

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN
NATIONAL DIALOGUE STEERING COMMITTEE (NDSC)
REMARKS BY THE RT HON. ANGELO BEDA, CO-CHAIR
ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCHING AND SWEARIN IN OF
THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE STEERING COMMITTEE

Date: Monday 22 May 2017

On behalf of the National Dialogue Steering Committee (NDSC) and on my own behalf, may I take this opportunity to greet and welcome our President, H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit, the President of South Sudan, H.E President Yoweri Musaveni, H.E President Joseph Kabila, H.E President Uhuru Kenyatta (*mention all leaders who attend*), Our First Vice President, Vice President and the Rt. Hon Speaker of TNL, Representative of other Regional and International Countries, the Diplomatic Missions, Senior Government Officials. I would like to also welcome and greet my fellow Members of the Steering Committee, community Leaders, Chiefs, Religious Leaders, elders, youth, members of the media, ladies and gentlemen, *Good Morning to you all!*

Today, we mark a major millstone in our history and let me tell you my fellow citizens of South Sudan that fighting the war of liberation and subsequently winning the Independence of South Sudan was only the first step of Nation Building, but we have started today the most difficult part of our journey of rebuilding our beloved country to give it a new look of a peaceful, stable, transparent, accountable, organized, developed, prosperous and economically viable State. A State that is full of opportunities and hope for all its citizens, and anybody who lives within its borders. For this to happen, and as your Co-Chair, I will rely on your support and cooperation to realize these objectives and goals through this historic process of National Dialogue (ND) between the people of South Sudan.

Objectives: Our overarching goal is to build national consensus and bases for the unity of the people of South Sudan, end the violence and conflict in the country, deliver peace, stability and have a conducive environment for a free, fair and credible election. Also, our aim is to usher a new era of peace and start a process of national healing and reconciliation.

Strategy: The National Dialogue is a forum and a process (South Sudanese led process) to help deliver some of the general and specific objectives set above. For this reason, it must be inclusive to all stakeholders. The Steering Committee (SC) will begin its work with an open mind, ready to receive ideas from all. We will encourage every member and stakeholder to feel free and air their views without fear or favour. We also do not want to simply begin with predefined and predetermined ideas and theories taken from the shelves or books but ideas will come when the steering committee meets with stakeholders, brainstorm and starts its work. However, we must all agree on vision, mission and a set of goals and objectives that we all want to achieve. We are aware that there those who are casting doubts on the ND and those who lack the confidence after so many failed attempts in past and “Many Agreements Dishonoured (Abel Alier)”. They consider this ND as another trick to maintain the status quo. But let me tell my fellow citizens, if people think this was a trick, myself and my fellow Co-Chairman, H.E. Abel Alier would not have accepted this challenging task. For this reasons, we are committed to lead the National Dialogue towards a “**sustainable peace**”.

The ARCISS Agreement: The National Dialogue is not a replacement to ARCISS as some may think but a tool to support, improve and enhance on the Agreement. To have it owned by the people, for the people and led by the people. In this context, the Steering Committee will act as secretariat for mobilizing the nation on how we can solve our problems within the context of the ARCISS Agreement.

Stakeholders: It is important that the Steering Committee identifies all the key stakeholders who are to be involved in this national process. A dialogue means talking to someone or an opponent. If you are talking to yourself then this is not really a dialogue! We don't have all the answers but we will not wait for everyone to begin. We will start the process and build the momentum and others will follow. *Key Stakeholders include:* Armed Groups/ Forces, women and youth, civil societies, media, government, regional and international bodies.

I would like caution you not to think of this as a one party affair. This is an all-South Sudan affair. We will hold big open debates and town hall meetings with all stakeholders. Inclusivity means it is important to have all “Opposition Forces/ Groups” in the process but not limited to only them. The role of our regional and international friends is important and vital in this process to broaden the bases for participation. I also want to emphasize on the importance of the Chiefs, traditional leaders, civil societies and more importantly the “media”.

Key issues:We need to identify the root causes of our war, discuss reform of the Security, unity and nation building, tribalism and citizenship, cattle raiding, proliferation of guns and militia culture, the economy, governance, safety and freedom of the actors, confidence building measures, cessation of hostilities, release of political detainees, transparency, Constitution writing process, etc.

Challenges: Lack of fund is on top of the agenda. We all know that there is no money since the country is going through economic crisis. So the question is where will we get the fund to run all these activities?? We must conduct public debates, mobilize the people, and visit to regions and other destinations, so how will we do that??The tension between the various stakeholders is a challenge;the issue of time: How can we have time frame in this situation of uncertainty? Finally, there is the challenge of lack of confidence among stakeholders.

Way Forward:Dialogue has been the hall mark of our liberation struggle (Juba Conference 1947, Chukudum, Wunlit, Rumbeck, the South South Dialogue after CPA 2005, etc.). I am sure we all want Peace. But who said South Sudanese are not peaceful?? I remember well, that we have been very peaceful in the past, for example following the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement. Also, during the time when Hon. Able Alier was a President of the South and I was the Speaker of the then “People’s Regional Assembly”. So what is happening today?? Therefore, we must “Sit and Hit” where it pains. They say “No Pain No Gain”!As I said, the goal is to end the current conflict, bring peace and have a conducive environment to hold election by 2018, 2019 or as soon as it is possible. Last but not least, we don’t want to open the old wounds. We must move forward always, tell our people to forget the past and open a new chapter of a stable, prosperous and peaceful South Sudan!

Finally, I want end by thankingall our distinguished guests who found time to come to this ceremony to express their solidarity and support us.I thank the President for the trust he has given to me and my fellow Co-Chair, Hon. Abel Alier. I thank the Organizers of swearing ceremony and to all the people of South Sudan: we shall not let you down; for the future and the Republic of South Sudan belongs to you all. God bless our country, the Republic ofSouth Sudan. Thank you all very much. God Bless you!

**RT HON. ANGELO BEDA,
CO-CHAIR, NDSC**

Source: Hon.Beda/Hon. Butrus/Dr.Zaza