

## **South Sudan Women Platform for Peace and South Sudan YWCA Position Paper on the Framework for Political Negotiations toward a Settlement of the Crisis in South Sudan**

South Sudan Women Platform for Peace (WPP) consists of different women's groups, organizations and individual women activists who are concerned about the ongoing conflict in South Sudan and its impact on the most vulnerable people like women, girls, children, and disabled people of South Sudan. The Platform seeks to effectively engage women in peace building and conflict mitigation and continuously advocate for the inclusion of women in peace building efforts at all levels. It further seeks to ensure that women's interest is adequately addressed in the peace agreement.

WPP activities were coordinated by EVE Organization for Women Development based in Juba. The Vision of EVE Organization is ***"Peaceful, Empowered and Developed Women in South Sudan"***.

The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) of South Sudan is a non-governmental non-profit organization with its headquarters in Yambio, Western Equatoria State. YWCA is a local initiated membership based organization formed in 1997 with 8 local branches.

The purpose of the organization is to support programmes and projects that promote the development of leadership qualities of women and girls, and those that target at achieving peace, justice, health, human dignity and sustainable environment and the fulfillment of basic needs amongst women and girls in South Sudan.

WPP and YWCA appreciate the ongoing efforts by the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) to

end hostilities and resolve the conflict in South Sudan through a multi-stakeholder negotiated peace agreement. SSWPP and YWCA believe that the right way forward is a stronger and more committed inclusion of women and women's groups in the mediation process. During the decades of war in South Sudan, while men took up guns to liberate and defend the rights of South Sudanese; women were predominantly maintaining the social fabric of the society by caring for the elderly, provide food and shelter for the families. Some women fought alongside men in front line while others played a role of advocacy and lobbying for the rights of South Sudanese. All these were done in an effort to liberate the people of South Sudan. However many men during this period chose to direct violence towards women whom they were expected to protect and limited women's participation in decision making. We therefore believe that both men and women did contribute to liberate South Sudan and this crucial experience is an integral part of our history and must not be ignored but rather benefit the ongoing efforts for a just and sustainable peace.

WPP during a number of consultations with women had discussed the framework for political negotiations towards a settlement of the crisis in South Sudan and the principals that will form the basis for the negotiated agreement in Addis Ababa. The recommendations from the consultations are as follows;

### **1. Women's position in the peace mediation**

- . a) With the goal of reflecting a representative section of the population *the number of participants from all stakeholders at the mediation shall constitute at least 40% women*
- . b) To ensure the concerns of women and girls are

satisfactory emphasized, *the mediation team should have at least 30% women mediators.*

## **2. Women's Position in the transitional government**

- . a) *The pre-transitional period duration shall be three (3) months, which will commence upon signing and ratification of the peace agreement. This period is meant to allow for the necessary changes needed in the current government structure before the transitional government can come into effect.*
- . b) *The transitional government should be given a mandate for a maximum of four (4) years without any room for further extension. These four years will allow the transitional government to perform the necessary reforms required to put the country back on track such as a national reconciliation and healing process, reforms in the government institutions, review of the transitional constitution, conduct census and finally lead the country to free, fair and credible elections. During the transition period; the Government must prioritize programmes in addressing health, education and infrastructure as such investments are fundamental to achieve development.*
- . c) *A gender representative executive will create ownership and recognition amongst the population of South Sudan and consequently build trust with its citizens. The transitional government must have at least one qualified female representative in the Executive. The gender representation should be included in the amendment of the transitional constitution.*
- . d) *The National Legislative Assembly has a crucial role to play in the transition period in passing legislations and bills and to ensure effectiveness. The position of*

speaker should reflect the gender representation in parliament and be nominated amongst men and women on a rotational basis. Unlike previously, the speaker during the transitional period should consequently be female.

- . e) For an effective, result focused and people's driven government, the transition government should be a lean government at the national level with a maximum of 18 Ministries inclusive core Ministries such as Foreign Affairs, Defense, Interior and Finance.<sup>5</sup> Women should at-least be minister in two of the core ministries and out of the remaining at-least 7 ministers should constitute women from the diversity of South Sudan. *We as a country need to build trust in our Government and Government institutions, hence appropriate checks and balances must be introduced at all Government levels to ensure a standard of good governance through transparency and accountability*
- . f) To redress the imbalances created by the impact of war on the women of South Sudan and the marginalization; *women including the young women shall constitute 40% of all the institutions at all levels of the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGONU)* at both National and state levels. This should include all commissions established. The Criteria of selection of women should be determined by a committee and should be transparent and based on merit and fair representation of the diversity of South Sudan.
- . g) *In order to increase effective women's participation at all levels of Government in accordance with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325/2000 (UNSCR 1325/2000), a training program to boost the capacity of potential female candidates must be put in*

*place and conducted at all levels.*

- . *h) During the transitional period; specific funds should be allocated to women programs including capacity building, improved livelihoods and economic status of women in South Sudan.*
- . *i) Programmes of relief, rehabilitation, repatriation and resettlement of IDPs and refugees targeting especially children, youth and women should be established. Its composition should include the government, national organizations including women's organizations, the UN and other international humanitarian Organizations.*
- . *j) National reconciliation and healing programmes must include truth telling, investigation of sexual and gender based violence and reparation for girls and women survivors, tracing of children and reunion of families and set up of psychosocial support for the survivors of the conflict including the child soldiers and women.*

*Date: 1<sup>st</sup> August 2014*

*Signed:*