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PRESS RELEASE

IGAD-led peace talks on South Sudan continue in Bahir Dar

22 September 2014, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia: The Sixth Session of the Second Phase of the IGAD-led multi-stakeholder peace talks on South Sudan officially opened today. The participants accepted the **First Draft of the Text Arising from the 25 August Protocol and Stakeholders' Positions** as a basis for the negotiations in Bahir Dar, the capital of the Amhara National Regional State.

Since reconvening on 13 September 2014, the IGAD mediators have engaged and consulted with the delegates to build consensus on the way forward for the South Sudan peace process. It is to be recalled that IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government endorsed the **Protocol on Agreed Principles on Transitional Arrangements towards Resolution of the Crisis in South Sudan** in Addis Ababa on 25 August 2014.

The heads of delegations representing the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army (In Opposition), the SPLM Leaders (Former Detainees), the Civil Society Organizations and the Faith-Based Organizations were provided on 20 September 2014 with the draft text to review and prepare for the negotiations.

Transitional governance arrangements; parameters of permanent constitution; transitional security arrangements; resource, economic and financial management; and transitional justice, reconciliation and healing are some of the issues that the delegates are to negotiate.

In his opening remarks, Amb. Seyoum Mesfin, the Chairman of the IGAD Mediation Process reminded the delegates that the document presented to them is theirs and contains their positions. He further added that the peace process is theirs.

“Let progress not be impeded any further by rhetorical or procedural issues,” stated the Special Envoy, quoting an adage that goes: if you are looking for fish, do not climb a tree.

“If you are committed to peace, you will not find it through the barrel of the gun, but around this table,” he reiterated, adding that peace will not be given as a donation from others, but can be found through collective efforts.

In their opening statements, representatives of the different stakeholders reiterated their commitment to the IGAD-led negotiation process and expressed their resolve to address the root causes of the crisis as soon as possible. ##

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