South Sudan Taskforce on the Engagement of Women Recommendations

We, the South Sudan Taskforce on the Engagement of Women, gathered in advance of the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa from January 26 to 01 February 2016 to define our priorities for the successful implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan, with the goal of long term stability in our country.

We are a group of 10 women peacebuilders of diverse backgrounds with a shared objective of increasing the effectiveness of the peace process. We believe this will happen through an inclusive process in which women and communities are consistently engaged.

We acknowledge progress made to date by our country’s leaders on the difficult and complex issues of restoring peace and security, including the signing of the agreement. Our nation, founded on immense sacrifice and commitment, while now embroiled in conflict, still holds significant opportunity for stability, prosperity, and equality.

We commend the actions by our parties and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and some members of the international community in promoting and ensuring the engagement of women and raising the visibility of gender in the peace talks.

However, we express our despair and grave concern about the current impasse over contentious issues that are impeding the implementation of the peace agreement. We emphasize the desperate nature of the humanitarian crisis that takes lives on a daily basis and fear a return to war.

Together we should address all of these challenges. Leveraging women’s human and intellectual capacities is key to increasing stability. Women bring unique perspectives to matters of peace and security and understand what’s happening on the ground. Women are trusted bridge-builders within our families and communities and have the technical expertise and knowledge to add value to the process. 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 South Sudan we affirm our common principles of solidarity, trust, peaceful coexistence, and inclusion.

**We’re calling on the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-In Opposition (SPLM-IO) to prioritize resolution of the political deadlock**. We present the following recommendations as constructive ideas for implementation to progress:

1. **The GRSS and SPLM-IO should start a public outreach campaign by broadcasting a joint media message by the two principals** that expresses commitment to the implementation of the peace agreement and cease adversarial posture, including the negative media representation and antagonistic narratives.
2. **The GRSS and SPLM-IO should incorporate, without delay, the key provisions of the peace agreement** into the transitional constitution through the National Constitutional Amendment Committee.
3. **The GRSS should signal to the South Sudanese people their commitment to restoring a sense of security by:**
   1. Paying the military and the police on time; ensuring they do not have access to their weapons and uniforms when off duty; and offering them other agricultural and economic initiatives.
   2. Giving special attention to the unique needs of women and issues of food security and livelihood; and
   3. Revoking the National Security Law, including the immediate ceasing of the arbitrary arrests and detentions.
4. **The GRSS and SPLM-IO should ensure all the security services adhere to their code of conduct** **related to the civilian population** byproviding specialized training on how to engage appropriately with communities, particularly women. Enforce regulations that prohibit violations of the code of conduct and sanction the violators.
5. **The GRSS and SPLM-IO should ensure implementation of the ceasefire agreement, particularly the establishment of the cantonment sites that take into consideration the unique needs of women.** Special attention should be given to:
6. Identifying additional sites;
7. Building required infrastructure; and
8. Providing logistical support.
9. **The GRSS and SPLM-IO and other actors must ensure that the Strategic Defense and Security Review Board includes women and takes into consideration women’s priorities in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program (DDR).** The DDR program must also recognize both male and female ex-combatants and make provisions for their specific needs.
10. **The GRSS and SPLM-IO should ensure the safety and security of the host communities of cantonment sites by:**
    1. Providing health centers and water points within the assembly areas, paying particular attention to the needs of women; and
    2. Ensuring additional security arrangements in places that are particularly dangerous for women and girls, such as firewood collection points, markets, and frequently traveled roads.
11. **The GRSS and SPLM-IO should address the grievances of armed groups through dialogue** to ensure their long-term needs are met and encourage them to participate in the cantonment process.