

**SPEECH OF RIGHT HONOURABLE
JEMMA NUNU KUMBA
SPEAKER
TRANSITIONAL NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 143RD INTER PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU)
ASSEMBLY,
MADRID, SPAIN
26-30 November 2021**

PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY

PRESIDENT OF INTER PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU),

THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE INTER PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU),

HONOURABLE DISTINGUISHED HEADS AND MEMBERS OF DELEGATIONS,

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

GOOD MORNING,

ALLOW ME, ON BEHALF OF THE PARLIAMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH SUDAN AND ON MY OWN BEHALF, TO EXPRESS MY SINCERE GRATITUDE TO THE IPU, THE PARLIAMENT, GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF THE KINGDOM OF SPAIN FOR THE WARM RECEPTION AND THE GOOD HOSPITALITY ACCORDED TO ME AND MY DELEGATION SINCE OUR ARRIVAL FOR THIS ASSEMBLY.

I WOULD EQUALLY LIKE TO THANK THE GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN FOR HOSTING THE 143RD INTER- PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU) ASSEMBLY “IN PERSON “ AT THE TIME WHEN GOVERNMENTS AROUND THE WORLD ARE STRUGGLING WITH THE SCORCH OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC. WE PAY OUR TRIBUTES TO THE LIVES LOST IN SPAIN AND AROUND THE WORLD TO THIS MERCILESS PANDEMIC.

MR. PRESIDENT,

THE 143RD IPU ASSEMBLY COMES AT AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT AS THE WORLD GRAPPLES WITH THE CHALLENGES OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC, THE RISE IN AUTHORITARIANISM, THE GROWING INCIDENCES OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND REPRESSION AS WELL AS INSECURITY AROUND THE WORLD.

THE OVERARCHING THEME SELECTED TO GUIDE DELIBERATIONS IN THIS CONFERENCE IS RELEVANT SINCE IT ATTEMPTS TO ANSWER SOME OF THE MOST PERTINENT QUESTIONS OF THE CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY; OVERCOMING DIVISION AND BUILDING COMMUNITIES AND HOW PARLIAMENT CAN PROMOTE AND ENHANCE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE, PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, MITIGATING POLITICAL POLARIZATION AND EMPOWERING VULNERABLE AND MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS OF THE WORLD.

MR. PRESIDENT, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,

I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE WITH YOU THE RELEVANT EXPERIENCE OF MY COUNTRY SOUTH SUDAN BECAUSE IT ECHOES THE THEME OF THE 143RD IP ASSEMBLY

THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN WAS BORN OUT OF THE ASHES OF BITTER EXPERIENCE OF POLITICAL MARGINALIZATION AND EXCLUSION. AFTER ATTAINING INDEPENDENCE ON THE 9TH JULY 2011, SOUTH SUDAN WAS ESTABLISHED AS AN EMBRACING HOMELAND FOR MORE THAN SIXTY-FOUR (64) ETHNIC GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES. THE COUNTRY IS THEREFORE A MULTI-ETHNIC, MULTI-CULTURAL, MULTI-RELIGIOUS, MULTI-LINGUAL AND MULTI-RACIAL ENTITY.

OUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE AFTER INDEPENDENCE HAS BEEN HOW TO PROMOTE PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE AMONG THE MANY COMMUNITIES, ENSURE THE UNITY OF THE COUNTRY AND HOW TO ENSURE THAT THE DIVERSITIES OF THE POPULATION PEACEFULLY COEXIST AND PARTICIPATE EFFECTIVELY IN THE GOVERNANCE OF THE COUNTRY.

IT IS REGRATABLE THAT IN 2013, AND BARELY 3 YEARS AFTER INDEPENDENCE, THE COUNTRY PLUNGED INTO A DEVASTATING CIVIL WAR THAT CLAIMED MANY LIVES, LEAVING MILLIONS OF THE POPULATION DISPLACED.

MR. PRESIDENT,

DESPITE THIS SETBACK AND WITH THE SUPPORT FROM OUR FRIENDS, THE REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES, THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH SUDAN REACHED AN AGREEMENT ON THE RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN WHICH BROUGHT TOGETHER ALL THE POLITICAL AND NON POLITICAL ACTORS INCLUDING THE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS, FAITH BASED GROUPS, WOMEN AND YOUTH GROUPS AND THE ACADERMIA ETC. TO RESTORE PEACE, SECURITY, UNITY, AND PROMOTE RECONCILIATION AND HEALING OF THE SOCIETY.

THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY WAS FORMED ON 22ND FEBRUARY 2020 BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF INCLUSIVITY OF THE DIVERSITIES OF THE SOCIETY COMPRISING THE PARTIES TO THE AGREEMENT WITH THE MANDATE TO IMPLEMENT SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REFORMS AIMED AT STEERING THE COUNTRY TOWARDS POLITICAL TRANSITION AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE.

UNDER THE AGREEMENT, SOUTH SUDAN IS IMPLEMENTING REFORMS IN THE SECURITY SECTOR INCLUDING REVIEWING ALL THE SECURITY RELATED LAWS, TRAINING AND UNIFICATION OF THE ARMED FORCES IN THE COUNTRY, THE SECURITY SECTOR REFORMS ALSO INCLUDE A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC DEFENSE AND SECURITY REVIEW (SDSR) THAT SHALL PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR A PROFESSIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY FORCES.

THE ECONOMIC SECTOR REFORMS WAS DESIGNED TO INCLUDE ESTABLISHMENT OF INSTITUTIONS FOR TRANSPARENCY AND PRUDENT MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES OF THE COUNTRY AND STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ANY MISMANAGEMENT. THE PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT LAWS, THE PETROLEUM RESOURCE RELATED LAWS AND THE

BANKING LAW ETC ARE ALL SUBJECTED FOR REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS AWAITING ENACTMENTS BY THE PARLIAMENT.

MR. PRESIDENT, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,

AS PART OF POLITICAL REFORMS, SOUTH SUDAN HAS INTRODUCED AMENDMENTS TO POLITICAL PARTIES ACT AND NATIONAL ELECTION ACT WITH THE VIEW TO OPENNING POLITICAL AND CIVIC SPACE, ALLOWING CIVIL LIBERTIES, PRESS FREEDOMS AND FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATIONS. AS A RESULT, SOUTH SUDAN HAS OVER 50 POLITICAL PARTIES AND GROUPS. THE NUMBER OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS COMPRISING WOMEN, YOUTH AND VULNERABLE GROUPS AND ACADERMIA HAS SINCE INCREASED COMPARED TO VERY FEW AT INDEPENDENCE IN 2011. SOME OF THE STRIKING MILESTONES ATTAINED SO FAR INCLUDES THE INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN AND YOUTH IN THE GOVERNANCE OF THE COUNTRY. THE WOMEN ARE ACCORDED 35% AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN THE CONSTITUTION AND THE YOUTH ARE EMPOWERED TO TAKE UP POLITICAL POSITIONS. CONSEQUENTLY, SOUTH SUDAN HAS FOR THE FIRST TIME MORE WOMEN AND YOUTH IN THE PARLIAMENT WITH A FEMALE SPEAKER IN THE PERSON OF MYSELF AND A FEMALE DEPUTY SPEAKER IN THE COUNCIL OF STATES. LIKEWISE, IN THE EXECUTIVE, ONE OF THE VICE PRESIDENTS OF SOUTH SUDAN IS A WOMAN. KEY MINISTRIES INCLUDING MINISTRIES OF DEFENSE, GENERAL EDUCATION, GENDER, PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND ENVIRONMENT ETC ARE HELD BY WOMEN

TO FURTHER MANAGE HER DIVERSITIES, THE GOVERNMENT HAS EMBARKED ON A PROCESS OF MAKING A PERMANENT CONSTITUTION WITH THE INTENTION TO ESTABLISH A FEDERAL SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT FOR THE COUNTRY THAT SHALL PROMOTE UNITY IN DIVERSITY, RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOM, TAKING SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT TO THE PEOPLE AT THE GRASS ROOTS. TO PROMOT THE DEMOCTIC GOVERNANCE, THE AGREEMENT ALSO REQUIRES THAT ELECTIONS ARE HELD AT THE END OF THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD IN 2023.

I WOULD ALSO WISH TO NOTE THAT CLIMATE CHANGE REMAINS ONE OF THE BIGGEST GLOBAL CHALLENGES THAT REQUIRES THE ATTENTION OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY. AS I SPEAK, HALF OF MY COUNTRY IS UNDER WATER DUE TO ECCESSIVE AND UNPRESIDENTED FLOOD WHICH HAS AFFECTED THE IMPLIMENTATION OF PEACE AGREEMENT IN TERMS OF RESETLEMENT OF IDPS AND RETURNEES AS WELL AS FOOD SECURITY. THIS REQUIRES INCREASED SUPPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

MR. PRESIDENT, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,

HAVING SAID THIS OUR PARLIAMENT HAS CRITICAL ROLE TO PLAY IN ENSURING THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT AS THE ONLY OPTION TO RESTOR PEACE AND STABILITY IN COUNTRY. ON THIS NOTE I CALL UPON THE IPU AND ALL FRIENDS OF SOUTH SUDAN TO HOLD OUR HANDS AND SUPPORT US IN THIS IMPORTANT AND CRITICAL PROCESS.

MR. PRESIDENT, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,

HAVING LEARNT FROM OUR EXPERIENCE AS A COUNTRY AND EXPERIENCE OF OTHER COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD, AND AS WE COMMENCE DELIBERATIONS ON THIS CRITICAL SUBJECT, I WOULD LIKE TO PUT FORWARD THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A) PARLIAMENTS TO RAISE AWARENESS AND ENGAGE IN CIVIC EDUCATION ON THE DANGER OF THE DIVISION AMONG COMMUINITIES,**
- B) PARLIAMENTS TO LEGISLATE LAWS THAT PROHIBIT HATE SPEECH AND USE OF VULGAR WORDS AMONG CITIZENS,**
- C) PARLIAMNTS AND PARLIAMENTARIANS TO COOPERATE IN PROMOTING THE UNITY OF THEIR CITIZENS THROUGH PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS SO TO AVOID FURTHER POLARIZATION OF COMMUNITIES**
- D) PARLIAMENTARIANS TO RAISE AWARENESS AMONG THEIR COMMUNITIES ON IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVATION OF DIVERSITY AND UNITY OF THEIR PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY WOMEN, YOUTH AND OTHER SEGMENTS OF THE SOCIETIIES IN DECISION MAKING,**

- E) INVOLVEMENT OF MINORITIES AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS IN PARTICIPATING IN PUBLIC ACTIVITIES AND DECISION MAKING, AND**
- F) PARLIAMENTS TO WORK TOWARDS GENDER AND YOUTH SENSITIVE PARLIAMENTS.**
- G) PARLIAMENTS TO PLAY THEIR ROLE IN PROMOTING DIALOGUE AS THE BEST MECHANISMS FOR BRIDGING GAPES AND RESOLVING DIFFERENCES.**

MR. PRESIDENT, SECRETARY GENERAL, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,

I WOULD LIKE TO CONCLUDE BY THANKING THE ABLE LEADERSHIP OF THE IPU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, THE TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF OF (IPU) FOR TIMELY ORGANIZING THIS CONFERENCE AND FOR SELECTING THE MOST APPROPRIATE THEME WHICH INFORMS THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AROUND THE GLOBE.

ONCE AGAIN, MY SINCERE COMPLIMENTS TO THE HOST PARLIAMENT AND GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN FOR THE WONDERFUL RECEPTION AND HOSPITALITY ACCORDED TO US AND I WISH YOU FRUITFUL DELIBERATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS.

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION