

**SPEECH OF H.E. GEN. SALVA KIIR MAYARDIT ON THE  
OCCASION OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN  
9 JULY 2013**

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**Your Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda and our Chief Guest;**

**Your Excellency General Seretse Khama Ian Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana;**

**Your Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda;**

**Your Excellency Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia;**

**Your Excellency Demeke Makonen, Deputy Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia;**

**Your Excellency Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission;**

**Your Excellency Thabo Mbeki, Chairperson of the African Union High Implementation Panel;**

**Your Excellencies Heads of Delegations;**

**Your Excellency the Representative of the UN Secretary General;**

**Right Honorable Speakers of the Republic of South Sudan National Legislative Assembly and Council of States;**

**Right Honorable Chief Justice of the Republic of South Sudan Judiciary;**

**Honorable Leaders of South Sudanese Political Parties;**

**Honorable Religious Leaders of all faiths;**

**Distinguished members of the diplomatic corps and development partners;**

**My Compatriots and fellow Citizens of the Republic of South Sudan;**

**Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**Good Afternoon.**

Today, on the second anniversary of our independence, we celebrate the birth of our country and the freedom of our people. We should always remember that our nation is born of the blood of our heroes and heroines, who fought for many decades for the freedom we now enjoy and on top of whom is our late leader Dr. John Garang de Mabior. May their souls rest in peace and may we always remember their sacrifices.

I am grateful to the many friends who supported our journey to independence and who continue to stand by us today. Your support and solidarity at this crucial time has not gone unnoticed.

I acknowledge the presence of many distinguished guests here with us today to celebrate this important occasion. You are warmly welcome and your dedication is very much appreciated by me, my government and the people of South Sudan.

**Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

The Republic of South Sudan attained freedom and independence after a generation long and bitter struggle in which our people were subjected to untold atrocities and genocidal persecution.

Yet, we held together and endured the ordeals, and overcame the hardships. The untold sacrifices of so many led to our cherished freedom and independence.

This freedom, which we won through so much blood, sweat and tears, will never be reversed by current challenges. The resilience and courage that you have demonstrated during the days of our liberation struggle is an expression of our common hope to build a new, shared future for all the people of South Sudan. It is a hope that is based on the principles of freedom, self-reliance, progress and justice for all.

It is because of you, dear citizens, that we are celebrating our freedom today. However, our journey continues. We still have a long road to go before fully realizing our vision of a peaceful, democratic and prosperous South Sudan. The task of building a nation and state is enormous and challenging, but with our determination and commitment we shall be successful.

**Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Fellow Citizens:**

Since hoisting our flag for the first time two years ago, we have made many positive steps towards the building of our nation. Over the past year, the National Legislative Assembly has enacted nineteen laws, including the Banking Act, the General Education Act, the Mining Act and the Agricultural Bank Act.

Progress has also been made on a number of bills, which are currently in the reading stages and which will be enacted soon. These include the eight Human Rights Bills, the Right of Access to Information Bill, the Media Authority Bill and the Information and Broadcasting Bill.

With the support of our development partners we have completed the 192km Juba–Nimule road, rehabilitated 180km of feeder roads, and constructed six bridges in Juba as well as the Bussere and Bo bridges. Contracts have been signed for the Juba Nile Bridge project and for the improvements to the Juba International Airport.

We have extended the telecommunication networks to some of the most remote counties in South Sudan in order to improve communication. South Sudan did not have mobile phone networks and I am pleased to tell you that today we have four mobile phone operators in the country.

In the area of oil industry, we have made significant progress in developing petroleum infrastructure. The Bentiu refinery construction will be inaugurated in August 2013 and the Thiangrial refinery will be commissioned early next year.

Finally, we have made good progress with the process of constitutional review, which will continue over the coming year. We have also established the National Election Commission, which will be fully funded in the upcoming budget so that they can start to prepare for the general elections after the conduct of the population census.

## **Your Excellencies and Distinguished Guests:**

We would be at a different juncture on the path of nation building had we not been derailed by the loss of our major source of revenue in 2012.

In response to the oil shutdown, the government implemented austerity measures that resulted in postponing many major development projects. However, our prudent fiscal management has been successful. We managed to reduce government spending by 40% and increased non-oil revenues by almost 800% from 7 million to 100 million South Sudanese Pounds monthly.

Despite having resumed oil production in April this year, the austerity measures budget will continue into the first half of the 2013-2014 budget. This will be rigorously monitored for accountability and transparency. As the President of this country, I will ensure that our legacy of liberation is not turned into a free license for corruption.

As I stated before, I state it again now and will continue to say it...**corruption will not be tolerated**. Those implicated will be taken before the court of law. It is critical that we are good stewards of our resources in order to develop this new nation.

The days when mistakes were being committed with impunity are gone. During our transitional period, obtaining independence was our priority. Now that we are a free nation, our fight against corruption shall not be confined at the national level only, but will extend to the states, counties and anywhere that there is public spending. We have a responsibility to ensure that public funds are properly utilized.

As our oil is still flowing at present, we cannot be assured of its continued passage through Sudan. We remain in dialogue with Khartoum to continue to respect and implement the Cooperation Agreements that we signed in Addis Ababa in September 2012, and the implementation matrix signed in March of this year. This is the only way to ensure the viability of the two states.

In the spirit of peace, I recently sent a delegation to Khartoum that was led by my Vice President to express this interest. The delegation engaged with the Government of Sudan and reached an understanding to utilize the mechanisms that were established in the Cooperation Agreements to resolve any disputes. We also reiterated our acceptance of the African Union High Implementation Panel proposals for the resolution of our differences.

With this, we still urge Sudan to work with us towards full and unconditional implementation of those agreements as well as a final status for Abyei. The people of Abyei have suffered and continue to suffer due to the unwillingness of the Sudan Government to resolve the issue. This issue cannot pend indefinitely. The people of Abyei deserve a final resolution.

**My fellow citizens, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

I wish I could stand in front of you today and say that all the difficulties we face are external, but that is not the case. We too must learn from our history.

I am extremely concerned about the continuing attacks and senseless killing of innocent civilians carried out by David Yau Yau and his followers in Jonglei State, and specifically in Pibor County.

The lives of our citizens and of international peacekeepers have been tragically lost and many others have been displaced and are forced to live and work in fear. This is not acceptable.

I acknowledge the leaders who have seen the value in reconciliation, unity and brotherhood and have responded positively to the amnesty that I granted earlier this year.

I urge those who have not yet responded to the amnesty offer, including David Yau Yau, to reflect on this day, the second anniversary of our independence, and to honor the memory of our martyrs, who fought so that we do not have to struggle again. We should end violence and war with our generation so that our children will eventually enjoy lasting peace.

I am also troubled by the alarming crime rate in our cities. While it is easy to blame the rise of crime on external factors, we must be honest and face our internal indiscipline. Whether it is within our organized forces, civil service or our political system, we must reflect on how we can change the situation. We must uphold good work ethics while executing our responsibilities.

In pursuit of this policy, we have made huge efforts to professionalize and reorganize our security forces, including the SPLA, National Security and Police Services.

**Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

My Government is determined and resolute in serving the people of South Sudan. It is essential that we prioritize vigorously. South Sudan will not be built in a day. The coming period will witness major policy shift in my government.

I have been to the bush twice. First, during the Anyanya War of 1955-1972 and again when we founded the SPLM/A in 1983, which set this nation free and proud.

**My fellow citizens**, I went to the bush NOT because of myself.

- Not because of my Comrades in the SPLM/A.
- Not because of my colleagues in the Cabinet.
- Not because of my colleagues in Parliament.
- Not because of my colleagues in the State government.

**BUT** because of every South Sudanese man, woman, and child in every village across this great nation!

**My dear citizens**, I have not forgotten you.

- I am aware that many of you cannot afford a meal every day.
- I am aware of that mother who struggles to feed her household of twenty people with less than twenty pounds a day.
- I am aware of the SPLA soldier whose salary cannot meet all of your needs. You struggle to pay your house rent, feed your family, pay school fees and pay for medical treatment.

These scenarios must change. As your President, I promise you that we will work tirelessly to change them.

Since last year, the Ministry of Agriculture has been working to boost food production across the country. It is excellent to have the Agricultural Policy Framework on paper, but the people of South Sudan need food on the table.

**It is excellent** to draft water policies, but the people of South Sudan need not to drink water directly from the River Nile, but rather have reliable, clean water running through their taps at home.

**It is excellent** that we have a well written health policy, but the people of South Sudan deserve to access not only good basic healthcare, but have any of their health concerns addressed at home. Yes, some of you can afford to go to Kenya, India, Germany or South Africa for medical treatment. But what is to become of those who cannot afford to travel abroad? They too deserve to access a well-equipped, well-staffed hospital in Juba, Wau, Bentiu or Malakal.

**It is excellent** that we have big plans and high hopes for building more schools in the future. But what do we tell the parents who cannot afford to send their children to boarding schools abroad? They deserve schools **NOW**. They deserve for their children to have a chance and not be left behind due to their economic situation.

What do I tell the widow whose husband went to the battlefield and died for this land, yet she cannot educate her children? What do I tell the orphan, struggling to survive and cannot even imagine the possibility of obtaining a passport to go for studies abroad?

As your President, I promise you that the time has come for us to strengthen our education system and empower our teachers to educate our students right here at home.

It is my strong belief that every child, whether they are the children of a government leader, businessman, soldier or farmer should have the same opportunity to go to school. No longer can it be that only children of the privileged have access to a quality education in South Sudan.

To our young lions, the Youth of this nation, I urge you to listen carefully. When my colleagues and I went to the bush to fight the war of liberation, we were young. But as young people, we dedicated ourselves and contributed to the liberation of a nation. I know what a young person can do for their nation if they are committed. Look at what we accomplished as youth.

I know many of you are facing the problem of unemployment. And those of you have not obtained a university degree yet are frustrated by the difficulties that the universities are facing.

My government is determined to address these issues and create the necessary environment in which you can grow and develop into responsible citizens and leaders of this nation. To ensure that the youth are empowered, your party, the SPLM has given you 20% representation in the SPLM structures.

To our strong South Sudanese women-- my government will continue to empower you economically and politically to bridge the gap created by history and cultural practices. Your representation is consistently growing and I will do what I can to encourage continued growth. Your contribution to this nation cannot be denied.

**Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

To pursue these commitments, our budget this year will focus spending on three priority areas:

1. Boosting agriculture, the mining and other non-oil sectors of the economy in partnership with the private sector to create jobs;
2. The rapid development of infrastructure to support economic development including development of alternative export routes for our oil; and
3. Improving basic services in education, health and water for people in rural areas.

Our aspirations for South Sudan's development are set out in Vision 2040. We will work methodically so that our Government has the capability to implement our development plans. Our institutions of Government must be strong and accountable to ensure that we deliver real change for the benefit of the South Sudanese people.

**Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

While this day is about reflecting on our independence and visualizing the way forward for the Republic of South Sudan, I remain mindful that we live in a region of growing geo-political, and geo-economic and geo-strategic importance for the entire world.

We are concerned about the various crises in our region including Somalia, Sudan, DRC and the Central African Republic. We observe with great interest and willingness to engage to ensure that our region is peaceful. We encourage our neighbors to participate in dialogue to settle all of the disputes. Peace in those countries has a bearing on peace in South Sudan.

We are committed to working with the African Union, IGAD, or ECCAS toward the resolution of these conflicts so that our brothers and sisters may have peace.

Africa has bled for too long and it is time for her to enjoy the fruits of her labor and resources of the land. Our region and Africa in general needs investment and development in partnership with international, regional and local investors. Africa needs more trade within its borders in order to create jobs and avoid idleness that creates frustration, anger, and eventually violence. We have the potential to rise above our difficulties and work together for the benefit of this great continent.

To our brothers and sisters in Egypt, our thoughts are with you during this time of transition. We encourage you to remain calm, peaceful and exercise restraint as the crisis is being managed.

**Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests:**

As I conclude, I wish to offer my sincere thanks to our many partners and friends for their continued support. South Sudan celebrates two years today largely due to your dedication and commitment. We look towards the future with anticipation of what we can accomplish together.

My fellow citizens of South Sudan: Today we honor you. I thank you for your determination, patience and resilience in difficult times and your unwavering support and belief in our future. It is because of you that I know we will achieve great things for this great nation. Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Independence Day to you all.

**Thank you.**

**God bless you and God bless South Sudan.**