Re-Building Sudan
AFTER THE WAR

SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

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CHAPTER 31

Can Sudan Achieve the United Nations 2030 Agenda

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ABSTRACT

PURPOSE: Using Sudan's Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2025 submitted to the United Nations (UN), this chapter aims to quantify Sudan's SDGs performance, showing where strong progress exists and where further policy actions are needed.

DESIGN/METHODOLOGY/APPROACH: Sudan's VNR assesses development performance using quantitative and qualitative data, aligning national priorities with SDG targets. Sudan's available indicators and national statistics are used to evaluate whether Sudan has achieved, is on-track, moderately off-track, seriously off-track, or showed no progress towards achieving the goals.

FINDINGS: According to the analysis, not a single goal has been fully met with sustained performance and monitoring in place. No noticeable progress has been made and Sudan is not close to achieving any targets. Therefore, Sudan has not **Achieved** any of the 17 SDGs, nor is the country **On-Track** to achieve any of the UN 17 SDGs.

ORIGINALITY/VALUE: The findings of this chapter present Sudan's progress across the 17 SDGs, with ratings assigned to each goal based on Sudan's VNR report's findings. The ratings reflect the extent of progress made, highlight areas where challenges have been addressed, and identify those that remain unresolved.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS: Based mainly on Sudan's VNR 2025 report (secondary data) and due to incomplete or inconsistent data, some assessments rely on proxy indicators or qualitative descriptions of progress. The research faced data gaps and several methodological challenges.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS: Guides policy-makers, investors, and producers.

KEYWORDS: *Sustainable Development; United Nations; Agenda 2030; Sustainable Development Goals; Sudan; Re-Building; War; Strategy; Public Policy; SDGs; Voluntary National Reviews; VNRs.*

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INTRODUCTION

Sudan has faced profound development challenges alongside periods of reform and resilience. Prior to the outbreak of conflict in April 2023, Sudan had been making gradual progress towards the United Nations **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SD)** and its **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** through poverty reduction initiatives, education and health reforms, environmental protection, and infrastructure investments. However, the war that began on 15 April 2023 severely disrupted this progress, displacing millions, destroying vital infrastructure, and reversing many development gains. Despite these setbacks, Sudan remains committed to recovery and sustainable development, as reflected in its third Voluntary National Review (VNR) (2020-2024) and the 2024 Post-Conflict Reconstruction Vision. These prioritise rebuilding the economy, restoring essential services, and supporting vulnerable populations such as internally displaced persons, women, and persons with disabilities.

SUDAN VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW (VNR)

The VNR is a self-assessment process through which the United Nation's (UN) Member States review and report on their progress in implementing the UN 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs. These reviews are **voluntary, country-led, and inclusive,** allowing each nation to share experiences, identify challenges, and highlight best practices.

In July 2025, the Government of Sudan submitted formally Sudan's third VNR to the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). In doing so, Sudan is one of only three countries from the Arab countries and only eight countries from Africa who successfully submitted their VNRs in 2025.

Sudan's VNR 2025 was presented against the backdrop of the devastating conflict that erupted on 15 April 2023, when the Rapid Support Force (RSF) launched large-scale attacks against the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), resulting in widespread destruction and the displacement of more than eleven million people, approximately a quarter of the population. The war has severely damaged critical infrastructure, disrupted essential services, and reversed much of the country's earlier progress towards the UN SDGs. Despite these challenges, the VNR demonstrates Sudan's continued commitment to recovery and SD. Developed through extensive consultations with federal and subnational authorities and civil society, it assesses the conflict's impact on SDGimplementation and outlines national efforts to rebuild the economy, restore services, and support vulnerable populations in line with the 2020-2024 review period and the 2024 Post-Conflict Reconstruction Vision.

Our analysis of Sudan's VNR 2025 helps to quantify Sudan's SDGs performance, showing where strong progress exists and where further policy actions are needed.

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OVERALL PROGRESS

According to the analysis, not a single goal has been fully met with sustained performance and monitoring in place. No noticeable progress has been made and Sudan is not close to achieving any targets. Therefore, Sudan has not **Achieved** any of the 17 SDGs, nor is the country **On-Track** to achieve any of the UN 17 SDGs.

Table 1 presents Sudan's progress across the SDGs that are Severely Off-Track (SDGs 1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 16) with very little advancement; major gaps persist. The table presents the details of these SDGs, highlighting the justification for the assessment of the progress; the challenges identified from the report; progress/solutions; and the unsolved challenges.

Table 1: SDG Progress Scoring

SDG1: No Poverty	
Justification	- Minimal progress achieved overall. Cash transfers delivered to some vulnerable and extremely poor families. Coverage remains limited. - Significant expansion and stronger interventions needed to reach more people.
Challenges	- Poverty has risen sharply in 2023 and 2024. - Displacement and economic contraction are key drivers. - Poverty rate increased from 67.4% (2022) to 79.8% (2023). Further rise expected to 86.2% (2024). - Majority of Sudanese population now living in poverty. - Floods in 2024 affected 4 million hectares (41% of cropland) and damaged houses and livelihoods.
Progress/ Solutions	- Sudan formulated a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) for 2021-2023 to reduce poverty nationwide. - Government implemented economic reforms in 2021-2022 to tackle poverty. - Social protection programmes existed, including cash transfers, medical support, National Health Insurance Fund, and National Pension and Social Insurance Fund. - After initial decline due to the conflict, social protection expenditure began to recover in 2024 (from 2.5% to 3.7% of revenue).
Unsolved Challenges	- Poverty rate increased from 46.5% in 2009 to an estimated 86.2% in 2024. - Conflict since 2023 disrupted poverty reduction efforts and aid programmes. - Negative economic growth, high inflation (47.8% → 188% from 2023-2024), and large-scale displacement worsened poverty. - Decline in government resources reduced social protection expenditure drastically in 2023 (from 9-7% to 2.5% of revenue). - Loss of assets, employment, and income due to conflict further aggravated poverty levels.

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SDG 3: Good Health and Well Being	
Justification	- Very limited; some health facilities and services may still be operational in safer areas, allowing minimal access to care.
Challenges	- Deliberate attacks on health facilities and infrastructure by militias. - Over 30% of hospitals destroyed; some repurposed as military bases. - More than 50% of kidney dialysis centres out of service. - Loss of about 70% of specialised services and equipment for cancer, cardiac, pediatric surgery, and diagnostics. - Destruction and looting of the Central Medical Supplies Corporation, private pharmaceutical factories, pharmacies, and cold chains (including vaccines and insulin). - Attacks on ambulances and health workers; seizure of the National Health Laboratory. - Loss of 30% of routine health information due to destroyed electronic servers. - Deterioration in health indicators, including maternal and child mortality. - Reduced vaccine coverage and health service availability and increased exposure to disease outbreaks (measles, polio, cholera, malaria, dengue) due to IDP surge and collapse of sanitation.
Progress/ Solutions	- Maternal and child health improved, increased health facility coverage. Deployment of trained community health workers and midwives to improve access, especially in rural/conflict-affected areas. Mobile clinics deployed with international support. - Expanded immunisation coverage. Control measures for TB, HIV, malaria, cholera, and dengue. - National Health Recovery and Reform Policy adopted (aligned with SDG 3). - National Medical Supply Fund developed a 5-year strategy including emergency supply plans.
Unsolved Challenges	- Conflict-related destruction: 70% of health facilities in conflict states (30% nationally) partially or fully non-functional. Damage to National Public Health Laboratory, Central Blood Bank, National Medical Supplies Fund, and specialised hospitals. Looting of pharmaceutical factories, cold chains (vaccines, insulin), and ambulances. Loss of 30% of routine health data (DHIS2 system). - Limited equitable and sustainable healthcare access. - Achieving universal health coverage. Strengthening health system resilience to emergencies and shocks.

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SDG5: Gender Equality	
Justification	- Some humanitarian services and safe spaces may still operate, providing limited support for women and Gender Based Violence (GBV) survivors. - Awareness and reporting of GBV have increased, potentially improving access to assistance for survivors.
Challenges	- Over 5 million girls deprived of education due to conflict. - Attacks on healthcare facilities and workers limit access to life-saving services, especially for pregnant women. - About 1.63 million women of reproductive age lack adequate healthcare. - Sharp increase in GBV as a tactic of war; number of survivors seeking services rose by 288% since December 2023. - Female-headed households disproportionately affected by food insecurity (64% vs 48% in male-headed households).
Progress/ Solutions	- Economic empowerment programmes (2020-2022): Savings and Social Development Bank and Family Bank implemented project financing and capacity-building programmes for women. - Rural women projects and community-targeted programmes implemented in 11 states affected by militia attacks. - Preparation of the second executive plan for implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 linking gender equality to peace and security.
Unsolved Challenges	- Programmes targeting women interrupted due to insecurity and displacement. - Women constitute over half of IDPs, facing limited access to clean water and essential services. - Increased GBV and other harmful practices. - Reduced coverage of women by empowerment programmes due to conflict.
SDG8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	
Justification	- GDP contraction slowed from 1.6% in 2020 to 0.8% in 2022. - Agriculture, livestock, and services sectors contributed to modest recovery. - Gold exports supported foreign exchange and government revenues.

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Challenges	- Militia attacks affected all economic sectors: agriculture, industry, services, and energy. - Agriculture production declined due to scarcity of fuel, improved seeds, fertilisers, and disrupted supply chains. - Industrial growth fell by 26%; many factories destroyed or operating at reduced capacity. - Services sector contracted by 38% in 2023 and -11% in 2024 due to disrupted trade, banking, communications, and government services. - Urban displacement: 31% of households relocated from pre-conflict locations. - Job losses widespread; most firms laid off staff (20%) or placed them on unpaid leave (47%). - Unemployment projected to exceed 45% by end of 2024. - Women disproportionately affected; pre-conflict female unemployment over twice male rate. - Proportion of urban households with no income rose from 1.6% pre-conflict to 18%.
Progress/ Solutions	- GDP contraction slowed from 1.6% in 2020 to 0.8% in 2022. - Agriculture, livestock, and services sectors contributed to modest recovery. - Gold exports supported foreign exchange and government revenues.
Unsolved Challenges	- GDP shrank by 30% in 2023 and 13% in 2024, far below SDG target of 7% annual growth. - Agriculture, industry, and services remain severely disrupted. Oil sector remains non-operational in many areas. - Widespread job losses and lack of access to income-generating opportunities. - Scarcity of critical inputs and services continues to hinder economic recovery. - Large-scale urban displacement disrupts labour markets and access to basic services.
SDG9: Industry Innovation and Infrastructure	
Justification	- Prioritised agro-industries and food processing to boost economic growth and employment (2020-2022). Efforts to address pre-conflict challenges: power cuts, weak infrastructure, and scarcity of imported inputs.
Challenges	- Conflict-related destruction: 66% of factories in Khartoum destroyed or heavily damaged; 20% moderately damaged. - Remaining factories closed due to security concerns; few operating at reduced capacity or relocated. - Loss of raw materials due to power disruptions, looting, or destruction. - Industrial sector growth negative; GDP share unchanged.

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Progress/ Solutions	- Some pre-conflict measures implemented to strengthen the industrial sector. - Planning reforms for modernisation, technology-intensive industries, and improved operational efficiency initiated. - Legal and regulatory frameworks being prepared (Organisation and Development of Industries law, improved PPP law).
Unsolved Challenges	- Large-scale rehabilitation and modernisation of industrial areas required. - Need to establish technology-intensive industries to improve productivity. - Strengthen quality control, standards, and manufacturing efficiency. - Promote small- and medium-scale enterprises and improve private sector regulatory environment. - Rebuilding investor confidence and resuming industrial operations remain critical challenges.
SDG11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	
Justification	- Some buildings and institutions may remain partially intact and could serve as foundations for reconstruction. - Awareness of cultural losses may attract international support for heritage protection and restoration.
Challenges	- Metropolitan Khartoum, home to 20% of Sudan's population, heavily affected by conflict. - Over 3 million people displaced from Khartoum (31% of total IDPs in Sudan). - High number of deaths and widespread destruction of homes, government buildings, banks, factories, businesses, markets, and services. - Other cities including Medani, El Fasher, El Obeid, and Nyala also damaged and severe destruction of cultural heritage: museums, libraries, art exhibitions, historical buildings looted or destroyed. - UNESCO reports unprecedented risk to Sudanese cultural heritage, including National Museum, Ethnographic Museum, Natural History Museum, Military Museum, Republican Palace Museum, and several regional museums. - Partial damage to historic university and government buildings; National Records Office and National Library affected.

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Progress/ Solutions	- UNESCO conducted risk and damage assessments of World Heritage Sites (Gebel Barkal, Napatan Region, Island of Meroe). - Endangered museum collections secured, packed, evacuated to safe locations, inventoried, and digitised with support from UNESCO and the British Council. - Heritage Emergency Fund mobilised to protect Sudan's World Heritage components. - National Council for Urban Development prepared a five-year plan (2022-2027) titled "*Towards a Comprehensive and Sustainable Urban Plan".* - Developing a national strategy for IDP reintegration within the *Urban Development Strategy (2025-2050)*.
Unsolved Challenges	- Extensive looting and destruction of museums, heritage sites, and private collections (National Museum, Khalifa House, Nyala, El Fasher, Al Geneina, etc.). - Smuggling of priceless archaeological artifacts and manuscripts. - Partial destruction of University of Khartoum, Republican Palace, and National Records Office. - Continued military activities threatening World Heritage sites. - Limited resources and security to ensure full restoration and protection. - Need for comprehensive recovery funding and international co-operation for cultural reconstruction and preservation.
SDG12: Responsible Consumption and Production	
Justification	- Environmental laws and regulations exist, including bans on plastic bags and measures to regulate mercury use in gold mining, although enforcement remains weak. - Some initiatives were undertaken pre-conflict to improve solid waste management and raise environmental awareness.
Challenges	- Mercury contamination from artisanal gold mining causing severe environmental and health hazards. - Weak enforcement of environmental laws, especially plastic use and waste management. - Conflict-related pollution: toxic materials from explosives, damaged buildings, and looted laboratories. - Accumulated solid and medical waste in urban centres, particularly Khartoum. - Collapse of waste collection systems (efficiency dropped from 79.5% to 65.9%).

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Progress/ Solutions	- Limited clean-up and assessment efforts underway in safer areas with local authorities and international partners. - Environmental monitoring and damage assessments being considered to address hazardous waste and pollution risks. - Efforts to restore waste collection systems and manage medical waste in functioning states.
Unsolved Challenges	- Lack of capacity and resources for environmental clean-up and hazardous waste management. - No systematic removal of war debris mixed with toxic materials. - High medical and military waste volumes remain unaddressed. - Absence of a national environmental recovery plan to mitigate post-conflict pollution and restore safe living conditions.
SDG16: Peace, Justice and Institutions	
Justification	- Government and partners initiated birth registration campaigns and held NCCHT meetings to combat trafficking.
Challenges	- Escalating violence, gender-based crimes, child recruitment, and weakened institutional capacity.
Progress/ Solutions	- Ongoing efforts to restore anti-trafficking operations and expand child ID issuance in displaced communities.
Unsolved Challenges	- Limited protection for civilians, stalled anti-trafficking initiatives, and incomplete civil documentation for affected populations.

Similar to Table 1 above, Table 2 below presents Sudan's limited progress with minimal improvement across the remaining SDGs that are Off-Track (SDGs 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17).

Table 2: SDGs Progress: Off-Track

SDG2: Zero Hunger	
Justification	- Some recovery in agricultural production was achieved in 2024, following a severe decline in the 2023/24 season. - Humanitarian assistance helped alleviate extreme food shortages in certain areas. - Efforts to restore agricultural activities and stabilise food supply chains began to show early signs of improvement in late 2024.

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Challenges	- Food security and malnutrition conditions deteriorated sharply due to ongoing conflict. - Militia attacks on key agricultural zones, including the Gazira Scheme, the largest irrigated project, damaged irrigation infrastructure and storage facilities. - Restricted access to farmlands and limited livestock movement in Darfur and Kordofan disrupted agricultural livelihoods. - Agricultural production dropped drastically, with grain output in 2023/24 at 4.1 million tonnes, about 40% below the five-year average. - Inflation rose dramatically from 47.8% in March 2023 to 188% in December 2024, driving up the cost of food. - The average retail price of sorghum increased by 32.6% in December 2023 (compared to early 2023) and by 114% in 2024 compared to the previous year. - Around 54% of the population faced acute food insecurity (June-September 2024), up from 24% in 2022. - Malnutrition rates reached 15% in 24 localities and up to 30% in areas under militia control in North Darfur in 2024.
Progress/ Solutions	- Agriculture production recovery (2024). - Grain production increased to 6.6 million tonnes, above the annual requirement (5.5-6 million tonnes). - Formation of a committee to rehabilitate the agriculture sector. - Nutrition and health: Ministry of Health, with international partners, provided integrated malnutrition treatment, supplementation, early detection, and expanded health coverage. - Food security strategies: Sudan prepared action tracks for the UN Food Summit: access to nutritious food, sustainable consumption, nature-positive production, equitable livelihoods, resilience to shocks.
Unsolved Challenges	- Food insecurity: 25.6 million people (54% of population) food insecure due to conflict, displacement, income loss, and inflation. - Most affected: IDPs, host communities, children, and populations in conflict-affected states (Khartoum, Gazira, Darfur, Kordofan, Blue Nile). - Agriculture limitations: Low crop yields due to weak research, low use of fertilisers and improved seeds. - Nutrition and health: GAM rate at 13.6% (under-five children), rising to 15-30% in conflict areas. 3.7 million children, pregnant and breastfeeding women in need of acute malnutrition treatment. - Conflict impact: Ongoing conflict continues to disrupt agriculture, markets, and access to inputs.

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SDG4: Quality Education	
Justification	- Some schools may still operate in safer areas, providing limited access to education. Teachers and communities in unaffected areas may continue efforts to maintain learning. Primary enrollment rose from 73.1% to 73.7%; secondary enrollment from 39.7% to 40.3%.
Challenges	- Children and teachers displaced due to conflict. - Hundreds of schools damaged; some repurposed as shelters for IDPs. - Prolonged school closures. About 17 million children (over 90% of school-age population) deprived of schooling. - Disruption of learning and risk of education system collapse. Negative impacts on education indicators, including increased dropout rates and reduced enrollment.
Progress/ Solutions	- Primary schools increased by 4% (2022 vs 2019) and 23% (2022 vs 2015). Secondary schools increased by 3% (2022 vs 2019) and 57% (2022 vs 2015). Primary school completion improved by 10%; secondary by 2.3%. - Temporary schools in IDP shelters opened. E-learning facilities introduced.
Unsolved Challenges	- RSF attacks in April 2023 devastated the sector. About 5 million children displaced; nearly 17 million out of school for two years. - Limited access to teaching and learning materials in conflict-affected areas. - Unequal access for vulnerable children (IDPs, refugees, nomadic populations, children with disabilities).
SDG6: Clean Water Sanitation	
Justification	- Some water facilities in safer areas remain operational, providing limited access. - Communities may be implementing local coping strategies to manage water shortages.
Challenges	- Deliberate attacks on water supply facilities, treatment plants, and sanitation infrastructure. - Damage to 8 water stations in Khartoum (50% of state's water production). - Golo reservoir in El Fasher and El Obeid water supply station attacked and damaged. - Rural water supply points also destroyed. - Increased pressure on existing facilities in safer areas due to IDP influx, causing shortages and contamination. - Depletion of water treatment materials. - Rising risk of waterborne diseases and decline in access to safe water and water quality.

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Progress/ Solutions	- Al Manara water station in Omdurman continued to operate despite damage, providing water to the population. - Local communities and international partners helped restore damaged water supply in several areas. - Co-ordination with health and renewable energy sectors strengthened WASH integration.
Unsolved Challenges	- Water stations, treatment plants, and sanitation facilities damaged or attacked in conflict areas. - Khartoum North plant and 8 major water stations stopped operating, affecting 22% of the population. - Solar systems looted; power shortages and fuel scarcity disrupted water operations and rural water facilities damaged; technical staff lost due to displacement.
SDG7: Affordable Clean Energy	
Justification	- Some power plants and smaller stations in safer areas may still be partially operational. - Renewable energy initiatives, although heavily affected, may provide a foundation for future reconstruction efforts.
Challenges	- Widespread attacks on electricity infrastructure by militias, targeting power plants, substations, and renewable energy projects. - Severe damage to major power plants: Khartoum North Thermal, Geri 1-4, Umdabaker, El Fasher, Geneina, El Obeid, Merowe Dam, and Jebel Aulia stations. - Extensive destruction of transformers (6,689 fully damaged, 1,714 partially damaged) and 21,289 km of transmission lines. - Looting of equipment, control rooms, fuel, solar panels, and other critical assets, and loss of about 50% of transformer substations and significant damage to renewable energy projects. - Massive reduction in population's access to electricity and clean energy, and halted progress towards electricity and renewable energy goals.
Progress/ Solutions	- Electricity staff maintained operations under extreme pressure, restoring power to many areas. - Short-term plan for 2025: Focus on stable, regular power supply and optimal generation (target: 11 million GWh).

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Unsolved Challenges	- Shortages of spare parts; security risks and movement difficulties hindered operations. - Major new projects on hold due to conflict and financing issues. - Access and reliability issues: 60% of the population lacked access to electricity as of 2022. - Rehabilitation of damaged power stations and transmission lines, procurement of transformers and mobile generation units, upgrading hydropower and thermal generation facilities, expansion of renewable energy and solar mini-grids, improvement of electricity management, monitoring, and protection systems, etc.
SDG10: Reduced Inequalities	
Justification	- Government prioritised reducing inequality in the PRSP 2021-2023 and Juba Peace Agreement. - Commitments to inclusive growth, extending the national electricity grid to western Sudan, and ensuring equitable access to basic services. - Affirmative actions planned for conflict-affected areas in livelihoods, education, and civil service employment. - Sectoral plans (education, health, social programmes) promote spatial equality and women's empowerment.
Challenges	- Exacerbated regional inequalities and deepened structural poverty. - Severe destruction of infrastructure and halted production in conflict-affected states (Darfur, South Kordofan, West Kordofan, Blue Nile). - Mass displacement about one-third from South and North Darfur. - Humanitarian access severely restricted due to violence. - Economic and social norms continue to disadvantage women. - Conflict disproportionately affected women, higher food insecurity and exposure to gender-based violence.
Progress/ Solutions	- Institutional recognition of regional and gender inequalities. - Integration of equality measures into national and sectoral plans. - Early implementation steps towards extending services and improving women's participation before the conflict.

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Unsolved Challenges	- Exacerbated regional inequalities and deepened structural poverty. - Severe destruction of infrastructure and halted production in conflict-affected states (Darfur, South Kordofan, West Kordofan, Blue Nile). - Mass displacement about one-third from South and North Darfur. - Humanitarian access severely restricted due to violence. - Economic and social norms continue to disadvantage women. - Conflict disproportionately affected women, higher food insecurity and exposure to gender-based violence.
SDG13: Climate Action	
Justification	- Some areas may remain less affected, allowing partial clean-up and containment efforts. Awareness of environmental risks could mobilise local and international support for waste management and remediation.
Challenges	- Extensive use of weapons and explosives in residential areas creating toxic waste. - Release of hazardous materials from explosives, posing risks to households and water networks. - Destruction of laboratories, hospitals, and pesticide stores causing potential chemical leaks. - Accumulation of garbage, military debris, destroyed vehicles, and building rubble. - Significant environmental health risks and long-term negative impacts on environmental indicators.
Progress/ Solutions	- Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources (HCENR) developing plans to address environmental deterioration. - Focus on climate adaptation policies and regulations to mitigate conflict impacts. - Promoting clean energy use to reduce carbon emissions. - Co-ordination with international partners underway for technical and financial support.
Unsolved Challenges	- Severe environmental degradation due to war remnants, air and water pollution, and loss of green cover. - Limited capacity and resources for environmental restoration and monitoring. - Weak enforcement of climate and environmental regulations. - High dependence on firewood and unsustainable land use persisting. - Need for long-term climate resilience planning and stronger international co-operation for environmental recovery.

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SDG14: Life Below Water	
Justification	- HCENR co-ordinated with relevant bodies to protect the Red Sea and marine resources. - Projects launched to identify coastal wetlands for inclusion in the Ramsar list and develop protective regulations. - Awareness workshops and training sessions held on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its protocols.
Challenges	- Conflict-related degradation, weak enforcement of protection laws, limited technical and financial capacity, and ongoing human activities and pollution continue to threaten Sudan's marine and coastal ecosystems.
Progress/ Solutions	- Implementation of updated biodiversity strategies and activation of national frameworks addressing conflict impacts. - Enhanced international co-operation under the CBD for marine and coastal resource protection.
Unsolved Challenges	- Conflict-related environmental degradation affecting marine and coastal ecosystems. - Weak enforcement of marine protection regulations. - Limited technical and financial capacity for monitoring and biodiversity conservation. - Human activities and pollution continue to threaten marine life and coastal habitats.
SDG15: Life on Land	
Justification	- Forests cover 12% of Sudan's land; sustainable forest management promoted. - Sustainable Natural Resources Management Project (SNRMP) implemented to link conservation with livelihoods. - REDD+ Readiness initiatives advanced to reduce emissions from deforestation.
Challenges	- Land degradation affecting 12% of land, needing integrated management. - Protected area coverage (4.6%) remains far below international targets. Deforestation driven by agriculture, fuelwood use, and infrastructure expansion, combined with weak enforcement, limited data, and low financial and technical capacity, continues to hinder biodiversity conservation in Sudan. Sustainable practices remain uneven across sectors, and poor documentation of funding further limits progress.

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Progress/ Solutions	- Integration of biodiversity values into national and local development strategies. - Ecosystem restoration and soil fertility improvement programmes ongoing. - Improving data systems for forest, mountain, and biodiversity monitoring.
Unsolved Challenges	- Deforestation from agriculture, fuelwood use, and infrastructure expansion. - Weak enforcement and limited data on invasive species, poaching, and pollution. - Low financial resources and technical capacity hinder biodiversity conservation. - Uneven implementation of sustainable practices across sectors. - Insufficient documentation of public and donor funding for biodiversity protection.
SDG17: Partnership and means of Implementation	
Justification	- Revenue-to-GDP ratio rose from 6.7% (2020) to 9.2% (2022) due to improved tax collection and electronic payment systems. - ODA increased to 4.9% of GDP in 2021 before suspension. - Reforms initiated to unify exchange rates, boosting remittances through official channels. Sudan reached the HIPC decision point in June 2021.
Challenges	- Conflict-induced economic collapse, business destruction, and tax revenue decline (revenue dropped by half in 2023). - Suspension of donor funding post-2021 coup. - Heavy reliance on humanitarian aid and informal remittance channels.
Progress/ Solutions	- Expansion of the tax base and revenue collection under MOFEP's reform plan. - Efforts to restore economic growth and resume HIPC debt relief process.
Unsolved Challenges	- Unsustainable debt (221% of GDP in 2023). - Stalled HIPC debt relief process. - Weak fiscal capacity, limited private sector recovery, and dependence on volatile aid inflows.

MAJOR CHALLENGES

According to Sudan's VNR, these are the major challenges facing the country to achieve the UN 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDG.

- **Mass displacement:** Approximately 11 million people have been internally displaced or have fled as refugees, representing around 25% of the population, placing immense pressure on host communities and social services.

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- **Infrastructure destruction:** Critical infrastructure has been extensively damaged or looted, including schools, hospitals, water and power plants, markets, roads, bridges, and cultural sites.
- **Economic collapse:** Sudan's GDP contracted sharply, with key sectors, agriculture, industry, and services declining by 15-38%. Inflation and poverty surged, while investment and employment plummeted.
- **Service disruptions:** Education, health, water and sanitation, and electricity provision were heavily disrupted. Around 70% of health facilities in conflict-affected zones became non-functional, and many schools were either closed or repurposed as shelters for internally displaced persons.
- **Humanitarian crises:** Food insecurity now affects over half of the population, with 3.7 million children under five and pregnant or breastfeeding women in need of treatment for acute malnutrition. Disease outbreaks, including cholera and measles, have intensified, alongside a marked increase in gender-based violence.
- **Fiscal constraints:** Government revenues halved in 2023, while national debt rose to 221% of GDP, severely restricting funds available for reconstruction and recovery.
- **Institutional breakdown:** State functions have largely collapsed in conflict zones, delaying co-ordination for SDG implementation and data collection. The National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking lost much of its operational capacity, and the rule of law deteriorated in areas affected by the conflict.
- **Exacerbated inequalities:** Women face disproportionately high food insecurity, with 64% of female-headed households affected compared to 48% of male-headed households. Incidences of gender-based violence have doubled for women relative to men.
- **Other challenges:** Long-standing issues persist, including chronic poverty, climate shocks such as the 2024 floods that affected approximately 4 million hectares, or 41% of cropland—and gaps in SDG data, with many indicators lacking recent figures.

NOTABLE CONTRIBUTION

The VNR 2025 for Sudan, also outlines notable progress and several contributions made by the country before the war and during the ongoing conflict period.

Pre-war progress (2020-2022):

- Poverty rate had been decelerating before the conflict.
- GDP showed slight improvement in 2022 (0.8%).
- Primary education completion increased from 61.6% to 62.2% in 2022.
- Access to improved drinking water rose to 70% of households (up from 60% in 2013).
- Steps taken to expand electricity access, although 60% of population still lacked electricity in 2022.

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Conflict-period resilience (2023-2024):

- Grain production rebounded from 4.1 million tonnes in 2023 to 6.6 million tonnes in 2024.
- Government revenue partially recovered in 2024 after halving in 2023.
- Some critical services were maintained through adaptive measures (e.g., mobile clinics, emergency schools, local governance initiatives).

Humanitarian and social measures:

- Targeted support for malnourished children and women (3.7 million) continued despiteconflict.
- Efforts to protect and maintain essential registries (e.g., birth certificates) ensured access to basic services.
- International and local partnerships helped sustain basic service delivery and relief operations in safer areas.

KEY LESSONS LEARNED

Despite the very limited progress by Sudan towards the UN SDGs, there are several key lessons to be learned from Sudan for the rest of the world. These include, but not limited to the following:

- **Inclusivity in planning:** The VNR was prepared through extensive consultations with federal and state authorities, civil society, and other stakeholders to assess the war's impact on SDGs. Inclusive reviews enable the design of resilient and context-specific strategies.
- **Integrating peace and development:** Sudan's post-conflict vision explicitly links re-construction to SDGs, recognising that sustainable development cannot proceed without security and peace, as reflected in frameworks such as UNSCR 1325 and the 2025 national plan.
- **Social protection is crucial:** Pre-war safety nets, including cash transfers and insurance for vulnerable households, mitigated poverty. During the conflict, targeted programmes such as the Mother & Child Cash Transfer and emergency response kitchens continued to provide relief, highlighting the protective value of robust social safety nets in times of shock.
- **Local and state resilience:** Safer states and local communities played a vital role at the outbreak of the crisis. Host states outside Khartoum absorbed displaced populations and maintained essential services. Empowering subnational governments with resources and autonomy strengthens continuity when central structures fail.
- **Adaptive service delivery:** During the conflict, Sudan improvised with international organisations, deploying mobile clinics, community midwives, and emergency schools to sustain basic services. Flexibility and strong community partnerships, including NGOs operating IDP kitchens, offer important lessons in resilience.

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- **Maintaining core institutions:** Sudan relocated the federal government to Port Sudan (Red Sea state) when Khartoum fell, preserving governance continuity. Emergency campaigns to protect vital records, such as birth registrations, ensured continued access to essential services, demonstrating the importance of contingency planning.
- **Transparent data and planning:** Despite the crisis, the VNR systematically documents key indicators and ongoing plans including health recovery, education transition, and climate adaptation, showing that monitoring systems and clear action frameworks are critical for prioritising resources and partnerships.
- **Mobilising partnerships:** Sudan's pre-war engagement with donors secured substantial commitments. Even as aid shifted towards humanitarian needs, diaspora networks and NGOs contributed. Diversifying partnerships across regional, international, and private-sector actors is essential for development finance, particularly during crises.
- **Addressing inequalities early:** Measures in the PRSP and Juba Peace Agreement sought to promote spatial and gender equality. The conflict's exacerbation of inequalities such as significantly higher food insecurity among female-headed household's underscores that addressing social divisions proactively enhances resilience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis of Sudan's VNR report, several recommendations can be presented here:

- **Peace and Security -** Establish lasting peace and protect civilians to create a stable environment for development.
- **Governance and Institutions -** Strengthen state institutions, ensure transparency, and maintain critical registries for resilience.
- **Economic Recovery -** Rebuild key sectors, restore employment, and ensure sustainable public finance.
- **Social Protection -** Provide safety nets and targeted support for vulnerable populations, including displaced people.
- **Education and Skills -** Rehabilitate schools, reduce dropouts, and enhance teacher training and vocational skills.
- **Health -** Restore health facilities, prioritise maternal and child care, and strengthen epidemic preparedness.
- **Water, Sanitation, and Energy -** Rehabilitate water and power infrastructure and promote renewable energy.
- **Food Security and Agriculture -** Rebuild agricultural systems, ensure access to inputs, and strengthen climate resilience.

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- **Gender Equality and Women Empowerment -** Expand women's economic, social, and political opportunities, and protect against GBV.
- **Environment and Biodiversity -** Restore ecosystems, protect cultural heritage, and promote sustainable resource management.
- **Humanitarian Response and Resilience -** Ensure equitable aid delivery and build community capacity to cope with shocks.
- **Partnerships and International Support -** Mobilise donor, diaspora, and private sector support for recovery and SDG implementation.

CONCLUSIONS

Sudan's 2025 VNR highlights that, despite pre-2023 progress in poverty reduction, education, health, and environmental management, the ongoing conflict has severely reversed SDG gains. Achieving the 2030 Agenda now depends on peace, reconstruction, and substantial external and domestic support. The post-conflict recovery vision (2024) focuses on restoring growth, public services, infrastructure, and vulnerable populations, alongside resuming debt relief and attracting investment. Success will require stabilising the country, rebuilding human capital and infrastructure, and leveraging international partnerships to ensure inclusive and resilient development.

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