

Republic of the Sudan

Ministry of Social Welfare , Women & Child Affairs

**SUDAN RESPONSE FOR QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE
FIFTEENTH-YEAR REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM OF
ACTION (BPFA+ 15)**

August 2009

The Interim National Constitution (INC) 2005:

Article 32 of the INC provides as follows:

- (1) The State shall guarantee equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights, including the right to equal pay for equal work and other related benefits.
- (2) The State shall promote woman rights through affirmative action.
- (3) The State shall combat harmful customs and traditions which undermine the dignity and the status of women.
- (4) The State shall provide maternity and child care and medical care for pregnant women.
- (5) The State shall protect the rights of the child as provided in International and regional conventions ratified by the Sudan.

Preface

Sudanese women have long been playing a positive role in the Sudanese society; being recognized as effective and important partner with men as regards their country. They have been among the pioneers in the African region, Arab world and Islamic world to entertain and enjoy their rights as enshrined in most if not all human rights instruments and international treaties. Women enjoyed their rights of education, employment, health and participation in politics dating back prior to independence and being reinforced and strengthened after independence. Women's impact at both the public and private level is fully realized and appreciated by the Sudanese society. They contribute to societal efforts in the field of eradication of illiteracy, alleviation of poverty, in getting involved in the peace negotiations and peace building out of their belief that men and women are equal partners in life without distinction or discrimination as ordained by their faith in Islamic Religion. Nevertheless, the State appreciate the existence of disparities between women and men's status, which prevail worldwide. The State has given requisite attention to this situation, aiming towards women's promotion and full realization of their rights and obligations. Women are the backbone of the Sudanese society; they are the custodians of its values, strengthening its social fabric, promoting such important notions as tolerance, peace and security within society. Women's impact in this regard is vividly clear at the public and voluntary level in the Federal and State levels.

This Report reflects the efforts exerted for women empowerment in all areas during the period 2004-2009. The Report includes the current Status of Sudanese Women, highlighting the gains, indicating the strength and weaknesses, opportunities and challenges, efforts exerted in the implementation of policies for women empowerment. The period 2004-2009 has been characterized as a transitional period in Sudan, witnessing the signing of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, ending one of Africa's longest war between the Northern and Southern Sudan. The CPA resulted in the creation of a Government of National Unity (GoNU) composed of the two partners who signed it; the National Congress Party (NCP) for the North and the Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM). This transitional period that precede Election and Referendum is contingent on many factors that have to be satisfied by GoNU inter alia to make unity conducive as an option between the two parties. It tallies on this huge commitment to induce change in accordance to the CPA, the Interim National Constitution (INC) and the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan (ICSS). The Sudanese women have positively gained and still continue to gain in the process in the fulfillment of their goals towards attaining gender equality as it has been provided for and explicitly spelt in the CPA, INC and ICSS.

This Report is primarily issued in response to the Questionnaire sent to governments in regards to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) and the Outcome of the Twenty Third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000) on a number of critical areas of concern. The Report consists of Four Parts as indicated in the Questionnaire:

1. Part One: highlights the major overall achievements and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Platform for Action and the Outcome of the Twenty Third Special Session of the General Assembly.
2. Part Two: For providing specific examples of achievement including policy development and programs and projects undertaken in the implementation in the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action, except critical area concerning institutional mechanisms to be covered in Part Three.
3. Part Three: focuses on Institutional Development to support gender equality and women's empowerment.
4. Part Four: To provide information on key challenges and constraints as well as any plans for future actions and initiatives to ensure full implementation of the Platform for Action in each of the Critical Areas of concern. To indicate new commitments to acceleration implementation of BPFA and the Outcome of the Twenty Third Special Session of the General Assembly.

PART ONE

An overview of Achievements, Challenges in the field of Justice, Gender Equality and Women Empowerment:

In follow up of the national effort in support of women issues which were initiated in the past century, the government endeavored to promote and empower women in the economic, social and political spheres. It aimed towards achievement a comprehensive and sustainable development; in implementation of t he BPFA which calls for women empowerment and addressing obstacles that contribute to lack or minimal participation of women in all aspects of life both public and private. The government's Efforts for incorporating a gender perspective, women empowerment and sustainable development has been realized through the formation of a national machinery for the advancement of women (National Committee for the Advancement of Women) by virtue of the Ministerial Decree No. 12 for the year 2003. Members of the Committee include forty five entities including governmental, civil society, NGOs, Academic and Research Institutes, Funding institutions and others. The specific objectives of the Committee is:

1. Formulation of general policies, strategies, propose legislative bills supporting the advancement of women and those of the families.
2. Monitoring and evaluation of achievements at the national, regional and international levels.
3. Forming technical and specialized committees.

The Committee in collaboration and partnership with other entities has formulated the "National Policy for Women Empowerment in

Sudan." The Policy has been adopted by the Council of Ministers and incorporated in the Five Year Strategy of the Country 2007-2012. The National Policy for Women Empowerment is grounded on six pillars i.e., based on BPFA. The implementation of the Policy is ongoing with national and sectoral Plans being developed in full collaboration with relevant sectors active in the field of women promotion vis-à-vis capacity building, skills' development and the formation of a number of mechanisms, coordinating committees at the States' level. In accordance with Advisors of Governors (Walis') for Women Affairs were appointed in the States to safeguard gender mainstreaming in all policies, as well as ensuring that challenges and obstacles are addressed in all their forms. Such measures were very positive in the promotion of women rights and in identifying the relevant issues peculiar to each State in Sudan and its priorities.

The government has paid requisite attention to the Protection of the Child and in strengthening the role of the family as an important nucleus of society. The government aims towards promoting and preserving the family unit from the risk of disintegration, highlighting the important parental roles and guidance of their children. The government strategies of ensuring education for all, in making available vocational training, enhancing wages, expanding health services; providing orphans' and elderly people welfare programs are all part of a holistic approach towards its people among other proactive efforts in the area of Law Reform of laws that are incompliant with the INC, ICSS and the international instruments that Sudan has ratified.

The strategies and plans of the state were directed towards strengthening women role in the family and society at large;

ensuring the integration of the family unit, the promotion of positive norms and values in the society, focusing on increasing women's participation in the public sphere, in being appointed in decision making positions, in addressing school drop-outs and promoting awareness in relation to other important population and environmental issues.

To attain the aforementioned goals for the promotion of women, the government has formulated the Quarter Century Development Strategy (2002-2027) which outlines its major objectives as: strengthening values and norms that assist and ensure women's integration in the development process, combating harmful traditions that deprive women of their rights through education and advocacy programmes; strengthening legislation that protects working women and eradicating illiteracy; and ensuring adequate education and training taking into consideration gender disparities at all levels of education as well as regional disparities. The National Policy for Women Empowerment issued in 2007 was the outcome of the recommendations and plans envisioned by the Quarter Century Strategy.

The National Policy for Women Empowerment is embodied on BPFA 12 Critical Areas of Concern focusing on six thematic areas which are Education, Health, Environment, Human Rights and Legislations, Political Participation, Decision making, Peace and Conflict Resolution in addition to Institutional Mechanisms.

Sudan has pledged since the First Comprehensive Strategy Conference in 1990 to support women's rights in the public and private spheres and has been since adopting all national, regional

and international measures that promote such rights. After the conclusion of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement 2005 a former Supreme Court woman Judge was elected to the Position of Constitutional Court Judge, another appointed in the Nine Members' of the National Election Committee, a woman Advisor of the President was also appointed and so forth.

In monitoring the achievements since the last five year report, it is worth-noting the following developments:

First: in the field of policies and plans:

- ❖ The National Policy for Women Empowerment has been issued by the Council of Ministers in its (9) Ninth Session of 4 March 2007 which encompasses six main thematic areas for the empowerment of women; A detailed Action Plan was formulated based on such policy and subsequently being included in the Five Year Strategy for the years 2007-2011.

- ❖ The Project "Women Empowerment and Gender Mainstreaming (2002-2006) was implemented with funding from UNFPA and the government of Sudan. The objective of the Project was to strengthen and promote women's advancement and economical, social and political empowerment. In gender mainstreaming of development policies and sectoral plans.

Achievements:

In the context of achieving its objectives, the Project has provided institutional support to the Women and Family Units in the various states. Organizing programmes for capacity building, enhancing skills through the directorate of women in the sectoral ministries and relevant institutions. The Project has contributed in the conduction of visibility studies to identify the gender gaps in the holistic government's policies as well as identifying indicators for women

empowerment in the various states. The Project also played a pivotal role in the documentation of the national policies related to women and their activities.

- ❖ A National Strategy for the Family was formulated which was subsequently incorporated in the Five Year Strategy 2007-2011 being endorsed by the Council of Ministers according to the Ministerial Decree (13) 2008. The Strategy was disseminated and adapted to the different states. The Plan was sent to the League of Arab States.

- ❖ The formulation of the Strategy for Combating HIV/AIDS among women with full support from National programme combating HIV/AIDS and UNAIDS and civil society .

- ❖ The African Campaign by First Ladies was led by the First Lady .

- ❖ The formulation of a Five-Year Strategy for Child Welfare 2007-2011 in partnership with ministries of concern with children as a comprehensive and integrated strategy. A National Policy for Disabled and another for Unaccompanied Children's Welfare were also formulated with UN agencies related bodies .

Achievements in the Field of Women Empowerment:

- ❖ Establishment of Women's Funding Facilities (WFF):

The establishment of WFF serves as one of the leading projects that aim towards alleviating women's poverty and setting up an adequate information resource for facilitating Planning and Monitoring. The Project affords women the opportunity to enhance their living standards and that of the family through income generating projects utilizing local raw materials at its best seasonal availability, and in developing that through manufacturing and preservation mechanisms. The Project tends to strengthen

cooperative norms and values among women and familiarize them with banking information for concluding business transactions know how. One of the most important and positive characteristics of this project is making funding for women available through facilitated steps without complicated collaterals and in encouraging the spirit of collective activities as most of the projects are implemented with the participation of two or more persons. The project is also supported by business consultation services, visibility studies and training for women in several fields. The project covers women beneficiaries in several states in Sudan and is to be implemented in several phases to reduce risk factors and achieve women empowerment.

❖ **Revolving Funds:**

This project is implemented in collaboration between the Ministry and the Sudanese Women General Union (SWGU) in Darfur, Kordofan, Gedaref, al Gezira, Khartoum, Nile River, Bah r Al Ghazal, White Nile and Kassala States.

❖ **Multiple Purposes Social Centers for Women.**

❖ The Ministry established and rehabilitated a number of multiple purposes social centers for the development of women. Some of them have been transformed into Faculties of Sociology upon the Ministry's initiative and the coordination of other competent authorities such as Centers for women Development. The centers provide training and awareness raising courses in various gender related areas. In the context of integrating women in the economical section were a number of productivity and marketing opportunities were enhanced. Training Manuals have constantly been updated by specialist under the supervision of the Ministry of

Social Welfare, Women and Child Affairs, Ministry of Higher Education, presented and distributed as TOT Courses Materials.

❖ Achievement in the field of training, rehabilitation and capacity building:

- A Training Workshop on Women Empowerment, Integration of Gender has been implemented in the various states targeting 1556 trainee from all stakeholders of concern to women activities. The workshop was in the context of TOT. The outcome of the workshop was the adoption of indicators to measure progress of women status at the state level.

- A Workshop on the Integration of Gender Perspective in Plans and Programmes on the rights-based approach was implemented in both North and Western Darfur States. A Network of organizations and stakeholders active in the field of gender was created in those states.

- Fifteen similar workshops were held in the different Northern States. The beneficiaries were 750 participants representing various stakeholders active in the field of gender including civil society, NGOs and government authorities.

- A Workshop on Women Status during Peace was implemented in collaboration with IGAD. A document on Women Development was formulated.

- Many seminars on Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health were held in fifteen Northern States.

- A Workshop on the Integration of Women Rights on Policies, Plans and Programmes was implemented in collaboration with Khartoum Center for Human Rights.
- A Seminar on Partnership for the Promotion of Family Status was held where two papers entitled "Partnership and its Role in the Promotion of the Family Status," and the "Partnership Realities" in the context of more involvement of women in sharing responsibility.
- A Forum on the Role of Networking in Supporting Family Programmes was held by Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Child Affairs.
- A Forum on Family Disintegration was held by Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Child Affairs.
- A Forum was held on Intergenerational interaction and integration within Families.
- Training Courses in the field of Nutritional and Skin industries were organized in collaboration with the Higher Council for Industry, Vocational and Apprentice. The training courses were implemented in the context of strengthening women and family centers. The beneficiaries of such courses are the personnel working in the centers.
- A Forum has been organized on efforts to eradicate harmful traditions in the Sudan Society.
- A symposium was conducted on the Efficacy of Data-information, collection, analysis and utilization in planning and projects.
- Training courses on Project Proposals have been organized in collaboration with Khartoum University Development Studies Institute. 340 participants from the personnel of governmental

bodies, financial institutions and organizations active in the field of women and family affairs.

- A number of workshops on HIV/AIDS were held on "Protection from HIV/AIDS – Social Perspective", "HIV/AIDS Realities and future Prospects."

- Training course in the field of Strategic Planning, Training on Proposal Preparation for personnel active in the field of women activities in the states. Two workshops were conducted on the integration of gender perspectives in Planning and Programmes based on women rights.

- A Forum for Women's Governors' Advisors on Women, Affairs was held.

- A number of Research, Studies and Scientific Papers were conducted and prepared.

As regards Reporting, the following Reports were prepared:

- ❖ Sudanese Women: Challenges and Prospects – Efforts for the Alleviation of Poverty.

- ❖ Reports on the Child – submitted to the International Commission on the Right of the Child, including:

- a) Optional Protocol on the protection of the child in armed conflicts.

- b) Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

- c) Progress achieved on the Document "World Fit for Children" issued on the 27th session of the General Assembly.

- d) Reports on "(T)he Comprehensive and Sectoral Committee to Address Unemployment.", "Violence against Women", "Women and Peace", "Status of Peace", in follow-up of MDG 2004, "Report on the Current Status of Children, Challenges

and Prospects.", "Women, Peace and Security based on UNSCR-1325".

e) The Integrated Report on the Family in Sudan, a comprehensive report on the activities and programs presented for the Arab Organization for Women.

f) Preparation of the National Report on Progress Achieved in the Field of Policies, Legislature and Programs concerning protection of the Family in Sudan.

g) Networking: A network of organizations active in the field of women's issues was formed. A second network for those organizations active in the field of Family issues, and a third Network for those active in the field of HIV/AIDS were formed.

h) Achievements in the field of information Gathering and Data Resources:

In the context of coordination and strengthening mechanism in states, facilitating exchange of information, women directorates in the councils for child welfare and Population Councils in different states were supplied adequately with computers and accessories in order to establish information centers in those

states. Such project was supplemented by training programmes for the employees in the field of management and establishing information centers besides providing specialized courses on computers.

i) An information and Communication Technology Unit was established in the Directorate General of the Women and Family Affairs in the Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Child Affairs. It is continuously and periodically being updated on issues and area related to women.

j) Several Training courses on Gender Sensitive Information and Communication Technology were provided to 450 beneficiaries both males and females.

Achievements in the Field of Institutional Support:

a) The Directorates of Women in fifteen states were supplied with computers equipments and software in addition to vehicles and electronic equipments.

b) The State has issued a number of legislations in support of women empowerment.

c) The Institutional mechanisms supporting women advancement constitutes twenty five units at the Northern and Southern States. Such units act as focal points of the main machinery at the federal level, aiming towards the promotion of women and the family status at the states' level.

d) The units were provided with trained personnel in addition to supplies of computer and communication equipments as part of the capacity building programmes.

PART TWO

Critical Areas of Concern

The Sudanese government is very committed to the Beijing Platform for Actions and the critical areas of concern which are Women and Poverty, Women in Education and Training, Women and Health, Violence against Women, Women and Armed Conflict, Women and the Economy, Women in Power and Decision Making, Institutional Mechanism for the Advancement of Women, Women and Human Rights, Women and the Media, Women and Environment and the Girl Child and focus based on National priority on 6 themes as spelt on Sudan National Policy for Women Empowerment .

Assessment of Achievements:

First: in regards to the theme:

Women – Poverty:

Sudan is primarily an agricultural country with 67% of the Sudanese deriving their livelihood from agriculture. Agriculture constitutes about two-third of employment opportunities and supplies approximately 60% of the raw materials needed by the industrial sector.

Women contributes in the agricultural sector with a high percentage 87.8% compared to 70% for males, particularly in rural areas. Women's work is focused on productivity projects of multiple forms at a small scale for family livelihood and subsistence. That prompts the need to review interventions to facilitate provision of assistance, means, training and full utilization of mechanized firmly facilities so that they may increase their

productivity range. Among the mechanisms followed is collective farming groups.

The Sudan Central Bank has formed a Micro-Finance Unit with the objective of encouraging and promoting social and economical banking facilities aiming towards alleviating poverty particularly in rural areas and the least developed areas, serving women in particular to enhance their living standards and to promote their economical and social status.

Achievements:

❖ A Strategy to Alleviate Poverty was formulated for the year 2002-2004 and currently another strategy is formulated to cover the whole of Sudan.

❖ A comprehensive policy is formulated to decrease the impact of poverty in addition to other social policies.

❖ A Micro Finance Facility for women is created in the Savings and Social Development Bank which has accomplished the following:

Targeted Groups: Women only – targeting 10,000 mainly the following categories:

- Women heading households or those who sponsor them;
- Rural women;
- Limited income'
- Students;
- Widows.

❖ Revolving Funds for Women in the Informal Sector:

- The Project is implemented in collaboration with the Sudanese Women General Union in the context of the

Bank's concern in such category of women. It aims towards the creation of job opportunities and increasing women's income in a positive and environmental friendly manner.

- Women Groups at Grass-root levels.
- Targeting women who are the bread winners of their families in residential communities – women working from home. Each group constitutes 30 women living in the same community. A supervisor is selected from amongst the group.
- The findings indicate that 95% of the aforementioned projects are run from within the confines of the households with assistance of the rest of the family members.
- Funding women associations in the corporations.
- Targeting the working women of limited income with the guarantees of their salaries.

❖ Funding Sector through National and International Organizations:

- ✓ The Bank functions in collaboration with international, local and NGOs in the micro credit field in accordance to Memorandum of Understanding utilizing endowments deposits as collaterals. It is noteworthy to mention that the bank contributes substantially in such funds amounting to 60% of deposited funds by the entity of concern. Women comprise more than 60% of the beneficiaries.
- ✓ A Comprehensive Strategy to address Graduates unemployment, both males and females was translated into a four year short term program (2005-2008). It is directed towards a number of areas, among these three serves –

productive families' projects which are: policy intervention, small scale projects through Graduates' Fund and Community Partnerships. A Fund was established to finance graduates' projects with a Statute passed by Sudan Central Bank.

- ✓ A Model Bank of Sudan Micro-credit Fund was established. Through this 854 projects were implemented and the beneficiaries are 5524 graduates both males and females with a total cost of 3,027,295 Sudanese Pounds.
- ✓ The number of beneficiaries who utilized the Productive Employment and Graduates Fund for the year 2008 reached 7961 graduates with expenditure reaching 26.3 million Sudanese Pounds. The number of graduates recruited in the Technical Certificate Program reached 2223 Graduates.
- ✓ The total expenditure through the Social Fund for the year 2008 reached 1.5 milliard Sudanese Pounds contributed by the Almsgiving Fund (Zakat), National Pension Fund, National Fund for Social Insurance.
- ✓ The Almsgiving Fund reached 362 million pounds with expenditure reaching 93% of total collection per year with an increase of 9.4% than the year 2007. The beneficiary families are 1,955,000.
- ✓ The total social support for pensioners is 46.55 million Sudanese Pounds the beneficiaries are 93,043 pensioners covering treatment, students' grants, grants for excellent students, orphans' funds and miscellaneous support. 107,015 pensioners a 62% of the total number benefited from the Health Insurance Program.

- ✓ A number of Social Development Centers for Women have been formed, some of them were transformed into Community Colleges upon the initiative of the Ministry in collaboration with the competent authorities and some of them changed into Women and Family Development Centers. The centers carry on activities in the area of training women and raising cultural awareness in various fields. It also aims towards allocating productivity and marketing opportunities to enable women enhance their social and economical status and their contribution in development. New curricula and syllabus have been prepared by specialists under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Higher Education. It was adopted, printed and distributed. TOT training was conducted on such syllabus.
- ✓ Bank Funding was increased for social development with a ceiling of 10% to 12%. A Funding Facility was created for mitigating funding' risk.
- ✓ Sudanese Women Business and Employers' Federation (SWBEF) was established as part of the Sudanese Businessmen and Employers' Federation. Its membership comprises a number of women representing industrial and commercial sectors. SWBEF is a member of the Arab Women Business Chamber.
- ✓ Projects for alleviating poverty were established in collaboration with States' Ministries of Social Affairs.
- ✓ A sustainable mechanism for micro finance for families in the State of concern. This mechanism is supported by the State's endowment funds acting as collaterals. The Bank

contributes in the implementation of Families' Projects with 60% of the deposited funds of the Ministry of concern. Several projects have been implemented with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Child Affairs (MOSW) and the State's ministries of Social Affairs. Women comprise 70% of the beneficiaries.

- ✓ Banks secure a 12% of its ceilings of Credit Funds for productive families, individuals and small scale producers.
- ✓ A specialized Family Bank was established. Families and individuals are trained on the management of small scale projects (community rehabilitation).
- ✓ National Development Plans have been implemented targeting families and communities.
- ✓ The programmes for conflict stricken areas have been implemented in (Al Salam and Community Development Projects.)
- ✓ Raising Awareness programmes for families and communities regarding micro-credit have been implemented.
- ✓ Intermediary Funding Institution have been established to serve families with micro –credit (Micro-Credit Unit).
- ✓ The Strategy to address unemployment of graduates have been implemented within the Agricultural Renaissance Projects. About 20,000 graduates both males and females have benefited from such programme.
- ✓ Abu Halima Incubator for Agricultural Projects and transforming industries with funding of 1.5 million Sudanese Pounds, allocated from Almsgiving Fund (Zakat). Visibility studies for partnership projects have been finalized.

- ✓ The House Ownership Project for Families and Individuals through Payment Plans have been implemented.
- ✓ Under the Project “Shades of Shadow” five hundred homes have been constructed in Kassala for flood affected Gash area residents, the beneficiaries are mainly orphans.
- ✓ The High Council for Agricultural Revival was established chaired by the First Vice President of the Republic. It constitutes seven units among these Alleviation of Poverty and Employment Opportunities Unit. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Child Affairs is the Ministry charged with such Unit.
- ✓ The Objective of this Unit is to promote the micro-finance to increase productivity power; to serve as insurer for producers against natural risks; upgrading and developing the traditional sector to consider them as new opportunities for investment.
- ✓ The Village Information, Services and Agricultural Funding Center is established.
- ✓ A Three Day Workshop on Marketing Problems for Productive Families implemented in collaboration with League of Arab States (with participation of 15 countries).
- ✓ A symposium was conducted on “Opportunities and Challenges of Microfinance – Emphasis on Graduates’ Use and Operations.
- ✓ The production of a Documentary Film on Women and Development – reflecting the performance of productive employment and use and operations of graduates. A second Documentary Film on the role of the Project on the eradication of illiteracy and social guidance.

- ✓ Training courses in the field of nutritional industries in addition to the organization and implementation of a number of training courses in the field of Proposal Writing, Gender Sensitive Budgeting.
- ✓ Conducting surveys to identify gender gaps and disparities in government's overall policies in collaboration with the Central Bureau of Statistics – pilot project.
- ✓ Preparing an Evaluation study for specialized social centers in all states of Sudan.
- ✓ Preparing a study entitled “the Social and Economical Impact of Sudan’s Membership in WTO”.
- ✓ Preparing syllabus for social guidance and a Training Manual for Enhancing Small Scale Projects.

Obstacles:

1. Scarcity of resources due to economical sanctions imposed against Sudan.
2. Burden of debts on Sudan that negatively affects alleviation of poverty programs.
3. Challenges of globalization and integration in the world's economy.
4. The tendency of investments' policies on large scale projects as compared to average and small scale projects where women contribute most.

Second:

Women and Education Theme:

- Girls education was promoted in the recent year indicated by the increasing number of girls enrolled. 1.8 million girls enrolled

compared to 2.1 million for boys. Thus the enrollment rate for both genders is in the range of 57.4%-65.7%. Latest studies indicated that the negative traditional practice play a considerable role in perpetuating the gap in addition to other factors such as the distant educational institutions from residence in some rural areas and the stereotype role of girls in doing domestic household activities.

- The gender gap is vividly clear in the average of 8.3% and still constitutes a challenge (Sources: the Executive Programme for the National Population Policy).
- As regards Secondary Education the official data of the Ministry of Public Education indicates that the total children enrolled for the targeted age groups is 25.9 percent for both males and females. This means that the gap has been closed. Nevertheless, the gender gap still persists outside the Secondary Education for both technical and academic fields.
- Despite the increase in number of females in all the educational stages especially the higher education where girls are outnumbering boys.
- School admission of nomadic children increased from a low 20% to 70% for the year 2011 and to 100% education projection for all in 2015, with the creation of 720 mobile schools and 352 movable schools.
- In Sudan there are many tangible achievements in regard to women education – assessment has identified certain areas that need intervention.
- The programme components and its activities include raising the enrollment rate of women to 71% with a pre-requisite of

construction of 252 schools with boarding houses and 1400 classrooms for females and the availability of 00 school uniforms to ensure continuity of girls in education.

- Raising the rate of nomadic children's to 70% which requires allocating 250 mobile schools and hiring 3600 teachers.
- Challenges:
 - ✓ Lowering both functional and alphabetical which is considerably high taking into consideration efforts exerted in this field.
 - ✓ Addressing dropout rates for girls especially in rural areas and narrowing the gap between females and males through applying the principles of compulsory basic education, raising the capacity of girls' schools and preventing dropout rates.
 - ✓ The declining quality of education providers which necessitate improving teachers' performance through expanding training opportunities.

Third:

Women and Health:

- ✓ Maternal mortality rate is still high and appalling. It varies across war stricken and the natural disastrous regions. This is indicated in the increasing number of internally displaced people. Such situations had an impact on the health conditions due to the weak infrastructure of the health system influenced by lack of services in rural areas. (Sources: National Strategy to Combat FGM).
- ✓ Lowering maternal mortality rate Strategy.
- ✓ Women Coalition to Fight Fistula.

Al Bir Wal Tawasul Organization (NGO) has established a hospital for delivery and Fighting Fistula in Kordofan. Insurance coverage reached a 34% rate of the targeted group in addition to the support of Almsgiving for the poor. The organization made health services accessible to the targeted women at child bearing age.

Fourth:

Women in Power and Decision Making:

Successful Policies, Legislative Change and Programmes:

The Interim National Constitution of Sudan 2005 states in Article 32:

(1) that "the State shall guarantee equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights, including the right to equal pay for equal work and other related benefits."

(2) The State shall promote women rights through affirmative action."

The INC further provided that "(E)very citizen shall have the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs through voting . . . ", The right to elect and be elected in periodic elections through universal adult suffrage in secret ballot, which shall guarantee the free expression of the will of the electorate."

Sudanese women are among the first in the African region to enjoy the right to vote since 1954 and the right to be elected in 1968. The number of women parliamentarians grew to 85 women with an 18.7% rate. Women's participation in election increased a few

27.9% rate during the 1968 Election to 71% during the 2000 Election.

In the Judiciary seven women were appointed to the Supreme Court, one woman was elected as Justice to the Constitutional Court out of nine Justices. The Constitutional Court that was formed in pursuance to the previous Sudan Constitution of 1998 was re-established in pursuance to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and as provided for in Article 119 (1) of the Interim National Constitution (INC) 2005. Women judges serve in the Appellate Court and about 70 judges serve in the different hierarchies of the Lower Courts. Two women judges served at the highest echelon as Head of the Judiciary Bureau of Khartoum and Khartoum North and three First Class Judges served as supervisors of the major three courts in Khartoum State.

In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nine women were promoted as ambassadors and fourteen were promoted as plenipotentiaries with a 4% increase. Women in the position of diplomats grew to forty five with a 15% increase.

Fifth: Women and Human Rights:

The Sudanese laws guarantee gender equity and equality and reaffirm the principles of equity, equality and non-discrimination. The INC includes the Bill of Rights a land mark achievement issued for the first time in Sudan's history. In Article 15(2) it states that "the State shall protect motherhood and women from injustice, promote gender equality and the role of women in the family, and empower them in public life." And according to Article 27 "the Bill

of Rights is a covenant among the Sudanese people and between them and their governments at every level and a commitment to respect and promote and respect human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Constitution. It is the cornerstone of social justice, equality and democracy in the Sudan."

Furthermore, INC considered all rights and freedoms enshrined in international human rights treaties, covenants and instruments that are ratified by the Republic of Sudan as being integral part of the Bill. This is provided for in Article 27 (3) that all rights and freedoms enshrined in international human rights treaties, covenants and instruments ratified by the Republic of Sudan shall be an integral part of this Bill."

Sudan is a party to the most important core human rights instruments such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR- accession date: 18 March 1986); the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights (ICCPR-accession date: 18 March 1986); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC-Accession Date 1990) and all its Protocols; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Racial Discrimination (ICERD-Accession Date: 1977); Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (signed on 30 March 2007); Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Accession Date 22 February 1974); Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Accession Date 13 October 2003); all the Geneva Conventions and their Protocols which Sudan has acceded to in 13 September 2006; Sudan is a party to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (signed

in 3 September 1982 and ratified by 18 February 1986); Convention on the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (Signed on 10 September 1969 and ratified on 24 December 1972. It is noteworthy that the rights and freedoms enshrined in the above-mentioned instruments comprise the whole if not the predominant rights.

Sudan is adhering and conforming to the above commitments besides other global consensus and regional instruments, covenants and declarations at the International, African and Arab levels. In the area of employment, Sudan ratified the Convention concerning Forced or Compulsory labor (18 Jun 1957), Equal Remuneration Convention (22 October 1970), Abolition of Forced Labor Convention (22 October 1970), Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) convention (22 October 1970), Employment Policy Convention (22 October 1970), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (30 March 2007) and other ILO conventions. These employment-related conventions have been reflected at the domestic level legislations in their entirety. Sudanese women enjoy equal opportunities with men at all levels of positions. Efforts have been realized by the government to increase the number of women in decision making positions, and to bridge the gap through affirmative measures adopted since the early nineties with the National Policy for the Advancement of Women and the National Comprehensive Strategy 1992.

Reform Process Law:

After the conclusion of the CPA and issuance of the INC several Law Reform Committees were formed to revise the laws and

legislations in order to ensure conformity with the INC. There was a Law Reform Committee already in place in the Ministry of Justice that was mandated to carry on the responsibility of compliance with the INC. Several laws were issued in accordance to its findings including the amendment of the Nationality Act which allowed women to confer nationality on their children borne from a foreign father. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Child Affairs has in its turn formed a Law Reform Committee tasked with the responsibility of reviewing laws and legislations related to women in order to ensure conformity with the INC and identify new bills. The membership of the Committee included in addition to the Ministries of concern, other stakeholders such as the Sudan BAR Association, UNMIS, UN Agencies, civil society and NGOs.

The Committee reviewed *inter alia* the Criminal Act 1991, the Criminal Procedure Act 1991, the Evidence Act 1994, the Election Bill proposed at that time, the Family Act 1991. The findings of the Committee were pivotal in ensuring a 25% quota for women in the Election Act that was passed in 2008.

The INC 2005 provided for the establishment of several commissions in implementation of the CPA's commitments. The following commissions were created:

1. The National Constitutional Review Commission. (Article 140)
2. The National Civil Service Commission. (Article 137)
3. The National Judicial Service Commission
4. The Non-Muslims Rights Special Commission. (Article 157)
5. The National Election Commission Act 2009 (Article 141).

The Commissions' membership is open for all Sudanese who are competent, non-partisan and impartial members and have generally adopted an inclusive approach taking into considerations gender balance and geographical origins of the members.

Part Three:

Institutional Mechanism for the Advancement of Women:

Due to the State's Commitment towards women's empowerment and achieving equality, a number of official structures and mechanisms have been put in place to ensure strengthening women's participation and integration in the public affairs . A number of unions, associations, Non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations have been founded as effective mechanisms to attain wide participatory roles for women in all fields and as a means of facilitating the release of their energies as an organized and powerful force in all areas of life. In this context the following institutions have been formed:

Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Child Affairs:

In accordance to the Republican Decree No. 34 for the Year 2005, the functions and responsibilities of the Federal Ministries were identified. The Directorate of Women and Family Affairs within the MOSW was mandated to design and implement the strategies related to women and gender affairs at the national level.

Powers of the Directorate as set out in the Republic Decree No. 34 for the Year 2005:

- Formulating general policies in the field of women, family Affairs.
- Designing strategies, plans and programmes in the field of social welfare as relates to motherhood and childhood at the national level.
- Proposing National Bills regulating women and family affairs, welfare of the mothers and children and strengthening women role. Coordinate, cooperate with national associations and organizations, and institutions active in the field of women and child affairs .

1. The National Committee for the Advancement of Women:

The National Committee for the Advancement of Women is an advisory Committee formed in pursuance to the Ministerial Decree No. 12 for the Year 2003. Its membership is comprised of 45 individuals representing all sectors, institutions and civil society organizations of concern to women and chaired by the Federal Minister of Social Welfare, Women and Child Affairs. The Committee's underlying principles are based on Sudan's national, regional and international commitments and the principles of promoting and strengthening the national fabric of society. It is tasked with policy advice and proposing the overall general plans and strategies including the adoption of Legislative Bills for strengthening women advancement.

This Committee endorsed the National Policy for Women Advancement and has been designated as the incumbent mechanism for its Monitoring and Evaluation. The Committee furthermore is tasked with the formation of technical committees

whenever deemed necessary to act on a specific field related to women.

Mechanisms in the Sectoral Ministries:

A number of Women and gender Units have been created in the Sectoral Ministries including Health, Justice, Foreign Affairs, Labor, Education, Agriculture, Finance, Industry and the Central Statistical Bureau. These Units are focal points as coordinating mechanisms mainstreaming gender in the sectoral plans and strategies.

Women Mechanisms in the Higher Educational Institutions:

These mechanisms include "Women Studies and Research Institutions such as "Women Unit in the Development Studies Institute of University of Khartoum", "Institute of Women, Gender and Development Studies (IWGDS) of Ahfad University, Omdurman Islamic University, International University of Africa, Sudan University for Science and Technology , Juba University, Azhari University and others. These institutes are vital in conducting research and studies related to women in various fields.

These institutes assist through their various studies and research that are taken into consideration in the evaluation of the implemented programmes, projects capacity building and training programs for the staff .

Mechanisms in the Financial Institutions:

These are the Women Development Departments within the Financial and Banking institutions such as those in Omdurman

National Bank- Bint Khuwailid Branch, Al Baraka Bank- Al Zahra'a Branch, Agricultural Bank, Savings and Social Development Bank and The Family "Al Usra" Bank. Through these departments the Ministry is capable of making a follow-up of the Poverty Alleviation Projects and the specialized microfinance allocated for women projects.

Women Mechanism in the States:

Women and gender units in the states and the coordinating committees at the Ministries of Social Affairs are considered the mechanisms charged with the implementation of the National Policy at the States' level. It presents periodic reports to the Women and Family Affairs Directorate at the Federal level. The appointment of Governors' Women Advisors have been instrumental in inducing change and integrating gender in the states' policies. This is also in addition to the formation of the Higher Council Women and Child Affairs as another important mechanism.

Civil Society Organizations:

- With their shared vision for voluntary work underpin efforts in the area of humanity, social and economic fields; in their endeavor to attain comprehensive development. Women civil society organizations are considered one of the most effective mechanisms in the implementation of State's strategies and policies through true partnership to attain measurable achievement for the promotion of women.

- The INC 2005 has guaranteed peaceful assembly and the right for both women and men to form associations for political, social, economical, trade or professional unions without discrimination as to race, religion or place of birth.
- Women enjoy the membership of many trade, social and cultural unions and organizations; and enjoy special unions such as Women Lawyers Association, Business Women Federation, Media Women Association among other organizations formed by women.
- Recently women associations and organizations increased to a level that can be considered a big boost for women empowerment in addition to networking for women active in the field of Family Affairs, Combating HIV/AIDS, Microfinance and other fields. Among the leading organizations is the Sudanese Women General Union a national voluntary organization