

COMMUNIQUÉ: WOMEN SHAPING PEACE IN SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

January 22, 2013

We, delegates of the Coalition of Women Leaders from Sudan and South Sudan, gathered in advance of the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa from 19 to 22 January 2013 to define our common priorities for the future and peaceful coexistence of our countries.

We reviewed the September 27, 2012 Cooperation Agreements and the September 21, 2012 African Union High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan (AUHIP) Proposal on the Final Status of Abyei. We received briefings from technical experts, resource persons, and advisors over the course of our gathering.

We acknowledge progress made to date by our country's leaders on the difficult and complex issues of building relations between two new states. Our nations separate and together hold significant opportunity for peace, prosperity, and equality.

However, we express our despair and grave concern about ongoing violence in both countries. We emphasize the desperate nature of our shared humanitarian crisis that takes lives on a daily basis. We fear a return to war if the issues of Abyei and border demarcation are not peacefully resolved and the Cooperation Agreements not successfully implemented. We express frustration at the increased conditionalities imposed upon and continued lack of implementation of already signed accords. We call upon our leaders in both states and the African Union to honor their commitments and support efforts to restore peace.

We acknowledge the ongoing humanitarian crisis unfolding in South Kordofan and Blue Nile affecting the security and stability of both countries. Nearly one million people are already affected and the situation continues to worsen.

Together we should address all of these challenges. Leveraging women's human and intellectual capacities is key to resolving these challenges and increasing stability. We affirm the critical role women played throughout the war, in bringing peace to our countries during the Comprehensive Peace Agreement negotiations, and most recently the peaceful referendum. We also affirm our rights as women to be included, consulted, and informed of decision-making processes that impact our lives. We decry the exclusive nature of the negotiations and especially the absence of women. We are frustrated by the lack of information about the process, for it only increases the divisions in our fragile social fabric. We commend the actions by the African Union and some members of the international community in promoting the engagement of women and raising the visibility of gender in negotiations to date.

We pronounce the need to ensure that women are not only at the decision-making table but that our voices inform the substance of policies intended to bring peace. We invoke global evidence that demonstrates that the participation of women in peace processes often leads to a more sustainable peace. This initial phase of implementation is a unique window of opportunity for women's engagement. As women from Sudan and South Sudan we affirm our common principles of solidarity, trust, peaceful coexistence, and inclusion.

We present the following recommendations as constructive ideas for a challenged peace process:

COMMUNIQUÉ: WOMEN SHAPING PEACE IN SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

January 22, 2013

1. We call upon **the parties, the AUHIP, and the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) to guarantee the 25% representation of women by appointing them as chairs and members of committees**, including established bodies and ones yet to be formed.
 - *For example*, women must comprise at least 25% of the Ad Hoc Committee mandated under the Security Arrangements. This Committee is tasked with receiving grievances and complaints as the border is demilitarized, a process which leaves women particularly vulnerable. Yet, women often refrain from filing complaints of sexual- or gender-based violence for fear of retribution. Ensuring significant representation of women in this Committee will contribute to creating a safe environment for women to report violations and other early warning signs of renewed conflict.
 - To ensure adequate representation of women and acknowledge the plethora of capable, educated, and experienced women leaders from both countries, **each party should commission and endorse a roster of women** with technical expertise and/or relevant experience.
2. We call upon **the AUHIP to sanction a consultative taskforce of women**. There is currently no specific body tasked with gathering stakeholder input and disseminating information about the implementation process. This taskforce could conduct consultations to determine the needs of women related to implementation and the spread of information to communities. It could also monitor the progress of implementation.
 - *For example*, the Border Areas agreement urges the Joint Border Commission to “give due consideration to the views of the host communities, border communities as well as to interests and views of other affected interest groups.” The taskforce could be dispatched to meet with women’s groups in the host communities to share information about the agreement and gather input on the explicit needs and concerns, feeding it back into the discussions that inform implementation.
3. We call upon the parties to **ensure the terms of reference for each implementation body reflect the needs of women living in areas where agreements will be implemented**. To do so, the AUHIP should mandate that TORs be informed by consultations with women in these areas.
 - *For example*, the Joint Political Security Mechanism/Committee (JPSM/C) established under the Security Arrangements agreements is the umbrella organ responsible for setting the policies related to security. It’s vital that in order to ensure the security of women and communities, women’s voices and experiences inform these policies and terms of reference, especially as it is largely composed of security forces.

COMMUNIQUÉ: WOMEN SHAPING PEACE IN SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

January 22, 2013

4. We call upon **the facilitators and parties to ensure a gender-responsive approach to community security by:**
 - **supporting the gender sensitization training of security forces, such as the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNIFSA), national militaries, and the police service;**
 - **appointing and ensuring funding for a gender advisor to UNIFSA; and**
 - **insisting that security forces have more female officers.**
 - *For example, the Joint Border Verification Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) established under the Border Areas agreement monitors withdrawal of troops and any ceasefires. When crossing borders for the purposes of trade, or because women's families are bi-national, women are often harassed by officials. JBVMM officers (national and international) must receive basic training on gathering data that can be used to identify the cross-border patterns of women and identify areas of vulnerability.*
5. We call upon **the AU and members of the international community, and especially our own negotiating parties, to ensure ongoing access to contemporary information on the substance and status of the peace process.** The lack of access to such information is a primary challenge to women's engagement. *The AUHIP should mandate linkages and the sharing of information between senior advisors and/or gender advisors and women's groups on a consistent basis. As well, parties should agree to disseminate information through radio, public meetings, and other relevant media.*
6. We call upon **members of the regional and international community to create funding streams that will enable women to come together.** When gathered, women will gain information, learn from advisors and technical experts, and plan strategies for advocacy to ensure inclusion and input into the process of implementation.

Beyond these summary recommendations, as women from both countries we have determined our shared top priorities:

- A. **Resolving the final status of Abyei and**
- B. **Ensuring the timely implementation of three of the most vital components of the Cooperation Agreement:**
 1. **Security Arrangements,**
 2. **Border Issues, and**
 3. **The Status of Nationals of the Other State**

We emphasize the interconnected nature of these priority areas and the need to ensure effective coordination of their implementation.

COMMUNIQUÉ: WOMEN SHAPING PEACE IN SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

January 22, 2013

A. Resolving the final status of Abyei

The deadlock on Abyei has had catastrophic consequences for the population of the Area, especially women and children, forcibly displaced time and again by violence. The efforts of the parties and the mediation team to address the concerns and interests of the communities impacted have been unsuccessful. As women, we are concerned about the ominous threat of resumption of conflict between our two countries. We commend the AU Assembly for adopting the AU Roadmap on 16 July 2012.

We call upon:

- Participants at the AUPSC heads of states meeting to endorse the 21 September 2012 AUHIP Proposal on Abyei, according to its commitments; and
- Sudan and South Sudan to accept and implement in good faith the Proposal and ensure a secure and safe environment for the full implementation of the agreed Proposal as well as the timely conduct of the referendum.

B. Ensuring the timely implementation of three of the most vital components of the Cooperation Agreement:

1. Security Arrangements and Border Issues

As the demilitarization of the border takes place, increased vulnerability of families, and specifically women and children, is anticipated. Yet, the agreement does not clearly define who will be responsible for protecting communities located in or near the demilitarized zone. Without protection, women and children living in or near this zone will be vulnerable to attacks and/or abductions from military groups and/or armed civilians, as well as danger from increased exposure to the explosive remnants of war. Women also risk facing demands for sex in order to cross, or being forced into trafficking.

When considering this increased risk it is important to also consider that women often are not comfortable reporting these violations given social stigma and insensitive response by security forces. We note that security is not only the absence of armed conflict, but the guarantee of the freedom of movement, access to resources such as food, water, shelter, and education, and more importantly, a general sense of safety.

The border areas between both countries represent an opportunity for realizing peaceful coexistence and forging neighborly relations. These areas share culture, language, familial and tribal networks, and resources. It is vital that the structures and related terms of reference governing border relations and creating a demilitarized zone incorporate the views of people living on both sides, especially those of women.

We call upon Sudan and South Sudan to:

- Provide entry and exit permits at no or low cost, recognizing that women generally have fewer financial resources than men. As requirements for

COMMUNIQUÉ: WOMEN SHAPING PEACE IN SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

January 22, 2013

nationality are established, the bureaucracy of mandating multiple documents to provide right of crossing will pose specific threats to women who might not be able to easily attain documentation;

- Provide assurances that multiple documents will not be required in order to obtain the right of crossing, recognizing the disproportionate challenges women face in trying to obtain this documentation; and
- Economically empower women living at the border through broader development and livelihood programs. These programs should secure and facilitate access to agricultural lands and establish border markets supported by vital local infrastructures such as roads that facilitate transportation, with protection of economically active women and female-headed households.

2. The Status of Nationals of the Other State

Nationality is a fundamental right to identity. Many Sudanese and South Sudanese are struggling with imposed statelessness due to a lack of clear policies and legal frameworks that guarantee nationality and citizenship. Families of intermarriage are at risk of disintegration, where children can only access citizenship through paternal affiliation, and mothers are often denied the rights and protections of citizenship. Forced displacement, a direct result to statelessness, contributes to greater insecurity and particularly affects women and unaccompanied children unable to prove right to citizenship in either country. In addition, revocation of citizenship of people of South Sudanese origin living in Sudan effectively strips millions of people of their freedom of movement and return.

We call upon Sudan and South Sudan to:

- Protect property and business rights regardless of nationality;
- Address evictions and denial of access; and
- Enforce the four freedoms enshrined in the Nationality agreement signed by both countries on 27 September 2013. This agreement effectively addresses and mitigates the nationality challenges and context created by the independence of South Sudan.