



---

**EQUATORIAN SOUTH SUDANESE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION - USA**

12<sup>TH</sup> ESSCA-USA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

AUGUST 31<sup>ST</sup> – SEPTEMBER 2<sup>ND</sup> 2012

---

**REVISITING AND STRENGTHENING OUR UNITY**

**CHARTING A WAY FORWARD FOR A BETTER AND STRONGER EQUATORIA**

---

CONFERENCE REPORT

## CONTENTS

Executive Summary .....	2
Day One .....	5
Remarks by H.E Ambassador Dr. John Akec Khoc .....	5
Keynote Address by H.E. Dr. Ambassador Francis Nazario .....	6
South Sudan at One: The Challenges Ahead.....	7
Strengthening Women’s Collective Action for Better Equatoria .....	8
Challenges Facing Equatorian Youth .....	10
Presentations about issues facing Equatoria and South Sudan.....	11
Day Two .....	12
Remarks by H.E. Banagasi Joseph Bakasoro .....	12
Q & A with South Sudanese Government Officials.....	15
ESSCA State office Reports .....	19
13 <sup>th</sup> ESSCA-USA Annual Conference .....	24
Financial Report.....	26
Acknowledgments .....	28
Appendix A.....	29
Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Dr. Francis Nazario .....	29
Remarks by Dr. David Bassiouni .....	33
Civil Society and Democratic Transition: It is Time to Choose.....	38

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On behalf of the Equatoria South Sudanese Community Association - United States (ESSCA-USA) Board of Directors and Executive Officers, I would like to thank our brothers and sisters in the state of North Carolina for hosting, organizing, and making this year's conference a great success. Equally, I would like to thank everyone who participated and contributed directly or indirectly in making this event a success. Collectively, with the spirit we have demonstrated, ESSCA-USA, as a community organization can move mountains, be more productive, and be a stronger voice and face of the people of Equatoria.

ESSCA-USA has been in existence for over twelve years, and during this period it has survived a tumultuous journey. Through the dedication and hard work demonstrated by our predecessors, ESSCA-USA stood strong and weathered the storm and challenges facing us as South Sudanese in general and Equatorian in particular in the United States as well as back home in South Sudan.

From August 31<sup>st</sup> to September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2012, ESSCA-USA held its 12<sup>th</sup> annual conference at Deep River Event Center in Greensboro, North Carolina to address some of the challenges facing Equatorians in both the diaspora and the homeland. Hosted by Equatoria South Sudanese Community of North Carolina (ESSCA-NC), the conference brought together over two hundred Equatorians from across the United States, Canada, and South Sudan. The theme of the conference "Revising and Strengthening our Unity: Charting a Way Forward for a Better and Stronger Equatoria," emphasized the unity of Equatorians in the diaspora as well as in the homeland. It further explored strategies for strengthening ESSC-USA's role in the United States and its engagement with the homeland.

The conference was led by our Gov. Bangasi Joseph Bakosoro, the governor of Great State of Western Equatoria representing his colleagues Gov. Clement Wani Konga of the Great State of Central Equatoria; and Gov. Luis Lobong Lojore of the Great State of Eastern Equatoria; as well as our distinguished Ambassadors to the United Nation Dr. Francis Nazario and Dr. John Akec Koch our Ambassador to the United States, distinguished Members of Parliament from our

national and state governments in South Sudan, our respected elders in the US and South Sudan, and ESSCA-USA state representatives.

The two-day conference covered a ranged of topics which addressed the general situation of Equatorians and issues related to the status and operations of ESSCA-USA.

The first day of the conference discussed the following topics: Working Together for United and Stronger Equatoria; South Sudan at One: the Challenges Ahead; Strengthening Women's Collective Action for Better Equatoria; Addressing the Challenges facing Equatorian Youth in America; and Addressing Security Concerns in Equatoria.

The second day was dedicated mainly to addressing internal issues of concern to the role, status and operations of ESSCA-USA and state offices. Some of the issues discussed include: ESSCA-USA's achievements, challenges and way forward; Achievements and Challenges of ESSCA state offices; exploration of ways to strengthen ESSCA-USA; and amendment of the bylaws. The day started with a Question and Answer session with Ambassador Nazario, three Members of Parliament (MPs) from the three states and one MP from the South Sudan Legislative Assembly (SSLA), and concluded with remarks by H.E. Bangasi Joseph Bakasoro the Governor of Western Equatoria State.

The conference was very engaging and most participants were involved in the process and eger to speak their minds and ask questions. Prior to closing the conference, ESSCA-USA's bylaw amendment was unanimously passed. Among the key provisions passed were the extension of the term in office of the Executive Officers from two years to three years and the adoption of a \$24 a year or \$2 a month membership. The complete text of the ESSCA-USA amended bylaws is found in Appendix B.

The following is a summary of our 12 - 36 months projected plans.

1. diaspora Programs
  - a. 12 Months
    - i. Strengthening relationship with local state chapters
    - ii. Establish an office in Washington DC (1 staff and volunteers)
  - b. 24 – 36 Months:
    - i. Increase number of staff in DC office

- ii. Mentorship for Middle and High School Student (In collaboration with local ESSCA state chapters)
    - iii. Facilitate internship programs for college students
- 2. South Sudan Programs
  - a. 12 Months:
    - i. ESSCA-USA Scholarship fund for 15 twelve grade students (5 students from each of the three Equatorian states)
  - b. 24- 36 Months
    - i. Secure land in Juba
    - ii. Community Center and ESSCA-USA office in Juba
- 3. Government Engagement
  - a. ESSCA-USA will continue to influence South Sudan public policies
  - b. Monitor conditions on the ground, and continue to issue press releases on critical issues that impact the South Sudanese people.

With the spirit of camaraderie demonstrated during the conference, collectively, we can execute and accomplish the aforementioned plans. Therefore, I strongly urge you to support ESSCA-USA through your membership contributions.

## DAY ONE

The 12<sup>th</sup> ESSCA-USA conference kicked off on September 1<sup>st</sup> at 9:30 with a moment of silence for the fallen heroes of South Sudan, followed by an opening prayer by Pastor Moses Soro. The women of North Carolina led the audience with rousing songs of worship in the traditional South Sudanese manner.

The Master of Ceremony, Mrs. Suzan Andrea, welcomed the audience and outlined the program for the rest of the day. She then welcomed to the stage Sunday Taabu, the President of ESSCA-NC. Ms. Taabu greeted the audience, and expressed her delight about North Carolina hosting the conference and wished that everybody attending the conference would enjoy it.

Following Ms. Taabu's remarks, Mr. Kwaje Lasu, President of ESSCA-USA also welcomed the participants to the conference, and thanked them for showing concern for Equatoria by taking the time to attend the conference and discuss the pertinent issues facing Equatorians in South Sudan and in the diaspora.

## REMARKS BY H.E AMBASSADOR DR. JOHN AKEC KHOC

H.E. Dr. John Akec Khoc, the South Sudanese Ambassador to the United States, delivered the opening speech. He was introduced and welcomed to the podium by Professor Sam Laki.

Ambassador Khoc began his speech by conveying greetings from the Government of South Sudan and indicated that he was happy to see that Equatorians in the United States were gathered to discuss the issues that face South Sudanese and identify ways to develop our nascent nation.

He provided possible ways through which the diaspora can go home and contribute to the development of the homeland. One of the ways is through a similar program like the USAID program, implemented after the signing of the Comprehensive peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005; which encouraged people to visit the homeland for three months to help in the reconstruction

efforts. However, the Ambassador noted that the USAID program was not successful because the information was not well publicized and shared by many people.

He further encouraged people to compile statistical data about the diaspora. This data will help the government establish an accurate view of the capabilities and skillset of the diaspora, which in turn will enable the government to draw on the need skillsets in developing the country.

The Ambassador acknowledged the role and strength of ESSCA-USA, and proposed that ESSCA-USA should explore the possibility of organizing a gathering that brings together other South Sudanese communities to discuss issues of common interests.

#### KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY H.E. DR. AMBASSADOR FRANCIS NAZARIO

H.E Ambassador Dr. Francis Nazario, the South Sudanese Ambassador to the United Nations delivered the keynote address after Ambassador Khoc. He was introduced and welcomed to the podium by Jobickson Modi, ESSCA-USA's Board of Directors Chairman.

The Ambassador commended the unity Equatorians showed by coming together for such a conference and noted that this is the first step in realizing a united South Sudan. The Ambassador noted that as we struggled through the civil war to attain our freedom and independence, so we must struggle to build and develop South Sudan. He noted that the government continues to resolve post-independence challenges such as consolidating our relationship with Sudan, establishing internal security, and establishing government capabilities.

As for civilians and particularly the diaspora, the Ambassador noted they have a special role to help achieve economic independence and self-sufficiency. He invites the diaspora to leverage the knowledge acquired in the west to develop farms and produce food, establish the private sector, and build hospitals in South Sudan.

His complete remarks are attached in Appendix A.

## SOUTH SUDAN AT ONE: THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

Dr. David Bassiouni, the UNICEF Humanitarian Coordinator & CEO of the Bassiouni Foundation made a presentation titled “South Sudan at One: Challenges, Achievements, and the Way Forward. Dr. Abanki Hino introduced and moderated his presentation.

Dr. Bassiouni’s presentation was a reflection on how far South Sudan has come since 2005 and what has been accomplished since the independence last year (July 9, 2011). He started his presentation by posing the following question: “Why do you want Equatoria to be strong?” Answering his own question, he argued that “you need Equatoria to be strong so that our country could be stronger in order to realize our dreams for a strong, peaceful and prosperous sovereign South Sudan.”

The presentation provided a broader view about the current state of affairs in South Sudan; the achievements attained as a country; outlined the challenges ahead; what Equatoria has to offer; and suggested a way forward. According to him, all the challenges in South Sudan are shared responsibilities of all South Sudanese.

Some of the achievements of South Sudan one year later he outlined include: creation of government structure; a democratically elected government; writing and passing of Transitional Constitution, South Sudan became a member of UN Assembly and other regional and international organizations.

As for the challenges, he noted such issues as post-independent issues – border, oil, Abyei, nationality, the tying of negotiations with security concerns, etc.; good governance – rule of law, justice, and human rights; security issues in Jonglei and other parts of the country; transparency and accountability issue, and the impact of humanitarian crisis on development efforts; lack of basic service provisions, among others.

A key take away from the presentation was that, “we are a fledgling new nation and although there is great pressure for us to go from baby steps to sprinting, we must not lose sight of

setting a solid foundation for creating and building a unified nation, promoting a diversified economy, establishing good governance and providing security and the basics of life and development to the majority of the long suffering citizens of South Sudan. We have enormous challenges ahead of us but even greater opportunities because, at the end of the day, we are in a unique situation of looking at all of the good and bad examples in nation building in Africa and going with the best.”

His complete remarks are attached in Appendix A.

#### STRENGTHENING WOMEN’S COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR BETTER EQUATORIA

The panelists Sunday Taabu Chairperson, ESSCA North Carolina, and Dr. Jane Kani Edward, ESSCA-USA’s Secretary of Women & Youth Affairs discussed strategies for strengthening women’s collective actions for better Equatoria. According to the panelists, women in South Sudan in general and Equatoria in particular, are not a homogenous group. Rather they are differentiated based on their ethnicity, region, religion, social status, educational level, and other forms of social difference. However, despite these differences, there are common societal and cultural aspects that bind and affect women similarly regardless of their differences.

For example, customs and traditions of South Sudan affect women similarly across ethnic, regional and class lines. Illiteracy rate is highest among women in South Sudan as compared to men. Also the gendered division of labor in South Sudan places heavy burden on women’s shoulders. For example, about 80% of agricultural work in rural areas in South Sudan is done by women. In the diaspora, women to greater extent are responsible for most of household responsibilities, in addition to their paid work outside the home. Furthermore, working women contribute substantial amount of their monthly income to cover the financial needs of the household both in America and in South Sudan.

Since the panel was intended to engage the conference participants, the panel examined the following questions: what are the main issues of concern to women? What programs should women embark on? And how can women as well as men strengthen ESSCA’s Secretariat of Women and Youth Affairs?

Participants provided several responses which are summarized here. One of the issues dealt with in details was the need to recognize women’s role during the liberation struggle. It was

noted that, because of their contributions women are accorded a 25% representation in all levels of government to redress the ills of the past. Furthermore, and given the fact that there are either few or no female role models in South Sudan, it becomes imperative that the history of women leaders in South Sudan need to be written and be taught in schools to inspire the younger generation, particularly girls in the country.

As far as strengthening women's collectivity, it was emphasized that women need to strengthen their networking efforts and come together to identify issues of concern to women; and to develop strategies that address such concerns. It was suggested that ESSCA-USA women need to register with the United Nation women and other African women organizations to widen their network and expand their knowledge of global issues affecting women. These engagements will help women identify potential funding opportunities.

In response to the question related to forging collaborative strategies among and between women in the diaspora and in South Sudan, it was proposed that, ESSCA-USA to establish an office in South Sudan. This office will be tasked with coordinating the work of women inside and outside of South Sudan.

Regarding how women and men can strengthen ESSCA-USA's Secretariat of Women and Youth Affairs, it was proposed that, women should involve men in their struggle for change and emancipation. That, women should work in collaboration with men rather than in opposition. It was argued that "men are the best advocates for women."

During the discussion also, some participants identified some of the problems facing women of all ages. These include: disunity among women; lack of education or high illiteracy rates among women; the use of girls as compensation to settle family disputes (a practice prevalent in Eastern Equatoria State); early and arranged marriages; and other socio-cultural practices regarded harmful and discriminatory to women.

Some of the suggested solutions to women's concerns include: the involvement of women in the constitutional review process, to ensure that women's fundamental rights and freedom are not compromised. That women need to review the Transitional Constitution to identify some of the provision that affect women's live directly and to make the necessary changes to safeguard women's interests.

Similarly, given the gender disparity that exists in South Sudan, it was suggested that gender issues need to be mainstreamed in all government structures as well as private institutions to guarantee women's equal participation in all aspects of the society. It was also proposed that, harmful cultural and customary practices that affect women negatively need to be eradicated to allow young girls to continue with their education and realize their dreams. It is through such endeavors that women in South Sudan will be able to live a peaceful and productive life.

#### CHALLENGES FACING EQUATORIAN YOUTH

The panel on the Challenges Facing Equatorian Youth in America was led by Dominic Suru and Daud Repent and moderated by Dr. Jane Kani Edward.

The two panelists discussed the main challenges facing Equatorian youth in the United States. Some of the challenges outlined include: stresses of life in America that some youth are experiencing; miscommunication between youth and adults or their parents; issues of HIV/AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs); the negative media representation of South Sudan which negatively impact youth's attitudes in diaspora toward South Sudan; the disconnect between parents and children; which can be attributed partly to parents' work schedules; lack of parental and community involvement in children's and youth's lives; the clash of two cultures – American and South Sudanese cultures and how it affects youth choices in life; were some of the problems facing Equatoria youth in America.

According to the panelists, the impacts of these problems are severely affecting the life of female youth in particular. As a result, some young girls are sometimes subjected to early and unwanted pregnancies, and other gender-based difficulties, which in turn affect their chances of continuing and completing their education. They further noted that, parents' absence and disengagement with their children sometimes push many youth to seek support and attention from strangers; who often times put their lives in jeopardy. It also exposes them to difficult situations.

The panelist called upon parents and adults to step up to the challenge, and become involve in the lives of their children and youth, and to be responsible parents and adults. This panel

generated a lot of discussions where participants raised questions and provided some suggestion to address the problems.

#### PRESENTATIONS ABOUT ISSUES FACING EQUATORIA AND SOUTH SUDAN

Three panels discussed issues facing South Sudan.

1. The first panel led by John Omuu and Justin Laku and moderated by Dr. Henry Lejukole discussed “Working together for a united and Stronger Equatoria.” See Appendix A for the complete presentation.
2. The second panel led by Dr. Henry Lejukole and Justin Laku, moderated by Benaiah Duku addressed Security Concerns in Equatoria. Some of the topics addressed include the domination of all security check-points, Immigration Office, Police Investigative Units, and other security organs in Equatoria by one ethnic group is threatening the security situation in Equatoria. Furthermore, the discriminatory immigration policies toward certain ethnicities in Equatoria that cast them as foreigners, especially when applying for government documents such as nationality, passports and other documents, and their impact on Equatorians were also discussed. Other issues of concern also included the culture of hostility and ‘tribal’ loyalty, causes of insecurity, and lawlessness in the country, were discussed. It was noted that cattle raiding and land ownership disputes are some of the causes of violence in South Sudan. The panelists suggested some solutions including recognition of ‘tribal’ land holding and seeking of permanent solutions to grazing problems in the South Sudan.
3. Ercoph Bongomin presented a paper on the recent experience, future challenges and role of Equatorians in South Sudan and led an engaging exchange with the audience. The complete presentation is published separately but distributed together with this report.

## DAY TWO

Day two of the conference started with a warm worship service that included several Juba Arabic songs and a sermon by Pastor Moses Soro. This was followed by welcoming remarks by the President of ESSCA-NC Sunday Taabu. The second day was dedicated to addressing internal issues concerning to the role, status and operations of ESSCA-USA and state offices. Some of the issues discussed include: ESSCA-USA's achievements, challenges and way forward; Achievements and Challenges of ESSCA state offices; exploration of ways to strengthen ESSCA-USA; and amendment of the bylaws. The day was concluded by remarks by H.E. Bangasi Joseph Bakasoro the Governor of Western Equatoria State.

### REMARKS BY H.E. BANAGASI JOSEPH BAKASORO

Due to a very tight schedule the Governor of Western Equatoria, H.E. Bangasi Joseph Bakasoro arrived to the conference in the afternoon of the second day of the conference. He was welcomed with a standing ovation, dance and ululations. Shortly after that he delivered the key note address.

The Governor thanked and congratulated ESSCA-USA's leadership for organizing the conference and for inviting him to speak at the conference. He briefed the attendees about the health status of H.E. Clement Wani Konga, Governor of Central Equatoria State (CES) noting the improvement of his health. He further noted that the Governor of Eastern Equatoria State (EES) couldn't come due to the economic austerity measures implemented in the country.

He emphasized the importance of Equatorians to work together arguing that "a community together is an organized community." The main themes he raised during his remarks include avoidance of 'tribalism;' the position of Equatorians in the context of political stability of the country; the importance of education and awareness of the issues facing South Sudan; hunger in South Sudan; high mortality rates among women and children in WES; Equatorians in the diaspora and the decision to return; the logging of Teak trees in WES; Unemployment in South Sudan; the austerity measures and their impact on people's livelihoods, Security issues, among others. His remarks were followed by question and answer session.

The following are synopses of some of these themes.

### **'Tribalism'**

On 'tribalism' the Governor encouraged people from Equatoria to see themselves as Equatorians and South Sudanese and to avoid 'tribalism' because as he rightly puts it 'tribalism' will never "take us anywhere." Although the political system in the country is influenced by tribal tendencies, he emphasized that "no political system remains stagnant, everything is dynamic, things will change, people will come to their senses, and know that this behavior ['tribalism'] is not helping South Sudan."

### **Equatorians' Position**

That Equatorians are very strong – "Equatorians are the architects of South Sudan ... the brain behind good governance. But it is a challenge for Equatorians. Many of us [i.e., Equatorians] are more concern about their self-interests and protecting ones position, rather than focusing on the issues that affect the whole community." Thus, to guard against protecting ones self-interest, and position, which is negatively affecting Equatorians, those in position of power should think and take care of the masses that helped them reach to the top. As he rightly argued "the community is our ladders. They push you to reach a position like me as a Governor. I was voted to be a Governor." Therefore, those in leadership positions should not abandon and ignore the needs of the community.

### **Importance of Education and Awareness**

Those in the United States should pursue education so as to avoid ignorance. This is serious, because people in South Sudan assume that those in America "are more educated, [and] aware, more than us in the village." The Governor made education and health as priority issues in Western Equatoria state this year (2012). His government is encouraging those who are non-literate to go to school. According to him education is key to progress and up-ward social mobility. Also through education people can avoid and/or minimize inter-communal conflicts. He partly attributed the on-going conflicts in some parts of the country to limited levels of education and lack of awareness of issues affecting the society.

### **Hunger in South Sudan**

The governor acknowledged the hunger situation in the country. However, he noted that people are addressing the situation. "At least in Western Equatoria this year ... food is enough, at least we made people to cultivate." He asked those in the diaspora to provide support by writing and

talking to people in South Sudan to cultivate. According to him “we are fighting hunger seriously and hope that God will bless the second harvest because the first one is already blessed.”

### **High Mortality Rates among Women and Children**

The government of WES has made it a campaign issue to improve the health situation in the state. This is because women and children are the future of the state and the country at large.

### **Equatorians in the USA and the Decision to Return**

The governor acknowledged the fact that Equatorians in the United States are assets, arguing that “you [people in the diaspora] have the technical knowledge; you are not staying here for nothing.” On the issue of return, he urged those in America not to hurry to go home. Rather, they should first make short visits to assess the situation on the ground, build a house and then make their final move. In his words “don’t hurry to go home; prepare yourself to go as a person and be powerful.”

### **A Vision for the Future**

The Governor emphasized the importance of having a vision for the future. He encouraged parents to take care of their children and plan for their future. He urged parents to educate their children. According to him, if parents cannot pay for their education and that of their children, they should sacrifice theirs to pay for their children’s.

On the issue of unemployment in South Sudan, the Governor noted that there is high unemployment in South Sudan. “There are no jobs at home.”

### **Austerity Measures**

The austerity measures were implemented after the Government of South Sudan stopped the oil production. At the moment the governments of South Sudan and Sudan are negotiating to reach an agreement to resolve the oil issue. The austerity measures have affected all levels of government and its operations. The government has “to cut everything; the salary is cut; operation is zero... At least what we can survive on is salary, but we have gone two months without that salary.” However, people are “persevering and going through.”

### **Security Issues**

Given the sensitivity of the security issues, the Governor only noted the existence of security concerns in many parts of the country, and that the government is “addressing them the way they have happened.”

The Governor’s remarks were followed by question and answer session, which covered issues related to presence of pastoralists in WES, issues of concern to Equatorians, and their relations to people from other states, the unity of Equatorians and their role in the constitutional review process, the importance of women’s education as it related to the 25% affirmative action for women, etc.

The prepared remarks of the Governor are attached in Appendix A.

#### Q & A WITH SOUTH SUDANESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

This session was intended to general discussions and elicits answers from the Ambassador and the members of States and national assemblies who participated at the conference. By and large, this was the longest session as participants had many questions. The ample time provided enabled members of the government to share with the audience all they wanted to communicate.

The session was organized as follows: conference attendees were encouraged to ask questions which was then followed by responses from the panelists. The questions asked ranged from land grabbing problems in the Equatoria Region; the problems of co-existence between Equatorians (who are mostly agriculturalists), and the Dinka (who are predominately pastoralists); Human rights issues facing women, and in particular issues related to early and arranged marriages, and the use of young girls as compensation to settle family disputes (prevalent in Eastern Equatoria State).

Other questions that dominated the discussions focused on insecurity and absence of rule of law particularly in Equatoria; the presence of cattle in Equatoria that interfere with the agricultural activities, particularly in Eastern Equatoria State; the control and domination of trade and businesses by foreign nationals from the neighboring countries. Weak justice system, centralization of tax collection and utilization, service delivery, the role of the diaspora in the constitutional review process were some of the issues raised by the audience.

## **Synopses of Responses**

### **Marriageable Age and Women's Rights Issues**

In response to the question of marriageable age, it was argued that the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan did not specify the exact age of marriage, especially for girls. To address this issue, female MPs both in states and national assemblies are working to change the provision and propose 18 years as the marriageable age, and should be included in the permanent constitution. Also female MPs are reviewing provisions in the constitution related to marriage, education, health, environment, etc. to identify any shortcoming and propose solutions to rectify such weaknesses. Regarding women's rights and victimization of young girls through practices such as arranged marriage and use of girls as compensation for family disputes, female MPs, particularly from Eastern Equatoria State are mobilizing to address the problem and demand the government to enact laws that will eradicate such harmful practices.

### **Coexistence between Dinka and Equatorians**

Responding to the difficulty of coexistence between Dinka and Equatorians, particularly in Equatoria, the panelists noted that, for peaceful coexistence between different ethnicities in South Sudan, it was noted that the Transitional Constitution grants South Sudanese to live anywhere in South Sudan without discrimination. That is why there exist "Dinka in Morobo, Yei, Nimule, etc." However, misunderstandings emerge when those who come and settle in Equatoria are not abiding by the laws of the local population and whose lives depend on agriculture. Similarly although the Transitional Constitution grants South Sudanese the rights to reside in any part of the country, people from Equatoria are hardly found in other states nor are they grabbing lands in other states in South Sudan. Therefore, in order to ensure peaceful coexistences in South Sudan, there is need to write a just and inclusive permanent constitution that reflects the needs and aspiration of all people of South Sudan.

### **Existence of Cattle in Equatoria**

On the issue of the existence of large herds of cattle in Equatoria, several MPs provided some answers. One MP, for example, noted the position of Central Equatoria State Parliament which resolved that "all cows and pastoralists who are around Equatoria should return to their original localities." The resolution was submitted to the executive branch of the government for implementation. It was reported that the cattle were transported from Bor to Equatoria (in Eastern and Central Equatoria), by trucks. What makes the return of the cattle to their original

habitats difficult is the fact that some of the cattle belong to individuals holding powerful positions in the government, as well as Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) generals.

### **Control and Domination of Trade and Business by Foreigners**

On this issue most MPs noted the fact that most South Sudanese are not enthusiastic about promoting business and to learn how to manage and run business. They, however, encourage youth to get involved in business and politics to overcome and minimize foreign domination of trade and business sectors; arguing that the youth are the future leaders of South Sudan. It was also explained that restaurant and hotel establishments in Juba are individual businesses. Even some residential buildings are often times turned into hotels and restaurants by homeowners.

As far as the domination of markets by food produced by neighboring countries, most MPs blamed the problem on neglect and underdevelopment of the agricultural sector in South Sudan. Furthermore, the majority of South Sudanese are reluctant to engage in agriculture. Rather they prefer office or white-collar jobs. This unwillingness to engage in agriculture, in turn has led to low agricultural productivity in the country. As a result, South Sudan encountered and continues to encounter food shortages. As a result, such shortages are supplemented by food items from the neighboring countries. This situation explains the domination of food markets by foreigners. However, one MP noted that, many Equatorians have now turned their attention to agriculture and hopefully this year (2012) is going to witness good harvest.

### **Land Grabbing in Equatoria**

On the issue of land grabbing in Equatoria, the official from the Land Commission noted that the Republic of South Sudan has no Land Act. According to her, officials from the Land Commission met with the President of the Republic to discuss ways of how to expedite the passage of the Land Act by the SSLA. Also, what complicates the issues of land tenure in Central Equatoria State (CES), in particular is related to the concurrent powers between the national and state governments, and the power struggle between the two governments.

Furthermore, it was argued by some MPs that some of the problems related to land grabbing in CES can be blamed on some individuals from the state, who acquire many plots in their names or their relatives, and then sell them to individuals in need of land at a very high price.

## **Taxation and Tax Collection**

Regarding the question of tax collection and the role of states in the process of collecting taxes, the MP from the SSLA noted that Articles 179 and 180 of the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan related to sources of revenue of the states and national revenue funds respectively are the source of the problem and are affecting Equatorian states negatively.

Initially, tax collection was decentralized. However, it was later centralized, whereby the central government assumed the responsibility of tax collection all over the country. This change affected the state's agencies responsible for tax collection, as they are replaced by tax collectors appointed by the central government. Under the centralized system of taxation, after the taxes are collected, the central government should allocate each state a certain percentage of the revenue collected to address the need of a given state.

However, since the implementation of a centralized system of taxation, the three Equatorian states which provide much of non-oil revenue are not given their fair share of the revenue, despite their repeated request for the funds. This in turn affects the functioning of state governments. Furthermore, what has made the issue of taxation more problematic is the fact that there is no transparent tax system that addresses issues of accountability, proper management, and utilization of the revenue collected.

## **Insecurity in Equatoria**

The problem of insecurity in Equatoria and particularly in Juba is partly attributed to the fact that defense and security fall under concurrent powers, as well as the centralization of the police or the Ministry of Interior. This situation makes it difficult for states, (CES in particular) to enforce the law and ensure the security of citizens. It was recommended by one MP that the police need to be decentralized to allow states to formulate and enact policies relevant to their internal situations. Related to security and rule of law issues, it was argued that the Justice system and almost all the legal institutions in the Republic of South Sudan are weak and as a result, it is difficult to enforce the law.

## **The Role of the diaspora in Rebuilding the Republic of South Sudan**

It was also discussed that Equatorians in the diaspora have a role to play in the rebuilding efforts in South Sudan. It was emphasized that ESSCA-USA should take an active role in the

constitutional review process to ensure that the permanent constitution is inclusive and reflective of the needs and aspirations of all the South Sudanese people.

## ESSCA STATE OFFICE REPORTS

ESSCA-USA is a national organization that represents Equatorians across the United States. Its success, however, largely depends on the leadership of grassroots executed at the state level by ESSCA state offices. The State offices have direct access to the communities and have an understanding of the challenges that face them and are situated to respond effectively to the needs and issues that arise in the community.

Of the 50 US states, 30 states have a sufficient number of Equatorian residences to warrant a formal or informal Equatorian community organization.

Formal community organizations are known as ESSCA State Offices or Chapters and are registered with the state. For tax purposes they also may have their own 501 c 3 status with the federal government or use ESSCA-USA's 501 c3 status.

Informal community organizations are not registered with the State or Federal government. They have adhoc elections for groups or committees to coordinate specific events and initiatives.

At the conference the ESSCA State leaders and representatives were given the opportunity to brief the participants about the community in their respective states. The following state had representation at the conference.

- |               |                       |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1. California | Agnes Olwar           |
| 2. Colorado   | Mikilina Omuni        |
| 3. Florida    | Evelina Benjamin Wani |
| 4. Georgia    | Stephen Shilako       |
| 5. Texas      | Juma Jobickson Modi   |
| 6. Iowa       | Dr. Henry Lojukole    |
| 7. Kentucky   | Christina Sunday      |
| 8. Maine      | Ms. Regina Nataniel   |

Representing New Hampshire, Vermont, and  
Massachusetts

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| 9. Michigan             | Ps. Okwera Okuka  |
| 10. New Jersey          | Dr. Jane Kani Edward  |
| 11. Nebraska            | Kawunda John  |
| 12. Ohio                | Mrs. Josephine & Dr. Sam Laki                                     |
| 13. Tennessee           | John Jigo   |
| 14. North Carolina      | Sunday Taabu (Representing South Carolina)                        |
| 15. Metro Washington DC | Oliver Tunda<br>Representing Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania |
| 16. New York            | Dr. Frances Nazario   |
| 17. Canada              | Ercoph Bongomin   |

There was no representation of the following well organized states which have ESSCA offices:

1. Arizona
2. Utah
3. South Dakota
4. North Dakota
5. Washington
6. Illinois
7. Minnesota

The overwhelming main point expressed by the representatives is the need for unity, organization, and leadership within the states. There was a sense that we are at a critical moment in the history of South Sudan and thus we have to rebuild and strengthen the communities to effect change within our communities in the US as well as contribute to development of Equatoria through ESSCA-USA. The following are brief summaries of the comments provided by the various representatives.

### **Georgia**

The representative of the state of Georgia Mr. Shilako outlined some of the activities carried out by South Sudanese in the state. One of their main activities is religious celebrations, particularly during major religious holidays such as Christmas and Easter. The goal of ESSCA-GA is to establish a community center. He further identified "tribalism" as the main problem that creates

disunity among South Sudanese in the state. He urged South Sudanese to take ESSCA seriously and that, ESSCA-USA need to address the issue of “tribalism.”

### **Iowa**

The State of Iowa was represented by Dr. Henry Y. Lejukole, who is also the president of ESSCA-IA. He noted that, the main problem of the state office is leadership. That people are reluctant to volunteer to become leaders. He argued that there is need to reorganize the leaders of ESSCA-USA and urged people to support the current ESSCA-USA office. Another challenge facing the community according to Dr. Lejukole is how to bring people together to impart South Sudan values to the community and the young generation in America. He emphasized the importance of culture, education and empowerment of women. One of the accomplishments of ESSCA-IA this year (2012) is the convening of a “Women’s Empowerment” conference in April 20-21, 2012 which brought together women from across Iowa and other neighboring states.

Some of the programs proposed by ESSCA-IA include: Establishing education resource center for educational purposes; identify resources for community improvement; host Equatoria culture conference/day to address some social issues relevant to the community.

Dr. Lejukole concluded by emphasizing the integration of the states to the center; that is, building greater communications between ESSCA-USA and state offices.

### **Kentucky**

The representative of the state of Kentucky, Christina Sunday noted that it was the first time for her to attend ESSCA-USA conference. She is the Chairperson of women in the State. According to her the Equatoria community in the state of Kentucky is not strong. Some of the activities the community embarked on include organizing social events during major holidays such as Christmas, thanksgiving, etc.

### **Maine and New England**

The state of Maine and New England at large was represented by Ms. Regina Nataniel. According to her, there are many Equatorians in the state of Maine, but they are not united. She acknowledged the role of late Margret Juan Lado in the establishment of ESSCA office in Maine. According to Regina, the state of Maine had a strong Equatoria community. Currently, the community is divided, due partly to some members within the community who are painting a

negative image of the organization. Despite these challenges and divisions, women are trying to keep the community together; and that she is not giving up on ESSCA-USA. She encouraged the youth who attended the 2012 conference to take the message back to the community in Maine.

### **Michigan**

The representative of the state of Michigan, Ps. Okuka was grateful to ESSCA-USA leadership and South Sudanese leaders who came to attend the conference. According to him the state of Michigan played a great role in promoting the interests of Equatoria community in the state. ESSCA-MI office was formed in May 2012, and currently it is at the organizational process. Its programs include: Education of children; parental/parenting issues; addressing the issue of drugs and alcoholism and their impact on children. According to him, state leaders are collaborating with the prison and the police departments to help address these challenges. There are 67 adults and 48 youth working together to strengthen the community.

### **Nebraska**

The state of Nebraska was represented by Kawunda John. According to him, ESSCA-USA foundation started in the state of Nebraska. However, over the years the community has disintegrated due to misunderstanding among its members. Currently, Equatorians in the state are trying to revive the community and re-establish ESSCA office.

### **New Jersey**

The state of New Jersey was represented by Dr. Jane Kani Edward, Secretary of Women and Youth Affairs, ESSCA-USA. Given the small number of Equatorians in the state, there is no organized office that caters for the needs of Equatorians there. However, there is need to establish ESSCA office in the state. Five individuals from New Jersey attended the conference, three adults and two children.

### **New York**

The state of New York was represented by Ambassador of South Sudan to the United Nations Dr. Frances Nazario. Like New Jersey, the state of New York has no organized ESSCA office. However, there is need to establish an office in the state

### **North Carolina**

The state of North Carolina was represented by Sunday Taabu, Chairperson of ESSCA-NC. ESSCA office in the state of North Carolina had carried out many social events. Taabu encouraged women to come together to discuss issues of concern to women. The office had a general assembly meeting in March, 2012 and had developed a program to be implemented. Some of the proposed projects include: the establishment of businesses that provide employment opportunities for Equatorians; establishment of a restaurant, and a hair braiding salon owned by Equatorian women. The state hosted the 12th ESSCA-USA Annual Conference, and all families in North Carolina contributed financially toward the conference. One of the problem noted, that discourage members to carry out their work effectively is the fact, when an agreement is reached regarding a specific program or action, some members will work behind the scene to undo what is already agreed on.

### **Ohio**

The state of Ohio was represented by Josephine Laki and Dr. Sam Laki. According to Mrs. Laki the Equatoria community in the state is not organized. However, according to Dr. Laki, upon their return they will try to bring together the community and organize/establish an office. He argued that if people are able to fix the problems facing them, they will be able to move the organization forward. He also commented on the on-line discussion on E2K, noting that people or discussants often times tend to focus on negative criticism without offering alternative solutions. He went on to say that he is not against criticism, but that people should offer constructive criticism to further the cause of Equatorians.

### **South Dakota**

There was no representative from the state of South Dakota. However, the community extended their greetings and support to the conference attendees and ESSCA-USA leadership. The Equatoria community in South Dakota was/is one of the communities that support ESSCA-USA activities.

### **Tennessee**

The state of Tennessee was represented by John Jigo. Four people from the state attended the conference.

### **Texas**

The representative of the state of Texas, Mr. Juma Jobickson Modi Chairman of the ESSCA-USA's Board of Directors, noted that Texas is facing many problems that are common in other states. However, the office is working hard to resolve the problems. He noted that Texas had hosted a huge ESSCA-USA conference in the past, and that its leadership is planning to host future conference. According to Modi, Texas delegation to any ESSCA-USA conference usually consist of men, women and youth.

### **Washington**

There is a large number of Equatorians in the state of Washington. However, there are many problems facing the community as well. The Chairperson of ESSCA in the state extended his regards and wished ESSCA-USA a great conference.

### **Washington D.C. and Surrounding States**

The Washington D.C. area was represented by Oliver Tunda. According to him, Washington D.C. has minor problems which have the potential to drag down the organization. He argued that there is a need to address the minor issues to improve the operations of ESSCA-DC office. The 10th ESSCA-USA annual conference was held in Washington D.C.

### **Canada**

Canada was represented by Ercoph Bongomin who noted that ESSCA-USA has a great influence in Canada. According to him Equatorian Communities exist in all provinces of Canada; and that there are plans to organize an ESSCA-CA similar to ESSCA-USA.

## **13<sup>TH</sup> ESSCA-USA ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

As part of the conference agenda, the second and final day was dedicated to ESSCA-USA business, among which was ensuring that the host of the next conference was selected. By so doing, ESSCA-USA leadership effectively reverted to the original bidding system where the next host of ESSCA-USA conference would be selected and confirmed before the end of the conference, thus breaking a four year period in which the host was selected just few months before the conference. This change will effectively lessen the pressure on both organizing state and ESSCA-USA leadership; it provides ample time to plan for the conference, unlike when a decision to host the conference is made with only few months to the conference.

In implementing the original bidding process, all ESSCA-USA organized states were invited to bid for the 2013 conference and four states submitted their applications to host the 13<sup>th</sup> ESSCA-USA conference next September 2013. The four contenders were the state of Connecticut, the state of New England, the state of Kentucky and the state of Michigan.

After ESSCA-USA leadership reviewed the four applications followed by intense discussion, a motion was moved for the board and executive to vote on which state should host the 13th ESSCA-USA conference. ESSCA leadership present at the time voted unanimously in favor of the state of Michigan.

The leadership of ESSCA-USA is proud to announce that the 13th ESSCA-USA conference will be held in the city of Lansing, Michigan. We congratulate ESSCA state leaders in Michigan on winning the bid to host the 2013 conference. Please join ESSCA-USA leadership to congratulate the state of Michigan on taking this challenging but honorable decision to host the 13<sup>th</sup> ESSCA-USA conference.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

### Equatoria South Sudanese Community Association (ESSCA) 2012 Conference "August 31st-September 2nd, 2012" Financial Report -Greensboro North Carolina - 11/17/2012.

#### Funds Raised for the conference and other contributions

##### Income

ESSCA Executives and Board Members contributions	\$1,850.00	
Funds Borrowed from the State of NC for Conference Cost	\$2,500.00	

##### Other Income

North Carolina Members Conference Contributions	\$4,840.00	
Other States Registration Fees	\$5,085.00	

##### State Contributions

ESSCA California	\$500.00	
ESSCA Michigan	\$500.00	
ESSCA Iowa	\$500.00	

<b>Total Income &amp; Contributions</b>	<b>\$15,775.00</b>	<b>\$15,775.00</b>
---	--------------------	--------------------

##### Funds Raising Activities During the conference

One I Pad- Raffle Tickets Sold	\$1,289.00	
Western Equatoria Governor - Donation	\$1,000.00	
Prayer Offerings	\$657.00	
Evening Offerings	\$299.00	
Digital Camera Raffle Tickets Sold	\$355.00	
Party Entrance Fee	\$868.00	
Food Sold @ The Party	\$335.00	
<b>Total Fund Raised</b>	<b>\$4,803.00</b>	<b>\$4,803.00</b>

##### Other Cash Flow

Deposit Reimbursed- Venue Two Emmanuel Temple	\$500.00	
Cash From Unraffled I Pad	\$457.12	
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>\$957.12</b>	<b>\$957.12</b>

<b>Total Income</b>		<b>\$21,535.12</b>
---------------------	--	--------------------

### **Conference Expenditures**

Two Days Rent Conference Venue- Deep River Event Center	\$5,500.00	
Party Venue One Rent - Emmanuel Temple Greensboro, NC	\$1,200.00	
Accounts Payable (Reimbursed North Carolina Money Borrow)	\$2,500.00	
Party Venue Two Rent - Ramshell Greensboro, NC	\$200.00	
VIP Rental Car	\$560.90	
Food and Drinks Day One	\$775.24	
Food and Drinks Day Two	\$847.59	
Day Two Breakfast	\$900.00	
Pay Cook For Day Two Services	\$900.00	
Utensils	\$325.35	
Gasoline	\$281.40	
Raffle -Items: One-Camera ; Two I pads	\$947.81	
Bank Service Fees		
Fees	\$200.00	
	Flag Pole Two	\$21.33
	USA Flag	\$21.32
	Video Tapes (3)	\$41.63
	Miscellaneous item	\$19.43
	Miscellaneous item --Two "Moses"	\$100.00
	Pianolist	\$150.00
	Security -Sheriff Day One	\$258.00
	Security -Sheriff Day Two	\$172.00
	Pens( For Fund Raising)	\$130.00
	Beer & Wine( For Fund Raising)	\$187.62
	Accommodations for Musician	\$333.75
	Office Supplies	\$61.36
	<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$16,634.73</b>
		<b>\$16,634.73</b>

### **Income**

Revenue	\$21,535.12
Expenditures	(\$16,634.73)
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$4,900.39</b>

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The ESSCA-USA Board of Directors and Executives officers would like to acknowledge everyone who contributed for the success of this years' conference, especially Equatoria Community in the Carolinas and its formidable organizing committee lead by Mrs. Sunday Taabu, Dr. Michael Tomor, and their respective team members. Without your hard work, dedication, and commitment, this conference would have not been as successful as it turns to be. Also, we would like to give a special thanks to all members and their respective states', including Canada for their generous contributions. Above all, we would also want to acknowledge the participation of our government officials from home the Republic of South Sudan and in the United States headed by Governor Joseph Bangasi Bakosoro.

In addition, ESSCA-USA 12<sup>th</sup> annual conference 2012 would have not been a success without the dedication, commitment, and hard work of the executive office and board of directors teams, combined.

## APPENDIX A

### REMARKS BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DR. FRANCIS NAZARIO

#### **Remarks on the Equatoria Association Conference**

North Carolina, 01/09/2012

- Excellency Ambassador Dr. Akech Khoc, Head of Mission of the Republic of South Sudan to the United States of America
- Mr. Kwaje Lasu, President of the Equatoria Association in the USA
- Members of the Executive office of the Equatoria association
- Elders of the community
- Religious leaders
- Distinguished guests
- Ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning

At the outset I would like to express thanks and gratitude to the President of the association and to all the members of its executive committee, organizers of its 12th annual conference In Greensboro in North Carolina, for inviting me to participate. I am very much honored. I am pleased to be here and to be given this opportunity to meet with all of you. As a son of Equatoria, I would like to say that I am impressed and particularly proud of the level of the organization and leadership that you have manifested. Equatoria Oyee

Allow me to take this opportunity to humbly introduce myself. My name is Francis Nazario Opoka, from Magwe county, Eastern Equatoria state, was born in Juba, started my education in Juba Buluk Primary school then moved to the North of Sudan for my secondary school and University then to Algeria and France where I completed my education.

I hold a degree in Economics and Social science, Master's and PhD in Political science

I have the title of ambassador and currently I am the Charge d'affaires of the Republic of South Sudan to the United Nations. Am in this position since April 2012. From next week I will be the deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Sudan to the United Nations.

Distinguished guest ladies and gentlemen

It is good always to come together as one people and work together for the benefit of the Equatoria Region and the whole of South Sudan. As sons and daughters of South Sudan from different Bumas, Payams and Counties of the three states of Equatoria this commendable and admirable togetherness you should consider it as the nuclear and the first step toward the greater unity of all the citizens of the Republic of South Sudan.

The people of South Sudan have come long way, have crossed jungles and valleys to reach the plane. To reaches peace and stability. As we have been through the years we will continue to be together also in the struggles to build and develop our country.

After the long civil war we had, our country is left behind in terms of development. I am sure most of you have already gone home and have seen the situation of our country and situation our people are still living in. No doubt all of you would agree that a lot need to be done to change their living condition.

Each and every one effort individually or collectively will help to alleviate the suffering of the people South Sudan. Governments, civil society, churches and associations of all our people at different levels being in the states, Counties Payams and Bumas. All are expected to contribute in the development of the country Serious work needs to be done to allow us to see different South Sudan; I call upon all of in the diaspora to contribute in the efforts aiming at making South Sudan a better place to live in.

Our long and dire struggle has cost us a lot of lives, and enormous suffering, we the survivors we must commit ourselves to honor our martyrs by building a strong state and a greater nation in our country.

Our independence came as a result of long and heroic struggle for justice, freedom, equality and human dignity, the selfless sacrifice of our martyrs will continue to inspire our new nation in its quest for a better and prosperous future. We are now one year as an independent state indeed we are free and we are governing ourselves. For us to have a meaningful independence, we must of course build the states that fulfills the aspirations of its citizens and produce an inclusive political, social and economic order guaranteed by the rule of law and good governance.

The Republic of South Sudan has made some progress in terms of establishing national institutions and extending the authority of the government all over out territory. Given the historical context and the present challenges experienced by South Sudan, there is of course much more that still needs to be achieved by the state, to enhance the government's capacity, and ensure that the government can provide protection to all of its civilians and residence. Our internal challenges are linked to the ongoing task of consolidating our relationship with the Republic of Sudan, to establish two viable states living side by side in peace. We believe that this is achievable.

To ensure that all of our civilians are protected and living in peace, we must put relations between Sudan and South Sudan on a secure long-term footing, and also re-double our efforts to keep peace when and

where it is threaten. The government of the Republic of South Sudan remains committed to negotiating all the outstanding issues of the comprehensive Peace Agreement in good faith, with a view to reaching sustainable agreements that will enable all the people of both Sudan and south Sudan to live in peace. It is to this end that the government of the Republic of South Sudan does not undertake negotiation for negotiation sake, as you have all noticed in the previous rounds of negotiation in Addis Ababa, but with the aim of reaching logical and just solutions to our common challenges. Taking the challenge of building our state and our nation is an obligation that the government takes it extremely seriously, as we must restore dignity and humanity to our people. That indeed confirms that we have much to do and much to accomplish.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

•We have got a daunting task in front of us which is development, how do we achieve development? How can we achieve our self-sufficiency, how can we grow economically? We must till the land to produce food. Enough food for our own consumption and much more which we can export.

Let's all work to achieve our economic independence, as an independent nation, we must not depend solely on food imports. The government has its plans to diversify our source of income to avoid the dependency on oil, and the government through the ministry of agriculture is striving to revive the different agricultural schemes in South Sudan. But at our level as individuals, there is a moral responsibility for us as citizens to find our role in the ongoing process of development.

Let's takes this opportunity to reflect, and ask ourselves how we can contribute to the development of our country? Or just how can we support our farmers back home, in our villages, knowing very well that 85% of our people in Equatoria are farmers and our main economic activity is agriculture. Our region is endowed with an arable and fertile land. Our people in different villages are farming but in a small scale, let us help them to start farming in bigger scales.

The long civil war has forced many of our people to leave the country and take refuge outside, many have been resettled let's take advantage of that and benefit our country and people back home from your experience and all what you have gain knowledge. Let's take advantage of having been in the West in particularly in the USA, having seen the way people do farm and produce food. Let's also be encouraged to go and work in the private sector, let's go and start business, let us think of how we can support education in our country at its different levels. Let's think of how we can support our hospitals. Let's think of how we can empower our women, as individuals at the level of families and communities. The government is doing its best in this regards but the people can contribute positively to that to assist in providing better living condition for our mothers, sisters and daughters. Let's work as members of our different communities to develop cultures of peace and dialogue to avoid the recurrent clashes. Let's

redefine our relationship with each other as individuals and communities in this endeavor of our nation building. Let us work all together for Peace in South Sudan and the harmony among our communities.

Long live South Sudan  
Equatoria oyee, South Sudan oyee.

Good bless you all  
And thank you  
Amb. Francis Nazario

**SOUTH SUDAN AT ONE: CHALLENGES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND THE WAY FORWARD**

Mr. Kwaje Lasu, President, ESSCA - USA

Ambassador Dr. Akec Khoc, South Sudan Ambassador to USA

Ambassador Dr. Francis Nazario South Sudan Ambassador to the United Nations

Hon National and State Assembly Members

Director-General of the South Sudan Land Commission

Ladies and Gentlemen

- I am delighted to be invited to address the 12th ESSCA Annual Conference and I wish to congratulate the President, his Executive Committee and the Association for carrying ESSCA to a new high level of performance and efficiency and wish them more success in the challenging times ahead
- It is pleasing to note that we are joined from home by several Members of Parliament and senior officials most of whom are women. Your departed sister Mary N. Bassiouni would have been proud to see so many of our country women taking up their rightful places alongside their male counterparts in running and developing our young country and moving it towards development and prosperity
- Allow me to express an apology to you all for arriving late according to the Sudan Standard time that I persistently continue to fight but just before leaving home this morning to drive from Charlotte to join you, we received the sad news of the passing away of a close friend and my former UNICEF staff Dr. Tibebe Haile Selassie from Ethiopia, in Denver, Colorado. With your permission, I will have to skip the second day of the conference, tomorrow, Sunday to proceed to Denver to join the family at the Memorial Service for Dr Selassie
- This address looks critically at the Republic of South Sudan at year one, outlines the challenges it has encountered, highlights what achievements it has scored, identifies what Equatoria could offer to the country, and offers suggestions for the way forward
- However, before I proceed further, it is appropriate that I pose the question, "Why do you want Equatoria to be strong?" You need Equatoria to be strong so that our country could be stronger in order to realize our dreams for a strong, peaceful and prosperous sovereign South Sudan

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

- The people of South Sudan lost millions of lives and paid the ultimate price and waited decades to express their inalienable right to self-determination through exercising a democratic process of referendum that was universally lauded
- South Sudanese in the country and in the diaspora exercised their right to separate and form a sovereign country and nation
- There is much to be proud of ...peaceful cessation, returnees, global attention...a home and a country to call our own
- We know that there are challenges that face any new nation
- But, we are also united in the knowledge that this is just the beginning and that we must focus all of our collective efforts into building the new nation
- Much will depend on strong statesmanship and leadership, unity at the local level, continued cooperation between Sudan and South Sudan and support from the international community
- Much will also depend on maintaining peace -- the Oil Shutdown created a major crisis and although forced upon us, should not be repeated....any current/future disagreements should be resolved amicably at the table and not in the battlefield
- Both sides have lost many lives through war and they surely understand the importance of maintaining peace and security as neighbouring sovereign states living side by side in peace
- ROSS has taken steps to begin building the key components of governance, security, rule of law, basic social services and embark on development but much more needs to be done.

## **B. CHALLENGES**

- Stalemate with the Sudan in negotiations on outstanding post-independence issues (Abyei and National Borders, Oil Transit Fee, Citizenship and National Debt)
- Oil Shut Down and consequent severe austerity measures and lagging economy
- Weak delivery of Basic Social Services (health, education and water and sanitation)

- Inter-Tribal Conflicts and Insecurity
- Allegations of Corruption, absence of Transparency and Accountability, Weak Governance and Inept Civil Service
- Weak Revenue Collection
- Imbalance in Checks and Balances of three branches of Government, Executive, Legislative and Judiciary because of predominance of the Executive Branch
- Reported lack of respect for and adherence to Human Rights and Freedom of Expression
- Poor Infrastructure
- Overreliance on a mono-commodity, oil to sustain the economy

**C. ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2006**

- Established governments at central and state levels
- Successful election that SPLM won in a landslide
- Established the National Legislative Assembly and 10 State Legislative Assemblies
- Successful Referendum on Self-Determination leading to Independence
- Joined UN,AU,ITU,WB,IMF,AFDB and applied to COMESA and several international organizations
- Adopted Interim Constitution and launched the drafting of the permanent constitution
- Established a number of Commissions
- Constructed the macadamized Juba-Nimule Road

- Achieved the 2010 All Party South-South Conference for dialogue, reconciliation, cooperation, peace  
And stability

#### **D. WHAT CAN EQUATORIA OFFER TO SOUTH SUDAN**

Equatoria, by virtue of its unique highly integrated society, peaceful disposition, belief in dialogue and peaceful resolution of conflict, hard work and historic pioneering leadership in the struggle for the independence of South Sudan, has much to offer our young nation:

- Active participation in conflict resolution and peace building in the conflict-ridden states of South Sudan and bridge-building between neighbouring states
- Creating Centers of Excellency for the other states of South Sudan to emulate by each of the States, e.g., Western Equatoria State excelling in Agriculture, Eastern Equatoria State excelling in Basic Social Services and Institution Building and Central Equatoria State in industry
- Continue to be the melting pot for the emergence of South Sudan as a one unified nation

#### **E. TEN STEPS FORWARD**

- **Work towards a Transparent and Accountable Governance** anchored in respect for human rights, decentralization, trusted and respected civil service, a functioning anti-corruption system, effective revenue collection system and strong security and peace-building mechanisms
- **Restore Oil production**, diversify mono-product economy by shifting to e.g. agriculture, encourage investment and promote small business as engine of growth
- **Restore and expand delivery of quality Basic Social Service**
- **Develop reliable renewable energy and sound Environmental Protection and Water Resource Management Strategies and Policy**
- **Develop Comprehensive Infrastructure** covering roads, air, rail and river transportation
- **Promote Nation Building** to create a consultative and participatory involvement of citizens in all fabrics of life and development to establish a one seamless South Sudanese nation

- **Increase the 25% Affirmative Action for women** and women into substantive national positions
- **Encourage, inspire and incentivize the South Sudanese diaspora** to re-establish root and connection with their motherland and invest their expertise, skills and resources in participating in the development of their country as well as building bridges for South Sudan internationally and attract investments to harness the resources of their richly endowed country .
- **Take and apply Lessons Learned from successful African countries** such as Botswana, Rwanda and Ghana which are making an indelible mark in the continents' economic growth and prosperity
- **Create an conducive environment for attracting investment**

#### **F. CONCLUSION**

- But, independence is not a panacea to all our ills and needs and an instant magic wand to realizing our dreams. It comes with great responsibilities, tough belt-tightening sacrifices and immeasurable price

Unlike the euphoria and jubilation that marked the Declaration of Independence we celebrated the first Anniversary in a somber mood with many despairing that we have not much to show for our independence. However, remember we are a fledgling new nation and although there is great pressure for us to go from baby steps to sprinting, we must not lose sight of setting a solid base for creating and building a unified nation, promoting a diversified economy, establishing good governance and providing security and the basics of life and development to the majority of the long suffering citizens of South Sudan

We have enormous challenges ahead of us but even greater opportunities because, at the end of the day, we are in a unique situation of looking at all of the good and bad examples in nation building in Africa and going with the best.

Whatever challenges confront us, we have the collective duty to protect and preserve our hard won, God given beloved country because we have none other. God bless the Republic of South Sudan

Thank you all

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION: IT IS TIME TO CHOOSE

By J. Omuu

*“What is it that the poor reply when asked what might make the greatest difference in their lives? They say, organizations of their own so that they may negotiate with the government, with traders, and with non-governmental organizations. Direct assistance through community-driven programs so that they may shape their own destiny...these are strong voices, voices of dignity.”*

These words introduce a courageous World Bank study titled *Voices of the Poor: Can anyone Here Us?* These are voices of citizens outside normal power structures reaching engagement. The challenges of our troubled new country require new conceptual lenses that enable citizens to find dignity and the capacity to change what we need to change. There is no question that, the challenge of democratic governance system-government of the people by the people and for the people is taking a dangerous turn in post-conflict South Sudan.

South Sudan just celebrated her first independent on July 9; the country finds itself at crossroads. Hence there is now considerable dissatisfaction brewing among people as a result of the rampant corruption, politics of exclusion and lack of service delivery provision. As the only feasible political actor in diaspora, ESSCA should engage in an intense discussion and struggle over pushing South Sudan back to the right course of democracy and people's control over the State.

Make no mistake about it, the current ruling political elites and/or leaders in South Sudan should avoid the temptation to think that they are the only ones with good ideas needed to decide for the majority civil population in the country.

In this presentation, I content that democracy cannot thrive in south Sudan if it's merely established from top-down, it has to develop from and entrench itself at the grassroots level e.g. community organization and civil society group must rise up to the challenge. Thus, the participation of political actors/forces such as ESSCA-USA becomes a key element in the democratization process, and David Mathew puts it right by asserting that, *“politics is not a separate area of life. It is not doing something different. It is doing what we do every day differently.”* Conversely, early definitions of democracy suggested that democracy is about citizens having an equal say in the decisions that affect their lives. Indeed, democracy is becoming not only something people from across the globe cherish but also hard to see as it continues to exist as a moving target in a world where several South Sudanese leaders are failing to shoot the target.

To grasp this factor of political change in South Sudan, transforming ESSCA-USA into a formidable and credible a grassroots' train engine will be vital. Whilst civil society will be imperative analytical concept which Monga Celestin (1996: 11) describes it as an “anthropology of anger” with democratization

perceived by the people as the “*supreme vector of expression of citizenship which has been hijacked and perverted by decades of authoritarianism*” and that the feeling of political knowledge has quickly become one of the values most shared among all levels of the world’s population.

Despite different theoretical understanding and confusion, civil society has frequently been invoked as a key factor in redressing the oppressive power of totalitarian regimes.

### **Why is democracy so important for South Sudanese?**

The liberation struggle for independence is quite different from the task of administering government. In spite of decades of suffering and fighting for a just society (justice, equity, equality and liberty), South Sudanese have not learned from grave mistakes committed by most African post-liberation governments and leaders who turned tyrants today. Awkwardly, the liberation leaders who took over the helm of power and government have perpetuated destructive attitude towards their people by throwing overboard the fundamental aspects of democracy and good governance. Nonetheless, the sad reported events in post-independent republic of the South Sudan should not discourage its resolute citizens from addressing the unresolved key issues of social justice, equality, good governance and rule of law in post-independence South Sudan.

Given the dangerous evolving socio-economic and political trends the new country has taken, it’s imperative that all South Sudanese citizens must mobilize the good ingredient part of their cultures to move the newly independent country forward in the right direction. Notwithstanding the important role of the civil society/community organizations such as ESSCA-USA to sensitize and educate the citizen on empowerment and the need to participate in the current bumpy transition to democratic governance specifically in OUR militarized society.

### **Major Factors that Impeding the Role of Civil Society**

- The monolithic/one-party structure and dictatorship is evident in evident in South Sudan
  - Selfish leaders and exclusion
  - Entrenched elites and politicians with vested interest in the politics of status-quo maintenance
  - High Level of Illiteracy
  - Many people are not aware of their rights
  - They’re confronted with the immediate pressing issue of staying alive and how to survive the next minute, hour or day—to borrow President’s George Bush own words: *persistent of poverty and oppression can lead to hopelessness and despair...*

- Civil society has yet to be sensitized to a different sophisticated level of thinking regarding the socio-economic and political issues, which is caused by the low human capital formation.
- South Sudan has very few trained competent researchers, fewer progressive thinkers, independent radio stations and TV sets per 1000 population.
- Lack of support from the state, thus a need building a new era based on mutual trust and relationship between the state and the civil society.
- Democratic politics requires a public informed about government decision, policy, and action as opposed to the typical GOSS keeping their intentions secret.

### **What is Fundamental Path towards Democratic Transition in the RSS?**

- Institutionalization of the democratic “rules of the game” of good governance (i.e. accountability, transparency, representation, participation, the rule of law etc).
  - “Willingness to participate actively in the political arena in pursuit of common good” (Deakin 2001: 84).
  - Building on the intrinsic values of professionalism to confront ethnic identities.
  - Ban any form of holy/unholy intercourse between the military and civilian/elites by keeping the military in the barracks (e.g. Bilpham Headquarters) this is because most disgruntled elites very often support military as means of settling personal dispute with political opponent
  - Some African military experience has shown that military solution has led to military take over e.g. Nigeria

### **Are there alternative choices in a given existing governing structure in South Sudan? Yes!!**

- Radical change is necessary
- The civil society should rise up and face the tough realities of the current situation.
- The elites and intellectuals must rise up and confront the existing semi-authoritarian rule in our society and seriously address public institutions malfunction.
- New technology offers the opportunity of evolving new modes for action such as use of internet or cell phones can now all be assembled outside traditional arena for mass action.

### **Following briefly are the stages which ESSCA-USA to reframe problems and to measure Progress.**

#### **First Step: Coming Together around the Problem**

This process begins when we concludes that a situation hurts us badly enough and require change. Seeing a connection between our personal interest and bad situation, we can reach out to other people whose interest s may also be hurt. The problem may seem daunting, but widening circle of conversation

may be needed to create a critical mass who are ready for regular continuous interaction especially among the internal group. The idea here is construct relationship that can solve problems whether group members involved fully trust each other or not. However, because everyone is dependent on each other, everyone has an equal say in what association's purposes are.

### **Second Step: Mapping the Problem, Identifying It, and Framing Choices**

When the group meets, active participants need to spend time discussing about the situation at hand in order to identify its main components. How the problem often affects them, and then let the people/members identify the perceive problem from their own viewpoint as opposed to the experts. The main objective is to learn why and how the problem threatens their value and interest. Therefore naming the problem is in the way that engages each participant is crucial in building the common ground necessary to start tackling the problem itself. Framing the choices in terms of what one's value is a key to define and tackling the problem.

### **Step Three: Setting a Direction**

To weigh possible approaches in the light what the group value, people must meet to deliberate not just taking about the problem. This helps identify a common ground which defines the starting point for setting the broad direction just enough to accomplish the task at hand. These choices include the community and a country we they want. This depends whether there is a personal political convection and will to pursue the chosen course.

### **Step Four: Planning and a Course for Action**

When people are committed and determined the direction in which they want to move, they must then decide how to get there? The following steps are important.

Resource mobilization for tackling the problem

List any obstacles including resistance obstacles to move from point A----B. Often rocky relationship is the major challenge to the direction.

List step to removing these obstacles. The aims here to engage everyone within the group/community who can generate the much needed momentum through the balancing act which may help remove barriers.

Encourage cooperation to stimulate others to join the process and the momentum for change build and consolidated.

### **Step Five: Acting Collectively**

Once the plan has been designed, the group on course of action. Form and move the insights small active group out into a civil society to which members relates easily in order to engage complex scenarios. The process to learning and leaning forward together tend to strengthen relationship and in turn it will help resolve complex situations peacefully.

**In conclusion**, the challenge before the Equatoria and ESSCA-USA specifically is to construct a proper political space and environment to ensure that first and foremost Equatoria is part of the evolving any foreseeable political change in the new country. ESSCA-USA should therefore gun for democracy, empowerment, and popular participation, inclusive and open shared government and fairness before the law. In the word of Harold H. Saunders, *politics is what happens when citizens outside the government come together and build relationship to solve collective problems.*

**The unanswered question, however, remains whether ESSCA-USA is firmly committed to seeking a new change and fair system of governance in the Republic of South Sudan?**

## REFERENCES

Deakin Nicholas.2001. *In Search of Civil society*. NY: Palgrave

Burnell P. & Calvert P. (eds).2004. *Civil Society in Democratization*. UK: London Frank CASS & Co. Limited

BIX, H. P. (2011). "The North African--Middle East Uprisings from Tunisia to Libya." *Massachusetts Review*, 52(2), 329-347.

Monga C. 1996. *The Anthropology of Anger: Civil Society and Democracy in Africa*. UK: Lynne Rienner Pub

Seligman B. A. 1992. *The idea of Civil Society*. NY: USS The Free press