



ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES CONFERENCE DES EGLISES DE TOUTE L'AFRIQUE

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STATEMENT ON SOUTH SUDAN REFERENDUM OUTCOME

We welcome and salute the results of the self-determination referendum which was conducted from 9th – 16th January 2011. The results are a clear expression of the will and aspirations of the people of southern Sudan. The interim official results that have been released by the south Sudan Referendum Commission show a 99.57% vote for independence.

Many actors contributed to the resounding success of the referendum. In particular, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) wishes to express sincere appreciation to the leadership of Sudan, President Gen. Omar al-Bashir and 1st Vice-President, and President of south Sudan, Gen. Salva Kiir and the entire government and in particular the south Sudan Referendum Commission for diligently organizing the south Sudan Referendum despite daunting challenges.

We are impressed by the dignified manner in which the people of south Sudan conducted themselves throughout the week long referendum. We were encouraged by their character to demonstrate their sense of civic duty and the general atmosphere of peace, which prevailed. This happened despite the fact that the referendum come so soon after the presidential and general elections which were a challenge in themselves after many years without similar elections, and following a protracted civil war.

The AACC, teaming up with the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) and other Ecumenical Organizations accompanied the people of Sudan once again as we have always done through out the period of the search for peace. The AACC played a significant role in assisting the churches with Voter Education Programmes and Voter Election Monitoring.

For the Church in the entire continent, the referendum is a turning point after the huge loss of life and the prolonged pain by the Sudanese people.

The impressive campaigns by supporters of either side of the referendum is an indication that the people of Sudan would want to see democracy work for them. The challenge that this presents for the leadership is to ensure that the expectations of the people are matched with a realization of a new era of peace and progress.

We once again pray and hope that, even with interim results indicating a 99% vote in favour of independence by south Sudanese, when finally the official outcome of the referendum is announced on the 7th of February 2011, we call on:

- The leadership of both north and south will not assume that they are indebted only to those who voted for their convictions but will provide leadership and service to all the people regardless of their vote, faith or any other consideration as per the mandate of their offices.
- The Sudanese in the north not to see themselves as losers and react in a manner that would plunge the country back to the abyss of death and darkness. Rather they would appreciate and respect the will of the people of the south through the referendum for self-determination which offered a chance for the southerners to define both the self and their belonging .
- The leadership in both the north and the south, to value their shared history and therefore conscious engage to offer each other opportunities that would continue to strengthen the history of a shared identity through the many years of hurting. In this regard we urge the two leaderships to ensure:
 - ❖ The guarantee of basic rights and protection of the southerners in the north as well as northerners in the south, including the protection of opportunities and property.
 - ❖ That post-referendum arrangements on transition, constitution making, sharing of wealth, and other issues including the demarcation of the north - south border are addressed as required with sobriety and the sensitivity they deserve.
 - ❖ To ensure that the Abyei Referendum is held as per the provisions of the CPA and as per the expectations of the people of Abyei.
 - ❖ That the Popular Consultations for Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan are held in an environment of clarity of the meaning of such consultations and with adequate civic and voter education
- As IGAD, Africa Union, the Arab League and the International community begin to recognize the referendum outcome, section of the international community will be reminded that the rip-off of blood fortunes from Sudan must be stopped to give the people of Sudan time to recover from that sad perversity of human nature.

The success of the referendum is not an end of the struggles of the people of the South Sudan but opens the door for a new future that must be characterized with strong relations with the north. Accordingly, we call upon the international community and African countries

to rise up in solidarity and in support of the people of Sudan (north and south) to reconstruct their country and rebuild their nationhood. It is further our hope that religious leaders will use this time and space to build viable moral foundations for the Sudan society regardless of the political division that may place some in the north and others in the south location.

The church in Africa looks forward to a future when the people of Sudan and specifically in the South will benefit from their God-given natural wealth, which ironically, has been the main source of their untold suffering.

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