



**THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN**  
**MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING**  
Office of the Minister

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**Speech by: Hon. Dr. Barnaba Marial Benjamin (MP)**  
**Minister of Information and Broadcasting**  
**Spokesperson of the Government**  
**Republic of South Sudan, Juba**

**Subject: Launch of TEDx Juba (Technology, Entertainment and Design)**

**Date: 13 July 2012**

**Place: Kush Resort, Juba**

**Time: 08:30am**

- UNICEF Sponsors for TEDx Juba,
- Distinguished Speakers,
- I do recognize the presence of the super model, Alek Wek and many others including Mr. Joseph Abuk, Dr. Jok Madut Jok etc.
- Invited Guests,

Good morning!

I am delighted and greatly honoured to be offered the privilege to make a few remarks and to open this first Technology, Entertainment and Design event here in Juba, the capital of the Republic of South Sudan.

It is important for us to congratulate UNICEF South Sudan for its sponsorship of this important event.

Indeed, we are informed that the theme of this is entitled, “New Nation, New Ideas”. And this is marking the first anniversary of Independence for the Republic of South Sudan.

One must say that this event is truly an encouragement to our growing community of Dynamic innovations from various walks of life in our beloved country, the Republic of South Sudan (RSS). I can assure you that this young country and a New Nation on planet earth applauds and encourages innovative and new ideas that can strengthen the identity and the sovereignty of our young country. In fact to safe guard the misinterpretation of these wonderful ideas, it is of absolute importance to have an honest and transparent discussion on all these new ideas without any camouflage of secret agendas that aim to the destruction of our infant homeland, the Republic of South Sudan.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are so lucky to have a country where over 50% is under the age of 18 years and nearly 70% of its entire population under the age of 30 years of age. Imagine those developed countries where the old population now have become the majorities e.g. Japan, Norway and many others. In fact there are many people who are on pension funds and with a huge lack of young people to be employed to even replenish the pension resources. Yes, as citizens of the RSS, we are lucky to have a population of young to build this country from scratch and are capable to overcome the enormous challenges which are not insurmountable. This is your challenge, you the young people. It is futile to engage in a blame game when we are faced with very serious challenges. For me I believe we can make it and realize our promised land.

Incidentally, it is paramount for us to know that this TEDx event that reflects “New Nation, New Ideas” signifies a foundation for a growing community of committed innovators that encourage direct South- South

Collaboration and knowledge sharing without any academic greed contaminated with human vices of jealousy and selfishness full of vanity. With that in mind, the young people will avoid any pitfalls and sensibilities thus contributing to the growth of the nation by fostering civil society discourse. This will help in strengthening opportunities for our young people, women and children to realize their rights; and this of course will encourage the elderly into the happiness and paradise of earlier retirement since there are young responsible population that are prepared and have good capacity to propel the nation forward towards success and development in peace and harmony.

Ladies and gentlemen, a nation in true conversation for its good is welcome. It is also important to remind our citizens that this nation has its enemies, both seen and unseen. Our thinkers from a wide range of fields are expected to create positive change, but they must also be aware of those out to destroy this country, one way or another. This is a challenge they must be prepared to face and overcome, you must succeed to impact and set a strong foundation for more success for the second year of independence, grounded as a year of innovation and success in South Sudan. That should be the direction where your conversation and innovation should lead to. I am sure the audience I see here this morning are capable to think about their country rather than dwell in how bad they can make the country to be.

Today, your programmes seem to contain many very important areas that your government will be happy to hear what your advice would be on such important matters of your conversation. The theme of your discussion, I understand will touch on many issues regarding **diversity**, by Dr. Jok Madut Jok, **Lulu Production** by Eunis Elisama which is on **entrepreneurship, innovation, fuel supply** to be presented by the CEO **Imatongas**, Warille Benjamin Warille, **art theater** by Joseph Abuk, **Women journalism** by Rachel Alek and not to forget contribution from our beautiful and supermodel, Alek Wek on **refugee and peace** and of course **innovation** by both Jan Chipchase and William Kolong.

This is indeed a roll call of excellent speakers but unfortunately, I shall not be able to attend with you because I have to attend the Council of Ministers this morning. Indeed, with the freedom of press in the Republic of South Sudan, we shall be able to read your conversation and discussions in our news papers.

Ladies and gentleman, I am sure many people will be asking a lot of questions of what TEDx is and why in the Republic of South Sudan at this time of independence and why especially of these six speakers a mixture of very beautiful women in the company of these very ugly men. I am sure you will provide the answers this afternoon during discussion.

However, we are aware that some of you have outstanding and innovative ideas for South Sudan and that can contribute to a positive change in peoples' lives in South Sudan. Some of you can make a lot of change in your communities through your wonderful stories to tell the people of South Sudan including the diaspora. Your experience, knowledge, peace building, project on agriculture, arts and music, development projects, sharing of vision with others. For example, impact of refugism in one's life. We have here our beautiful lady, Alek Wek who was a refugee and today, South Sudan is proud of her as a well known international super model of enormous popularity. Her simple presence in the international scene as a beautiful black model makes the enemies of South Sudan choke in jealousy and rage. Congratulations Alek Wek despite your refugee background. I am sure the enemies of our young nation can eat their heads if they can. This new country will overcome its challenges. In fact you are one of the success stories and you have won many friends for South Sudan worldwide.

Today, Ladies and gentlemen, your country the Republic of South Sudan is fully an independent state. We have just celebrated our first year of independence this week on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2012. We must continue to fight in different ways for our independence and that requires of us to commit ourselves to principles of freedom and liberty. It means every

woman and man maintains the right to elect or reject their leaders in a free and fair voting. This is the basis of democracy enshrined in our transitional Constitution. Our independence is our quest for dignity and freedom. Indeed, it is our monumental achievement to build and maintain a free society in the Republic of South Sudan.

We are determined to resolve all our problems including challenges in an atmosphere of peace and within the spirit of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). That is why our government is engaged in the AU High Implementation Panel Facilitation Peace Talks, within the context of the African Road Map based on the requirements of the Security Council Resolution 2046(2012) and as recommended by AU Peace and Security Council. There is no doubt in our part that we are negotiating with the Republic of Sudan with an open mind and also determined to resolve all the outstanding issues and within the time frame of the African Road Map for resolving all the issues between South Sudan and Sudan.

The important elements to be resolved include demarcation of borders, disputed areas including Panthou (Heglig) and Abyei. In fact we have proved the **prophets of doom** together with **doom merchants** wrong with their erroneous propoganda that South Sudan was at the brink of an ethnic war fare and they concluded that South Sudan would be a failed State. All this has turned out not to be true.

Finally, with your permission ladies and gentlemen, congratulations for our independence on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2012.

I wish you today's conversations and discussions on "News Nation, New Ideas" great success for you, our people and our country.

God bless South Sudan!

**Thank You.**