



**Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission
(RJMEC)**

REPORT

BY

**H.E. AMB. MAJ. GEN. (rtd) CHARLES TAI GITUAI, CBS
INTERIM CHAIRPERSON OF RJMEC**

**ON THE STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REVITALISED
AGREEMENT ON THE RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT IN THE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN**

FOR THE PERIOD

1st July to 30th September 2024

Report No. 024/24

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms.....	ii
Executive Summary	iii
I. Introduction	1
II. Status of Implementation of the Transitional Tasks of the R-ARCSS.....	2
Chapter 1: Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity	2
<i>Decision to Postpone Elections and Extend the Transitional Period</i>	2
<i>Transitional National Legislative Assembly</i>	3
<i>R-ARCSS Gender Considerations</i>	4
Chapter 2: Permanent Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements	4
Chapter 3: Humanitarian Assistance and Reconstruction	5
<i>Humanitarian Access</i>	6
<i>Humanitarian Working Committee</i>	6
Chapter 4: Resource Economic and Financial Management	7
<i>Public Financial Management</i>	7
Chapter 5: Transitional Justice Accountability Reconciliation and Healing.....	8
Chapter 6: Parameters of Permanent Constitution.....	8
Chapter 7: Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission	8
III. Key Observations and Recommendations.....	9
Observations	9
Recommendations.....	10
<i>a. To the Parties to the Agreement and Relevant Stakeholders:</i>	10
<i>b. To the RTGoNU:</i>	10
<i>c. To the TNLA:</i>	11
<i>d. To the Africa Union C5 Countries</i>	11
IV. Conclusion.....	12
Annex I: Status of the Implementation of the R-ARCSS Since its Signing on 12 th September 2018.....	13

List of Acronyms

AU	<i>African Union</i>
CDC	<i>Constitutional Drafting Committee</i>
CRA	<i>Compensation and Reparation Authority</i>
CTRH	<i>Commission for Truth Reconciliation and Healing</i>
CTSAMVM	<i>Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism</i>
DDR	<i>Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration</i>
EAC	<i>East African Community</i>
IDPs	<i>Internally Displaced Persons</i>
IGAD	<i>Intergovernmental Authority on Development</i>
IOM	<i>International Office of Migration</i>
JDB	<i>Joint Defense Board</i>
JMCC	<i>Joint Military Ceasefire Commission</i>
JRC	<i>Judicial Reform Committee</i>
JTSC	<i>Joint Transitional Security Committee</i>
MVT	<i>Mobile Verification Teams</i>
NAS	<i>National Salvation Front</i>
NBS	<i>National Bureau of Statistics</i>
NCAC	<i>National Constitutional Amendment Committee</i>
NCRC	<i>National Constitutional Review Commission</i>
NEC	<i>National Elections Commission</i>
NGOs	<i>Non-Governmental Organisations</i>
NSS	<i>National Security Service</i>
NUF	<i>Necessary Unified Forces</i>
PFM	<i>Public Finance Management</i>
PPC	<i>Political Parties Council</i>
R-ARCSS	<i>Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan</i>
RJMEC	<i>Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission</i>
RTGoNU	<i>Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity</i>
SDSRB	<i>Strategic Defence and Security Review Board</i>
SPLM -IG	<i>Sudan People's Liberation Movement-In Government</i>
SPLM-IO	<i>Sudan People's Liberation Movement-In Opposition</i>
SRF	<i>Special Reconstruction Fund</i>
SSPDF	<i>South Sudan People's Defence Force</i>
SSRA	<i>South Sudan Revenue Authority</i>
TNL	<i>Transitional National Legislature</i>
TNLA	<i>Transitional National Legislative Assembly</i>
UN	<i>United Nations</i>
UNDP	<i>United Nations Development Programme</i>
UNMISS	<i>United Nations Mission in South Sudan</i>
UNHCR	<i>United Nations High Commission for Refugees</i>

Executive Summary

This report covers the status of implementation of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) during the period 1st July to 30th September 2024 and builds on similar previous Reports Nos. 001/19 - 023/24 prepared since the signing of the peace agreement on 12th September 2018. In addition to the status update on implementation, it highlights the activities of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC) in the fulfilment of its oversight, monitoring and evaluation mandate within the R-ARCSS; and concludes with providing key recommendations to the various stakeholders and guarantors.

During the quarter, the Parties to the Agreement agreed to an extension of the Transitional Period from February 2025 to February 2027, a decision that was subsequently endorsed by the RJMEC and ratified by the Transitional National Legislature (TNL). This action effectively postponed elections scheduled for December 2024 to December 2026. In arriving at the decision to postpone the elections, the Parties pointed to the generally slow pace of implementation of the R-ARCSS and failure to put in place the Permanent Constitution and adequately fund the peace process.

Following the postponement of the December 2024 elections, and the extension of the Transitional Period, the security mechanisms were directed by the RTGoNU to produce work plans for the duration of the 24 months extension. Consequently, the National Transitional Committee (NTC) and the High-Level Standing Committee (HLSC), convened a meeting with the security mechanisms to receive workplans for the implementation of the pending tasks under Chapter II of the R-ARCSS.

According to UNOCHA, humanitarian access was severely hampered by floods, bureaucratic hurdles, and a sharp rise in attacks on aid workers and facilities, with 52 incidents reported in August alone. Main supplies roads in Malakal, Longochuk, Maban, Old Fangak, Rubkona, and Southern Unity were rendered impassable. The forced reliance on expensive air and river transport left more than 400,000 vulnerable people without essential support. Access to those in need was further constrained by the escalation of security incidents heightening the risk to Aid workers. In July the safety of humanitarian staff was severely threatened by escalating abductions and demand for ransom. In addition, violence in Morobo County and along the Yei-Maridi road put lives at grave risk and strained organizational resources.

The Draft National Budget for Fiscal Year 2024/25 and the Finance Bill FY2024/25 were submitted to the TNLA on 25 September 2024. This submission was three months behind the budget preparation schedule according to the Public Financial Management and Accountability Act 2024. The Resource Envelope for the period was given as SSP 2.258 trillion and the spending limit approved by the Cabinet of SSP 4.172 trillion, creating a spending gap or deficit that is estimated to be 85 percent of the available revenue. This deficit is to be financed through recovery in oil production, exchange rate alignment between the government official rate and the market determined rate, and concessional loans.

Bills for the setting up of the Commission for Truth Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH) and the Reparations and Compensation Authority were passed by the TNL and now await presidential assent. There has been no progress on the setting up of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan.

The RJMEC leadership held discussions with key members of the RTGoNU, including First Vice President H.E. Riak Machar and Vice Presidents H.E. Wani Igga and H.E. Hussein Abdelbagi. The number of important engagements focused on issues related to the implementation of the Revitalised Agreement, and in particular plans for the holding of elections in December 2024. Additionally, the RJMEC leadership met with the Chief Mediator of the Tumaini talks in Nairobi to discuss the peace process.

Concerns remain on the commitment of the RTGoNU to push through the requisite activities to ensure that there are no further extensions and that critical tasks such as the writing of the Permanent Constitution and the completion of redeployment of the Necessary Unified Forces are tackled. In that regard, it must be noted that the authorities have indicated their willingness to divert resources from infrastructure projects into facilitating implementation of the R-ARCSS. Also, there have been appropriations made in the current budget that will go towards the funding of the key constitution-making and election institutions. RJMEC has repeatedly pointed to the lack of sufficient funding for the implementation of the Agreement as one of the key stumbling blocks to successful implementation. Therefore, securing funding for the implementation mechanisms will go a long way to ensuring that the critical pending tasks will be completed and this extension will indeed be the last.

Consequently, the recommendations which follow, including to the Parties to the Agreement, RTGoNU, TNL, and the Africa Union C5 countries are geared towards encouraging a faster pace of implementation of the R-ARCSS and will better prepare the country to satisfactorily negotiate the extended Transitional Period, if acted upon

a. To the Parties to the Agreement and Relevant Stakeholders:

- continue to engage in dialogue during this critical period of the extension with a view to implementing the critical outstanding tasks; and
- commit to no new extension of the R-ARCSS and embrace the Tumaini Initiative as a means of bringing in the holdout groups in the spirit of inclusivity and furthering the prospects for peace in the country.

b. To the RTGoNU:

- avail requisite funding, in a timely manner, to the Agreement institutions and mechanisms and the overall funding of the peace agreement, as a matter of priority;
- facilitate the JRC to validate its final report and officially submit it to the RTGoNU in order to ensure that the judicial reforms process compliments the permanent constitution-making process and the conduct of elections;
- expeditiously set up functioning CTRH and CRA institutions and begin in earnest the task of truth and reconciliation in order to complement the overall peace agreement;
- create an enabling civic and political space for citizens' participation in governance;
- provide, as a matter of urgency, all the resources necessary to complete redeployment of the remaining NUF, and in addition complete harmonization of the command structure so that the country can have a unified force with a national character under one Commander in Chief;
- pursue establishment of the SRF and Board with a view to helping to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the country; and

- develop detailed workplans for the NCRC, Security Mechanisms, and the NEC while ensuring that these mechanisms are fully funded to allow them to continue the constitution-making and elections processes.

c. To the TNLA:

- expedite the enactment of all pending amendment bills, including the NGO bill;
- participate in creating an enabling civic and political space by re-enacting an NSS Bill that removes contentious provisions of arrests without warrants; and
- support the process of providing the requisite funding for the financing of the peace agreement including all the outstanding requisite tasks required for satisfactorily implementing the peace agreement.

d. To the Africa Union C5 Countries:

- as guarantors to the R-ARCSS, the AUC5 has a critical role in ensuring the success of the Agreement and in helping to maintain lasting peace and stability in South Sudan. In that regard, the following recommendations should be considered;
- the Council of Ministers and the Heads of State of the AUC5 to continuously engage with the RTGoNU through regular country visits;
- through the fostering of trust and confidence building measures, create a conducive environment for the R-TGoNU leadership and especially the two principals to discuss and pursue issues related to the Agreement;
- provide support to the permanent constitution-making and election processes, including considering direct funding of some of the critical mechanisms, civic education, and providing capacity building;
- provide support to help strengthen the DDR process and in so doing contribute to an enabling security environment in South Sudan;
- remain deliberately seized on the South Sudan peace process to ensure success in implementation towards achieving elections in December 2026.

I. Introduction

1. This report covers the status of implementation of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) during the period 1st July to 30th September 2024 and builds on similar previous Reports Nos. 001/19 - 023/24¹ prepared since the signing of the peace agreement on 12th September 2018. In addition to the status update on implementation, it highlights the activities of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC) in the fulfilment of its oversight, monitoring and evaluation mandate within the R-ARCSS; and concludes with providing key recommendations to the various stakeholders and guarantors.
2. During the quarter, the Parties to the Agreement agreed to an extension of the Transitional Period from February 2025 to February 2027, a decision that was subsequently endorsed by the RJMEC and ratified by the Transitional National Legislature (TNL). This action effectively postponed elections scheduled for December 2024 to December 2026. In arriving at the decision to postpone the elections, the Parties pointed to the generally slow pace of implementation including that of the critical tasks of completing the graduation and redeployment of the Necessary Unified Forces (NUF). In addition, that of putting in place the Permanent Constitution, as well as the failure to adequately fund the peace process.
3. The TNL in continuing with its legislative reforms mandate passed several pieces of legislation, including the *National Security Service Bill 2024*, the *National Bureau of Statistics Act 2018 (Amendment) Bill 2024*, and the *Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Act 2012 (Amendment) Bill 2024*.
4. During the quarter, the Permanent Ceasefire continued to hold. However, sporadic episodes of intercommunal violence were reported in Unity, Jonglei, and Lakes States, compounded by some security-related incidents in Juba. In Central Equatoria State, CTSAMVM reports indicate an increase in the abduction of youth allegedly by the National Salvation Front (NAS) of Gen Thomas Cirillo. With regard to humanitarian affairs, the situation in the country remains challenged by food insecurity, prolonged flooding, and the influx of refugees and returnees from Sudan.
5. RJMEC convened one ordinary monthly meeting and one extraordinary with discussions focused on the lack of adequate preparedness and very little progress in some key activities meant to pave the way for elections. The leadership also engaged the TNL and members of the Presidency, and further held separate consultative meetings with the RJMEC members.
6. Section I of the report provides an overview, followed by Section II, with an analysis of the status of implementation of the R-ARCSS, Section III proposes key observations and makes recommendations to the RTGoNU, TNL, Parties, Stakeholders to the R-ARCSS, and the International Partners and Friends of South Sudan; Section IV is the conclusion.

¹ Article 7.9 of the R-ARCSS mandates the RJMEC to prepare and submit Quarterly Reports to the RTGoNU, the TNL, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) and the United Nations (UN) and UN Security Council.

II. Status of Implementation of the Transitional Tasks of the R-ARCSS

Chapter 1: Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity

Decision to Postpone Elections and Extend the Transitional Period

7. On 2 July 2024, the Deputy Chairperson of the National Elections Commission (NEC) wrote to the Speaker of the TNLA alleging irregular decision-making by the NEC Chairperson that required her attention. The Deputy Chairperson cited unilateral decision-making by the Chairperson in both relieving the NEC's Secretary General from office in May 2024 and reconstituting the State High Committees in contravention of the approved roster by the Commission. A few weeks earlier the NEC Chairperson had announced the establishment of the State High Committees whose membership comprises the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, and three members for each state. It is important to note that the Committees were appointed without any female gender representation.
8. On 5 July 2024, the NEC Chairperson announced 22 December 2024 as the date for the commencement of elections, citing that they will be conducted in accordance with section 16 (1) of the *National Elections Act 2023*, read together with the *Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan (TCRSS) 2011 (as amended)*. On its part, the Political Parties Council (PPC) continued to implement its activities pursuant to its mandate. Among the tasks undertaken included the issuance of full registration certificates to 15 new political parties which were registered during the last quarter and the continuous building of PPC's institutional capacity, including the inauguration of its Headquarters in Juba. Out of the 29 political parties fully registered by the PPC, so far, 3 are women-led. The PPC is yet to share data on how many of the registered parties have adhered to the minimum requirement of 35% representation of women, especially among the leadership of the registered parties.
9. Notwithstanding the announcement of the date by the NEC for the 2024 elections, the Parties to the R-ARCSS² remained divergent in their views on whether elections would be held as scheduled or not. For example, the ITGoNU proposed phased elections, with Phase I being for Presidential Elections which were to be held in December 2024, and Phase II, which would focus on Parliamentary and local government elections to be held in December 2025 with the current TNL's mandate extended for 12 months. The ITGoNU's proposal was supported by the Other Political Parties (OPP) and the Former Detainees (FDs). On the other hand, the SPLM-IO maintained that all the provisions and tasks of the R-ARCSS and the Roadmap needed to be fully implemented to prepare the country for credible elections. In that regard, the SPLM-IO recommended an extension of the Transitional Period by 24 to 36 months. Meanwhile, SSOA opined that inter-party dialogue would be critical to enable the Parties to reach a consensus on how elections could be conducted against the backdrop of pending critical provisions of the Roadmap.
10. At the same time, the overall progress was slow towards the implementation of the key tasks to pave the way for the holding of free, fair, and credible democratic elections previously scheduled for December 2024. To that end, the RJMEC continued to urge the RTGoNU leaders and the parties to the R-ARCSS to engage in dialogue in a collegial manner, build consensus amongst themselves and with the stakeholders to agree on the way

² The Parties to the R-ARCSS are the: (i) Incumbent Transitional Government of National Unity (ITGoNU); (ii) Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement – In Opposition (SPLM/IO); (iii) South Sudan Opposition Alliance; (iv) Other Political Parties (OPP); and (v) Former Detainees (FDs).

forward on elections, and provide regular updates to the public on the progress of such engagements.

11. In that regard, the High-Level Standing Committee (HLSC) for the implementation of the R-ARCSS embarked on assessing, analyzing, and reporting on the status of the implementation of the provisions of the Roadmap, including the level of preparedness for the conduct of elections in December 2024.^{3,4} In the HLSC's assessment of the implementation of the Roadmap, overall, 17 (10%) tasks were completed, 56 (33%) tasks were in progress in implementation of 98 (57%) of them was yet to commence. This assessment was followed by a joint meeting of the HLSC and the concerned Security Mechanisms,⁵ the NEC, the National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC), the PPC, and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The outcome of the joint meeting informed the recommendations of the HLSC to the Presidency to delay the conduct of the December 2024 elections.
12. The HLSC presented its report with recommendations to an extraordinary meeting of the Presidency held on 13 August 2024. At that meeting, the decision was taken to “*endorse the postponement/delay of elections set for 22nd December 2024 for 24 months from 22nd February 2025 to 22nd February 2027, with elections to be held on 22nd December 2026*”. Subsequently, and pursuant to Article 8.4 of the R-ARCSS, on 16 September 2024 the Council of Ministers of the RTGoNU adopted the decision of the Presidency and RJMEC consented to this decision through voting two days later. Further, on 20 September 2024, the TNL passed the *Constitutional Amendment Bill No. 12*, incorporating the extension of the Transitional Period of the R-ARCSS by 24 months, and the President assented to it on 21 September 2024.

Transitional National Legislative Assembly

13. During this quarter, the reconstituted TNL continued with its normal functions of legislation, oversight, and representation and passed some pieces of legislation, namely: *the National Security Service Act 2014 (Amendment Bill 2024)*; *the National Bureau of Statistics Act 2018 (Amendment) Bill 2024*; *the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Act 2012 (Amendment) Bill 2024*; *Commission for Truth Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH) Bill 2024*, and the *Compensation and Reparations Authority (CRA) Bill 2024*. The National Security Service (NSS) Act was passed with contentious provisions, particularly in relation to Articles 54 and 55 of the Act which retained the powers of the NSS to arrest without a warrant as well as to detain suspects. The Act was subsequently presented to the President for his assent but he requested and received a legal opinion from the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs on the contentious matters.
14. In July 2024, the RJMEC Leadership briefed the TNL, pursuant to article 7.9 of the R-ARCSS, on the status of implementation of the R-ARCSS during the second quarter of 2024, including the constitution-making and elections processes, and challenges facing

³ The HLSC is comprised of two representatives of each of the Parties to the R-ARCSS, and is Chaired by Hon Tut Gatluak Manime the Presidential Adviser on Security Affairs and its Secretary is Hon Dr Martim Lomuro, Minister of Cabinet Affairs.

⁴ On 7th June 2024 the RTGoNU directed the HLSC to begin the process of assessing the country's readiness to hold elections in December.

⁵ These included the National Transitional Committee (NTC), Joint Defense Board (JDB), Joint Military Ceasefire Commission (JMCC), Joint Transitional Security Committee (JTSC), Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (DDRC), Strategic Defense and Security Review Board (SDSR-B).

implementation. RJMEC's report recommended, among others, interparty dialogue on the way forward on elections; embracing the Tumaini Initiative as a means of bringing the holdout groups within the spirit of inclusivity and furthering the prospects of peace; seizing the constitution-making moment as the basis to guide the elections; availing requisite funding to the National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC) to enable it to discharge its mandate; creating an enabling civic and political space for citizens' participation in governance; expediting elections-related activities; complete unification of forces; establishing the Special Reconstruction Fund (SRF) and Board and expediting enactment of pending bills. The TNL welcomed the RJMEC's briefing and committed the report to the Parliamentary Committee on Peace and Reconciliation for further consideration. Subsequently, the Committee adopted the report and its recommendations for action by the Government.

R-ARCSS Gender Considerations

15. During the quarter, it was noted with concern that the governor of Central Equatoria State dismissed the Mayor of Juba City, Flora Gabriel Modi, and appointed Johnson Swaka, a male in her stead, further reducing the positions held by women in governance and the 35% allocation of positions as stipulated in the agreement. During the 37th plenary, the RJMEC underscored that whenever a female incumbent is to be replaced, the Parties to the Agreement should pay due consideration to the requirement of 35% minimum threshold of women's representation in the executive and other decision-making bodies as stipulated in the R-ARCSS.
16. The RJMEC reiterated an earlier concern regarding the disregard of the 35% women representation on the high-level committees appointed and now trained by the NEC at the State levels. According to the Ministry of Gender Affairs, several legal frameworks that are critical for the furthering of gender equality as well as women's meaningful participation have been developed, awaiting final drafting by the MoJCA and forwarding to the TNLA for ratification. These include: (i) an Anti-GBV Bill – currently with MoJCA; (ii) Women Empowerment Bill – ready for presentation to the Parliament; (iii) Women Enterprise Development Bill – with MoJCA; (iv) Family Law-Bill – zero draft, awaiting further consultation; and (v) Women Empowerment Fund Bill – zero draft.

Chapter 2: Permanent Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements

17. During the period of reporting, the Permanent Ceasefire continued to hold with no major clashes among the forces of the signatory parties to the R-ARCSS. However, some episodes of intercommunal violence were reported in Unity, Jonglei, and Lakes State, compounded by some security-related incidents in Juba. In addition, sporadic clashes between the SSPDF and the National Salvation Front (NAS) of Lt Gen. Thomas Cirillo Swaka were reported in some parts of Central Equatoria State. CTSAMVM cannot fully investigate and report on SSPDF and NAS clashes because NAS does not have representation in CTSAMVM and there is no communication between CTSAMVM and NAS.
18. During this period, CTSAMVM submitted two (02) violation reports as follows:
 - a. CTSAMVM Report 2024/08: Fighting Incident between Unity State Governor's Convoy Protection Team and SPLM/A-IO Forces in Jamus/Barkuor;
 - b. CTSAMVM Report 2024/10: Alleged Secret Training and Recruitment by the SSPDF;

RJMEC submitted the reports to the Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) and the Chairperson of the Joint Defence Board (JDB) urging implementation of CTSAMVM recommendations including holding accountable those who denied CTSAMVM access to investigate violations.

19. On Transitional Security Arrangements as it relates to the completion of the deployment of Phase I and the commencement of Phase II training of the NUF, there has been very little progress since the deployment of a total of eight military battalions by April 2024. As for the unification of the second command echelon, President H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit has reportedly reviewed the lists sent to him by the SPLM/A-IO and SSOA. The lists were sent to the chiefs of the armed forces for verification to ensure their accuracy. Since then, no further progress has been reported.
20. On 16 July 2024, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) appointed 2,995 non-commissioned officers (NCOs) of the NUF police component into the South Sudan National Police Service (SSNPS). This means that the newly appointed NCOs are entitled to salaries and benefits, but are yet to be deployed to police units across the country. However, the rest of the NUF Police are not yet deployed, and so are the following; National Security Service, Wildlife Service, Prison Service, and the Civil Defence Service. The main reason cited for the lack of progress in the completion of Phase I deployment of the graduated forces is the lack of funding. The security mechanisms responsible for the cantonment sites, training centres, and the overall unification of forces also lack funding to implement their tasks. The DDR Commission has not fully commenced its programs as mandated by the R-ARCSS, except for the Community Violence Reduction (CVR) pilot program funded by the UNDP.
21. Following the postponement of the December 2024 elections, and the extension of the Transitional Period, the security mechanisms were directed by the RTGoNU to produce work plans for the duration of the 24 months extension. Consequently, on 24 September 2024, Hon Tut Gatluak Manime, the Presidential Advisor on National Security Affairs, and the Chairman of the National Transitional Committee (NTC) and the HLSC, convened a meeting to receive workplans for the implementation of the pending tasks under Chapter II of the R-ARCSS. After some adjustments the workplans they were presented to the HLSC for approval. Once approved by the HLSC the workplan and the budgets will be submitted to the Presidency for funding.

Chapter 3: Humanitarian Assistance and Reconstruction

22. The South Sudan humanitarian crisis continues to worsen and is compounded by worsening food insecurity, the influx of refugees and returnees from Sudan, projected record levels of flooding, an economic crisis and insufficient funding for tackling the crisis. By the end of August, only 43% of the US \$1.8 billion UN humanitarian response plan had been realized. Since May, floodwaters have damaged homes, crops and critical infrastructure, disrupted education and healthcare services and heightened the risk of disease outbreaks with hardest-hit areas including Jonglei, Unity, Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap states. Floods have left many communities isolated, with impassable roads cutting off access to markets, livelihoods and vital humanitarian aid.

23. UNOCHA reports indicated that as of 25 September, flooding had impacted over 735,000 people across 38 of the 78 counties of South Sudan and the Abyei Administrative Area while the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that 76,230 people had been displaced. In response to rising needs and limited funding for the flood-affected, the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) allocated US\$10 million to provide critical assistance to 700,000 people in the five highly impacted counties of Aweil East (Northern Bahr el Ghazal State), Fangak (Jonglei State), Nasir (Upper Nile State), and Mayendit and Rubkona (Unity State). An additional \$5 million was released from the UN South Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SSHF) to bolster critical response pipelines and frontline life-saving services in health, shelter, non-food items, and water, sanitation and hygiene support to vulnerable communities that have been devastated by the floods.

Humanitarian Access

24. According to UNOCHA, humanitarian access was severely hampered by floods, bureaucratic hurdles, and a sharp rise in attacks on aid workers and facilities, with 52 incidents reported in August alone. Main supplies roads in Malakal, Longochuk, Maban, Old Fangak, Rubkona, and Southern Unity were rendered impassable. The forced reliance on expensive air and river transport left more than 400,000 vulnerable people without essential support. Access to those in need was further constrained by the escalation of security incidents heightening the risk to aid workers. In July the safety of humanitarian staff was severely threatened by escalating abductions and demand for ransom. In addition, violence in Morobo County and along the Yei-Maridi road put lives at grave risk and strained organizational resources.
25. Recorded incidences included at least 14 cases of armed robberies, threats, and theft targeting personnel and 23 attacks on humanitarian facilities across six states. Renewed violence in Nasir, Upper Nile State led to the displacement of hundreds and suspension of humanitarian efforts while repeated break-ins and thefts at NGO compounds and storage sites were reported in Maban and other areas, severely disrupting relief operations. Bureaucratic impediments such as new taxes and fees on humanitarian workers, mandatory registration charges, interference in recruitment processes, operational licenses also critically hindered access to aid in Upper Nile State, drove up operational costs, strained resources, and delayed the delivery of critical services.
26. The NGO act was tabled before parliament in September 2024. It is hoped that the ratification and operationalization of this Bill will help create a conducive working environment for NGOs in South Sudan thus improving access to those in need.
27. By the end of the quarter, over 800,000 returnees and refugees had crossed into South Sudan. Out of these, more than half remained stranded at the points of entry counties of northern Upper Nile, Northern Unity, and Northern Bahr el Ghazal in dire need of food, shelter and health services among others due to funding shortages.

Humanitarian Working Committee

28. The 11th, 12th and 13th Humanitarian Working Committee meetings were convened and actively attended by the RRC, Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, and the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare. Key presentations and discussions included the flood response and efforts to mitigate against its impact, which will be most adversely felt by

women, children, and other vulnerable groups like the elderly and persons with disabilities, the programs for return, resettlement and reintegration which remain largely hampered by lack of funding, and the Ministry of Gender's response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) among others. During the working committee meetings, implementing mechanisms and institutions were urged to include gender-disaggregated data, challenges, and recommendations in their future reports so these can be brought to the attention of the RJMEC Chairperson and all partners in the RJMEC for relevant action. Implementing partners were also commended for their informative reports and encouraged to widely disseminate their achievements which many partners and stakeholders may not be aware of.

Chapter 4: Resource Economic and Financial Management

Public Financial Management

29. The South Sudan Revenue Authority (SSRA) has continued to outperform its targets in mobilizing non-oil revenue and was able to largely support the government's budget during this quarter. This increase was attributed to increased domestic revenue through higher personal income tax collections, which accounted for fifty per cent of the total. The SSRA embarked on several capacity-building activities that have enhanced its ability to assess, collect and administer taxation. Further reforms are expected such as a review of the Customs Valuation Exchange rate, reduction in tax exemptions by 50%, introduction of betting, gaming, and lotteries tax and that of a digital service tax (DST).
30. The establishment of an effective public procurement and payroll system and cleansing exercise under the public service reform efforts are ongoing and have been focused on the civil service following that of the security services, which are already in place.
31. The Draft National Budget for Fiscal Year 2024/2025, themed: "To Accelerate Economic Recovery through Improving livelihoods, Sustaining Peace and Investing in Critical Social Services and Agriculture" (the Appropriation Bill FY2024/2025, and the Finance Bill FY2024/2025) were submitted to the TNLA on 25 September 2024. This submission was three months behind the budget preparation schedule according to the Public Financial Management and Accountability Act 2024. The Resource Envelope for the period was given as SSP 2.258 trillion and the spending limit approved by the Cabinet of SSP 4.172 trillion, creating a spending gap or deficit that is estimated to be 85 percent of the available revenue. This deficit is to be financed through recovery in oil production, exchange rate alignment between the government official rate and the market determined rate, and concessional loans.⁶
32. In the FY 2024/25 budget 18.5 per cent of the total amount, equivalent to SSP 773.8 billion, is designated for wages and salaries, 10 per cent for goods and services, another 10 per cent to be allocated to States and Administrative Areas, including State-Organized Forces and 0.1 per cent allocated to other expenses. In addition to the mandatory payments totalling 10.9 per cent of the budget (payment to oil-producing states and communities, tariff to

⁶ In the previous financial year 2023/24, a budget of SSP 2.105 trillion was submitted but was reduced by the TNLA to SSP 1.782 thereby ensuring that expenditures were well within the revenues available (of SSP1.838). Whilst non-oil revenues were projected to fund 15 percent of last year's budget, its outstanding performance whilst oil revenues hit rock bottom in 2024, and further reforms of the SSRA, non-oil revenues' contribution to the revenue base for FY 2024/25 budget has increased to 50 percent.

Sudan, MoP and SSRA) 15 percent was allocated to salary arrears for both civil servants and Organized Forces not paid in the previous financial year and 6 percent to the December 2026 pre-election activities. In addition, 4.2 percent is allocated for humanitarian and emergency funding, 2.6 percent to funding transfers to international treaties and 2.3 percent to foreign missions' arrears. The budget continues to make allocations to the Constituency Development Fund (0.7 percent) though payments were not made in the previous year as mandatory requirements for disbursements were not met.

33. An amount representing 2.2 percent of the budget is allocated for funding peace implementation and 0.2 percent to the Agriculture Bank of South Sudan as the country intends to prioritize mining and agriculture in its economic diversification program. Amounts have been allocated to clear arrears and fund litigation settlements. Capital expenditure has been allocated 11.8 percent and it is assumed that a considerable amount would go to the social sector to enhance service delivery as the budget has committed to increase health and education spending.

Chapter 5: Transitional Justice Accountability Reconciliation and Healing

34. Under Chapter 5, Transitional Justice, the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs undertook country-wide consultations on the Commission for Truth Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH) and Compensation and Reparations Authority (CRA) Bills. The Ministry with the support of the RTGoNU also held an international transitional justice conference. Both the public consultations and the conference informed the drafting of the Bills on the CTRH and the (CRA). The Bills have since been passed by the TNL and now await presidential assent. There has been no progress on the setting up of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan.

Chapter 6: Parameters of Permanent Constitution

35. During this reporting period, the NCRC continued to finetune its work plans as it awaits additional funding from the RTGoNU to undertake the task of completing the Permanent Constitution.

Chapter 7: Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission

36. The RJMEC leadership held discussions with key members of the RTGoNU, including First Vice President H.E. Riak Machar and Vice Presidents H.E. Wani Igga and H.E Hussein Abdelbagi. The number of important engagements focused on issues related to the implementation of the Revitalised Agreement, and in particular plans for the holding of elections in December 2024. Additionally, the RJMEC leadership met with the Chief Mediator of the Tumaini talks in Nairobi to discuss the peace process.
37. On 6 August 2024, the leadership of RJMEC formerly presented its Quarterly Report for the second quarter of 2024 before a full seating of the TNL. The briefing, which was presented pursuant to Article 7.9 of the R-ARCSS focused on the status of implementation of the Revitalised Peace Agreement, including the constitution-making and election processes, the continuing challenges facing implementation, and recommendations. The report was committed to the Committee for Peace and Reconciliation for further consideration and subsequently adopted for action by the RTGoNU.

38. RJMEC held its 37th regular ordinary monthly meeting on 8 August 2024 during which the Interim Chairperson lamented the lack of adequate elections preparedness and very little progress in the unification of forces. He noted that the lack of clarity concerning the holding of elections is causing anxiety among the population of South Sudan, which is already under pressure from an increasingly difficult economic situation. In that regard, several recommendations were made to the RTGoNU as follows: (i) the Principals of the Parties urgently consider the report of the High-Level Standing Committee and provide clarity on the way forward for the Peace Agreement; (ii) provide the Agreement institutions and mechanisms with the requisite resources and logistics to enable them to discharge their mandates; (iii) complete the redeployment of the unified forces, including the unification of the mid-level command echelon, and commence Phase II training and the DDR; and (iv) expedite the passage of the *National Audit Chamber Act*, to promote transparency and accountability in public service and administration.⁷
39. RJMEC convened its 3rd Extraordinary meeting⁸ on 18 September 2024 at the request of the RTGoNU to consider the decision of the Parties to the R-ARCSS to extend the Transitional Period of the Revitalized Peace Agreement for twenty-four months from 22nd February 2025 to 22nd February 2027.⁹ Members eventually voted on the proposal and out of the forty-two (42) members present, thirty-four (34) members consented, seven (07) members did not consent and one (01) member who was online was unable to vote due to technical glitches.

III. Key Observations and Recommendations

Observations

40. The peace agreement is in its sixth year of implementation and the most recent extension will extend it possibly to eight years. This will be five years beyond what it was originally intended to be. Consequently, as part of its endorsement of the extension, RJMEC asked the Parties to the Agreement to commit to the people of South Sudan that this will be the last and final extension of the Transitional Period and that the elections will be held as currently rescheduled. In addition, the Parties were asked to demonstrate genuine commitments and political will by revoking the controversial provisions of the NSS Act, build more trust, open civic and political space, fast-track the unification of forces and accelerate the permanent constitution-making process by establishing all the pending sub-committees.

⁷ The resolutions can be accessed at: <https://jmecsouthsudan.org/index.php/plenary/plenary-resolutions>.

⁸ The 1st Extraordinary Meeting of RJMEC was held on 19 February 2019, to consider the budget of the National Pre-Transitional Committee (NPTC). The 2nd took place on 1st September 2022, during which the members consented to the 'Roadmap', which extended the Transitional Period of the Revitalized Peace Agreement by two years to February 2025.

⁹ Under Article 7.6 of the R-ARCSS, RJMEC is responsible for monitoring and overseeing the implementation of the Agreement and the mandate and tasks of the RTGoNU, including adherence of the Parties to the agreed timelines and implementation schedule. Under Article 8.4 of the R-ARCSS "*the Revitalized Agreement may be amended by the Parties, with at least two-thirds of the members of the Council of Ministers of the RTGoNU, and at least two-thirds of the voting members of the RJMEC consenting to the amendment, followed by ratification by the Transitional National Legislature*".

41. In addition to the above-mentioned tasks related specifically to the holding of elections, at the time of the extension of the R-ARCSS, some other critical tasks remained pending (See Annex I). These include enactment of the Petroleum related bills, the Audit Chamber, and the NGO Bills; the finalization and implementation of the Judicial Reform Commission (JRC) reports; the completion of Phase I and commencement of Phase II unification of forces, and the SDSR and DDR processes; and establishment and operationalization of the CTRH and CRA. Going forward, these activities must be prioritised to ensure that there is significant progress made in implementation and ultimately the holding of elections in December 2026.
42. However, many concerns remain about the commitment of the RTGoNU to push through the requisite tasks to ensure that there are no further extensions and that these pending critical tasks are indeed tackled. In that regard, it must be noted that the authorities have indicated their willingness to divert resources from infrastructure projects into facilitating implementation of the R-ARCSS. Also, there have been appropriations made in the current budget that will go towards the funding of the key constitution-making and election institutions. RJMEC has repeatedly pointed to the lack of sufficient funding for the implementation of the Agreement as one of the key stumbling blocks to successful implementation. Therefore, securing funding for the implementation mechanisms will go a long way to ensuring that the critical pending tasks will be completed and this extension will indeed be the last.

Recommendations

43. The recommendations that follow, including to the Parties to the Agreement, RTGoNU, TNL, and the Africa Union C5 countries are geared towards encouraging a faster pace of implementation of the R-ARCSS and will better prepare the country to satisfactorily negotiate the extended Transitional Period if acted upon.

a. To the Parties to the Agreement and Relevant Stakeholders:

- 43.1. continue to engage in dialogue during this critical period of the extension with a view to implementing the critical outstanding tasks; and
- 43.2. commit to no new extension of the R-ARCSS and embrace the Tumaini Initiative as a means of bringing in the holdout groups in the spirit of inclusivity and furthering the prospects for peace in the country.

b. To the RTGoNU:

- 43.3. avail requisite funding, in a timely manner, to the Agreement institutions and mechanisms and the overall funding of the peace agreement, as a matter of priority;
- 43.4. facilitate the JRC to validate its final report and officially submit it to the RTGoNU in order to ensure that the judicial reforms process compliments the permanent constitution-making process and the conduct of elections;
- 43.5. expeditiously set up functioning CTRH and CRA institutions and begin in earnest the task of truth and reconciliation in order to complement the overall peace agreement;
- 43.6. create an enabling civic and political space for citizens' participation in governance;

- 43.7. provide, as a matter of urgency, all the resources necessary to complete redeployment of the remaining NUF, and in addition complete harmonization of the command structure so that the country can have a unified force with a national character under one Commander in Chief;
- 43.8. pursue establishment of the SRF and Board with a view to helping to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the country; and
- 43.9. develop detailed workplans for the NCRC, Security Mechanisms, and the NEC while ensuring that these mechanisms are fully funded to allow them to continue the constitution-making and elections processes.

c. To the TNLA:

- 43.10. expedite the enactment of all pending amendment bills, including the NGO bill;
- 43.11. participate in creating an enabling civic and political space by re-enacting an NSS Bill that removes contentious provisions of arrests without warrants; and
- 43.12. support the process of providing the requisite funding for the financing of the peace agreement including all the outstanding requisite tasks required for satisfactorily implementing the peace agreement.

d. To the Africa Union C5 Countries

- 43.13. As guarantors to the R-ARCSS, the AUC5 has a critical role in ensuring the success of the Agreement and in helping to maintain lasting peace and stability in South Sudan. In that regard, the following recommendations should be considered.
 - the Council of Ministers and the Heads of State of the AUC5 to continuously engage with the RTGoNU through regular country visits;
 - through the fostering of trust and confidence building measures, create a conducive environment for the R-TGoNU leadership and especially the two principals to discuss and pursue issues related to the Agreement;
 - provide support to the permanent constitution-making and election processes, including considering direct funding of some of the critical mechanisms, civic education, and providing capacity building;
 - provide support to help in strengthening the DDR process and in so doing contribute to an enabling security environment in South Sudan; and
 - remain deliberately seized on the South Sudan peace process to ensure success in implementation towards achieving elections in December 2026.

IV. Conclusion

44. While it has been a difficult period of implementation of the R-ARCSS, the country remains relatively peaceful, institutions are being rebuilt, legislation are enacted regularly and in general, the pace is being set for lasting and sustainable peace. However, much remains to be done to secure this foundation. Therefore, having agreed to a two-year extension of the Peace Agreement, it is imperative that the RTGoNU, TNL and all other stakeholders work diligently at completing pending tasks of the Agreement particularly those related to the Permanent Constitution-making, unification of the forces, and transitional justice. At the same time, the opening up of civic and political space cannot be overemphasised in giving the general public a stake in harnessing the gains from peace. All of these efforts must be commended through a total commitment of financial resources by the RTGoNU to ensure success in implementation including through the unification of forces and completion of the Permanent Constitution.
45. On its part and pursuant to its mandate as provided for in Chapter 7 of the R-ARCSS, the RJMEC will continue to monitor, evaluate, and report on the status of implementation of the R-ARCSS, and as circumstances may demand, intervene to break any deadlock that may emerge in the course of implementation. RJMEC will regularly provide reports and briefings to the RTGoNU, the reconstituted TNLA, the Chairperson of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the Chairperson of the IGAD Council of Ministers, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and to the Secretary General of the United Nations and the Security Council of the United Nations.

END

Annex I: Status of the Implementation of the R-ARCSS Since its Signing on 12th September 2018

1. The R-ARCSS is comprised of six thematic chapters covering governance, security issues, humanitarian affairs, resource economic and financial management, transitional justice and permanent constitution making. Since the signing of the R-ARCSS some progress has been made in implementation including the formation and functioning of government structures at the national and state levels, Parties to the Agreement maintaining relative peace, economic reforms and enactment of several pieces of legislation.

2. Under chapter one, on Governance, there has been the formation and establishment of government structures at the national and state levels, including that of the RTGoNU, the TNLA, local assemblies, and appointment of state governors and commissioners. In addition, progress has been made towards the attainment of critical benchmarks in legislative, judicial and institutional reforms as follows:

- the National Constitutional Amendment Committee (NCAC), which began its work in 2016 and completed in February 2024, reviewed and drafted 25 pieces of legislation, including the National Audit Chamber Act, Public Finance Management and Accountability Act, Petroleum Act, Petroleum Revenue Management Act, the National Elections Act, and the Anti-Corruption Commission Act;
- of those reviewed bills by the NCAC, 18 have been enacted into law while 2 are currently before the TNL and 5 await the approval of the Council of Ministers; and
- reconstitution of the PPC, the NCRC and the NEC.

3. The *ad hoc* Judicial Reform Committee was established and led by IGAD appointees who are former Justices of Uganda and Kenya. After two years it is in the process of completing its mandate with the preparation of a final report that will propose recommendations for reform of the judiciary, and other rule of law institutions.

4. The following key tasks related to Chapter I of the R-ARCSS are still pending:

- complete funding to the three newly reconstituted institutions, namely: the PPC, the NCRC and the NEC to enable them to deliver their mandates;
- conducting elections-related activities listed in Article 1.20.8, such as the establishment of subsidiary electoral management bodies at the state level, the establishment of procedures for the voter registry and registration;
- judicial reforms, including the review of the Judiciary Act, reconstitution of the Judicial Service Commission and establishment of an independent, impartial Constitutional Court to, among others, adjudicate elections related disputes;
- publication of the voters registers no later than six months prior to the holding of elections (Article 1.20.10); and delimitation of constituencies, in accordance with the provisions of the National Elections Act, 2023;
- full registration of political parties no later than 180 days (6 months) from the date of provisional registration in accordance with the Political Parties Act 2022;
- opening of political and civic space to allow citizens to enjoy the freedom to exercise their political and democratic rights, including through the enactment of the revised National Security Service Act (Amendment) Bill 2023; and

- amendment of the National Elections Act 2023 to conform to the terms of the Permanent Constitution (Article 1.20.6).
5. Under Chapter 2 (Permanent Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements), despite major clashes that occurred following SPLA-IO senior officers' defections to the SSPDF in 2019 and 2020, the ceasefire has generally been holding and there have been no major engagements between the Signatory Parties. Progress have additionally been registered by the RTGoNU as follows:
- establishment or reconstitution of key Chapter II Security Mechanisms such as CTSAMVM, the Joint Defence Board (JDB), Joint Monitoring Ceasefire Commission (JMCC), Joint Transitional Security Committee (JTSC), Strategic Defence and Security Review Board (SDSR-B) and the Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Commission;
 - resolution of the impasse over the High Echelon Unified Command appointments and structure in April 2022;
 - establishment of Cantonment Sites and Training Centres throughout the country and subsequent selection, training and graduation of approximately 55,000 NUF, deployment of about eight (08) military battalions, and the appointment of 2,995 NUF police NCOs into the South Sudan National Police Service; and
 - the completion by the SDSR-B of the drafting of the key documents required under the R-ARCSS, namely the: (i) Strategic Security Assessment; (ii) Security Policy Framework; (iii) Revised Defence Policy; and (iv) Security Sector Transformation Roadmap and the White Paper on Defence and Security.
6. In most parts of South Sudan, the Signatory Parties have proved capable of peaceful coexistence, and in some cases have actively cooperated to manage security issues. However, the ceasefire experienced – and continues to experience – considerable strains including:
- changes of allegiance or “defections” by senior commanders and some of their troops, mainly from the SPLA – IO to the SSPDF. This has led to some of the most significant Party-related violence since the R-ARCSS was signed, when those who defected turned on their erstwhile comrades;
 - there are several armed groups within South Sudan with differing loyalties and affiliations. The activities of these armed groups, which can be allied to and under the influence of, but not necessarily the direct control of Signatory Parties have proved a threat to the ceasefire;
 - activities of Non-signatory Parties – especially NAS – have led to much violence, especially in southern Central Equatoria State as the SSPDF tries to quell the rebellion; and
 - inter-communal violence also strained the permanent ceasefire and caused much harm to communities affected.
7. Concerning the protection of civilians, civilian continued to experience murder, rape, illegal arrests, looting of civilian property and harassment mostly by the SSPDF rogue elements during the early months of the ceasefire. Since mid-2020, the SSPDF leadership has tried to hold rogue soldiers accountable for crimes against civilians through the establishment of mobile military courts (Court Martials). Therefore, mobile court martials coupled with improved command and control by the JDB significantly lowered the number of crimes committed by armed forces against civilians.
8. There are critical outstanding transitional security arrangements tasks, which include the deployment of the already graduated NUF under Phase I, commencement of Phase II training,

operationalization of DDR programme, development of a clear plan for the management of weapons and munitions to be collected from all forces, submission of SDSR-B draft documents to the Presidency and the Council of Ministers. Importantly, all these tasks need funding which has continuously been lacking throughout the Transitional Period.

9. Chapter 3, which pertains to Humanitarian Assistance and Reconstruction, has also witnessed some progress. To date, most of the humanitarian corridors that were opened right after the signing of the R-ARCSS continue to facilitate free movement of goods, services and people across borders. This includes the voluntary return of close to one million people since 2018, and a total of over 700 000 people who were recorded to have crossed into South Sudan since the war broke out in Sudan in April 2023.

10. A combination of factors has conspired to exacerbate the already dire humanitarian situation in the country: subnational violence is prolonged and lethal; floods are widespread and expected to worsen; there is food insecurity; the influx of refugees and returnees from the Sudan conflict; funding decline and lack of basic services, particularly for the conflict-affected population. The other challenges relate to safety concerns for humanitarian workers and their assets. Access impediments undermine the capabilities of aid workers in reaching out to those in urgent need of assistance.

11. In addition, there are key tasks pending within Chapter 3 as follows: (i) repatriation of refugees, resettlement and reintegration of returnees and internally displaced persons and ensuring their rights to participation in democratic processes; and (ii) establishment of the Special Reconstruction Fund (SRF) and Board and provision by the RTGoNU of the requisite USD 100 million per annum to pave the way for a pledging conference to aid the reconstruction of conflict affected states and other areas; and (iii) enactment of the NGO Bill.

12. Under Chapter 4 on Resource, Economic and Financial Management, the Public Finance Management Oversight Committee through its work continues to improve on the overall transparency and accountability in the management of the country's finances. In that regard, the Committee has been instrumental in ensuring that the priorities of the PFM Reform Strategy of 2020, are in progress. Though overall implementation has been slow, the RTGoNU has forged ahead with the implementation of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) by establishing a unified structure of the government's bank and closed many other accounts that were operated within the commercial banking system. With the support of Development Partners, the system is being automated.

13. The Ministry of Petroleum has made some progress in implementing reforms in the petroleum sector, including in the areas of employment and more transparent operations in the sale of oil. Also, transparency in the management of Petroleum resources has become more evident of late as the lifting and marketing of oil has been made public.

14. Furthermore, the R-TGoNU has reviewed and aligned the Strategic Economic Development Roadmap with the provisions of the R-ARCSS, and is being implemented. Whereas the document prioritises security, humanitarian and development nexus, it also focuses on devolution of powers and resources which is being operationalised with the development of State plans for all the 10 states and three (03) Administrative Areas.

15. Regarding access to finance by South Sudanese, the R-ARCSS mandates the establishment of enterprise development funds, microfinance, and other social safety nets such as subsidised credit.

Some progress in the development of the legal and institutional framework has been made on the Youth and Women Enterprise Development Funds Bill.

16. Under Chapter 5, Transitional Justice, the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs completed the drafting of the Bills on the Commission for Truth Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH) and the Compensation and Reparations Authority (CRA). The Bills have since been enacted by the TNLA. There has been no progress on the setting up of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan.

17. Chapter 6 relates to the making of the permanent constitution. This chapter is critical for guiding the conduct of elections at the end of the Transitional Period. The members of the NCRC have been appointed, and are expected to deliver on their mandate to produce a people-led and people-owned permanent constitution. The NCRC is ready to commence civic education and recruit members to the Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC), a specialised technical body expected to support the NCRC in drafting the permanent constitution as well as the establishment of the Preparatory Sub-Committee (PSC) whose primary mandate is to convene the National Constitutional Conference (NCC). However, despite its reconstitution, the NCRC has not received any funding from Government and its work remains stalled.

Challenges Facing Implementation of the R-ARCSS and the Way Forward

18. The implementation of the R-ARCSS has persistently faced a number of recurring challenges over the years which has resulted in a relatively slow pace of implementation. Among these are the:

- a. lack of political will;
- b. failure by the RTGoNU to provide adequate and timely funding to the Agreement Institutions and Mechanisms;
- c. trust deficit among the Parties;
- d. capacity gaps within the various implementation mechanisms;
- e. persistent levels of intercommunal violence in some of the states;
- f. insecurity caused by military defections and holdout groups; and
- g. severe flooding in parts of the country causing displacement and
- h. the influx of returnees and refugees fleeing the conflict in Sudan.

19. These recurring challenges and the failure of the authorities to adequately address them meant that critical tasks remain pending even after 6 years of implementation. These include the permanent constitution on the basis of which elections are to be conducted and the unification and redeployment of forces. Creating a secure and conducive environment is imperative to conduct peaceful, free and fair elections. More generally, there are concerns about the absence of civic and political space. These issues must be adequately addressed in order for elections to be held in December 2026.

20. Consequently, following the two-year extension of the R-ARCSS, the authorities have promised to fund the Agreement by diverting resources from the country's infrastructure projects to funding of the agreement. In addition, budget allocations have been made for the key election and constitution making institutions during fiscal year 2024/25. At the time, a number of other tasks have been identified including development of action plans by the mechanisms, and completing the security arrangements. **END**