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# ESSCA-USA 14TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORTY

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Equatoria: Beacon of Hope for Sustainable Peace and Progress in South Sudan



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EQUATORIAN SOUTH SUDANESE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION - USA

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## INTRODUCTION

The ESSCA-USA 14th Annual Conference was held in Des Moines, Iowa on August 30 - 31, 2014 under the theme Equatoria: Beacon of Hope for Sustainable Peace and Progress in South Sudan. Over four hundred people from the United States and Canada attended the conference with visitors from South Sudan, East Africa, Europe and Australia.

Several sessions were dedicated on the past, present, and future roles Equatorians can play in shaping the future of South Sudan especially in light of the current crisis unfolding in South Sudan. Throughout the conference presenters emphasized the need for Equatorians to be a role model in resolving the current conflict.

The general assembly provided feedback on how to best pursue the mission and objectives of the association. In questions and answer sessions, the General Assembly emphasized the need for ESSCA to channel its programs and efforts in building the community in North America in addition to the South Sudan advocacy work it has focused on over the recent years.

The association also conducted administrative business where Chairman Jobickson and President Lasu were reelected for the second and last term.

## MODEL OF PEACE AND PROGRESS IN SOUTH SUDAN

### EQUATORIANS HAVE PLAYED KEY ROLE IN THE FIGHT FOR SELF DETERMINATION

#### *Key Note presentation by Dr. David Bassiouni*

As the keynote address of the conference, Dr. David Bassiouni began his presentation by appreciating the South Sudanese and Equatorian leaders for giving us a country, South Sudan. He then went on to discuss how these events have shaped the history and led to the liberation of South Sudan. He believes it is very important to let our children know of the history that plagued South Sudan and where they fall within all these.

According to Dr. Bassiouni, the first annexation of South Sudan occurred during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, that is the joint British and Egyptian government that ruled the Sudan from 1820-1888. He questioned where South Sudan would have been if the annexation did not happen in the first place. He pointed out that annexation of South Sudan was a very important point in history because this was the second separation of Sudan, with the first during the British occupation and the second by the South Sudanese themselves.

Dr. Bassiouni pointed out that the animosity between the northern and southern Sudanese can be traced back to the Arab slave raids when northern tribes had been contracted by the Arabs to conduct raiding activities in the south. However, before the late 19th century, the Sudanese conflict was not strictly ethnic, between the Arab north and the African south, but tribal conflict over territory and resources. Similar fighting occurred all over the continent and around the world throughout the history.

Since 1899, Sudan was ruled by the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium. Trying to control half of the world at the time, the British did not have the force to occupy Sudan. Like in other colonies across Africa, they had to institute the "divide-and-rule" policy in Sudan. They wanted Sudanese to distrust, fear, and fight each other, instead of their colonizers. The "divide-and-rule" policy separated southern Sudanese provinces from the rest of the country and slowed down their economic and social development. The British authorities claimed that the south was not ready to open up to the modern world. At the same time, the British heavily invested in the Arab north, modernizing and liberalizing political and economic institutions and improving social, educational, and health services.

Another colonial experiment that slowed down development of southern Sudan had been the "indirect rule" policy. In order to prevent educated urban class and religious leaders from influencing social and political life in southern Sudan, the British authorities gave "power" to the tribal leaders and ruled through them. While the "divide-and-rule" policy separated the north and south, the "indirect rule" divided the south into hundreds of informal chiefdoms. The British authorities made their "indirect rule" policies official through the "Southern Policy" document.

He believes that, while the British had prevented the oppression and exploitation of the southern Sudanese by their northern countrymen, they did little to help the south to learn how to hold their own in the modern world. The British administration reversed its Southern Policy in 1946, stating that the Southern Sudanese were inextricably bound, both geographically and economically, to the Arab north as far as future development was concerned

The tensions and mistrust between the northern and southern Sudanese that had been building up over decades culminated into a large scale armed conflict in the mid-1950s. Fearing marginalization by the more populous and developed north, southern army officers mutinied in 1955. This was the beginning of the first long civil war in Sudan. Dr. Bassiouni believes that the British policies in the Sudan were the primary cause of conflict

The British differentiated the northern and southern Sudanese from each other without separating them politically. This made it virtually inevitable that, if and when the British abdicated, the northerners, being by far the stronger of the two sections of the Sudanese people, should attempt, as they have done, to assimilate the southerners by force. This, in turn, has made it inevitable that there should be a southern resistance movement.

Similarly, Dr. Bassiouni believes that the British "indirect rule" policy retarded interactions among different groups in the south and lead to divisions and conflict between them, thus helping the northerners. He believes that the protective umbrella of indirect rule made it possible for some tribal groups to develop vital interests while other groups became relatively underprivileged. When the British withdrew, an intense struggle for power ensued. The privileged became exposed to the danger of losing power and had to mobilize their forces in defense, while the underprivileged aligned themselves to gain power.

Historians and social scientists, both Western and Sudanese, believe that the post-independence conflict in Sudan was largely caused by the ethnic divisions created by the British colonial administration between 1899 and 1956. The south became economically underdeveloped and cut out from the rest of the country due to the British segregationist policies. As a result of underdevelopment and the lack of political

organizations and unity, the southern region was not prepared to actively participate in the Sudanese government after independence.

Regional differences resulted in a deeply divided and economically differentiated Sudan – an Arab-dominated north, economically and politically stronger than an underdeveloped and weaker African south. The southern provinces, sidelined during the British rule, continued to be marginalized and underdeveloped in independent Sudan controlled by the northerners. This consequently triggered the southern rebellion and two civil wars that ravaged the country for the most part of the second half of the twentieth century.

## EQUATORIA /EQUATORIANS MUST BE A MODEL OF PEACE FOR SOUTH SUDAN

*By Ladu Gubek*

Mr. Gubek discussed his views on the free society. He pointed out that it is always his nascent efforts to fight against idea of White domination and as well will fight for the idea of black domination

He called for more care for to the body of ESSCA and South Sudanese and the key to this is unity. He mentioned that our common destiny is one regardless of our tribe, language, and identity and that rather than using identity as a tool to separate us, we are united by our shared identity. We are not an island but part of South Sudan. The problem of the South is lack of nationalism. The presidency of South Sudan is not the property of Dinka or Nuer but all 63 tribes. We must fall and rise as one nation.

## EQUATORIAN WOMEN HAVE ALSO PLAYED CRITICAL ROLE AND MUST BE RECOGNIZED

*By Dr. Jane Kani Edward*

In her presentation Dr. Jane Kani Edward presented brief summary of the political & military roles of people of Equatoria in the liberation struggles, defined who Equatorians are, and provided insights into the sacrifices and contributions of Equatorians in general and women in particular, to the independence of South Sudan

She pointed out that writings about South Sudanese liberation struggles are often gendered and ethicized, arguing that women's participation & their war stories are rarely featured in public and national debates about the liberation struggles since the first civil war (1955-1972) and during the second civil war (1983-2005). The reasons according to Dr. Edward are that the history of South Sudan liberation struggles is written from a male perspective which emphasizes the role of men. Military contribution, or combat roles, particularly of men are glorified. Even worse, the role of women in the home front is not often publicized in national debates, or historical records.

Dr. Edward emphasized that women's roles during the 1983-2005 liberation movements included but were not limited to the following; mobilization of resources; health care provision; advocacy,

women's mobilization and political organizing; combat; and other supporting roles; and maintenance of families, traditions, and communities. Women played a vital role in providing safety for freedom fighters, food, and other necessities. Despite being neglected, she argued, women were among the victims of atrocities committed by Sudan security forces in the South during the first and second civil wars in Sudan. Not only these, women cared for wounded SPLA in villages and in refugee camps in neighboring countries; and as many men joined the war, women became heads of households and breadwinners not only in Sudan, but in refugee camps and in exile as well. Similarly, women whose husbands, male children, and/or relatives were killed in the frontline, became heads of households and breadwinners.

Dr. Edward further elaborated that women's political role is emphasized at the detriment of the sacrifices of ordinary women. The 25% affirmative action for women representation is privileged; while ignoring the efforts of the majority of the ordinary women that make up the rest of the 75% that labored so hard to feed us during the struggle. She also questioned why the contributions and sacrifices of Equatorians are either ignored or rendered non-existent. The sacrifices of specific ethnicities are privileged, while that of other ethnic groups are either dismissed or denied.

The consequences of this kind of categorization is the segmentation of the various groups as 'liberators' or 'non-liberators,' 'brave' or 'coward,' 'patriotic or unpatriotic,' and etc. Dr. Edward then called for a paradigm shift in thinking to be emphasized at all levels. People need to be made to understand that, women maintained families, & preserved traditions, amid war, hardship, and uncertainty. That, all people of South Sudan from the sixty four ethnic groups or "tribes" were participants and contributors to the struggles for the independence of South Sudan. All people of South Sudan from different ethnic groups/"tribes" participated in the quests for freedom.

Lastly Dr. Edward defined Equatorians as people who trace their ethnic origin to one of the three states of Equatoria. Here geographical location is emphasized. That Equatorians belong to different ethnic groups or "tribes." However, majority of non-Equatorians see Equatorians as belonging to one ethnic group – homogeneity is stressed. Over centuries Equatorians have developed social mechanisms of peaceful coexistence & corporation between different ethnic groups in the region; Majority of Equatorians practice agriculture, & keeping goats, sheep, and chicken; others combine agriculture & cattle keeping (a detailed definition of Equatoria and Equatorian can be found in Appendix I).

## SECURITY OF EQUATORIA AND IT'S PEOPLE

*By Fr. Mark Opere Omol*

Fr. Mark went in depth regarding the security of Equatoria and its people. He discussed the context in which we can significantly talk about security. He argued that we should not talk of peace in Equatoria as if Equatoria is isolated. Its part of South Sudan and therefore insecurity and instability in Equatoria is part of wider problem, for insecurity in Equatoria is insecurity for the whole country.

Fr. Mark argued that to most peoples' understanding, security always implies military security. When in fact some of the insecurity issues facing Equatoria are internal problems caused by the Equatoria people themselves. For instance, when people die of problems caused by epidemics, it is because the Equatoria people neglected to improve the health sector, and that this cannot possibly be attributed to it being a military problem.

He went further to discuss the nature and sources of insecurity in Equatoria. He mentioned that main sources of instability and insecurity in Equatoria fall into one of the following; land issues; cattle raids; epidemics and natural calamities; political antagonism (if one leader is from another tribe or clan, the others will not accept it); divide and rule policy in which a particular ethnic group pity one against the other, that is population dissemination (destroying the strong and conquering the weak); youth delinquency (outlaws, gangsters, lost boys, domestic LRA groups, calaries); sophisticated black magic poisoning; use of Equatorians against Equatorians in exchange for money or position; back starting of comrades (put in the front line and shot by their own colleagues--clear planned strategy)

Fr. Mark gave an account of several reasons that he believed triggered the eruption of the current political crisis in South Sudan which started in Dec 15, 2013. One of these reasons is the pragmatic ideal of the SPLM/A who believe that it fought the war, liberated the country, and attained the CPA, meaning they brought peace. It also means the SPLM owns the country, the people, and the resources; secondly, the Nuer/Dinka people believe they suffered the most during the war compared to other tribes and want to use the country's resources as their payment, neglecting the contribution of the other tribes; Third, the elites who did not physically contribute to the war are looked at as enemies and therefore are not valued and therefore must be eliminated; SPLM syndrome being practiced at the local level (utilized the SPLM/Dinka posted to the Equatorian

Fr. Mark also examined the position of the Equatorians in the current political crisis raging on in the country. He argued that although Equatorians may feel that they do not belong to either side of the political system or that they have not taken side, they are misjudging their reasoning. That is mainly because Equatorian position fall into one of the following two. First, the position of Equatorians, especially the governors and other military officials, is represented by those who are currently with the democratically elected government. That means that being with the government, they are required by law to defend the constitution and the elected government from any resistance. Secondly, the other position of the Equatorians is represented by those that

defected with the rebels, which automatically sends the signal that they are against the government and therefore do not support the current government being in power.

He further went on to discuss potential issues of insecurity facing the Equatorian people. Possible sources of insecurity he discussed include the following. The insecurity from the side of the Dinka tribe who, according to Fr. Mark have the hidden motive of revenging the killings from the Kokora policy that the Equatorians fought for long ago. Similarly, the Equatoria people face political insecurity from the Nuer people, who hold a grudge against the Equatorians for standing with the current government that mostly comprises of the Dinka people, whom the Nuer dreaded for killing them in large numbers during the current political crisis.

Finally Fr. Mark detailed strategies that the Equatorian people should adapt in the face of the above political insecurity posed by the different forces described above. First, Fr. Mark maintained that Equatorians should realistically examine and understand what the Equatorian people are capable of doing and not capable of doing so that we should not blindly lay the blame on other tribes for what we ourselves have not understood very well. For this he wants the Equatorian people to understand that those proposing to have independent Equatorian army have to understand that they have to first fight the three governors who have chosen to remain with the current government. He also pointed out that we can draft constitution governing our own affairs but not for the government. And last he pointed out that us, as Equatorian people cannot oppose the government while still remaining a part of it.

He further argued that since Equatorians also face insecurity posed by epidemic diseases, it'll make sense for them to first develop other forms of security against epidemics by developing health security, against food insecurity by improving the agricultural sector, and against environmental insecurity by devising ways to improve and preserve the natural environment from degradation.

Equatorians should also prevent and frustrate attempts to use Equatorians against Equatorians like campaigning against taking bribery intended to motivate them to kill their own people. Fr. Mark cited the 1992 incidence as a case in point where a small ransom was enough to convince other Equatorians to release names of their own people to be recruited in the army.

Since the other kind of insecurity for the Equatoria people results from cattle looting, Fr. Mark also urges Equatorians can also develop policies and strategies to prevent cattle raids by other tribes.

From the group discussions, most people believe that insecurity in the greater Equatoria region indeed fall into one or more categories as those discussed by Fr. Mark.

## PERSONAL TESTIMONY

*By Mr. Seme Anoka*

Seme Anoka is a graduate of Khartoum University faculty of Engineering. He is married and a father of two. He thanked ESSCA-USA for inviting him to share his experience of torture. Mr. Anoka traveled to South Sudan in 2012, after he was offered a job by Company SABA, a subsidiary of Nile Petroleum Company in Unity State, South Sudan. According to him, he was in three month rotation in Bentiu, Unity State in from September to December 2013. Therefore, he was in Bentiu when the December 15, 2013 violent erupted in Juba. While in Bentiu, he and his colleagues from different ethnic groups of South Sudan were beaten and tortured. Below are excerpts from his testimony:

I remember a group of people came and knocked at the door and asked me where I am from. I said I am not sure where I am from. However, I told them that I am from Juba. So I heard gun shots. They asked me about my roommate who is a Dinka from Abeyi. They want to know where he is from. I didn't tell them his ethnicity. Because I refused to tell them they beat me up, they hit me with rocks and sticks on my head. I bled a lot, I collapsed' but they didn't know that I didn't pass out. I didn't die. One thing that I remember is I cried out Jesus Christ, every time they hit me, I cried Jesus Christ... In some instances, I experience flashbacks that I don't want to share with others even with my wife, I don't tell them. But it was so painful, I bled so much, but I thank God that he saved me. But this is not the most important. I don't feel sorry for myself because there are people who died. I have colleagues who died and I saw them. I remember Michael, he was laying there, he is a person I knew, I worked with, I shared a room, okay, it is hard because I saw it. But all these are not important even I am not important. The most important thing is that God is there...What happened is that I was injured on my scalp, I bled, and they broke my bones. On the morning of December 19, 2013 we were taken to Robkona and I was there for two nights. From Robkona I was transferred to Juba, then, I came to United State on January 1, 2014. Following my arrival in the United States I received medical treatment... What I want to tell you is that my experience was painful, that is what I can say... and one of the most important things I can say is that, you have to trust the Lord.

He concluded by thanking the audience for listening to his testimony.

## CAUSES OF INSECURITY & STATE FRAGILITY IN SOUTH SUDAN

### Focus Group Discussions

To critically address causes of insecurity and state fragility in South Sudan, the conference organizers organized focus group discussions to garner the viewpoints of the conference participants. The session was moderated by Dr. Henry Lejukole and Dr. Jane Kani Edward. Dr. Lejukole provide the context within which issues of security and causes of state fragility in South Sudan. He urged the audiences to do two things: first, to identify the causes of insecurity and state fragility in South Sudan; and second, to propose

strategic solutions to the problems. The participants of the conference were divided into eighteen (18) groups, and were allowed to deliberate for about 45 minutes. Each group was asked to nominate a secretary to record their comments. At the end of the 45 minutes, each group presented its view points to the audience. Below are summary of the presentations:

### **Causes of Insecurity and State Fragility in South Sudan**

- Threat to physical security emanating from state of lawlessness; personal elimination; dysfunctional government; lack of accountability; and absence or lack of the rule of law.
- Corruption – nepotism – tribalism – insecurity: leadership greed, self-interest; poor leadership characterized by incompetency, dysfunctional and weak government institutions; settling of old political scores; the culture of corruption – eat first and deliver later; favoritism,
- Tribalization/ethnicization of the SPLA and the SPLM. That, the SPLM/A is the cause of problems, instability and insecurity in South Sudan.
- Oppression of some people by the government apparatus; and lack of understanding among South Sudanese.
- Trauma resulting from violent and war; availability and prevalence of small arms in South Sudan;
- Ignorance – wrong people in right position; issues of age limit – everlasting rule;
- Overcrowding in Juba – concentration of people, economic, political and social activities in Juba leading to underdevelopment in other regions.
- The constitution which gave too much power to the president.
- Food insecurity,
- The perception that specific ethnic groups in South Sudan are the ones who fought for the liberation and independence of South Sudan, while others, such as people from Equatoria did not. Equatorians are being call cowards; denial of the contributions of Equatorians in the liberation struggles,
- Lack of political vision for the country; disunity and disintegration of ethnic groups’ cohesion, unequal power sharing.
- The presence of outsiders/foreigners and non-Equatorians cattle keepers into Equatoria; the political agenda of settling non-Equatorians in Equatoria as settlers, rather than IDPS; political marriage to gain a foothold in Equatoria; destructions of farms by cattle;
- Dependence on government as the only source of employment – everyone sees the government as the only source of economic survival.
- Struggle for power; land grabbing; lack of development, lack of service delivery;
- Lack of unity or social cohesion, fairness, proudness or the attitude of “know all,” disagreements, mistrust; use of force to resolve disputes; lack of nationalism or strong national sentiment or belonging.
- Ignoring the role and authority of local chiefs or traditional authorities.

### **Strategies for Addressing insecurity and state fragility in South Sudan**

- Civic education is very important to create awareness among the population on the political, economic and social aspect of their society. Civic education is also needed to inculcate nationalism and patriotism.
- Cross-cultural interaction is very important to minimize differences and build bridges between different ethnicities and communities.
- Organization among Equatorians is very important.
- Need for good and quality leadership chosen by the people.
- Education is very important to address prevalence of ignorance and illiteracy in South Sudan.
- Development programs that promote unity in diversity e.g., institution of federal system of government will encourage community policing. Equal allocation of key positions in the military and government is important to create balance in the politics and economic aspect of the country, and minimize the domination by one ethnic group or region.
- Transformation of the SPLA to a national army that reflect the diversity of South Sudanese people.
- The need to remember and recognize all our heroes and heroines who sacrificed for our freedom equally.
- The use of election and democratic practices to elect qualified leaders to lead the country.
- Fight for freedom of speech and expression.
- Engage youth in the political process.
- Ensure accountability and justice issues.
- Achievement of food security by guaranteeing the following: quality and quantity; protecting the produces from land minds and avail tools and resources for agriculture. Design clear policies to protect crops and animals, considering cultural diversity in agricultural practices. Scientific investment and advances in modern agricultural practices, such extension work, provision of subsidies, and loans through cooperative. Monitor population growth. Investment in physical infrastructure to facilitate trade movement of agricultural produce. And investment in storage facilities, harvest, field and crop protection.
- To achieve stability and eradicate the causes of state fragility, there is need to develop democratic system that is accountable and a government that is responsive to the needs of the citizens. Provision of equal opportunities for all regardless of race, ethnicity, political affiliation, gender, religion, etc. Consistency of policy, vision, and strong and independent institutions.
- Adherence to the rule of law to resolve domestic insecurity, and violations of people's rights.
- Rewriting of the constitution to reduce the powers granted to the president, put limits to the president's term in office, and to include provisions that guarantee the rights of all citizens and that reflect the diversity of South Sudanese people.
- Proper training of the police, security personnel, and other organized forces to ensure that the human rights and dignity of the civilian population is respected.

## POLITICAL PRESENTATIONS

### SPLM

Hon. Grace Abalang opened her statement by acknowledging that she came to the conference on an individual capacity. Thus she does not represent the position of the government of South Sudan, but as an elected representative of the people of Eastern Equatoria State, and Equatoria in General. She noted that there are a lot of things going on in South Sudan. Some are good and others are bad. That, those things that are bad they are not supporting them. As she argues “we don’t support the killing of our people, the killing of women, the rapping of women, the killing of children. We don’t support it especially as a woman. And as a representative of women in South Sudan and Eastern Equatoria in particular, and Ikotos as a county I don’t support it being it from the opposition, being from the government. It is not good. The people who are dying are the people of South Sudan.”

As women of South Sudan, any child who dies in Bentiu, a South Sudanese women gave birth to that child. Any child who dies in Malakal or in Juba, a South Sudanese woman gave birth to that child. As Equatorians we don’t have to support or follow anybody. We should have a stand. Not all the time when somebody defected to the bush we run after him and say this one is good. But when that person was in the government, why didn’t he do anything good for you? If we want something good for us as Equatorians we have to start it ourselves as Equatorians. We don’t have to follow anybody.

Secondly, all of us in Equatoria, even an unborn child, we are standing for federalism. If you go to Equatoria today, mobilization is seriously going on. If you ask a child in the street what you want? They will answer “federalism.” What is the meaning of federalism? The answer is “everybody in his/her own place.” She urged those in the Diaspora to help in the mobilization for federalism constructively not through insults. We [Equatorians] need to know which Nuer or Dinka does not want federalism, so we can explain to them. This is because we as Equatorians alone cannot bring federalism by ourselves. We are all South Sudanese. We need to campaign for federalism in a good way because we are peaceful and God-fearing people. We should not insult those who are against federalism.

South Sudan is for all of us. It is not for one ethnic group, a state, or a region, but for all the three regions of South Sudan. Hon. Abalang commented on the discussion on the on-line forums, arguing that people in South Sudan “read the on-line forums. So we should not promote hatred, insults ourselves as Equatorians. It is not good. We read but we don’t reply. Especially our brothers in the forum, respect us as women. Don’t expose us with insults in the on-line forums. Respect us as your sisters. We love you.”

Lastly, she noted that all Equatorian MPs in Juba passed their greeting to those in the diaspora. That she came to hear what we are discussing so that she can report back to the Equatorian Caucus in the parliament. As she commented, “last year you raised the issue of Abdulrahman Sule, we raised it in the parliament, Wani Igga raised it, and Sule was released.”

Some might ask, are those of Grace bought? Why are they staying in the parliament? I was elected by the people of Eastern Equatoria. They did not elect me to join a rebellion. If I want to start a rebellion, I will start it in Ikotos, I will not join anybody. And don’t allow anybody to come here and deceive you that, I am

doing this and that, but he has no base in South Sudan. Me Grace, I am in charge of a base which is Eastern Equatoria. If I want to do anything, Eastern Equatoria is behind me. We come to talk in the diaspora, who is behind you? Thus I want to tell you that we need to support our leaders, because they are there whether they are good or bad. Your work here is not about insults. Now it is the time for the women of South Sudan. The men of South Sudan let us down, now is our time.

## GRECCOR

Dr. Wani Tombe came from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from the peace discussions taking place there, where people are trying to create a nation that is very accommodating, cooperative and which is very kind. Dr. Tombe is the Chairperson of the Greater Equatoria Council of Rights, which according to him are rights “which are very inclusive rights – political, civil, and all types of rights which we need to enjoy.” According to him, he was at the conference “literarily not to blame others, but to encourage ourselves so that we can work together. This is not the first time I am talking to some of you. I was here [in the USA] during May and June, and I was also in Australia.” Dr. Tombe explained the reasons that brought him to the conference saying that he was invited by the conference organizers to share his political thoughts, and the political thoughts of those in diaspora. Explaining his political thoughts he argued that “my political thoughts are grounded on the premises that you [Equatorians] are the beacon of South Sudan. In fact you are the foundation of South Sudan, and therefore, we think that it is time we took that challenge and bring South Sudan back to peacefulness. And definitely peace always, in many situations follows certain degree of anarchy and I don’t think that we warmongers when we say that peace can be brought through certain ways; and certain ways include getting angry sometimes and therefore it can bring laughter.

On the on-going peace talks in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Dr. Tombe noted that “the discussion taking place in Addis Ababa at the moment are not encouraging because the government in Juba thinks that peace must be dictated upon its terms. Some of us who are there think that, no, we have given you, (that is the government in Juba) the opportunity to lead us. But you let us down; and therefore, we don’t think that actually peace can be dictated by our brothers and sisters in Juba. When I say our brothers and sisters in Juba I didn’t honestly hate anybody. Politics is not about hatred but we want to correct the intentions and certain actions.”

He went on to comment that his group presents itself as “South Sudan protectors. We have the belief that we can protect South Sudan through politics, through economic, and through firearms also. I am saying this because I am also a military person or a person with military background. Therefore, we should not be ashamed of defending South Sudan and protecting our rights as Equatorians. It is our legitimate right so that to have a future we have to begin in the present now and that is why I strongly believe that we have the need to have an army, viable army; an army.” When peace is achieved and as there is talk about federalism, “we are going to have an army that resembles us. Unless we have this army, some of us who have been displaced whom others continue to displace us we shall not be able to protect ourselves unless we have this army made up of our sons and daughters. Regardless of my gray hair I still can run distances with a Kalashnikov. So I think it is not shameful, we have to have an army and we are going to do this.”

He emphasized that, although his groups is calling for a creation of an army, it doesn't mean that they are warmongers, but one have to protect one's peace because we [i.e., Equatorians] have been marginalized by others and that "we are not going to allow this to go by."

Given that he has limited time to speak, Dr. Tombe concluded by saying that people should continue with the discussion as they mingle. He thank the audience and for the opportunity to share his thoughts.

## SPLM IN OPPOSITION

He spoke in both English and Juba Arabic. He started his statement by asking the following questions: following the December 2013 incident, who among you were directly or indirectly lost, or have a friend or relative arrested? If you are one of them please stand up – [many people actually stood up]. After the problems started in Juba in December 2013, I want to ask and know form you people of Equatoria who among you did not lost a person, or have a relative or a friend who is arrested or imprisoned? If there is one among you who have no relative or friend who is not killed or arrested please stand up – [I not sure how many people stood up].

He made it clear to the audience that "we are in conflicts, we are in conflicts because, as Equatorians, we don't want to show our color. And I don't know the things that you are saying such as federalism, marginalization, etc., how are these issues be resolved? He went on to say that the problems in South Sudan started since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). That "since the signing of the CPA we have problems. As Equatorians, we complained that we are not appointed to high government positions and that nothing is done for us, and so on. But did someone from Equatoria stood up to listen to you? No body. We have the problem that started between September and December 2013, but nobody wants to sit down and discuss and resolve the problems. But when a bullet was fired in December 2013, what happened? Our President put on his military gear and can on the TV and said he will go after those people who and finish them. But when the other side responded by a bullet, what happened? After three days, there was a call for peace negotiation in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia."

He continued by saying that "as our priest one day said, if you are a strong woman or a strong man, and that someone keep stepping on your head many times, but one day you tried to raise your head up a bit, that person will take note. So I want to tell you the people of Equatoria, talking alone will not take us anywhere. If you want government positions or federalism, it will not come easily, only through the barrel of the gun; only through the bullet. If you are waiting so that someone will ask you to come so that you will be given, you can stay. But if the few who are now with the opposition, we want our rights. We want to stand like Equatorians and demand our rights. He asked the audience to say that we (i.e., Equatorians) we are not followers of others. We Equatorians if you don't know what is going on, this is the reality. We as Equatorians from different ethnic groups have organized ourselves and ready to fight for the freedom of our country and Equatoria." He ask those in the diaspora to contribute financially. He concluded by asking all members of the opposition in attendance to stand up so that people know them.

## YOUTH PROPOSAL

This proposal is to serve as a preliminary piece towards the strategic goals of organizing and mobilizing the youth towards active participation within ESSCA. This proposal is a result of a careful look into the social fabric of Equatorians in diaspora and in particular the United States region.

This proposal is a collective effort of three young men (Louis Ladal, Ivan Oramo, Fareed Ojok) who care deeply not only for the growth and prosperity of ESSCA-USA, but also for the prosperity of the Equatorian community here in diaspora and back at home in the great Equatorian States. We have discovered from our own observations into the diaspora community that, there is a huge disconnect between the elderly and the young within our community here in the U.S. and this caused us to raise the question, why there is a disconnect between the two significant demographics that are supposed to be the fabric of the community?

We have taken the liberty of talking to a number of young men and women of Equatorian background between the ages ( 18-35) and concurrently talking to elderly people of the same descent and during our communication with these two demographics we have noticed a great deal of disconnect between the two groups.

It is/was clear to us that, there is the element of blame amongst the two groups which seems to formulate the contention of both demographics; the young are simply saying “THESE JULUKA” doesn’t want us to get involved; they always bore us with politics during these conferences. However, at the same time the elderly also say the youth “EYAL TA AMERICA DEL”, they don’t want to get involved in community activities. These contentions have created a gap between the young and the old, and if not addressed, the gap will widen and lead to the decay of the organization. With that in mind, we are proposing the following mechanisms and goals:

### GOALS

1. To create a conducive environment that can foster interest of youth and young adults in playing an active role in the organization’s affairs, this in turn, will create a generational ladder into the leadership of the organization. As such, our suggestion is:
  - a. Hold meetings between the youth and elders on a monthly basis through teleconferences or Facebook/other social media platforms
  - b. And our elders should reach out to the youth and young adults to create relationships that initiate healthy conversations
2. To create a solid relationship amongst the youth and youth adults here in the United States, and if possible back at home. As such, we propose:
  - a. To have an event during the ESSCA conference that is tailored for the present youth and young adults to create a networking opportunity at personal and professional levels, such as presenting awards to participants that recognize their talents and skills. For example, DJ appreciation organization, as aspiring models, etc.
  - b. To creating a database for the youth and young adults across the United States and Canada, in maintaining solid connection.

3. To utilize youth and young adult's as an instrumental connection to the U.S and Canada educational, private, and public institutions, given that their demographic has perhaps a higher level education and financial stability. This will further develop the ESSCA organization's goals and objectives and to create awareness about ESSCA across the U.S. and Canada. As such, we should:
  - a. Assign youth and young adults the tasks of organizing fund raisers for ESSCA in their own communities, schools, and workplace.
  - b. Conduct outreach to youth and young adults in their communities who are not engaged in ESSCA activities through social media.
  - c. To connect ESSCA youth and young adults to Equatorian families in their own communities to foster a "Big Brother/Big Sister" initiative that would create relationships between at-risk children from Equatoria and positive Equatorian role models. As such, we should:
    - i. Offering tutoring from ESSCA youth and young adults at the local levels for families that have children struggling in school
    - ii. Create a link between ESSCA youth and young adult professionals to mentor children of Equatorian families to guide them towards higher education and professional aspirations.
    - iii. Successes of ESSCA youth and young adults going to colleges and those graduating from colleges.

If we achieve the above goals and objectives, they will not only strengthen the ESSCA-USA organizations, it will mend strong and trustworthy relationships between the youth, young adults and the elders within the ESSCA community. In addition, these goals will also create a stronger path within ESSCA, which will enable the elders to have confidence, in charging or transferring the organization's operations and responsibilities to the youth and young adults. Finally, these goals if accomplished, it will lead ESSCA to financial independency, and that will help us to influences events back home, not only financially but also in the political spectrum.

"Don't judge a book by its cover your saggy pants son is a well-respected ENGINEER"

## ELECTION AND ELECTION RESULTS

The elections for the Chairman of the Board and President of the association were conducted under the auspices of the Nomination Committee. The committee was composed of Jaden Ohiro, Mikelina Iboj, and Lawrence Becu.

The Nomination committee was responsible for processing candidate application and ensuring that all candidates were qualified and fit to stand for election.

For the position of Chairman of the Board of Directors two candidate submitted their applications, the incumbent Chairman Jobickson Modi, and Jimmy Mulla.

For the position of President five candidates submitted their applications, the incumbent President Kwaje Lasu, Lino Lokonobei, Omol J. Louis, James Okwaramoi, and Julius Badigo.

Each Candidate was given five minutes to campaign and appeal for votes. For the Chairmanship of the Organization the public was notified that Jimmy Mulla opted to withdraw his name from the contest days before the conference Omol J. Louis, James Okwaramoi, and Julius Badigo each gave speeches but in the end withdraw from the elections.

After the campaign period the three remaining candidates answered questions from the public. When that concluded all the states represented dispersed into groups to select two delegates each to cast ballots on their behalf. Following the delegate selection, the delegates cast their votes one at a time.

The final results was that Chairman Jobickson was reelected unopposed and President Kwaje Lasu won the contest with a vote tally of 32 to 23 votes for Lino Lokonobei.

## ORGANIZING CANADA

A group of Canadians from different provinces at the conference met and decided to restart the stalled process of forming an Equatoria Community Association in Canada. The resolution reached was to organize and hold a convention in Winnipeg in the summer of 2015.

## MAMALAND HOPE FOR FUTURE FOUNDATION

Ms. Catherine Dudu Kenyi is the wife of late Dr. Pacifico L. Lolik. She came from Sydney Australia. She spoke in Juba Arabic for all to understand. She told the audience that she was happy to be at the conference and that she traveled from Sydney, Australia, in a non-stop flight, and that her feet were swollen due to limited movement on the plane.

She encourage all women in the audience to be strong and do something for themselves, their children, and for people of South Sudan. As she argues, “we the women in Australia, and based on our financial capacity did something for our people in South Sudan. For instance, in March 27, 2014, women agreed and did something for women in South Sudan. We sent a container of medical supplies up to Juba at the time when South Sudan was going through difficult time as a result of the on-going war. This is because Equatoria is not a joke. I was born in Juba Hospital.”

Ms. Catherine Kenyi talked about the women’s organization she and other women help form in Sydney, Australia, which is still at its infancy. The name of the organization is Mamaland Hope for Future Foundation Inc. The main goal of the Foundation is to extend help to women and children in South Sudan. This is because, women are the ones who suffer most. We as women are the ones suffering the most. Based on the brochure of the Foundation, one of its main objectives include promotion of “health and well-being of the women in South Sudan through education sessions and workshops to raise awareness.”

She also urged men to encourage and support women so that they stand strong and do something beneficial. “This is because, each time we receive from the white people, but we don’t give. Let us tell them that it is enough, we have had enough. So what is left should be send to South Sudan.” In conclusion, she urged the participants of the conference to contribute to the cause of their organization, arguing that

“if each one of you contribute a dollar, it will help fund a project in South Sudan. She thank the organizers for allowing her to address the audience.

FINANCIAL REPORT

**Conference Report**

<b>Items Descriptions</b>		
<b>Income</b>		
Iowa State Contributions	\$7,820.00	
At Door -Iowa Residence Registration Fees	\$1,700.00	
At Door - Non Iowa Residence Registration Fees	\$18,525.08	
Direct Deposit Registration (Other States Registration.) Fees	\$6,850.00	
Online Registration Fees	\$3,800.00	
Party Entrance Fees	\$1,014.00	
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>\$39,709.08</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Hotel Bills include Meals	\$26,517.07	
Expenses Spend by the State of Iowa	\$2,836.07	
Reimbursement for Air ticket	\$454.20	
Sound System	\$150.00	
Office Supplies	\$23.58	
Returned Check	\$100.00	
Conference Checking Acct	\$100.00	
PayPal Processing Fees	\$26.64	
Bank Fees	\$100.36	
Non-Sufficient Check Fee	\$64.20	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$30,372.12</b>	
<b>Net Profit</b>		<b>\$9,336.96</b>

## Fundraising During Conference Report

<b>Items Descriptions</b>		
<b>Income</b>		
States contribution (NC, CA, MI) Each State Contributed \$500.00	\$1,500.00	
Membership dues	\$756.00	
Sunday offerings	\$409.00	
Raffle Tickets	\$765.00	
Donation plates	\$603.17	
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>\$4,033.17</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
iPad	\$370.99	
Funeral Donation	\$500.00	
<b>Totals Expenses</b>	<b>\$870.99</b>	
<b>Net Profit</b>		<b>\$3,162.18</b>

Conference Net Profit		\$9,336.96
Fundraising Net Profit		\$3,162.18
<b>Grand Total Net Profit</b>		<b>\$12,499.14</b>

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Finally we thank the Equatorian Community in Iowa for hosting the 2014 Annual ESSCA Conference. The hard work of the ESSCA-IA team under the leadership of Dr. Henry Y. Lejukole and Jaden Orhio must be acknowledge. Thank You Iowa.



## EQUATORIAN SOUTH SUDANESE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION - USA

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