

The SPLM 2nd National Convention

Juba, 15th – 20th May 2008

Opening Statement by:

The Chairman of SPLM, General Salva Kiir Mayardit,

- ▶ **Members of the SPLM Interim Political Bureau**
- ▶ **Members of the Convention Organizing Committee**
- ▶ **Members of the SPLM Interim National Council**
- ▶ **All Delegates to the SPLM National Convention**
- ▶ **Members of Diplomatic Community, UN and other International Organizations**
- ▶ **All observers**
- ▶ **Distinguished Guests**
- ▶ **Ladies and Gentlemen**

My dear Comrades and Friends of SPLM and Sudan

Let me take this opportunity to welcome you all in Juba, capital of Southern Sudan, to attend the Second SPLM National Convention. This Convention comes 14 years after the First SPLM Convention in Chukudum, Eastern Equatoria, in 1994, and 3 years after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement on 9th January 2005, that ended many years of suffering for the people of Southern Sudan, Abyei, Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile.

I am in deed delighted to see in this historical hall of Nyakuron, delegates from all over the Sudan and corners of the world, representatives of political parties and civil society at home, members of the diplomatic community to Sudan, observers from friendly countries, representatives of UN Agencies, religious leaders, international and local media and

representatives of international and local organizations. It is my pleasure and honour to welcome you all.

As Southern Sudan has just emerged from war and suffered from decades of instability, we are doing our best to rebuild what has been destroyed and to transform Southern Sudan into a new shape. Juba, as capital of Southern Sudan, may not have standard hotels and amenities similar to what you have in your countries, but I know for sure that all of you will find something to love and admire about our lovely Juba as well as to have opportunity to apprehend and appreciate the enormous challenges facing us in Southern Sudan.

This meeting, Comrades, would not have taken place in this timely manner without the diligent work of the Convention Organizing Committee, under the leadership of Comrade James Wani Igga. Of special note is the success of the COC to produce a Convention in which women, youth and our SPLM veterans are fairly represented. Let us, therefore, give a thunderous clap to all members of COC and its Chairperson Comrade James Wani Igga.

Fourteen years ago, on 2nd April 1994, the SPLM held its First Convention in Chukudum, Eastern Equatoria. Indeed, it had taken us a very long stretch of time to meet again. Understandably, that was a situation dictated by the conditions of war. Nonetheless, the journey from Chukudum - to Juba: and from April 1994 to May 2008: and from meeting under shabby tents in the wilderness of Eastern Equatoria to air conditioned rooms in the heart of Juba, the capital city of Southern Sudan, tells its own story. But before taking you with me through that difficult and eventful journey, let me remember with reverence two of our lion hearts without whose wisdom and determination, the First SPLM Convention would

not have taken place, let alone succeed: Our Late Chairman John Garang de Mabior and the Chairman of that Convention, the Late Cde Yousif Kuwa Mekki. Together with the two giants, let us also remember other founding members of the SPLM, who we lost during our liberation struggle and made their mark in our struggle namely:

Cde Kerabino Kwanyin Bol

Cde William Nyuon Bany

Cde Arok Thon Arok

Cde John Kulang Puot

Cde Ngachigak Nyashiluk

Cde Francis Ngor Nyang

Cde Akuot Atem de Moyen

Cde Samuel Gai Tut

Cde Gelario Modi Hurinyang

Cde Martin Manieyl Ayuel

To this constellation of fallen heroes, I add all other heroes and heroines who made the ultimate sacrifice so that we can enjoy the fruits of our struggle. Let me also add to the above names, two SPLM veterans: Comrade Justin Yaac Arop and Comrade Dominic Dim Deng who just met their fate, together with their wives and other comrades, in a tragic plane crash while they were engaged in the process of reorganizing the SPLM at the grass-root.

Please, let us stand up to pay tribute to the memories of our fallen comrades who have paid the ultimate price for peace, freedom, justice and equality. Let us also remember in this important occasion the freedom fighters of Anyaya Movement for their heroic and selfless sacrifice they had shown during the first civil war.

Dear Comrades

The SPLM, at the climax of its most difficult period, held its First Convention in April 1994 and emerged from it as a robust politico-military organization with clearly defined goals and strategies and an inflamed mind and soul. Having left behind the bitter experiences of the past, the SPLM gained momentum and its call for the creation of a New Sudan based on liberty, justice and equality for all, resounded all over Sudan and beyond. The marginalized people of Sudan were inspired by the vision of the New Sudan, making ten of thousands of their sons and daughters join the SPLA gallant forces and moved stubbornly, with one common aim, to liberate the whole Sudan, scoring successive victories in different parts of our country, particularly in Southern Sudan, Blue Nile, Nuba Mountains, and Eastern Sudan.

Dear Comrades

The First Convention was a turning point in the history of our Movement. In that meeting, the birth of the New Sudan was proclaimed. The 1983 Manifesto was revised in line with changing realities within, and outside Sudan. Party structures were formed with defined

roles and functions. Guidelines for peaceful negotiations with the government of the day in Khartoum, under the auspices of regional and international mediation, were set. And the vision of the SPLM and its participation in the opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA) were endorsed.

The Convention also resolved that military and civilian functions be separated; this was an important milestone in the context of enormous challenges during the armed and liberation struggle. Pursuant to that resolution, more than 700 civil society representatives met and deliberated on the nature of the new administration, giving birth to the Civil Authority of the New Sudan (CANS). As regards to the SPLA, more than 800 officers representing all ranks met, one year after the Convention, and adopted plans to transform the SPLA into an organic army. The SPLM shortly after the First Convention organized various conferences including the New Sudan Civil Society Conference, Women Conference, Chiefs Conference and Economic Governance Conference.

Dear Comrades

Rather than being content with its political accomplishments and military feats, the SPLM moved fast to reinforce unity within its ranks by extending hands of reconciliation to comrades who had parted ways and was able to achieve their reintegration into the Movement as evidenced by the Lafon and Nairobi agreements and Juba Declaration. It also

proceeded to heal wounds among the people of Southern Sudan, so that communities could live in peace and agitators denied the opportunity to fish in troubled waters. Accordingly, the SPLM facilitated and sponsored people – to – people grass-root peace initiatives in Wunlit and other parts of Southern Sudan. These initiatives and meetings decisively ended communal conflicts and laid down a basis for the unity of all our ranks in the SPLM. People, in their wisdom, knew that their strength rest in unity.

Beyond Southern Sudan, the SPLM initiated broad – based dialogue with opposition political forces in Northern Sudan, which culminated in the creation of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), with the aim of reaching national consensus on various issues among them; national identity and diversity, freedom of religion, non-marginalization, democratic transformation, fundamental freedoms and rights, and national reconciliation that had troubled Sudan since independence.

Dear Comrades

Before the creation of the NDA, Sudan's traditional leadership was reluctant to meaningfully address the root causes of Sudan's crisis. Indeed, some deliberately ignored the injustice and suffering inflicted on the marginalized people of Sudan. In Asmara, however, all Sudanese parties in opposition, including the SPLM, reached agreement on fundamental issues including recognition of the right to self determination for the peoples of Southern

Sudan as well as to any people in Sudan who may rightfully claim for this right. They also acknowledged self – rule for Southern Sudan, respect of Sudan’s multiple diversities, separation between religion and state, decentralization of governance, the need to remove historical injustices in marginalized areas and the inevitability of restructuring the economy as a prelude to equitable and even development. That was not a small achievement by the SPLM, for without its effective participation in, and intellectual input to, the NDA could not have reached consensus on these issues. That was why on Labour Day in 1995, the SPLM National Liberation Council, in an emergency session, endorsed the Movement’s stand in the NDA, while calling for unity and reconciliation with our comrades who parted way.

Outside Sudan, the SPLM was able to build a wide network of support to its vision and to the legitimate demands of Southern Sudan and the marginalized regions in our country. In Africa, from North to South and from East to West, and in Europe and America, the SPLM and its leaders were received with open arms to the resentment of those who envied us the success of our toils. In some instances, the SPLM was not only recognized but also the cause of its liberation struggle was highly appreciated by some countries. For example in 1993/4, the US Congress recognized in a resolution the rights of people of Southern Sudan for self-determination.

Still the SPLM, Dear Comrades, never relented in its quest for peace. If that quest had been irregular, that was not because your Movement was reluctant, but because the other party to the negotiations seemed not to be taking the SPLM seriously. Still, we never allowed the abuse of our patience to make us abdicate the peace route. The SPLM, as you all know Comrades, was neither looking for a quick fix, nor for accommodation. Those who had done this in the past were only sowing in the wind so they ended by reaping whirlwinds. The peace process, therefore, was protracted with few ups and many downs.

By July 2002, and with the vigorous intervention of the sisterly countries of the IGAD and their friends in Europe and America represented by the IGAD Partners Forum (IPF), peace negotiations began in earnest. A negotiated settlement of Sudan's conflict had always been one of the SPLM's declared modes of struggle. We were neither war – mongers, nor did we ever cherish being warlords. We were freedom fighters who were ready to turn swords into ploughs if and when a peace with honour was achieved.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement, Dear Compatriots, could not have been concluded in 2005 without the frankness, political will and courage, realism and spirit of reconciliation demonstrated by the two parties to the conflict. The Agreement was also facilitated by the timely and thoughtful interventions and persuasions of the chief IGAD mediator, General Lazarus Sumbewyo. Let me also recognize the chief architects of CPA our Great Leader Dr.

John Garang and Ustaz Ali Osman Mohd Taha as national peace heroes. This Agreement we enjoy today would not have come to existence without their individual wisdom and commitment. President Bashir has equally played a critical role in concluding the CPA as he provided the necessary leadership for all members of the NCP to endorse this Agreement. May I ask our Convention to rise and give a huge hand of applause to our heroes and heroines of peace.

Dear Comrades

We were all struck and saddened on 30th July 2005 when we lost our leader who had been leading our liberation struggle for 21 years. That loss came 21 days after his inauguration as President of the Government of Southern Sudan and First Vice President of the Sudan. Twenty one years of struggle for only 21 days to enjoy the fruits of that struggle was one of the heart – rending ironies of history. Our late leader, however, died immortal: in life he was acclaimed by contemporaries and in death his glory was sung in all languages.

To me personally, Dr John Garang was a bosom friend; a comrade – in – arms with whom I fought all wars against foes of all manner, and as his deputy for fourteen years. The moment of his death was therefore, the most testing in my life. No occasion, dear comrades, could have filled me with greater anxiety. As a result of the magnitude and

weight of the responsibility falling on my shoulders, I humbled myself as I had imparted to some of you in the INC meeting in Juba three months ago.

Our late Leader was surrounded by a forest of men and women during the struggle, though he was the towering and dominant tree in that forest. Let me take a short break and ask you all to give a standing ovation to this forest of men and women, of whom we have sadly lost so many. I thank the Almighty God for giving me wisdom and courage inspired by your trust in me to lead you during this critical time of new nation building.

Dear Comrades

Without false pretence or assumed humility, I asked members of the Leadership Council to choose a leader, and affirmed to them that I would loyally follow whomever they chose. My concern then was consensus and unity of the party and for the sake of that unity I was ready to sacrifice life, not only a position. But once I consensually assumed the leadership, I expected everyone who worked under me to know where the buck ends.

The challenges I faced and had to address were many: establishing and building from scratch the institutions of governance at the level of Southern Sudan and states, ensuring women representation at all levels of government, reconciliation and absorption of Other Armed Groups, reorganizing the SPLA into a professional army, maintaining peace and

security, and reconstructing the SPLM from the grassroots level as a party that would compete with other parties in a multi-party democracy. In addition, there were national duties as the First Vice President, a responsibility bestowed on me in the CPA by virtue of being the Chairman of the SPLM.

There was also the paramount responsibility to manage expectations and provide peace dividends, particularly provision of security, basic education, primary health care and clean drinking water as well as ensuring food security and assisting the return of IDPs and refugees. Our people never asked their leaders for unrealistic demands, all what they wanted, was to reap the fruits of peace after the end of a war to which they have selflessly contributed. Have we managed to live up to their expectations? The answer is Yes and No.

Dear Comrades

During the last three years, we were able to create a Southern Sudan government and a new Legislature. The institutions of governance in the ten Southern states were established and they have been provided with the necessary resources to carry out their functions relatively well. The SPLA is in the process of being slowly, but surely, transformed into a professional army. I am glad to announce that the SPLA is now capable of defending not only the territory of Southern Sudan and its people but also that of the Sudan at large as

being part of the National Armed Forces, A Southern Sudan Judiciary was established and is now in the hands of some of our finest and competent judges. A process of reconciliation has been initiated through agreements with different groups, including those designated by the CPA as “other armed groups” and that resulted in Juba Declaration. Peace has been gradually restored among communities in Southern Sudan, though occasionally marred either by conflict over resources or by spillovers from outside insurgence.

As for the reconstitution of the SPLM, today’s meeting is the resonant proof of our success in this regard as we have around 2,500 delegates from all parts of Sudan, from Nimule to Halfa and from Jennina to Kassala and Port Sudan, most ethnic groups of Sudan, youth, women, war veterans, widows, person’s with disabilities, Diaspora, elderly, chiefs and various professionals.

At the national level, the SPLM has taken its rightful place in the National Legislature and Executive and I, Your Chairman, have occupied my rightful place in the newly created Institution of the Presidency, with functions clearly defined in the CPA and Interim National Constitution. Those positions were among the fruits of the CPA and the struggle of both the SPLM and the fearless SPLA.

Nonetheless, when our Late Leader Dr. John Garang at Naivasha, or myself at Machakos, affixed our names to the peace protocols, we were neither seeking positions, nor fighting for a democracy devoid of any social, economic or cultural content. The SPLM, for over two decades, was fighting against a formidable coalition of political and economic inequities. These inequities must be removed for good, if the Sudan is to remain intact. The CPA, Dear Comrades, was well – designed to achieve this purpose. Together with our co – signatory, the then Government of Sudan represented by the National Congress Party (NCP), we pledged ourselves to carry out the Agreement in letter and spirit.

Dear Comrades

The CPA is a major constitutional development after independence as it provides a framework for new nation building, decentralization, democratic transformation, national reconciliation and new economic governance. Despite the fact that the CPA do provide a framework for realizing the vision of the New Sudan, the CPA is not an end in itself nor will it replace the New Sudan vision. As described by our Late Leader Dr. John Garang, the CPA is a “Mini-New Sudan” as it provides us with the required framework for the continued pursuit of the objective of New Sudan purely through political means as well as providing us with a golden opportunity to translate our vision of the New Sudan into a working political programme.

Dear Comrades

The implementation of the CPA continues in fits and starts. Though a lot has been achieved, there are still cardinal issues to be addressed. Without addressing those issues, we can hardly claim that we are out of the woods. The non – implementation of those issues made me, with the support of the SPLM (INC), to instruct all advisors, ministers and state ministers to withdraw from the Government of National Unity (GoNU) in October 2007. On 27th December of that year the two parties to the CPA, using mechanisms for consultation provided for in the Agreement, resolved some of the issues and established a road map with definitive time lines for addressing areas of disagreement.

You are entitled, Dear Comrades to know where we stand today on those issues. To be definitively resolved are the issues of Abyie Protocol, national reconciliation and democratic transformation. In addition, we raised in that meeting the prevailing hostilities towards the SPLM in some Khartoum publications as well as measures to be taken so that unity of Sudan becomes attractive to the people of Southern Sudan as provided for in the CPA. Recently we were about to bring the conduct of the population census to a halt as National Congress Party, contrary to the provisions of CPA and our constitution, refused to include the questions related to ethnicity and religion in the census questionnaire.

Dear Comrades

Abyei Protocol is the only Protocol of the CPA that is not implemented, in spite of the fact that it is one of the clearest components of the CPA and lack of its implementation will question the genuineness of the desire of our partner to put this problem behind us. The report of Abyei Boundaries Commission is not only final and binding but all independent legal opinions confirmed this simple and straightforward fact. Although we are still engaged with the National Congress Party to find amicable means of implementing the Abyei Protocol, we should not deprive the people of Abyei from enjoying the fruits of peace and that is why I appointed Cde Edward Lino Abyei to organize our people politically and socially, coordinate the work of UN and NGOs in providing humanitarian assistance, and prepare ground for full implementation of Abyei Protocol.

As regards to national reconciliation, we are obligated by the CPA and the INC to initiate a process of national reconciliation and healing so that national consensus can be achieved on all issues fundamental to the stability, good governance and well-being of the Sudanese people. There is no other way of making the Agreement to be owned by all Sudanese except through an inclusive process of national reconciliation. At the level of the Presidency, we have recommitted ourselves to a process of national reconciliation and agreed on procedures and timelines for implementation.

The process of democratic transformation called for by the CPA and INC, still leaves a lot to be desired, even though we have gone a long way in creating an environment for an incremental widening of the political space. Human Rights were upheld in a Bill of Rights which is now entrenched in the National and Southern Sudan Constitutions. The Rule of Law was solemnly recognized in both Constitutions. Institutions to monitor, or protect, those rights were, or are to be, created.

Despite all those achievements, Dear Comrades, the Bill of Rights shall remain a hollow shell so long that it is undermined by the existence of laws that are not in conformity with the provisions of the INC. The law enforcement agencies in our national capital still maintain the same pre-CPA attitude and practices of working with impunity, so is the seeming reluctance of the judiciary to upset laws that are repugnant to the constitution, which is the supreme law of the land. Truly, we have agreed to hold elections next year as per the provisions of the CPA and the INC. But to hold those elections in a free and fair environment, we need to have the right laws and right institutions with right attitudes.

Dear Comrades,

Frequently, the SPLM (INC and IPB) passed resolutions distancing themselves from actions such as the unlawful detention of politicians, censorship of the press, banning of lawful assemblies, and intimidation of political leaders. That was why the SPLM ranked those

issues high in its agenda when it withdrew its political officers from the Government of National Unity. However, in the Presidency, we concluded that all those practices should stop. The continuation of those practices, at whatever lower level, is an act of insubordination and insubordinate perpetrators of those unconstitutional practices are left with no other choice than to shape up or ship out.

Concerning the sustained and deliberate campaign against the SPLM, SPLA and GoSS by some known newspapers and columnists in the Khartoum press, I have this to say. The SPLM, with me as its head, believes in total freedom of the press as provided for in the Constitution. We have whole heartedly embraced criticism of some of our views and practices. We shall continue to do so. But outright lies and the circulation of falsified documents are acts criminalized by law and disallowed by the Constitution. While the Constitution guarantees rights to citizens, it also imposes obligations and responsibilities on them. In view of that, the SPLM drew attention to press publications disallowed by the Constitution and punishable under the law. In no single case did the agencies entrusted with the regulation of the press or applying the law, bother to look into false news or seditious features addressed against the SPLM, SPLA and GoSS, and in a sustained manner. I leave it to you, Dear Comrades, to draw up your own conclusions.

Dear Comrades

There are elements in Southern Sudan, including few SPLM cadres, who want us to withdraw southwards and forget about what happens in Khartoum, contrary to the provisions of the CPA and INC. Let me tell you that it is humiliating for Southern Sudanese, after championing the national liberation, to reduce themselves, in their own country, to sub-national level instead of shaping and directing the national strategic direction of the Sudan. The people of Southern Sudan know better that it was the SPLM which asserted, as never before, the right of Southern Sudan to liberty, dignity and rightful place under the sun. Evidently, in doing that, the SPLM followed the foot-steps of other Southern Sudan freedom fighters and learned from their success and failures. Furthermore, only grudging politicians would ever deny that the SPLM was the first political Party emerging from Southern Sudan that had convincingly articulated Southern Sudanese aspirations in their political, economic and cultural dimensions and made them achievable.

As for the few elements within the SPLM who were induced to those views, I also have a word. Our Party has a vision and a mission and without that vision and mission, it would not have been able to reach the heights it now occupies. Our vision of a New Sudan survived the test of time. I know as you do, Dear Comrades, that some of our ill – advised comrades have persuaded themselves that the passing of the mantle of power from our late Chairman to my humble person was a signal of change in our course.

All the same, the barren debate continued even after my speech on the commemoration of the Second Anniversary of the CPA right here in Juba. In that speech, I said the following:

Quote “There are certain elements who wish to divide us into Awlad Garang and Awlad, I do not know who. I therefore unequivocally say that our late leader, may his soul rest in eternal peace, has bequeathed on us, alongside the CPA, a vision and a message. This vision and that message have impressed themselves on our minds and to them we remain committed”. By those words, I call upon those who wish to see us divided to abandon their illusions and delusions” **End of Quote.**

Those words seemed to have fallen on deaf ears. I reiterated the same message in the meeting of the INC in Juba, March 2008. Still, the same verbal and written trash continues to be diffused, especially by a sector of the Khartoum media encouraged by its informers from our midst. I know, Dear Comrades, in some quarters in our country heads turn when the name of Garang, or the words SPLM vision, hit the ears. From now on, let those heads turn till head and body go to orbit. From now on also, let no one amongst you say that the SPLM mission cannot be achieved. IT MUST BE ACHIEVED.

Dear Comrades,

There are still two milestones in front of us as a party: the general elections next year and the referendum in 2011. There is no way for us to successfully reach those milestones

without clarity of vision and unity of rank. As for the elections, we need to organize ourselves in a timely manner. To that end, I have formed an Electoral Committee to fine tune our political agenda. We will effectively compete in the upcoming general elections on the basis of programmes and issues, not slogans and rhetoric. Elections are not cattle markets where votes are sold and bought. They are democratic exercises in which eligible men and women voters pass their verdict on contesting candidates and parties. On that score, the SPLM has a lot to say.

We have a vision and programmes on social and economic transformation, on combating poverty, on realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), on taking towns to rural areas, on respect of diversity, on gender equality, on the reversal of incidence of HIV/Aids and other endemic disease such as Malaria, on reconciliation and healing process, on our natural resources and environment, on foreign policy and regional and international cooperation, on referendum to the people of Southern Sudan and Abyei and on popular consultation to the people of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile.

Those, Dear Comrades, are mighty objectives that need to be translated into well-thought programmes within national, Southern Sudan and states plans that must be formulated in close consultation with the people at all the appropriate grass root levels. The SPLM

Secretariat at levels must be restructured to include qualified, competent and self-less officers who are capable to carry out the above tasks.

Dear Comrades

As you are well aware, the SPLM shall compete in the upcoming elections all over Sudan. Amongst you in this Convention are 500 members representing, not only all Northern states but also all administrative districts within those states. The Sudan, from Nimule to Halfa and from Ginena to Kassala is no more a slogan. It is a living reality you have seen today by your own eyes. What you see here is the New Sudan in the making. And if you have chosen as a slogan for this Convention: No to War: Yes for the New Sudan, then it is incumbent on all of us to make this slogan become a reality.

Dear Comrades

Let us be very clear about one issue. There is no peace without Darfur. The untold suffering of the people of Darfur must end. We said several times to stop war in Darfur, yet we are witnessing everyday increased suffering of civil population in Darfur. How can we say that we are at peace with Darfur burning! Decades of war in the South should have taught us that civil wars are not winnable at the barrel of a gun, only through comprehension of the root causes of conflict and a spirit of conciliation and fair-mindedness in addressing and resolving them. This spirit is required from all sides to the conflict. On our side as a party

and without relinquishing our responsibilities within GoNU, we were, and continue to be, engaged in persuading Darfurian movements to unite their ranks and clearly articulate their demands. Nonetheless, despite vast human displacements and tragic killings, there are some who still claim that all is well in Darfur. Comrades, Darfur is not well. So, it is the height of irresponsibility to deny those realities. It is morally unacceptable to dismiss national, regional and international appeals for the immediate resolution of the Darfur conflict. The political, constitutional and moral duty of the national government, with the SPLM included, is to bring a just peace to Darfur. Let us hope that the recent tragic events in Khartoum, which we denounced, shall be the last **WAKEUP CALL**.

Dear Comrades,

As I stated earlier, we have not realized the aspirations of our people. Why? Peace, Comrades, has no meaning without providing our people with their basic needs. And democracy is not an automatic vaccination against social and economic ills. Our people want shelter, health care, education, clean drinking water and decent means of livelihoods. They want to know how efficiently we have used the resources to meet those needs. That, with regret, did not happen. To begin with, our new government in Southern Sudan lacked adequate competent and trained personnel in key civil service positions. It lacked necessary laws, regulations and systems for good governance and prudent public financial management. It inherited from the liberation era a system, dictated by the logic and priorities

of armed struggle, and whose lines of demarcation between military and civilian responsibilities were blurred. It also inherited from the previous administration a bloated civil service that was only a civil service by name. It was merely a congregation of cronies whose only service to government was to receive salaries by the end of the month. Though we had started before the establishment of GoSS, with a comprehensive capacity building programmes, with assistance from our international partners, the process still needs time to realize the results.

Dear Comrade

This managerial inadequacy was coupled with a serious phenomenon that could not be justified under any guise. The name of that phenomenon is corruption; I mean corruption in all its forms: embezzlement, nepotism, use of public assets for private gain and kickbacks.

Dear Comrades, let me tell you loud and clear that those practices are rampant at all levels of government in the Sudan. As the SPLM is the major political party that is in charge of government affairs in Southern Sudan, we are morally bound to vigorously fight the war on corruption. Our commitment to “zero-tolerance” to corruption needs to be the responsibility of every one of us and we have no other option except to win this noble war against corruption. It is shameful.

On the other side, the SPLM as a political party needs to set example in managing its resources in prudent, transparent and accountable manner. It is your responsibility here to issue appropriate directives and pass appropriate resolutions regarding integrity in the SPLM and prudent use of its resources and finances. The SPLM is preparing a Code of Conduct for our leaders at all levels of our structure, which I expect each of us to follow strictly. So, while I shall not relent in fighting this virus called corruption, I still need your support: from within the Party, government, the legislature, civil society organizations and media, so that together we can get rid of this disease.

Dear Comrades

As for the second milestone, we are destined to reach in 2011, the SPLM First Convention had clearly stipulated the Party's position on the issue of voluntary unity within the framework of a New Sudan Vision. This vision of bringing about radical and fundamental change in the Sudan is based on the correct and visionary definition of the central problem of Sudan as embedded in the concept of "Old Sudan", which is characterized by racism, religious intolerance, instability and wars. The New Sudan is a Sudan, which is based on what unites and not on what divides, a Sudan which lives in peace within itself and its neighbours, and with the rest of humanity, and a Sudan which is united by the voluntary and free will of its people and achieved through the exercise of the right to self-determination, unlike the Old Sudan that was imposed from the top by a small elite.

To achieve voluntary unity, the First Convention recognized the right to self – determination for the people of Southern Sudan as a means for ascertaining the people’s choice. The recognition of that right is now cast in stone, from Asmara in 1995 to Machakos in 2004. The CPA did not only acknowledge that right, but it also set a date for its exercise, defined its objective, and mapped out procedures leading to it. The decision on voluntary unity ultimately rests with the people of Southern Sudan who are, and should remain, masters of their own destiny. The referendum provided for in the CPA gives constitutional right to the people of Southern Sudan to make a choice between (1) confirming “unity of Sudan by voting to sustain the system of government established under the CPA and the INC” or (2) “vote for secession”.

This contention, Dear Comrades, leads me to the crucial issue of making unity attractive. If the system of government established by the CPA was to end at giving Southern Sudan the powers and competences allocated to it by the CPA and leave the other parts of Sudan to the charm of the Old Sudan, then the word “Unity” becomes meaningless in political sense. If the old bad ways of the old Sudan continue, then the unity shall have no value added. For example, if the dictates of the CPA and the Constitution are not fully implemented and respected, then unity shall be of no attraction. If Southern Sudan represented in GoNU by the SPLM or any other political parties, is reduced to a rubber stamp, then unity shall have

no attraction to the people of Southern Sudan. And if the rights guaranteed by the CPA and the Constitution to the marginalized people of Sudan who stood shoulder to shoulder by their comrades in Southern Sudan, are not respected in the manner provided for in the CPA and the Constitution, then unity shall not be attractive to the people of Southern Sudan. And if the process of democratization ushered in by the CPA and the INC with a view of leading the Sudan to fully – fledged democracy, then unity shall cease to be a prize worth fighting for. That is why, Dear Comrades, the SPLM continues to urge our partners to work with us for the full implementation of the CPA, in letter and spirit. Delaying the full implementation of some critical provisions of the CPA such as the Abyei Protocol would make the unity of Sudan not only less attractive, but we will be reminding the people of Southern Sudan of the “Old Sudan”.

Dear Comrades,

In our meeting at the Presidency in which we discussed the unfinished peace agenda, we also revisited the issue of making unity attractive and agreed on measures to be taken by the national government to initiate and implement national development projects in Southern Sudan and other marginalized areas. In that respect, we deliberated and agreed upon for the Central Government to initiate development projects in Southern Sudan such as the infrastructure development, particularly road, rail and waterway links between North and South, provision of social services, especially health, education and clean water, and

promoting and encouraging Northern investment in the South. If these were to commence and be achieved, the probability of making unity attractive to the ordinary Southern Sudan citizen might build up. The responsibility to make unity attractive, therefore, is mutual. It takes two to tango.

Whatever the outcome of the referendum is, Southern Sudan shall continue to be a good neighbor of Northern Sudan. Geography, history, culture, shared values and common economic interests will dictate that the two entities live with each other in harmony, friendship and cooperation. President Bashir, has often repeated that he shall respect the will of the people of Southern Sudan in the event they decide to secede, and I respect him for that. Let me also say that, we in the SPLM, while striving to make unity attractive within the framework of the New Sudan Vision shall respect and protect the will of the people of Southern Sudan. We believe that even if the South decides to secede, the SPLM shall continue to pursue its political agenda of New Sudan Vision in the two entities and shall as well promote and ensure that the two entities co-exist in harmony and cooperation.

Dear Comrades

Before closing, allow me to undertake the pleasant duty of expressing my sincere gratitude to all those who stood by the SPLM, especially during difficult times of our liberation struggle. There is no any other better occasion than this Convention, Dear Comrades, to remember with appreciation governments, peoples, NGOs, UN agencies and other institutions, who stood by our side during hard times.

I shall be remiss if I don't bring to memory the United Nations Humanitarian Agencies particularly, UNICEF and its former Executive Director, Mr. James Grant, who established from scratch "Operation Lifeline Sudan". I would like to seize this opportunity to extend my profound appreciation to the binternational community for their continuous support to our post-conflict reconstruction and development as well reflected in their generous pledges in the First and Third Sudan Consortium held in Oslo, Norway. In particular, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the government and people of Norway, United Nations and the World Bank for successfully organizing the Second Sudan Consortium in Norway.

Dear Comrades,

By holding this Convention, we should, Dear Comrades, congratulate ourselves in the SPLM for having shown to the Sudanese people that we are a democratic party destined to lead this nation as a people's party. I am extremely happy that women and youth as heart of our Movement have managed to get their proper representation at all levels of our structure.

We have to show to the Sudanese people and the international community that SPLM is truly a party of change different from the “Old Sudan”, and above all a party for the marginalized people. With this Convention let us together start ringing loudly the bells of freedom, equality, democracy and peace till the voice of the marginalized people is heard in all villages and towns of Sudan and a real change is realized in the next general elections.

As some of us may loose in the process of elections to key positions, we should not forget that we are comrades and we should show our togetherness and unity and support the newly elected members in comradely spirit. As delegates, I would like each of you to provide leadership and promote the spirit of unity, democracy and comradeship during the deliberations of the Convention. Our people have high expectations on the SPLM and we should live up to their expectations by making SPLM a true democratic party. The road of democracy that we have chosen is not an easy one as it may be bumpy and thorny in the short run but I am confident that it will eventually be smooth with positive results.

We have nothing but to make SPLM champion our noble march of democratic transformation within the vision of New Sudan as Old Sudan has taken us to a dead end. In the spirit of democracy, I declare before you that, from now on, all positions to be elected by the Convention including the one I now occupy shall be open to competition through democratic process. Inspired by the selfless sacrifices of our fallen heroes and heroines, I

pledge before God and your august assembly that I shall abide by your decision and choice and I am committed whatever the outcome of your decision to continue serving as a committed and loyal SPLM member and I would like all of you to do the same.

With those words I conclude my remarks, declaring the SPLM Second National Convention open, wishing you success in your deliberations and a happy stay in Juba.

**SPLM Oyee, SPLM Oyee,
No War But Peace with New Sudan**

Thank You and God Bless You