



Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission
(JMEC)

Opening Statement

by

His Excellency Festus G. Mogae,

Chairperson

of the

Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC),

at the meeting of JMEC held in Juba on

23 February 2016

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen:

Good morning.

Let me begin by expressing my condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the violence in Malakal a few days ago. An attack on a place of refuge, on the principle of sanctuary, is not only unacceptable; it is cowardly. The strong should protect the weak. I have already urged there be a swift investigation of the incident. Whomever is determined as responsible should be held accountable for their actions. I would ask all Parties represented today to work collectively to rebuild trust amongst the communities of Malakal, so that the latest events do not further contribute to polarisation and discontent.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I remain deeply concerned that the humanitarian situation in South Sudan is not being addressed sufficiently to

prevent further disaster. I was recently informed by the humanitarian agencies that between Juba and Bentiu, for example, there are no less than 54 checkpoints. The average amount of money paid at these checkpoints amounts to some 33,000 pounds per truck delivering humanitarian supplies. I recall the commitments made in this room that action would be taken to improve humanitarian access immediately. I urge you to make those commitments a reality.

I am also concerned at the recent passage of the NGO Bill by the National Legislative Assembly, in the absence of the new transitional assembly members already appointed by the President. South Sudan is a sovereign country, and has the right to pass its own laws. But I am concerned that this law, which is specifically mentioned in the Agreement, has been addressed outside of the provisions contained therein. The Agreement states: “the TGoNU shall submit the legislation to a process of public consultation, to

ensure that such legislation complies with international best practice in regulating the activities of non-governmental organizations in South Sudan.” At this time of acute humanitarian need, any action that potentially complicates the difficulty of the humanitarian response is undesirable. I urge the TGoNU, once formed, ensure that there is a process of public consultation in the reform of this law.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I was pleased to hear the positive remarks of some government officials on the need to quickly redeploy forces from Juba, and encourage further action be taken so that this occurs. I recall the government’s commitment to complete relocation of its designated forces from Juba by 29 February, less than a week away, and welcome that commitment.

Let me note though that I recently received a letter from the Bari, Lokaya and Olubo communities expressing concern at the lack of consultation that has taken place over locations in Juba county where forces will now be accommodated. Those communities are concerned that their land will be taken in the move of government forces from the city of Juba. I would encourage the government representatives, civilian and military, to consult widely with the relevant communities, and ensure that any worries are addressed.

On Friday, I told the United Nations Security Council that you, the South Sudanese, are closer to the formation of a transitional government of national unity, but have not yet achieved it.

I informed the Security Council that at present, the principal obstacle to the formation of the new government is the introduction of phased, transitional security

arrangements for Juba, for which there is yet to be agreed a workable and fundable plan. I further informed the Security Council of my intent to offer a compromise proposal on security arrangements for Juba, sufficient to ensure security for the return of the First Vice President, and consequently allow for the formation of the TGoNU. This plan is based on three principles: security arrangements that are appropriately phased, sequenced and realistic.

I am ready to ask, and I believe the international community is ready to support, a plan for the SPLM/A (In Opposition) troop return that is reasonable and measured. The proposal I wish to offer will be circulated later in the meeting, and is based on the inputs received from the JMCC and from the Parties. It prioritizes the forces most immediately needed in Juba, and in the most ready state to assembly and deploy, and should allow for the

formation of the transitional government while future phases of movement take place in the weeks to come.

As I have said repeatedly, it is evident that the transitional government needs to be formed as soon as possible. Perhaps it seems that I am being repetitive when I say there is not a moment to lose, and that this is your peace, and no one else's. As the events in Malakal show, fragility anywhere in the country can mean fragility everywhere in the country. Mistrust can easily escalate to animosity and violence. The means to mitigate and de-escalate conflict can be elusive, when there is so much uncertainty about the future.

The losers are the people, the citizens of this land, who can only escape their current plight if there is a change of course.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen:

It is my expectation that this meeting will have four main outcomes:

1. Firstly, to endorse the compromise plan on phased security arrangements for Juba I will offer in this meeting, so that the necessary logistics can be put in place this very week, and the transport operation can begin;
2. Secondly, to hear reports from CTSAMM on the status of their work in monitoring the ceasefire, and identify any steps that can be taken, by the Parties or by the wider JMEC membership, to further facilitate CTSAMM's work;
3. Thirdly, to understand from the Parties why there remain difficulties in ensuring humanitarian access is unimpeded.
4. Fourthly, to understand from the JMCC what challenges remain in the fulfillment of their mandate.

Following this meeting, I expect to inform IGAD, the African Union and the UN Security Council on the progress that has resulted from this latest meeting of JMEC, and ask for further action to be taken, if necessary. I note that I have now been in office for almost 4 months, one third of a year. I can only hope that the next 4 months will bring more rapid progress for the people of South Sudan. Let us end their suffering now. I thank you for your attention.