

**STATEMENT FROM SOUTH SUDANESE WOMEN TO THE AFRICAN UNION (AU) AND
INTER GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY ON DEVELOPMENT (IGAD)
24 JANUARY 2014, ADDIS ABABA**

We, the women of South Sudan are shocked and disappointed by the recent outbreak of armed conflict in South Sudan, and are also concerned by the wide spread violence that has led to a continuous loss of numerous lives and displacement of women, men, youth and children.

South Sudan women met at the SPLM secretariat in Juba on the 20th December 2013 to deliberate on how they can quickly intervene and seek all possible ways to end the crisis. Thereafter the women of South Sudan met various leaders to urge for dialogue and peace. The women also held a national meeting for women from all walks of life on the 15th January in Juba to discuss all possible interventions for peace. Similarly South Sudanese women in Nairobi, Kenya and Kampala, Uganda held meetings on the same on the 17th January 2014 and 19th January 2014 respectively. On the 24th January 2014 we converged in Addis Ababa under the Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) conference at the margins of the Heads of State meeting, to share our experiences and bring the different voices of women of South Sudan together for peace.

We are also concerned about the negative involvement of youth, both women and men, as combatants and agents of negative propaganda in the ongoing conflict; and demand that all parties to the conflict desist from involving the youth.

We recognize the historic participation of South Sudanese women in the Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005; and the critical role they played during the 2011 South Sudan referendum for independence. We, the women of South Sudan are committed to continuously calling for and defending the peace and all that has been achieved since the signing of the CPA.

We acknowledge and appreciate the commitment of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and the SPLM/A in opposition for signing the cessation of hostilities agreement on the 23 January 2014 in Addis Ababa. We believe that this is an important step towards attaining a lasting peace in South Sudan. We also acknowledge that this is only the beginning of a difficult part of the peace process and believe that the inclusion and full participation of women in the process of mediation and negotiation is a prerequisite for the success of this process and sustainable peace in South Sudan.

Based on the above, we the women of South Sudan call on the AU and IGAD:

- To strongly urge all parties to the conflict not to breach the cessation of hostilities agreement.
- To commit to women's participation in the next phase of the political mediation and negotiation as stipulated in the UNSCR 1325 and provide all necessary support.
- To urge all parties to the conflict and the UN to provide protection for women who advocate for peace, displaced women and particularly young women who are often targeted for abuse by the different conflicting parties
- To urge all conflicting parties to open corridors for humanitarian assistance and also urge the humanitarian organizations to include special packages for women

We call on our sisters in the African continent to continue supporting our cause and all actors to respond to the plea of South Sudanese women.