conflict needs assessment conducted by IGAD and the AU with participation of the UN system.

### **Excellencies,**

10. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of engaging with shared purpose and common messaging in our efforts to assist South Sudan in its transition. Over the last month, I have held constructive engagements in South Africa, Kenya on the peace process. From here, I intend to take my good offices to Ethiopia, Djibouti and Uganda as part of our regional engagement. I believe that there may be more international willingness to support the Revitalized Peace Agreement and a charge towards elections if there is a regional backing, as well as clear direction and structure on the ground to allow for longer-term assistance. In this regard, I seek your support to;

- a. Call on the Government to allocate requisite funds towards the implementation of the peace process and operationalisation of key institutions particularly the transitional security arrangements, constitution making and elections.
- b. Encourage dialogue amongst leadership to address immediate technical, legal, and operational decisions needed to enable elections to take place

on time. The Trilateral mechanism has presented ten (10) priority issues for the consideration by the parties to assist them in framing the discussion around these critical issues.

- c. Encourage IGAD to convene on South Sudan and assist the Parties to resolve current contentious hurdles in the implementation of the peace process as well as to enable Member States to align their support accordingly.

11. To conclude, I wish to recall that, those who guaranteed this Agreement, did so on the basis that the parties to the agreement will implement it with the consensual collaboration of all stakeholders. It is now our duty to encourage the stakeholders to engage each other to find ways and means to prepare the country for elections in December. It is equally our duty to discourage the parties from the temptation of unilateralism.

12. There are some who are skeptical of the leverage that we might be able to collectively muster to ensure the implementation of the peace agreement. To those, we would remind that it was precisely unity of purpose amongst member states that saw the CPA being negotiated and implemented that we need today.

13. I thank you.

**[End] – 858 words**