

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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South Sudan becomes the 44th country to ratify the Protocol on Women's Rights.

The Republic of South Sudan has deposited instruments of ratification to the [Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa](#), known as the Maputo Protocol, becoming the 44th Member State of the African Union (AU) to ratify the Treaty. Honorable Aya Benjamin Warille, South Sudan's Minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare deposited the instruments of ratification with the African Union Commission on the 7th of June 2023. This latest ratification coincides with the 20th anniversary of the Maputo Protocol, which will be celebrated this year on July 11, 2023.

As one of the world's most progressive and comprehensive women's rights instruments, the purpose of the Maputo Protocol is to protect, promote and affirm women's human rights to exercise civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights as well as collective and solidarity rights, thus reaffirming the universality, indivisibility and interdependency of human rights for African women.

In May 2022, the African Union Commission (AUC) through the Women, Gender and Youth Directorate (WGYP) in collaboration with the AU Liaison Office for South Sudan (AULO-SS) conducted an In-Country Advocacy Mission to the Republic of South

Sudan to support the finalization of the ratification process of the Maputo Protocol, which started in 2017 when the Parliament of South Sudan signed the instruments in October, 2017. During the Mission, the Vice President H.E. Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior, committed to ensuring that all regional and international instruments on gender equality and women's rights, including the Maputo Protocol, are ratified in time for the 20th anniversary of Maputo Protocol.

South Sudan has made great strides in achieving its gender equality obligations. For instance, the country has reached 32% women's representation in Parliament, surpassing the global quota of 30%. It has also established a Gender-Based Violence and Juvenile Special Court, which is regarded as a global best practice.

H.E Warille restated the commitment of the Government of South Sudan and the President H.E. Salvir Kir, to advance the rights of women and girls, not only in the country but to rally the same on the continent. "On February 24th 2023, H.E. the President appended his signature to the Maputo Protocol, which Parliament passed in 2017. The Ministry has worked tirelessly for a decade to champion for the ratification of the Maputo Protocol. It may have taken us 12 years but we are excited to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Protocol with the rest of the continent. We are excited to be a part of history. Now you can remove our name from the list of Member States that are yet to ratify the Protocol," she stated. The Minister was accompanied by H.E. Ambassador James Morgan, South Sudan's Permanent Representative to the AU.

Ms. Lehau Victoria Maloka, Head of the Coordination and Outreach Division within the WGYD commended South Sudan on the ratification. She conveyed the congratulatory remarks of the women who have walked the journey of achieving GEWE on the continent. "On 11th July, we celebrate 20 years of the Maputo Protocol. Last year during the In-country Advocacy Mission you made a promise that you would celebrate as a Member State that has ratified the Protocol. I congratulate you for keeping that promise. This is a testament to the commitment of South Sudan to upholding women's rights. The next trip we take to your country will be to support you in domesticating and implementing the Treaty, including building your capacity to develop your reports and submit it to the African Commission on Human and People's Rights. You have our full support," she said.

To date, 44 Member States have ratified the Protocol. 11 Member States are yet to ratify, namely Botswana, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Madagascar, Morocco, Niger, Somalia and Sudan. The AUC reiterates its encouragement to all Member States to sign and ratify the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights.

Relatedly, the African Union Commission adopted the African Union Strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2018 – 2028) and the All for Maputo Protocol Programme, which identified ratification, domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol as a key priority to achieving gender equality on the continent. It aims for universal ratification, domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol by all AU Member States.

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