

## **Elements of Sudanese Renaissance\***

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September 2019

### **Preface**

Sudan is at a crossroads. The aftermath of the 2018/2019 revolution offers a unique opportunity for the launch of a renaissance in order to achieve the legitimate aspirations of the Sudanese people. Often political groups in Sudan aspired to achieve grand visions with regional and even global dimensions. A new realistic approach is needed towards a simple and achievable national vision for “a free and prosperous Sudanese nation in peace with itself, with the region and the world, establishing justice under the rule of law, satisfying the vital needs of all its people, and contributing to human civilization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

This vision is rooted in the values of the Sudanese revolution of justice, peace, and freedom, reflecting the best of the heritage of the people of Sudan, and shaped over hundreds of years, guided by a tolerant brand of Islam practiced on this land long before the emergence of contemporary ideologies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The goal should be modest and capture the essence of the goals of Sudanese families everywhere. This simple goal should aim “to create a society in Sudan where all young women and men would enjoy great educational opportunities, find rewarding careers, and lead a happy family life with dignity in their own country.”

A Sudanese Renaissance is needed to achieve this vision. The 2018/2019 revolution offers a rare opportunity to launch this historical process.

In order for a Sudanese Renaissance to succeed, however, the nation has to score significant progress along four axes: democracy and rule of law, national reconciliation, a new Sudanese social contract, and stabilization of the collapsing economy of early 2019.

## **Democracy and Rule of Law**

Democracy is defined here as the system characterized by free and fair elections, rule of law, and separation of powers. These are the civilized norms of how societies should manage their internal differences in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Sudan is no exception. These principles represent a “technical” solution for how people rule themselves that is not colored by any ideology. This solution has been adopted by civilized nations around the world; just as travel using airplanes is the “technical” solution for how to move people around the world adopted by civilized nations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century!

Free elections are a necessary but not sufficient condition to achieve democracy. Elections have to be fair, and recognized to be fair, such that no candidate is given unfair advantage over others due to their participation in or support of previous governments or relationship to the past ruling regimes. This principle is important since the country is emerging from three decades of non-democratic rule that worked to concentrate wealth and power into the hands of supporters of one political group.

During the recent decades, Sudan suffered significantly from absence of the rule of law. Instead, Sudan had the rule of one man! In too many instances, the laws applied in the country were inconsistent with the country’s constitution, limiting freedoms and violating basic human rights. Many other laws were not enforced, or enforced in an ad-hoc subjective manner. Sudan will have to evolve into a state that respects rule of law as enforced by an independent and respected judiciary.

In absence of the rule of law, Sudanese institutions in the judicial (judiciary and constitutional court), executive (ministries and agencies), and legislative (parliament) branches were weakened significantly, and lost their independence, in order to pave the way for a one-man rule of the country. These institutions will need to be rebuilt with clear guidelines, re-erected to stand tall again and play an important role in society under the rule of law, in order to gain back their sound traditions.

As Sudan emerges from three decades of dictatorship, establishment of an independent judiciary is a necessary step. Creation of a government commission to investigate and prosecute any crimes committed during the last three decades should be pursued in order to bring charges in front of an independent and professional judiciary. This process should be carried with a high degree of professionalism, fairness, and rigor in order to offer a model for how justice can be served in a democratic society under the rule of law.

Establishment of the rule of law in economic and social spheres is as important as in the political sphere. New laws should be legislated and enforced consistently to insure transparency, professionalism, and fairness in all financial and contractual dealings by the government. These laws should include a strong legal framework for prevention and fighting of corruption in commerce and business. Creation of a healthy and fair economic environment is necessary for any real economic progress in Sudan.

### **Peace and National Reconciliation Through Development**

Since independence, Sudan has not been at peace with itself. Civil wars persisted in the south, then spread to the west and the east of the country. Marginalization, unfair sharing of political power between the regions, and uneven economic development across the country are the root causes of these conflicts.

The real progress along the axis of national reconciliation will be achieved when the issue of marginalization is transformed from a demand championed by armed revolutionary movements in the Sudanese regions into a fundamental concern for a central government that is making a sincere and effective effort to change the facts on the ground, and to address injustice suffered by large sections of the people. The transitional government should be given the full opportunity to address this chronic problem.

In moving forward, a democratic system of governance may provide a satisfactory framework for power-sharing and political reconciliation. However, marginalization is primarily a matter of uneven economic development that persisted for too long resulting in a myriad of social and political problems. Therefore, there is a need for an innovative model of economic development

in order to address the root cause of the problem and the consequences of decades of neglect and war and to spread economic opportunities into all corners of the country, especially marginalized regions.

Here, I propose an initiative for addressing the challenge of uneven economic development. A “National Commission for Even Economic Development” can be created to supervise the following tasks:

- A professional survey carried out by independent international experts in collaboration with local representatives should be commissioned to produce a detailed map describing the level of economic and social development in all localities of each region in the country. These maps should cover access to health, education, water and electricity services, as well as access to economic opportunities and jobs, and measures of gender equality, within those localities.
- The same map can then be translated into a priority list that reflects an objective ranking of different localities to be used for targeting investments in economic development by the central government.
- I propose that all the income of the central government from oil, gold, and other minerals should then be used to create a development fund that targets the least developed districts based on the ranking and criteria established above, but irrespective of region. In addition, all international donors with interest and desire in seeing stability and development in Sudan and Africa may contribute towards this development fund. Allocation of all proceeds from oil, estimated at market price, for this fund will impact the central budget significantly.
- The allocation of funds should respond to specific small-scale proposals submitted by local authorities from different localities around the country. Such process should empower the different localities and regions at the expense of the center.
- The future development investments should target access to clean water, sanitation, health (especially for mothers and children), equal educational services for girls and boys, and electricity supply, as well as training and job creation programs.
- This initiative will have to be carried out with the highest level of transparency, including the initial field surveys, professional assessments, rankings, sources of

funding, investment allocation criteria, biddings, details of contracts, and measures of success.

In my view, insuring even economic development is the key to achieving justice between the regions of Sudan, which, over time, leads to stable peace. If we would like to secure a stable peace in Sudan, let us provide more economic and social justice for all. To pay for this peace, Sudan's political and economic elites, primarily at the center, need to voluntarily make important concessions against their historic privileges, in line with the values of justice, peace and freedom. However, the benefits that will accrue to all the people of Sudan, on the long term, from stability and peace will exceed any price paid in the near term.

### **New Sudanese Social Contract**

Marginalization is not the only problem that needs to be addressed in order to achieve national reconciliation in Sudan. The conflicting nature of the extremely diverse ideologies guiding the political class in Sudan is a significant challenge. These ideologies span the full spectrum from Salafism, to Muslim brotherhood, Arab nationalism, Africanism, and Marxism.

While the freedoms of expression and political affiliation have to be guaranteed to all Sudanese, there is an urgent need for identifying and acknowledging a shared set of facts and principles to form the basis for the peaceful coexistence of all these diverse ideologies within the same nation, together with a majority of the population that do not follow any of these ideologies. The objective is to prevent future conflicts and setbacks in the Sudanese democratic evolution, and to avoid repeating the experiences of 1969 and 1989. There is a need for identification, and explicit acknowledgment, of a common unifying thread respected by almost all Sudanese, all parties, and all groups. Such a thread may offer a framework for a new Sudanese social contract to be explicitly endorsed by all political groups and individuals. Here is an attempt to describe such a common thread that may unite all Sudanese:

- The shared human heritage based on science, technology and innovation, which is shaping and driving the economy in our 21<sup>st</sup> century world, will be respected, engaged and harnessed to guide the transformation of Sudan into a modern society.

- Equality, dignity, respect, and fair representation are guaranteed in Sudan for all individuals and groups, women and men, irrespective of their regional background, cultural expressions, religious beliefs, or ethnic origins.
- The only condition for any Sudanese to enjoy their full range of freedoms and human rights is to accept the same freedoms and rights for all other members of society.
- Democracy defined by free and fair elections, rule of law, and separation of powers is the civilized norm for how societies manage their internal differences in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Sudan is no exception.
- In any free society, laws naturally reflect people' values. Sudanese values will be reflected in Sudanese laws as conceived and legislated by fairly and freely elected representatives of the people through a democratic process under the rule of law. The free will of the people is the mirror that reflects real Sudanese values leading to acceptable and legitimate laws.
- A tolerant and moderate version of Islam has been the main factor shaping values of the Sudanese people for more than a thousand years. Other religions and traditions are respected and practiced, and should be protected by law.

This set describes an example of the elements that need to be included in a viable social contract. Successful formulation of such a contract cannot be articulated by a single individual but could only come from a serious and sustained engagement by representative groups from across the political spectrum.

### **Sudan Economy: from Crisis to Stability**

Here are some specific, discrete proposals offered to seed a broad dialogue between young Sudanese that is urgently needed to address the question: How may Sudan move forward from the current economic and financial crisis of early 2019 towards stabilization, paving the way for sustainable development? These general proposals are presented, not from the perspective of an economic expert, but from the perspective of an individual closely observing conditions on the ground, and concerned with the depth of the economic crisis in Sudan.

#### Financial Policies: Back to Basics

1. Enhancement of local economic production in the agriculture, industry and service sectors is a basic objective that can be reached by establishing a fair, transparent, predictable, and competitive economic environment, free of government corruption, excessive taxation and all other government interventions that would lower competitiveness in the Sudanese economy relative to the rest of the world. Eradicating corruption at the individual and institutional level is a top priority. Promoting transparency is absolutely necessary. These steps should create an environment conducive to a set of new and necessary fiscal policies that are needed in the near future.
2. A single currency exchange rate determined by free market forces is a feature of all stable economies. The law of supply and demand is the basic determinant of the real currency rate, and therefore the government should not interfere in determining the currency rate directly, but focus on influencing the economic factors (not security factors) that raise supply and reduce demand, and hence stabilize the price. In general, Sudanese government policies should encourage the flux of hard currency into the country, and discourage the flux out. Sensible policies should be adopted to encourage local production and export, and discourage imports and consumption of imported goods. Local products should be promoted.
3. Smart management of import/export activities is essential. All hard currency proceeds from exports are to be channeled back into the country, and exchanged into local currency.
4. Imports should be regulated to insure priority for essential needs such as wheat, fuel, and medicines, then potentially a list of less essential items, depending on the level of exports.
5. While individuals should be able to exchange and keep their money in local or hard currency, export of hard currency should be regulated and only allowed for financing essential imports including equipment and other inputs that enhance local production.
6. Policies should facilitate transfer of funds by Sudanese expats into Sudan, and encourage return of Sudanese from the diaspora and their relocation into the country by providing attractive incentives to those starting productive businesses in Sudan, importing equipment and technology, and employing the youth.

7. For purely economic reasons, policies should be developed and pursued to stop the active export of hard currency by all foreigners living in Sudan. Under current economic conditions, Sudan cannot afford to support such transfers.
8. Instead of importing electricity, government efforts should focus on local generation of electricity leading to self-sufficiency emphasizing renewable sources of energy such as solar energy, and hydropower. Reducing imports of electricity should save hard currency.
9. Port services, or any similar services, should not be outsourced to foreign companies that are likely to become buyers of hard currency in order to export their profits.

#### Equity, Adjustment, and Stability

1. A structural review of jobs and reevaluation of their wages is essential first step. Raising the minimum wage (by a factor of 10 or so) is a good start in order to insure a dignified standard of living for all.
2. Limiting the ratio between the highest to the lowest salary in government and private sector (to about 20 or so) is a progressive step in order to insure equity and to reduce disparity in income levels.
3. Special attention should be given for reasonable compensation of teachers, policemen, nurses, and medical assistants, in order to make these professions more attractive.
4. Removal of all subsidies including bread, gasoline, and electricity, should be implemented gradually and in measured steps. Eventual removal of subsidies should reduce smuggling significantly, and eliminate the large disparity between rich and poor in how much subsidy they may receive. Currently, central resources that should be used to support the poor in the peripheries of the country, are used to subsidize the relatively rich living in Khartoum.

The issue of subsidies, which is too often discussed in the context of policies imposed by foreign funding agencies, is in fact a matter of social and economic justice. This is especially true in a country where children living in the peripheries study in classrooms without chairs and die from preventable diseases, while the relatively rich in Khartoum live in air-conditioned rooms powered by government-subsidized electricity, and enjoy the ride of their SUVs powered by government-subsidized gasoline. This disparity needs to be addressed in the new Sudan.



5. Use of money saved from elimination of subsidies to establish a transparent, effective, and efficient social security system to support the poor economically and train them for more rewarding jobs as needed.
6. A steep progressive pricing of electricity and gasoline should be introduced so that rates increase with consumption. Overconsumption is an economic and social scourge for Sudan, and an environmental scourge for Sudan and the world!
7. Slow, systematic, and persistent transfer of large government resources currently allocated to military (the expenditures that are not needed in times of peace) and security purposes (the expenditures that are inconsistent with the nature of a democratic regime) into financing the health and education sectors. The top priority for Sudan should always be investments in the health and education of its people. This is the most important function of government.
8. Carefully designed job training is essential for the large number of young Sudanese whose only skills and experiences are in military and fighting, (government and armed groups), facilitation of their integration into productive economic activities by acquiring new skills, and micro-financing their small businesses.
9. Use of existing military resources to secure the borders and stop smuggling of goods and people; the military should refocus on border protection.

### Tax Policy Reform

1. Adoption of a progressive tax policy based mainly on income and less on consumption; the income tax rate should increase significantly with income similar to many other countries; low income citizens should be exempt from income taxes.
2. Linking of tax categories to specific government services at all government levels, so that citizens may see which of the services provided by the government are funded directly by their tax payment.
3. Introduction of significant taxes on real estate (~1% of the real value of the property), similar to most cities, collected from every owner of a high value property mainly in affluent neighborhoods of Khartoum and large cities to fund education and policing at the local level, and hence free up more government funding for similar services in less fortunate neighborhoods.

4. Rigorous tax collection should be enforced, with absolutely no exemptions.

### **Initiatives Leading to Sustainable Development**

After achieving significant progress along the four axes: democracy and rule of law, national reconciliation, the new Sudanese social contract, and stabilization of the collapsing economy of early 2019, the nation will then be ready to launch transformative initiatives that would constitute a Sudanese renaissance adopting a sustainable development pathway and bringing the country closer to the vision and goal stated above. Here are brief examples of thirteen important initiatives:

1. Sustainable Development Rooted in Science, Technology and Innovation

There is an urgent need for Sudan to rejoin the community of civilized nations that appreciate the important role of science, technology, and innovation in solving societal problems. Significant and integrated investments should be planned at all levels, from support of science education at early stages starting before elementary school, to introduction of scientific thinking skills at elementary and secondary schools, to serious commitments towards funding research on critical societal problems at universities and research centers.

Here, I call for a major initiative to revolutionize the K-12 education of mathematics, science, and English language in Sudan. Coordinated efforts in (i) training and better reward system for teachers, (ii) development of new strong curricula similar to those followed in leading countries such as South Korea and Singapore, and (iii) setting of high standards and expectations, should all be important elements of this initiative.

Environmental protection and prevention of environmental problems is an important priority. Enforcement of new and existing environmental regulations protecting the Sudanese water, air, soils, deserts, and forests should be vigorously pursued. It is fundamentally more effective and economically more efficient to prevent pollution and avoid environmental degradation than any attempt to treat and remediate environmental

problems after these are created. I call for issuing and enforcing new laws creating environmentally protected areas in the deserts, coasts, and forests of Sudan.

Climate change poses a challenge to Sudan. Serious plans are needed to design how Sudan will adapt to the impacts of climate change. Warmer temperatures will require significant adaptation measures in urban planning and innovative building technology. Other adaptation measures are needed in the water, transportation, and electricity sectors. New investments in renewable energy, especially solar energy and hydropower, will position the country to engage a world that is moving quickly towards a low-carbon economy.

Major reforms in the oil and gold industries are needed to preserve national interest, modernize technology, protect the environment, and protect the health of the workers in this sector. Accountability, transparency, and establishment of the rule of law are badly needed to transform this important national sector. Applications of advanced technology such as “horizontal drilling” should enhance the recovery rate of oil and gas. More advanced technology applications will optimize the efficiency of gold mining.

## 2. Sudan’s Green Revolution

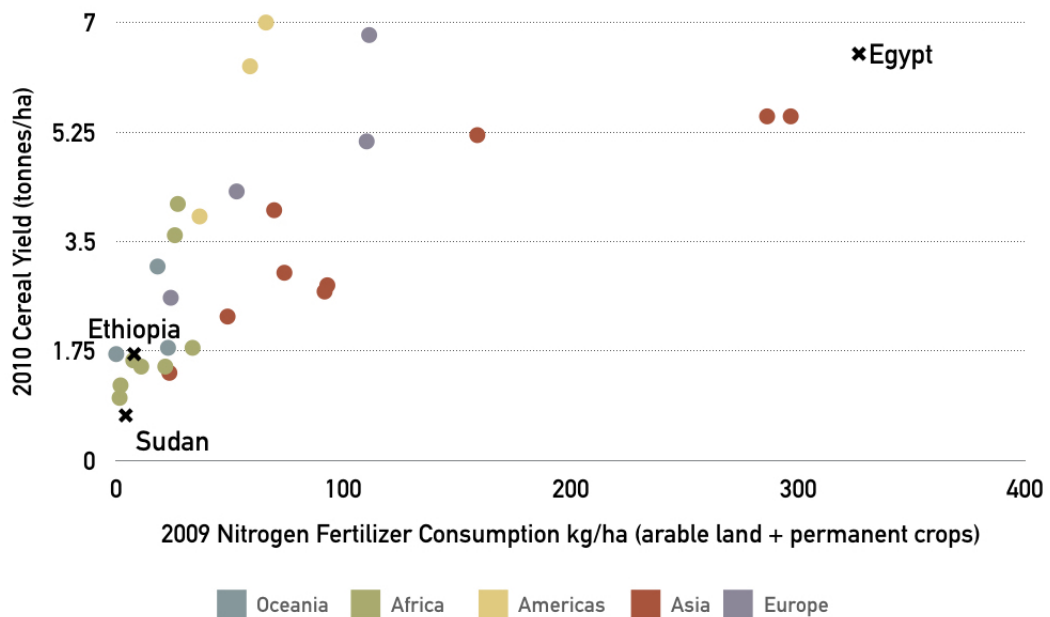
Sudan, just like many African countries, lags behind the world in agricultural productivity due to the lack of adoption of important agricultural technology such as the use of better seeds, fertilizers, etc. This initiative has three components:

First, it emphasizes adoption of modern technology using better seeds, and more use of targeted fertilizers, and financing for vertical expansion of agriculture instead of horizontal expansion. Soil fertility mapping, and new significant investments in agricultural research infrastructure are critically needed, in addition to new investments in targeted agricultural financing and marketing.

Second, it should promote the launch of a Sudanese fertilizer industry to start and increase local production, specifically nitrogen fertilizers, potentially utilizing Sudanese

natural gas from the few sites where it was discovered. Here, I propose the creation of a large-scale fertilizer factory in or around Gezira utilizing natural gas discovered in the region.

Third, this initiative should encourage industrial processing of traditional agricultural Sudanese exports such as gum Arabic, sesame, peanuts, cotton, etc., to add value before exporting them. Similarly, animal production activities should have the objective of exporting meat products instead of exporting animals or animal feed, capitalizing on the close proximity to Middle East markets.



**Rates of Fertilizer Application and Agricultural Productivity**

The launching of a green revolution in Sudan is probably the most important initiative in this list. There is a great potential for increasing productivity of agriculture in Sudan significantly with modest investments in agricultural technology (increased use of fertilizers and new seeds varieties).

### 3. Public Health before Medical Treatment

A “disease” economy is flourishing in Sudan with profitable private clinics and long lines in public hospitals. People suffer, and many still die of preventable diseases in Sudan. Although statistics are scarce, expenditure in medical treatment and medicines exceeds investments in public health by wide margins. The neglect of public health and disease prevention is the root cause of the health care crisis in Sudan. A new initiative investing in public health to prevent disease and reduce huge medical expenses by the public in treating preventable diseases is urgently needed! The relative magnitudes of the budget allocations to public health and medical treatment will need to be adjusted significantly.

New taxes should be imposed on private clinics and private medical services, with the proceeds directly channeled to fund public health investments with emphasis on public health education and environmental health management.

The top priority for Sudan should always be investments in the health and education of its people. This is the most important function of government. The private sector should not be the main provider of health services. The government should discourage the for-profit private sector investments in health that exploit and benefit from deficiencies in the public hospitals as well as under-investments in public health.

#### 4. Education, for Jobs, and in Support of Entrepreneurship

Higher education has expanded dramatically in Sudan during the last few decades. However, that expansion emphasized quantity at the expense of quality. The resources of public universities, including lecturers, are inadequate and the quality of education received is rather poor. Private universities mushroomed since higher education has become a business pursued for quick profits by national and even foreign investors!

There is an urgent need for fundamental restructuring of the higher education system with two main objectives: (i) consolidation of public universities into fewer universities and allocation of additional funding to improve quality of education, (ii) scaling back of the for-profit business activity in higher education. Private universities should be run as not-for-profit institutions.

Another major problem with the current higher education system in Sudan is the clear disconnect between the educational curricula and the needs of the jobs market.

Significant reform is needed to make sure that young Sudanese are educated and trained to acquire marketable productive skills, in particular entrepreneurial skills, that would equip the youth and train them to start and run businesses instead of relying on government employment.

As a result of recent policies of higher education, a large number of young Sudanese graduated from Sudanese universities during the last decade with education and training that failed to prepare them for any feasible career in Sudan. There is a need for an emergency retraining program to transform this army of unemployed youth into a productive working force that will lead the economic transformation of the country. Here, I propose establishment of a National Program for Youth Training that offers diplomas after completing short and intensive hands-on training programs at Sudanese universities (3 to 12 month). The first step should be a market survey that would identify existing job opportunities. A starting point would be the list of jobs occupied by foreigners in Sudan. The curricula and content of the training programs should be designed to match available jobs. Special attention should be directed to elevate the standard of these programs so that graduates would experience significant improvement in acquiring new marketable skills, and to give them a good reputation among potential employers. Examples of potential topics for these diplomas include: English language skills; project management and accounting; writing and communication skills; agricultural productivity modules; careers in construction industry; basic entrepreneurship skills, etc.

Science and technology education in Sudanese universities should also emphasize new emergent opportunities in industries related to information technology, biotechnology, biofuels, and solar energy, linking targeted applied research and a new generation of young Sudanese entrepreneurs.

##### 5. Enabling Better Use of Water Resources

Sudan receives significant amounts of water from the Nile river. However, it does not fully utilize its share of the Nile water allocated according to the 1959 Nile Water Agreement between Sudan and Egypt. As a result, billions of cubic meters of unused water flow naturally to Egypt. This loss of water has been going on every year for 60 years, without any compensation for Sudan. Specific plans should be developed to utilize Sudan's full share of the Nile water, and implemented within a short period.

Water is a strategic resource and its use should be optimized for the benefit of the nation. Here, I propose serious consideration of the transport of water to the Red Sea coast to support development of the coastal region. A pipeline can be properly designed to transfer water from the Nile to Red Sea coast. In order to transport water from the Nile to Port Sudan, water has to be pumped uphill over the Red Sea mountains in Eastern Sudan. However, a significant fraction of that energy can be reclaimed through hydropower generation of electricity as water flows downhill to Port Sudan. The water transported to Port Sudan should be used to meet local demand in that city, and economic development of the Red Sea coast.

The development of a new and transparent Sudanese strategy for the use of Nile water, emphasizing national interests, and supporting cooperation between the basin countries towards equitable and sustainable use of the Nile water should be a priority. Sudan's location between Ethiopia and Egypt is a more complex geographical position, and would necessarily dictate a water strategy that is more complex than that of either of the two countries. In other words, a strategic position where Sudanese interests are presented as perfectly aligned with those of Egypt, or perfectly aligned with those of Ethiopia, is not consistent with the facts of geography. Contrary to this picture, the water strategy for Sudan in the last few decades seemed to oscillate between being fully aligned with Egyptian positions and being fully aligned with Ethiopian positions, depending on the direction of political winds. What would be in the national interest of Sudan is a "triangulation" strategy that would always identify and maintain a distinct set of national interests for Sudan in the Nile water.

As detailed in the section about the green revolution, Sudan would benefit significantly from vertical expansion of agriculture instead of horizontal expansion, and in doing so use water more efficiently. In addition, Sudan should make it a top priority to invest in improving efficiency of water use through adoption of advanced irrigation technology. Such savings would enable Sudan to expand agricultural land area and production.

#### 6. Sudan's Logistics Revolution

Sudan has a unique position in Africa surrounded by four land-locked nations: Ethiopia, South Sudan, Central African Republic, and Chad. All these countries are land-locked, and do not have any sea ports to use in export and import of goods. The combined population of these countries is 135 million (more than 3 times the population of Sudan), and their combined GDP is about \$100 billion. Until recently, the main economic activity between Sudan and these countries was smuggling of subsidized goods! Here, I propose a major trade and logistics initiative emphasizing the strategic location of Sudan and transforming Sudan into an African hub for logistics and trade.



This initiative should build on old established social and historical links and local border-trade expertise. Legal trade should be encouraged to replace smuggling! The government



should invest in building the infrastructure, such as ports, railways, and highways. The private sector will then be the main actor in this initiative.

One strategic advantage of this initiative stems from the fact that Sudanese states bordering these four countries are areas that have historically been neglected and hence these states are in need for affirmative action to spur economic development.

7. African Hub for Professional Services

A knowledge-based service economy initiative is proposed to transform Sudan into an African hub for medical, engineering, educational, and legal professional services. This initiative builds on the relative advantage of Sudan in these professional fields compared to its African neighbors.

Different Sudanese cities can be designated as hubs for different professional service activities to act as a magnet for African service tourism. These new hubs should welcome wealthy and upper middle-class visitors from surrounding countries seeking distinguished professional services in the medical, legal, and engineering fields.

8. Tourism: Discover Sudan

A tourism initiative should be launched to develop opportunities in the winter season when the weather in Sudan is more pleasant compared to the harsh weather of summer. Opportunities for development of the tourism industry should be explored with a focus on archaeology in the north, sea resorts and sports in the east along the Red Sea, camping and sustainable hunting of wild life in the extensive desert regions, and developing new attractive touristic resorts in Jebel Mara and the Nuba Mountains.

The emerging tourism in northern regions of Sudan should be integrated with similar activities in upper Egypt, especially at this early stage of tourism industry development in Sudan.

9. Innovative Models of Economic Development in Sudan

Sudan is in dire need for exploring new modes and models for economic development. One model to be considered is the hybrid model in which corporations are partly owned by the private sector and partly owned by the government. This model fits national strategic sectors such as oil, mining, transportation, and telecommunication. It insures that the nation would optimally benefit from the use of its natural resources while harnessing the potential efficiency in the private sector approach to business. As an example, a new Sudan Airways can be relaunched as a publicly-traded, for-profit corporation, partly owned by the government while inviting Sudanese expats and locals to support the national carrier by buying shares in the new corporation.

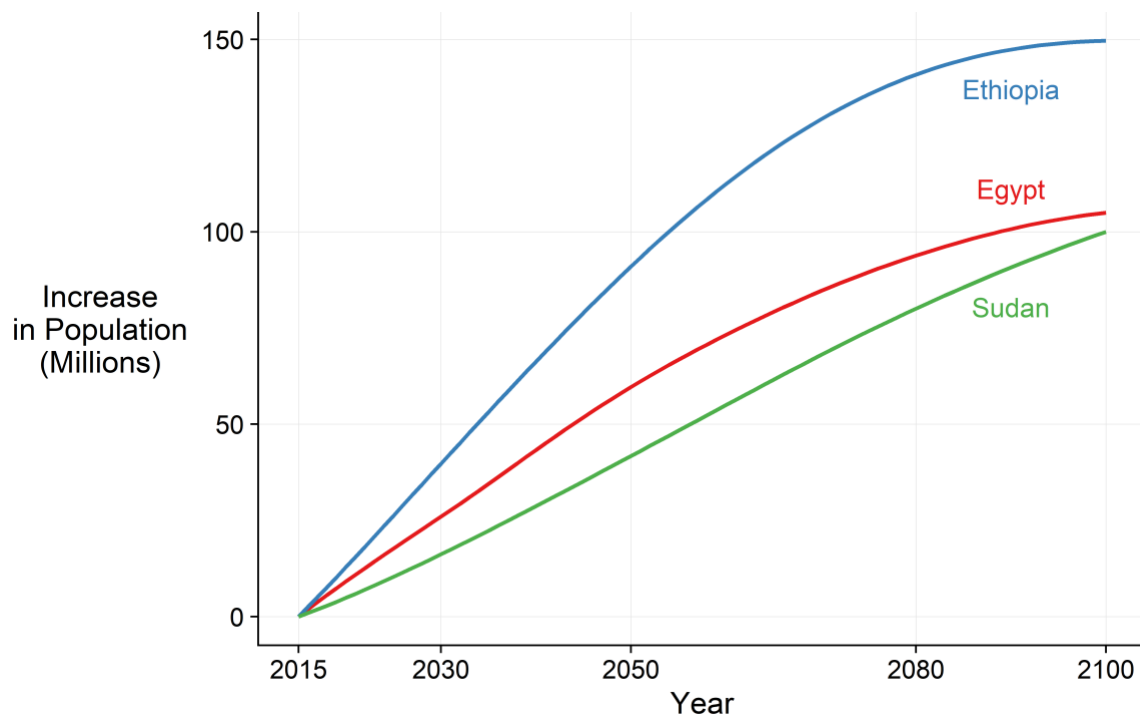
Policies and regulations should encourage investment in the Sudanese economy by Sudanese (locals and expats) and discourage short-term foreign investments that eventually seek to export quick profits in the form of hard currency (see the experience with telecommunication companies). Sudanese expats should be incentivized to form new corporations that would invest in development projects. Such corporations would channel savings by this important section of the Sudanese population to contribute towards the renaissance of their home country.

#### 10. Rebranding of Sudan

Sudan has suffered in the last few decades from extremely negative news coverage in the international media. This coverage, which was largely accurate, damaged the international image of the country. There is an urgent need for designing and implementing a coordinated media campaign to rebrand Sudan, drawing from all the positive aspects of the country, including its rich history, diverse populations, and beautiful landscape. The recent peaceful revolution, and the successful struggle of the Sudanese people for freedom can be presented to the world as a proud achievement of this special nation. The tolerant brand of Islam practiced by Sudanese, and the peaceful and generous nature of Sudanese culture can all be highlighted to change established stereotypes about Sudan and its people. Finally, the Sudanese music admired across a broad region of Africa can be presented to the world as one example of Sudan's cultural contributions to human civilization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## 11. Addressing the Population Challenge

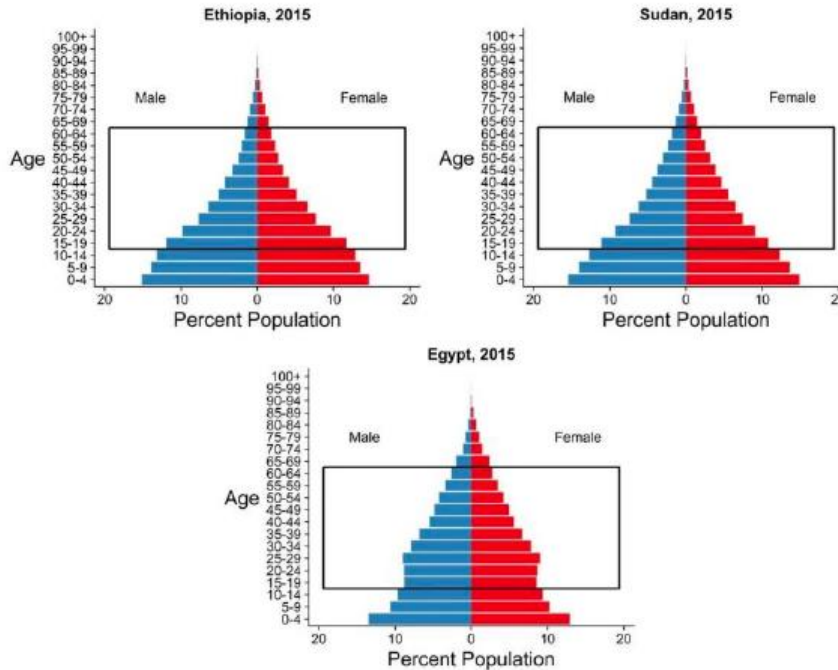
The continent of Africa is facing a population crisis. By 2050, the world population is projected to increase by about two billion. Half of that increase will be in Africa, effectively doubling the African population size from one to two billion. The trend in Sudan is not different. The population of Sudan is likely to double in the next 30 years. Clearly, neither Sudan nor Africa has the economic capacity to absorb these large additions in such short time, and at the same time achieve the badly-needed improvements in standards of living for the relatively poor existing populations. If not addressed properly, population increase will likely be a persistent root cause for social and political instability.



**UN Projections of Population Increase**

Talking about population policy is not a popular topic in Africa. How to characterize the nature and extent of the problem is controversial. However, the most efficient approach for addressing the population problem is not controversial. Education of girls through completion of secondary school is probably the most effective policy to address the population problem. Obviously, no one should oppose education for girls or boys in Sudan or anywhere else! A significant initiative should be launched to educate all Sudanese girls in all corners of the country till they receive the Sudan Certificate of Secondary Education. This is one good example for how gender equality would help to address a critical societal problem.

While an increase in population taking place in a country with well-developed economic production infrastructure such as Germany and Japan may enhance consumption and economic demand and in doing so drive economic growth, the same argument is not valid for countries where such infrastructure is not developed yet. In such countries, like many in Africa, economic growth is not as sensitive to increases in population. In addition, adding low-income people does not enhance economic demand significantly due to their low purchasing power. Instead, the increase in population under such conditions would burden the state due to increased demand for health and education services, and increased demand for jobs and economic opportunities. As a result, the economic development process aiming to build and develop new economic production infrastructure is made difficult if not impossible. Such conditions would likely lead to social and political instability.



### Population Pyramids

The population pyramid, which describes the Sudanese population structure for different ages, would predict acute future problems. The population in their twenties is more than double the population in their fifties! Any scientific analysis of the 2018/2019 revolution must recognize this objective fact as one of several contributing factors. If the population challenge in Sudan is not addressed, it is not unlikely that the next popular revolution in Sudan will be against a democratic system, unable to meet the growing and accelerating demand for the necessary and vital services by the masses.

#### 12. Modern Sudanese Institutions of National Security

A sustainable democratic regime in Sudan requires strong institutions of national security designed for protecting the nation against all adversaries, and for protecting a healthy democratic regime. A significant initiative is needed to restructure the institutions of the army, police, and security to match the nature of the democratic regime, and to invest in improving the technical efficiency of these institutions in order to create modern and effective forces.

The burden and honor of service in the Sudanese armed forces should be shared by all Sudanese from all regions and all backgrounds. The current situation where military service, as soldiers, is a burden shouldered disproportionately by young men from marginalized regions is neither sustainable, nor consistent with the value of justice emphasized by the Sudanese revolution.

In addition to any necessary investments in physical infrastructure, major efforts are needed to educate and train individuals on the principles of democracy, rule of law, separation of powers, and civilian control of the military. A modern security institution should establish protocols for continuous training on the fundamentals of civil rights, and on how to interact with the civilian population.

### 13. New Model for Journalism in Sudan

Newspapers will have to play an important role in any Sudanese renaissance, offering forums for public engagement and media for informing and educating the masses about the critical issues facing the nation. Unfortunately, these are not good times for journalism, nationally and internationally. The advent of the internet and social media posed significant challenges for the traditional financial model of newspapers and questioned sustainability of the old traditions of journalism. In addition, the traditional model of how newspapers operate was damaged significantly due to interventions by the government in Sudan during the last three decades.

It may be difficult to find solutions to the problems of private newspapers in Sudan because of the overlap of local factors with the complexities of the global press problems, so I choose not to discuss these problems. However, there may be an opportunity to develop new public newspapers that are managed in an impartial and professional manner. In moving forward, I would like to propose an initiative for launching and sustaining a few new newspapers (2 to 3), published in paper and electronic formats, overseen by a corporation independent of direct government intervention, but adopting a financial model similar to the one followed by the British Broadcasting Corporation

(among others). BBC is supported through a television license fee paid by each and every household. However, since conditions in Sudan are different, this Sudanese corporation can be supported by a small fee, legislated by the government, applied to every internet user in Sudan proportional to their internet use charges. This fee is justified by the fact that the content created by these newspapers will be available for free access by all users of the internet in Sudan. The same corporation may also charge a small fee for newspapers access by internet users from outside Sudan, in addition to traditional sources of revenues from selling the paper, subscriptions, and advertising.

The “Sudanese Newspapers Corporation” should be governed by a board selected from respected journalists and civil society leaders, representative of the broad political spectrum. The board may choose to launch and support a few (2 to 3) new newspapers, reflecting the diversity of intellectual and political views in Sudan, while enforcing a high degree of professionalism and integrity. For the success of this model, editors of the newspapers should be selected carefully, favoring those upholding deep professional values. This proposal is offered for further scrutiny and enrichment from all those who believe in the important role of journalism in shaping the future of Sudan.

### **New Principled Pragmatism in Sudan**

Who will lead the Sudanese renaissance? A new political organization based on a new way of thinking seems to be the answer. Not an ideology similar to those of the past, but a new way of thinking that accepts the objective reality as it is, and deals with it through its own merits, not by forcing reality to conform to a theoretical model required and expected by political or social theory. A new way of thinking that learns lessons from the past, but before that analyzes the experiences of other nations in the twenty-first century, is needed to help Sudan advance into new horizons.

Pragmatism, as advocated here, is defined as the empirical approach that seeks to advance social and economic development in Sudan by adopting solutions that were proven to work and succeed elsewhere in the world, without constraints from any traditional political philosophy or

political ideology. Problems are diagnosed accurately by surveying the situation and collecting relevant data, and solutions are developed and applied to maximize the likelihood of success by drawing from all proven successes in dealing with similar problems around the world. These solutions should be tailored and adjusted to suit the local conditions of Sudan. Further, pragmatism in Sudan has to be principled: guided by the values of social and economic justice and constrained by the system of Sudanese values outlined in the section above about the social contract.

The old Sudanese political parties suffered from, and were shaped by, the cycle of failed governance that played out in Sudan during the last six decades. While recognizing their positive political contributions, and the sacrifices and patriotic acts by many of their members, the harsh political conditions in the country stifled any innovation and limited any modernization efforts within these organizations. In order to break away from this cycle of failure, a new political body in the form of a broad front consisting of individuals and political groups, led by the young generation of the 2018/2019 revolution, and united by commitment to the agenda for change, will have to emerge and lead the urgently needed transformation. The essential agenda items for political change in Sudan are largely non-controversial.

The popular political ideologies in Sudan span the full spectrum from Salafism, to Muslim brotherhood, Arab nationalism, Africanism, and Marxism. All these ideologies were rooted in the context of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They did not exist in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and nobody knows if these will remain relevant through the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Sudanese people suffered through the last half century subjected to two failed experiments characterized by dictatorship and oppression following military coups, one from the left in 1969 and one from the right in 1989. Empirical evidence indicates that both of these experiments, as well as most similar experiments triggered by the revolutionary ideologies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century elsewhere around the world, were short lived and in most cases collapsed, victims of their own rigid structure, and as a result of the people's legitimate rise in face of oppression.

On the other hand, all countries that have made healthy economic and social progress, in recent history, followed pragmatic development policies adopting a version of the free market doctrine



constrained by varying degrees of government control on national economy. The main advantage of such a system is the high level of flexibility, that would allow for the development of a suitable economic and political system, with options ranging from pure capitalism characterized by minimal safeguards and constraints, to almost pure socialism when such safeguards and constraints are expanded to exert significant government control on the economy, as well as every other option between these two extremes. The people, through their representatives in a democratic system, are in the driver seat developing and implementing new laws, adjusting the nature of the economy and the character of the state to reflect their free will, and ultimately to reflect the underlying values and vital interests of the nation.

The empirical evidence indicates that high levels of social and economic justice can be achieved by wisely governed nations while maintaining economic and political freedoms. Following the 2018/2019 revolution, the time seems ripe for Sudan to leap forward, turn the page on 20<sup>th</sup> century politics, and adopt a new principled pragmatic approach, supported by accumulated empirical evidence from around the world, to achieve sustainable development, striking a balance between a free market driven economy and the necessary constraints and safeguards that are needed to achieve a high level of social and economic justice in Sudan.

\*The ideas presented in this article are NOT meant to provide specific final solutions to any of the complex problems facing Sudan at this important juncture. These are only initial thoughts offered as a modest contribution into a badly-needed “brain-storming” session, to be carried at the national level, openly, in a frank and transparent fashion, and with broad engagement from all those who deeply care about the future of Sudan. We are all presented with a rare opportunity. We cannot afford to waste it.