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 1 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 ten 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 critical 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 international policymakers** to prioritize resolution of the political deadlock. We present the following recommendations as constructive ideas for implementation to progress:

1. **The JMEC, Troika, and the European Union should support the newly created Civil Society Taskforce for the Engagement on the Implementation of the Peace Process,** which aims to create a feedback loop for the dissemination of the peace agreement in local languages through:
	1. Direct community consultations, with equal participation of women;
	2. Radio and other media outlets, with programs targeting youth and women; and
	3. Civil society fora to ensure regular sharing of information.
2. **JMEC and international partners should make it a mandatory requirement that the implementation of the peace agreement is inclusive of women’s and community priorities by:**
	1. Hiring a gender advisor, with expertise in gender and peacebuilding to ensure gender mainstreaming throughout the implementation of the agreement;
	2. Conducting a gender analysis of the peace agreement and the implementation’s plans, programs, and projects;
	3. Selecting civil society delegates in a fair and transparent way and prioritizing gender parity within groups consulted; and
	4. Providing dedicated funding to facilitate multiple gatherings of women’s and other civil society organizations.
3. **JMEC and the AU,** in consultationwith the civil society Transitional Justice Working Group, **must ensure the Hybrid Court is comprised of at least 33% women** through a transparent selection process.
4. **The JMEC should require that the Compensation and Reparation Mechanism and the Commission of Truth, Reconciliation, and Healing, consult with the Council of Traditional Leaders and** other community leaders to include traditional justice measures**,** seeking guarantees that these mechanisms are inclusive and gender sensitive.
5. **The AU, in collaboration with the JMEC, must require training for all staff working on transitional justice,** including on the following topics:
	1. Investigating sexual and gender based and conflict related violence;
	2. Mainstreaming gender in the compensation and reparations process;
	3. Facilitating women-only public hearings; and
	4. Providing psychosocial support to women, using culturally approaches.
6. **Troika should provide funding for the effective application of transitional justice** by**:**
	1. Employing transitional justice experts with African experience;
	2. Conducting workshops on gender sensitive transitional justice implementation;
	3. Organizing women-only public hearings;
	4. Providing gender-sensitive technical expertise;
	5. Conducting on-the-job training and mentoring for South Sudanese staff; and
	6. Supporting ongoing education initiatives, including academic programs.

1. **JMEC must ensure the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism and the Security Defense and Strategic Review Board:**
	1. Specify policy provisionstosafeguard the needs of women, youth, and other civil society organizations; and
	2. Guarantee their participation in verification by including at least 50% women as community liaisons in CTSAMM; and
	3. Conduct gender sensitization training, particularly around investigating sexual and gender based violence.