

**REMARKS ATTRIBUTABLE TO H.E HAILEMARIAM DESSALEGN,  
PRIME MINISTER OF THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF  
ETHIOPIA AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE IGAD ASSEMBLY  
3 MARCH 2015**

**Your Excellency, President Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of the  
Republic of South Sudan;**

**Your Excellency, Dr. Riek Machar Teny, Leader of the SPLM / SPLA  
(In Opposition);**

**Your Excellencies the Special Envoys;**

**Distinguished members of the negotiating teams;**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Good afternoon.

I welcome, Your Excellencies, once more to Addis Ababa.

When we last met, in the late hours of February 1st, both President Kiir and Dr. Riek Machar assured His Excellency President Kenyatta, and myself, of their fervent commitment to resolve the crisis in South Sudan and come to an agreement by March 5th. That leaves the parties with three days to make the necessary progress. Very little time remains.

Allow me to recall my remarks on the evening of February 1st. The region and the international community will not stand by and watch a humanitarian and political crisis in South Sudan continue.

There must be a negotiated settlement in South Sudan that allows the country to move out of this period of crisis and put in place a new political dispensation founded on principles of good governance and stability.

Difficult compromises must be made, by both sides. Prolonging the crisis, and refusing to make those necessary compromises, does not serve the interests of the people of South Sudan.

I urge the leaders here to address those issues now, and be courageous in themselves offering compromises and alternatives, rather than only reiterating old positions.

As you may well know, today the United Nations Security Council is considering a resolution in relation to the situation in South Sudan. This is a sign of the frustration that the international community feels in relation to the Parties in South Sudan, and their continued intransigence in resolving the crisis.

For my part, the region is also frustrated. The solution is in your hands. Do not throw it away any longer. The consequences of a failure to find a solution will endure for years, and will only weaken South Sudan further. It is only you who can prevent this from happening. I recall an encounter between our former prime minister Meles Zenawi and a university professor. The latter remarked, at the end of a public discussion at the university, 'that the ball is in the courts of the Ethiopian leadership. They can take Ethiopia to a better future, or they can take the country to a deeper crisis.' So I want to borrow this, and tell you, that the ball is in your court, and that you can take South Sudan to a better place, or you can take the country to a deeper crisis. I humbly call on you, as brothers, to make, I repeat, the necessary compromises so that the crisis in South Sudan is solved expeditiously.

The IGAD Special Envoys are with you. Do not hesitate to call on me whenever I can be of assistance.

I would invite, Your Excellencies, now to offer your thoughts on the way forward, and how we can proceed with discussion of the most critical issues, as proposed in the agenda. I thank you. Your Excellency President Kiir, you have the floor.