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European Union

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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	South Sudan - Council conclusions (30 April 2020)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on South Sudan, adopted by written procedure on 30 April 2020.

Council conclusions on South Sudan

1. The EU welcomes the formation of the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) as a key step towards a long lasting peace as well as inclusive and sustainable development in South Sudan. The holding of general elections at the end of the transitional period will be another step towards stability. The new unity Government will have to show a strong and sincere spirit of collaboration to bring security and stabilization, promote much needed reconciliation and justice, and deliver essential basic services to the people of South Sudan. In this regard, the swift appointment of state governors and local governments will be important.
2. The EU commends the engagement of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and its Member States as well as the African Union (AU), which was critical in the political process leading to the formation of the R-TGoNU and will remain instrumental to support the full implementation of the peace agreement.
3. Full respect of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement of December 2017 is imperative. In this context, the EU is supportive of the process facilitated by the Community of Sant'Egidio to create a conducive environment for dialogue and achieve inclusivity by bringing non-signatory parties on board the peace process. The fulfilment of the security arrangements, including the unification or demobilization of all ex-combatants, must have as a primary aim to ensure safety and security to all citizens, irrespective of their political or ethnic affiliation. The EU welcomes the signature of the Comprehensive Action Plan by the R-TGoNU parties to end and prevent all grave violations against children, and looks forward to its swift implementation. The EU calls on the UN Security Council to renew the arms embargo and stresses the need to have it enforced.

4. An inclusive constitution-making process and preparations of free and credible elections are essential to strengthen democracy and good governance. Democratic and civic space must be guaranteed and journalists, other media workers, civil society and human rights defenders must be enabled to operate freely, including by participating in the public debate. It is essential to also ensure political space for youth, who have played an important part in the peace process.
5. Women's effective inclusion in the overall peace and constitution-making process is critical. The EU welcomes the appointment of women to several key ministerial portfolios and calls on the Government to ensure at least 35 per cent of women in every level of government, consistent with peace agreement commitments. A gender perspective to political, economic and social reforms will be central to the success of the peace agreement.
6. More than half of the population is severely food insecure and two thirds are in urgent need of principled humanitarian assistance. The threat of the locust swarms puts people further at risk. The Government must guarantee safety and security for humanitarian workers and unimpeded humanitarian access in the entire country, and create the conditions for a voluntary, safe, sustainable and dignified return of refugees and internally displaced persons. The national budget allocated to the provision of basic services, especially health and education, should be increased.
7. Greater accountability and transparency, fight against corruption, and adherence to international financial standards are expected from the new Government to set South Sudan on a trajectory towards sustainable and inclusive peace and development. The peace agreement outlines the financial and economic reforms that must be carried out as well as the timeframe for their implementation. Independent verification is also necessary in order to obtain the confidence of the people and international partners.

8. Widespread violations of human rights and the culture of impunity must end. The EU stands ready to adopt further restrictive measures should these continue or should the peace process be undermined. Perpetrators of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence must be held accountable. The EU strongly supports the setting up of transitional justice institutions and urges the Government to establish the mechanisms foreseen by the peace agreement, not least to take the lead in establishing the Hybrid Court for South Sudan. The engagement by the AU in support of these efforts remains crucial.
9. The EU is determined to continue to stand by the people of South Sudan in their quest for peace and prosperity. The EU recognizes the ambitious timeframe of implementing chapters of the peace agreement. To achieve this goal, the EU encourages the Government to develop a comprehensive mutual accountability framework on future cooperation with international partners, linking peace, security, justice and basic services. In this regard, the EU stands ready to strengthen its support to the R-TGoNU when genuine and concrete political deliverables are realised.
10. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic risks having far-reaching humanitarian and economic consequences that may threaten the newfound stability. The R-TGoNU has taken some preventive measures; it is crucial to maintain a balance between reducing the public health threat and allowing people their livelihoods. . Cooperation with the World Health Organisation, United Nations, the African Union, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and other regional entities is welcomed. The EU reiterates its solidarity with the people of South Sudan and is supporting ongoing efforts, including the tireless work of humanitarian workers.