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To: GRH

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### External Evaluation of Independent Diplomat's Diplomacy Support to the government of South Sudan **Management Response**

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K.234.32-1100

The external evaluation covers the diplomacy support that Independent Diplomat (ID) provided to the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) and its Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFAIC) from November 2011 to October 2013. This project aimed at improving the institutional diplomatic capacities of the GRSS. The findings of the evaluation are comprehensible, well-structured and useful. They contribute to assess the impact of this particular project but also help defining HSD's future activities in support of the GRSS.

The Steering Committee took note of the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation and endorses the following aspects that seem particularly important:

#### **1. General Assessment**

The evaluator assesses that ID's project funded by HSD met the extraordinary diplomatic challenges of the newly independent GRSS. He concludes that the project is in line with the mandate of HSD as an intervention in a fragile new state going through a post-war peace consolidation process. ID had an important role in helping the South Sudanese negotiators and diplomats to understand the views of the international community and of their counterparts in negotiations, and to take into account historical and political facts as well as legal considerations in their diplomatic decisions. An important limitation to the impact of ID was the fact that in any country but particularly in a new nation like South Sudan, external diplomatic advice is often simply not taken into account. The prior lack of an agreement between the South Sudanese counterparts and HSD about ID's appointment is identified as the principal procedural weakness of the project.

The evaluation concludes that the project had several immediate effects upon the negotiations with Sudan, improvements in relations with UNMISS, some neighboring countries, and some international organizations. In contrast, the impact on the functioning and equipment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFAIC) of South Sudan and the skills of its staff was minimal.

## **2. Responses to the main conclusions of the evaluators:**

### **a) Relevance and sustainability of the project:**

The evaluator confirms that the project was both urgent and relevant, a view supported by high-level officials of South Sudan as well as foreign observers. Although friendly governments dispatched a few advisors to work with the GRSS and organized crash courses in diplomacy, this was not enough. More intense and sustained diplomatic advice was called for. Notwithstanding the project's necessity, the outcomes did not go much beyond immediate effect and the project did not lead to a better equipped MFAIC and a better coordination of the diplomatic function inside the GRSS. The evaluator suggests as an alternative to exchange ID as a direct adviser with former diplomats of anglophone African countries or to explore a partnership with an African or non-African institution to support diplomatic training.

- **Response:** HSD shares the view that a longer-term designed training would have had a more sustained impact on the functioning of the Ministry. Should a similar support by HSD be considered, this finding will have to be built in the setup of such a new project, both in South Sudan or elsewhere.

### **b) Quality of the project design:**

The evaluator claims that the project documents are not detailed and analytical enough to reduce the risk of weak compliance or failure. Furthermore he argues that the selection of ID as advisor was not justified enough by HSD, and the ToR's did not reflect a common assessment by South Sudan and HSD.

- **Response:** ID had already played a role as a consultant of the GRSS before South Sudan's independence. For instance, ID provided valuable diplomatic advice related to the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) as well as with the GRSS's relation with the UN. Therefore HSD believes that this choice as an advisor was well-considered. However, should HSD envisage a further cooperation with ID, a detailed assessment of the proposal should be carried out, including the establishment of a baseline study about the efficiency of the selected institution (government) and its potential, in terms of trained staff, infrastructure and financing. Finally, HSD takes into account that the provider of diplomatic advice has to be accepted by local counterparts not only as highly professional but also as independent and exclusively loyal to the receiving country.

### **c) The demand for Independent Diplomats services**

The evaluator discusses the shifting demand for ID's services through the project phase. Although the advisor was to work in the MFAIC, the Ministry did not accept ID's services for the first 16 months. The advisor then worked with the chief negotiator for the post-secession negotiations with Sudan and advised the country's Vice-President on relations with the UN peacekeeping mission. The situation changed as soon as the top MFAIC officials started working with ID on many aspects of the traditional regional and global agenda.

- **Response:** HSD acknowledges the need to study the demand for diplomatic services thoroughly beforehand and to ensure ownership by the domestic partner agencies. It is crucial to be aware of the high sensitivity to external interference in local policy-making in post-independence.

### **d) The quality of ID's diplomatic advice**

Although ID's experts were not able to prevent some disruptive decisions which increased the risk of war with Sudan, ID provided valuable support to South Sudan's negotiators and diplomats. ID's services were highly appreciated by South Sudan's counterparts who are aware that the bridges,

which ID built with the international community, reinforced South Sudan's international standing. It was recognized that nobody else in South Sudan was able to do this work at a critical juncture in its history.

- **Response:** The high quality of ID's advice (formal and substantive) and general good feedback is a welcome outcome of the evaluation and will be positively taken into account when/if considering future support of ID.

**e) HSD as project manager and supervisor**

HSD's supervision of the project was limited by the fact that ID provided services to the GRSS which, to be useful and acceptable, had to be kept secret, even to the funding agency. ID and HSD agreed on exchanging information in form of periodic reports from ID to HSD. The evaluator however states that *"as far as we know, the representatives of the Human Security Division did not discuss these reports with ID and did not periodically talk to project counterparts in South Sudan on the usefulness of the project, difficulties in its implementation and possible reforms to better attain the initial project."*

- **Response:** HSD agrees that even in projects where the main output is diplomatic advice, which is confidential and is not made available to the donor agency, an active supervision is of critical importance. If HSD envisages a further cooperation with ID, a closer exchange not only with the partner but also with project counterparts will need be part of HSD's project management.

**3. Conclusions**

ID suspended the project as a result of the violence that broke out in South Sudan in December 2013. In the words of ID, it could only resume under certain circumstances, *"particularly if a political agreement were to be reached and arrangements were to be made for an internationally monitored accountability process"*. In any case, ID would need to conduct a full ethical review and consult with its Advisory Council before making any such decision. The recent signing of a peace agreement by the main parties to the conflict will hopefully open new opportunities in this respect.

At the beginning of 2016, HSD will be involved in the elaboration of the new Whole-of-Government Strategy for South Sudan 2017-2020. The outcomes of the external evaluation will help defining HSD's future activities and potential support of the GRSS.

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