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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
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**REPORT OF THE FIELD MISSION OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL TO THE REPUBLIC OF
SOUTH SUDAN, CONDUCTED FROM 23 TO 26 JUNE 2024**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. From 23 to 26 June 2024, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), led by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda to the AU, H.E. Ambassador Rebecca Otengo Amuge, in her capacity as the PSC Chairperson for June 2024, undertook a field mission to South Sudan, within the overall context of the PSC mandate of promoting peace, security and stability in Africa. More specifically, the field mission was undertaken as a follow up to the Council's decisions and those of the AU Assembly in relation to the situation in South Sudan, particularly Communique [PSC/PR/COMM.1141. (2023) adopted at its 1141st meeting held on 28 February 2023, on the Report of its field mission to South Sudan, conducted from 22 to 25 February 2023. In paragraph 23 of the Communique, the PSC '*committed to undertake another field mission to South Sudan before the next Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government*'. The decision was reiterated, respectively, in paragraph 19 of Communique [PSC/PR/COMM.1186 (2023)] of 16 November 2023 and in paragraph 23 of Communique [PSC/PR/COMM.1202.1 (2024)] of 27 February 2024.

II. COMPOSITION OF THE PSC DELEGATION

2. The Delegation of the PSC comprised the representatives of all PSC Members, as follows: Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, The Gambia, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Uganda. The Delegation also included support staff from the AU Commission Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security, which was led by the Head of the PSC Secretariat. In line with the established practice of the PSC, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Sudan to the AU accompanied the PSC Delegation.

III. OBJECTIVES

3. Essentially, the field mission was meant to provide an opportunity for the PSC to gather first-hand information on the prevailing political, security, economic, and humanitarian situation in the country, in order to gauge the status of progress achieved in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) since the last PSC field mission that was undertaken in February 2023, in general and, in particular, the status of preparations for the successful organization of elections in December 2024 to mark the end of the transition, including the challenges to be urgently addressed.

4. The field mission was undertaken within the context of following up on the implementation status of the R-ARCSS and also as an expression of the AU solidarity with the Government and people of South Sudan. Furthermore, it was undertaken as a reaffirmation of the unwavering commitment and determination of the AU to continue supporting the efforts of the people of South Sudan to successfully complete the Transition within the timelines stipulated in the August 2022 Roadmap, that is, by February 2025.

5. The first-hand information gathered during the field mission is critically necessary as it will inform the decisions of the PSC on the next steps required to more effectively support the South Sudan's Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) in accomplishing the remaining Transitional tasks.

IV. METHODOLOGY

6. To achieve the objectives of the field mission, on arrival in Juba, South Sudan, the PSC Delegation first received a comprehensive briefing from the AU Mission in South Sudan. This was followed by extensive consultations with various key stakeholders that include the representatives of the R-TGoNU, namely: the President of the Republic, the First Vice President; two other Vice Presidents; the National Cabinet; the Chairpersons of the National Elections Commission (NEC); the Chairperson of the Political Parties Council (PPC); the Africa Group; the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD); the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (R-JMEC); the African Development Bank (AfDB); the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS); the European Union (EU); the Troika, comprising Norway, United Kingdom and United States of America; the IGAD Partners Forum (IPF) represented by the Netherlands (co-chair); as well as representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs); and faith based organizations (FBOs).

V. KEY FINDINGS

7. During the field mission, the PSC managed to gather the following first-hand information regarding the prevailing situation in South Sudan, particularly, in relation to the state of progress in the implementation of the R-ARCS, status of readiness for the successful organization of elections in December 2024 in conformity with the August 2022 Roadmap.

A. Political Situation

8. The PSC Delegation noted that, since its last field visit in February 2023, some relative and gradual progress has been registered in the implementation of the R-ARCSS, notwithstanding some challenges. Specifically, the National Constitutional Amendment Committee (NCAC) has completed the review of 24 pieces of legislation in conformity with the Revitalized Agreement. The Council of Ministers have endorsed the revised Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Amendment Bill 2024 that is meant to facilitate the registration, regulation and operation of NGOs in the country. The Bill now awaits consideration by the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (TNLA).

9. The Judicial Reforms Committee (JRC) has completed its work and finalized its report together with the recommendations. The Report now awaits validation and official submission to the Government for consideration.

10. In November 2023, the institutions that will be involved in the organization of elections, namely, the National Elections Commission (NEC), the Political Parties Council (PPC) and the National Constitutional Review Committee (NCRC) were reconstituted. Reportedly, only 10% of the required budgetary allocations were provided to some of these institutions. For example, the NEC has reportedly been allocated an initial funding of SSP22 billion while the PPC was allocated

SSP1.5 billion. On the other hand, although it has already adopted its international working documents, the NCRC did not receive any funding until this month when it was given USD800 000 of its initial funding which came from the international partners, but is not sufficient to enable it effectively discharge its mandate. The National Elections Commission indicated that they had submitted a draft elections calendar for consideration by Government. However, it has not yet been approved. Once approved it would provide clarity on the date of elections; voters register; constituency mapping and nature of the election, whether a general or partial election.

11. There is lack of mutual confidence and trust between and among some of the signatories of the R-ARCSS. To address this situation, an inter-party has been proposed as a platform for addressing the challenges at hand and to consensually map the way forward, in relation to expediting the completion of the Transition and, in particular, the successful organization of elections in December 2024, in line with the August 2022 Transition Roadmap. Simultaneously, and under the facilitation of the Government of Kenya, a complementary negotiation process known as ‘Tumaini’ (Hope) Initiative, is currently underway in Nairobi, between the representatives of the R-TGoNU and all hold out groups, with a view to ensuring an inclusive peace process as embodied in the R-ARCSS. It is hoped that the outcomes of both, the Juba inter-party-political dialogue and the Tumaini process will be crucial in generating the consensus required in relation to the decision on the way forward, particularly in relation to the organization of elections in December 2024 to mark the end of the Transition.

12. With regard to the feasibility of successful organization of elections in December 2024, there are two main views. The first view is of those who are seemingly optimistic and want the elections to be organized by December 2024. They argue that: a) the people of South Sudan are tired of transitional governments and unelected leaders, and as such, they should be given the opportunity to freely elect their leaders; b) the R-TGoNU will face a legitimacy crisis if elections are not organized as stipulated in the R-ARCSS; c) there are many examples of countries, including South Africa that, in 1994, successfully organized elections without a permanent constitution, which was subsequently drafted by the elected government from where lessons and best practices can be emulated; and d) the Government will do all that is necessary to ensure that the elections are organized as stipulated, as it will simply have to update existing voters roll/ register.

13. On the other hand, there are those who are pessimistic about the feasibility of elections in December 2024. They argue that: a) the Permanent Constitution under which the elections should be conducted as stipulated in the R-ARCSS, is yet to be finalized; b) the Voters Register is yet to be prepared or updated; c) the population census that is critical for the demarcation of constituency boundaries is yet to be conducted; d) the elections calendar is yet to be announced; e) voter education campaigns are yet to be conducted; f) the political parties registration fees which have been set at 75,000 USD (seventy five thousand USD only), are prohibitively exorbitant; and g) the required security arrangements as stipulated in the Peace Agreement, including the deployment of Necessary United Forces (NUFs) to guarantee election security are yet to be completed, as only phase 1 was completed. It was also emphasized that subject to availability of resources, repatriation of refugees and IDPs could be possible within a month; conduct of the census and its outcome would be done within 16 months; and the Constitution making process, can be concluded within 18 months.

14. However, the representatives of R-TGoNU assured the PSC delegation that efforts are underway to ensure that the elections are successfully organized by December 2024. They appealed for financial, technical and material assistance from the AU, Member States and the international community, in order to expedite the required processes.

15. Civil Society Organizations, the Troika, and IPF, argued that there were communication and information gaps in South Sudan as most people were kept guessing with regard to the organization of elections. Some argued that there are no demonstrable efforts and commitment by the RTGoNU to expedite the implementation of all outstanding transitional tasks, in order to pave the way, and create the conducive conditions, for the successful organization of credible elections in December 2024, including to guarantee the freedoms of association and expression. They emphasized the urgent need for the R-TGoNU to prioritize restoration of durable peace, security and stability throughout the country and population census as key preconditions for the South Sudanese people to enjoy their freedoms of movement, assembly and expression.

16. They also underlined the urgent need for reviewing the Electoral Act, the establishment of an independent and fully capacitated national election management body to oversee the successful organization of credible, transparent and democratic elections that would undisputedly reflect the freely expressed will of the people of South Sudan, in compliance with AU instruments governing democratic elections.

17. Most of the interlocutors concurred that the general lack of progress in the implementation of the transitional tasks was largely due to the lack of required financial resources coupled with the sanctions, amid economic stagnation/ decline; the arms embargo and other forms of punitive measures imposed on the Government of South Sudan by international financial institutions and some of its bilateral development partners.

B. Security Situation

18. Progress in the implementation of Chapter 2, which is generally regarded as the cornerstone of the R-ARCSS, has been markedly slow, partly due to the United Nations arms embargo and other sanctions imposed against South Sudan, coupled with the general economic hardships facing the country.

19. Phase one of Chapter 2 regarding the top and middle echelons have already been agreed upon. Approximately out of the 83,000 of the Necessary Unified Forces (NUFs), that were supposed to be trained, only 53000 NUFs were successfully trained, graduated. However only 4000 have been deployed under Phase 1. This has largely been attributed to the arms embargo. What remains is Phase 2. The Challenges being faced include: the lack of financial, material, including weapons, as well as logistics. In addition, the processes of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR) are also stalled. It was observed that the Electoral Act prohibits any political parties with armed wings from being registered and that some of the Parties to the Peace Agreement have military wings. There were concerns about their non-participation in the elections as a result of this requirement.

20. By and large, the permanent ceasefire between and among the forces of the signatories of the R-ARCSS has continued to hold. However, the security situation in the entire horn of Africa region is negatively impacting on South Sudan. The country is awash with illicit weapons allegedly from Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, among others. This is contributing towards inter-communal violence, including in areas near Juba, cattle rustling, as well as sexual violations and abductions of women, girls and children. The areas mostly affected Jonglei, Upper Nile, Unity State, Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Western Equatoria and Warrap. The general insecurity has resulted in numerous losses of lives and displacement of people.

21. In light of the foregoing, an appeal was made for the AU to redouble efforts towards the lifting of the UN arms embargo and sanctions imposed against South Sudan in order to facilitate the successful implementation of the R-ARCSS.

C. Humanitarian Situation

22. As a result of the persistent conflict, the influx of refugees and returnees from Sudan, approximately 700,000, coupled with the negative effects of climate change, particularly, drought and floods, South Sudan continues to face a dire humanitarian situation, which is projected to worsen during this year's rainy season. Many South Sudanese people are internally displaced (about 2.2 million), while others are still refugees in neighboring countries (about 2.3 million). Women, children and the elderly have been disproportionately affected by persistent conflict. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UNOCHA), more than 8.3 million people in South Sudan are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance including food and shelter. Out of this figure, about 1.6m are malnourished.

23. While some humanitarian corridors were in place and that humanitarian access had improved, there were still occasional cases of attacks against humanitarian actors. Humanitarian access is also a challenge in some areas, particularly those affected by floods.

24. The Refugees and IDPs are reluctant to be repatriated or to voluntarily return to their original villages due to the prevailing insecurity and lack of incentives. As such, there is need for the R-TGoNU to redouble efforts towards creating necessary conditions for facilitating the voluntary repatriation of refugees and voluntary return of IDPs.

25. The situation is compounded by the declining humanitarian assistance due to a combination of factors, including donor fatigue and the diversion of humanitarian assistance to new conflict zones such as Gaza, and Ukraine. As such, the international community should be encouraged to continue to provide humanitarian support in favor of South Sudan.

D. Economic Situation

26. The PSC Delegation was informed about the dire economic situation that South Sudan continues to face due to a combination of factors, namely, the violence in parts of the country, and the ongoing Sudan conflict which resulted in the breakdown of the oil pipeline that goes through Sudan, which is a major economic life line for South Sudan. It was noted that 90% of all

the revenues come from oil. The pipeline accounts for 75% of all revenue. The PSC was also informed that the repair of the oil pipeline would have normally taken about nine (9) months if there was no war in Sudan. There is no balance of payment support currently being extended to the Government of South Sudan by the development partners.

27. The process of economic recovery and stabilization remains painstakingly slow and challenging. In fact, the economic situation continues to worsen, with the continued depreciation of the South Sudanese Pound (SSP) and the increases in prices of basic commodities, thereby sharply raising the cost of living. Furthermore, the Government has not been able to pay the salaries of civil servants for over 6 months.

28. The African Development Bank informed the PSC Delegation that it is providing capacity building support to the Government of South Sudan in order to facilitate necessary economic and financial reforms, including improvements in public finance management and revenue generation, both, oil and non-oil revenue. The Troika and IPF encouraged the Ministry of Finance to improve non-oil revenue collection, with emphasis being laid on the importance of demonstrable transparency and accountability in the management of the oil revenue and other public resources, fighting corruption, and the need to demonstrate commitment towards implementation of institutional, structural and financial reforms.

29. Overall, the PSC Delegation was informed that the delays in the implementation of the R-ARCSS was largely due to the lack of international commitment to fund the process.

E. Transitional Justice

30. Progress in the implementation of Chapter 5 of the R-ARCSS is also slow. However, a draft legislation was already in place for the establishment of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing and it was now awaiting a workshop to be organized by the R-TGoNU with a view to refine it before its submission for final legislative process. Similarly, the Delegation was also informed that the legislation for the establishment of the Compensation and Reparations Authority (CRA) was also in process.

31. The PSC Delegation was further informed that study visits were undertaken to Rwanda, South Africa, Burundi and The Gambia to draw context-specific practical lessons and best practices in the area of national reconciliation.

32. In short, the representatives of the R-TGoNU assured the PSC Delegation that the Government was fully committed to promote, transitional justice, national reconciliation, as fundamental requirements for the successful restoration of durable, peace, security, stability, sustainable development and prosperity in South Sudan.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

33. Despite the challenges being faced, there has been continued gradual progress in the implementation of the R-ARCSS since the last visit by the PSC in February 2023. Most aspects of

Chapter 1 of the R-ARCSS are in place. The implementation of Chapter 2 is stalled due to a number of factors including the arms embargo and other sanctions, as well as withdrawal of partner support to CTSAMVM. The country remains awash with illicit weapons due to proliferation from the conflicts in neighboring countries. The comprehensive ceasefire continues to hold. However, the situation in some parts of the country remains volatile.

34. The economic situation remains dire, in part due to declining revenue from oil exports due to the attacks against the oil pipeline that passes through Sudan; as well as lack of balance of payment and budgetary support from the development partners and multilateral financial lending institutions. Although public finance management is gradually improving and economic and financial reforms are being implemented, there is still need for enhanced transparency and accountability in the management of oil-revenue and non-oil revenue. Thus, economic recovery and stabilization remain daunting tasks.

35. Humanitarian situation remains dire and is compounded by the influx of refugees and returnees from conflict areas around South Sudan, mainly from Sudan and due to renewed fighting in some areas affected by holdout groups and inter-communal violence in some parts of the country and climate shocks.

36. The decision on whether or not to proceed with the organizations of elections in December 2024 should be reached through consensus among the signatories of the R-ARCSS.

37. While the limited progress achieved is welcome and commendable, a lot still needs to be done in order to ensure a successful transition within the extended transition period. As such, the R-TGoNU needs to reflect its determination and continued commitment to expeditiously implement the outstanding tasks stipulated in the R-ARCSS. Equally important, in is the commitment of the South Sudanese people in general, and the sustained support of the neighboring countries, the region (IGAD), the AU, UN, the Troika, the EU and other bilateral partners. There is also need for predictable and sustainable provision of necessary resources to the R-TGoNU. The outcome of the Tumaini Process in Nairobi and the inter-party dialogue in Juba should inform the way forward regarding the outstanding transitional tasks. Efforts should also be deployed to encourage General Thomas Cirillo Swaka and his National Salvation Front to unconditionally embrace the peace process and positively contribute towards the success of the Transition.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

38. In view of the detailed first-hand information gathered during the field mission, Council may wish to:

- a) Commend** the RTGoNU for the efforts in implementing the R-ARCSS and progress achieved so far, **in particular** H.E. President Salva Kiir Mayardit, First Vice-President Dr. Riek Machar and the rest of the signatories of the R-ARCSS for placing the supreme interests of the country and its people above all else;

- b) **Also commend** the signatories of the R-ARCSS for choosing dialogue to address any differences they may have in the implementation of the Peace Agreement;
- c) **Further commend** IGAD, UNMISS, RJMEC, Troika, the IGAD Partners Forum (IPF), all international partners and Friends of South Sudan for working with the RTGoNU and the people of South Sudan in implementing the R-ARCSS, including in exploring the required consensus regarding the organization of elections in December 2024;
- d) **Commend** the Government of the Republic of Kenya for hosting the Tumaini Process and **encourage** the parties to the process to ensure that the outcome of the process complements the R-ARCSS and to also place the supreme interests of South Sudan above all else, in order to end the suffering of the people of South Sudan;
- e) **Commend** the African Development Bank for its contribution towards enhancing the capacity of the R-TGoNU to successfully implement economic and financial reforms so as to facilitate speedy economic recovery and stabilization in South Sudan;
- f) **Appeals** to the international community to support the ongoing inter-party dialogue and the Nairobi Peace Talks (Tumaini) in order to ensure a peaceful completion of the transition in South Sudan;
- g) **Also appeal** to the international community and regional organizations to stand by South Sudan in the upcoming unprecedented floods which is expected to be the worst in the history of the country and **call** for the provision of financial support to enable the Government to face it;
- h) **Commend** the AU High Level Ad Hoc Committee on South Sudan (C-5) for supporting the peace process in South Sudan;
- i) **Express support to** the Government of South Sudanese in its efforts allocate and provide funding for all the three institutions, including NCRC, in order to effectively execute their mandates; and **appeal** to AU Member States, in a position to do so, to support the efforts of the RTGoNU;
- j) **Further encourage** the Government to finalize the training of the remaining batch of the NUFs and deploy the remaining graduated forces to protect civilians, and create a conducive environment for the successful organization of credible elections and socio-economic development in the country;
- k) **Reiterate** AU's appeal to the UN to urgently lift the arms embargo imposed on South Sudan, as well as the international partners to also lift all punitive measures imposed on South Sudan, in order to facilitate the successful implementation of the outstanding aspects of the R-ARCSS;

- l) **Appeal** to all partners to promote and facilitate humanitarian relief and support in the protection and assistance of IDPs, refugees and returnees in the South Sudan and, in this regard **reiterate the need** for the establishment of the Special Reconstruction Fund (SRF) and its Board to aid humanitarian recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts;
- m) **Urge** the R-TGoNU to find solutions to sporadic cases of intercommunal violence, and, in this context, urge the responsible authorities in all parts of the country grappling with inter-communal violence to work earnestly towards an inclusive process of holistically addressing the root causes, with a view to promoting durable peace in these areas;
- n) **Reiterate the critical importance** of expediting the implementation of Chapter V of the R-ARCSS which includes the establishment Hybrid Court of South Sudan (HCSS), with the support of the AU Commission, the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation, and Healing (CTRH) and the Compensation and Reparation Authority (CRA), with a view to fighting the culture of impunity, as well as promoting lasting peace, justice and reconciliation in South Sudan and in this context, **underscore the urgent need** for the passing of the CTRH and CRA bills in the RTNLA;
- o) **Emphasize** the important role of women and youth in the South Sudan peace processes, including in reconciliation, economic development and transitional justice;
- p) **Emphasize the importance** of peacebuilding and the post-conflict reconstruction and development component to South Sudan and **direct** that the AU PCRDC Centre develops programs to support South Sudan and to build South Sudan national capacities.
- q) **Request** the AU Commission to provide technical support and to coordinate and mobilize resources to support RTGoNU in preparation for the elections and, in this regard, work in a timely fashion with the Panel of the Wise (PoW), the AU Ad Hoc High-Level Committee of Five on South Sudan (C5), and Member States in a position to do so, to also contribute technical, material and financial assistance for the constitution-making and organization of elections, as well as for post-conflict reconstruction and development programmes, emphasizes the importance of towards the realization of peacebuilding and state-building goals and objectives in South Sudan;
- r) **Also request** the Chairperson of the Commission to provide technical support to South Sudan with a view to addressing issues relating to Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR), as well as the collection of weapons currently in illegal hands;
- s) **Express gratitude** to the South Sudanese authorities for finding time to interact with the PSC Delegation during the field mission, as well as to all interlocutors, namely, the African Diplomatic Community, IGAD, R-JMEC, UNMISS and the Troika, as well as the representatives of Civil Society and faith-based organizations;

- t) **Express particular gratitude** to the AU Mission in South Sudan for facilitating the successful conduct of the field mission and commend the efforts of the Mission in effectively promoting the visibility of the AU on the ground; and

- u) **Note with concern** the institutional capacity challenges facing the AU Mission in South Sudan (AUMISS) and **request** the Chairperson of the Commission to urgently address the current staffing challenges which is posing operational challenges, with key positions remaining vacant.

ANNEX: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

NUMBER	NAME	COUNTRY/ORGANIZATION
1.	Mr. Filipe Jaime Ricardo	Angola
2.	Mr. Domingos Mesquita Sapalo	Angola
3.	Ms. Stelvia Patricia Verissimo E Costa	Angola
4.	Amb. Tebelelo Alfred Boang	Botswana
5.	Ms. Kutlo Mokgobelelo	Botswana
6.	Amb. Churchill Ewumbue-Monono	Cameroon
7.	Mr. Dibi Bongro Zephirin	Cote d'Ivoire
8.	Mr. Kabalu Milandu Floribert	Democratic Republic of Congo
9.	Mrs. Wafa Kassim Ali	Djibouti
10.	Amb. Dr Mohamed Omar Gad	Egypt
11.	Amb. Miguel Ntutumu Evuna Andeme	Equatorial Guinea
12.	Dr. Liberato Salvadoe Bakale Nguem	Equatorial Guinea
13.	Amb. Jainaba Jagne	Gambia
14.	Mrs. Khadija Znaidi	Morocco
15.	Mrs. Houda Jouhari	Morocco
16.	Amb. Emilia Ndinelao Mkusa	Namibia
17.	Ms. Lahya Shikongo	Namibia
18.	Amb. Nasir Aminu	Nigeria
19.	Mr. Duwai Sellu Lungay	Sierra Leone
20.	Amb. Innocent E. Shiyo	Tanzania
21.	Amb. Rebecca Amuge	Uganda

	Chair PSC for June 2024	
22.	Mr. Michael Wamai Assistant to the Chair of PSC	Uganda
23.	Ms. Neema Chusi	Head, PSC Secretariat
24.	Mr. Simon Badza	Political Officer, PSC Secretariat
25.	Mr. Wuri Bah	Political Officer, PSC Secretariat
26.	Mr. Tayu Shawel	Administrative Assistant, PSC Secretariat
27.	Mr. James Tenkorang	Youth Volunteer, PSC Secretariat
28.	Mr. Tawanda Chimhini	Elections Officer, GCP
29.	Ms. Sarah Johnette Turay	Assistant Accountant
30.	H.E. Amb. Natalina Edward Mou	Permanent Representative of South Sudan to the AU
31.	Ms. Denise Ahidjo,	Interpreter
32.	Mr. Fuaty Valentine Aka	Interpreter

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