

**SPEECH**  
**ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF**  
**SOUTH SUDAN INDEPENDENCE**

by

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*President of the Republic of South Sudan*



*Juba, July 9<sup>th</sup> 2012*

**SPEECH OF H.E. GEN. SALVA KIIR MAYARDIT, PRESIDENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN,  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF SOUTH SUDAN  
INDEPENDENCE**

**Juba, July 9, 2012**

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**Your Excellency**, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda and my Chief Guest for this occasion

**Your Excellencies** Heads of States and Governments,

**Your Excellency**, Chairman of the AU Commission

**Your Excellencies** Heads of Delegations,

**Your Excellencies** South Sudanese Political Party leaders and leaders of our three branches of Government,

**Religious Leaders**,

**Distinguished members** of the diplomatic corps and invited guests,

**The friends of South Sudan**, and my compatriots the citizens of South Sudan:

Today we join together to celebrate the first anniversary of our independence, a manifestation of a sustained liberation struggle. We stand here today due to the selfless sacrifices of our heroes and heroines, on top of who is our dear leader Dr. John Garang de Mabior. May their souls rest in eternal peace, knowing that indeed, victory was achieved.

To our many friends who have traveled from near and far to celebrate with us, I want you to know that your presence here today is a gift to the people of South Sudan. Thank you for your continued solidarity and unconditional support to our young nation.

**My fellow citizens and distinguished guests:**

Our struggle for liberation began long ago and was expressed in the Torit mutiny in 1955.

It was then resumed, energized and redefined by the SPLM/A in 1983.

Finally our journey of liberation was concluded with your clear and overwhelming vote for the freedom of South Sudan through our internationally recognized free and fair referendum.

Today we are a free and liberated people, and in that we celebrate. But as we celebrate this great achievement we must note that freedom is not an end in itself but a means to aspirations for liberty, justice and prosperity: ideals that my Government is committed to uphold.

**My fellow citizens, distinguished guests:**

One year ago on this field and across the land we looked up as our flag was hoisted for the first time. Since that day, our commitment to the ideals that the flag signifies has been challenged.

We have been challenged by conflicts from outside and conflicts from within, including the loss of revenue that we depend on.

Externally, our challenges have been with the Republic of Sudan particularly on the outstanding post-independence issues, specifically oil, our borders and Abyei.

Since independence, Khartoum has continuously violated our sovereignty through aerial bombardments and ground incursions, which have affected all five of our states along the border. In Upper Nile State, the towns of Guffa, Jau and Kuek were attacked. In Unity, bombs fell on Abienhom repeatedly. In Warrap, they attacked Ajak Kuac.

Northern and Western Bahr El Ghazal were not spared as they bombarded Warguek and Kafia Kingi. Many innocent lives have been lost and countless people have been displaced.

Despite the continuous provocations, we are committed to resolving the issues through dialogue and the AUHIP mechanism because we believe in the peaceful resolution of all conflicts. It was in that spirit that I invited President El Bashir to attend these celebrations.

Although the Republic of Sudan has declared South Sudan as their number one enemy, we still remain committed to peace, good relations and free trade with Sudan. We believe that this is the time for both nations to rebuild, not a time to tear down.

I have stated many times, on many occasions and I am repeating it today-***WE HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH THE CITIZENS OF SUDAN.***

We hope that the leadership in Sudan will realize the importance of our mutual viability. That we can be two states living side by side in peace and mutual security, while respecting each other's sovereignty. That we can indeed cooperate in many areas, while pursuing the mutual interests of our two nations.

We are presently fully engaged in the AUHIP facilitation process discussing all the outstanding issues including oil.

We were forced to shut down oil production when we realized that it was no longer a reliable option to export our oil through the territory of Sudan. For months, Khartoum blocked, confiscated and diverted our oil amounting to over 800 million dollars. This unilateral decision could not continue unaddressed.

**My fellow citizens and distinguished guests:**

At the moment, we are operating on an austerity budget due to the loss of oil revenue. We are also working on several alternative revenue sources including non-oil tax collection and alternative oil infrastructure. We are establishing Thiangrial Refinery in Upper Nile State and we have also signed memorandums of understanding with Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti for alternative pipelines. These initiatives will also create jobs for our unemployed youth.

It is therefore important that we maximize the limited resources we have in a manner that will benefit the people of South Sudan.

I want to assure my fellow citizens and our international partners that I will not tolerate corruption.

I appreciate the tremendous support from the National Legislative Assembly, Civil Societies, and the citizens of South Sudan in regards to corruption.

I will pursue this fight against corruption in a manner that will not undermine the fundamental rights guaranteed in our Constitution through our various tools and institutions of government.

We must build institutions to sustain our new nation. Public service matters. But I must be clear: the size of our government payroll is very large compared to other countries. In these times of austerity, we cannot afford it and therefore, we will downsize the government so that money is reserved for development. Because of the downsizing it will not be possible that we create new counties as we had proposed earlier.

**My fellow citizens:**

Through our struggle these many years, we have learned this: It is not oil or armies that make us strong.

Instead, it is the moral foundation of our people. Across the land, from Renk to Yei, from Raja to Kapoeta, it is the faith in our hearts that we can work together to make things better. We are not a people who fear the night and hide. We know that no matter how

long the night, morning will always come. We joined together and fought for liberty and together, we earned it. We have fought for our right to be counted among the community of free nations and we have earned it. But to the extent that we depend on others, our liberty is incomplete. We must be more than liberated. We must be **independent**.

**My fellow citizens, distinguished guests:**

In the past year, we have been able to set the foundation for a democratic, pluralistic and inclusive government. We enacted more than thirty foundational laws that moved us in that direction including the political parties act and the election act. Rule of Law is a cardinal principle to security and a basic element in building confidence for investors; therefore we have also enacted laws such as the Public Finance Management, Accountability Act and Petroleum Act to name a few.

The executive has also passed a set of media bills which are the foundation for freedom of the press.

These are just a few of the laws that have been enacted during this period of one year. But laws are only effective if our government is held accountable for following them and for working in the public interest.

**My fellow citizens, distinguished guests:**

We are establishing these laws and making our budgets according to a development plan.

The development plan was created with our international partners and with much input from experts in economy, health, education, transport and agriculture. The plan helps make sure that money is spent with our national vision and long-term goals in mind.

The plan also means that the donor aid to South Sudan is not meant for short-term programs but moves us toward our goal of self-sufficiency.

The development plan aims to make South Sudan a good place to do business, which encourages job growth and in turn creates wealth that improves lives of our people. Already we are welcoming many new businesses to South Sudan – banks, telecommunications, advertising, shipping, construction and many more. And our own citizens are opening small and large businesses.

Already these businesses are creating job opportunities for our people.

**My fellow citizens:**

Without education, no nation can be truly free. Education provides knowledge and perspective that are the foundation for the decisions we make.

Education provides understanding that gives freedom meaning. Education ensures our children will have freedom that some of us did not have growing up – freedom to choose a trade; freedom to earn a living based on achievement instead of political connections; and most of all - freedom from dependency on the state.

We hold that every child in South Sudan, regardless of where they live or what their means, has the right to an education.

We have worked hard to ensure that every girl has the opportunity to go to school and enjoy the same rights as their male counterparts.

This year we will pass a general education law that will establish and fund a high-quality system of primary and secondary education across the land.

The law will include provisions to ensure that the invaluable contribution made by our teachers is adequately respected.

Independence also means we do not depend on someone else to feed us. We must be able to feed ourselves. We are blessed with good land, plenty of sun and abundant rainfall. Our people are experts at raising livestock.

And we already know that we can grow our own crops. If there is one thing that we should strive for, it's food security.

To help meet the more immediate food needs, right now the Ministry of Agriculture is sending seeds, agrochemicals and fertilizers to farmers in all ten states.

We are also investing in harvesting and planting equipment that can be made available to communities so that people can farm on a larger scale.

It is my belief that by 2015, we will be self-sufficient in food production. Therefore to achieve this target, every one of us must farm.

For the long term, we are building roads so that crops can get to market quickly. With our international partners, we're bringing new knowledge and more efficient practices to the farmers so they can grow more food on the same amount of land.

Independence also means women emancipation and empowerment. Currently our constitution requires that we promote women participation in public life and their representation in all levels of government in the Legislative and Executive organs with at least 25% as affirmative action. This is an indication of our resolve to gender equality. We must however work harder to eliminate from our societies those traditions that hinder the participation of women in public affairs including the education of the girl child.

**My fellow citizens, distinguished guests:**

The year to come will be hard, but we will prevail. In all of this, I ask that the international community stays with us. We are a new country.

The commitment we showed in creating our nation is the same commitment we will show in developing it. We are under no illusions as to the scale of what we must achieve, and so the international community, should not doubt our determination to achieve it. We are committed to providing security to our citizens and provide them the services that they need.



We are a nation of vast potential and enormous resources. We will make good on that potential and we need our partners to help us do so.

We acknowledge that we would not have made it this far without your generous and unwavering support and for that we're grateful. However, we still need you.

As we build this new country, we are ready for the long and arduous journey ahead and we ask you to stay by our side.

This is a time when the friends that welcomed us into the community of independent nations, should remain close for the far more routine and less poetic task of development.

**My fellow citizens and distinguished guests:**

The modern history of Africa is a story of independence and great hopes for our continent.

It's a story that starts with crowds celebrating like we are here today, with flags waving and people dancing. However, it is up to us to write the rest of the story for South Sudan.

Only we can determine how our vision will be read in history books generations from now. Will we let our challenges define us or will we rise as a nation and define our own future? I believe that we will write a story worthy of the sacrifices of our ancestors and martyrs. If we work together, the story of South Sudan will inspire the world.

The history of South Sudan is written on the faces of our elders here today; it is reflected in the eyes of our children.

It is a history that has taught us something that our former rulers never learned: that being equal does not mean being the same. It is a history that brings our many peoples, tongues and ways together in strength like the many waters that flow into the mighty Nile.

It is a history that gives us assurance that we shall endure, we shall be victorious, and we shall stand tall. Today, we celebrate our independence day.

And in the joyous words of South Sudanese singer Emmanuel Kembe, "Let's Celebrate!"

**Thank you, God bless us all.**

**God bless South Sudan.**