



PRESS STATEMENT: 5th FEBRUARY 2014, ADDIS ABABA

**IGAD SPECIAL ENVOYS SPEARHEAD THE START OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN
SOUTH SUDAN**

Soon after the 24th Extraordinary Session of the IGAD Summit last week in Addis Ababa, the Special Envoys engaged themselves to implement the decisions of the Assembly of IGAD Heads of State and Government.

Accordingly, the Special Envoys have sent invitation letters to the Parties on the commencement of the second round of the negotiations on 10th February 2014 in Addis Ababa; and dispatched the advance team of the IGAD Joint Technical Committee (JTC) to South Sudan to conduct a pre-deployment assessment. Thereafter, Monitoring and Verification Teams will be deployed to various sites in South Sudan based on the assessment report of the JTC.

As part of their plan to visit all capitals of the IGAD Member States, the mediation team led by H.E. Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin briefed H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn, the Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the current Chairman of IGAD before leaving for Nairobi yesterday. While in Nairobi, the envoys met with H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, the President of the Republic of Kenya and H.E. Ambassador Amina Mohammed, Kenya's Foreign Affairs Cabinet Secretary.

During these meetings in Addis Ababa and Nairobi, the envoys outlined their plans and also sought the guidance of the leaders before the second round of the mediation that will focus on political dialogue and national reconciliation.

Furthermore, the envoys met with the seven released detainees of the SPLM leadership in Nairobi to seek their opinions on how they wish to see the next phase unfold. The meetings were extensive and productive. They were appreciative of the IGAD initiative and the practical achievement made so far by the envoys, including the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement.

The released detainees expressed their commitment to be part of the IGAD mediation process for political dialogue and national reconciliation in the Republic of South Sudan. In light of this, the mediation team has sent them an invitation letter to participate in the political process and they have confirmed.

The Special Envoys will be shuttling between Addis Ababa, Juba and other places to hold discussions with President Salva Kiir Mayardit and other officials of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan. The mediation team will also visit Dr. Riek Machar, the leader of the SPLM (in opposition).

The envoys are striving to engage all stakeholders and seek their views on the framework, structure and organization of the second round of the negotiations.

The IGAD mediation team is encouraged by the commitment of all Parties to find a peaceful end to the crisis. The Parties have reiterated that violence and war is not and cannot be a solution to the crisis in South Sudan; and therefore they are determined to negotiate and work towards an inclusive political dialogue for national reconciliation and healing. ENDS.