

Revised



**STATEMENT**

**BY**

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**AT THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL EVENT AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL MEETING OF MEMBER  
STATES OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO COMMEMORATE THE 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1951  
CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES AND THE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
1961 CONVENTION ON THE REDUCTION OF STATELESSNESS**

*GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, 8 December 2011*

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Mr. President:

At the outset, allow me on behalf of my government to congratulate the UNHCR for its role in helping millions of refugees to resettle in places where they could be safe to raise their families. And on behalf of my delegation and my own behalf, I express sincere gratitude to the High Commissioner, Mr. Antonio Gutierrez, for the unrivalled dedication to guide the UNHCR to where it is today.

It has been four months since the declaration of the independence of the Republic of South Sudan, on July 09, 2011. In spite challenges of nation-building, my country is cognizant of the importance of taking care of the most vulnerable people—refugees, the stateless, and the IDPs. One month after the declaration of the independence of the Republic of South Sudan, we have nominated a committee for drafting our National Refugee Bill.

We are concerned about the difficulties that refugees face, and conscious that these problems may escalate further due to the increasing number of large-scale movements of population in surrounding countries. Therefore, the Government of South Sudan is dedicated on enacting, by the end of this year, its Refugee Bill that will deal with the following: [1]to provide for reception into South Sudan of asylum seekers; [2] to regulate applications for recognition of refugee status; and [3] to provide rights and obligations flowing from the status. On the adoption of the Refugee Bill, we shall nominate three commissioners for refugees who shall be deployed to the most sensitive States of the Country where refugee influx in highest, namely Upper Nile, Unity, and Western Equatoria States.

The Government of South Sudan has formed a committee to prepare notes for accession and ratification of the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees and its 1967 Protocol as well as the 1969 Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa, and commits itself to give immediate effect within the Republic of South Sudan to said relevant international legal instruments, principles, and standards relating to refugee protection.

#### **Pledges Relating to Statelessness**

Mr. President,

The Republic of South Sudan, as the world newest independent country, is facing multifaceted priorities. However, among all the issues demanding the attention of the Government, there is no greater priority than to prevent statelessness, since citizenship is a fundamental right for everybody.

Acknowledging the importance of developing a comprehensive strategy to prevent and address statelessness in the country, the Government of South Sudan has already enacted a National Bill that entered in to force on July 07, 2011, that should protect people from statelessness.

The importance of documentation demonstrating citizenship is also a key, both in terms of basic human rights, but also with regards to feelings of inclusion, maintaining allegiance to the nation and preserving stability and the rule of law. In its efforts to elaborate and implement a strong human right-oriented nationality legislation, the Government of South Sudan is determine to comply with the best practices in that matter, and aspires to accede and ratify, in the near future, the 1951 Convention relating to the status of stateless persons and the 1961 Convention on reduction of statelessness.

### **Pledges on other Areas**

Mr. President,

The Republic of South Sudan is recovering from a 22-year devastating civil war, during which over 2.5 million South Sudanese perished, and over 4 million people were displaced, making the plague of internal displacement as one of its most critical issue to address. Up to date, there is only one binding legal instrument in the world which promotes and strengthens regional and national measures to prevent or mitigate, prohibit and eliminate root causes of internal displacement, as well as provide for durable solutions.

The Convention for the protection and assistance of IDP's adopted in Kampala, Uganda, on October 22, 2009, demonstrates that African Leaders are conscious of the difficulties that internally displaced persons experience and poised and committed to put an end to the sufferings of the IDPs. The Republic of South Sudan, as the 54<sup>th</sup> state in Africa, pledges to accede and ratify this Convention and to develop the related domestic legal framework so as to give this treaty full effect in the Country.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I say the Declaration of Independence of my Country affirms that we undertake our international obligations and specifically the United Nations Charter seriously. South Sudan seeks to provide for all its citizens the highest living standards, and shall continue to develop public institutions committed to good governance and accountability.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would impress on you my final thoughts about our efforts to deal with refugee, statelessness, and IDPs problems that humanitarian remedies are not enough. We must coordinate our efforts with other international, regional and state institutions to deal with the root-causes of these tragic human situations. Take note of the fact that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, of January 09, 2005, between the Government of Sudan and the SPLM was supposed to bring peace to the two Sudans, and resolve the problems of the refugees and IDPs. Ironically enough the very peace, itself, has

become the cause of renewed war in the Blue Nile State, South Kordofan State, Abyei Area, and border areas between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan, creating a new wave of massive IDPs and refugees. This example, Mr. President, is a compelling argument that we must also deal with the root-causes of what create refugee, IDPS, and statelessness problems.

I thank you Mr. President and all for listening.