

Challenges Facing Development in the Altamas Areas of Sudan

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1. Introduction

Development Economics is a new and one of the interesting branches of economics, which focuses on the study of the causes of underdevelopment and ways out of it by following certain strategies and policies. This science pays attention to the optimal allocation of scarce resources and growth with the passage of time, as well as study the interdependence between the economic structures, political and social and how to change these structures by seeking continuous improvements in the standard of living and the elimination of ignorance and backwardness.

It is well recognized that Adam Smith is the first development economists through his book "The Wealth of Nations" 1776. However, the organized writings in the field of economic development of third world countries and their problems become evidence only during the last sixty years, and particularly since the birth of many of the third world countries through obtaining political independence in the fifties and sixties of this century.

Since the end of World War II the subject of development received great interest, both at the level of the people or Governments. In addition to the growing feelings about the fact that the world has been divided between advanced rich countries and poor backward countries, rich countries with less than a fifth of the world and receive two-thirds of the world's income, and the poor countries live the tragedies of underdevelopment.

The seventies witnessed radical changes in the concept of development, as it become more inclusive than just focus on the increase in the gross national product. The narrow concept of development is no longer enough to solve the chronic problems afflicting developing countries including poverty, unemployment and justice in the distribution of national income. These goals are used as the criteria for judging the true extent of the success and failure of development policies of any country.

2. What is Development?

The definition of development has been a major area of controversy. Values are central to disputes about the definition of development – what to improve, how to improve it and who decides? However, since the 1990s development has come to be defined with a shorter horizon related to policy objectives and performance indicators (such as growth of income per capita and poverty reduction).

A common theme within most definitions is that ‘development’ encompasses ‘change’ in a variety of aspects of the human conditions. Indeed, one of the simplest definitions of ‘development’ is probably Chambers’ (2004: iii, 2–3) notion of ‘good change’, although this raises all sorts of questions about what is ‘good’ and what sort of ‘change’ matters (as Chambers acknowledges), about the role of values, and whether ‘bad change’ is also viewed as a form of development.

Development has been taken to mean different things at different times, in different places, and by different people in different professions and organisations. The dominant meanings have been those attributed by economists and used in economics.

Communities differ in their geographic and political strengths and weaknesses. Each community therefore, will have a unique set of challenges for development. But for development to be good and successful, it must be sustainable.

The questions to ask about a country’s development are therefore: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all of these three have become less severe, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result ‘development’, even if per capita income has soared (Seers, 1972: 24).

The result of good development is improvement in human welfare, quality of life, social well-being, environmental sustainability and satisfying the population’s needs and wants. Without achieving these goals it would be misleading for a country to claim successful economic development policies.

How do we assess whether development and change has occurred, and the extent to which it has occurred? Any attempt to answer these questions requires sets of statistics and other descriptive data which need to be handled in a systematic way. It is for this reason that the literature on

development indicators has prospered over the last half century, with much of the concern being with the need to treat all development indicators with caution.

3. Why Development Indicators Are Important?

Development indicators have evolved considerably since the 1960s. They are used to illustrate progress of a country in meeting a range of economic, social, and environmental goals. In most contexts, development indicators focus on factors that relate to well-being, economic productivity and the environmental sustainability of the resource base populations depend on for their livelihoods.

Indicators perform many functions. They can lead to better decisions and more effective actions by simplifying, clarifying and making aggregated information available to policy makers. They can help incorporate physical and social science knowledge into decision-making process, and they can help measure and standardize progress toward sustainable development goals. They can provide an early warning to prevent economic, social and environmental setbacks.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 recognized the important role that indicators could play in helping countries make informed decisions concerning sustainable development. At the international level, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) approved its Work Programme on Indicators of Sustainable Development in 1995. Since then they have been extensively tested, applied and used in many countries as the basis for the development of national indicators of sustainable development.

Indicators were divided along the lines of the well know four pillars (social, economic, environmental and institutional). This is no longer valid with the newly revised development indicators. This new change emphasizes the multi-dimensional nature of sustainable development and reflects the importance of integrating its four pillars.

The newly revised CSD indicators contain a core set of 50 indicators. These core indicators are part of a larger set of 96 indicators of sustainable development. The introduction of the core set helps to keep the indicator set manageable. Indicators include: Poverty (living conditions), governance (corruption, crime), health (mortality, health care delivery), education (education level, literacy), land, freshwater (water quality and water quantity), biodiversity (ecosystem), economic development (macro-economic performance and sustainable finance).

4. Background of Sudan

Sudan is the largest country in Africa with a total surface area of 2.5 million square kilometres. The country is gifted with a wealth of resources ranging from oil, a vast agricultural, and livestock resource base. The country's GDP is estimated at \$22.75 billion, but with noticeable widespread poverty and large but unmeasured proportion of the population lives on less than US\$1 per day. Sudan is known for its highly lopsided income distribution, inadequate delivery of social services and run-down infrastructure services are a few examples to mention of serious issues.

Sudan is one of the most diverse countries of the African continent with an estimated population of around 31.7 million which accommodate more than 300 tribes with more than 100 widely spoken local dialects.

Successive Sudanese governments since independence of the country in 1956 have failed to recognize the importance of this diversity as a critical factor in the process of nation building. Instead, they have abused and exploited this diversity, turning it from a source of strength into a source of diversion and violence. The result was that the entire country has become at war with itself through prolonged conflicts that arrested the country's economic and political development and risked its unity.

5. The Challenges Facing Development of the Area

There are many challenges facing future development within the Altamas areas of Sudan, and the following are a few to discuss:

5.1 Political instability

In Sudan the fundamental problem has always been governance, and since Sudan gained independence in 1956 with a temporary constitution, two issues arose which were to prevent agreement on a permanent constitution:

- 1) Whether Sudan should be a federal or unitary state, and
- 2) Whether it should have a secular or an Islamic constitution which would define the identity of Sudanese people.

Sudanese elites have long disagreed about these two fundamental issues. To some, Sudan should be associated to Arab and Muslim; to others, it should respect and accommodate all the cultures, religions and minorities within its territory.

Most of the Sudanese elites rejected the idea of federalism, seeing it as a first step towards separation, a dichotomy that came to characterize modern Sudan. In addition to the deliberately created confusion regarding Sudanese identity. Failure to achieve a federal and secular constitution therefore was seen by the South as a beginning of the North colonization of the South. This left Sudan to Islamic rulers who lacked the leadership qualities to govern a modern state system and the ability to approach solving political problems from a rational scientific manner; the qualities needed to keep the country intact, and instead, they remain committed to solving chronic political issues relying on military forces. This mentality led to the division of Sudan into the Republic of Sudan and South Sudan in 2011.

5.2 Independence of South of Sudan

Post separation challenges are many, including the conflict over border issues, the politics of oil, and the economic trade war that emerged following South Sudanese independence, to name a few. In addition, the conflict involves land rights between ethnic communities live in infringes areas that lead to increased pressure on land which is causing insecurity in many pastoral areas and will result in an increased instability and massive displacement.

The secession of South Sudan and its implications on the nomadic migration emerged as the main challenge facing nomads. Lack of access to pasture and water resources in South Sudan has forced them to keep their livestock in a limited strip of a poor pastureland north of the River (Bahr Al Arab). As a result, their livestock suffer from lack of sufficient pastures, the spread of infectious diseases and increased infestation. This situation increased the level of competition over limited resources due to the loss of grazing areas south of the Bahr al Arab.

Strategies developed by the pastoralists to sustain their livelihood security include expansion in agricultural activities, diversification of crops, selling male animals and replacing them with females and gradual settlement in urban and semi-urban areas. This is happening without appropriate planning; an approach that has been forced upon the nomad communities.

5.3 Marginalization

Marginalisation, a term that has recently become deep-rooted in the Sudanese political jargon refers to the process of exclusion of the forces of the periphery from political power sharing. The term also denotes the set of policies adopted by successive governments of Sudan since

independence in 1956 that favoured the concentration of economic activities in the centre of the country, mainly in the Northern and Central regions, thus signifying unequal wealth sharing.

Marginalisation in Sudan dates back to the Turco-Egyptian rule (1820-1885) and to the Condominium rule under Britain and Egypt (1899-1956). The Turco-Egyptian rule initiated the policies of concentrating economic development activities primarily in the center and the Anglo-Egyptian condominium pursued educational and developmental policies that resulted in unequal distribution of economic opportunities and human resource development.

As the British colonial rule prepared Sudan for independence in the late 1940s they were increasingly persuaded to listen to the demands of the riverine elites. In this respect the “Sudanisation” process implemented by the British favoured these groups and consequently they replaced the colonial officials.

Out of the eight hundred administrative posts that have been sudanised by 1954 only six were filled by people from the marginalised areas and were all from Southern Sudan. Following independence of the country, the riverine elites were best prepared to assume political control because they were better educated and above all they controlled the national economy. Consequently, emerging as the dominant group in the country they inherited political power and continued the policies of marginalising the periphery.

Key to the marginalisation process as we have noted above is the monopoly of political power by the riverine elites, which caused disproportionate power sharing between the centre and the periphery, and contributed in creating conditions of unbalanced development, widespread rural poverty and mounting grievances in the periphery regions.

5.4 The Nomad System in the Area.

What factors or conditions tend to be associated with the expansion or retraction of nomadic activity? Within any given matrix of pastures and migration tracks patterns of mobility may remain relatively stable for a time. However the war, the changes in the political conditions and environmental stress, as well as general changes in economic conditions, can lead to radical shifts in migration tracks which disturb the nomad system.

The war itself destroyed the nomad villages and disrupted their lifestyle and forces many nomads to abandon their way of life and return to urban or semi-urban centres. They became consumers

instead of producers and fail to integrate in the urban communities. The main question is: Are they able to go back to their original villages when times come?

Many questions to be raised regarding the future of nomadism in the area: is this system good for the nomad communities? Is it sustainable? Were previous settlement proposals appropriate and sufficient in providing the needed services to the nomads? What are the issues and obstacles that nomad people have to deal with in order to move on with their lives? Are there any other options for the nomads? What do nomad people say about their system? These questions require an in-depth debate and dialogue with the nomads themselves, as they are the only qualified people to address them.

5.5 Disparity in Economic Diversity and Activities

As a result of the imbalanced development policies the centre has become the focus of economic activities while the periphery has been largely ignored. Regional biases in the Sudan are also evident from the distribution of development expenditures. The following table illustrates regional development expenditure in the Sudan during the period 1996-2001. As could be seen, the period has been marked by huge disparities in the distribution of development expenditure as Khartoum alone accounted for 75% of the total development expenditure while the share of Darfur and Kordofan were 2% each. The centre and the North accounted for 89% of the total development expenditure while the share of all marginalised areas in Northern Sudan accounted for 11 per cent only.

Table No. 1: Regional Development Expenditure, 1996-2001, in millions of Dinars

Region/Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Total Development Expenditure	Population 2003 in Million
Northern	121.3	368.5	763.8	823.6	1402.4	659.6	4139.21	1.568
Central	340.8	634.5	1788.1	806.9	492.1	NA	4062.4	7.251
Khartoum	4351	6477	11461	13355.5	3313	5740.6	44698.8	5.352
Kordofan	14.6	122	265.2	302.1	164.6	175.2	1043.7	3.895
Darfur	168.3	433	169.9	350.6	12.8	NA	1134.8	6.360
Eastern	614.1	741	580.1	1117	922.6	413.3	4388.6	3.937

Source: Ministry of Finance and National Economy, National Accounts Directorate General, United Nations Population Fund, Sudan, 2003.

5.6 Abolition of Native Administration System

Historically, tribal chiefs were key actors in the governance structures through performing advisory role to the government in matters relating to the administration of their tribes as well as the administration of the region and in maintaining security, performing judiciary roles, collecting taxes, and contributing in resolving tribal disputes. As an institution that contributed in managing conflicts in the region, Native Administration (NA) has been deliberately weakened by the central authorities.

It was formally abolished in 1971, when the local government act was enacted but the government's dismantling of NA shifted the burden of traditional conflict resolution and tribal land governance to a weak local administration system that terribly failed to fill the resulting vacuum. Despite being reinstated in 1987, the NA system was not empowered to play its traditional role effectively. Numerous reasons contributed to this, including the limited powers granted to tribal chiefs and unclear legislative frameworks. In 1995 the central authorities introduced a new parallel NA system known as "*Amarat*" or "*Principalities*", where 'princes' who in most cases were political activists have been appointed on top of the new structure. These political appointees performed tasks that overlapped with the jurisdictions of the traditional NA system and seriously undermined its role and its credibility.

The NA system is a key ingredient for peace and development within the area and must be reviewed and re-energized through comprehensive consultation process.

5.7 Poor Centre-state financial relations.

The federal system adopted in 1992 compounded the problems of the periphery. Under this system Sudan was divided into 26 states and the delivery of key services such as education, health, sanitation, local roads, and agriculture were delegated to the states, which had neither the revenues nor the administrative capacity for these tasks. The criteria for transferring funds of the State Support Fund (SSF) established, as a mechanism for channeling federal assistance to the needy states were not pro-poor because they were based on population size and the level of development rather than on the level of poverty at the state level. In addition regional budget were released upon firm assurance from the regional governors regarding their support to the federal policies. Consequently, the transfers correlated more strongly with state population size than with the percentage of rural population, while many state receive their budgets in installments.

According to the World Bank (2003), regional expenditures have remained a low priority for the federal government. By 1998, the total budget received by the states and local communities was 2.4 percent of GDP. This figure has increased to only 4% in 2001 when net oil revenues were added to the government's budget but was quite inadequate, given the enormous responsibilities of the states to deliver social services for sustainable socio-economic development.

Healthy centre-state financial relations that are based on the results of scientific investigations about the existing development gaps and critical infrastructure is the only option to be adopted in order to address these development issues.

5.8 Investment of Oil Revenues

It is worth noting that, while the revenues from oil increased, military spending on the other hand has also increased from US \$242 million in 1999 to US \$ 250.9 million in 2000. In 2001, defence expenditures peaked to US \$ 345 million, more than 60 percent of the oil revenues for the year, representing an increase in military budget of 39.6 percent while government revenue increased by 13.4 percent, indicating that substantial share of oil revenues has been spent by the government to update its military. The pattern of government military expenditure is incomparable with the expenditure on social services, which was only 6.3 per cent of total expenditure out of which spending on education was 4.4 per cent, 1.6 per cent on health and 0.3 per cent on water, for the period 2001-2003. While the discovery of oil improved the government's fiscal position, it nevertheless, had little impact on socio-economic development of the country as poverty levels and inequalities in the periphery persisted.

To support local people, the oil companies adopted a policy according to which they pay financial compensations to individuals who claim the ownership of farmlands appropriated for the oil facilities.

Table No. 2: Oil Revenue and Military Expenditures, 1999-2002, in millions of U.S. Dollars

	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total Government Revenue	799.9	1,267	1,415	1,798
Government Oil Revenue	61.1	547.4	572.6	805.1
Government Oil Revenue as % of Total Government Revenue	7.64%	43.18 %	40.45 %	44.76 %
Government Expenditures	884.4	1,359	1,534 b	1,923
Government Military Expenditures	242	250.9	345	312.7
Government Military Expenditures as % of Government Oil Revenue	27.38%	45.8 %	60.25 %	38.8 %

5.9 Promotion of Tribal Conflicts

One of the national government's policies is based on "divide and rule" tactics. This can be observed obviously in the way of promoting tribal conflicts and mobilisation of tribal militias within different areas of Sudan. Mobilisation of militia by the central authorities as a counter insurgency tool, however, is not a new phenomenon in the Sudan. As early as 1985 the then transitional government led by General *Suwar Eldahab* adopted an open policy of arming the Arabs "*Murahleen*" to fight the SPLA in Southern Kordofan. The current Sudanese government resorted to a full-fledged militarization of the Sudanese society with the declaration of the Popular Defense Forces (PDF) Law in 1989. The aim of the PDF, as it was envisioned, was to organize the *Mujahideen* and innocent youth to fight a holy war in the South. Now, the war with South of Sudan has ended, the armed people started using their arms against each other which led to the formation of the so called "Janjaweed forces" that are widely spread in the west of Sudan.

Principally, all tribal militias including the Janjaweed are part of the Popular Defence Forces (PDF), a paramilitary force established by the GoS with the aim of acting on behalf of the state when the army is unable to fulfill its duties. It was under this official cover that the Janjaweed militia acted with impunity and committed grave atrocities against the civilian population of Darfur, unprecedented in the history of the country.

On the ground, co-operation and partnership between the government forces and the Janjaweed is virtually inexorable one, and so is the commitment of the GoS to provide the militia with resources (financial, institutional and material) as well as protection, including to those who have been indicted by the ICC for crimes against humanity. In reality, the Janjaweed militia has been reinforced and integrated into the regular security forces as "border patrol" and the distinction between them and the GoS armed forces has become somehow superfluous. The Janjaweed Forces are finally called the Fast Supporting Forces.

The tribal conflict and the existence of the Janjaweed forces remain the most destructive factors in Altamas areas and would act as a discouraging a major obstacle fronting future development opportunities. In fact it falls within the marginalization policies of the central government to keep these areas remain underdeveloped for obvious reasons.

5.10 The Abyei Dispute.

The literature study reveals that the issue of Abyei has been under discussion and negotiation within the circles of the colonial authorities and the national governments. However, to date no agreement has been reached on the final status of the area. This state of affairs has resulted in the continuous instability of the area governance institutions.

The civil war in the Sudan has deteriorated relations between northern nomadic tribes and southern agro-pastoralists. Political influences from both sides have made shared use of resources a dangerous and conflict prone endeavor. In addition, both governments of Sudan and South Sudan are not taking lead in controlling the conflict and rely on tribal efforts and participation to resolve the conflict, yet these Governments remain unaccountable for any crimes or atrocities occur in the area.

5.11 The Role of the Donors

Since June 1989 when the current government took over in a military coup overthrowing a democratically elected government, a major shift has occurred in the donor's policies towards Sudan. The immediate reaction of the donor's community in the aftermath of the military coup was to scale down foreign aid by almost 50% (World Bank, 2006). As a result, development aid has been greatly affected because of the regime's fundamentalist domestic and foreign policies. With major donors withdrawing and various sanctions imposed on the regime by the international community, development aid has been suspended and only humanitarian aid continued to be channeled through the individual and collective efforts of indigenous and international nongovernmental organizations and UN agencies. This situation continued until the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in January 2005 which opened a new chapter in the donor-Sudan relationships. However, the commitments by the donor's community to the Multi Donor Trust funds earmarked for reconstruction and development of the areas affected by war, in the South and the North has been weak.

Development aid has been scaled down but subsequently suspended a part from humanitarian aid. However development assistance coordination in the Sudan remains a challenge because it lacks clear mechanism for aid coordination at the Government level and it continues to revolve around the different priorities of humanitarian assistance, recovery efforts and development.

5.12 Disparity in human development levels

Disparities in economic activities, bias in the allocation of national expenditure, and the spread of poverty have been accompanied by similar disparities in the human development levels, specifically in health and education. Social indicators reported point to low levels of welfare throughout Sudan with some indicators well below those in the periphery areas. In this regards, available data on social indicators reveal a multi-dimensional centre-periphery divides. The national adult literacy rate in Sudan varies throughout the country but are high in the Northern region, the Central Region and Khartoum – 65; 51 and 69 respectively, while low in Kordofan, Darfur and the Eastern regions, with 39; 46; and 49 respectively. The enrolment rate in primary education shows considerable regional variations. While high enrolment rates of 85.7, 62.6 and 67.6 have been reported for the Northern region, the Central region and Khartoum respectively, the reported enrolment rates for Darfur is 33.4, 34.5% for the Eastern and 26% for and Kordofan.

While no up-to-date figures are available for the periphery areas, enrollment rates must have deteriorated further over the last few years as a result of the war and due to lack of educational services in proximity to the IDP camps, a part from those provided by the NGOs. Because of low levels of public expenditure the quality of educational services in the periphery, in general, has declined with only 7 percent of teachers having some training in some areas. In addition, educational facilities have also deteriorated considerably in the periphery and reoccurrences default in payment of teachers' salaries in these areas.

Health indicators throughout the country have also been characterized by marked regional variations. Indicators are worst in Eastern region, Darfur and Kordofan. Infant mortality in these areas is substantially higher than in Central and Northern Sudan. The Eastern region has infant mortality rate of 94, while in Kordofan and Darfur; the rates are 76 and 65 respectively. In 1984/85, Khartoum with 8.8% of the country's population had 64% of the total number of doctors, 68% of the dentists and 88% of the allied professionals. In 2002, Khartoum's share has improved as the percentage of doctors increased to 78%, 63% of the specialists and 77% of the dentists. Furthermore, while the ratio of doctors/100,000 population was 46 in Khartoum in 2003, such ratios were 2.8 and 1.9 for Darfur and Kordofan respectively.

The government's policies on private health services have compounded the vulnerability of the marginalized population to various health risks. For much of the rural poor, accessing free healthcare has become something of the past as public health services are provided at

unaffordable cost with low quality. Public health expenditure, as a percentage of GDP was 0.90 in 2000, while the private health expenditure reached 2.1% of the GDP for the same year. This has led to poor coverage of the health system, with poor capacity for delivery at all levels, but particularly the deterioration of primary health centers in rural areas where shortages of drugs, doctors and nurses are chronic.

A World Bank survey, undertaken well before the war broke out in Darfur, Kordofan, and Blue Nile and published in May 2003, summarized the conditions in Sudan as follows:

“The poorest parts of Sudan are in the west and the war-torn areas mostly, but not only, in the south. The displacement of whole communities has ravaged traditional safety net systems and resulted in “man-made” famines. There is perennial vulnerability to insecurity of both persons and property. Basic human needs are often unmet. Even those areas that are relatively stable face isolation from markets and lack secure access to services for human development that can break the inter-generational poverty cycle”.

This represents further compelling evidence of a state of affairs in the periphery most encouraging to strengthen grievances and civil conflicts.

Lack of comprehensive and scientific planning process of human resources development is a clear evident as the main cause for this gloomy picture of the human development in Sudan.

5.13 Unbalanced Power Sharing

The disparities in power sharing in terms of regional representation since independence of the country to date do not need any proof. The following table depicts representation of the five regions of the Sudan in the successive regimes that ruled the country from 1954 to date. While the population of the marginalised areas was nearly 60% of the entire population of the country, their ministerial representation accounted to 17.4% for the period 1954 -1964 during which five different regimes were in power. The Northern and the Central regions had share of 81.8% of the ministerial positions for the same period while the Western region of Kordofan and Darfur was entirely excluded.

In the more recent years calls for total exclusion of the marginalised areas from developmental activities started to emerge from within some circles in the centre. In a conference organised by the ruling party in Khartoum in 2005 on *“the future of investments during the transitional period”*, a former Minister of Finance (Abdelrahim Hamdi) who is currently the economic advisor of the ruling party (the National Congress Party) presented a paper that divided Northern Sudan into two zones (locally called Hamdi’s Triangle):

- Elshamalia (Northern Region), the states of Sennar, Elgezeira and the White Nile, i.e. the Central region, and
- Eastern Sudan and Western Sudan

Mr. Hamdi advocates the view that during the transitional period investments should be directed to the first zone because it has the voting power to decide the result of any future elections, a clear call for deliberate marginalisation and economic suffocation of the periphery.

Table No. 3: Sudanese governments – regional representation (%)

	Regimes	Alazhari Khalil Abood	Second democracy	Nimairi	Transitional Military Council	Third Democracy	Revolutionary Command Council (Elbashir)		
Region	Population share (2001)	1954-64	1964-69	1969-85	1985-86	1986-89	June 1989	Jul 1989 Dec 1999	Post Turabi period
Eastern	11.7	1.4	2.05	2.5	0	2.6	0	3	3.3
Northern	4.7	79	67.9	68.7	70	47.4	66.7	59.4	60.1
Central	36.9	2.8	6.2	16.5	10	14.7	0	8.9	6.6
Western	30.6	0	6.2	3.5	22.4	20	13.8	16.7	16.7

Source: Cobham, Alex, (2005), "Causes of conflict in Sudan: Testing the Black Book", The European Journal of Development Research, Volume 17, Number 3, September, pp.462-480. Retrieved on June 4, 2014 at the following url link: <http://www3.qeh.ox.ac.uk/pdf/qehwp/qehwps121.pdf>

Conclusion

The Sudan has been at war with itself since its independence in 1956. A series of civil conflicts that engulfed the country have severely impeded its political and economic development. All of these conflicts have only affected the fringe areas of the country, and specifically in the Southeast, and the West, where livelihood has been overwhelmingly destroyed. The most recent of these conflicts are the current conflicts in Darfur, Kurdufan, Blue Nile and Nuba Mountain which brought these regions to the forefront of the international attention because of the severity of the human rights violations that have been committed.

Despite the signing of many peace agreements and despite continuous peace negotiations with other fighting groups and the strong involvement of the regional and international communities in the Sudanese matter, Sudanese people proved without a doubt that they are unable to overcome their differences and be united and take lead of their communities. To that end, it is fair to conclude that the seeds of the conflict in Sudan have been sown by decades of deliberate marginalization and neglect of the periphery areas, disproportionate power sharing to the favour

of the riverine elites; manipulation of and persistent inequity in resource allocation; and incitement of tribal and ethnic conflicts, all of which are inherently political and economic.

The country's oil revenues, if properly used, could have at least partially alleviated poverty across the country. Oil revenues, however, have been misused and substantial amounts have been spent on the military and for personal interests. While the most critical infrastructure for development have been deliberately neglected.

Bad governance in the Sudan has been in the heart of the causes of the conflict since Sudan independence in 1956.

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