

GOVERNMENT OF SOUTHERN SUDAN

SOUTHERN SUDAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

SPEECH ON THE OCCASION OF
OPENING OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE
SOUTHERN SUDAN LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY FOR THE YEAR 2008

May 26
2008

Presented by:-
Hon. Lt. Gen.
James Wani
Igga, Speaker,
SSLA.

**SPEECH OF HON. LT. GEN. WANI IGGA,
SPEAKER OF THE SOUTHERN SUDAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (SSLA)
ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE 1ST SESSION 2008 OF THE
SSLA. 5th May 2008.**

H.E. President of GOSS/ Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit,
H.E. Vice President/GOSS,
H.E. President of the Supreme court of Southern Sudan
Rt. Hon. Deputy Speaker of SSLA,
Your Excellencies the Advisors and Ministers,
Your Excellency the Governor,
Hon. Chairpersons,
Members of Diplomatic corp.,
Hon. MPs,
Religious Leaders,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of this august House and on my own behalf, I salute each and every one of you.

To my dear Members of the SSLA, I say you are very much welcome back after the working recess. I believe you had a fruitful stay in your respective Constituencies and shared with them their problems.

This session was scheduled to start on 7th April but due to the importance of the census, we felt it necessary for our honourable MPs to be at their various constituencies sensitizing the people. Southern Sudan is such a backward area that some people could reject being counted given many of our negative traditions; this is why we take the decision to allow the Assembly Members to partake in the education of the populace.

I am sure you must have returned more convinced than ever that there is an urgent need for the implementation of the Constituency Development Funds (CDF) which this respectable Assembly passed shortly before the recess. We do appreciate the cooperation of our government in this respect.

The CDF has come to realize the SPLM Policy of "taking towns to the people" rather than the other way round. It has proved the most workable philosophy now. Already on the ground people are excited to hear the news and everyone is eager to partake in this new development approach devised by GOSS. This is the quickest way so far to take development to the remotest villages.

A big credit to you Honorable Members for passing that bill and we are grateful to our President for approving this fund. It is, no doubt, one of the biggest achievements of our government.

On The SSLA's Achievements In The Last Quarter Of 2007:

1. The august House passed nearly 16 Bills during the life time of this august Assembly. Only three Bills are in the custody of the SSLA Standing Specialized Committee of Legislation and Legal Affairs. The SSLA is anxiously waiting submission of more Bill from the Executive.
2. The renovation of the mother building of the Assembly is another great achievement. We shall invite H.E. the President of GOSS to officially inaugurate it as soon as the on-going landscaping is over.
3. In the last quarter of last year, various delegates from our Assembly visited many Countries. The ultimate purpose of these visits is to enhance our much-needed diplomatic relations and ties with other parliaments and governments. South Sudan can not afford to remain like an isolated remote Island. We have received credible signals that these visits, reciprocated by offering our young Legislature opportunities for capacity building, are broadening the ongoing investment in our human capital.

4. The SSLA leadership succeeded with the help of our ten States' Speakers to form the "Speakers' Forum" (SF). Already this historic forum has met three times. The last meeting in early March was a joint one with the Governors, Ministers and Advisors of GOSS. We discovered that this is yet another way of exchanging experiences and finding solutions to common endemic problems.

It was unfortunate that the last quarter of 2008 witnessed undesirable upheavals in some of our State Assemblies where at least four of them had their Speakers impeached. We renew our commitment that we must abide by the principles of democracy - which of course has always been the core of the values and ideals for which the SPLM has been fighting; however, if not handled responsibly, democracy could be easily abused and lead to anarchy.

As it is, the four States affected are now almost paralyzed.

5. During the last quarter, over nine training courses, workshops and symposia were carried out by friendly and esteemed organizations such as AWEPA, IRI, NDI, UNDP, etc.
6. Less than two weeks ago an historic conference of the Sudanese Women Parliamentarians was held in Khartoum attended by over 500 women MPs from the Country, the African and Middle East Regions. It was an extremely vital parliamentary meeting of our women MPs where South Sudan delegated nearly one hundred members headed by myself.

Having recognized the significance of this Women Parliamentarian Conference, we in the SSLA may have to soon reciprocate should we secure funding. The SSLA sells out not only the need for gender affirmative action in such gathering but uses the same as a good platform to articulate the importance for other players in the Sudan and African Continent to adhere to the 25% for women in all Constitutional levels.

7. On Corruption and Nepotism: In its strive to fight corruption, the SSLA in the last quarter did take drastic measures against some personnel of our government. We

are very grateful for the cooperation of H.E. President of GOSS in executing the SSLA's Resolution. All the doubting Thomases questioning the seriousness of GOSS on this evil and about its policy of "zero tolerance towards corruption" must now come to their senses and believe that we mean what we say. We reiterate here our firm stance to fight this disease that destroys the rudimentary fabrics of our institutions as well as our values.

8. On Improved implementation of the CPA: Congratulations for the bold move by the GOSS in protesting and recalling SPLM Ministers from the GONU during the last session. That move has indeed propelled the implementation of the Accord further. The Executive and SSLA's duty will be to put more energy on the Abyei question and the on-going security threat along the border. The recent developments and attacks by SAF on innocent civilians must be strongly condemned.
9. On Border Demarcation: This is the mother of all protocols because it has critical consequences on the others including the Referendum. However, I don't want to venture too far into this province. It has someone who has mastered it. This is none other than H.E The President, Lt.Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit himself. I am quite certain he will articulate to us about its progress, however little.

In its continuous quest for excellence in serving our people, who lagged behind for so many years in almost all the socio-economic and political dimensions of development, the SSLA's standing specialized committees endeavored to deliver to the peoples' expectations, as well as empower themselves through seminars, trainings and workshops conducted within and outside the country. To briefly touch on specifics, below are outlines of the activities undertaken by the different committees of the SSLA during the last Session of 2007.

1) The Security and Public Order Committee:

The committee wrote a report on the Yambio incident in which 3 officers were killed and

presented it (i.e. the report) to the House; Conducted a survey in all the 10 states and the report is to be discussed by the committee before being presented to the House in the next session; Started with the security sector ministers in GOSS to get informed about some of the problems facing them – the exercise is, however, not yet completed.

Committee members visited Uganda to share experiences with the Ugandan security sector organs- in which they met with the Minister of Defense, Minister of Internal Affairs, and the Director of External Security.

2) The Public Accounts Committee:

A training session on Transparency and Accountability with regard to exercising oversight on the executive organ was conducted in conjunction with the (IRI). Along the same vein, the Chairperson of the Committee held lengthy consultations with the Auditor Generals (AGs) of different African countries on oversights over governments - these consultations were organized by the World Bank in Tanzania.

3) The Members Affairs Committee:

The Committee paid a visit to the National Assembly, Khartoum, in order to strengthen cooperation between legislators both within Southern Sudan and with those of the North. This Committee is in link with the various State Assemblies to acquaint them with the activities of MAC with the objective of raising the capacity of the Hon. Members .Established co-operation with the Indian Embassy with the aim of creating training opportunities carried out a review of the emoluments, privileges and post service benefits for Hon. Members of the SSLA.

4) The Committee of Development, Economy and Finance

The Committee has approved the largest budget allocation for the army (SPLA) in the history of South Sudan. However, the SSLA still hears voices of resentment on the ground of military salaries not being paid regularly. I call upon the Ministry of Defense not to disappoint these gallant soldiers who fought tirelessly to bring the VPA and peace about. To improve efficiency and accountability, the Committee led anti-corruption investigations of the Attorney General's office after which a vote of no confidence was passed on the AG; Invited legislators from the USA with the aim of improving the level of transparency in financial management; Conducted trainings for some members of the SSLA and State Assemblies in financial management and accounting; and to generate development from the grassroots level as-well-as attaining some important developmental goals, the committee held a conference on the nature of the South Sudan's economy.

5) The Committee of Information and Culture:

A delegation was dispatched to South Africa in order to acquire some insights into the processes necessary for stabilizing post-conflict periods - given the South African experience with Apartheid. In addition, the South African economic and political development could provide a strong role-model for our nation to emulate; Some staff were, also, sent to the Ugandan Parliament and others to Mozambique.

6) The Committee of Regional and International Corporation:

A workshop (in which MPs and invitees from relevant ministries) was conducted on various topics relevant to post-war reconstruction and development, drawing from the experiences of the country members of the East African Community (EAC) and beyond; Members from the German Parliament were received by the RICC members, following a

prior visit to Germany by the Chairpersons of the RICC, Hon. Agnes K. Lasuba, in which she opened the GOSS Liaison office in Brussels.

7) The Committee of Energy, Industry and Mining:

The Committee engaged the GoNU through a study with the GoNU's Ministry of Industry, in which the industrial policies of the Central Government was critically examined and an attempt to streamline the policies of the two ministries commenced; An extensive training on oil production (upstream and downstream) was held at the US Consulate, Juba, in which four (4) members from the committee participated. However, even though the Committee is trying its utmost to deliver in the interest of the citizens of South Sudan, collecting data to be used for analysis is constrained by Khartoum's insistence on not fully disclosing vital information which would help in formulating the laws and policy frame-works for a better operation of the oil industry in South Sudan.

8) The Standing Specialized Committee for Gender, Social Welfare, Youth and Sports:

The Committee held a seminar on Child Rights and Child Protection Bill; sought to closely liaise with various institutions of higher learning- like The University of Khartoum and Al-Ahfad University- with the objective of streamlining its own vision and plan of action with those of the institutions of higher learning in the country with regard to issues pertaining to social welfare and gender equality.

9) The Standing Specialized Committee for Peace and Reconciliation:

In fulfillment of the work plan of the Committee and in order to monitor and ensure proper implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), a team from the committee was dispatched to Massacre site at Ngauro village in Budi County, Eastern Equatoria as well as other affected areas. The committee is in cooperation with relevant

government institutions in an effort to entrench Peace and reconciliation in Southern Sudan. In addition the Committee sought to establish relationships with various Peace NGOs as well as South Sudan Peace Commission.

10)The Committee of Services and Physical Infrastructure:

In the light of the fact that the existence of good social and physical infrastructure is the foremost important pre-requisite in the development of every nation-state, the committee sent monitoring and assessment teams to all of the 10 states of South Sudan to collect, analyze and assess data about the existing infrastructure and the services rendered to the people in the areas of health, education and physical infrastructure; Joint parliamentary visits to some African countries (Kenya, Rwanda, Congo, Namibia, Angola, and South Africa) were conducted, as well as two (2) main parliamentary visits to Kenya .

11) The Committee of Legislation and Legal Affairs:

A study visit to Kenya and Uganda was undertaken between 19th March – 2nd April, 2007 during which the committee undertook the following activities: 1) Attended IRI workshop on parliamentary systems and CDF in Kenya ; 2)Exchange of experiences with the Kenyan National Deputy Clerk and the support legal staff; 3)Visit to CDF locations in Kenya.

The committee conducted a visit to the Ugandan National Parliament in which its members exchanged experiences with the Chairperson of the Committee of Legislation and Legal Affairs and the support staff; Worked on eight bills (The Code of Civil Procedure Bill(2007); The Southern Sudan Research Council Bill(2007); The Personal Income Tax Provisional Order Bill(2007); The Appropriation Bill(2008); The Judiciary

Bill (2007); The Judicial Service Council Bill (2007); The Kush Institution Bill (2007)) that were passed by the SSLA.

12) The Committee of Education, Research, Science and Technology:

Considering the importance of having higher institutions of learning operational in South Sudan, the committee exerted immense pressure on both the GoNU and GOSS in order to bring back the three (3) Southern universities (Juba, Upper Nile, and Bahar El-Ghazal Universities) to their original precincts. Such meetings resulted in the return of a number of faculties of the University of Juba back to Juba City; all ten states of South Sudan were visited and an assessment of the immediate needs of their education sectors carried out; The committee, as well, held numerous workshops and conferences on various topics such as Orientation and Job-descriptions for staff and administrative officers of SSLA, Needs of Persons with Disabilities, the Operation of the National Council for Research among other topics; established a Research Unit and a Computer Resource Center within the premises of the SSLA; established a Parliamentary Education Forum on Radio Juba, Mirror FM and Southern Sudan Television visited Uganda, Egypt, and China on tours in which it sought to gain from the extensive experiences of those countries in the fields of research, science and technology, and Capacity Building.

13) The Committee for Public Services and Administrative Reforms:

The Committee for Public Service and Administrative Reforms managed to visit four states (Lakes, Warrap, Northern Bahar-Elghazal, Central Equatoria) with the aim of supervising the Implementation of Public Service Procedures, Human Resource Development Programs, Employment Policies, Gender Awareness, and Good Governance Practices; visited two (2) countries (South Africa and Kenya) for matters

pertaining to public sector reforms.

14) The Committee of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs:

Committee members participated in a workshop on International Human Rights and the Rule of Law, sponsored by the Red Cross; logistical help has been secured by the committee from the UNMIS, in which free and prompt flights for the committee's undertakings would be given a priority when need arises for investigating human rights violations in any of the ten States of South Sudan; reception of returnees from Northern Sudan and a follow-up on their resettlement is still underway ; visits were taken to different prisons during which the conditions in which prisoners are subjected has been examined and cross-examined in accordance with the international standards stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and measures to rectify the appalling conditions in our prisons were taken.

15) The Committee of Land, Natural Resources and Environment:

A visit to the oil areas by Hon. Members of the Committee was taken, in addition to visiting different States in order to acquire insights into the methods employed with regard to the proper use of our natural resources (these visits included areas in Northern Sudan like Khartoum and Shendi); a workshop was conducted in which some Ugandan legislators as well as intellectuals from Uganda, Kenya and Nigeria participated. Development of the oil sector, security, and environmental management were among the vital issues discussed. The Committee and the Southern Sudan Parliament at large is very concerned about pollution risks on our people in the oil production areas.

OUR EXPECTATIONS FOR THE COMING SESSION:

1. This first session of 2008 is going to be full of rigorous legislation. I seize this opportunity to call on our executive Institutions to come up with bills for this is the key usual channel for any legislature to pass acts or make laws. Nonetheless, because the challenge is great, we can not confine the initiation of bills to the GOSS Ministry of Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development alone. I am aware of the serious problem of shortage of lawyers in South Sudan even for the SSLA legal documentation. We may have to resort to hired lawyers from other countries for this purpose as a last resort. In addition, as usual, we look forward to any private bill emanating from individual Honorable Members. Southern Sudan may need over 500 (five hundred) Laws/Acts. Most urgent include the Anti-Corruption, Investment, Taxation, Local government and Land Acts.
2. It is necessary to note that there was a list of Ministerial Work Plans not yet submitted to the august House. We shall give them priority while at the same time 2008 is a year in which each Ministry shall submit a report of its performance of the work plan approved by the Assembly in 2006 and 2007.

We give our government bravo for the ongoing progress in asphaltting the roads in Juba though extremely slow. On the development front, one highly appreciates some vital developmental projects whose commencement works have recently been opened by H.E. President of GOSS. Within these groups are the proposed asphaltting of Juba – Nimule Road, Juba – Lokichogio roads, Baden Falls ,Sue dam, to mention but some. Once commenced and completed, these projects will no doubt lead to the improvement of the

standard of living of our people since, in addition, they will be quickly connected to the East African Market.

As some of us went down to the grass-roots to educate people on the CDF, we unearthed that the populace is extremely happy of the opening by the President of GOSS of the Juba Teaching Hospital a few weeks ago, following the grand renovation. That, reinforced by the training of a high number of medical personnel and posting over 600 medical staff to this central hospital, cements the assurance of the citizens that GOSS is indeed determined to better their living condition.

The same people are proud of the fact that GOSS has already enrolled over one million school age children compared to only 343,000 before the CPA. True, the people are equally saddened by the appalling situation in the South where teachers have gone, in many States, unpaid for several months.

We in the Assembly, as well as in the Executive, will have to focus at ameliorating the teaching conditions and environment in our schools. I call on private investors to augment the efforts by opening more private schools. The common citizens are enraged when they see us the able sending children to East African schooling while the majority of the poor cannot afford education . Clearly more efforts and funds need to be invested in the sphere of education.

All levels of government should expedite the collection of non-oil revenues which should be managed properly and transparently, eliminate ghost names and become resolute in combating poverty from all flanks. In this context, more attention needs to be paid to the basic necessities of the three southern Universities.

FOOD PRODUCTION:-

I would want to appeal to our people to produce food. We must make use of our rains.

People loitering during this cultivation season must be discouraged.

ON THE ELECTRAL LAWS: Though it is not within the competence of our legislature, we shall have to keenly monitor the legislation of the Electoral Law by the National Assembly. It is likely to enter into debate sooner than later in spite of recorded SPLM reservations.

Mr. President, Sir;

Hon. Members,

In conclusion, may I stress and reiterate that as part of the functions of this Assembly, we are expected to deliver by passing as many bills as possible to enable the machinery of this Government to function smoothly. In that regard, we shall need quicker formulation and submission of bills from our Ministry of Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development in the GOSS. It appears the public impression is that huge number of Bills are submitted but bogged down or delayed by the SSLA. This is not the true state of things. Today we possess only three Bills at their second or third reading stages

Any other, is not tabled to the SSLA.

I wish you all the best of luck and thank you.