STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION AT
THE SECOND HIGH-LEVEL REVITALISATION FORUM OF SOUTH SUDAN
ADDIS ABABA, 17 May 2018

Your Excellency Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal
Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,
Excellency Chair of the IGAD Council of Ministers,
Excellencies Representatives of the various Parties and Stakeholders from South Sudan,
Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Excellencies Friends of South Sudan,

I bring you fraternal greetings from our Chairperson, Dr. Moussa Faki Mahamat.
It is my pleasure and privilege to welcome you all to the continuation of the second IGAD led
High-Level Revitalization Forum of South Sudan.

We are gathered here for the reconvening of the second session of the High Level
Revitalization Forum of the peace agreement for South Sudan. This session is therefore
crucial. The expectation of the people of South Sudan and, indeed, of all the caring friends of
South Sudan, is that it should successfully conclude, and set the country on the course for
permanent peace and reconciliation. Our people are clearly tired of war. What we want and
fervently work for is peace, reconciliation and development.

I should express appreciation to IGAD mediation for having brought together key South
Sudanese leaders who may have not spoken to each other for over two years. I should, also
to take this opportunity, to congratulate you, as leaders of South Sudan, on having chosen
dialogue over violence to find a lasting solution to your political impasse. Let us remember
that “war begins in the mind of man, and therefore it is in the minds of men that peace can
be forged.
Making peace after a protracted conflict is never easy. Yet pursuing civil war is certainly more expensive, both in human and financial terms. War negatively impacts on social relations and will only lead to more revenge and counter-revenge while the people we profess to care for continue to suffer. We have numerous examples in Africa of how things could go wrong. We do not want yet another.

You have a huge task of making the necessary compromise to save your people. No-one else can do that for you. As leaders you have to learn to forgive each other for the national interest. Violence has never provided a basis for resolving national issues, South Sudan is not an exception to this rule.

**Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We in the African Union, and certainly the people of South Sudan, were delighted in December 2017 when the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian was signed. We all appreciated that invaluable gift to the suffering people of South Sudan. It has been an utter shock and disappointment to all of us, especially the innocent civilians in South Sudan that the parties continued to engage in military confrontations.

As we begin today, the onus is on you to prove to the people of South Sudan that you really are interested in ending this senseless war. As leaders, you have a chance to prove wrong those who claim that you are fighting for your own personal interests! It has been suggested that you do not care for the ordinary citizens of South Sudan who continue to be killed, raped, wounded, or forced to flee their homes.

I am sure you do not take pride in the fact that your people are in IDP and refugee camps living in an appalling conditions. The people of South Sudan deserve better. You can make that change today.
Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

You are certainly aware that there is growing fatigue within the international community over the slow progress of achieving peace. While IGAD toils to make peace each day, it seems the leaders in South Sudan prefer to pursue war on the other hand. This cannot be the case, neither should it be.

Discouragement, displeasure, frustration, exasperation, are becoming more and more the buzzwords to describe the slow progress of the peace talks, especially in the face of the worsening humanitarian situation. The question today is whether or not the regional, continental and international community should remain engaged the same way it has been since December 2013. We, at the AU, are duty bound to continue to assist our member state. However, such an engagement has to be reviewed, together with IGAD, to ensure that we give impetus to the peace process.

Excellencies,

It would not be fair for anyone to argue that the AU decision to take punitive measures against those that kill or contribute to the killing of the citizens every day is unjustifiable. The AU is going to work tirelessly with IGAD and other partners to punish those who obstruct efforts towards peace without fail. Such a decision is inspired by the desire to save the people of South Sudan as enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the AU.

Let us have the South Sudanese leaders help us address the problems facing their country and save their people. Anything short of success from this process will be a blatant betrayal of the innocent people of South Sudan. We cannot afford this. Africa cannot.

I wish you full success in your deliberations during this High-Level Revitalization Forum.

May the Lord bless you all.