



**National Statement of the Republic of South Sudan  
Delivered by**

**H.E. Amb. Beatrice Khamisa Wani  
Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**

**71<sup>st</sup> Session of the Executive Committee of the United Nations High  
Commissioner for Refugees (ExCOM)**

Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**Chairperson of the Executive Committee, H.E Ambassador Marc PECSTEEN  
High Commissioner, Mr. Filippo Grandi  
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

Permit me to convey greetings from my President, H.E Salva Kiir Mayardit and to appreciate the leadership of this forum for inviting South Sudan to participate in the 71<sup>st</sup> Session of the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The Republic of South Sudan aligns itself with the statement delivered by Algeria on behalf of the Africa Group.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate H.E Ambassador Marc PECSTEEN of Belgium on his election as the Chair of the ExCom for the year 2020. I further thank and congratulate High Commissioner Filippo Grandi for his commendable leadership, commitment and continued support to complementing the efforts of Member States in search of durable solutions in hosting refugees around the world at this extremely difficult time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, protracted conflicts and limited opportunities for resources.

**Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,**

The Republic of South Sudan is the world's newest nation, having obtained its independence on 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2011. In December 2013, war unfortunately erupted and conflict escalated in most parts of the country resulting in the forced displacement of 1.6 million people as IDPs and 2 million others as refugees into the neighboring countries.

I am delighted to inform you that our President, H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit, is committed to bringing lasting peace to the country. In close consultation with the IGAD Heads of State and Government, President Salva Kiir signed the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) on 12 September 2018. The Revitalized Peace Agreement which is being implemented as I speak remains a major step for our country to restore peace, rebuild the broken social fabric and return South Sudan to peaceful co-existence.

Under the leadership of my President significant progress has been made in implementing the peace process starting with the giant step he took to return the country from 32 States to 10; the formation of an inclusive Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGONU); the ongoing reforms in the security sector through assembling of forces in cantonment areas in a bid to build one professional national army; the amendment of the laws; disseminating the Agreement in conjunction with partners to ensure that it is understood by citizens; appointment of State Governors except one; reforms in the financial sector; and the ongoing reconstitution of the Revitalized Transitional Parliament lower State administrative areas which are at their final stages.

Peace is already being felt by the citizens, and consequently over 326,000 refugees from the neighboring countries have returned home spontaneously and are settling into their villages to start rebuilding their lives. Humanitarian Agencies have been granted access to render needed services in all parts of the country though infrastructure (access roads) remains a challenge.

**Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,**

South Sudan is effectively and consistently implementing the 1951 Refugee Convention and its Protocols. To elaborate, South Sudan's unique and exemplary open-door policy for asylum-seekers and refugees allows her borders open to welcome refugees from neighboring countries despite the short time official closure of the border as a preventive measure to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Protecting national populations from the COVID-19 pandemic while granting international protection to civilians fleeing conflicts, war and persecution are key examples of the good practices of South Sudan. As part of the government's national COVID-19 response strategy and plan, we have, through an inter-agency mechanism included key border entry points for use by asylum-seekers and refugees; and the deployment of COVID-19 prevention measures, thereby ensuring that asylum-seekers and refugees have access to international protection and are included in available COVID-19 prevention measures.

The menace of COVID-19 is further compounded by natural disasters, in particular flooding. The Seven out of the 10 States of the country are experiencing flooding of unprecedented levels, displacing over 600,000 citizens who have become IDPs and are in serious need of humanitarian support. Some of the refugees returning home have found themselves caught in this nightmare. We commend humanitarian agencies for responding to the call of government and the suffering of the people by prepositioning direly needed food and NFIs, including tents, and medical kits. However, the work is far from being over as rains continue to pound many parts of the country and South Sudan is bracing for more displacements; loss of animals; Malaria

and typhoid; and the worst cases of waterborne diseases- including diarrhea/dysentery.

**Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,**

In the spirit of the 'global compact on refugees', I wish to reiterate that South Sudan remains committed to delivering on its pledge towards finding durable solutions for the refugees despite the enormous challenges enumerated above.

South Sudan, host to over 300,000 refugees, is committed to integrating the refugees into her national plans and to providing them with access to basic services, in addition to the services the country is currently rendering: issuing them with ID cards, conventional travel documents, Asylum certification, birth registration certificates and complete freedom of movement.

In addition, refugees live in safe and secure accommodation made from local materials similar to the communities in their localities; and have access to free primary and secondary education in public schools. The government is encouraging self-reliance by allocating agricultural land to refugees on temporary basis as well as granting refugees the right to seek employment. All these measures demonstrate our solid commitment to the Convention, to providing protection and to delivering services to refugees.

As we continue to promote peace in our country, we are aware that many South Sudanese refugees, especially those in our neighboring countries, will return voluntarily. Therefore, we need the support of UNHCR and the international community to implement the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).

**Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,**

To conclude, I once again thank High Commissioner Mr. Filippo Grandi and the International Community and pledge the assurance of our political will, commitment and determination to bring long-lasting peace to the country. As a visionary leader High Commissioner, you have demonstrated unwavering support through the initiation of the comprehensive approach to finding a durable solution to the South Sudan situation. There is no doubt this will stabilize the ongoing peace process and enhance the stability of the 326,000 spontaneous returns experienced since the signing of the peace agreement only two years ago.

South Sudan would further like to appreciate the steadfast support and selfless contributions of the UNHCR staff in the country and other UN agencies and humanitarian partners to ensure provision of seamless services. Our sincere appreciation is also due to our neighboring countries; Uganda, Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo and CAR for hosting large numbers of our citizens.

**Thank you**