



**DEPUTY SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL,
RESIDENT COORDINATOR AND HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR INTRODUCTION REMARKS – ECOSOC
MEETING 21 JULY 2021**

Good Afternoon Colleagues and greetings from South Sudan.

I wish to thank you for the opportunity to provide a brief introduction to the South Sudan topic **covering the context, response and outlook**. My name is Arafat Jamal, RC/HC ai for South Sudan and representative of UNHCR.

Regarding the country context, I want to start with the peace process. Since the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in 2018, considerable progress towards peace has been made, with a reduction in conflict-related violence throughout the country, although intercommunal violence has increased.

In March 2020, the Presidency, comprising the President, the First Vice-President and four Vice-Presidents, was constituted on 22 February 2020. The appointment of governors for the 10 states and deputy governors and commissioners has been finalized.

Nonetheless, we note slow progress on some pre-transitional tasks, including the training and redeployment of a unified force, the reconstitution of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and the appointment the Council of States, and ensuring that 35 per cent of posts in the executive were to be allocated to women. Currently only, only one of the governors appointed to date is a woman.

On the economy, we noted recovery in 2018 and 2019 and growth rate projected at 10 per cent for 2021 but recent estimates for the year point to an economic contraction of about 4–5 per cent. **The South Sudanese pound depreciated from about 280 pounds per \$1 in March 2020 to about 600 pounds per \$1 in December 2020. The 2020/2021 budget indicated a fiscal deficit of more than 50 per cent of the \$1.3 billion budget, and national budget for 2020/21 has not yet been approved.**

Relatedly, the coronavirus disease significantly slowed the economy due to lockdown measures and the plummeting of global oil demand, resulted in low price of oil and large decrease in exports and national revenue. **Children and youth also suffered considerably in terms of education owing to the absence of reliable telecommunications systems and resources for children to access educational platforms.**

On the Humanitarian, the needs were dire in 2020 and remain high in 2021. According to the 2021 humanitarian needs overview, **some 8.3 million people are estimated to be in need of assistance, an increase of 800,000 people from the previous year. In addition, some 483,382 pregnant or lactating women acutely malnourished need treatment.**

Heavy floods affected more than 800,000 people for two consecutive years (2019 and 2020), with women and children being the most impacted. **A spontaneous return of 1.1 million internally displaced people has been reported since 2016, and some 360,000 refugees have returned to South Sudan from the neighboring countries since 2017.**



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UN Response

Despite such daunting challenges, the United Nations country team responded swiftly and in a flexible manner - For example,

The funds for activities that could not be implemented owing to COVID-19 restrictions were redirected to activities such as the manufacturing of face masks and soap and educational programmes delivered via radio so that children in lockdown could continue learning.

The United Nations supported the strengthening of national dialogue with the government and national partners for example -

The UN coordinated Government and the wider donor community to engage in focused and constructive dialogue for the United Nations Cooperation Framework 2019–2021, **which was signed in 2019. In 2018, the interim Cooperation Framework, delivered \$172 million. In 2019, it delivered \$213 million, and in 2020, it delivered about \$203 million.**

A key element of the United Nations work in South Sudan is the triple -nexus approach to ensure coherence across peace, humanitarian and development activities. **This translates into increased localized dialogue to foster recovery and resilience in areas that are stable enough to allow the inclusive convening of local stakeholders willing and able to work to achieve progress.**

In October 2020, the Government convened a similar high-level meeting with development partners, which included bilateral donors, international financial institutions, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and government leaders. The dialogues have contributed to the reactivation of the sector working groups.

Additionally, the South Sudan reconciliation, stabilization and resilience trust fund has remained a strong coordination and transparent mechanism to support the partnership and resilience. The fund budget increased from \$11,729,287 in 2019 to \$13,093,054 in 2020.

The international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank are active participants in the activities of the United Nations country team in South Sudan and provide significant funding for programme implementation by United Nations agencies, funds and programmes on a partnership basis.

The United Nations country team, in close collaboration with stakeholders and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), **concluded a peace and conflict analysis and identified entry points and opportunities for stakeholder collaboration and joint programming.**



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Humanitarian organizations reached more than 7.3 million people with humanitarian assistance and protection services in 2020. This represented 97 per cent of the revised target of 7.6 million people through the humanitarian response plan for 2020. As at 31 December 2020, \$1.1 billion was secured against the \$1.9 billion requested in the plan.

Finally on outlook -

I would like to reflect the following points:

A successful political transition in South Sudan is fundamental for its future.

This requires progress in three broad areas: political and governance issues; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former fighters and security sector reform; and improvements in the humanitarian and human rights situation.

Some key benchmarks are transparency and accountability of the public finances system, women's 35 per cent representation, disarmament of former combatants and the establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission.

The National Development Strategy review is expected to be finalized later this year and this is important for coherent and coordinated development planning and the identification of joint national priorities and although the sector working groups were revived in 2020, they remain operationally weak.

Returnees from both internal displacements and outside the country will continue to face increasing needs in areas such as food security, social services, housing or land and require support.

The ongoing economic reforms, including the efforts of the National Revenue Authority, are promising and need to be implemented fully – especially those pursuing transparency and accountability.

Provision of basic social protection services, such as better education and health care, should help reduce violence, boost the inclusion of vulnerable segments such as youth with few job opportunities and reduce negative effects on others, such as girls, women or people with disabilities. Protection of vulnerable segments is crucial.

While its effects are difficult to predict, according to the Climate Change Vulnerability Index 2017, South Sudan is among the most vulnerable countries to climate change. Natural disasters such as floods happen frequently and often result in severe food shortages, with 1.7 million women and children estimated to be acutely malnourished. Hence, a new flagship initiative on disaster risk reduction for floods is urgently required.

The country team will continue to nurture efficient linkages with other development partners, including the World Bank, the African Development Bank and bilateral donors, leveraging new



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capacities and tools that are now in place in the context of the repositioning of the United Nations development system.

Lastly, the reduction of violence in all its forms, including sexual and gender-based violence, is another fundamental prerequisite for progress in South Sudan. Preventing violence can have very positive returns, by minimizing the high risk of conflict over land and property when internally displaced people and refugees return to their homes after a long time and find new occupants on their land and properties.

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