

Speech by President National Nurses and Midwives Association of Southern Sudan (NNAMASS)

Today, I am indeed very happy because a new day has begun for nurses and midwives in Southern Sudan where nursing and midwifery have long been struggling for recognition and respect. I stand today as the President of the newly formed Nurses and Midwives Association of Southern Sudan (NAMASS). I am pleased therefore to first introduce to you the new Executive Board of this Association.

Members of the media, around the world, nurses and midwives remain key health workers delivering cost effective and quality health care across the life cycle (from birth to death). Nurses and midwives remain the largest category of health workers, spending the longest period of time with clients and patients and are usually the first point of contact for individuals and families with the health care service. We are therefore critical for the efficient and effective functioning of any health care system. We have a lot to contribute to ensure that families and communities live healthy lives and even more to nation building since an unhealthy population means a poor nation.

We are therefore extremely pleased that we could come together today as a body of professionals to work together to advance nursing and midwifery professions so that our fellow South Sudanese could get access to improved and nursing and midwifery services. This is one of our key objectives as an association. We would like to ensure that nursing and midwifery care is delivered in an efficient manner and of the highest quality. We would like to see our nurses and midwives be given opportunities to develop their skills and competencies to deliver this care. We would like to see nurses and midwives work in safe practice environments. We would like our patients and clients to benefit from ethical and culturally sensitive nursing and midwifery services. There is much work to be done. However it has started and

will continue this day onwards with a strong and unified voice and force.

This association will mobilized all nurses across the length and breadth of Southern Sudan to be a part of the association. We will reach out and become members with our colleagues in the international fraternity including the International Council of Nurses and the International Confederation of Midwives. We would network with our Government and local partners so as to strengthen the delivery of nursing and midwifery services in Southern Sudan for better health for all South Sudanese. We are therefore urging your support in the process.

I am therefore calling all nurses and midwives to become members of the association. We will be having associations at state level as well so that we will be stronger and our voices louder. Let me also use this opportunity to say special thank you to the Ministry of Health, Government of Southern Sudan, Dr. Olivia and the Directorate of Nursing and Midwifery including Janet and her team for making this happen today. Our deepest and sincerest thanks are also extended to UNFPA for the technical and financial support especially Gillian and all of the logistic staff members. Without their unwavering support this would not be possible. Thank you members of the media for coming out to support us and we look forward to your continuous coverage as we seek to do some serious work as an association.

I thank you all and would like to take this opportunity to wish all our midwives “Happy International Day of the Midwife” which will be celebrated tomorrow.