



Sixth African Regional Conference on Women
Mid-Decade Review of the Implementation of the
Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action

Sudan National Progress Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action

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In the Name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate

"The State shall care for the institution of the family, facilitate marriage and adopt policies to purvey progeny, child upbringing, pregnant women and mothers. The State shall emancipate women from injustice in all aspects and pursuits of life and encourage the role thereof in family and public life."

The 1998 Constitution of the Republic of the Sudan

"Empowering women is the comprehensive renaissance and ignition of her powers for building and resurrection, giving equal opportunities to ensure social justice."

National Comprehensive Strategy, 1992-2002

Part One

Section One

Introduction:

The Sudan is very rich in national and human resources with deep-rooted ancient civilizations. Its human resources have skills and abilities in numerous fields. However, the effect of the colonial policies created a deteriorating situation in this vast country. This situation has heavily burdened the alternating different national governments (military-party) since the independence in 1956.

The deterioration impact has spread through all the constitutional, political and cultural spheres. The successive governments have tried to implement or enforce their political aims and objectives respectively at the expense of the unity of the nation. The last of trials to save the country from this deterioration was the advent of al Inqaz (salvation) revolution in June 30th, 1989. The new government aims at overcoming the fiasco of the alternating ex-governments and administrative systems since the Turkish era in 1821.

Al Inqaz has declared the implementation of the Federal System of governance so as to resolve the problems of power sharing, wealth, equally and balance development and solving the problem of the separation of religion from the state, arriving at peaceful co-existence and social welfare for the people of the Sudan. All of this is constitutionalized in the light of political philosophy for a ruling system, administration, and development and for the total civilized and cultural revival which assimilates the identity, diversity that characterizes the Sudan.

Sudan Demographic and Social Background:

The Republic of the Sudan is the largest among the Arab and African countries with 2.5 million square kilometres. It is located between latitude 23-10 North and longitudes 24-38 east. The Sudan borders 10 countries; Egypt, in the North, Libya in the Northwest, in the west Republics of Chad and Central Africa, in the South Republics of Congo, Uganda and Kenya. In the east it borders Ethiopia and Eritrea. Thus it's characteristic geographical position and vast area makes it the moulding pot in which the Arab and African civilizations meet.

Population:

The 1993 census stated that the total population was 24,940,000. Also it indicated that sex ratio is 102 males for 100 females. The Central Statistical Bureau estimates a total population of 30,326,000 for 1999.

Natural Resources:

The River Nile and its tributaries flow from the South to the North. The Nile tributaries secure a quantity of water of about one hundred billion cubic meters. This leads to a mounting role in the economical and agricultural development. The Nile water is governed by a regional agreement to manage the use of the water. In addition to the Nile there are many valleys (wadis) and ravines and abundant accumulation of ground water which comprises an important source for development. Besides these water resources, the Sudan is privileged with a high amount of heavy rains.

The Sudan is also very rich in vast agricultural areas. These are 160 million feddans suitable for cultivation. 29.6% and 3 million feddans and mountains areas make 5.6%. Forests and abundant wild animal resources besides river and sea fishing, exist as well. Sudan is also rich in mineral resources and various other sources of energy. Now the petroleum sector witnesses a great interest after the excavation and drilling of oil.

The National Comprehensive Strategy (1992-2002) sets directives to initiate the whole sectors of the state for the ideal manipulation of the resources, capacities investment of wealth, and entering the new millennium with a national economical cycle.

Section Two: General Trends towards Women Equity and Equality

Women's Role in Life:

As a result of the mounting of the important role of women plus her persisting efforts, she could realize numerous purposes and claims which guaranteed her just equality and rights. The alternating national ruling systems adhered to the confirmation of women participation and guaranteed here representation in the executive and legislative institutions and enrolled her in the political organization of the country.

In order to consolidate women effective participation in the different aspects of life, the National Comprehensive Strategy (1992-2002) designates a special strategy for women as an outset of a new phase in the women movement. The introduction of this strategy states that the women sector is a broad one and its needs are included in the various sectors of the other strategies, yet the women sector in the strategy is specified to assert certain meanings and to draw attention to problems of special connection with the woman and her distinctive functions in life.

Backwardness and manipulation from which she was afflicted with the main oppressive share where customs and traditions intrude upon her rights, emphasized by religion, such as here right to dignity, equality concerning obligations, and humanity, her right to work, education, health and participation in public affairs and finally her right to have care and respect, in addition to her natural right to give birth and care for a family. All this should make us conceive the gap in her condition and the necessity of giving her concern, thus the National Comprehensive Strategy includes objectives and priorities and specific policies and programmes which guarantee women's participation in all aspects of life.

Accordingly, the National Salvation Revolution has adopted the advancement of the women movement, which started with continuous efforts since the forties. The Sudanese women in the preparation for the Fourth World Women Conference in Beijing in 1995, where a national committee was formed headed by the state minister in the Ministry of Development and Social Welfare, besides the participation of many experts concerned with women issues. Finally it was crowned by a General National Conference patronized by the President himself, where a declaration of several resolutions were issued evaluating the women's role and enhancing here participation in public life.

In the implementation of the resolution 50/203 dated December 1995 concerning the carrying out of the Fourth Women World Conference Programme of Action, a ministerial resolution No. 22, 1996 was issued to form a Committee and to follow the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action, where there is no contradiction with the values, beliefs and customs of the Sudanese society.

The continuous efforts have yielded the penetration of Sudanese women into the various field such as her participation in the legislative power, executive power, and political power. All the alternating constitutions since the independence in 1956 have confirmed giving women their complete rights without discrimination (distinction) irrespect of sex. Article (21) in Sudan's 1998 Constitution states that all the Sudanese are equal before the law and in their rights and duties, both males and females, without permitting discrimination among them owing to sex, religion or wealth. The article also confirmed their equal capability (efficiency) for public service (job). The 1998 Constitution (article 22) states the nationality right for every infant to be conferred through the mother and father. Thus calling for amendment to Nationality Act that restricts conferring of the nationality to the child through the father only. Further the Constitution makes retention for women a percentage of 25 as regards membership of the National Council through the special indirect election to guarantee women representation , plus 10% on the level of representation at the local committees.

In the legislative institution women has participated in all the alternating parliaments since 1964 up till now. The percentage of women in the present National Assembly amounts to 6.5%. Moreover, the percentage of women representation in the States Assemblies amount to 5% for each of the Northern States, 11% for Khartoum State and 8% for the Southern States.

In addition, women participate in the economical activities where the percentage of the working women is 26.5% from the total working power, the percentage of working women in the rural areas amounts to 32.5% and the working women in urban centres is 14.5%. According to the 1993 census and the assumptions of Central Statistical Bureau (1998) the participation of the Sudanese women in the agricultural sector comes to 92.4% compared with the urban women whose participation is 13.6%

Besides these achievements, women participation was effective in supporting peace operations, conflict resolution, in addition to the effective participation in building and development schemes. The problems of the civil war in the South and peace prevalence in all parts of the country are considered the main challenge to the implementation of the political, economical and social objectives, which require adopting a strategy for movement to continue the dialogue and establish peace. As far as this issue is concerned women participation was on a large scale. They participated in the National Dialogue Conferences, making deliberations and drawing recommendations concerning ways to achieve peace. Women also participated in service programmes for the regions affected by civil war and played a prominent role in the progress of Sudanese Community Unity Project.

The State has adopted numerous policies and programmes to solve the negative reflection of the reform policies and the structural adjustments, some of these economic policies are the establishment of funding institutions such as the Saving and Social Development Bank, pension funds, social insurance, besides concentrating the basic government services in the areas of health, education and water (which their responsibilities and administration have to be carried out at the state level with direct support from the Central government. This aims at giving more care of the essential services on a continuous basis and at the same time the central government improves the economical situations. This is clearly conceived from developing in this respect the governmental support to poor sectors. This includes electricity support, direct support for the needy families, support for productive families, support for medical insurance coverage for treatment abroad and locally.

The state catered for the women sector through adopting projects and programmes to satisfy their needs and priorities. Later on the state accepted the implementation of the commendations of the Fourth Women World Conference, putting a national comprehensive plan for the Advancement of Women (1998-002). The prominent features of this Plan is exemplified as follows:

- Reducing functional and literal illiteracy with emphasis on the young and women in the productive sector.
- Alleviating poverty through improving women situation.
- Enhancing basic medical services and health care facilities.
- Strengthening women's skills in cooperative, productive and marketing skills in order to maintain permanence and continuity.
- Encouraging corporations providing financial services and support for needy families and women in particular. Besides replicating and generalizing successful experiences in this field.
- Treatment of social distortions and fighting harmful traditions which violate the human rights of women
- Intensifying the training programmes in order to enhance women's aptitudes and skills in various fields.
- Improving employment opportunities and women recruitment in decision making positions.

- Increasing women abilities, skills and efficiency in facing and enduring environmental changes and hazards.
- Activating the women's role in participating in disputes and conflict resolution in order to maintain peace.
- Implementation of legislation and laws pertaining to women concerning various issues.
- Intensifying educational programmes for women in rural areas and rectifying the negative stereotype image of women in media programmes.
- Conducting and encouraging research regarding women diverse issues
- Upgrading educational services and facilities in order to attain women advancement and development in the field of education.

State Priorities:

Since the adoption of the Beijing Platform of Action, the government has been providing support in all areas of critical concern. The most critical areas have been as follows:

1. Alleviating poverty and creating job opportunities through integrated programmes and projects.
2. Eradicating illiteracy and upgrading educational standards.
3. Enhancing general health and subsidizing maternity and child care services.
4. Encouraging women participation and share in attaining peace and security.

Accordingly, women's objectives in terms of priorities are mainly geared towards social, economical and political aspects. Special attention is given particularly to special population groups from women and other special groups in addition to the residents of remote geographical areas.

To conclude, drawing from the above issues, it is evident that despite the efforts exerted to improve and enhance women situation yet the burden of the enforced civil war and the ramifications that result from it, constitute a huge set back in the availability of programmes that necessitate stability, peace and finance. A country distorted by war is in a continuous struggle to create temporary salvation projects and programmes that aim to reduce human sufferings and needs.

Part Two

Financial and Institutional Arrangements

Priority Objectives:

1. Women development.
2. Supporting the women sector and mobilizing all its abilities and energies as an important human resource to realize the Comprehensive National Strategy for Development.
3. Promoting women's roles in the society and consolidating it besides adopting policies suitable for such a role.
4. Opening news horizons to assist women in becoming effective agents in the political, social and economic change.

Policies:

- Enforcing what was realized of women rights, protecting it against violations and practical implementation of legislative decrees issued for the benefit of women to complement the legislative framework that consolidates their rights.
- Provision of legal rights for women with continued enlightenment on the importance of respecting these rights.
- Fighting harmful customs, traditions and practices of women through education and awareness raising programmes.
- Promulgating legislation affording protection and issuing affirmative measures for women working in the formal and informal sectors.
- Eradication of all forms of women illiteracy. Increasing correct religious understanding and providing vocational training to enhance basic abilities and skills.
- Reducing the gender gap in the enrolment of girls in formal education.

1. Financial Arrangements:

The State depends upon three methods for financing the Women Strategy and the National Plan for the Advancement of Sudanese Women.. These are:

- a) Within the annual general budget where the programmes and activities concerning women are included in the Plan to be funded through resources allocated for the various sectoral programmes.
- b) Establishing and activating the machinery working in the field of women development and advancement. The necessary resources for this are allocated from the national budget plus the financing offered from the bilateral cooperation programmes such as the project of WIDCU financed by UNDP. In addition to local financing from Sudan Government, project of developing the displaced women, family planning and income generating programmes and the MCH project funded by UNFPA. It is worth mentioning that the last few years have witnessed an increase in the number of projects and the number of training centres for the development of women capacities. Also a fixed percentage is allocated for the income generation programmes. The percentage ranges between 25% to 45% of the general development budget allocated for selected areas such as those supported by UNDP. According to the general budget of 1999, the percentage of the increase in the resources allocated for women programmes amounted to 40% compared to the total budget appropriated for the projects and programmes of income generating in the budget of 1998. Funds allocated for the WID Programmes by UN Agencies:

1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
\$1,130,000	\$900,000	\$1,350,000	\$1,400,000	\$1,250,000

- c) National Corporations have a role in funding the projects of women development. For example the Bank of Savings and Social Development, Bank El Kifaya, Agricultural Bank and other funding corporations which allocated financial resources to programmes for the benefit of women and poor families.

The Agricultural Bank participated in providing finance to support the activities of the rural women and the productive families within the strategy of alleviating poverty. The Bank participated as follows:

Year	Total Finance (in Dinars)
1995	28233437
1996	119403879
1997	158423428
1998	159503155

Reference: Agricultural Bank Data.

Responding to the Beijing Platform and Plan of Action that called for establishing appropriate machinery for advancing the status of women, a Ministerial Decree (No. 22) was issued. It formulated a National Committee to follow up the implementation of the resolutions of the Fourth World Conference on Women headed by the State Minister of the Ministry of Social Planning. It enforces the government commitment in consolidating the action of women advancement. The National Committee consists of 36 members representing various governmental Organs, NGOs and representatives from among youth and national resource persons concerned with women issues.

The National Consultative Committee assisted by the focal point (The General Directorate of Women Affairs).

Goals of the General Directorate of Women and Family Affairs

Set strategies, policies, plans, programmes and resource allocations that reflect the priorities of women and address women equity and equality.

- Follow-up , evaluate, and co-ordinate the implementation of WID policies and programmes and build capacity to have high degree of effectiveness and positive impact.

The position of this General Directorate is located close to the highest levels of decision making so that it can influence other ministries concerned and organs of NGOs and civil society. The national machinery (General Directorate of Women and Family Affairs) has been clearly defined with specific mandates, role and authorities.

Also a Consultative Committee was formulated to act as an advisory and co-ordinating mechanism to enhance women's role in different spheres and facilitate mainstreaming in other sectors.

Part Three: Section One: Women and Poverty Eradication

Poverty eradication is one of the areas of concern that Sudan Government sets it among its major priorities. Women participate effectively at all levels including both public and private sectors, this comes into the Comprehensive National Strategy 1992-2002 and also included in the National Plan for the Advancement of Women.

Women in the Traditional Agricultural Sector:

Between 80-90% of the women in this sector work to provide family food by producing – sorghum, millet, ground nuts in most parts of the country. In the irrigated sector the role of women is restricted to the seasonal labour such as cleaning the crop. This is due to the far distant of the seasonal agricultural schemes from the inhabited areas.

Animal Resources and Fishing:

The rural Sudanese women play a distinguish role in this field especially at the house, where they raise the domestic animals such as; sheep and goats for providing meat and milk and its derivatives, besides raising poultry for egg production and for family food. This field has an economical profit for women and the family and supplies the rest of the family with basic needs. In the field of fishing women have appreciated roles in making fishing nets. In the forestry field, women have gained strong awareness towards the protection of environments. They participate in forest construction and plants production.

2. The Most Prominent Institutions for Funding Agricultural Activities of the Productive Women:

Funding Institutions:

A. Banks:

The leading financial institution is the Saving and Social Development Bank which was founded for the sake of the poor, besides, Khartoum Bank, Sudanese Agricultural Bank, Farmer Commercial Bank, Animal Resources Bank, Sudanese Islamic Bank and Faisal Islamic Bank.

These banks provide finance for micro-credit and small scale industries. Such as food production and clothing in the range of ten percent from the ceiling specified. However, the Saving and Social Development Bank allocates all its resources for the poor families, micro-credit investors. The capital of this bank depends on the governmental financial support from Ministry of Finance, deposit of investors and 17.5% from the Almsgiving Fund (Zakat) The bank has an estimate of 31 branches in the various parts of Sudan. In 1997 a sum of 940 million pounds were allocated for financing projects of productive families where women share were 30% the finance allocated.

B. Social Funds:

Almsgiving Fund (Zakat) provided 13 thousand families with means of production through Saving and Social Development Bank which is allocated with 17.5% of such sum.

Al Kifaya Bank which is a social financial institution established in 1993, works in consolidating the values of work and alleviating poverty through uncollateral credit to poor women and provide them with economical consultancies, cultural programmes and training courses for enhancing their skills.

C. Pensions and Social Security Funds:

- These take care of the groups of pensioned officials and workers in both public and private sectors. It is worth mentioning that working women have the full right to pension in case of retirement as their men counterparts. These funds have begun to charge part of the pension or the insurance for the retired persons to enable them to own means of production or any income generating projects.
- Students Fund takes care of the poor students where it provides them with suitable accommodation, living subsidy, transportation and materials that help in the learning process.
- Health Security Fund concentrates on providing treatment and medicine for the State employees as well as the vulnerable groups in the society including women.
- Voluntary Organizations play prominent role in poverty alleviation among women, where 26 organizations work in this field.
- Most of these organizations have social centres for multi-purpose or integrated programmes in training courses, literacy raising and enhancing skills, health and environmental awareness as well as providing the means of production.

3. National Projects:

The most prominent national projects funded with both local and foreign component to which a 25-40% of the funds are allocated for women development programmes and income generating activities. These projects are as follows:

1. WIDCU (Women in Development Co-ordination Unit). This is for co-ordinating women activities in development.
2. Project of Displaced Women: targeted area Haj Yousif and Al Baraka at Khartoum State.
3. Comprehensive Women Development Projects: targeted for Nile State.
4. Area Development Scheme (ADS)
5. Area Rehabilitation Scheme (ARS)
6. Women Training Centre (Khartoum State)
7. Rural Women Development Projects: These are Western Savana Women Development Project and Jabel Mara Project.
8. South Kordofan Agricultural Development Project.
9. Al Nuhud Agricultural Development Project.
10. South Kassala Agricultural Development Project in addition to twelve projects covering different rural development areas.

- To achieve objectives of gender equality many projects at the national and state levels were implemented and financed by the government and International Organization.
- There are some financial constraints facing the allocation of needed funds for women projects and programmes pertaining to sectors related to health, education, environment and various development programmes. Yet, it could be stated that there are national projects that integrate women in development, for instance the displaced women development projects have allocated budgets estimated in the range of one million dollars in addition to the projects specified for maternal and child health care.

In the light of the commitment of the specialized International Organizations and UN Agencies to women issues, it is evident in its inclusion in the development projects. A percentage ranging from 25-45% of the projects implemented by UN Development Programmes go to women projects.

2. Non-Governmental Organizations:

Activities of voluntary non-governmental organizations covered a wide range of issues. They aim at the welfare of the Sudanese individuals, development and advancement of women, finding solutions to problems of the country priorities to all national women organizations are to alleviate war effects, rehabilitate the displace, refugees and the returnees, satisfying their basic needs.

Women non-governmental organizations and women groups work to consolidate the effective structures and fields of co-operation with the government and make networking with organizations. Communications and networking activities are enforced at the national level. A workshop was organized to pave the way for that.

It is worth mentioning that a number of non-governmental organizations have been given a consultative status to the UN.

Section Two

Women Education and Training

Statistics show that 53% of school age children (6-13) attend school at the basic level. The statistics also indicate that 49% of school age (6-13) girls attend schools, whereas 56% of the boys in the same age group attend school.

The 1990-96 statistics of general education show increase in girls' intake compared to boys, see the table No. (1). In that period the intake of girls increased from 871110 to 13378 (22% increase). Whereas, the boys intake increased from 1234064 to 1625810 with 8% increase during the same period.

Table No. (1) Explains the Development of Basic Education between 1990-1996:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1990	1234064	871110	2105174
1996	1337878	1625810	2963688

The number of the teachers also increased from 63735 in 1992/3 to 118402 in 1997 with 86% increase, the female teachers were 70%.

The increase in the educational services especially in the basic level is a main factor in realizing a parallel development. Examining the development of general education indicates an increase in the intake of children (both sexes) in the basic level in the year 1994-96, 60 -69% in 1996. The apparent intake of girls increased from 60.5% to 60.8% in the same period whereas the apparent intake percentage of the boys decreased from 76-71% at the same period.

Secondary Education:

The Education policies aim at making a qualitative change in the secondary education which is considered as the level of the utmost importance. Thus there was a 22% increase in school numbers from 547 in 1992/93 to 1217 in 1997. As a result, the number of male students increased from 153718 to 247459, 61% increase whereas the female students number increased from 126382 to 221231 with 75% increase at the same period.

Despite the large scale increase realized in the secondary level during the years 1989-1997, secondary education suffers from the difficulties of financing, training and the imbalance in the distribution of the trained teachers. Like the basic education, secondary education is administratively subordinate directly to the different state governments.

In spite of these difficulties, the secondary education in the Sudan was categorized in list (A) as one of the best 10 countries in Africa having high educational competence (Reference: UNESCO Report about education in Africa in 1997, the Sudan was the fourth in list (A)).

Statistics of general education for the year 1996 indicated a 27.9% intake in the secondary level for average of both sexes of the age 14-16 years. Male intake in the secondary level (28.5%) and female intake (27%) of same age. The following table explains the percentage of the apparent intake according to sex.

The Percentage of the apparent intake in the Secondary level according to Sex for the Year 1996

Information	Inhabitants 14-16 Years			The Intake		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
	866065	809314	1675379	247459	221231	468690
Intake %			100%	28.5%	27.3%	27.9%

High Education:

The State paid attention to the higher education institutions; governmental and non-governmental in order to prepare the educational and research sectors for the new century. Thus the last period of the year 1998 was distinguished with highlighting technical high education as a basic factor for development. The high education policies also aimed at increasing the chances of intake in all specialities. There was also an increase in the female intake estimated as 85% for the years 1991/92 – 1995/96.

Reviewing the statistics of the intake in the high institutions for the periods 95/96 and 98/99, the following may be noticed:

There is an increase in the percentage of females' intake in the higher education institutions. The number of females surpassed the males in some of the high education institutions (governmental and non-governmental).

The total number of students qualified for the intake in 1995/96 – 1998/999

Year	Males	Females	Female Percentage
1995/96	22456	20077	47.2
1998/99	14648	24012	62%

Source: Ministry of Higher Education

Illiteracy:

Educational policies aim at functional and literal illiteracy of the citizen to enable him/her to raise productive, vocational competence and gain good values and positive orientations.

The strategy aims at removing the illiteracy of 8 million from both sexes, of whom 84% are from the productive group of the age (14-45 years) and 16% from the young group outside the school of the age (9-14 year).

Illiteracy Programmes aim at the following:

- Illiteracy programmes aiming at removing literal and functional illiteracy.
- Joint training programmes for woman development aiming to improve the quality of life to enable women to participate in the development of society.
- In 1999 a national illiteracy campaign was launched resulting in the decrease of the rate of illiteracy to 57.6% among the females and 33.4% among the males.

Section Three: Women and Health

The global "Health for all" programme aims at attaining the highest possible level of physical, psychological, mental and social health. The approach of Primary Health Care (PHC) has been agreed upon for achieving the goal of the global programme (Health for all).

Sudan is one of the countries that has committed itself to the goals of the (Health for all) adapting its health system to the Primary Health Care approach and gave more attention to the health for women and children since they make 75% of the total population. Added to this are the specific problems facing these groups such as pregnancy, delivery and proper growth of children. During the eighties, the Maternal and Child Health and Family planning programmes were established to cover most of the country targeting the two groups mentioned above.

Also the maternal and child health and reproductive health programmes have been the primary priority areas in the Sudan Comprehensive National Strategy (1992-2002). The National Plan of Action for the Advancement of the Sudanese women-complementing the Comprehensive Strategy included the health programme too.

Strategic Objectives:

- 1- Increasing possibilities for women to receive health care during their lifetime.
- 2- Improving and developing programmes that protect women's health.
- 3- Encouraging research and dissemination of information on women's health.
- 4- Increasing financial support for improving women's health.

Similarly, the objectives of the Sudan National Plan of Action targeted the following areas:

1. Provision and training of human resources working in the field of women and child health (MCH) and PHC.
2. Improving health delivery system and increasing usage rate.
3. Improving the health of women and children.
4. Eradicating sexual transmitted diseases especially HIV/AIDS.
5. Strengthening research and encouraging studies in the field of reproductive health and developing the information system.
6. Improving Family Planning Services.
7. Improving life situation, living conditions for local communities.
8. Making health awareness and health education is available to public especially in the field of eradication of harmful practices and tradition.
9. Improving the nutritional status of women and children.

In order to achieve the above objectives, the National Plan of Action has been prepared by different sectors as indicated below:

1. The private sector.
2. United Nations Agencies
 - UNFPA
 - WHO
 - UNICEF
 - UNDP
3. National and International Non Governmental Organisations.
4. Different Civic Society organizations.

Achievements:

1. PHC and women's health protection programmes

Coverage of PHC reached more than 80% for all Sudanese women. Even in the South and despite the adverse security situation. The coverage has increased from 2% in 1989 to 25% in 1999.

Rehabilitation of health institutions working in the PHC with support from specialised UN agencies, NGOs and community participation including:-

- a- Support of 200 health centres for MCH in all parts of the Sudan through GOS and UNFPA support programmes.
- b- Provision of 1000 midwifery by UNICEF.
- c- Rehabilitation of the school of health visitors
- d- Rehabilitation of some of the midwifery schools.
- e- An observable development in pre and postnatal MCH.
- f- Improving the admission system of complicated cases of pregnancy and delivery through early follow up and provision of services with higher standards.
- g- Decentralization of the health system in Sudan encouraged attaining a better standard of PHC, and MCH management at local community levels.
- h- Sudan is the first state of the east Mediterranean region to apply the initiative of complementary treatment of childhood disease when a pilot experiment started in two states of Sudan. After the forthcoming evaluation in November 1999, services are to be extended to the rest of the state gradually.
- i- Mental and psychological health was integrated in the PHC to ensure service delivery for all women and treatment of their problems in the field.
- j- The programme of preventing cancers has been incorporated into PHC and will of course, assist in early diagnosis of cervical and breast cancers and early treatment.
- k- Health awareness and health education activities have been executed through the programme of preventing malnutrition especially among children under five, pregnant women and lactating mothers. Strategies have been designed and nutritional interventions incorporated under specific standards for improving the nutritional status.

2. Family Planning Services:

As a result of increased family planning services, the rate of awareness among women has increased on spacing between birth. The rate of contraceptive use has increased from 9.9% in 1990 to 15% in 1999.

3. Eradication of Harmful Traditional Practices (EHTP)

Under the director of MCH and in collaboration with UNICEF, a programme on the eradication of harmful practices has been put in place. It is also an essential component for all health programmes funded by UNFPA. The Harmful Traditional practices targeted are:

- FGM
- Harmful nutritional practices
- Successive pregnancies.

Tangible developments occurred especially in big towns and among educated women in general. More needs to be done in this respect in the rural areas.

4. Training and Capacity Building:

4.1 Basic Training

The following training have been achieved in collaboration with UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO:

- 1500 rural midwives.
- 750 traditional midwives.
- 150 midwife-nurses.
- 50 women health visitors.

4.2 In-Service Training:

With the above agencies and during the same period, approximately 1000 health workers were trained by organized activation workshops on MCH, PHC and eradication of HPT. The projects

of rehabilitation of the midwifery schools in all Sudan and provision of the trained human resources needed is under planning now.

5. Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases/AIDS:

A number of centres for treatment of sexually transmitted diseases have been opened and training sessions of medical, para-medical and other health personnel, on the diagnosis of such cases and treatment have been organized. Efforts to identify such cases have been exerted accompanied by activities on raising awareness for improving the health status. These activities exist at all levels of the health system targeting strengthening the early warning and treatment systems. In the field of HIV/AIDS, official and public efforts have been exerted within the national programme of fighting AIDS to raise awareness about the danger of the diseases and putting a strategy and action plan targeting protection of the society to limit spread. The programme intervenes in many ways and works in collaboration with NGOs and UN agencies.

6 Other Fields:

- A directorate for School Health was established under the auspices of the National Directorate for MCH. Similar directorate have been established in four states with a future vision of making service delivery general at schools and in all parts of the country. This is done in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and UN agencies (UNICEF, WHO and FAO).
- The official register and reporting system have been combined to improve the data and information system for more effectiveness. Training on the new system is on going for more specialized personnel.
- Safe Motherhood Survey was conducted targeting provision of indicators for safe motherhood. It is now under analysis and results will be disseminated most in December 1999.
- It is expected that an Impact Assessment Study will be conducted next year on the training of Traditional Midwives. According to the results, it will be decided on sustaining the training or more specifically train rural midwives only (basic training of one year)

Section Four: Women, Armed Conflict and Peace

Armed conflict is a primary obstacle that has threatened the passage of Sudanese women for development and progress since there is no advancement or development without peace. Women in Sudan, especially in the South, are more concerned with bringing war to a halt since they are the most affected during the last thirty-four years. For this reason the government sees the participation of women in peace making as an essential tool for raising women's issues.

First: Policies and Programmes for Women and Armed Conflict:

Objectives:

1. Developing and Directing attention to the needs of women and girls-victims of armed Conflict:

This objective has been achieved 50%. According to the research on war-displaced girls and women, and after identifying their needs, a number of income generating activities have been established. Also training sessions for those interested in productive activities and allocations of resources have been organized. This target has been achieved in collaboration between GOS and NGOs. But women in the war zone were not included in the study for the known security reasons, which meant reducing their benefits from such projects.

2. Encouraging the participation of women in decision-making and peace negotiations:

This objective has been achieved 25%. Though efforts exerted on peace resolution had not stopped since 1955, yet the participation of women was only realized during this government era, from inside and outside Sudan. Women also have been represented in all government mechanisms for peace and a woman was appointed as a minister of Peace in one of the States of conflict areas in the Southern Sudan.

3. Strengthening and developing the role of Women's participation in conflict resolution and spreading the culture of peace:

To accomplish such an objective the government and NGOs organized a number of training workshops and seminars in different spheres for spreading the Culture of Peace and encouraged women to participate in inter-tribal dialogue and dialogue between different factions.

Second: Best Practices and Creative Procedures:

- The government appointed a number of women in the Public Police forces which has a great impact in protecting women from violence and abuse of their rights especially the displaced and refugees.
- The government issued some legislation which protect women and girls in armed conflict areas and outside camps. Also legal awareness and training to those working in the field was organized especially on women issues.
- The government directed special programmes in local dialects for children and women in the shape of songs, role-plays, stories etc. This will assist in mobilization for peace and encourage women to call their kin who still carry arms to resort to peace after knowing the difficult circumstances in which they live.
- Through women initiatives twelve women organizations and groups were established on voluntary basis in the north and south of Sudan and also in the neighbouring countries. Despite the differences of these associations in terms of religious, political and ethnic affiliation and

regional background, they all strive for finding a better situation for women victims of armed conflict.

- One of the best practices that was done by such groups is strengthening networking and coordination between them to provide better services for affected women and uniting vision and collaboration to push the passage of peace and strengthening the role of women in it.

Section Five: Women and the Economy

The economic sector is concerned with making decisions and policies concerning the economic cycle as a whole. Women play a major role in economic activities since the rate of their participation reaches 30% of the labour force. In the agricultural sector they come as a majority reaching 68.7% of all the labour force in the Sudan followed by the service sector reaching a participation rate of 22% followed by trade, co-operatives sector reaching a participation rate of 15%, then the industrial sector reaching 02%. The ratio of females in the public sector reaches 40.8% (Statistics of Service Affairs Bureau) and in some parts they constitute 92.4% (Western Sudan in Kordofan and Darfur).

Legislation:

The Sudan 1998 Constitution provided for the sanctity of earning and property. Every person shall have the right to acquire property and knowledge and shall enjoy the privacy of his/her earning without any sort of expropriation of whatever kind. In fact the earlier legislations Individual Labour Relations Act 1981, the Industrial Safety Act of 1976 are all consolidated in one Act i.e., Labour Act 1997 which covers laws governing the private sector. The Public sector applies the Public Service Act of 1995. In these laws and legislations many affirmative measures were adopted for the benefit of women. Thus ensuring compatibility with all ILO Treaties and Agreements.

There are special tribunals for adjudication of labour disputes. Recourse to justice outside the Judicial system is recently adopted to act as an equitable remedial process for genuine claims that need a special just treatment.

Access to Resources, Markets and Trade:

Provision of capital and resources, land appropriation, ownership rights and women development programmes were introduced in planning and implementation to assist women for income generation activities. One of the mechanisms established is the businesswoman Bureau under the auspices of the Business Owners Association.

Credit:

Development banks have funded complementary rural development projects in agricultural production and family productive activities, rural women activities, vocational and micro-credit activities and investment. Women have participated in the agricultural activities supported by various banks. For instance, the total sum of funding for al Nilain Industrial Development Bank reached 149 million pounds for the period 1997.

- 1 Exemption of beneficiary families from enforcing advance payment as a condition.
- 2 Accepting guarantors from the Social Fund, Almsgiving (Zakat) and (Insurance) (Takaful).
- 3 Accepting personal guarantors.
- 4 Exemption from the default period of six months.
- 5 Provision of a maximum loan ceiling for an individual at 3 million pounds.

Training:

Women are trained in different sectors (Agriculture, health, industry, small industries, vocational training such as making clothes, soap making, food production, drinks and agricultural products). Also training workshops for businesswomen in marketing and funding have been organized through training centres, banks, organizations and women directorates in the states. This is besides conducting studies and research on women's economic problems and productive capacity. One of the major studies has been marketing women products in seven states.

Section Six :Women in Power and Decision-Making Women in Executive and Judiciary Mechanisms:

Since independence in 1965, women have enjoyed full rights as equal citizens as men. Article 21 of the 1998 Constitution states: (All people are equal before the court of law as regards to functions of public life and there shall be no discrimination only by reason of race, sex or religious creeds. They are equal in eligibility for public posts and offices not being discriminated on the basis of wealth). This quotation means the full equality in rights and duties including political rights, since women have the right of voting and election equal with men at all levels. Women made use of this right to elect and vote since 1965 when the first woman was elected to Parliament. The current National Assembly has 25 (twenty-five) women making 6.5% of the total membership, in addition to female members in all 26 state Legislative Organs. The ratio of women in State Assemblies reached 5% for all states, 11% for Khartoum State and 8% for the Southern States.

To increase women participation in political life, women are granted in the 1998 Constitution a 25% of seats of National and state Assemblies. At the local level, the minimum quota is 10% for women. During 1990 to 1999, women held the following offices:

One Governor at the state level (appointed 1993 for the first time)

2 Federal Ministers.

4 State ministers

13 regional state Ministers

A landmark was made in 1993 by the appointment of 3 (three) women in the Supreme Court among 27 judges. By 1995 there were 5 women judges in this highest judicial position. Women participate widely as lawyers and judges.

Beside the quota allocation women are free to contest for the geographical seats. Thus the retention of seats for women are meant to be affirmative measures to expedite women empowerment and participation in society.

Section Seven: The Girl Child

Attention given by Sudan to children is derived from principles and good values and beliefs of its citizens. Children under 18 constitute about 14 millions i.e. more than 50% of the total population. This is a large sector of the population and reflects the great responsibility that is shouldered towards children, their services and care.

Education for All:

The right of a child for education is a human, social, economical, political cultural, scientific, and technical perception. It is one of the major goals of the Sudanese jurisdiction at the level of basic needs. Education opportunities have been provided based on the principle of equality, right, and justice. Laws, projects and educational programmes have been designed accordingly. The slogan ' Education for All ' came to achieve the goals of the National Action Plan for Survival Development of Children based on the following indicators:

- 1- increasing the enrolment rate at the basic education level to 100% by the year 2000.
- 2- increasing the rate of completion to 805 by the year 2000
- 3- eradicating illiteracy by the year 2000
- 4- Expanding services for early childhood development and basic education

In accordance with the International Announcement of the Education for All that gives the maximum priority for providing education for girls and females in general, improving the quality of education by eradicating the problems facing girls, education of girls is set as a priority. To reduce the gender gap and the gap between regions in education, The Ministry of Education conducted a study on the problems and obstacles that lead to girls drop out Assessing the family and social demand for education, the study targeted the following groups:

- Male and female directors of schools
- Parents of girls in schools
- Girl children in basic education at the age of 7-12 years

The results of the study ensured that there are many factors that have made girls drop out from schools such as:

- Household responsibilities undertaken by girls
- Poverty
- Attitudes of certain local communities towards girls education
- Distance of schools from residence
- Lesser chances of enrolled and repetition
- Lack of relevance between curriculum and local community need

To solve such problems, the ministry of Education organizes awareness raising programmes for parents about the importance of girls' education. The curriculum is revised to address local demands. The cost of educational services is reduced.

Health

The combined efforts of the government with the public had an impact on developing and improving health centres especially those serving mothers and children. Many projects were achieved targeting:

- Reducing rates of communicable diseases
- Complementary treatment of the five killing diseases of children (malaria,diarrhea, bronchitis, malnutrition and measles)

- Iodination of table salt
- Vaccination
- Eradication of polio among children

National campaigns for polio eradication were organised in three target states and cases have been reduced from 252 cases in 1993 to 51 cases in 1996.

Despite issuing acts and laws that prohibit harmful traditional practices, yet the FGM is practised especially in rural areas. After the ratification of the Child's Rights Convention in 1992, eradication of FGM was included as a strategic aim in the Comprehensive National Strategy (1992-2002). Government and NGOs conducted activities that reduced the practice to a low of 50% in 1998. Activities to eradicate the practice that affects the girl child include;

- Raising public awareness on the harmful consequences of FGM
- Training trainers
- Designating a national day for FGM
- Organising round tables on FGM
- Reaching the grassroots

Sudanese Laws and the Girl Child's Rights:

In application to the Child Rights Conventions, Sudan established and revised laws that are in conformity with the girl child's rights:

- Birth and death Registration Law (1972)
- Public Health Law (1975)
- School Health Law (1972)
- Juvenile Care law (1982)
- Child Care Law (1971)
- National Council for Child Care Law (1991)
- Organizing Basic Education Law (1992)
- Personal matters Law for Muslims (1991)

All the above laws make it clear that there is no discrimination, and that all children have equal rights. The right of the girl to inheritance is secured. The Personal Matters Law (1992) stated the eligibility of the child (boy /girl) to inheritance even before birth.

Section Eight : Institutional Mechanisms :

Governmental Institutional Mechanisms:

Women focal points are part of the machinery where recently the women unit in the Ministry of social planning is upgraded to a full-fledged department. Additional women units exist in the Ministries of Justice, Agriculture and Foreign affairs, as well as focal points in the 26 states of Sudan.

Higher Educational Institutions, Women/Gender Studies, And Information Centres:

In almost all universities there are academic as well as gender-related studies. Leading ones are the Unit of Women Studies at the Institute of Developmental studies of Khartoum University. This offers short-term courses, Diplomas and Master degree programmes. University of Ahfad, a private university, is exclusively for women and also provides women and gender-based studies. Omdurman Islamic University has a college for women studies. The university of Gezira, a rural-oriented university is specialized in rural women studies at the under graduate and postgraduate levels.

The Private Sector:

In the private sector a number of companies and consultancy firms are providing training, research, evaluation and project formulation services in gender and development. Most of these centers are run by women or depend highly on women experts.

Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs):

Civil society organizations are actively participating in coordination with governmental institutions. This is seen as a major help in the implementation of the National Comprehensive Strategy (1992-2002). Most of the 156 national NGOs and the 56 International NGOs work in the field of women in development. Forty one (41) national organizations are working exclusively in women issues. The most leading among these are:

1- The Sudanese Women General Union (SWGU) :

The largest broad-based, open for all, grassroots organisation. Its Constitution defines the following strategic objectives :

- Promoting social, political and economic development
- Furthering the development of women's education and participation
- Conveying the opinion of women to decision makers at all levels
- Promoting peace, understanding and cooperation between women.

SWGU uses the following means to achieve its objectives:

- Studies, research and dissemination of information
- Technical and advocacy training
- Educational and cultural programmes drawing on grassroots experiences
- Fostering culture of peace

SWGU has 17000 (seventeen thousand local branches) across Sudan.

2- Working Women Bond :

A sectoral association that caters for the welfare and development of working women with branches in all work places.

3- NGOs with consultative status with the UN ECOSOC : four national and international NGOs working in Sudan acquired the consultative status and these are :

- Babiker Badri Scientific Association for Women Studies
- National Organization for the Eradication of Harmful Traditional Practices
- International women Bond.
- International Muslim Women Union

Section Nine: Women & Human Rights

Sudan belief in women rights as human rights is well reflected in the government's commitment in making an exclusive strategy, among strategic objectives expressed in the National Comprehensive Strategy. (NCS) 1992-2001.

It also deserves mentioning that Sudan have signed all conventions pertaining to human rights since it joined the UN, OAU and the Arab League.

Sudanese Women Constitutional Status:

All national constitutions have affirmed the firm legal status of women versus basic civil, political and economic rights. This is emphasised as early as the Provisional Constitution of 1956 and 1964 amendment, the transitional constitution of 1985, the 12th Constitutional Decree of 1993 and the 1998 Constitution which is ratified by a referendum in June 1998.

The Status of Women since Beijing:

The last five years had witnessed the approval of many laws and legislation's which had improved economic and social position of Sudanese women. The 1998 Constitution has defined the nature of governance in the Republic of Sudan and its ethnic -cultural diversity, religious tolerance, lofty goals of justice and social equality without discrimination due to race, sex or colour. As for the family, the Constitution clearly expressed the state's commitment and protection of women against any unfairness in the public life and encouraged the positive role of women in family and society. (Article 15). Women are equally given all basic rights and freedoms, infringement of which constitute grave violations of human rights. In accordance with the Constitutional rights of the Minister of Justice, acting on his capacity as Chairman of the National Advisory Council for Human Rights, he issued a Decree on June 15th 1999 ruling the complete eradication of abduction of women and children. He formed a Committee (CEAWC) which entertain Attorney General powers delegated to it as far as arrest, capture and investigations in order to enable the members of the Committee in order to carry out their mandate. CEAWC is formed to redress the issue of abduction of women and children who become victims in war and conflict zone areas, yet such grievances are not prevalent in the rest of the Sudan.

CEDAW

Sudan did not ratify CEDAW due to lack of unanimity in the past. But after the promulgation of the Sudan Constitution 1998, the atmosphere became conducive as it adopted a considerable amount of rights pertaining to women, thus rendering most of the past reservations regarding CEDAW repugnant and unworthy. A technical Committee is already now evaluating and reviewing the convention. Once report of such Committee is ready, it will be put to public debate in preparation for the ratification of CEDAW.

Section Ten: Women & Media

The Media is a decisive tool in awareness raising and communication in accordance with the socio-economic reality and advocacy of the agenda of change.

Objectives:

The National Women focal point makes use of the existing public, private and NGOs media institutions to achieve the following objectives:

- a- Combating women stereotype images and negative portrayal.
- b- Encouragement of a balanced presentation of women multidimensional roles.
- c- Increasing women participation and communicate women views, ideas and to influence decision-making.

Achievements:

Since independence women participated in the different media institutions. The Ministry of Information and Culture with its focal departments in all 26 States employ women at all levels, some of which hold substantial leading posts.

National Corporation for Arts and Culture (NCAC)

In this institution 14 women hold the post of unit director. In the arts unit 22 women are holding different leading posts.

National Radio Corporation:

Radio services at the federal States radios are covering the country. The first woman broadcast was appointed in 1947 and women now comprise about 70% of the total working force in the Federal Radio Corporation.

National TV corporation:

As early as the starting of the TV services in the country (1963) women had joined these services. Currently 207 (two hundred and seven) women are working in the TV corporation.

News Papers:

Since the forties women had joined journalism. Currently 57% of all journalists are women. In the 57 journals authorized to date two daily news papers editors are women. Almost all paper allotted sections for women issues. The press council includes 2 women out of 21 members, one of who is vice president and the other is chairing one of the 4 committees.

Sudan News Agency (SUNA)

SUNA is the only national news in the country. Women enjoy the very leading roles in the agency. The director of the agency is a women and seventy other women are sharing with her leadership and management in English editing, local news editing and International News. Training unit at Port Sudan regional office. As well as strong managerial representation of 49 female Journalist, 17 female technicians and 4 female engineers.

More over the Sudanese Women General Union issues (Noon) weekly newspaper and (Usrati) a monthly magazine specialized in women issues.

Section Eleven: Women & Environment

Women are in direct and daily contact with the environment through their use of its resources (fuel and water) and through their efforts to maintain healthy environment for their families. Sudanese women play a major role in managing natural resources through their different activities in agriculture, animal husbandry and household activities.

The 1992-2001 Strategy fully recognized the vital role of women in fulfilling the following strategic objectives:

- a) Creation of a healthy environment through cleaning solid and soft wastes, provision of clean water and rational use of water.
- b) Rehabilitation the vegetation cover by programmes of popular forestation and home gardens.
- c) Use of alternative energy sources and use of conservation methods i.e. improved stoves and agricultural residue material.

The following are examples of best practices of women participation:

- 1 **Comprehensive Development Projects to combat desertification.**
This project is currently implemented in al-Udayya in Western Kordofan State under the umbrella of the international conservation for combating desertification. The project aims at increasing range management capacity for the pastoral population in the area. The project improved women situation by involving them in designing the activities as well as the management of the institutions. The women become members of the local community councils and the sub-committees that implement the project. Resources made available by the project i.e. revolving funds, small enterprises and awareness campaigns. Women also had benefited from the project endeavour to integrate traditional governance institutions with modern ones.
- 2 **Gardukh Project for range Rehabilitation:**
Bio-diversity and Carbon emission reduction:
This UN funded project, implemented in Bara, Northern Kordofan State. It aims at providing rural communities with technical assistance to develop an environmentally friendly local systems for resource management, alleviating the poverty of women by introducing income-generating activities that are environmentally friendly is seen as a central component of the project.
- 3 **Arid Zones Development Project:**
Pilot implementation of this project is at the Butana Plain in Eastern Sudan.
4. Salt production by means of solar energy for rural women development.

Constraints

Experts at the National Committee identified the following constraints to further progress of the Beijing Platform of Action.

1 At the International Level

Weak international funding has negatively affected the funds available for UN agencies and NGOs, consequently leading to:

- 1- Few projects for development of women
- 2- Few capacity building and training programmes for women
- 3- Less exchange programmes and study tours
- 4- Few research centers and information and documentation units
- 5- Lack of recognition of basic cultural values and specific peculiarities of certain nations in the International Conventions and Treaties which makes countries reluctant to adopt them
- 6- Differences in priorities between donor and recipient countries

2 At the Regional level:

- 1- Lack of co-ordination in the fields of women development
- 2- Sporadic expert meetings on gender issues between African countries and between African and Arab countries
- 3- Weak communication and networking between countries in the region
- 4- Lack of exchange of best practices and successful pilot experiences at the regional level

3 At the National level

- 1- Weak or non-existence of basic infrastructure for special programmes of women empowerment
- 2- Far geographical distances renders dissemination of basic services very difficult, especially when accompanied by meagre resources.
- 3- Negative response to improve the status of women and girls in certain areas.
- 4- Harmful traditional practices.
- 5- Absence of a critical mass of women in decision making is considered as a major obstacle to moving the agenda forward.
- 6- Lack of information together with low level of training.
- 7- High cost of monitoring, training, maintaining data base, reporting and evaluation.
- 8- Heavy debts and structural adjustments lead to cutting back on social services.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is to be emphasized that the status of Sudanese women has improved significantly since independence in terms of women constitutional rights. But effective implementation of these rights is slow.

It is to note that Sudan is one of the first countries that established a higher mechanism for childcare after the ratification of the Child's Convention (the Supreme Council for ChildCare). This is considered as an important factor in drawing attention towards the girl child. Also the problem of poverty, illiteracy, conflict and lack of services will remain major issues that require perpetual attention and back up, funding and collection of proper data.

Sudanese women are determined to stand in solidarity with the women in the other countries to advance the empowerment of women in all fields.