

REMARKS BY AUHIP CHAIRPERSON, AT THE CEREMONY TO ANNOUNCE THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE SOUTH SUDAN REFERENDUM

KHARTOUM, FEBRUARY 7, 2011.

Mr. THABO MBEKI

Professor Ibrahim Khalil, Chairperson of the South Sudan Referendum Commission,

Justice Chan Reec Madut, Deputy Chairperson of the Commission,

Members of the Commission,

Your Excellencies President Omar al-Bashir and First Vice President Salva Kiir Mayardit,

Ministers and leaders of the people of Sudan,

Your Excellency Mr. Antonio Montero, Member of the UN Secretary General's Special Panel on the Referenda,

SRSO Haile Menkerios,

Your Excellencies Ambassadors and Members of the diplomatic corps,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen:

During the week of the referendum our Panel was privileged directly to observe the process of the exercise of the right to self determination by the people of South Sudan.

Naturally, as was the case with the voters, none of us could be oblivious to the historic importance of the occasion and the process, which would determine whether Sudan would remain one country or separate into two independent states.

Given the significance of the moment, it was imperative that the referendum should be conducted in a manner which ensured that the people of South Sudan exercised their right in such a way that the legitimacy of the outcome should both be clear and not subject to any question or controversy relating to its integrity and credibility.

As we observed the people vote and interacted with the staff at the voting centres it was clear to us that everything had been done to guarantee the free participation of the voters as well as the credibility of the referendum.

Like all of us here we were conscious of the severe pressures of various kinds under which the Referendum Commission had to work to discharge its challenging mandate.

We are pleased to take advantage of this occasion to convey our heartfelt congratulations to Professor Khalil and Justice Chan, the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Commission and their colleagues on the Commission for the outstanding work they did which resulted in the unquestionable success of the referendum.

We also convey similar congratulations to the thousands of Sudanese who served as the staff of the Commission and carried out their work with exemplary discipline and dedication.

We are also honoured to convey our sincere appreciation to the SRSO Haile Menkerios and UNMIS for the sterling work they did to provide the Commission with the logistical support without which it would not have been possible to hold the referendum on time and with the efficiency that was achieved.

Similarly we must express our appreciation of the impeccable manner in which all the Sudanese people and the political parties conducted themselves to facilitate a free and fair process which took place in conditions of peace and the absence of such tension as might have compromised the integrity of the referendum.

We are pleased that by this means, the political parties, regardless of their views in favour of or against the secession of the South, kept their word with regard to respecting the commitment they made when they signed the Code of Conduct.

Once again we would like to convey our unqualified tribute to their Excellencies President Omar al-Bashir and First Vice President and President of the GoSS, Salva Kiir Mayardit, for everything they did which made it possible for the people of South Sudan to exercise their right to self-determination, to which the Government of Sudan and the SPLM had committed themselves when they signed the CPA in 2005.

At its recent Summit Meeting held on January 30th and 31st, the African Union unanimously adopted a vitally important Solemn Declaration on Sudan. Among other things the Declaration says:

“We congratulate the people of Sudan on the successful achievement of the principal pillar of the January 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the referendum on self-determination for southern Sudan. This success confirms the commitment of the Sudanese people and their leaders never to return to war, and hitherto to resolve any differences that may arise exclusively by peaceful means...

”Sudan has the utmost importance to the African continent. It spans the diversity of our continent, bringing our peoples together in a great melting pot. The achievement of peace, democracy and development in northern and southern Sudan promises to help lift the entire continent. Sudan’s ability to overcome the formidable obstacles in its path stands as a testament to Africa’s capacity to resolve its conflicts and achieve our common goals. Conversely, Africa cannot afford to see Sudan again plunge into turmoil...

“We express Africa’s solidarity with the entire Sudanese people, and welcome equally North and South Sudan and the emerging post-referendum situation, as building blocks for the ongoing project of African integration. Having achieved peace, the Sudanese people are now able fully to participate as effective actors and beneficiaries in the common African endeavour of shared prosperity and continental unity.”

We are convinced that as they did to ensure the success of the South Sudan referendum, the esteemed leaders of the Sudanese people, led by President Bashir and First Vice President Salva Kiir, will live up to

the expectations of both the Sudanese people and the African Continent as a whole for lasting peace, a better life for all the people of northern and southern Sudan, and the contribution of both countries to the further upliftment of Africa.

Our Panel is privileged that it has the opportunity to work with the leaders of the sister people of this important African country to achieve these objectives.

Once more, we convey our sincere congratulations to the people of Southern Sudan for the successful exercise of their right to self determination, as well as to the Government of Sudan, the SPLM, the Referendum Commission, UNMIS and everybody else who ensured the success of the referendum.

Thank you.