

## **Taskforce for the Engagement of Women In Sudan and South Sudan**

### **Statement and Recommendations**

**January 2014**

The Taskforce for the Engagement of Women, (the “Taskforce”) is a group of 20 peace builders – one man and 19 women- from Sudan and South Sudan. We are leading civil society activists and government officials with varied backgrounds. Our objective is to increase the inclusivity and effectiveness of the implementation process of the nine Cooperation Agreements between both countries. We do this by ensuring the voices of women and communities voices are engaged in the process via consultation and advocacy. We view our role as a conduit between women in both states, especially along the border region, senior officials in the bilateral process, and our constituencies.

The need for a consultative group such as the Taskforce emerged in January 2013 when members of a long-running coalition of women leaders from both countries gathered and released a [joint statement](#) advocating for their increased participation in the process. The statement noted the sheer lack of community and specifically women’s voices in the process – the human element - and thus recommended the creation of a Taskforce, which was officially launched in June 2013.

#### **Crisis in South Sudan**

We express our despair and grave concern about the crisis in South Sudan. Moreover, we highly value the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement between the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) and the Sudan People Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in opposition.

However, conflict is still raging. Therefore, we call upon conflicting parties to honor their commitments and support efforts to restore peace.

We emphasize the desperate nature of the humanitarian crisis that claims lives on a daily basis.

Despite the fact that women contributed in many ways throughout the war and also in bringing peace to our countries during the comprehensive peace negotiations and the peaceful referendum, they continue to be poorly represented in formal peace processes. We decry the exclusive nature of the negotiations, in particular the absence of key stakeholders, especially women.

We affirm the right of and need for women to be included in, consulted about, and informed of decision-making and peace processes that impact our lives. Women’s voices must inform the substance of policies intended to bring peace.

To ensure inclusion and, ultimately, the long-term sustainability of peace, we put forward the following constructive recommendations related to the current crisis in South Sudan and bilateral relationships between our two countries.

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## **CRISIS IN SOUTH SUDAN**

### **A. Cessation of Hostilities<sup>1</sup>**

1. We call upon the **international community** to fully fund the various components of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoH). The amount currently budgeted will not effectively stem the widespread violence occurring in South Sudan.
2. We call upon the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (**IGAD**) **Special Envoys** and **the Parties** to include women in the Joint Technical Team (JTC).
3. We call upon the **IGAD Special Envoys** and the **JTC** to:
  - a. Design a Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM) that:
    - i. Clearly defines a mechanism for accountability for violations of the CoH.
    - ii. Works in formal partnership with existing structures and local, national, and international organizations with experience in civilian protection, unarmed civilian peacekeeping, and violence reduction. These organizations, many of which are now working on the ground, can support the monitoring and verification of progress of the CoH. Their partnership will allow for safe and easy reporting of ceasefire violations by civilians without fear of retaliation and intimidation.
  - b. Engage women in the monitoring and verification of the CoH by:
    - i. Including women, especially from civil society and local communities, in the Monitoring and Verification Team (MVT).
    - ii. Electing a Chairwoman of the MVT.
    - iii. Engendering the Terms of Reference and policies of the MVM.
    - iv. Including in the MVM Terms of Reference a requirement that the focal points engage regularly with women and their organizations.
    - v. Increasing, as permitted in Section 6.2.b. of the CoH, the number of monitors.
    - vi. Ensuring that women comprise at least half of the monitors and focal points on local committees.
  - c. Ensure community sensitization is conducted by the MVT by translating and disseminating the terms of the CoH Agreement into local languages with use of accessible terminology, keeping in mind the importance of oral communication.
  - d. Establish a formal reporting mechanism and report regularly to local communities in local languages.
  - e. Recognize inherent security risks to civilians reporting violations and ensure robust mitigation measures.

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<sup>1</sup> See the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities Between the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (In Opposition) (SPLM/A In Opposition)

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- f. Note that the integrity of the process is compromised by the presence of foreign combat troops and therefore insist the MVM Terms of Reference include a clear plan for withdrawal of foreign forces currently deployed in combat roles (non-UN forces).

## B. Humanitarian Response

1. We call upon **the Parties** and the **United Nations** to:
  - a. Ensure safe passage of humanitarian goods.
  - b. Protect goods, aid workers, and assets associated with humanitarian aid delivery.
2. We call upon the **humanitarian community** to:
  - a. Increase the delivery of gender-specific materials to address the needs of women and girls.
  - b. Ensure the presence of qualified midwives and medical care for mothers and newborns.
  - c. Ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance is designed to “do no harm”, respond sensitively to conflict, and address the needs of the highly vulnerable.

## C. Peace Process

1. We call upon **the Parties** to include a minimum of 35% women as negotiators in each negotiating team.
2. We call upon the **IGAD Special Envoys** and **the Parties**, in order to ensure an effective *structure*<sup>2</sup> of upcoming negotiations, to:
  - a. Launch and facilitate an Official Consultative Forum (OCF) to convene representatives of civil society (at least 50% women) in parallel to the official negotiations. To be effective, the OCF must:
    - i. Be officially endorsed by IGAD, with the IGAD Special Envoys serving as Chairs.
    - ii. Enable participants to be consulted on and impact the agenda of the negotiations.
    - iii. Enable participants to draft positions and recommendations that are communicated directly to those involved in the formal negotiations.
    - iv. Provide participants with access to technical resources and continued current information about the status of the negotiations process.
    - v. Consist of participants chosen through a local, state, and national selection process.
  - b. Immediately commission the formation of a Civil Society Technical Team (CSTT) to design the OCF in direct partnership with the IGAD Secretariat.
  - c. Grant official observer status at the negotiations to civil society. At least ten seats in the negotiations should be reserved; with participation rotating among members selected by the OCF.
  - d. Appoint a senior gender advisor to advise the IGAD Special Envoys and work closely with the CSTT.

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<sup>2</sup> A diagram of the proposed structure is at the end of this document.

3. We call upon the **IGAD Special Envoys, in consultation with the CSTT**, to ensure the *content* of the agenda for upcoming negotiations includes the following topics:
  - a. Governance
    - i. Constitution making process
    - ii. Census
    - iii. Elections
    - iv. Exclusion of minorities
  - b. Transitional Justice
    - i. Reconciliation
    - ii. Reparations
    - iii. Accountability
  - c. Security Sector Reform
  - d. Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
  - e. Development and Reconstruction of Infrastructure

#### **D. Reconciliation**

1. We call upon **all participants in the negotiations** to ensure the talks result in a Comprehensive National Truth, Reconciliation, and Healing Process. This Process must be linked to the grassroots and be based in South Sudan's traditional mechanisms, values, traditions, etc.

### **BILATERAL RELATIONS**

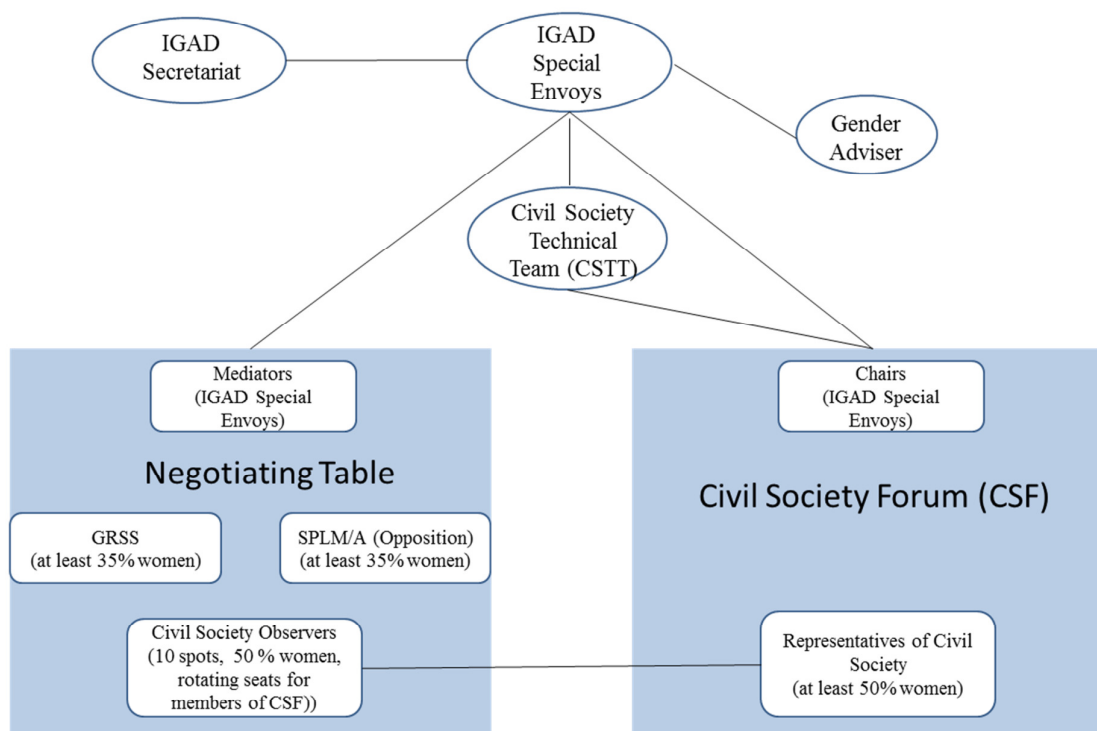
#### **E. Nine Cooperation Agreements**

1. We call upon the **Governments of South Sudan and Sudan** and the **African Union High-Level Implementation Panel** to ensure:
  - a. Female ministerial representation on the High-Level and ministerial committees.
  - b. Every technical committee has at least 50% women.
  - c. Women's needs, concerns, and interests are well addressed in the different committees and implementation units in both Sudan and South Sudan.
  - d. People living in the border region have access to information on the borders, nationals, security, and Abyei agreements.
  - e. Implementation is influenced by the interests of the communities in the border region.
  - f. Consultation with groups advocating for peaceful coexistence and improved bilateral relations, such as the Taskforce on the Engagement of Women.

#### **F. Related to the crisis in South Sudan**

1. We call upon the **Governments of South Sudan and Sudan** to:
  - a. Fully implement the four freedoms included in the Framework Agreement on the Status of Nationals of the Other State and Related Matters between the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan
  - b. Facilitate the work of the civil society organizations to provide humanitarian aid to refugees in the border areas.

## Proposed Structure South Sudan Peace Negotiations



----- = Formal Relationship

GRSS = Government of the Republic of South Sudan

SPLM/A (Opposition) = Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (In Opposition)