

**TALKING POINTS BY HON. MAJ. GEN. MADUT BIAR YEL, MINISTER FOR
TELECOMMUNICATIONS & POSTAL SERVICES, RSS, ON THE OCCASION OF
THE NEW COUNTRY CODE LAUNCH BY GEMTEL, QUALITY HOTEL, JUBA, 1ST
OCTOBER, 2011**

Hon. Ministers of the Republic of South Sudan (RSS) here present

Hon. Members of Parliament

The Managing Director & CEO, GEMTEL Green Network, Mr. Gadafi,

Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies & Gentlemen:

- I am most elated to be with you here today in making history at this auspicious occasion as we launch our sole and exclusive country code for the Republic of South Sudan (RSS), “+211”. Am delighted to note that the network suitably branded '**The Roots of South Sudan**' is once more living up to expectation by being the first network to implement, test and launch this new country code. I am equally thrilled to note that close on the heels, at least one other telecom operator will also be doing the same within a week from now! Just like a national flag, the country-code is a national monument that will live with many generations to come in the future. It is no doubt one of the strongest symbols of our sovereignty, freedom and independence, and the full recognition by the whole world of South Sudan as a Full Member of the Community of Nations.
- The historic signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 heralded a new beginning in South Sudan. While on the whole this milestone enabled us to reap peace dividends including the experience of this unique event, the opportunities created also brought about implementation pressures and challenges. On formation of government, we committed ourselves to providing basic services to the people, such as clean water, reasonable housing, healthcare, education, good roads, efficient transport, security, and equally important too, modern telecommunications and postal services. That today even in some of the very remotest villages of South Sudan you can make a phone call is itself a clear testimony that with the continued cooperation and partnership of all major actors, including the private sector, even the said challenges can be overcome as today attests.
- As the dynamics of the global and regional economies evolve, information and communication has become an indispensable pillar

for competitiveness as well as a growth-engine. South Sudan has to play catch-up with the global trends, and today marks a major milestone. Recognizing the importance of communications & ICTs in socio-economic development, wealth generation, job creation, poverty alleviation, and citizen's access to government services, the Government promptly issued policy and regulatory guidelines to stimulate sector growth. It is our declared policy to promote investment, private sector development, and to espouse partnerships (including public-private-people-partnerships) that are recognized as important elements in meeting the millennium development goals (MDGs). This is part of why from day one, we decided that private enterprise was the way to go for our telecommunications sector, hence the five licensed operators.

- In anticipation of a positive referendum vote, the Government tasked me to travel to Guadalajara, Mexico to meet the Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and also to attend the meeting of its highest decision-making body (Plenipotentiary), which convenes every four years. The Secretary-General, himself an African (heading this oldest UN Agency for the first time since inception in 1865) assured me that should the People of South Sudan vote for separation, he would issue the country code within 48 hours (i.e. two days). In fact, when this happened, he long beat the self-set deadline; he instead issued the country code within **2 hours** of the UN General Assembly recognition of South Sudan. The ITU also was one of the VERY first organizations to congratulate our President and the People of South Sudan. To deepen our friendship further, I am pleased to inform my countrymen and women, and indeed our friends here present that yesterday, a very high-powered delegation from the ITU ended a 3-day visit to South Sudan – yet another historic visit as we join the Global Community.
- The one question most people ask me these days is "When are we going to use our country code?". To ease the pressure on our engineers and ensure the new code is implemented with razor-precision, I ensured the public that the country code will become operational by 15th December. Indeed, that is the absolute deadline I gave to the operators also. I am much delighted that the Green Network has broken that set record by leaps and bounds. It is now incumbent upon each and every one of us to inform our friends and allies of the transition to our new country code. You will recall that we now have a very easy, and lucky number '211'; don't forget the **1st** month of the year 2011 was when South Sudanese

voted decisively for separation! And today we launch also the new code on **first** day of the month. I want to request all of us here present today to give a hearty clap to ITU for having favoured us with our number of choice. Few nations enjoyed this privilege!

- In the same vein, join me in congratulating Gemtel for once more leading the way to hasten the implementation of this new country code. Finally, I want to request you to join me also in congratulating and indeed thanking the Government and People of Uganda for having permitted us to use their "+256" code at a time our own then regulator could not!
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen: I cannot sit down before I inform you that we have also received our Alpha-numeric Country Codes "SS" (Alpha-2) and "SSD" (Alpha-3) from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and will soon be advising you of arrangements to implement our Internet domain (**dotSS**). As you may have heard, these Alpha-codes have many applications, including the national currency (SSP) and passports (SSD), among others. In the same vein, we are advanced with arrangements to join the Universal Postal Union (UPU) that will permit Juba to have its own International Postal Exchange for mail and parcel delivery.
- As for today, enjoy our new country code. Long live the Republic of South Sudan. Long live President Salva Kiir. Long live Gemtel. South Sudan Oyee!.. +211 Oyee!.. Gemtel Oyee!.. The People and Friends of South Sudan Oyee!.. Shukran!