Ngok Dinka traditional leaders applaud United Nations.

Abyei, 26 September 2018 - The traditional leaders of the nine Ngok Dinka chiefdoms of Abyei have commended the United Nations for the proposed reconfiguration of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and for once again bringing the Abyei issue to the front burner.

The traditional leaders led over 500 people, amongst them school children, in a solidarity match to the Headquarters of UNISFA to deliver a solidarity message to the Secretary General and to pledge their support for the proposed reconfiguration and prayed that it would deliver more value for the enormous costs incurred by the UN mission in Abyei. They regretted that very little of the resources used so far benefit the people of Abyei directly but expressed optimism that refocusing the resources of UNISFA and the mission on settlement of borders and the final status of Abyei would be a win-win situation for all in the region.

The traditional leaders said they are particularly happy that the proposal has identified the need of the local communities for mechanisms to provide them essential social services including rule of law, adding that putting timeline for the overall outcomes of the proposal will make the vision clearer to all actors and the hope stronger for all beneficiaries. They said they welcome any measure that will establish an “arm free environment, conducive to safe return of Ngok Dinka and unhindered seasonal migration of nomadic cattle herders within the Abyei box stressing that such measures will speed up healing and reconciliation.

The leaders applauded the role of UNISFA in maintaining peace and security within the Abyei box, adding that the mission has practically averted further confrontation between Sudan and
South Sudan, particularly over Abyei. They further said they believe the proposed adjustments to UNISFA’s mandate would add more dimensions to a sustainable peace across borders and between communities interacting within the Abyei box.

Mr. Ali Zaki from Office of the Principal Officer, who received the letter on behalf of the OIC Head of Mission and Force Commander, Major General Gebre Adana Woldezgu, assured them that their goodwill message would be conveyed to the Secretary General accordingly.