



Toespraak

President of the Senate of the Netherlands on the occasion of the visit of the Speaker South Sudan Council of States Legislative Assembly

26 juni 2014

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Your Excellency,

Welcome to the Senate of the Netherlands, the upper house in the parliamentary system of the Netherlands, a house which will celebrate its bicentenary next year. Considering the volatile situation in your country, I understand and endorse the need to maintain dialogue with fellow parliamentarians.

South Sudan's motto struck me. Justice, liberty and prosperity. These three elements are intrinsically linked. The one cannot be attained or maintained without the other. They are the basics for state-building, and as the non-profit website the Sudan Tribune put it: "for sustainable human security, state-building is the only endgame."

The current situation in South Sudan is very worrisome. As the world's newest country you are a democracy in transition. After the long road to independency, you were immediately reminded of the fact that peace is not a given. Being the President of the Senate of a country which is strongly committed to human rights, I cannot help but express my concern about the current humanitarian situation.

Over the last decade the Netherlands has contributed to the development of Southern Sudan, and now South Sudan. Via economic, diplomatic, aid and UN channels. Currently we are helping the refugees and internally displaced persons. Stability in South Sudan is crucial for the people of South Sudan, the people in the Horn of Africa and Great Lake region and the people of tomorrow.

With this in mind I cannot help but think of the motto of the Netherlands: *je maintiendrai*. Meaning: I will uphold. In this sense I feel parliamentarians have a very important role to fulfil. By overseeing the government and by representing the population, we play an essential role in creating and upholding stability in our countries. I wish you the best of luck in fulfilling your roles and carrying out your parliamentary tasks duly.

I can imagine that you have some questions regarding just this: the building of strong state institutions. From my part I am interested to hear about the current political situation in South Sudan. I suggest we have a constructive discussion about these topics, after I have given the floor to you.

I look forward to your remarks. Thank you.