



The Republic of South Sudan

2024 Voluntary National Review Report On the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals

June 2024





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Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing – in a global partnership. These 17 SDGs are interconnected, acknowledging that actions in one area will impact outcomes in others, and that development should strive to maintain a balance between social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

The SDGs reflect an understanding that sustainable development everywhere must integrate economic growth, social well-being and environmental protection. South Sudan contributes to this global objective by presenting its first National Voluntary Review (VNR) Report, outlining the progress, challenges, and opportunities on 9 SDGs. Opportunities to accelerate SDGs implementation include the prevailing relative peace, the Revised National Development (R-NDS) which outlined key national development priorities, South Sudan's current participation in the pilot under the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement which involves roll-out of structural reforms and financing frameworks, and the ongoing Public Financial Management reforms that will help generate revenue for financing the SDGs accelerated implementation. Moreover, South Sudan could leverage its existing national commitments from the Food Systems Summit (2021, 2023), the Transforming Education Summit (2022), Health Services and Climate Action to mobilize resources to finance the implementation of SDGs.



Abbreviations and Acronyms

AMVAT	Agricultural Markets, Value Addition and Trade Development
ARCSS	Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan
DFA	Development Finance Assessment
FY	Fiscal Year
GESS	Girls Education South Sudan
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HLPF	UN High-Level Political Forum
GoSS	Government of South Sudan
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
ND	National Dialogue
NDC(s)	Nationally Determined Contribution(s)
NDS	National Development Strategy
MSME	Micro-Small and Medium Enterprise
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PFM	Public Finance Management
R-ARCSS	Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan
R-NDS	Revised National Development Strategy
R-TGoNU	Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSP	South Sudanese Pound
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VNR	Voluntary National Review



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While we are unable to name everyone, we express our sincere gratitude to the Government, Development Partners, and Head of Specialized Committees, Academia and Think Tanks, Women Groups, Youth Group, Private Sector, and Civil Society Organizations that offered valuable insights on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation, challenges and the opportunities to accelerate progress on the SDGs. Their feedback during the validation of the draft VNR Report informed the development of this final report, alongside inputs shared during numerous consultative meetings and rounds of reviews of the draft report.

We are grateful to SDGs focal persons in various MDAs and UN Entities for their valuable technical contributions throughout the entire process. The National Bureau of Statistics, the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UN-RCO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) played a notable role in coordinating and providing strategic directions in the preparation of this report as well as providing technical inputs in the report. The Government greatly appreciate the financial support of United Nations Development Systems in South Sudan that facilitated the VNR team attendance of the VNR regional workshop, VNR launch, stakeholders' consultations as well as validation of the report.

Lastly, we express our appreciation to the VNR coordination team tasked with the VNR preparation. The South Sudan VNR Focal Points led the team from the Ministry of Finance and Planning and the National Bureau of Statistics who relentlessly followed up on the entire process daily since the VNR launch event on March 28, 2024. It is through your commendable dedication that we successfully grappled with setbacks and managed to produce this report. We thank you for your valuable contributions.



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Highlights

i. The Review Process

South Sudan Vision 2040, the Revised National Development Strategy (R-NDS) 2021-2024 and key sectoral strategies provide a solid foundation for the country's development agenda. Given the country's history of protracted armed conflicts that have significantly affected human capital development, the United Nations Development System has formulated the 2023-2025 United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDCF). This plan, guided by the humanitarian, development, and peace nexus approach, aims to support the government's developmental efforts. With assistance from the United Nations Development Programme, the R-NDS and previous development plans offer strategic direction aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Agenda 2063. The R-NDS outlines priority SDGs for South Sudan's development, in accordance with the R-ARCSS provisions.

To address significant challenges in achieving SDGs due to internal and external shocks, the government collaborated with the United Nations and other development partners to prepare the SDG Rescue Plan in 2023. This plan focuses on specific SDG targets with the greatest synergies and priorities in the R-NDS. SDGs are being integrated into national development plans and sectoral policies. Until 2024, South Sudan lacked a monitoring mechanism for the SDGs. In September 2023, the government committed to reviewing the SDGs status and preparing a progress report for presentation to the United Nations High-level Political Forum in July 2024. This report is South Sudan's first VNR.

The Ministry of Finance and Planning, supported by the National Bureau of Statistics, leads the preparation for the 2024 VNR. This involves identifying stakeholders and conducting extensive consultations to increase awareness and strengthen national leadership and ownership of the SDGs. The review identified progress, challenges, and opportunities for accelerating SDG implementation. Furthermore, the consultations enhanced dialogues and broadened partnerships. The outcomes of these meetings are documented in the stakeholders' consultative meetings report.

ii. Status of the SDG Progress

Despite the relative calm and recovery due to the R-ARCSS and the formation of the R-TGoNU in 2020, South Sudan's development path remains hindered by food security issues, armed conflicts, inflation, and climate shocks. Some positive milestones include mainstreaming SDGs in development plans and laws, the inaugural SDG report in 2017, the first SDG data landscape diagnostics study in 2021, the SDG Rescue Plan in 2023, and the 2024 VNR preparation. Progressive policies and sectoral plans have been developed in line with the SDGs, albeit with limited implementation.



No Poverty: No progress has been made toward SDG 1. Poverty levels have persistently worsened. The share of population below the poverty line of US\$ 2.15 is 67.3% (2016). The poverty headcount ratio according to the national multidimensional poverty index stands at 82.5% in 2023. Worsening poverty and vulnerability contexts have had a dire impact on development indicators, with social services mainly financed and delivered by donors. Social protection (SP) is an important part of the Government's strategy to fight poverty and promote resilience. The South Sudan Development Plan 2011-2016 first recognized the importance of developing a coherent SP system 'to reduce risk, vulnerability, poverty and economic and social exclusions throughout South Sudan. The newly revised National Development Strategy 2021-2024 reaffirms the Government's support and leadership in meeting the needs of vulnerable populations by reviving the implementation of the social protection policy.

Zero Hunger: Most of the food and agriculture-related SDG targets are still far from being achieved. Indicators focused on malnutrition present a mixed picture. The prevalence of stunting in children under five (5) remains higher than the global average for the same period, although there is a slight improvement. The prevalence of stunting among children aged under 5 years was estimated at 27.9% (2022), 28.3% (2021), 28.7% (2020), 29.1% (2019), 29.3% (2018), 29.6% (2017), and 29.8% (2016). The prevalence of acute malnutrition has increased from 15.8% in 2021 to 17.7% in 2023.

Good Health and Well-being: Though minimal, South Sudan's coverage for essential health services has progressively increased. The Service Coverage Index increased to 34% in 2021 from 31% in 2019, 30% in 2017 and 27% in 2015. Maternal mortality has reduced since the 2006 Sudan Household health survey, when it was estimated at 2,054 deaths per 100,000. It is currently estimated at 1,223 per 100,000, which is still the highest in the world. The maternal mortality ratio trend continues to fluctuate. While there was an increase between 2015 (789/100,000) and 2022 (1,223/100,000), it is important to consider the longer-term perspective of improving the ratio from 2006 to 2022. The proportion of birth attended by skilled birth attendants remained below 20% between 2019 and 2021, due to various factors, including poor access to reproductive health care and severe human resources capacity gaps.

The tuberculosis (TB) incidence stagnated at 227/100,000 population between 2011 and 2022, which is higher than the global incidence. The health system's challenges contributed to the high TB incidence in South Sudan. The TB treatment success rate (TSR) was 88% (2017), 85% (2018), 90% (2019), and 90% (2020), which met the recommended treatment success rate of 85%.

The HIV prevalence rate among adults aged 15 to 49 years decreased from 2.5% in 2020 to 1.6% in 2024. The HIV incidence has progressively decreased over the years: 17,000 (2022), 10,932 (2023) and 8,086 (2024).



Quality Education: Although literacy rates remain the lowest in the region, adult (age 15+) literacy rate in South Sudan increased from 26.98 percent in 2008 to 34.5 percent in 2022. Youth literacy rate is a little higher (age 15-24 years), standing at 47.9 percent with a slightly lower level among women (47.4%) than among men (48.4%). Inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all, remain elusive for over 2.8 million children, who are out of school, with 53 percent being girls whose net enrolment rate for primary education is a paltry 37.6%.

Total enrolment at all levels has steadily increased by 14% between 2018 and 2023. Between 2022 and 2023 alone, there was a 12% increase in enrolment. Moreover, the gender parity index is gradually narrowing across all school levels, from 0.75 in 2018 to 0.87 in 2023. In 2012 national net enrolment in primary education was 42.1% while in secondary education it was 2.5%. While net enrolment has steadily increased overtime to 7% in 2023, net enrolment rates in primary schools have gradually declined to 38.0% in 2023.

Decent Work and Economic Growth: South Sudan's macroeconomic stability is significantly affected by limited fiscal resources and pressing humanitarian needs. The war in Sudan has affected the oil export to international markets, causing sharp price spikes, which have heavily impacted on the economically vulnerable populations. Annual GDP growth is projected to recover to 7.1 % in 2024 from 5.6 % in 2023 and 6.6% in 2022. The labor force participation rate for adults aged 15-64 has slightly increased from 70.9 in 2020 to 71.5 % in 2022, compared with the global average of 60.8%. Participation rates for youth aged 15-24 have increased from 61% in 2020 to 61.2 % in 2023. Vulnerable employment rate is 87.7% (81.1% for men and 94.2% for women).

The government is investing in homegrown entrepreneurial initiatives through a dedicated Youth Enterprise Development Fund (Youth Enterprise Development Fund bill soon to be tabled in the national parliament), as well as vocational training facilities and resources for youth in all the states.

Industry and Infrastructure: South Sudan ICT usage and indicators are patchy as the progress is constrained by insufficient broadband capacity, outdated equipment, and a lack of understanding of the advantages and accessibility of ICT. The proportion of the population covered by mobile network technology is a static 30 percent. In addition, the proportion of internet users is 17% in both 2022 and 2023.

The government is committed to moving towards e-governance and has set up an ambitious plan to invest in sufficient broadband to equip public institutions to gradually transition to e-governance. Furthermore, South Sudan prioritizes partnerships to drive inclusive local manufacturing sector and commit to building resilient infrastructure, fostering innovation ecosystems, and leveraging technology to bridge the digital divide, thus paving the way for economic diversification and progress.



Climate Action: In accordance with Article 4(12) of the Paris Agreement, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) communicated by the Parties are recorded in a public registry maintained by the UNFCCC Secretariat. The NDCs registry contains 195 countries that have submitted their NDCs. South Sudan has submitted its second NDCs or version 2 of the NDCs on 21/9/2021 after a review. Its status indicates as active. The NDCs embody efforts by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to impacts of climate change.

Under the South Sudan's Vision 2040, the Government has adopted multiple climate-related initiatives, including the National Environment Policy (2015 – 2025) which led to the South Sudan's first National Adaptation Plan (NAP) in 2021, the first and second Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) in 2017 and 2021, and the comprehensive Agriculture Master Plan (2015-2040).

South Sudan launched its first digital integrated Monitoring, Reporting and Verification iMRV system in 2021. The iMRV provides the country with the capacity to track, verify, and report on the emissions and estimation of the annual national GHG emissions and GHG inventory from the IPCC GHG emission sectors; tracking and monitoring of climate actions, policies, programmes; and climate finance flow.

Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: South Sudan government has made strides to consolidate peace and set foundations to build strong and accountable institutions since the signing of the Revitalized Peace Agreement in 2018 despite repeated occurrence of inter-communal conflicts that have continued to derail peacebuilding and conflict resolutions efforts. Scarcity of data makes it difficult to assess progress toward strong institutions due to underdeveloped data systems. Some progress on women's rights has been achieved. For example, women representation in national parliament increased from 26.5% in 2013 to 32.4% of seats in the reconstituted national legislature.

Despite the enactment of Civil Registry Act of 2018 and the establishment of Civil Registry as a unit under the immigration and nationality office, little progress has been made in birth registration in terms of policy framework, building capacity of the Civil Registry, and raising awareness of the birth registration nationwide.

Leave No One Behind: South Sudan has undertaken measures to promote the Leave No One behind principle. First, the Revised National Development Strategy (2021-2024) prioritizes youth-centered development and envisions government partnership with the private sector and other partners to expand youth economic empowerment opportunities. The strategy also calls for investment in homegrown entrepreneurial initiatives through a dedicated Youth Enterprise Development Fund (Youth Enterprise Development Fund has been tabled in the national parliament), as well as investment in vocational training facilities and resources for youth in all the states.

Second, there is a progressive legal framework-granting refugee's freedom of movement. The Refugee Act of 2012 provides a legal framework for refugee protection in South Sudan. The government has also maintained a policy of granting refugees' access to its territory.



In particular, the law grants the refugees freedom of movement and freedom to settle anywhere in the country.

Finally, the R-NDS reaffirms the Government's support and leadership in meeting the needs of vulnerable populations by reviving the implementation of the social protection policy. Given the capacity and budget constraints within the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare (MGCSW), the social protection sector is dominated by donor-funded humanitarian assistance, mainly in the form of emergency food aid. The World Bank has been supporting the social protection sector since 2014, first through the Safety Net and Skills Development Project (SNSDP), and then South Sudan Safety Net Project (SSSNP), as well as the current Productive Safety Net for Socioeconomic Opportunities Project (SNSOP) aimed at responding to the dire food security situation and advance the social protection (SP) agenda by supporting efforts to link safety net more explicitly to human capital accumulation in South Sudan, and gradually establish a national government-led safety net system.

Volunteerism and SDGs Implementation

The contributions of volunteerism in South Sudan cut across all the 17 SDGs. In 2022, South Sudan was the second largest host of UN volunteers in the world, with 598 UN Volunteers with extensive professional experience to support the implementation of the SDGs. UNFPA implemented a Deploying Midwives (DM) and Strengthening Midwifery Services Projects aimed at increasing access to professional midwifery and sexual reproductive health services for women and girls in South Sudan. From 2013 to 2021, a total of 42 UN Volunteer midwives (national and international) were deployed at Government health facilities across the country. This deployment resulted in improved provision of maternal and SRH services. The volunteer midwives were also instrumental in building the capacity of the national midwives through clinical mentoring and teaching at the Health Sciences Institutes. Volunteerism under this programme extended beyond clinical care.

Other notable examples of contribution of volunteerism include the South Sudan Red Cross Society promotion of volunteerism as mean of critical service delivery countrywide. In the education sector, the level of annual teacher recruitment has been severely affected by budgetary constraints preventing schools from recruiting permanent teachers and pushing them to fill gaps using volunteers and part-time staff funded by direct contributions from parents or through capitation grant. Data from the Ministry of General Education indicate that there are 10,697 volunteer teachers in the primary, 1,106 volunteer teachers in the Secondary and 10,154 volunteer teachers in the pre-primary education systems. Government commitment to reverse this trend is reiterated in the General Education Sector Plan (GESP) 2023–2027, which will support the recruitment of circa 13,800 teachers over the five-year period to address the shortages, giving special considerations to qualified volunteer teachers in the recruitment process.



Strengthening collaboration among volunteerism organizations, namely the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), South Sudan Red Cross, and local volunteerism organisations will be important to address data availability and normative framework issues.

iii. Challenges

- Lack of a dedicated leadership and ownership of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda hinders coordination, accountability and tracking of SDGs (i.e., SDGs Secretariat).
- There is a dearth of disaggregated data on all 17 SDGs due to the weak national statistical system and funding constraints facing the national statistics office. This is compounded by low awareness on SDGs and the data for assessing progress.
- There is insignificant progress in birth registration in terms of policy framework and of building capacity of the Civil Registry and raising awareness of the birth registration nationwide.
- There is low budgetary allocation and spending in social services sectors, especially health and education.
- There is low institutional capacity across most sectors and line Ministries, Departments and Agencies that hinders the implementation and domestication of the SDGs.
- The VNR consultations and the SDG rescue plan in 2023 found low institutional capacity on SDGs to be one of the challenges hindering the SDGs implementation.
- There is lack of disability data that help categorise people with disability and design interventions. The absence of such information in South Sudan makes it difficult for disabled people's organizations (DPOs) to carry out evidence-based advocacy, particularly in relation to access to services, such as work and learning environments with facilities for use by disabled persons, as well as data to inform legal bases for measures to achieve the objectives of full participation and equality for persons with disabilities.
- Lack of Food Balance Sheet (FBS) system has widened data gap for assessing food security which can be addressed by conducting Food Balance Sheet (FBS) assessment by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to provide a comprehensive picture of the pattern of food supply and consumption in the country.

iv. Lessons Learnt

One main lesson learned during this review of SDG is that South Sudan is lagging far behind in its progress toward the agenda 2030. Most SDGs indicators for which there is complete data show stagnation, little or no progress. A myriad of factors explain this worrying trend, but the country's lack of clear coordination structure, coupled with limited targeted investment in the statistical system and social sectors, account for most setbacks.



A series of stakeholders' consultations highlighted low levels of awareness, ownership and localization as well as areas for future partnership to jointly address obstacles toward SDG attainment.

Lessons learnt during the preparation of the 2024 VNR include: the need to start the preparatory process early to have adequate time for stakeholder engagement, and the need for stakeholders to internalize the VNR report preparation guidelines. In addition, adequate resources are required for the VNR preparation process, hence the need to identify the required resources early enough and their possible sources.

v. Recommendations

- a.** R-TGoNU should efficiently utilize domestic public financing to implement SDGs by continuing to drive PFM reforms and by leveraging targeted funding from development partners and the private sector.
- b.** The Government should continue to commit to peace, prioritize the SDGs by increasing budget allocation, budget execution, and strengthening enabling environment for accelerated SDGs implementation by leveraging political commitment to review requisite legislative, policy and regulatory frameworks.
- c.** The Government should invest in core state institutions and public services (schools, health and essential public resources) by providing adequate operating budgets.
- d.** Strengthen capacity of the National Bureau of Statistics and statistics units within MDAs to collect quality, timely and reliable data that can be disaggregated when necessary. This entails investment in national data portal, SDG national indicator framework, and a new strategy for statistical system development.
- e.** Fund economic surveys such as the Labor Force Survey, Household Budget Survey, Multi-indicator cluster survey, the Business establishments census, Agriculture Census and Surveys, ICT and health survey. These surveys will form sampling frames for most future population-based surveys and will substantially address most of the existing data gaps as well as enhance data disaggregation and capacity building of the national statistical system.
- f.** Develop a national climate finance strategy to accelerate access to international climate finance, help with mobilization of private sector climate finance, enhance domestic investment in climate projects, and ensure a coordinated and sustainable climate finance flows.
- g.** Prioritise financing of the locally led climate action program to strengthen local resilience to the impact of climate change and support routine key stakeholders' consultations in the climate change landscape in South Sudan.
- h.** Conduct climate-health diagnostic assessments to identify South Sudan vulnerabilities and priority areas of needs and required resources to scale climate-health investments.
- i.** Fund research by the academia and think tanks on priority SDGs targets.



- j.** Strengthen support to the Health Management Information Systems, including developing and implementing a national policy to facilitate mandatory data reporting by the private sector to the central health data repository, the DHIS2.
- k.** Invest in the conduct of a comprehensive disability survey to provide baseline data.



1 Introduction

1.1 Country Context

The Republic of South Sudan is a landlocked country located in East-Central Africa. Bordered by Sudan to the north, Ethiopia to the east, Kenya to the southeast, Uganda to the south, the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the southwest, and the Central African Republic to the west, South Sudan occupies a strategic position within the African continent.

Following the end of protracted civil war which lasted for 21 years and completion of the 6 years period of Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in 2005 between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), South Sudanese voted overwhelmingly in the 2011 referendum (birthed by Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in 2005 between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A)) in favor of secession from Sudan culminating in the country's official independence on July 9, 2011. South Sudan was admitted as a member of the United Nations on 14 July 2011 and also became the 54th African Union member state on 27 July 2011.

Soon after independence, the country embarked on designing of its first set of development plans consisting of South Sudan Vision 2040 and South Sudan Development Plan 2011-2013/6 to help consolidate peace and foster economic development roadmap and lay foundations for the diversification of the economy. However, outbreaks of civil war in 2013 and 2016, persistent sub-national armed conflicts, inter-communal violence and political wrangles jeopardized the post-independence development gains and have since put the country in perennial humanitarian situation. Consequently, South Sudan remains negatively impacted by fragility, economic stagnation, and instability which have destroyed people's livelihood and cause extreme levels of food insecurity.

South Sudan's economy is heavily dependent on the oil sector, with oil revenues accounting for most of the government income and remain the prime driver of economic growth. The overdependence on crude oil production and exports makes the economy highly vulnerable to external macroeconomic and political shocks. Moreover, the country faces obstacles to economic development, including



infrastructure deficits, limited economic diversification, climate shocks and fragile food security situation, and the impact of conflict on investment and growth, but the signing of R-ARCSS and the ensuing formation of unity government in 2020 brought peace and created an enabling environment for development programming. However, the score of daunting developmental challenges remains.

Despite these challenges, South Sudan remains resilient and ready to exploit opportunities for progress and development. Driven by the determination to stay on its development trajectory, the Government of South Sudan and its partners designed the 2018–2021 National Development Strategy (NDS) in June 2018 to “consolidate peace and stabilize the economy”. The NDS was re-vitalized in 2021 to incorporate the provisions of the peace agreement following the formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) in February 2020. The R-NDS identified seven high priority Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for investment to help secure substantive progress across the SDGs in South Sudan. The country lags in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Nevertheless, some opportunities exist and will be leveraged to achieve the desired socio-economic transformation. Engagement in the international arena and championing regional and global agendas, such as the AU Agenda 2063, Maputo protocol on the rights to African women and girls, and UN 2030 Agenda will help South Sudan achieve its development milestones and deliver prosperity to her citizens.

The preparation and adoption of SDGs in 2015 came at an opportune moment when South Sudan embarked on its development plans and charted its trajectory for socio-economic progress. As a result, the 2030 Agenda has since been domesticated and integrated into the national development plans and policies. South Sudan Government is committed to ensuring the implementation of the peace agreement and conduct of elections in 2024, as well as strengthening service delivery institutions, governance, and economic and public financial management systems. It is against this backdrop that the country undertook the conduct its first voluntary national review of the SDGs in order to use its results to inform areas for improvement and re-orient its development priorities for years to come.



1.2. Objectives of the VNR

The objectives of the VNR are to:

- i. conduct a joint assessment of SDGs baselines and actions for collective support and reporting.
- ii. inform actions to strengthen government policies and institutions to enable pursuing concrete strategies to achieve sustainable development.
- iii. assess and review progress, challenges, and opportunities in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- iv. share development experiences, lessons learned, and best practices with the global community.
- v. highlight opportunity for priority setting to inform national development strategy; and
- vi. mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs.

1.3 Scope of the Review

Guided by the R-NDS which outlines the priority SDGs for South Sudan and subject to the availability of data, the VNR high-level coordination team deliberated and selected eight SDGs for in-depth and light review. This report provides an in-depth analysis of the eight SDGs (SDG 1, 2, 3, 4, 13, &16), with SDG 8 and 9 for light discussions. The report considers SDG 5 cross cutting. It also covers other important components such as the principle of Leaving No One Behind and SDGs means of implementation.



1.4. Methodology and Process for Preparation of the Review

1.4.1 Preparatory Phase of the VNR

Following the Government of South Sudan application for 2024 VNR to the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in September 2023, the national Ministry of Finance and Planning spearheaded the VNR process and preparatory work in coordination with the NBS and with support from the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator (UN-RCO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in South Sudan. UN-RCO collected names of SDGs and VNR focal points from MDAs, R-TNLA, Council of States, and States Coordination Offices. The orientation on the VNR exercise for government SDGs and VNR focal points and UN agencies was conducted on 7th February 2024, and it was followed by the official VNR launch event on 28 March 2024.

After the launch and popularization of the VNR, the Ministry of Finance and Planning in conjunction with the National Bureau of Statistics mapped out and invited major stakeholders and engaged them through series of consultative workshops where participants were taken through the VNR and its methodology, followed by guided group discussions based on each SDG relevant to their sector.

1.4.2 Data Collection

Required information for this VNR were gathered through desk review of relevant documents such as South Sudan Vision 2040, National Development Strategy (R-NDS), Policy documents, budget and legal frameworks, Sectoral strategies, plans and programmes, UN country reports, surveys and census reports, etc.

All the SDGs focal points from the MDAs and UN entities were tasked by the Ministry of Finance to provide data from respective sectors to the report’s drafters to complement information gathered through the desk review. These data were complemented by the qualitative data from various stakeholders’ contributions in relation to the implementation progress, challenges and recommendations during the consultative meetings. The following table shows stakeholders consulted during this exercise. The validation of indicators and data quality assurance was done by various technical teams.



1.4.3 National Validation Process

The 2024 South Sudan VNR report was validated through a three-step process. In the first step, the SDGs focal persons from MDAs, State Coordination Offices, Juba City Legislative Assembly, R-TNLA, Council of States and UN entities reviewed the draft report and shared their comments with the drafters. The first draft report was also shared and reviewed in a pre-validation workshop by SDGs focal points from the MDAs. In the third step, all major stakeholders including representatives of Civil Society Organizations, youth groups, Women Groups, People with Disabilities, Private Sector and donors were invited to a validation workshop where they shared their inputs which were incorporated into the final document.



2 Policy and Enabling Environment

2.1 Domestication of SDGs

Sustainable Development Goals have been integrated into the South Sudan planning development frameworks. Following the adoption of the SDGs in 2015, South Sudan prepared its first inaugural SDGs report¹ in 2017 highlighting the main SDGs for the country's peace and recovery process post the 2013 conflict. Supported by development partners, South Sudan conducted its first data diagnostics assessment of SDGs in 2021. Moreover, the revised national development strategy (2021-2024) highlights the importance of the adoption of Agenda 2030 and outlines priority SDGs for South Sudan development in line with the R-ARCSS provisions. Joint efforts by the South Sudan's government and development partners to accelerate progress on SDGs motivated the preparation of an SDG rescue plan in 2023 focusing on SDG targets (2.4; 3.3; 4.7; 8.5; 9.2; 13.1; 16.6).

In addition to integrating SDGs into the national development plans, specific goals are being and will continue to be integrated into sectoral policies and strategies. A selected examples are given below to showcase the integration of SDGs into national policies and strategies:

- South Sudan's National Environment Policy (NEP) (2015-2025) calls for the formulation of a national strategy for climate change adaptation. In 2021, the Government of South Sudan launched its first National Adaptation Plan (NAP) for Climate Change. This plan is a blueprint for the steps needed to mainstream climate change adaptation into planning and budgeting at national, state and local levels, as well as providing a framework for determining and fulfilling South Sudan's international commitments with respect to climate change adaptation. Besides, South Sudan National Draft Environmental Protection Bill (2012) offers strategic direction and coordination on climate change response concerns in South Sudan, including climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- South Sudan Transitional Constitution as amended and R-ARCSS stipulate gender equality and women empowerment. Both guarantee 35% of women's representation in the government.

¹ Republic of South Sudan MoFP and United Nations South Sudan, South Sudan SDG Inaugural Report, 2017. <https://ss.one.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/South-Sudan-SDG-Report.pdf>



- The National Dialogue (ND) has helped refine national sustainable development priorities. The ND was designed to give the public and political leaders a space to interact, voice their concerns and create a foundation for sustainable development through engagement and dialogue to provide recommendations on a variety of issues related to implementation of the peace agreement including governance, security sector reform, the economy and recommendations for social cohesion in South Sudan.
- Upon the formation of the R-TGNOU in February 2020, new entry points for sustainable development in South Sudan emerged. Support to institutions for implementation of key provisions of the peace agreement including especially chapter 5: Transitional Justice, Accountability, Reconciliation and Healing and critical support to strengthening community security platforms will be vital. Further, the National Development Strategy (NDS) created political momentum for government to engage in development issues; sustaining peace and consolidating the gains achieved will require continued UN and partner support.
- South Sudan demonstrates her commitments to protection of the rights of person with disability through enshrining in the transitional constitution and the ratification of the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- South Sudan's commitment to a sound migration policy environment is demonstrated through its ongoing discussion on country review of the Global Compact on Migration (GCM). Other policy initiatives include strengthening existing instruments for free movement of persons, labor migration, fighting forced migration with an emphasis on counter-human trafficking, migration, environment, and climate change (MECC), and migration and development, specifically on diaspora engagement and remittances. South Sudan has also prioritized discussion on the regional integration agenda to facilitate safe, voluntary and dignified migration.
- South Sudan's commitment to a stronger education system for all is reflected in following policy actions, viz. Early Childhood Education Policy Framework Development and the adoption of the National Inclusive Education Policy which sets out a vision for inclusive education and seeks to ensure that all children are given the opportunity to reach their full potential.
- In response to deteriorating vulnerability and poverty, the Government of South Sudan with support of the World Bank has been providing access to income support and livelihood programs through the South Sudan Safety Net Project (SSSNP) and Safety Net and Skills Development Project (SNSDP) 2015-2020. The Ministry of Agriculture and Minister of Gender and Social Welfare launched a follow-up project, namely the Productive Safety Net for Socioeconomic Opportunities Project (SNSOP)



designed to building on the successes and lessons learned of SSSNP and SNSDP and aims to provide economic opportunities and increase household investment in resilience and human capital development while also contributing to the development of the social protection sector in South Sudan.

- The National Bureau of Statistics has drafted a proposed coordination framework² for the SDGs monitoring and reporting and a National SDG Monitoring Taskforce is in place, but there is little high-level political support for the SDGs coordination and stakeholders' engagement.

2.2 Ownership of Sustainable Development Goals in South Sudan

2.2.1 Creating ownership of the SDGs

Although South Sudan is committed to ensuring that SDGs are owned at national and local levels as well as across stakeholders, major gaps remain. The UN agencies continue to support localization of the SDGs, but low political support, limited national leadership and unclear governance structure for the SDGs coordination and implementation remain major obstacles.

There was no clarity on which government agency is mandated to facilitate the ownership process, implementation, tracking and coordination of SDGs at all levels of the government across the country. The consultations during this first VNR highlighted serious concerns around SDGs awareness and ownership among diverse stakeholders. South Sudan government charted ways to establish an SDGs secretariat within the Ministry of Finance and Planning charged with leading localization and domestication efforts by the government. Also, the major financing around the SDGs localization continues to come from the non-government institutions, making it difficult to ensure sustainability of the efforts.

2.2.2 Communication and Awareness

Mainstreaming and creating SDGs awareness at different levels and amongst different stakeholders will be a continuous process. Annual planning and budget consultations will continue to deepen ownership and awareness. More specifically, an SDGs guide will be prepared and disseminated during the remaining 7 years and beyond. In addition, an online SDG portal will be maintained at the NBS and South Sudan SDGs metadata book

² South Sudan SDGs Data Landscape_SG_v3.indd 20



will be developed with clear definitions and methodology to ensure data sharing and reporting in South Sudan.

2.2.3 Multi-stakeholders partnerships to implement the SDGs

The Government of South Sudan recognizes that stakeholders’ engagement and public participation are crucial elements in developing and implementing policies and development strategies that benefit all South Sudanese. There is a broad array of stakeholders, ranging from those that are beneficiaries of the achievement of the SDGs and to those with interest in facilitating the implementation of the SDGs such as the UN agencies and development partners. Key stakeholders identified during the consultations for the VNR include national government (which map all the SDGs against the mandates of the government ministries and responsible for mainstreaming SDGs in planning frameworks), the state and county governments. The VNR consultations involved a diverse group of stakeholders drawn from the institutions whose roles are outlined in the table below. The stakeholders include Heads of Committees of national legislature, representatives of Juba City Legislative Assembly and Central Equatoria State Assembly, representatives of Civil Society Organizations, Youth Group, Women Group, and People with Disabilities, Private Sector, focal points from the UN Family, Government, Academia and Research Institutions.

Stakeholder	Role
Parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDGs legislation and budgeting • SDG strategic planning and awareness creating • Participate in the SDGs progress report and VNRs • Establish an oversight/monitoring framework for the progress against the SDGs and ensure its implementation
Ministries, Independent Commissions and Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDGs policies adoption and implementation. • SDGs awareness raising and tracking of progress. • SDG data collection, analysis and storage for decision making.
Civil Society Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate the engagement of civil society on SDGs. • Implement, follow up and review SDGs.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute directly to the implementation of the SDGs through provision of direct services to vulnerable populations. • Support skills development through capacity building and training, and provide microfinance services for economic empowerment • Carry out policy advocacy and awareness creation to support implementation of SDGs. • Avail data and analytical support to sub-national policymakers (e.g. county government). • Submitting progress report to inform the South Sudan’s VNR. • Help in implementation and monitoring of SDGs with specific impacts and opportunities for PWDs.
Private Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption and mainstreaming of SDGs in its operations and business strategies • Provide critical services that accelerate the achievement of SDGs. • Prepare progress report to complement the country VNR.
UN Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support localization, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the SDGs. • Development of comprehensive roadmap to facilitate the implementation of the SDGs. • Support capacity development of SDGs stakeholders. • Support the government to ensure that the cross-cutting issues of priorities across SDGs are adequately designed, financed,



	<p>implemented and monitored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure joint analysis, prioritisation and problem-solving, as well as coordinated programming and implementation in pursuit of common objectives
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help country's efforts in the implementation of SDGs providing critical services to the vulnerable population
Academia and Research Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce knowledge and innovations, strengthen capacities, provide evidence-based solutions to SDGs implementation and monitoring. • Carry out awareness survey.

2.3 Implementation Institutional Arrangements

Since the country adopted the SDGs in 2015, and whereas SDGS have been mainstreamed into the budgeting process, there is no official consensus on the governance structure and coordination mechanism of the SDGs at the national and local levels. Some views from consultations during the preparation of South Sudan SDGs Data Landscape Report in 2021 acknowledged the role of high-level political buy-in for the success of implementation of the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development. The report proposed establishment of SDG secretariat within the Office of the President to obtain political support for SDGs acceleration. The proposed SDG secretariat should be led politically by an assigned Vice President and technically by a full time official at the undersecretary level to run day-to-day operations.

However, multi-stakeholder consultations for this VNR highlighted the need for a clear structure with more technical orientation to accelerate the SDGs implementation and reporting. Stakeholders agreed on the need to have once adequately resourced central office, working in tandem with NBS, leading the SDG coordination, ownership and localization efforts. Most consultations proposed the establishment of SDGs secretariat to be headed by Director General (DG) at the Ministry of Finance and Planning to lead the inter-agency coordination and technical functions pertinent to the SDGs. The secretariat will be supported by an inter-agency technical committee with membership drawn from MDAs, UN agencies, Parliamentary caucus on SDGs, Academia and Think Tanks, CSOs and the private sector. The DG heading the secretariat chairs the inter-agency committee



while the NBS co-chairs the committee. However, strategic level consultations with undersecretaries and heads of independent commissions and agencies highlight the need to have a SDGs steering committee chaired by the Office of the President and co-chaired by the Ministry of Finance and Planning in order to help the SDG coordination gain political traction it needs. Among the roles of the SDG secretariate are:

- preparing workplans and providing political leadership for localization of the SDGs.
- working with the SDG monitoring taskforce, supported by the UN M&E Working Group, to establish an SDG Dashboard showcasing the country’s progress on implementing the goals.
- communicating all decisions from committees and working groups.
- coordinating the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process for South Sudan that is proposed in the Strategic Action Plan.

2.4 Integration of the Economic, Social and Environmental Dimensions of Sustainable Development

2.4.1 Sustainability in South Sudan

Sustainability have been a principal factor in the strategic framing of development priorities in South Sudan. Some crucial guiding principles of sustainable development planning are drawn from the South Sudan Vision 2040, the R-ARCSS and the national development strategy (2021-2024). Chapter 5 (sub. 4.9) of the R-ARCSS underscore that “The RTGONU shall develop comprehensive policies and legal and institutional frameworks for the preservation, conservation and sustainable use of the environment.” Furthermore, the agreement calls for the establishment of Environmental Management Authority (EMA) to champion environmental protections.

Climate change and environmental protection mainstreaming has been enabled by several national laws and policies. The National Environment Policy (2015 – 2025) provides guidelines for a wide range of responses to environmental management challenges to enable decision makers and resource users to make development choices for environmental sustainability. The Draft Environmental Protection Bill (2015) introduces requirements for environmental audits/environmental impact assessments. The bill also provides for the establishment of an autonomous South Sudan Environmental Management Authority to act as the environmental watchdog.

The Government of South Sudan has established partnership with UNEP through the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Agriculture dating back to 2009³. With the

³ [South Sudan | UNEP - UN Environment Programme](https://www.unep.org/topics/disasters-and-conflicts/country-presence/south-sudan)
<https://www.unep.org/topics/disasters-and-conflicts/country-presence/south-sudan>



funding from Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation⁴ (Norad), UNEP led the “Juba Clean and Green” campaign in 2010 which helped to put environmental issues on the agenda of the government, the UN community, and the citizens. The government has been able to release five new publications addressing issues of sustainable water usage thanks to the joint partnerships between UNEP, FAO and Ministries of Water Resources & Irrigation, and of Environment.

Furthermore, sector prioritization conducted as part of the consultation for the South Sudan NDC 2021 identifies sectors based on economic, environmental and socioeconomic parameters that are key for South Sudan’s development.

2.4.1 Tools to Integrate the three Dimensions of Sustainable Development

Some of the main tools are used to ensure integration of the 3 dimensions of sustainable development includes environmental impact assessment (EIA) to ensure that environmental protection is integrated into project planning. For example, the Environmental and Social Management Framework for the Agricultural Markets, Value Addition and Trade Development (AMVAT) Project whose objectives include to contribute to poverty reduction, economic growth and household resilience and social cohesion through increased agricultural production. Furthermore, the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) was prepared to guide the implementation of the South Sudan Safety Nets Project (SSSNP) whose aims was to contribute to strengthened household capacity to better withstand social and economic shocks and stresses, while also supporting increased community interaction and dialogue for enhanced local level social cohesion and unity. The ESMF seeks to establish clear procedures and methodologies for environmental and social planning, review, approval and implementation.

⁴ ibid



2.4.2 Addressing Interlinkages between Goals

Democratic governance was the primary priority in the first South Sudan National Development Plan right after the independence (2011-2013). Democratic governance is regarded as the solid foundation for peace as it creates an enabling environment for peace, stability, economic and social development. For this reason, there was a consensus during the consultations for the R-NDS in 2021 that SGD 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institution should be the priority SDG for South Sudan as it is an enabling goal for many other SDGs.

The Revised National Development Strategy⁵ (R-NDS) 2021-2024, which drew inspirations from the Africa Agenda 2063, primarily supports the implementation of the R-ARCSS leading to consolidation of peace and stabilization of the economy. Consolidating peace and stabilizing the economy provide extensive multiple effects to the achievement of many SDG targets and goals given that R-NDS overarching objectives include strengthening institutions for accountable and inclusive governance; stabilization of the economy; human capital development, building critical infrastructure for sustainable development; mainstreaming of gender in all development policies and programs and protecting the vulnerable population. The R-NDS also highlighted (with emphasis on cross-cutting essence) other priority SDGs as Good Health, Quality Education, Clean Water and Sanitation, Gender Equality, No Hunger and No Poverty.

Moreover, the revitalized Peace Agreement (Chapter 4 (sub. 4.15) of the R-ARCSS) roadmap calls for establishing Enterprise Development Funds consisting of Women Enterprise Development Fund, Social Security Fund and Youth Enterprise Development Fund. The Agreement states that RTGoNU shall:

- develop Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSMEs) among the rural populations and the urban poor;
- identify local, national, sectoral or private sector associations with the view to improve their productivity through capacity enhancement and easing access to financing”
- establish a Youth Enterprise Development Fund with the goal to bring more youth into economic growth and development;
- provide subsidized credit and capacity building for vulnerable members of the society.

These initiatives if implemented would contribute to the achievements of SDGs in their multidimensional aspects. The National Health Policy⁶ 2016-2026 lays the foundation on health service organization and infrastructure development for effective and equitable delivery of the Basic Package of Health and Nutrition Services, and Universal Health Coverage. It's also provided an enabling environment for the achievement of pertinent SDG

⁵ Revised National Development Strategy 2021-2024: Consolidate peace and stabilize the economy.

⁶ Ministry of Health: National Health Policy 2016-2026: A community Anchored Health System for Sustainable Health Sector Development.



2.5 Leave No One Behind

Decades of protracted conflict have caused unprecedented deprivation and widespread vulnerability of a large segment of South Sudanese society. Vulnerability takes several forms, viz. social exclusion, extreme poverty, scarcity of economic and education opportunities, displacement by caused by conflict or natural disasters, job-markets skill gaps, patriarchal culture that limits women and girls, violence, and sexual exploitation and abuse. The most vulnerable groups at most risk of being left furthest behind identified during the consultations include women, children and youth, elderly, persons with disabilities, internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees. An effective strategy to address these vulnerabilities includes deliberate and sustained investment in programs that uplift these vulnerable groups. For each of the vulnerable groups identified in South Sudan, this section outlines how they are left behind, what are the root causes of it, and the initiatives and/or processes that should be supported to revert the situation.

2.5.1 Women

Women suffer a horde of vulnerabilities ranging from insufficient political representation, lack of economic opportunities, gender-biased customary laws, rampant early marriages, sexual exploitation and abuse, domestic violence among others. These factors severely hamper their economic and political empowerment, which undermines their capacity to have a say in decision-making processes in society.

South Sudan has a progressive transitional constitution, legal and policy frameworks for gender equality and women's economic empowerment. In terms of women's representation in high decision-making positions, the country has made notable progress in mainstreaming gender since attaining independence; and has a woman as vice president, Speaker of the Transitional National Assembly, and a Deputy Speaker of the Council of States. Women also held/holding several strategic ministerial portfolios such as the Ministries of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Higher Education, health, environment, youth and culture and Gender, Child, and social welfare. Although there is need to increase women political representation at all levels of government, the peace agreement (R-ARCSS) reserves 35% quota for women. The share of seats held by women in the re-constituted Transitional Legislative Assembly increased from 26.5%⁷ in 2013 to about 32.4% ⁸in 2024. In addition, South Sudan has signed up to all the main international treaties and protocols that uphold and protect the rights of women. However, there are gaps and contradictions in the legal framework and many laws and policies are not well enforced. For instance, the National Gender Policy has been in place since 2013 and needs

⁷ UN Statistics Division.

⁸ Inter-Parliamentary Union. Available at <https://www.ipu.org/parliament/SS>



to be more effectively resourced to enable a more comprehensive cross-government approach and building of necessary capacities. Several of the legislative gaps are now being addressed in the preparation for permanent constitution-making process and efforts will lead to a stronger prioritization and integration across all sectors and institutions of government, so that spillover effects can go beyond government and reach the entire society.

Implementation of the National Gender Policy (2013) consists of a framework for coordination through ministerial gender focal points at national and state levels. One of the National Gender Policy's specific objectives is to promote equal and effective participation of all citizens in social and political affairs of the nation. The policy underlines the use of gender quotas/affirmative action across all sectors as a key strategy to redressing gender gaps in the participation of women and men in political and public life. The National Gender Policy also calls for the development of appropriate policies and laws to drive meaningful participation of all in electoral and democratic processes. This includes strategies to ensure there is gender-responsive recruitment, retention and promotion processes for public service, as well as capacity building, leadership training and mentoring of women. This includes conducting intensive campaigns and awareness-raising on the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development. The policy advocates for research and studies on customary practices and traditional beliefs undermining women and girls.

The National Gender Policy also encourages the engagement of men and boys, along with traditional, religious and other community opinion leaders in the promotion of GEWE and elimination of practices that reinforce gender inequalities and discrimination against women and girls. Despite the existence of a strong National Gender Policy framework and accompanying strategic plan (2013-18), and SSNAP on Women, Peace and Security, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare (MGCSW) has inadequate resources to fulfil its policy and coordination mandate; implementation of government GEWE-focused programs are heavily dependent on donor funding.

Recommendations

- Strengthen institutional frameworks supporting women education and economic empowerment.
- Operationalize legal frameworks supporting women's equal rights and addressing gender-based violence.
- Bridge the gap between statutory laws and traditional practices (educate traditional leaders on the changing roles of women).
- Address through education, media and arts cultural norms engrained in attitudes and beliefs regarding women and girls' rights and roles in society.
- Inclusion of women in leadership including in the private sector and



government through enforcing of affirmative action.

- Establish annual women leader's award to celebrate women's roles as leaders and active participants in all sectors of society.
- Investments in gender-based violence (GBV) prevention by supporting GBV courts and legal frameworks and resources for the monitoring systems of GBV.

2.5.2 Children and Youth

South Sudan's population has been estimated at 14,746,496⁹ people (NBS Population projection, 2023). The population is predominantly young with about 58.96 percent of the people aged below 18 years, 22.4 percent adolescents aged 10-19 years, and 74.2 percent under 30 years. Women constitute 49 per cent of the population. The working age population (15-64) comprises 47.8% and non-working age makes up 52.27%. This demographic structure presents an opportunity for harnessing the demographic dividend.

Young people aged below 25 years make up 62.9 per cent of the population¹⁰. Children and youth face multiple obstacles to the fulfilment of their rights and to their well-being. Among these major obstacles include lack of education, conflict-related violence, entrenched gender inequality, mental health issues, GBV including child marriage, lack of sexual education, injuries and disabilities, psychosocial distress and lack of economic and educational opportunities for youth. Years of conflict have resulted in a lack of child protection systems including welfare and justice. Only a paltry 35%¹¹ of children under five have their birth registered, which reflects the pathetic state of civil registration. The Civil Registry Act was adopted in 2018 but its implementation has been slowed.

Another notable concern is that while about 72% of the total population of South Sudan is below the age of 30, this population is perceived to be systematically excluded from decision making process and structures based on their age and assumption that they are inexperienced despite the Transitional Constitution (2011) advocating for their right to participation. While young parliamentarians were appointed in the recently constituted assembly, there is need for continued advocacy with the parties to R-ARCSS to commit the allocated numbers in their parties' constitutions to young people at all levels of governance.

Worsening economic conditions have also increased youth vulnerabilities as the opportunities for jobs shrink and livelihoods jeopardize. The youth bulge, high rates of unemployed young people (an estimated 18.8 per cent)¹², and lack of access to education

⁹ National Bureau of Statistics, Population Estimation Survey, 2021

¹⁰ CIA World Factbook, South Sudan

https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/print_od.html

¹¹ NBS, Household Budget Survey, 2009

¹² Unemployment, youth (% ages 15-24), UNDP, Human Development Report 2020



offer young people little hope and contribute to violent crime and instability¹³. It is vital for South Sudan to transition its young population into healthy, educated, skilled and productive adulthood to achieve the demographic dividend. This will allow for accelerated economic growth supported by investments in employment, entrepreneurship, education, skills development, health, rights, governance and youth empowerment.

Other factors linking demographic structure and violence include the country's large income inequality (Gini coefficient was 44.1¹⁴ in 2016), the fact that 80.4% of the country's population is rural (benefiting from very few services, including security), the widespread availability of weapons, no basic services and extremely little education especially among women and girls, and the consequent meagre prospects for jobs, e.g. youth unemployment in 2019 was estimated at 29%. These factors may have an influence on the emergence of armed youth groups and some cultural practices, e.g. herder boys are often engaged in cattle camps where education is not available and the conditions are harsh, becoming familiar with weapons at an early age. This is aggravated by the fact that in some areas in the country, people are cut off from all forms of media channels, and hence interpersonal communication is the only way to share information at the community level. This leaves vulnerable people unprotected against diseases, harmful cultural practices, or human rights violations.

The past five years have seen significant progress in terms of child rights policies underpinning an enabling environment for the provision of the basic needs. These landmarks include policies and strategies include Source¹⁵ :

- Policy on Children without Appropriate Parental Care passed by the Council of Ministers.
- Strategic National Action Plan to End Child Marriage in South Sudan (2017-2030).
- Civil Registry Act 2018 signed into law; a critical milestone that will see children being registered and receiving their birth certificates.
- Ratification of two Optional Protocols to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC): Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC) and Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children child, prostitution and child pornography (OPSC).
- Youth Development Strategy developed and endorsed, and Youth Enterprise Development Fund drafted awaiting tabling in the national parliament.
- Integrated reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and nutrition (RMNCAH & N) Strategy³ 2018–2022 endorsed.

¹³ Human Rights Council, Forty-third session, 24 February–20 March 2020, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=25686&LangID=E>

¹⁴ World Bank using HFS-W3/SSAPOV/GMD

¹⁵ UNICEF South Sudan. The Situation of Children and Women in South Sudan 2018–2020. United Nations Children's Fund, Juba, July 2021.



- Ministry of Health (MoH) endorsed a Multisectoral Nutrition Strategic Plan 2022–2030 and implementation Roadmap addressing malnutrition.

Challenges

- Lack of funding to support a fully functional civil registration system
- Lack of implementation of instituted policies.
- Limited legal capacity to fight gender-based violence
- Lack of basic mental health services in healthcare system.
- Lack of programs to improve youth participation in decision making and economic development.

Recommendation

- Invest in mental health for adolescents and youth (fragile health care systems)
- Create economic opportunities such as funds for business for youth in order for the country to benefit from the demographic dividend.
- Fast-track the Youth Enterprise Development Fund bill that is yet to be tabled in the national parliament.
- Productive economic engagement for youth through training and mentoring
- Implement the Civil Registry Act and allocate resources to support a fully functional civil registration system including the routine compilation of vital statistics. This is help in the fight to minimize child marriages and reduce the risks of statelessness for refugees and asylum-seeking children born in South Sudan.
- Invest financial resources to support the full function of the Civil Registry at sub-national levels, starting with the operationalization of civil registration in all the 10 states and administrative areas.
- Target vulnerable populations including, youth, women and girls for economic, legal and political empowerment, with enhanced investment in civil society and UNICEF’s Integrated Community Mobilization Network (ICMN) to reach the most at risk.
- Strengthen national and state level mechanisms for youth engagement in decision making.



2.5.3 The Elderly

The population aged over 65 years in South Sudan are estimated to be about 1.8% based on the 2023 population projection¹⁶, translating to 271,174 people of which 153,410 are males while 117,764 are females. This segment of the population stands a high risk of being overlooked in the country's development process. Various negative attitudes about ageing and older people have also had significant consequences for the physical and mental health of older adults. The communities take older people as a burden and less valuable, putting them at risk of depression and social isolation. They are discriminated against in terms of access to health care, information and other basic services like water, food, and housing¹⁷. Due to lack of awareness or negative attitudes, professionals and family and friends can fail to detect abuse of older women and men, often assuming that their problems are caused by 'old age. While the government has established the South Sudan Pensions Fund (SSPF) through the Pension Act 2012 and South Sudan Social Insurance Fund, there are still challenges in the operations of these two funds which directly impact the lives of retiree's civil servants.

To promote and protect the rights of older people, it is important to develop and implement social security programs for older people and increase access to data disaggregated by age and gender, policies, legal and programmatic frameworks addressing discrimination, neglect, abuse, and violence against older people. It is also important to have access to data that reveals discrimination on grounds prohibited under international human rights law and assist to monitor the achievement of age inclusion and gender equality across the SDGs and Agenda 2063. Furthermore, it is a crucial step for the government to urgently ratify, domesticate and implement the AU Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of Older Persons in Africa.

Recommendations

- Government to ratify, domesticate and implement the AU Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of Older Persons in Africa.
- Develop and implement social security programs for older people and increase access to data disaggregated by age and gender, policies, legal and programmatic frameworks addressing discrimination, abuse and violence against older people.
- Document and monitor the achievement of age inclusion and gender equality across the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

¹⁶ <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/south-sudan>

¹⁷ <https://dr.211check.org/slug/laws-of-south-sudan-national-social-insurance-fund-act-2023>



2.5.4 Internally Displaced People

Uprooted from their areas of habitual residence, IDPs are in a particularly vulnerable situation, often left to cater for their needs by themselves, or with support from host communities where resources are already scarce. Location-level data on IDPs shows that, while needs are generally most severe in less accessible rural areas, they remain significant in urban centers, whereas access to services and humanitarian assistance is most stable within largest IDP camps and displacement sites. The Most pressing needs inhibiting development pathways include gaps in infrastructure and services, persistent insecurity, explosive ordnance contamination, unresolved housing, land and property conflicts, natural disasters, and limited means for return or relocation.

There are approximately 4.2 million displaced people (2 million IDPs and 2.2 million returnees) according to IOM¹⁸. About half of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been in protracted displacement for over five years, while approximately 500,000 refugees and displaced persons have returned to the country since the signing of the Revitalized Peace Agreement in 2018. The main drivers of displacement include natural hazards such as floods, drought and wildfires, as well as conflict and violence, food insecurity and lack of economic opportunities.

The outbreak of fighting in Sudan on 15 April 2023 resulted in an influx of over 675,000 individuals¹⁹, 78 percent of whom are South Sudanese nationals, crossing border entry points along the Sudan-South Sudan border as of December 2023. A further 420,000 returnees are expected to arrive in 2024. South Sudan hosts some 330,000 refugees and asylum-seekers (mainly from Sudan). These resource-deprived individuals seek support from for various services, including transport assistance, multi-purpose cash assistance, shelter/non-food items (S-NFI), protection and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and lifesaving healthcare services.

These daunting challenges require comprehensive interventions from humanitarian, transition and recovery partners in the country to start working on long term programs supporting durable solutions and developing interventions that will work across the humanitarian, development and peace building nexus and advocate for sustainable peace and country's political and economic stability. The Government of South Sudan with support from the UN Country team in primarily target the population groups:

- IDPs, both protracted and newly displaced populations.
- IDPs and other migrants who have returned and continue to face challenges.
- Vulnerable host communities affected by disasters and/or conflict.

¹⁸ <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/south-sudan-mobility-tracking-round-14-initial-data-release>

¹⁹ IOM-UNHCR-RRC joint dashboard



To address the needs of these identified target groups, IOM has built partnerships with governmental, humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors achieving durable solutions for displacement affected people (IDPs, refugees, returnees and host communities), including return, local integration and resettlement. This includes social cohesion, economic recovery, protection, education and community driven development planning and governance processes including on rule of law with IDPs, returnees and their hosting communities in South Sudan. IOM works towards development-focused solutions. South Sudan continues to be on the frontline of today's climate crisis and has been heavily impacted by flooding and food insecurity.

South Sudan is one of 15 countries participating as a pilot under the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement. Throughout 2024, this will involve the roll-out of structural reforms, including strong government leadership, new generation solutions strategies, action roadmaps, and financing frameworks. Efforts will support the establishment of these structures while also shifting towards a development-oriented approach to solutions in close partnership with UN Agencies and financial institutions.

Policy development related to priority thematic areas such as the free movement of persons, labor migration, forced migration with an emphasis on counter-human trafficking, migration, environment, and climate change (MECC), and migration and development, specifically on diaspora engagement and remittances, is crucial. Other areas of close engagement include country review on the Global Compact on Migration (GCM). Further a supportive legislative environment is fundamental to achieving the priorities mentioned above. Access to justice and ensuring community-level social cohesion has proven cost-effective and relevant by aligning communities' practices with national legislation, including the Transitional Constitution and its comprehensive Bill of Rights, women's and children's rights, and human rights.

Recommendations

- Government to finalize country review on the Global Compact on Migration (GCM)
- Government to review and update statutory laws to align with the Transitional Constitution to facilitate return and reintegration especially related to local government act (2009) and the land and resettlement act (2009).
- Government to finalize review of the National Action Plan on Returns, Recovery and Reintegration and to support the development of area-based solutions roadmaps/plans
- Government to establish and support an effective durable solutions architecture, including state-level solutions taskforces



2.5.5. Refugees

As of May 2024, South Sudan hosts a significant refugee and asylum seeker population. There are 464,738 (48.6% male, 521.4% female) registered refugees²⁰ in South Sudan, of which 94.7 percent are Sudanese with some 140,000 who arrived fleeing the conflict in Sudan since April 2023. Women and children represent 81%²¹ of all refugees. The vulnerability of refugees is visible in that they face significant challenges in accessing basic services, livelihoods and security. The local governance structures in the refugee-hosting areas face acute lack of funding, delayed salary payments, prolonged staff absences, poor road and network infrastructure, and capacity challenges while remaining largely reliant upon UNHCR and humanitarian actors for assistance.

To address the gaps relating to refugees, the government of South Sudan has adopted important policy frameworks. South Sudan has acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1967 Protocol and the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. The National Legislative Assembly adopted the Refugee Act on 5 June 2012 in line with the Transitional Constitution, which recognizes, among others, the right for refugees to seek employment. The government of South Sudan also made important pledges in the 2019 Global Refugee Forum to promote access to livelihoods and economic opportunities, safe conditions for return, access to education and climate adaptation. In 2019, South Sudan developed a National Framework for Return, Reintegration and Relocation of Displaced Persons.

Furthermore, the Government of South Sudan, through the facilitation role of IGAD and with the support of some development partners and donors, under the Solutions Initiative has finalized development of a draft National Durable Solutions Strategy and an Action Plan for Refugees, Returnees, Internally Displaced Persons and Host Communities. This Strategy builds on the 2019 National Framework and focuses on solutions for refugees in South Sudan.

South Sudan has also adhered to the Global Compact for Refugees and made important pledges during the first Global Refugee Forum which took place in December 2019. These commitments include taking concrete steps in the area of rule of law and access to justice; peace building initiatives to promote sustainable and durable solutions; expand access to education and reduce school drop out by 2024 by improving school infrastructure, training of teachers; promote and expand economic opportunities for refugee areas through vocational training, expanding access to arable land and promoting improved agricultural techniques; and facilitate improved access to sustainable and green energy solutions for refugees and host communities by planting 100 million trees in line with the national reforestation program and policy; piloting of innovative approaches to resilience and climate- smart adaptation. Some progress has been achieved in designing a

²⁰ UNHCR Representation in South Sudan: Population Overview. Available: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/ssd>

²¹ IOM-UNHCR-RRC joint dashboard



national durable solutions strategy and expanding access to education. The government has developed a national action plan to implement the Djibouti Declaration on Education for refugees, returnees and host communities²².

2.5.6 People Living with Disabilities

The devastating civil war from which the people of South Sudan suffered for decades has not only affected the country economically and socially, but it has also increased the rate of disability and rendered persons with disabilities more marginalized and excluded. There are no recent statistics on the number of persons with disabilities (PWD) in South Sudan. But based on the 2008 census undertaken, PWDs in South Sudan accounted for 5.1% of the population. That number is believed to be underestimated because of the way in which disability was defined, as well as the likelihood that stigma prevented people from identifying themselves as being persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the violence conflict experienced since then undoubtedly increased the number of PWDs. PWD are marginalized in all sectors of society, e.g. it has been reported that visually impaired children find it difficult to fit in ordinary schools as they have special needs²³. South Sudan Annual School Census (ASC) in 2012 identified that only 1.37% (22896) of all enrolled (primary and secondary) pupils are children with disabilities. Fast forward in 2021, the percentage of learners with disability was 1.08 across all the learning levels.

Children, and especially girls with disabilities are particularly at risk of marginalization due to factors such as increased rates of violence, and lack of access to schooling. If children with disabilities do attend school, they have to cope with high levels of bullying and name calling, which leads to dropout. In addition, children are often designated as a caregiver of an adult with a disability, which will compromise their chance of attending school²⁴. Data on disabilities and gender in South Sudan are not available, but women and girls living with disabilities are highly marginalized with limited access to care and devices. Women and girls with disability face further stigmatization and are often hidden or isolated, are less likely to go to school and face higher levels of violence.

South Sudan has demonstrated her commitments to protection of the rights of persons with disability through enshrined in the transitional constitution and the ratification of the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities²⁵ (UNCRPD) and its optional

²² The implementation of this action plan has been hampered by school closure during the height of COVID-19 pandemic, lack of capacity of key government institutions and resource constraints

²³ Radio Tamazuj (2021). “Visually impaired persons demand specialized schools”. Available at <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/visually-impaired-persons-demand-specialized-schools>

²⁴ UNICEF, The Situation of Children and Women in South Sudan 2018–2020

²⁵ HI Institute on Humanitarian Action, March 7TH 2023: Available at <https://www.hi.org/en/news/south-sudan-signs-international-covenants-on-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-into-law>



protocol and 3 other human rights conventions in 2023. Ratifications of such international conventions and local advocacy efforts by organisations of persons with disabilities has enabled the visibility of persons with disabilities as well as support empowerment and advocacy programmes by persons with disabilities. However, the government has not instituted any systems for monitoring the CRPD implementation.

Moreover, policies relevant for the protection of the human rights of persons with disabilities include the South Sudan National Disability and Inclusion Policy (2013) by the Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare (MGCSW). The policy is a rights-based documents guided by the principles of non-discrimination, affirmative action, diversity, and inclusiveness, recognizing that people with disabilities are not a homogenous group. The MGCSW also drafted National Disability Action Plan (NDAP) (2020) to promote efforts to address the rights and needs of persons with disabilities by providing them with equal opportunities and fostering their full and active participation in all spheres of life. Similarly, in 2014 the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology drafted the National Inclusive Education Policy (adopted in 2021) which sets out a vision for inclusive education and seeks to ensure that all children are given the opportunity to reach their potential.

Areas for Improvement

- Advocacy efforts from the Organizations of Persons with Disabilities through their umbrella union: South Sudan Union of Persons with Disabilities (SSUPD) and other Civil Society organizations (CSOs) in South Sudan.
- Affirmative actions through reserved quotas of leadership roles in the government and private sector should be adopted and enforced.
- Conduct a disability survey to obtain baseline data for planning and national assessment to categorise people with disability and design interventions: No disability statistics has ever been carried out in South Sudan, making it difficult for Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs) to carry out evidence-based advocacy - particularly in relation to access to services.
- Education Management Information System (EMIS) should capture disaggregated data on children with disabilities, by sex, age, geographic situation and kind of impairment.
- Inclusive education should be reinforced and extended to all parts of South Sudan and education in Braille and sign language should be provided.
- Awareness campaigns should target families to send their children with disabilities to school, with special attention to girls with disabilities.
- Guidelines are needed at centers or schools for children with disabilities.
- Capacity building programme is required to address capacity needs in centers, or schools caring for children with disabilities.
- Enact and implement a national framework for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



4 Progress Made in the Implementation of the Goals and Targets

The review mainly provides an in-depth analysis of SDGs 2, 3, 4, 13, and 16 proposed by the country 2024 VNR team to demonstrate South Sudan SDG progress towards SDG 1: No Poverty. The SDG 5: Gender Equality is herein considered cross-cutting, and thus will not be analyzed in-depth and as a standalone. In addition, SDGs 8 and 9 will be reviewed but in less rigorous details. These seven SDGs constitute the priority goals for the country's sustainable development as outlined in the country medium-term development plan.



SDG 1: ENDING POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS AND EVERYWHERE

South Sudan is among the poorest countries in the world. The government has demonstrated its commitment to end poverty, though this hasn't been without its challenges.

Status and trends

1.1.1. Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age and geographical location (urban/rural)

Monetary poverty has increased over the years. In 2009, 51% of South Sudanese lived below the poverty line of 1.90²⁶ (calculated at the US\$ 2011 purchasing power parity (PPP)). The share of the population living below US\$2.15 in 2017 PPP is estimated at 67.3 in 2016. The 2023 poverty headcount index according to the national multi-dimensional poverty index report²⁷ stands at 82.5% with intensity of 55.3%. Poverty in urban areas of South Sudan increased from 54 percent in 2016 to 67 percent in 2022²⁸. In 2016, almost 7 in 10

²⁶ NBS, Household Budget Survey, 2009.

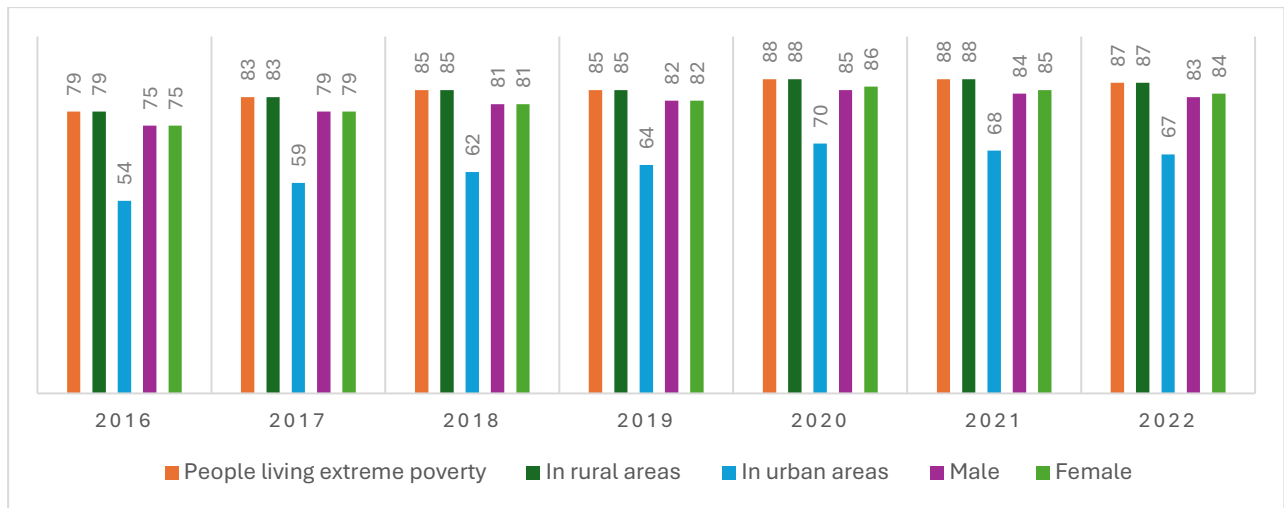
²⁷ NBS, National Multidimensional Poverty Index Report, 2023

²⁸ NBS, NBS Sustainable Development Report, 2022.



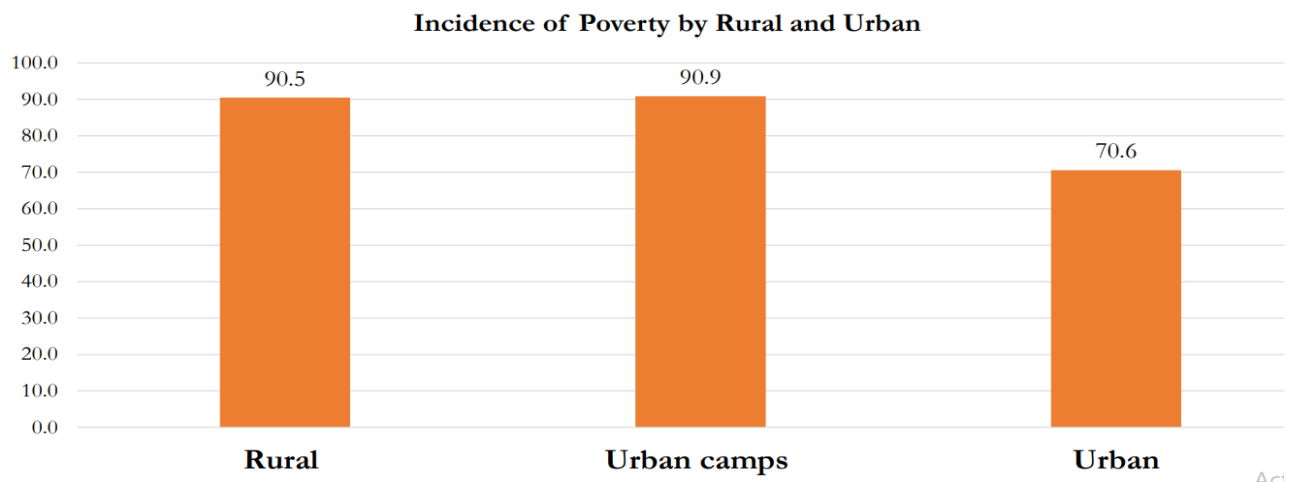
South Sudanese in urban areas were living below the international poverty line. Female headed households are poorer than male headed households, with more than 3 in 4 female headed households living in poverty (83 and 84 percent respectively in 2022).

Figure 1: Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age and geographical location



Source: NBS, Sustainable Development Report: SDG Dashboards and Trends²⁹

Figure 2:Poverty incidence by urban and rural according to the National MPI



Source: National MPI Preliminary Findings Report, 2023

²⁹ <https://dashboards.sdindex.org/profiles/south-sudan>



1.2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age

South Sudan faces high levels of multidimensional poverty, with more than eight out of ten households living in multidimensional poverty. Rural areas have the largest share of households experiencing multidimensional poverty. The global MPI Report of 2022³⁰ found that 91.9% of the people in the South Sudan are multidimensionally poor. Of these, about 83.5% and 94.6% reside in the urban and rural areas respectively. The MPI was about 58% making South Sudan the poorest country in the world. Moreover, according to the inaugural national MPI estimate³¹, 82.5% of people in South Sudan are multidimensionally poor and they experience deprivations in 55.3% of all indicators. Furthermore, the MPI in South Sudan is 45.6%, thus poor people face 45.6% of the possible deprivations if everyone were poor and deprived in all the indicators.

Though the national MPI doesn't necessarily reflect the proportions of men and women living in all forms of poverty, it highlights the levels of multidimensional poverty in male and female headed households. In this aspect, incidence of multidimensional poverty for female-headed households is larger than for male-headed households, with 92.1% of households headed by women experiencing multidimensionally poverty. The intensity of their poverty is 58.8%, and their MPI is 0.542. On the other hand, male-headed households face 79.4% the incidence of multidimensional poverty is with an intensity of 53.8% and an MPI value of 0.427.

1.2.2 Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

South Sudan remains volatile and its population highly vulnerable due to the protracted conflict, yet the country's social protection system is weak. The Government of South Sudan is strengthening its policies, structures and legal foundations for social protection. Towards this end, South Sudan Development Plan 2013–2017 and the National Development Strategy 2018–2021 identify social protection as a national priority to combat poverty and social exclusion. In 2015, the government approved the National Social Protection Policy Framework, and the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare commissioned mapping³² of the social protection system in 2019 to examine the enabling environment for South Sudan's social protection system. The mapping covered seven non-contributory social protection programmes, namely: the Safety Net and Skills Development Project and the South Sudan Safety Nets Project, both funded by the World Bank; the Building Resilience through Asset Creation Phase II initiative, funded by the UK

³⁰ OPHI, The 2022 global MPI report <https://ophi.org.uk/2022-global-mpi-report#:~:text=The%20global%20Multidimensional%20Poverty%20Index.global%20MPI%20as%20multidimensionally%20poor.>

³¹ NBS, National Multidimensional Poverty Index Report, 2023

³² MGCSW, Mapping and Analysis of Social Protection in South Sudan, 2019



Department for International Development (DFID); Asset Creation and Livelihoods (ACL) , funded and implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP); the Urban Safety Nets programme, implemented by WFP; the Girls Education South Sudan (GESS) Programme, funded by DFID; and the School Feeding Programme, implemented by WFP.

In 2023, the government enacted the National Social Insurance Fund (NSIF) Act of 2023 in an effort to establish safety net and protection for the citizens marking a noteworthy legal milestone. The successful implementation of SSSNP paved the way for the subsequent Productive Safety Net for Socio economic Opportunities Project (SNSOP)³³ in 2023, a \$129 million IDA-financed project, which provides safety net assistance to vulnerable households and strengthens the government’s safety net delivery system.

1.4.1 Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services

South Sudan’s national MPI indicates many households that do not have access to basic services such as education, healthcare, drinking water, sanitation, and electricity. The highest percentage of households’ deprivations were in electricity (94.3%), sanitation (84%) and years of schooling of the household head (73%).

1.4.2 Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, (a) with legally recognized documentation, and (b) who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and type of tenure

South Sudan transitional constitution safeguards the protection of its citizens, access to basic service. However, ownership and control over land and other property and so on is not necessarily universal.

Progress

Overall, poverty in South Sudan is high and it continues to rise owing to the protracted civil war, natural disaster like floods, recurring inter-communal conflicts, weakened public institutions, global factors among other reasons. Due to limited poverty data options, it is difficult to accurately measure poverty and its progress over the years, especially multidimensional poverty. However, poverty in monetary terms has been on an increase since 2010, according to the NBS and World Bank data.

Challenges

- Due to limited poverty data options, it is difficult to accurately measure poverty and its progress over the years, especially multidimensional poverty.
- Lack of economic opportunities; unemployment rate remains high.

³³ The World Bank: Uplifting Vulnerable South Sudanese Households through Safety Net Assistance <https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2024/01/09/uplifting-vulnerable-afe-south-sudanese-households-through-safety-net-assistance>



- Weak governance and accountability systems.
- High levels of illiteracy hence large proportion of unskilled workers
- Rampant insecurity impacts agricultural and livestock sectors.
- Over-reliance on oil revenue.
- Weak social protection systems which are hundred percent funded by development partners.

Recommendations

- Pursue PFM reforms, improve budgetary allocation and spending, especially in the social sectors.
- Invest in the implementation of robust social protection system to combat economic vulnerabilities and help contribute to four (4) other SDGs target as illustrated in figure 3.
- Upholding peace and political stability.
- Investment in key macroeconomic data by conducting labor force survey and household budget surveys to bridge data gaps to accurately assess poverty levels.
- Pay decent wages to civil servants.
- Diversification the economy to create opportunities and reduce unemployment.

Figure 3: Sustainable Development Goals of relevance to social protection.



Source: UNDESA Sustainable Development and ILO Social Protection Department





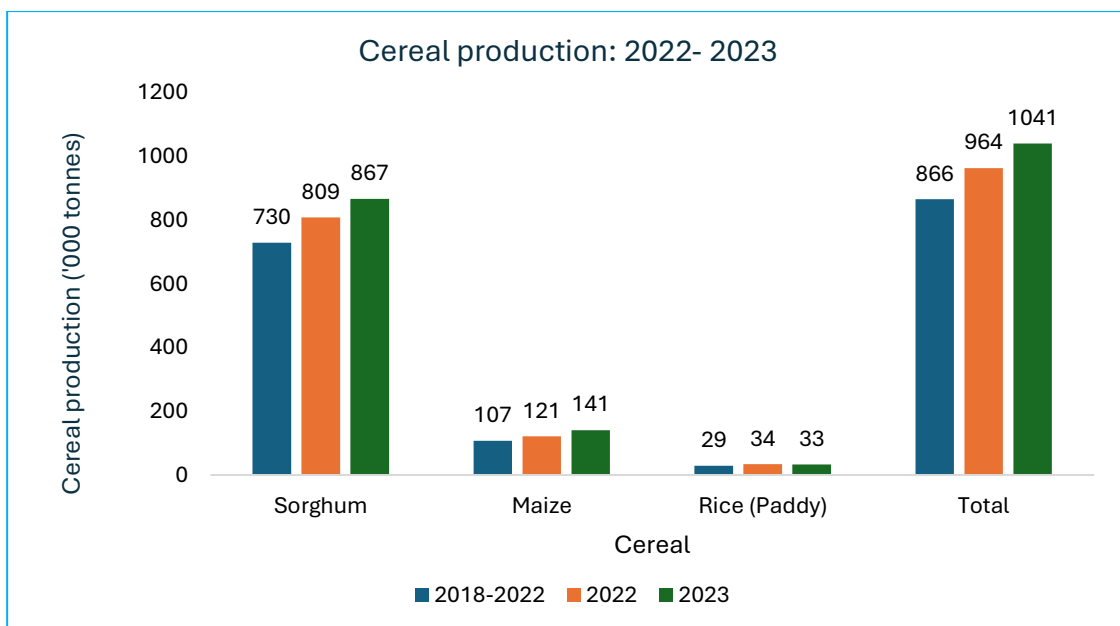
SDG 2 – END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Status and Trends

The latest data indicates that most of the food- and agriculture-related SDG targets are still far from being achieved. Indicators focused on malnutrition present a mixed picture. Food insecurity persists, affecting an estimated 7.1 million people, exacerbated by conflict, climate shocks, and economic instability.

Although South Sudan had above average³⁴ aggregate cereal production in 2023, about 8 percent up from the 2022 output and about 20 percent above the average of the previous five years, Food insecurity persists, affecting an estimated 7.1 million people, exacerbated by conflict, climate shocks, and economic instability.

Figure 4: Cereal production: 2022- 2023



Source: Based on data from FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet

³⁴ FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM), 2023



2.1.1 Prevalence of undernourishment

In South Sudan, the prevalence of undernourishment was estimated at 21.4% (2021) and 23% (2020), coupled with high global acute malnutrition (GAM) estimated at 17.7% (2023), 16.0% (2022), and 15.8% (2021) at the national level.

2.1.2 Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)

The prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the total population was estimated at 85.1% (2016 – 2018), 84.9% (2017-2019), 85.7% (2018-2020), 86.4% (2019-2021)³⁵ and 87.3% (2020-2022). The high level of moderate and severe food insecurity is attributed to the impact of climate change, such as residual flooding since 2020 in South Sudan.

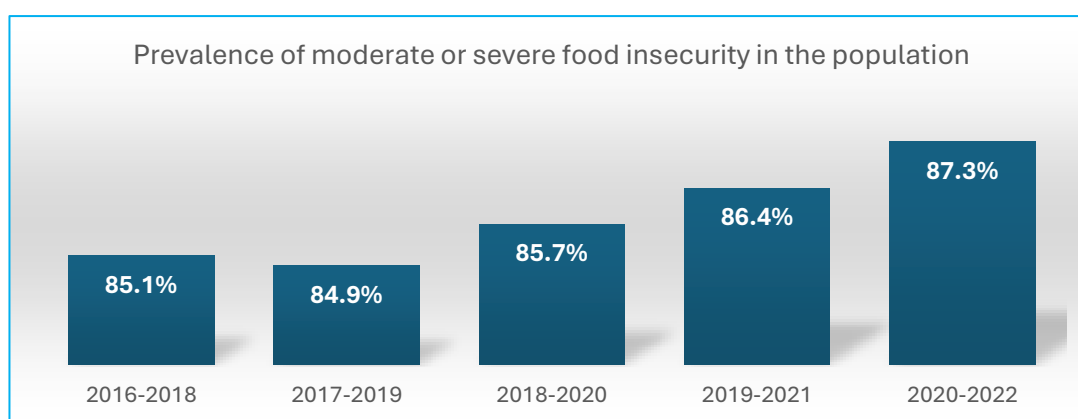


Figure 5: Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the total population

2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years.

The prevalence of stunting in children under 5 (weight for height <-2 standard deviation from the Child Growth Standards median) continued to remain higher than the global prevalence for the same period, although there is observed improvement compared to the 2010 LQAS Health Survey prevalence (32.1%). While no nutrition survey data is available on stunting, WHO has estimated the prevalence of stunting among children aged under 5 years at 27.9% (2022), 28.3% (2021), 28.7% (2020), 29.1% (2019), 29.3% (2018), 29.6% (2017), and 29.8% (2016), which is a 4.2% improvement³⁶.

2.2.2 Prevalence of overweight (weight for height >+2 or <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight).

There is a 4.6% improvement in the prevalence of overweight in children under 5 years old (weight for height >+2 standard deviation from the Child Growth Standards median) from 9.3% (2000) to 4.7% (2022). The prevalence continued to improve yearly, per the

³⁵ FAO. <https://www.fao.org/state-of-food-security-nutrition/2-1-2/en/>

³⁶ WHO. <https://data.who.int/indicators/i/3AA5F44/64E2430>



estimation: 5.4% (2016), 5.3% (2017), 5.1% (2018), 5% (2019), 4.9% (2020), 4.8% (2021), and 4.7% (2022)³⁷.

2.2.3 Prevalence of anaemia in women aged 15 to 49 years, by pregnancy status

The prevalence of anaemia in women aged 15 to 49 years by pregnancy status continued to increase and remained higher than the global prevalence for the same period. The prevalence of anaemia in women aged 15 to 49 years by pregnancy status was estimated at 35.6% (2019), 35.4% (2018), 35.2% (2017), 35% (2016), 34.8% (2015), and 34.7% (2014)³⁸. The deteriorating anaemia can be attributed to economic hardship and the impact of climate change, leading to residual flooding in South Sudan.

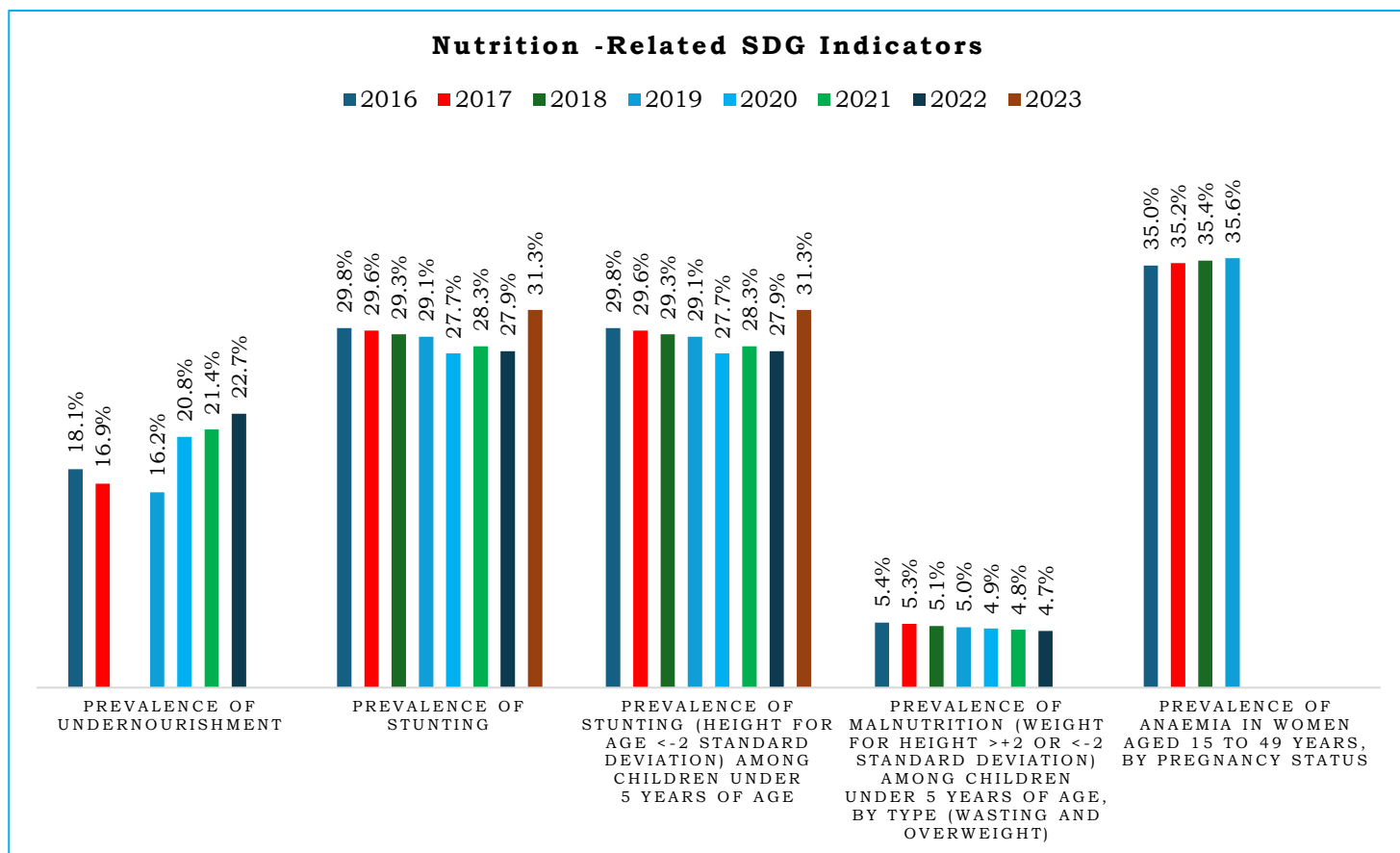


Figure 6: Nutrition -Related SDG Indicators

³⁷ WHO. <https://data.who.int/indicators/i/3AA5F44/64E2430>

³⁸WHO/National Health Observatories.

<https://aho.afro.who.int/ind/sc?sessionid=1FD8395E624525A22EAC590D3E014C74?dim=81&dom=Nutrition%20maternal%20et%20infantile>



2.a Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) has developed a short- and long-term plans prioritizing investing, leveraging the Public Private Partnership (PPP), in national agricultural projects to increase production which will in turn increase household and national income, and improved livelihoods. A few examples of the eight (8) short-term projects include:

- i. Production of Cereal Crops and Quality Seeds
- ii. Production of Oil-seed crops and Quality Seeds
- iii. Production Root Crops and Quality Seeds
- iv. Rehabilitation of Sugar Industry
- v. Rehabilitation of Coffee Industries

A few examples of ten (10) long-term projects include:

- i. Nzara Agro-Business Complex.
- ii. Yirol Edible Oil Mill. Establish Palm oil Cultivation and Oil Factory
- iii. Melut Sugar Project. Develop Cane Sugar Cultivation and Processing facilities
- iv. Mongalla Sugar Project. Develop Sugar Cane Cultivation and Processing
- v. Aweil Rice Project.
- vi. Rehabilitation of Coffee Production and Processing

A cumulative investment of approximately USD 5.6 billion³⁹ will be required over the next 3 years for these projects. The government through the MAFS has mobilized donor funds to the tune of USD 210 Million⁴⁰ from the World Bank Group, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and African Development Bank (AfDB). These strategic investments will primarily contribute to South Sudan achieving food self-sufficiency through increase in local food production, increase household income through youth and women -led enterprises focusing on agriculture value chain, as well as increase agriculture share to the national Gross Domestic Product – increase agriculture led economic growth.

2.a.1 The agriculture orientation index for government expenditures.⁴¹

South Sudan agriculture orientation index for government expenditures in 2021 was 0.59 which by status classified South Sudan as above median performers.⁴²

³⁹ Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, 2024.

⁴⁰ Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, 2024.

⁴² Food and Agricultural Organisation, SDG Indicator Portal
<https://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals-data-portal/data/>

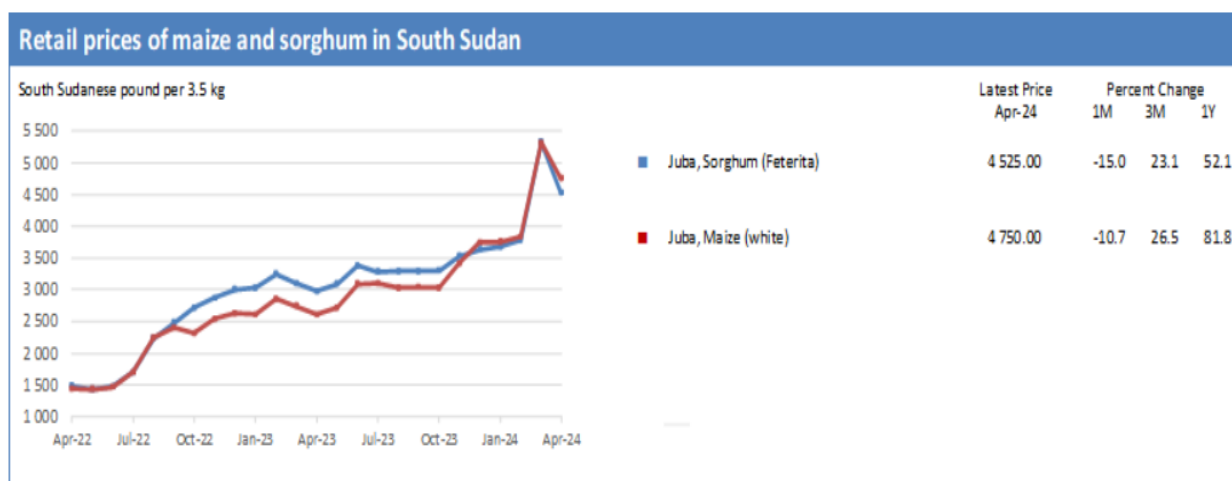


2.c.1 Indicator of food price anomalies

Prices of coarse grains remain at sky-high levels in South Sudan.⁴³ Exceptionally high levels continue to be recorded in South Sudan, underpinned by tight supplies and severe macroeconomic difficulties, including currency weakness. Food prices anomalies in South Sudan are further hiked by a sharply reduced cereal production in 2023, disruption to trading activities, weak market integration, high dependency on imports, high transaction costs, severe macroeconomic crisis.

Prices of maize and sorghum eased by 11–15 percent in April 2024 in the capital, Juba, after having surged in March 2024 due to a further, abrupt depreciation of the national currency caused by reduced oil exports. Prices of sorghum and maize in April were more than 50 and 80 percent, respectively, higher than their already high year-earlier values and at near-record levels due to tight supplies and macroeconomic difficulties.

Figure 7: Retail Prices of Maize and Sorghum in South Sudan



Source: Food and Agricultural Organization

Challenges

- Despite an abundance of arable land, crop production is mainly conducted by smallholder farmers on small plots of land cultivated manually using hand tools.
- Lack of Food Balance Sheet (FBS) system has widened data gap for assessing food security which can be addressed by conducting Food Balance Sheet (FBS) assessment by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to provides a comprehensive picture of the pattern of food supply and utilization in the country.
- Low productivity and low commercialization of agriculture and livestock.

⁴³ Food and Agricultural Organization: <https://www.fao.org/giews/food-prices/regional-roundups/detail/en/c/1682161/>



- The country's agriculture is entirely dependent on rainfall and hence rainfall variability in terms of amount and distribution is usually a major determinant of production.
- Underdeveloped rural infrastructure leads to high transport costs for agricultural produce and farm inputs.
- Adverse effects of climate change leading to severe droughts in some parts and perennial flooding in others.

Recommendations

- Strengthened institutional capacity to assess, analyze and monitor food security and nutrition outcomes and drivers, as well as design, allocate resources, and implement humanitarian and development initiatives.
- Ending all forms of malnutrition and addressing the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women, and older people.
- Doubling the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, particularly women, pastoralists and fishers by enhancing their access to inputs, knowledge, financial services and markets
- Ensuring sustainable food production systems and implementing resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change and extreme weather.
- Food insecurity requires a comprehensive approach that covers multiple angles to best address the needs of South Sudan. Addressing a single factor—whether underlying conflict-related insecurity, or supply-chain breakdown, or water storage—will not solve the severe food crisis that South Sudan faces.
- Address low productivity and low commercialization of agriculture and livestock by strengthening smallholder-based agriculture and developing large-scale commercial farms.
- Technological improvements intended to increase agricultural productivity can be challenging due to infrastructure constraints but have the potential to improve food security outcomes and reduce poverty in the long term.
- Given the influence of inflation on market prices and food security, it is crucial that economic and security stabilization occurs.





SDG 3 – ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES

Status and trends

3.1.1. Maternal mortality ratio

South Sudan has shown a mixed maternal mortality ratio trend in recent years. While there was an increase between 2015 (789/100,000)⁴⁴ and 2022 (1,223/100,000)⁴⁵, it's important to consider the longer-term perspective of improving the ratio from 2006 to 2022. The maternal mortality ratio stood at 1288/100,000, 1252/100,000, 1275/100,000, and 1245/100,000 from 2016 to 2019, respectively. Compared to the 2006 Sudan household survey, which estimated a much higher ratio of 2,054⁴⁶ per 100,000 live births, there has been a significant overall reduction in maternal deaths⁴⁷. The level of commitment from the government of South Sudan and partners is addressing the drivers of high maternal mortality.

3.1.2. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel

The proportion of births attended by skilled birth attendants in South Sudan has remained below 20% between 2019 and 2021 due to various drivers. The proportion of births attended by skilled birth attendants stood at 18%, 13%, and 15% from 2019 to 2021⁴⁸. In South Sudan, the low proportion of births attended by skilled birth attendants is exacerbated by poor health infrastructure, a shortage of funding, and ongoing conflict, which has weakened the health system. South Sudan has observed an increase in skilled health cadres compared to 2006⁴⁹.

3.2.1. Under-5 mortality rate

The under-5 mortality rate has stagnated at 98.77 per live birth (LB) in South Sudan due to health system challenges. It is estimated at 98.77/LB from 2018 to 2022⁵⁰. South Sudan lacks accurate tools

⁴⁴ 2015 Levels and Trends in Maternal Mortality; UN Inter-Agency Group for Maternal Mortality Estimation

⁴⁵ 2022 UN Interagency estimates.

https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undesa_pd_2022_ungme_child_mortality_report.pdf.

⁴⁶ Sudan household survey 2006. <https://www.ssnbss.org/home/document/survey/sudan-household-health-survey-SHHS-2006/>

⁴⁷ <https://data.worldbank.org/country/south-sudan>.

⁴⁸ Health Sector Strategic Plan 2023-2027.

⁴⁹ The South Sudan LQAS Household Survey 2020.

https://data.unicef.org/resources/data_explorer/unicef/f/?ag=UNICEF&df=GLOBAL_DATAFLOW&ver=1.0&dq=SSD.MNCH_SAB.&startPeriod=1970&endPeriod=2024.

⁵⁰ <https://data.worldbank.org/country/south-sudan>.



and systems for civil registration to populate and store data across the country due to poor health system infrastructure. Therefore, it's likely that there is missing data about the SDG indicator.

3.2.2 Neonatal mortality rate

The neonatal mortality rate has stagnated at around 40 per 100,000 live births since 2016. The proportion of neonatal mortality rates is estimated at 40/1000 LB, 39.79/1000 LB, 39.78/1000 LB, 39.64/1000 LB, 39.57/1000 LB, 39.51/1000 LB, and 39.42/1000 LB for the period of 2016 to 2022, respectively, and which is higher than the global rate⁵¹.

3.3.1 Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations

HIV prevalence⁵² rate among adults has decreased from 2.5% (2020)⁵³, 2.1%(2021), 2.14%(2022) to 1.6% in 2024. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is estimated at 2.14%, 1.9%, and 1.6% for 2022, 2023, and 2024 respectively. HIV incidence has progressively decreased over the years: 17,000 (2022), 10,932 (2023) and 8,086 (2024). The number of people (15–49 years old) on ART had increased to over 50,000⁵⁴ by 2022. Despite the existence of effective medications, treatment, and funding, the incidence of HIV/AIDS prevalence is still high in South Sudan, leading to death and public health concerns. The high incidence of HIV/AIDS is attributed to a lack of achievement toward the 95-95-95 cascade. South Sudan bears a disproportionate 95-95-95 cascade, as the first and second 95s stood at 39% and 27%, an increase from 35% and 23% in 2021, respectively⁵⁵.

3.3.2 Tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 population

The tuberculosis (TB) incidence stagnated at 227/100,000 population between 2015 and 2022, which is higher than the global incidence. The health system's challenges contributed to the high TB incidence in South Sudan. In South Sudan, tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 populations was 227 in 2011–2022. The TB treatment success rate (TSR) was 88%, 85%, 90%, and 90% for 2017 to 2020, respectively, which met the recommended treatment success rate of 85%⁵⁶.

3.3.3 Malaria incidence per 1,000 population at risk.

The malaria incidence increased from 2016 to 2019, when it stood at 259.6 per 1000, 270.7 per 1000, 274.5 per 1000, and 293.6 per 1000 at risk, but started declining in 2020 to 2022, when it stood at 283.1 per 1000, 270.5 per 1000, and 255.2 per 1000 at risk. Generally, the malaria incidence has stagnated around 270 per 1000 population at risk since 2015, which was an improvement from 349 per 1000 population in 2000 in South Sudan⁵⁷.

⁵¹ 2015 Levels and Trends in Maternal Mortality; UN Inter-Agency Group for Maternal Mortality Estimation. <https://childmortality.org/all-cause-mortality/data?refArea=SSD&indicator=MRM0>

⁵² South Sudan Aids Commission

⁵³ 2020 annual report WHO South Sudan: https://www.afro.who.int/sites/default/files/2021-06/WHO%20South%20Sudan%20Annual%20Report%202020_0.pdf

⁵⁴ WHO in South Sudan Annual Report. <https://www.afro.who.int/sites/default/files/2023-04/WHO%20South%20Sudan%20Annual%20Report%202022.pdf>.

⁵⁵ UNAIDS. <https://aidsinfo.unaids.org/>

⁵⁶ WHO. <https://data.who.int/indicators/i/C288D13>

⁵⁷ WHO. <https://data.who.int/indicators/i/B868307/442CEA8>



3.3.4 Hepatitis B incidence per 100,000 population

The proportion of incidence of hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) in the general population was estimated at 1724.3/100,000, 1736.1/100,000, 1755.8/100,000, 1715.6/100,000, 1617.9/100,000, and 9232⁵⁸/100,000 for 2015–2019 and 2022, respectively⁵⁹. In South Sudan, the prevalence of hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) among children under 5 years was estimated at 13.03% and 9.9% in 2020 and 2022, respectively⁶⁰.

3.3.5 Number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases

In South Sudan, the reported number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) continued to fluctuate from 2016 to 2022, when it stood at 10 million, 9.5 million, 7.5 million, 8.5 million, 8.6 million, 8.8 million, and 9.2 million⁶¹, respectively.

The increasing need for interventions against neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) can be attributed to the poor WASH system and residual flooding in South Sudan.

3.4.1 Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease.

In South Sudan, the mortality rate attributed to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) caused a significant public health concern. The NCD mortality rate stood at 16% from 2013 to 2017 and then increased slightly to 18% from 2018 to 2019⁶². The rise of the NCD mortality rate in South Sudan puts more burden on the poor health system, overwhelmed by the needs of a population affected by conflict, poverty, residual flooding, and limited access to healthcare services.

3.4.2 Suicide mortality rate

In South Sudan, the suicide mortality rate per 100,000 population stagnated at 3.6 from 2015 to 2017 and then increased slightly to 3.8 and 3.9 per 100,000 population in 2018 and 2019⁶³, respectively. In South Sudan, the increase in suicide mortality rates can be attributed to the rising needs of a population affected by conflict, poverty, residual flooding, and limited access to healthcare services.

3.6.1 Death rate due to road traffic injuries

In South Sudan, road traffic mortality continued to rise from 2016 to 2019, when it stood at 33.8 per 100,000, 34.7 per 100,000, 35.7 per 100,000, and 36.7 per 100,000⁶⁴, until 2021, when it stood at 23.3 per 100,000. The road traffic mortality is higher than the global road traffic mortality of 15 per 100,000 and Africa's 19.4 per 100,000 population⁶⁵.

⁵⁸ WHO. <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/hepatitis---prevalence-of-chronic-hepatitis-among-the-general-population>.

⁵⁹ World Data. <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/hepatitis-b-incidence-sdgs?tab=chart&country=SSD>

⁶⁰ WHO. <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/hepatitis---prevalence-of-chronic-hepatitis-among-the-general-population>

⁶¹ WHO. <https://data.who.int/indicators/i/95935F3/2D6FBE4>

⁶² WHO. <https://data.who.int/indicators/i/C540135/1F96863>

⁶³ WHO. <https://data.who.int/indicators/i/F08B4FD/16BBF41>.

⁶⁴ World Bank Inc.

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.TRAF.P5?end=2019&locations=SS&start=2000&view=chart>.

⁶⁵ WHO. <https://data.who.int/indicators/i/B9D9E6A/D6176E2>



3.8.1 Coverage of essential health services

The South Sudan's Universal Service Coverage Index has observed an increase since 2015 to 2021, when it stood at 28% in 2015, 31% in 2017, 32% in 2019, and 34% in 2021⁶⁶. Although there is an increase, the country's UHC coverage is below the global Universal Service Coverage Index. South Sudan UHC continued to experience low levels of service coverage and high levels of catastrophic health spending.

3.8.2 Proportion of population with large household expenditures on health as a share of total household expenditure or income.

In South Sudan, the proportion of the population with a large household expenditure on health was estimated at 13.4% in 2017⁶⁷. In South Sudan, the low proportion of health expenditure can be attributed to the rising needs of a population affected by conflict, poverty, residual flooding, and limited access to healthcare services.

3.9.1 Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution

In South Sudan, the age-standardized mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution in 2019 was estimated at 75 per 100,000 population (male 81 and female 69 and age-standardized), and 165.1 per 100,000 in 2016⁶⁸.

Progress

- Maternal mortality has reduced since the 2006 Sudan Household health survey^[xxv] when it was estimated at 2,054 deaths per 100,000. It is currently estimated at 1,223 per 100,000 although still the highest in world.
- There has been a progressive increase in coverage of immunization for children. Coverage for PENTA-3 increased as follows 59% (2018); 61% (2019); 67% (2020); 69% (2021) and 73% (2022). National measles vaccination coverage has also increased as follows 61% (2018); 65% (2019); 69% (2020); 74% (2021) and 72% (2022).
- The HIV prevalence rate among adults aged 15 to 49 years decreased from 2.50% in 2020 to 1.6% in 2024. The HIV incidence has progressively decreased over the years: 17,000 (2022), 10,932 (2023) and 8,086 (2024).
- Total fertility rate has been declining from estimated 5.3 births per woman in 2011 to 4.5 births per woman in 2020^[xxvii]
- South Sudan's service coverage for essential health services has progressively increased. The Service Coverage Index increased to 34/100 in 2021 from 31/100 in 2019, 30/100 in 2017 and 27/100 in 2015.

⁶⁶ WHO (2023). Tracking Universal Health Coverage: 2021 Global monitoring report.

<https://www.who.int/en/publications/i/item/9789240040618>

⁶⁷ WHO Health Financing Progress Matrix.

⁶⁸ WHO. [https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/ambient-and-household-air-pollution-attributable-death-rate-\(per-100-000-population-age-standardized\)](https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/ambient-and-household-air-pollution-attributable-death-rate-(per-100-000-population-age-standardized)).



Challenges

- **Limited healthcare infrastructure:** South Sudan has a shortage of healthcare facilities, particularly in rural areas, 517 out of 1956 health facilities are not functional⁶⁹. Much health centres lack basic amenities, medical equipment, and qualified healthcare professionals. The inadequate infrastructure hinders the delivery of quality healthcare services to the population.
- **Limited Domestic healthcare funding:** The healthcare system is entirely dependent on the donor funding that about 63.6%⁷⁰. The health care financing through national budget has been constantly around 2%, which is far below Abuja Declaration. This has hampered the delivery of other essential services which are not catered for by the donors.
- **Limited access to healthcare:** Many people in South Sudan face barriers to accessing healthcare services. As shown in the last SARA survey before the crisis of 2013, only 44% of the population have access the health services, of which to this time could be worst as majority of health facilities have been destroyed during the fighting and the persistent flooding in many parts of the country, particularly upper Nile region for the last five years.
- **High disease burden:** The country grapples with a high burden of communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, measles, and malaria (malaria accounts for 64% of morbidity) and there is an emerging burden on noncommunicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension.
- **Attrition of healthcare professionals:** South Sudan experiences a severe shortage of healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses, and midwives. Low retention rates particularly by the government, where trained medical personnel mostly prefer providing services under the NGOs or migrate to provide services in other neighbouring countries.
- **Malnutrition and food insecurity:** Malnutrition is a pressing issue in South Sudan, with a significant portion of the population suffering from acute and chronic malnutrition. Food insecurity, inadequate access to clean water, and poor sanitation contribute to the prevalence of malnutrition and negatively impact overall health and well-being.
- **Weak health information system:** The fragmentation of the health information system brought by multiple donations has weakened the health information system of South Sudan. Many systems are operating in silos-collecting data from the primary sources and store them in a server where the Ministry of Health do not have access to. There is also insignificant investment in the data generation, analytic and data use.

Recommendations

- **Reproductive Maternal, New-born, Child, and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH):** Equitably scale up availability and access to quality RMNCAH services.
- **Communicable Diseases: HIV/AIDS, TB, Malaria and NTDs (Neglected Tropical Diseases):** Integrate the implementation of these vertical programmes to create synergies and optimize resource utilization.
- **Non-Communicable Diseases:** Conduct surveys to determine the scale of these diseases and design tailored strategies with more focus on Primary Health Care.
- **Access to Health Services, Quality and Safety, and Health Infrastructure:** Scale-up access to essential health services through addressing the critical gaps identified by improving and expanding

⁶⁹ South Sudan DHIS2 System as of Dec 2023

⁷⁰ Health Section Strategic Plan for South Sudan 2023-2027



health infrastructure equitably, enforcing the implementation of an Essential Package of Health Services.

- **Human Resources for Health:** Scale-up and adequately equip health training institutes in the country; Establish a nation-wide human resource information system and regularly conduct health workforce accounts and commit to remunerate health workers.
- **Health Financing:** Advocate for increased government budget allocation to health towards achieving the Abuja declaration target of 15%; Strengthen public financial management capacities at national and subnational (state and county) levels; Introduce risk pooling schemes and other health financing mechanisms towards reducing out of pocket expenditure on health.
- **Health Information Systems:** Conduct population-wide household surveys; strengthen health information systems in the country including birth and death registration and embrace digital data systems.
- **Leadership and Governance:** Institutionalize annual operational planning at the national and subnational (state and county) levels; Conduct regular leadership and management trainings for MoH (Ministry of Health) personnel at all levels; strengthen coordination structures at national and subnational (state and county) levels and institutionalize coordination mechanisms; enact legal frameworks and health system regulations to ensure quality health services
- **Partnerships for Health:** Establish a clear framework to guide operations of partners at the State and County levels that ensures alignment to priorities identified at the subnational (state and county) level and to strengthen accountability.





SDG 4 – ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG PUBLIC LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Status and trend

Universal primary education and free illiteracy eradication programs are global goals that South Sudan has made strong commitment to and are enshrined in its national laws and development plans. However, a plethora of structural barriers continue to limit access to education and have constrained the country's progress toward full achievement of inclusive and equitable quality education. Albeit the fact that the literacy rates remain the lowest in the region, adult (age 15+) literacy rate increased by 7.52 percent to 34.5 percent since 2008.⁷¹ Youth literacy rate is little higher (age 15-24 years) standing at 47.9 percent with lower literacy level among women (47.4%) than among men (48.4%). Inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all remain elusive for over 2.8 million children, who are out of school and 53 percent of these are girls and also that net enrolment rate for primary education is a paltry 37.6%.⁷²

Total enrolment in all schools' levels has steadily increased by 14% from 2018-2023 to a total of 2,215,494⁷³ students in 2023. Between 2022 – 2023 there was a 12% increase in students' enrolment. Moreover, the gender parity index is gradually narrowing across all school levels from 0.75 in 2018 to 0.87 in 2023⁷⁴.

Water, hygiene and sanitation facilities in schools are being improved. According to the 2023 annual education census, 60% of the schools have boreholes as main sources of water and 72% of the schools have access to fairly protected water sources (borehole, tanker supplied and protected spring) reducing the risk of water borne disease among learners.

The Government of South Sudan has prioritized digital learning and has mainstreamed ICT as a key component of the school curriculum, and this is well emphasized in the

⁷¹ UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2022

https://www.uil.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/files/2022/11/gal_country_profiles_southsudan.pdf

⁷² *ibid*

⁷³ 2023 Annual Education Census Report: Preliminary Findings

⁷⁴ *ibid*



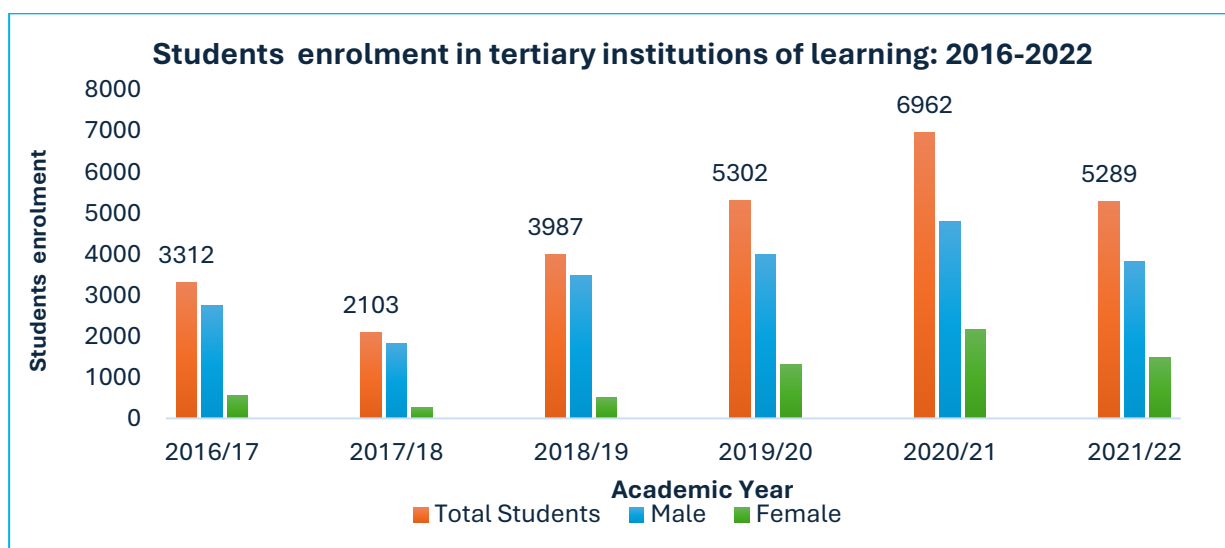
education policy and strategy documents. More efforts and investment are required to support ICT in school as 49 percent of the secondary schools lack ICT teachers.⁷⁵

Concerted effort by all partners in South Sudan’s education system for inclusive education policies are yielding fair results. Enrolment of learners with disabilities based on Washington Group of Indicators for Child functioning and the preliminary results of 2023 AEC show that 3,079 (51%) of the 6,009 operational schools at pre-primary, primary and secondary school levels.

Joint efforts by government and education partners have widened access to primary education and secondary education. Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) examinations continue to attract more candidates, with girls catching up with boys in terms of numbers and performance, and pass rates remain relatively high. In 2021, the National Examination council registered more than 54,000 candidates, 41% of them being female. The number of candidates has risen from 42,000 (2017) to nearly 65,000 in 2020, a 55% growth. In the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) examinations, the number of candidates more than doubled over the rising from 14,000 in 2016 to nearly 32,000 in 2021.

The number of learners joining tertiary institutions has continued to impressively increase over the years. For the past eight (8) years, 2016-2022, the number of admitted learners grew by 59.7% from 312 (2016) to 5289 (2022). Although the number of female students is still way below par, it increased by 161.9% over the last 8 years compared to male students’ admission which increased by 38.7%.

Figure 8: Students enrolment in tertiary institutions of learning: 2016-2022



Source: Computation based on data from Ministry of Higher Education

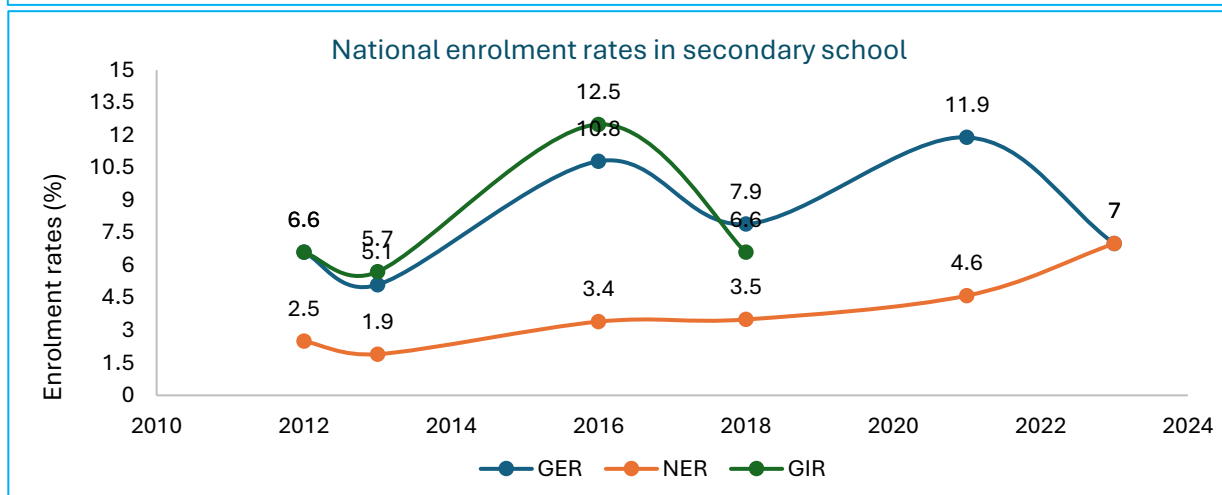
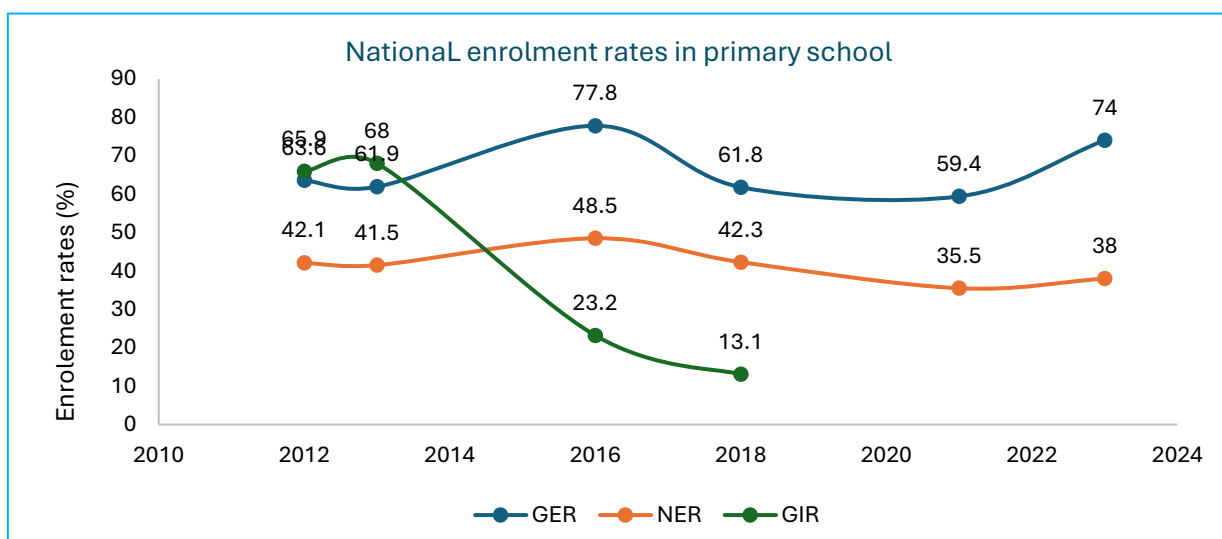
⁷⁵ ibid



The Government has put in place education policies and strategic plans to help fast-tracked the achievement of SDGs targets relating to quality education. The General Education Strategic Plan (2017-2022) is a national roadmap for implementation of The National General Education Policy (2017-2027), and The General Education Act, 2012. The Strategic Plan aims to achieve four important national priorities, viz. to increase equitable access to general education; to improve the quality of general education; to enhance the management capacity of senior staff of the national and sub-national levels; and to promote Technical and Vocational Education and Training to improve the employability of youth and adults in the next five years.

National Enrolment Rates

In 2012 national net enrolment in primary education was 42.1% while in secondary education it was 2.5%. While net enrolment has steadily increased overtime to 7% in 2023, net enrolment rates in primary schools have gradually declined to 38.0% in 2023.



Source: Computation based on data from Ministry of General Education

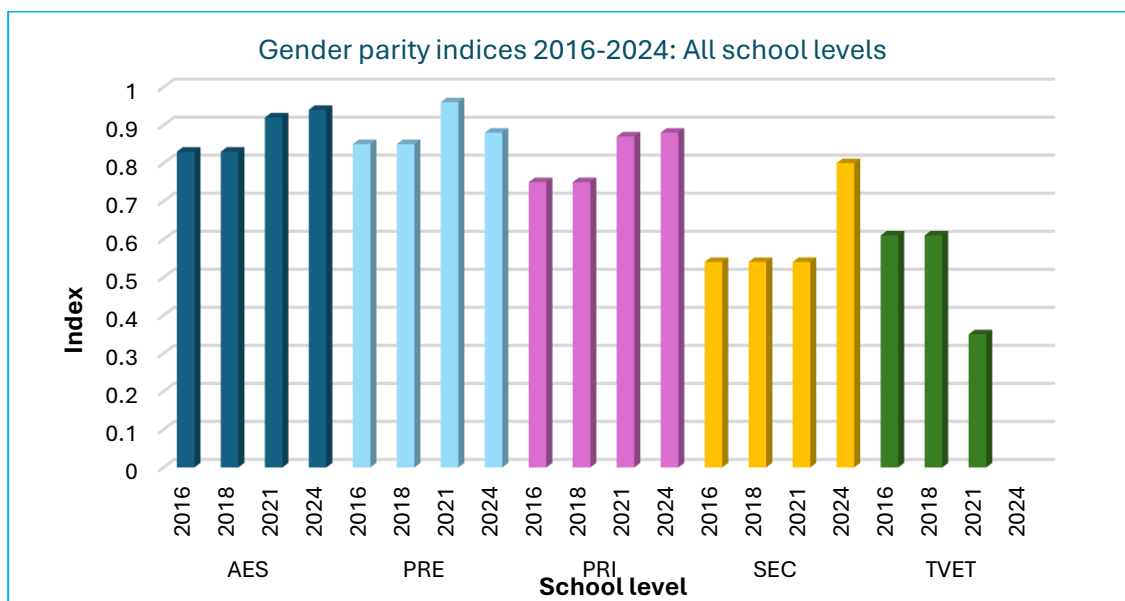


Gender parity indices

4.5.1 Parity indices (female/male, for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated).

Moreover, the gender parity index is gradually narrowing across all school levels from 0.75 in 2018 to 0.87 in 2023.

Figure 9: Gender parity indices 2016-2024: All school levels



Source: Computation based on data from Ministry of General Education

Challenges

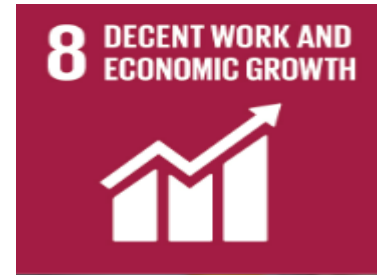
- Government spending on the education sector has stagnated at 6% of total government expenditure, which is far below the set global target of 20%.
- Barriers such as early and forced child marriage, cultural norms, and economic constraints that prevent girls from accessing education.
- Limited resources, lack of trained teachers, counsellors and inadequate infrastructure contribute to poor learning outcomes.
- Negative attitude towards education of girls and learners with special needs and other vulnerable groups, as well as early marriage and early pregnancy.
- Poor remuneration of secondary school teachers.
- Inadequate number of qualified teachers.
- Climate change, with seasonal floods rendering half of the country inaccessible for up to six months of the year.
- Political instability and persistence of armed violence.



Recommendations

- Government to steadily increase the budget allocation and spending in the education sector.
- Investment in teacher training and continuous professional development for teachers.
- Improved school infrastructure: access to electricity, drinking water and improved toilet facilities.
- Education-related policies and strategic plans have been developed to contribute to the achievement of SDGs.
- Assessment of children with disabilities at schools and trained teachers on inclusive education and inclusive programming.
- Invest in initiatives to promote STEM education.
- Investment in initiative to improve adult functional literacy programs.
- Enforce implementation of the ECDE policy by all stakeholders through registration and licensing, inspection and supervision of the schools by inspectors at all levels.
- Reaching the overall primary access targets will also require special efforts to increase enrolment for girls and children with special educational needs and to restore access to children who have been affected by conflict, including IDP and refugee children living in South Sudan.
- Invest in routine inspection, supervision and school management.
- Monitor and evaluate curriculum implementation, including end use of textbooks and teacher guides.





SDG 8 – PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL

Status and trends

8.1.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita

South Sudan's macroeconomic stability is being significantly affected by limited fiscal resources and pressing humanitarian needs. The conflict in Sudan has affected the oil export to international markets. The effects of this are sharp price increases which have most heavily impacted on the economically vulnerable populations. South Sudan Annual GDP growth stand is 5.6%. Annual GDP growth is projected to recover to 7.1 % in 2024⁷⁶ from 5.6 % in 2023 and 6.6% in 2022.

8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in total employment, by sector and sex

The labor force participation rate for adults aged 15-64 has slightly increased from 70.9 in 2020 to 71.5 % in 2022 compared with the global average of 60.8%. Participation rates for youth aged 15-24 are estimated at 61% in 2020 and 61.2 % in 2023. Labor force participation is about 70% with female labor force (70.3) participate roughly equal male labor force participation (71.1%) for 2023⁷⁷.

8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services

The Government of South Sudan recognizes that diversifying the economy is the most sustainable option to lift the population out of poverty. The government is working to create employment and develop the capacity of South Sudanese entrepreneurs and its digital economy. Through the support of the UNDP, the Ministry of Trade and Industry launched the first ever e-commerce hub, the Dukaanye, in 2022.

⁷⁶ IMF DataMapper, April 2024: <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/SSD>

⁷⁷ ILO Modelled Estimates and Project database



Dukaanye^{78,79} is a digital platform which connects pan-African e-commerce market. The benefits of this digital platform to South Sudanese entrepreneurs are emphasized in the words of Minister Kuol Athian: “E-commerce has the potential to enable our country to create opportunities for micro, small, and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) led by women and youth who want to participate in emerging markets like AfCFTA for traditionally offline goods that can now be sold online. E-commerce can promote entrepreneurship, contribute to inclusive private sector development, and create jobs. It will be central in connecting our producers to regional and global value chains....”

Furthermore, South Sudan continues to lay the foundations for trade through the development of key trade policies, mainstreaming of trade strategies and utilizing strategic partnerships with the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) and the UNDP. The EIF supported the update of South Sudan’s trade policy through a consultative process that included government ministries and agencies, academia, the private sector and development partners. The Trade Policy Framework 2018-23 lays the groundwork for EAC integration and future WTO accession. In 2023, the EIF supported⁸⁰ the National Steering Committee on WTO accession through trainings.

8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities

Employees in vulnerable employment are less inclined to have official employment agreements, social security, and safety measures to protect against financial downturns, making them more susceptible to slipping into poverty. Vulnerable employment rates remain high. According to the ILO model estimates in 2022, South Sudan vulnerable employment rate is 87.7% Vulnerable employment among men and women stands at 81.1% and 94.2 % respectively.

8.8.2 Level of national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on International Labour Organization (ILO) textual sources and national legislation, by sex and migrant status

Since joining the International Labour Organisation (ILO), South Sudan has ratified the three conventions of the ILO, viz. Forced Labour Convention, Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, and Equal Remuneration Convention. Signing these global legal instruments demonstrates the country’s commitment to formulate its labour policies and legislative framework, regulate the private sector labour market, manage and administer human resource policies in conformity with these conventions.

⁷⁸ <https://www.undp.org/south-sudan/news/undp-south-sudan-and-ministry-trade-industry-launch-new-e-commerce-hub>

⁷⁹ Consultation with SDGs Focal Person, Ministry of Trade and Industry, South Sudan.

⁸⁰ <https://trade4devnews.enhancedif.org/en/impact-story/worlds-newest-nations-lays-foundations-trade#:~:text=A%20major%20milestone%20on%20the,%2C%20www.dukaanye.com.>



The Labour Act (2017) provides a regulatory framework within which employers can operate and create jobs. The Act comprehensively addresses key aspects of the workplace. Pursuant to the Labour Act (2017), South Sudan under Ministry of Labour has passed four policies frames that includes (national occupational safety and health, vocational training and skill development 2022) and policy framework and strategic plan guiding the regulations. These prohibits workplace discrimination on any ground, establishes equal remuneration for work of equal value, promotes freedom of association, provides for disputes resolution mechanisms through the National Labour Act, provision for health and safety at the workplace, prohibits forced labour, regulates employment agencies among others.

8.10.2 Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider

Account ownership at a financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider for persons aged 15 and above stands at 4.01%⁸¹ in 2021(14.2% of women and 7.7% of men in South Sudan had an account). Women and men used a mobile phone or the internet to pay bills at approximately the same rate (4.19% for female and 3.83% men). Although the peace dividend could help create more economic opportunities, the economic slowdown is also expected to aggravate unemployment, with disproportionate effects on youth and women.

8.b.1 Existence of a developed and operationalized national strategy for youth employment, as a distinct strategy or as part of a national employment strategy

Youth constitute 73.6 percent of the population in South Sudan. More than 50% of this population is unemployed. Low levels of educations, limited skills and unstable economy limit youth employability. The Revised National Development Strategy 2021-2024 priorities youth-centered development and envisions government partnership with the private sector to private sector and other partners to expand youth economic empowerment opportunities. The strategy also calls for investment in home-grown entrepreneurial initiatives through a dedicated Youth Enterprise Development Fund (Youth Enterprise Development Fund bill which will soon be tabled in the national parliament) as well as investment in vocational training facilities and resources for youth in all the states.

Recommendations

- Expand the Universal Access Fund to take communication services to unserved and underserved areas.
- Targeted support to MSMEs by both the public and private sectors.
- Macroeconomic stability through prudent fiscal and monetary policies.

⁸¹ World Bank, Global Findex Database: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/globalfindex>



- Improvement of road network, airports and river transport to facilitate trade within the country.
- Investment in agricultural sector to ensure food security and employment.
- Develop and expand opportunities in the untapped export sector, particularly fish and fish products.
- Develop and invest in skilled based approach to maximize and increase labor-force for economic growth and development.
- Target institutions that produce local workforces and incentivized their expansion.





SDG 9 – BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION AND FOSTER INNOVATION

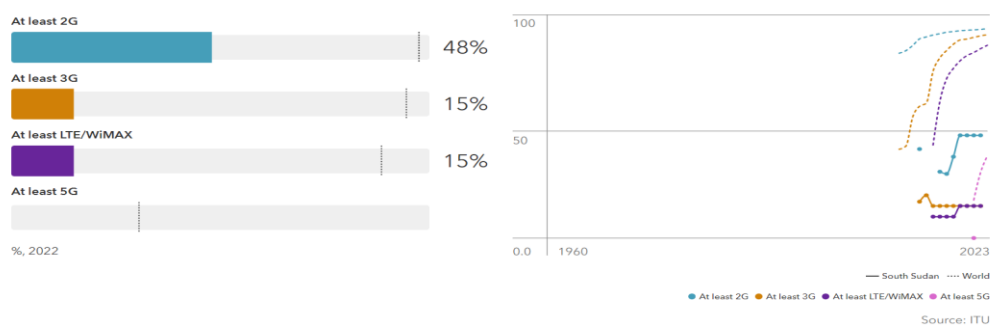
Status and trend

The poor state of critical infrastructure to catalyze growth remains a daunting development challenge and progress towards SDG 9 is off track. Roads, sewerage systems, electric power systems and internet capacity and penetration are very limited. The Government of South Sudan commits in the national development strategy (R-NDS) to expedite economic infrastructure development and have set a number of indicators to track the progress toward these ambitious goals. These indicators include construction of major highways, mobile phone penetration, water and irrigation facilities, feeder roads rehabilitated or constructed, build food reserve among others.

South Sudan ICT usage and indicators are patchy as the progress is constrained by insufficient broadband capacity, outdated equipment, and a lack of understanding of the advantages and accessibility of ICT. The proportion of population covered by mobile network technology is a static 30 percent⁸² for 2022 and 2023. The proportion of internet users is 17% in 2022 and 2023.

The government is committed to moving towards e-governance and has set up an ambitious plan to invest in sufficient broadband and equip public institutions to gradually transition to e-governance and train technical expertise to service ICT systems.

Figure 10: The proportion of internet users in 2022 and 2023



Source: International Telecommunication Union (ITU⁸³)

⁸² National Communication Authority, NCA

⁸³ <https://datahub.itu.int/data/?e=SSD&i=100095>



Furthermore, South Sudan's prioritize partnerships to drive inclusive local manufacturing sector and committed to building resilient infrastructure, fostering innovation ecosystems, and leveraging technology to bridge the digital divide, thus paving the way for economic diversification and progress.

The contribution of the manufacturing sector to the GDP and employment has remained low (2 percent)⁸⁴ in 2021, while the average in East Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa are respectively 8.4 and 12.4 percent. The manufacturing sector is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises. The sector also contributes to only 5.5 percent⁸⁵(2021) of the country's labour force. With investment in inclusive and sustainable industrialization, the country could unlock and impact on many SDG targets. However, South Sudan has a relatively solid framework for strategic planning thanks to the sustained assistance received from international donors and partners for the last decades, including support to formulate strategic guidance documents and plans such as the R-NDS the Second Nationally Determined Contributions and the National Adaptation Plan which identify actions and priorities for implementation to achieve the agenda 2030.

Challenges

- Poor state of the roads and underdeveloped infrastructure which hinder trade.
- Persistent political instability and armed conflict create a volatile environment inconducive for long-term planning and investment.
- Limited financial resources for segment of population willing to do business.
- Low skilled workforce incapable of driving industrialization and innovation

Recommendations

- Increase investment in infrastructure development to improve the country's economic growth and development.
- Improve the transport infrastructure by rehabilitating existing roads and building new ones to connect remote areas to the rest of the country.
- Increase access to clean water and basic sanitation facilities by investing in water supply and sanitation infrastructure.
- Increase access to electricity by investing in the energy sector.
- Increase internet penetration rates and access to mobile phones by investing in information and communication technology infrastructure.
- Building strong and accountable governance structures is essential for creating an enabling environment for sustainable development.

⁸⁴ United Nations Statistics Division National Accounts (Analysis of Main Aggregates dataset uploaded in January 2023), World Bank World Development Indicators
International Labour Organisation as cited in the World Bank World Development Indicators

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SDG 13 – TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS

Status and trends

SDG 13 calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. Climate change and its unprecedented impact disproportionately burdens the poorest and most vulnerable. In South Sudan, an estimated 95% of the population is dependent on climate-sensitive livelihoods. Average temperatures in South Sudan have increased by approximately 1-1.5°C since the 1970s (the global average being 0.7°C). This is expected to further increase by approximately 1-1.5°C by 2060. Analysis predicts that the country faces a large year-to-year variability in precipitation with the potential increased rainfall intensity in the tropical savanna region resulting in a 600mm/year more rainfall by 2100 and a shortening of the rainy season duration.

South Sudan is the second most climate vulnerable country in the world after Somalia, according to the World Risk Index.⁸⁶ This vulnerability is evidenced by communities devastated, destroyed and displaced by large-scale flooding across the country. The cumulative impact of recurrent flooding has contributed to damage to water facilities, increasing the likelihood of water-borne diseases and intensifying the existing vulnerabilities and tensions among the affected people, who are already facing high poverty rates, widespread displacement and limited access to basic services such as health, nutrition and education. Climate shocks that trigger competition for scarce resources such as water and fertile land due to displacement and environmental degradation, can significantly worsen livelihood insecurity and heighten resource competition, thereby increasing the risk of communal conflict. This issue is particularly acute during periods of flooding and drought, which intensify violent disputes over water and fertile land. Additionally, these conditions cause shifts in cattle migration and practices, leading to violence between pastoralist groups, host communities and migrants/IDPs, as well as between herders and farmers. Historic flooding along the White Nile has displaced

⁸⁶ The World Risk Index, 2023.

Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft in cooperation with the United Nations University (UNU) and assesses the disaster risk for 193 countries. See: https://weltrisikobericht.de/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/WRR_2023_english_online161023.pdf
<https://data.humdata.org/dataset>



hundreds of thousands of people, exacerbating ethnic tensions and potentially reviving historical grievances.

13.2.1 Number of countries with NDCs

In accordance with Article 4(12) of the Paris Agreement, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) communicated by Parties are recorded in a public registry maintained by the UNFCCC Secretariat. According to the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) registry in the UNFCCC Secretariat, 195 countries have submitted their NDCs. South Sudan submitted its second NDCs or version 2 of the NDCs on 21/9/2021 after being reviewed, and its status is indicated as active. NDCs embody efforts by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. South Sudan's Second Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) outlines a strategic approach to addressing climate change, directly aligning with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By prioritizing sectors with the highest potential for emission reduction and climate change adaptation, the NDC focuses efforts where they can have the greatest impact. Key sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, and forestry are targeted for interventions based on their potential for sustainable development and climate resilience.

The NDC's sectoral strategies for mitigation and adaptation address the specific challenges faced by these crucial sectors. These strategies build on existing initiatives, such as the Environmental Policy, to ensure continuity and maximize impact. Additionally, the NDC's specific targets and interventions provide a roadmap for implementing the National Adaptation Program of Action, guiding concrete actions within each sector. By strategically aligning with existing policies and programs, the NDC functions as an action-oriented document that propels South Sudan towards achieving its climate change goals and broader development objectives.

13.2.2 Carbon dioxide emissions:

The data on national CO₂ emissions (in metric tons per capita) is measured to track progress on emissions reductions. South Sudan CO₂ emissions remain negligible low at 0.2 from 2018-2020⁸⁷, with no data available for later years. South Sudan has one of the lowest Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions in the world, and yet it ranks second as the most climate vulnerable country in the world after Somalia.⁸⁸ Over the years, domestic production and resource consumption areas have led to a gradual increase of GHG emissions. Emissions have been increasing at annual rates of 1.22 percent and 1.14 percent, respectively, in tandem with economic and population growth.

⁸⁷ World Bank, *World Development Indicators*

⁸⁸ The World Risk Index 2023, Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft in cooperation with the United Nations University (UNU) and assesses the disaster risk for 193 countries. See: https://weltrisikobericht.de/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/WRR_2023_english_online161023.pdf



GHG emissions from domestic production come mainly from the agriculture and livestock sectors followed by the petroleum and service sectors. Given the importance of livestock farming, GHG emissions from bush burning and enteric fermentation will continue to dominate.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is investing more than \$30 million in country-driven climate change adaptation projects in South Sudan with technical support from the UN GEF implementing agencies. These adaptation projects will enhance community resilience to climate change, and smart agriculture and support community livelihoods.

13.a.1 Mobilization of \$100 billion a year for developing countries to take climate action

Since 2009, global climate talks have agreed on mobilizing \$100 billion a year for developing countries to take climate action, both to adapt to climate change and cut emissions. This indicator requires a mobilization of \$100 billion per year from 2020 onwards. So far, the \$100 billion goal has not been reached, however, and the distribution of funds has not been equitable. In 2020, based on the latest OECD data, developed countries provided \$83.3 billion. Only 8 percent of the total went to low-income countries and about a quarter to Africa, even though both are highly vulnerable to climate change and home to the majority of people in poverty.

Access to new and sustained sources of climate finance will play a vital role in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and in implementing NDC mitigation and adaptation activities in South Sudan. South Sudan receives significantly lower funding per capita for climate finance compared to more stable nations. This inequality in access can exacerbate vulnerabilities and hinder effective climate change adaptation efforts in these contexts, perpetuating a cycle of underdevelopment and insecurity. The government has committed to raising between US \$6.5 and 7 billion from domestic sources; but will require about US \$93.5 billion over a period of 10 years from international partners.

Other notable progress include:

- Awareness of climate change and its impact is relatively high among government officials and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), particularly among youth. The Government supports several programmes that address adaptation in priority sectors.
- Under the South Sudan Vision 2040, the Government has adopted multiple climate-related initiatives including the Environmental Policy (2015-2026) which led to the National Adaptation Program of Action (2016), the first and second Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) in 2017 and 2021, and the comprehensive Agriculture Master Plan (2015-2040).
- In 2021, South Sudan launched its first digital integrated Monitoring, Reporting and Verification iMRV system at the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MOEF). The iMRV provides the country with the capacity to track, verify, and report on the



emissions and estimation of the annual national GHG emissions and GHG inventory from the IPCC GHG emission sectors; tracking and monitoring of climate actions, policies, programmes; and climate finance flow.

Challenges

- Erratic rainfall patterns, droughts and floods affect agricultural productivity, water availability, food security, and overall livelihoods of the population. An estimated 16,500 hectares of cropland have been potentially affected by flooding, interrupting the livelihood activities, and aggravating the already alarming level of food insecurity.
- Droughts and floods can disrupt livelihoods, strain already limited resources, and intensify competition over land, water, and other essential resources, leading to large displacements of people. This can contribute to conflicts between communities and increase the potential for violence.
- Climate change exacerbates environmental degradation and deforestation in South Sudan. Changing rainfall patterns, coupled with unsustainable land management practices, contribute to soil erosion, desertification, and loss of biodiversity. Deforestation, in particular, reduces carbon sinks and exacerbates greenhouse gas emissions.
- Climate change impact in South Sudan will increase the risk of insufficient access to basic services, such as safe water, improved sanitation, and food security, as well as the population's vulnerability to climate-related health issues, including increases in illness and outbreaks of pests and disease.
- The effects of climate change are expected to worsen in the future, with air temperatures projected to rise between 1°C and 2°C by the 2050s as compared to 2020, reaching average annual temperatures between 29°C and 30°C. Despite decreasing trends in the past decades, average annual rainfall in South Sudan might increase in the next years and decades. However, the distribution of rainfall is likely to become more erratic and unpredictable, with longer stretches of drought and more extreme rainfall events, which will increase the risk of land degradation and flooding.

Recommendations

- **Climate change adaptation:** Develop and implement strategies to strengthen the resilience of communities, infrastructure, and ecosystems to the impacts of climate change. This includes conducting gender sensitive vulnerability assessments, promoting climate-smart agriculture practices, and integrating climate change considerations into land use planning.
- **Climate and gender-sensitive agriculture and food security:** Promote climate-resilient agricultural practices and sustainable land management techniques to enhance food security in the face of climate change such as organic farming practices. This includes supporting smallholder farmers in adopting climate-smart farming practices, improving water management, and diversifying agricultural systems. Increased adaptation in agriculture is vital since food prices remain exorbitant due to South Sudan's reliance on imports for 70% of the food supply.



- **Improve disaster preparedness and response:** Strengthen resilience and preparedness for climate-related disasters, such as floods and droughts. Develop early warning systems, contingency plans, and emergency response mechanisms to mitigate the impact of these.
- **Strengthen climate resilience in infrastructure:** Incorporate climate resilience considerations into the planning, design, and construction of infrastructure projects. This includes building climate-resilient roads, bridges, buildings, and water supply systems to withstand climate-related hazards such as floods, droughts, and storms.
- **Renewable energy promotion:** Encourage the transition to clean and renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, and hydropower. Develop policies and incentives to support the deployment of renewable energy technologies, including off-grid solutions, and promote energy efficiency measures. The stretch of the Nile running through South Sudan has 2590 Mw capacity for hydropower. The country also boasts impressive geothermal resources, though a comprehensive study is yet to be conducted.
- **Climate education and awareness:** Promote climate change education and awareness campaigns to build knowledge and understanding of climate change impacts and mitigation strategies among the population. This includes integrating climate change into the education curriculum, conducting public awareness campaigns, and engaging local communities in climate action initiatives.
- **Enhance climate data and monitoring:** Strengthen climate data collection, analysis, and monitoring systems to improve understanding of climate patterns and trends in South Sudan. This includes establishing weather monitoring stations, enhancing early warning systems for climate-related hazards, and improving access to climate information for decision-making.
- **Prioritise financing locally led climate action program** to strengthen local resilience to the impact of climate change, natural hazards, and other stressors by building local capacity to plan, budget, implement and monitor resilience investments in a way that promotes collaborative partnerships between communities, national and county governments.
- **Develop national finance policy** to help increase the country's adaptive capacity and build resilience to climate change, as well as a national climate finance strategy to accelerate access to international climate finance, help with mobilization of private sector climate finance, enhance domestic investment in climate projects, and ensure a coordinated and sustainable climate finance flows.
- **Develop and implement climate action** that is peace positive, i.e. enabling communities to not only build climate resilience but also strengthen trust and social cohesion, and better prevent, mitigate and resolve conflicts around natural resources. Climate-linked peacebuilding should be done in an inclusive and participatory manner following the Do No Harm principle.
- **Prioritize gender integration** by empowering women with land rights, resources, and training in climate-smart practices, while allocating resources specifically for women-led initiatives to address the gendered vulnerabilities arising from climate change.



- **Promote peacebuilding and conflict prevention** by integrating conflict-sensitive approaches into climate action plans by fostering dialogue and mediation between communities competing for scarce resources. This could involve supporting local peacebuilding initiatives and strengthening natural resource management practices to ensure equitable and sustainable use.

South Sudan has been experiencing continuous flooding over the past five years. With over 60% of the population living in riverine areas highly prone to flooding, these recurrent floods repeatedly disrupt and destroy the livelihoods of communities and national development investments. In light of this, climate-smart land use planning anchored on suitability mapping is crucial to reduce the flood exposure of people and to safeguard investments, especially in housing and other critical infrastructure.





SDG 16 – PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS

Status, trends and progress

Since the signing of the peace agreement in 2018, South Sudan government has made strides to consolidate peace and set foundations to build strong and accountable institutions. It is, however, difficult to assess progress due to underdeveloped data systems, and limited access to national and regional trends. However, according to data compiled by UNMISS⁸⁹, 1357 homicides occurred over a period of 12 months, with 1233 victims being male, 124 female, and 78 children. Conflict-related deaths amounted to 1524, with 1360 being male, 164 female, and 123 children. Most of these deaths were caused by inter-communal violence (1,416). Additionally, 1122 people (629 males, 493 females, and 321 children) experienced physical violence, and 601 people were victims of human trafficking, with the majority being children (380). The conflict trends highlighted by the above stated data showcases that despite ongoing peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts, community-level conflicts have not been fully addressed. These conflict trends have disproportionately affected women and youth exposing them to heightened risks of violence and is an obstacle for their full participation to decision-making processes.

Congestion in prisons is still a concern. As at the end of April 2024, 924 inmates were awaiting trial including 141 juveniles and 32 women. Further, 489 inmates were under investigations including 83 juveniles and 20 women.

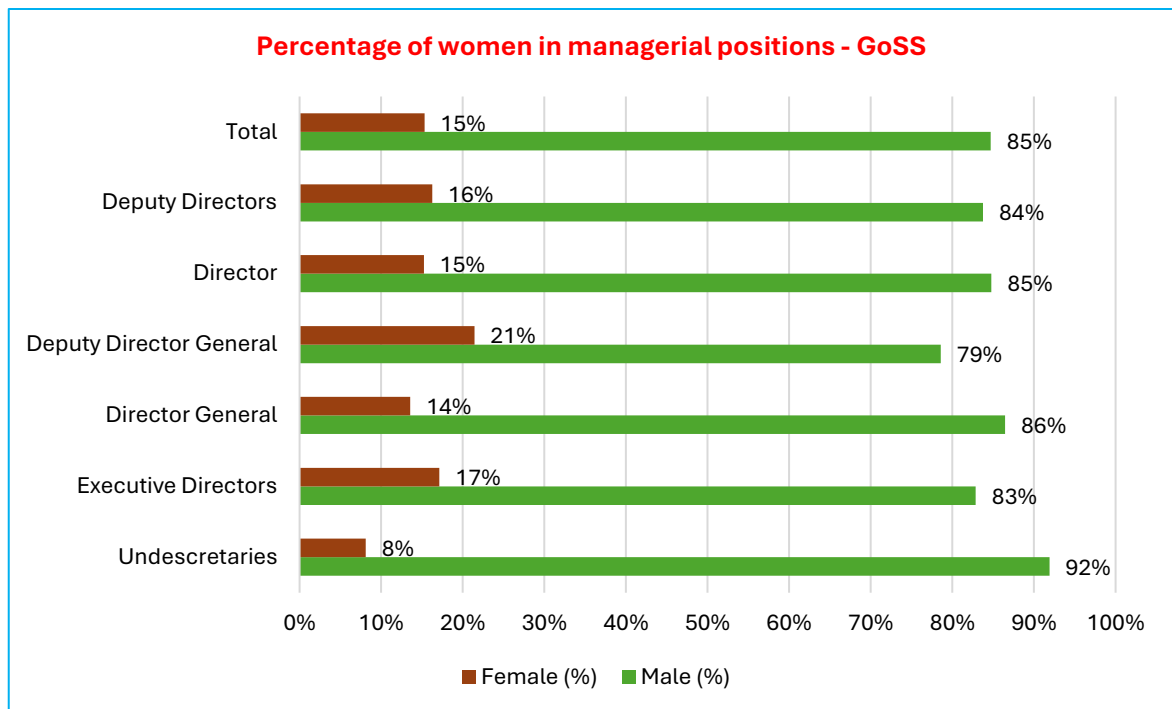
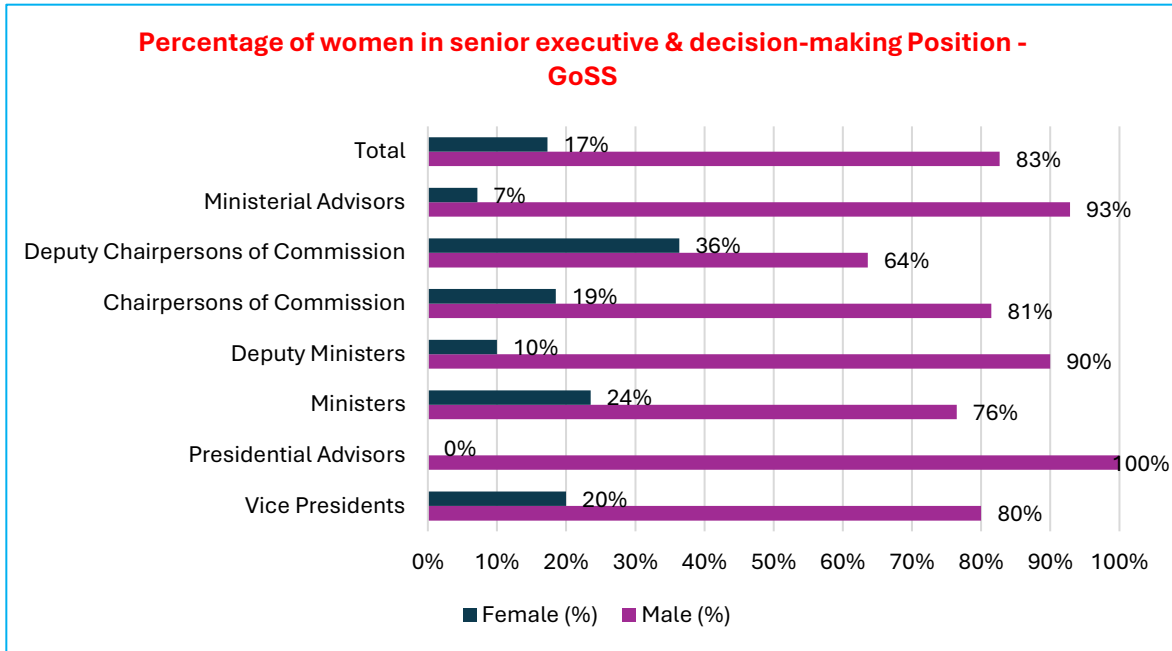
Slow implementation of the Revitalised Peace Agreement led to extension of the transitional period for two years until February 2025, affecting the governance landscape in the country. Discussions ongoing among the Peace Agreement Parties on the conduct of elections, now slated for December; constitution-making process, transitional justice and other governance aspects. The delay has also impacted public service delivery at the national and state levels. Local governance structures do not have adequate human and financial resources for service delivery. Although national policy provides for at least 35% of women in the public sector, they remain systemically under-presented. Nonetheless,

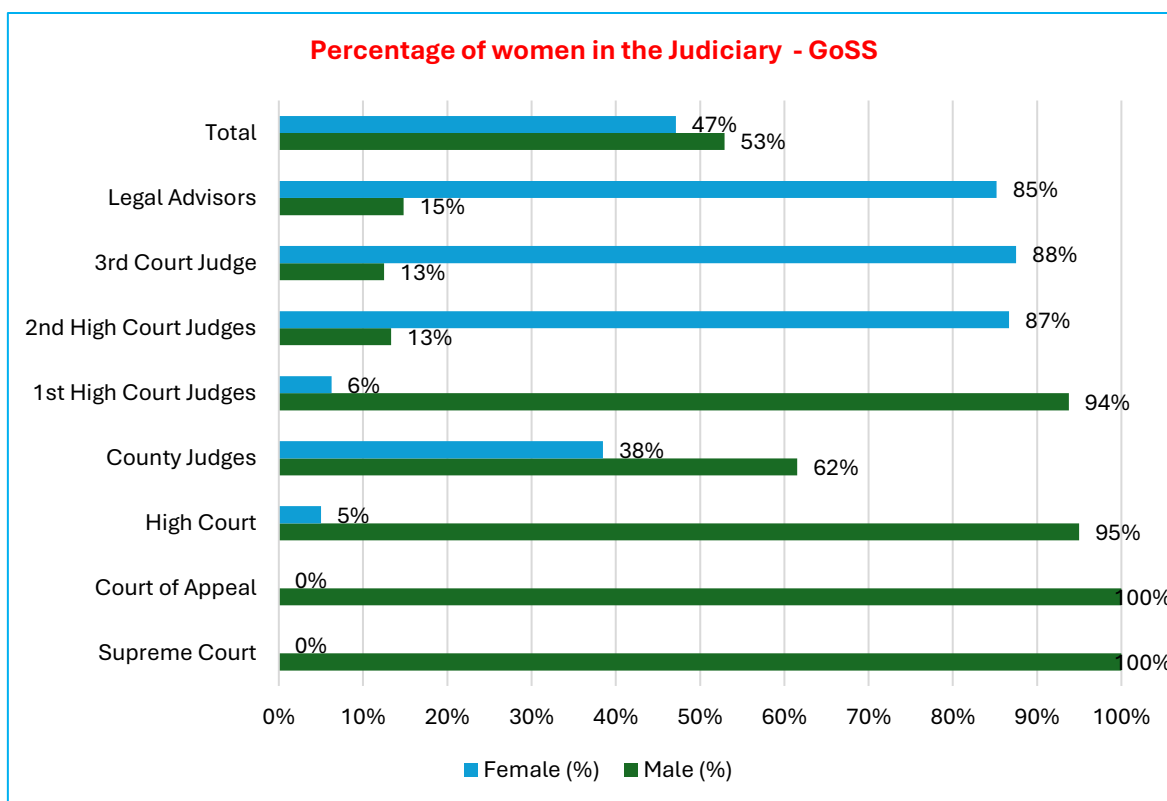
⁸⁹ Human Rights Brief, UNMISS, 2023



some progress on women’s rights has been achieved. Women represent 32.4% of seats in national legislature.

Figure 11: Women representation in political leadership and managerial positions in South Sudan





Aside the enactment of Civil Registry Act of 2018 and the establishment of Civil Registry as a unit under the immigration and nationality office, insignificant progress has been made in birth registration in terms of policy framework and of building capacity of the Civil Registry and raising awareness of the birth registration nationwide.

Other commendable progress toward building strong governance institutions include the review of the Parliamentary Service Master curriculum and capacity building trainings for legislators and staff of national and state legislative assemblies spearheaded by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. In 2022/2023, the Ministry organised induction trainings for clerks from the ten states and the members of state legislative assemblies. In addition, the Ministry also organised training for parliamentary women caucus on the gender mainstreaming and took women members of Parliament on a learning visit to Kenya and Rwanda.

The Ministry of Peacebuilding held peace and reconciliation at hot spot areas country wide and have supported peace messages dissemination through radio and many other media. The Ministry, with the support of the UNDP and peacebuilding partners, have developed strategic policy documents, viz.

- National Strategic Framework for peacebuilding in South Sudan
- Peacebuilding Policy
- The Standard Operation Procedure for Peacebuilding
- Document on Combatting Hate Speech in South Sudan.



Challenges

- The lack of comprehensive and reliable data systems makes it difficult to assess progress accurately. Without robust data, it is challenging to measure the impact of interventions and track trends effectively.
- Lack of proper policy coordination and implementation in various public institutions.
- The number of homicides and conflict-related deaths is alarming. These incidents disrupt peace, stability, and development.
- The prevalence of physical violence and human trafficking poses significant risks to individuals, especially children.
- The capacity of national and sub-national peace infrastructures, including for early warning, remains limited.
- Socio-political and economic systems remain highly exclusive with limited participation of women, youth and conflict affected population leading to challenges for peaceful re-integration of ex-combatants and conflict-affected communities.
- The lack of large sensitization and information on key peace and security development and reforms, especially in the context of the implementation of the R-ARCSS, fuels tensions at local levels, hate speech, and is an obstacle to inclusive institution building at all levels.
- Despite the inadequacy of national statistics, anecdotal evidence reflects a struggling criminal justice system characterized by limited access to security and justice services as a result of capacity gaps related with human resources, infrastructure and equipment. This results in arbitrary arrests, prolonged detentions with pre-trials remaining in detention for very long periods and most of them with expired warrants
- Continued delay in the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement has a negative effect on governance and public service delivery at the national and sub-national levels.
- Lack of funds from the government for peace dissemination around the country.
- Youth women are not being included in decision making and people with disability.

Recommendations

- Strengthen data collection mechanisms by collaborating with relevant agencies, improving reporting systems, and investing in technology for better data management. This will enhance evidence-based decision-making and monitoring of SDG progress.
- Strengthen community policing efforts to prevent violence, address grievances, and promote dialogue between communities. Community-oriented policing can help build trust and reduce tensions.
- Invest in training and resources for law enforcement officers to handle criminality and conflict situations effectively. This includes expertise in investigations, forensics, and crime analysis.



- Pay attention to gender-based violence and ensure that responses are sensitive to the needs of women and children.
- Work closely with affected communities, local authorities, and civil society organizations to address the root causes of violence.
- Prioritize victim support and rehabilitation. Provide safe spaces for survivors and ensure their access to justice and access to trauma healing and psychosocial support;
- Raise awareness about human trafficking and its consequences. Collaborate with local communities to prevent trafficking and protect vulnerable populations.
- Strengthen both national and international cooperation to combat human trafficking effectively.
- Strengthening conflict early warning and response (CEWAR) system and capacities, especially at the local level;
- Support the implementation of local and national peace initiatives and agreements, community dialogues, mediation and consultations as well as policy development on peacebuilding;
- Support Community Violence Reduction (CVR), community-based reintegration initiatives to foster peaceful coexistence;
- Support strategic communication and sensitization outreach to facilitate the integration of women, youth and conflict affected communities in institution building;
- Continuous capacity building for the justice actors including the police, judges, prosecutors and prison officers and traditional leaders while also strengthening infrastructure and equipment to enhance the access to justice, security and human rights strengthening.
- Awareness-raising on the provision of free legal aid by CSOs, strengthening the capacity of the CSOs and promoting the entry points and judicial services for the reporting of crime including the community security mechanisms.
- Increased engagement among the parties to the Revitalized Peace Agreement to expedite implementation for enhanced governance and service delivery.
- Government to engage in multi-stakeholders partnership that prioritize moving away from humanitarian to development assistance.



5 Means of Implementation

5.1 Financing of SDGs Implementation.

5.1.1 Implementing key PFM Reforms and key R-NDS Priority SDGs

Financing sustainable development goals in South Sudan is constrained by struggling economy, oil prices, reduced oil production, conflict, limited capacity for domestic revenue mobilization as well as shrinking donor's contributions due to competing global priorities. The Peace Agreement (R-ARCSS) stabilized the country's political situation. Consolidating peace and maintaining political stability will attract more foreign direct investment (FDI) leading to more job creations and tax revenues for government. It will also incentivize the South Sudanese diaspora to invest in development projects, business and property in South Sudan, hence increasing remittances flow into the country.

The R-NDS, which prioritized seven SDGs, identifies domestic resources as the primary source financing its implementation. The R-TGoNU commits to funding the R-NDS national priorities by reorienting expenditure of domestic revenue towards capital spending, contribution of domestic private finance and remittances; With commitment to have domestic financing drives the country's sustainable development agenda, the government has embarked on an assessment of the opportunities and challenges for mobilizing domestic private and public finances to deliver the R-NDS and future development plans.

The government has started implementing critical Public Financial Management (PFM) reforms starting with the identification of 11 priorities for PFM and the formation and functioning of PFM structures. Through the R-NDS 2021-2024, the government will implement the priorities of PFM reforms, including strengthening gender-responsive budgeting.

5.1.2 Increasing Budgetary Allocations for the Social Services Sector

South Sudan has increased its budgetary allocation for social services sector for the past three fiscal years. For the fiscal year 2021/2022 there has been an increase in the collective Social Sector Budget ceilings from 8% in 2020 to 28% for FY 2021-2022. The education sector ceiling has increased from an 11% budget share in FY 2020-2021 to 17% in FY 2021-2022. Although it is positive that the allocation share has increased, this falls short of the government's commitment to the Incheon Declaration 2015 where governments commit to allocate 15-20% of total public expenditure for the education sector.



After three years of the health sector receiving an average of 1.5% of the budget, the FY 2021-2022 ceiling has been increased to a 10% share of the budget. Similarly, this is a positive evolution, but it does not meet the goal of the Abuja Declaration requiring that 15% of the national budget be allocated to the health sector.

Building sustainable domestic financing of nationally led efforts to promote GEWE is also important. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MFEP) has taken steps to undertake gender-responsive budgeting (GRB). However, the government's dependence on international financing, both multilateral and bilateral, remains high for GEWE initiatives.

5.1.3 Attracting International Climate Finance

Given the current trends of South Sudan's increased vulnerability to climate change as evidenced by the unprecedented flooding and drought in most parts of the country in recent years, the country may also mobilize resources for climate change. While considerable efforts to address climate change challenges through policy, legal and institutional fronts have been made, the implementation of these policies and legal initiatives remained constrained by the country's limited fiscal capacity. To address this, South Sudan commits to partner with development partners to develop national finance policy to help increase the country's adaptive capacity and build resilience to climate change. Furthermore, South Sudan will develop a national climate finance strategy to accelerate access to international climate finance, help with mobilization of private sector climate finance, enhance domestic investment in climate projects, and ensure a coordinated and sustainable climate finance flows. In order to fast-track these efforts, there is an urgent need to have a Directorate/Unit within the Ministry of Finance to coordinate, organize and umbrella mobilization of climate finance both domestically and globally.

5.2 Stronger Multi-stakeholder Partnerships

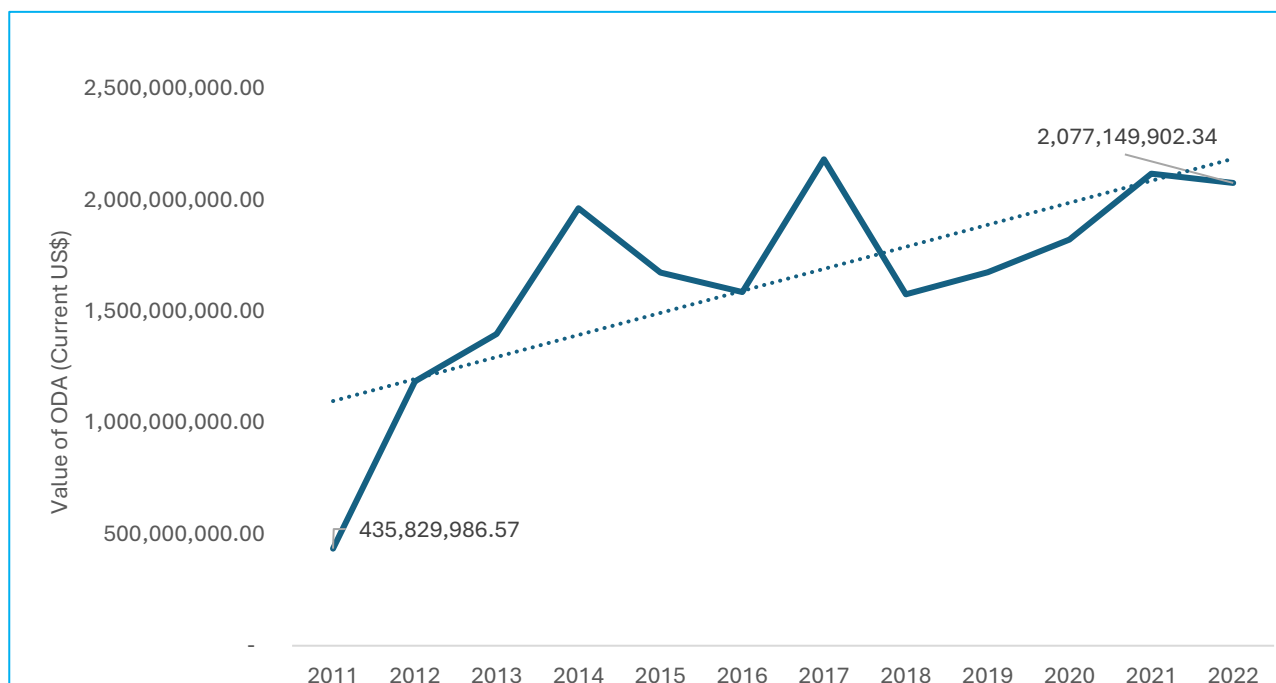
Consultations among diverse stakeholders during the preparation of this VNR report highlighted the fact that successful implementation of the SDGs for the remaining years will require inclusive approaches at national and local levels of government to tap all forms of development financing available from all stakeholders.

External financing through the official development assistance (ODA) has played critical role in the progress thus far achieved in the SDGs implementation in South Sudan. Donors have provided US\$2.08 billion⁹⁰ by 2022 in net ODA since the country's independence in 2011. Most of the donor financing remains largely siloed in humanitarian, peacebuilding and development funding streams. However, virtually all of ODA given is earmarked, which hinders the potential to combine resources and adjust to country political dynamics and evolving priorities.

⁹⁰ World Development Indicators: Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ALLD.CD?locations=SS>



Figure 12: Net official development assistance and official aid received to South Sudan: 2011-2022



Source: Based on data from World Development Indicators

Inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogues and political commitment and action is needed to enable a more conducive environment for delivery of aid and private sector investment. Critically, stronger collaboration will provide effective avenue for stronger partnerships that allow the country to muster all available resources for development. South Sudan will continue to pursue transformative domestic reforms including intensive engagement with private sector and will continue to pursue bilateral and multilateral cooperations as means to create the enabling environment for making progress on all the SDGs in the country. The government will create robust linkages between climate finance mechanism and other state and non-state organizations.

South Sudan will work collaboratively with academic institutions and think tanks to develop research agenda that will help in accelerating the achievement of the SDGs.

5.3 Strengthening the National Statistical System Capacity as an Enabler for SDGs

Capacity building of SDGs focal units at the national and sub-national levels, as well as the national statistical system remains critical accelerator for the achievement of SDGs. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) carried out an assessment on SDGs data landscape in 2021 and identified priority areas for strengthening the national statistical



system (NSS). These include, among other areas, empowering and providing financial resources to NBS in order to provide strong leadership on the national statistical system, developing a new strategy for the development of statistics, and building an administrative data infrastructure. The government of South Sudan made a commitment in the Revised National Development Strategy (2021-2024) to collaborate with development partners to invest financial resources in the strengthening of NBS to lead on the revitalization of national statistics landscape. Continued support of these laid down milestones will provide a solid implementation, monitoring and accountability system for the 2030 Agenda.

5.4 Data for SDGs Reporting

Strong data system is critical to successful implement, track and assess progress on SDGs. Good data can help determine which SDGs and indicators to prioritize in national development programming. Cognizant of the perennial challenges that South Sudan face in meeting its reporting obligations to international database, the NBS identified in the SDGs data landscape assessment gaps in data systems and priority areas for investment, viz.

- Revised the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics with intense focus on administrative data function of MDAs.
- Major household surveys such as Household Budget Survey, Labor force surveys and multi-cluster indicator survey, Agriculture census and surveys and business establishments census and surveys.
- Establishment of a fully function civil registration system at national and lower levels to improve data on vital events and generate vital statistics

Financing the conduct of these national representative household and business surveys would provide invaluable data to guide SDGs implementation, compilation and monitoring. For example, household budget surveys provide sample frames for consumer price index (CPI) and hence construction of nationally representative CPI figures and HBS dataset is used to compute poverty indicators. Yet, the last HBS was completed in 2009 and was the basis for the poverty indicator (51%) that the country currently used including in the calculation of the national MPI that was recently concluded with financial support from the UNDP. South Sudan has not conducted any labor force survey, and this explains the unavailability of labor statistics.

Planning and implementation of these major surveys is a mandate of the NBS, yet due to financial resources, the Bureau has not been able to deliver on this mandate. The spillover effects include lack of sampling frames for follow-up mini surveys and lack of population-based indicators computed from these surveys. However, with the renewed commitment by the government to mobilize and invest more financial resources in the social sector, NBS and national statistical system, sizable progress is expected.

The Civil Registry Act of 2018 provides the legal foundation for the establishment of civil registry. However, the rules and regulations to operationalize this law are lacking.



Consequently, civil registry structures at sub-national levels are not yet established. Achieving universal coverage of civil registration and hence the country's capacity to generate vital statistics will require gradual investment of resources.

5.5 Sustainable Data Infrastructure as Enabler for SDGs Data for Monitoring

The 2021 South Sudan SDG landscape assessment and SDG Rescue Plan emphasized immediate need for the NBS to play central role in the collection, coordination and management of national data, and thus call for the establishment of national data center at NBS as the central repository with sub-portal dedicated for SDGs dissemination. This policy call comes against the backdrop of success of the Health Management Information System (HMIS) that is supported by the District Health Information System (DHIS2) which rolled out in 2019. With capable HMIS technical team and financial resources, key actions designed to strengthen the health data ecosystem. Albeit with some challenges such as underfunding by the government, poor data quality and low facility reporting, non-reporting by the private health sector, HMIS epitomizes a good case study of emerging best practice in South Sudan that can be used to stimulate improvements in other sectors.

5.6 SDGs Governance and Coordination Mechanism

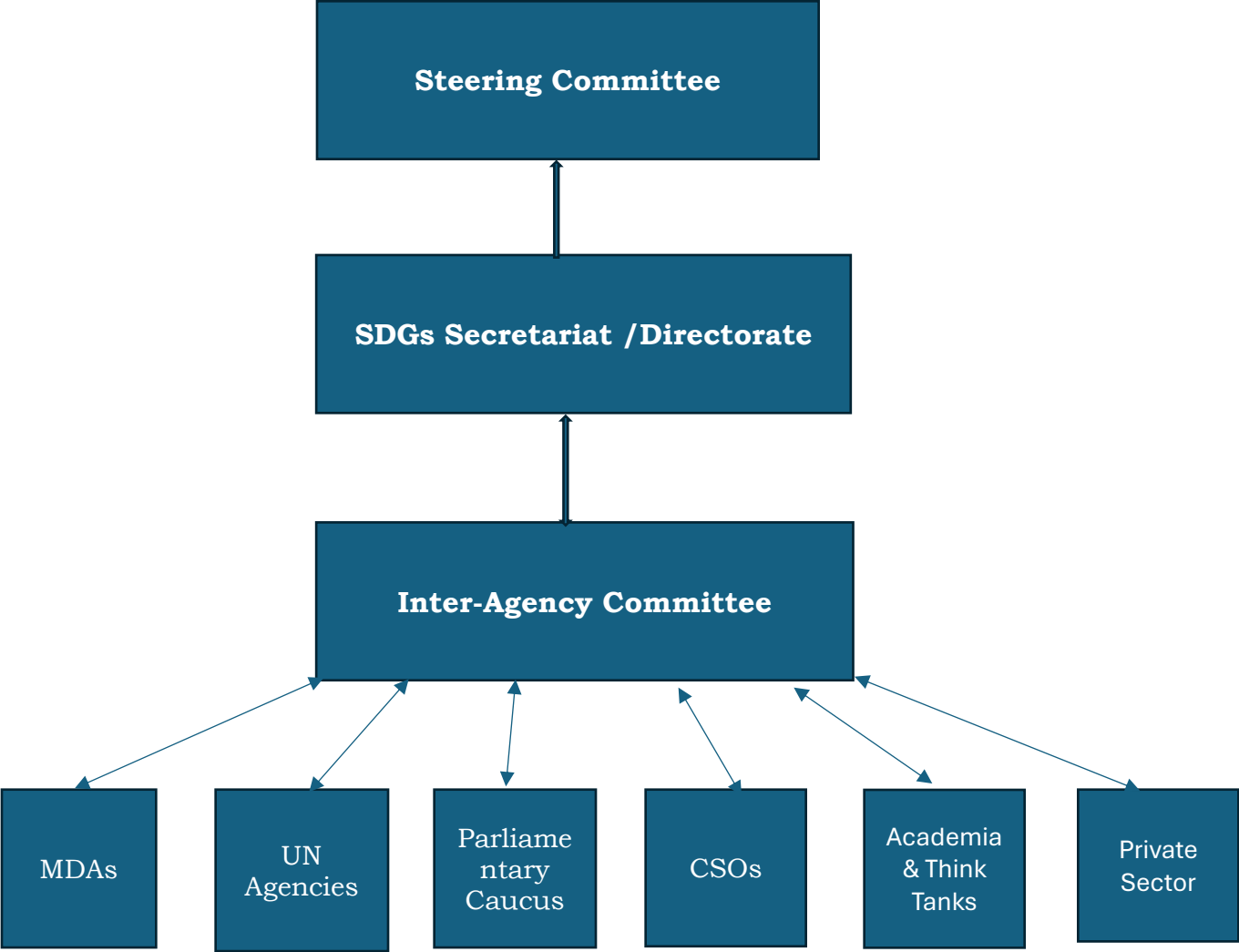
Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, there has been no clear SDGs governance structure. This negatively impacted SDGs domestication and localization efforts as evidenced in the low levels of awareness during the stakeholder's consultation for this VNR report. It also has a negative impact on the availability of monitoring data. For example, for the priority 7 SDGs, only 3 out of 97⁹¹ indicators have data full available, and 42 indicators with partial data.

During the VNR consultations, stakeholders made varied proposals on how SDG governance system should look like. Stakeholders agreed on the need to have one adequately resourced central office, working in tandem with NBS, leading the SDG coordination, ownership and localization efforts. Most consultations proposed the establishment of SDGs secretariat to be headed by Director General (DG) at the Ministry of Finance and Planning to lead the inter-agency coordination and technical functions pertinent to the SDGs. The secretariat will be supported by an inter-agency committee with membership drawn from MDAs, UN agencies, Parliamentary caucus on SDGs, Academia and Think Tanks, CSOs and the private sector. The DG heading the secretariat chairs the inter-agency committee while the NBS co-chairs the committee. However, strategic level consultations with undersecretaries and heads of independent commissions

⁹¹ NBS, Meeting the SDGs in South Sudan: The data landscape



and agencies highlight the need to have a SDGs Steering Committee chaired by the Office of the President and co-chaired by the Ministry of Finance and Planning in order to help the SDG coordination gain political traction it needs. Detailed SDGS governance structure and coordination mechanism is contained in Annex A.3.



5.7 Volunteerism and Provision of Critical Services in South Sudan

Volunteerism plays a key role in the South Sudanese society. At the community level, people engage in mutual help and campaigns to help address developmental issues, respond to conflict, crisis, and humanitarian situations. Whether formal or informal, volunteerism's contribution to the development and peacebuilding processes has always been crucial and fully recognized by the government and its partners.

The contributions of volunteerism in South Sudan cut across all the 17 SDGs. UNFPA implemented a Deploying Midwives (DM) and Strengthening Midwifery Services Projects aimed at increasing access to professional midwifery and sexual reproductive health services for women and girls in South Sudan. From 2013 to 2021, a total of 42 UN Volunteer midwives (national and international) were deployed at Government health facilities across the country. The deployment of volunteer midwives was done at a critical juncture in South Sudan, immediately after South Sudan Independence when South Sudan only had 8 qualified midwives and when a long period of conflict had adversely affected the delivery of social services including maternal/sexual reproductive health services. This deployment resulted in improved provision of maternal and SRH services directly reaching about 1.5 million women with Antenatal Care, Skilled Birth Attendance, Post Natal Care and Family Planning services. The volunteer midwives were also instrumental in building the capacity of the national midwives through clinical mentoring and teaching at the Health Sciences Institutes. Volunteerism under this programme extended beyond clinical care. It fostered a culture of shared knowledge, community service, and resilience. The volunteer midwives brought diverse experiences and skills, creating a rich environment for learning and professional growth. Their commitment and dedication exemplified the spirit of volunteerism, demonstrating the powerful impact that volunteers can have on community health and well-being in challenging contexts.

Other notable examples of contribution of volunteerism include the South Sudan Red Cross Society promotion of volunteerism as mean of critical service delivery countrywide. With its thousands of volunteers deployed across the country, the South Sudan Red Cross Society has contributed immensely to the implementation of the SDGs especially SDGs 2, 3, 5, SDG 6, 10, 13 and 17. In the education sector, the level of annual teacher recruitment has been severely affected by budgetary constraints preventing schools from recruiting permanent teachers and pushing them to fill gaps using volunteers and part-time staff funded by direct contributions from parents or through capitation grant. Data from the Ministry of General Education indicate that there are 10,697 volunteer teachers in the primary, 1,106 volunteer teachers in the Secondary and 10,154 volunteer teachers in the pre-primary education systems. Government commitment to reverse this trend is reiterated in the General Education Sector Plan (GESP) 2023–2027, which will support the recruitment of approximately 13,800 teachers over the next five years to address the shortages and giving special considerations to qualified volunteer teachers in the recruitment process.



In 2022, South Sudan was the second largest host of UN volunteers in the World, after Columbia, with 598 UN Volunteers⁹² with extensive professional experience to support the implementation of the SDGs. The UN Volunteers served mostly in UN entities in the fields of health, engineering, aviation, transport and logistics, legal affairs, refugee protection, child protection, human rights, gender affairs, communications, and public information, among other areas (SDGs 4,5,16 &17).

With financial assistance from the UN Peacebuilding Fund; the Government of South Sudan, IOM, UNESCO, and the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization are working with community volunteers to transform youth from gang life to becoming agents of social change. This programme aims to empower members of the gang with technical vocational skills, mental health awareness, psychosocial support, and peacebuilding activities (SDG 8 & 16)⁹³. The peacebuilding initiative engaged youth in dialogue sessions on gender and in campaigns on activism related to security, governance, gender, and peacebuilding. More than 30,000 young men and women participated in community awareness events. They also took up voluntary roles in social initiatives helping vulnerable community members, including elderly people.

South Sudan through the Ministry of Health launched the Boma Health Initiative (BHI) as a national strategy to improve access to health services. The BHI has been supported by UNICEF which is intended to harmonize the delivery of fragmented community health services which are largely supported by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This strategy is implemented through the support of the community health volunteers (CHVs) who strengthen linkages between communities and primary health facilities⁹⁴.

The Eve Organization which was founded in 2005 with the aim of contributing towards social change through promoting gender equity and equality, social justice, peace and security of women and girls. Since 2008 Eve organization has been raising awareness at the grassroots level on the implementation of the 1325 UNSCR. Eve organization community volunteers train chiefs, youth, women leaders to understand the 1325 UNSCR and the National Action Plan for the implementation of the 1325 UNSCR in South Sudan. However, there is insufficient policy and regulatory framework on volunteerism. South Sudan has enacted the South Sudan Red Cross Society Act (2012), the South Sudan Education Act (2012), the Revised National Development Strategy 2021–2024, and the National Health Policy 2016-2026. These key instruments provide a solid foundation for the volunteerism work but are not sufficient to fully address issues of volunteerism in the country. There is an urgent need to put in place a more enabling legal and policy environment for the promotion of volunteerism and providing the best working conditions for volunteers.

⁹² <https://www.unv.org/Success-stories/south-sudan-un-volunteers-are-rebuilding-hope-and-resilience>

⁹³ <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/success-story-south-sudan>

⁹⁴ <https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/reports/boma-health-initiative>



There are legal and policy instruments which are still on the floor of the Parliament for deliberations by the Transitional National Legislative Assembly. Among these are the South Sudan Youth Policy and Legal Aid Bill which may cater for volunteer work. In addition to policies and legislation, there is inadequate data on volunteerism in South Sudan.

Recommendations

- Expediate the enactment of the South Sudan Youth Policy, Women enterprise fund Bill, Legal Aid Bill and other key instruments to promote volunteerism and its integration in key sectors of the development.
- Expedite the enactment of the National Youth Service to further promote youth volunteerism.
- Integrate volunteerism into the next National Development Plan and key sectoral policies, plans and strategies.
- National Bureau of Statistics to provide a dataset for all volunteers in the country.
- Develop the national volunteerism policy and strategy.
- Develop and operationalize a national volunteer programme.
- Strengthening collaboration among Volunteerism Organizations, namely the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), South Sudan Red Cross, I am Peace Africa, Women 4Women, Voluntary Services Overseas, Banat Power Initiative and Eve Organization, will be important to address data and normative framework issues.



6 Conclusion and Next Steps

Sustainable development goals have been integrated into the South Sudan planning development frameworks. Following the adoption of the SDGs in 2015, South Sudan prepared its first SDGs report highlighting the main SDGs for the country's peace and recovery process post the 2013 conflict. Supported by development partners, South Sudan conducted its first data diagnostics assessment of SDGs in 2021. Moreover, the revised national development strategy (2021-2024) highlights the importance of the adoption of Agenda 2030 and outlines priority SDGs for South Sudan development in line with the R-ARCSS provisions. Joint efforts by the South Sudan government and development partners to accelerate progress on SDGs motivated the preparation of an SDG rescue plan focusing on SDG targets (2.4; 3.3; 4.7; 8.5; 9.2; 13.1; 16.6).

In addition to integrating SDGs into the national development plans, specific goals are being and will continue to be integrated into sectoral policies and strategies. A selected examples are given below to showcase the integration of SDGs into national policies and strategies.

The Government of South Sudan is committed to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda as demonstrated by the alignment of its medium-term development strategy, the Revised National Development Strategy 2021-2024, which highlights priority SDGs for the country. Virtually all sectoral policies are informed by sustainable development goals and, particularly, by the country's priority SDGs. Undertaking this voluntary national review shows the government's commitment to report on the progress thus far made toward this global agenda, including challenges faced.

While the Ministry of Finance and Planning was the focal ministry for this 2024 VNR, the consultation and reviews meeting held in preparation for this report showed there was no clear coordination mechanism supported by a multi-stakeholder structure that allows for an all-of-government approach and also encompasses other stakeholders. A multi-stakeholder census was reached during the consultations to have established at the Ministry of Finance an SDG Secretariat to lead the coordination, governance, and localization of the SDGs. The secretariat will be supported by an inter-agency technical committee that will be chaired by MoFP and co-chaired by NBS.

To accelerate the implementation of SDGs the Government of South Sudan acknowledged and committed to work together with the private sector and development partners to mobilize financial resources to finance the 2030 Agenda. The 2024 VNR raised SDG awareness and helped strengthen dialogues among various stakeholders. An action plan and acceleration strategy will be developed to address the identified gaps and challenges highlighted.



This VNR highlights challenges and lessons learned in order to guide policy and programme direction for accelerated implementation of the SDGs for the remaining years. These include:

1. While the SDG indicators are mainstreamed in the mid-term strategies at the national level, they have not been integrated into policies at subnational (state and county) levels, which requires an overarching approach to raise awareness and enhance cooperation among stakeholders at various levels.
2. This VNR highlights that lack of clear SDG governance at national and sub-national levels have negatively impacted awareness and localization of 2030 Agenda and created avenue for multistakeholder dialogues and resolution for ways forwards.
3. The VNR created awareness about the data required to monitor SDG progress and the reporting standards among SDGs focal persons across the MDAs. It also highlights lack disaggregated data as one of the main challenges.
4. The review emphasizes the crucial contribution of civil society organizations, private sector entities, and development partners in achieving the SDGs and other national objectives. This complements the continued requirement for creative methods and plans to gather resources (both domestic and external, public and private) for SDG implementation. Additional endeavors are necessary to enhance the coordination, monitoring, and evaluation system for the SDGs and to fill data discrepancies across various sectors.
5. Further efforts are needed to strengthen the SDG coordination, monitoring and evaluation system and to address the data gaps across sectors.
6. MDAs statistics unit have limited awareness about their sectoral SDGs data requirements including the standard of reporting. A serious investment in capacity building SDG focal persons is urgently needed.
7. Absence of sector working groups to coordinate the implementation of the selected SDGs.



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Annex

A.1. SDG Data

Indicators	Data Source(s)	Baseline	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Goal 1: No Poverty										
1.1.1 Proportion of the population living below the international poverty line by sex, age, employment status and geographic location (urban/rural)	MAFS/NBS	National Baseline Household Survey 2009. NBS, Sustainable Development Report, 2022.	67.3 (in US\$2.15 in 2017 PPP). Gender : (75% Male; 75% female) ; rural (79%), urban (54%)	67.3 (in US\$2.15 in 2017 PPP). Gender : (79% Male; 79% female) ; rural (83%), urban (59%)	67.3 (in US\$2.15 in 2017 PPP). Gender : (82% Male; 82% female) ; rural (85%), urban (64%)				67.3 (in US\$2.15 in 2017 PPP). Gender: (87% Male; 87% female); rural (87%), urban (67%)	
1.2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age	National Bureau of Statistics. Measuring Multidimensional Poverty in South Sudan.							82.5%, Rural (89.0%); Urban areas (70.1%)	82.5%, Rural (89.0%); Urban areas (70.1%)	82.5%, Rural (89.0%); Urban areas (70.1%)
1.2.2 Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions										79.4% (male), 92.1%(female)
Goal 2: Zero Hunger										
2.1.1 Prevalence of	MOH/FSNMS Round 26	0.277					0.23	0.214	0.227	



undernourishment										
2.1.2 Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)	MOH/World Bank Inc.			0.851	0.849	0.857	0.864	0.873		
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age	MOH/WHO	0.321	0.298	0.296	0.293	0.291	0.277	0.283	0.279	0.313
2.2.2 Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height >+2 or <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight)	MOH	0.07	0.054	0.053	0.051	0.05	0.049	0.048	0.047	



2.2.3 Prevalence of anaemia in women aged 15 to 49 years, by pregnancy status (percentage)	MOH(DHIS 2)/WHO	0.351	0.35	0.352	0.354	0.356				
2.a.1 The agriculture orientation index for government expenditures								0.59		
Goal 3: Good Health										
3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio	MOH/World Bank		1288	1252	1275	1245	1223			
3.1.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	MOH					0.18	0.13	0.15		
3.2.1 Under-5 mortality rate	MOH	109	99		98.77	98.77	98.77	98.77	98.77	
3.2.2 Neonatal mortality rate	MOH		40	39.79	39.78	39.64	39.57	39.51	39.42	
3.3.1 Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations	MOH						2.5	0.025	0.0214	0.019
3.3.2 Tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 population	MOH		227	227	227	227	227	227	227	
3.3.3 Malaria incidence per 1,000 population	MOH		259.6	270.7	274.5	293.6	283.1	270.5	255.2	
3.3.4 Hepatitis B incidence	MOH								9232	



per 100,000 population										
3.3.5 Number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases	MOH		10	9.5	7.5	8.5	8.6	8.8	9.2	
3.4.1 Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease	MOH		0.16	0.16	0.18	0.18				
3.4.2 Suicide mortality rate	MOH. INTERIOR		3.6	3.6	3.8	3.9				
3.6.1 Death rate due to road traffic injuries	MOH(DHIS). World Health Statistics		33.8	34.7	35.7	36.7	23.3	23.3		
3.b.1 Proportion of the target population covered by all vaccines included in their national programme	MOH(DHIS). World Health Statistics				0.59	0.61	0.67	0.69	0.73	
3.b.2 Total net official development assistance to medical research and basic health sectors	World Health Statistics. MOH. WHO						11.72	15.68	18.4	

Goal 4: Quality Education



<p>4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics , by sex</p>	<p>The National Learning Outcome Assessment for South Sudan, 2023</p>									<p>The 2023 National Learning Outcome assessment report focused on grade 3. The minimum proficiency level in (i) reading is 39.1% of children in lower primary (Grade 3). On further disaggregation by gender (Male = 40.0%; Female = 36.0 %.) On the Minimum proficiency Mathematics, the national proportions is 69.0% (Male = 72.8%; Female= 64.5%)</p>
<p>4.1.2 Completion rate (primary education, secondary education)</p>	<p>Education ministry</p>									



<p>4.2.1 Proportion of children aged 24–59 months who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex</p>	<p>Education Sector Analysis 2023</p>									<p>Completion rate primary education is 19%. This is proportionate across boys and girls in 2021. Completion rate lower secondary 13%. Completion rate upper secondary 10% (Female 7% and male 10%).</p>
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<p>4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex: TVET ENROLMENT & ADULT EDUCATION</p>	<p>Annual Education Census, 2021.</p>									<p>A total of 28, 325 learners enrolled for Technical Vocational Education and Training both formal and non-formal TVET. 85% Male and 15% female. To gauge this indicator against the global average stands of 400 per 100,000 inhabitants, South Sudan stands at 281 learners per 100,000 inhabitants.</p>
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<p>4.5.1 Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated</p>	<p>Annual Education Census, 2021. Education Sector Analysis 2023</p>								<p>Gross Enrollment ratio by gender: Pre-Primary: male 11%, Female 11%. Primary level: Male 67% female 57% Secondary: Male 13% female 10%. Share of IDPs in the level of education by gender. Pre-primary: Male 6% and Female 6%. Primary: Male 4% female 3%. Secondary: Male 6%, Female 5%. Out of school children by gender. (Male 47%, Female 53%)</p>
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<p>4.7.1 Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment</p>	<p>Education Sector Analysis 2023</p>									<p>The Ministry of General Education and Instruction is working closely with the African Union to harmonize the certification framework in South Sudan, this will allow citizens/graduates from South Sudan to equitably compete in the regional and global labour market without being discriminated against. South Sudan through the ministry of General Education and Instruction and the South Sudan Education Act 2012, emphasize</p>
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										<p>e for Free and Compulsory primary education. Girl Education Policy has been developed and implemented to bridge the gender gap in Education in South Sudan. National Qualification framework for South Sudan has been developed. South Sudan is currently implementing a competence-based curriculum. The National Teachers Training Institutes have been revived, with clear Teacher's certification, recruitment, appointment, and deployment.</p>
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										Nation Examinati on Council has been establish ed and responsib le to the assessme nt of students. This assessme nt is done through the annual examinati ons for primary and secondar y school candidat es.
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<p>4.a.1 Proportion of schools offering basic services, by type of service</p>	<p>Annual Education Census, 2021. Education Sector Analysis 2023</p>						<p>Number of schools providing formal education reached 5,784 at the national level. 73% of these schools provide primary education, while only 18% provide pre-primary and 9% secondary.</p>	<p>Non-Formal Education: Common is the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP), with 85% of centres offering it as their main programme, followed by the Basic Adult Literacy Programme (BALP), with 6% of the centre Others, such as Community Girls School (CGS), Functional Adult Literacy Programme (FALP), and the Pastoralist Education Programme (PEP), only represent 4%, 2%, and 2%, respectively.</p>
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4.c.1	Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications, by education level	2021 Annual Education Census. Education Sector Analysis report 2023	61,000 teachers across pre-primary, primary, secondary, and AES.						61000 teachers across pre-primary, primary, secondary, and AES.		29909 teachers across pre-primary, primary, secondary, and AES.
Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth											
8.1.1	Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita									0.066	0.056
8.8.2	Level of national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on International Labour Organization (ILO) textual sources and national legislation, by sex and migrant status										South Sudan has ratified the three conventions of the ILO, viz. Forced Labour Convention, Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, and Equal Remuneration Convention.
8.10.2	Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-								0.0401(14.2% female; 7.7%); mobile (4.19% female);		



money-service provider								3.38% male)		
Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure										
9.2.1 Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP and per capita	United Nations Statistics Division National Accounts.							0.02		
9.2.2 Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment	International Labour Organisation							0.055		
9.c.1 Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, by technology	National Communication Authority (NCA)								0.3	0.3
Goal 13: Climate Action										
13.2.2 Total greenhouse gas emissions per year					0.2	0.2	0.2			



<p>13.3.1 Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment</p>	<p>Ministry of Education</p>									<p>The Ministry of General Education and Instruction is working closely with the African Union to harmonize the certification framework in South Sudan, this will allow citizens/graduates from South Sudan to equitably compete in the regional and global labour market without being discriminated against. South Sudan through the ministry of General Education and Instruction and the South Sudan Education Act 2012, emphasize</p>
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										<p>e for Free and Compulsory primary education. Girl Education Policy has been developed and implemented to bridge the gender gap in Education in South Sudan. National Qualification framework for South Sudan has been developed. South Sudan is currently implementing a competence-based curriculum. The National Teachers Training Institutes have been revived, with clear Teacher's certification, recruitment, appointment, and deployment.</p>
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										Nation Examination Council has been established and responsible to the assessment of students. This assessment is done through the annual examinations for primary and secondary school candidates.
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Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institution

16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age	UNMISS									total homicides = 1357(f=124, m=1233)
16.1.2 Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause	UNMISS									1524(male= 1360, female=164)



16.1.3 Proportion of population subjected to (a) physical violence, (b) psychological violence and (c) sexual violence in the previous 12 months	UNMISS									Total = 1122(f=493, m=629)
16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation	Interior									Total = 601
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Interior									924
16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group	Ministry of Gender									32.40%



A.2. Gender data: Women in leadership and managerial positions in GoSS.

Women in Decion-making positions in South Sudan Political leadership and Civil Service				
1	Senior Executive and Decision-making Positions in Government			
Position	Male	Female	Male (%)	Female (%)
Vice Presidents	4	1	80%	20%
Presidential Advisors	2	0	100%	0%
Ministers	26	8	76%	24%
Deputy Ministers	9	1	90%	10%
Chairpersons of Commission	22	5	81%	19%
Deputy Chairpersons of Commission	14	8	64%	36%
Ministerial Advisors	52	4	93%	7%
Total	129	27	83%	17%
	Managerial positions			
Position	Male	Female	Male (%)	Female (%)
Undescretaries	34	3	92%	8%
Executive Directors	29	6	83%	17%
Director General	153	24	86%	14%
Deputy Director General	11	3	79%	21%
Director	323	58	85%	15%
Deputy Directors	402	78	84%	16%
Total	952	172	85%	15%
2	Judiciary			
Position	Male	Female	Male (%)	Female (%)
Supreme Court	11		100%	0%
Court of Appeal	6		100%	0%
High Court	19	1	95%	5%
County Judges	48	30	62%	38%
1st High Court Judges	15	1	94%	6%
2nd High Court Judges	2	13	13%	87%
3rd Court Judge	1	7	13%	88%
Legal Advisors	8	46	15%	85%
Total	110	98	53%	47%
3	Academic Institutions			
Position	Male	Female	Male (%)	Female (%)
Professors	67	4	94%	6%
Associate Professors	117	10	92%	8%
Assistant Professors	248	17	94%	6%
Lecturers	724	127	85%	15%
Teach Assistants	793	142	85%	15%
Non-academic staff	4088	1832	69%	31%
Total				
4	National Constitution Review, National Election and Political Parties Council			
Position	Male	Female	Male (%)	Female (%)
NCRC	39	19	67%	33%
NEC	7	2	78%	22%
PPC	5	4	56%	44%
Total	51	25	67%	33%



A.3. Detailed SDGs Governance & Coordination Mechanism for South Sudan

SDGs Governance and Coordination Mechanism for South Sudan

1. Central Coordination Office (SDGs Secretariat)

- **Location:** Ministry of Finance and Planning.
- **Leadership:** Headed by a Director General (DG).
- **Roles and Responsibilities:**
 - Lead inter-agency coordination and technical functions related to SDGs.
 - Ensure adequate resources are allocated for SDG initiatives.
 - Promote SDG ownership and localization across all sectors.
 - Maintain close collaboration with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) for data collection and analysis.
 - Develop and implement SDG-related policies and programs.
 - Facilitate capacity-building activities and awareness campaigns.
 - Act as a liaison between the government, UN agencies, CSOs, private sector, and other stakeholders.

2. Inter-Agency Committee

- **Chair:** Director General (DG) of the SDGs Secretariat.
- **Co-Chair:** Representative from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).
- **Membership:** Representatives from:
 - Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs)
 - United Nations (UN) agencies
 - Parliamentary Caucus on SDGs
 - Academia and Think Tanks
 - Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
 - Private Sector
- **Roles and Responsibilities:**
 - Provide technical support and advice to the SDGs Secretariat.
 - Facilitate inter-agency coordination and collaboration.
 - Monitor and report on SDG implementation progress.
 - Identify and address gaps and challenges in SDG implementation.
 - Support data collection and analysis for SDG indicators.

3. SDGs Steering Committee

- **Chair:** Office of the President.
- **Co-Chair:** Ministry of Finance and Planning.
- **Membership:** Undersecretaries, heads of independent commissions and agencies, senior representatives from key stakeholder groups.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:**
 - Provide strategic direction and oversight for SDG implementation.
 - Ensure high-level political support and commitment to the SDGs.
 - Oversee the allocation of resources and prioritization of SDG-related projects.
 - Review and endorse national SDG plans, policies, and reports.
 - Facilitate high-level consultations and partnerships with international and regional bodies.



4. Data and Monitoring Sub-Committee

- **Leadership:** Co-chaired by representatives from the NBS and the SDGs Secretariat.
- **Membership:** Technical experts from MDAs, UN agencies, academia, and CSOs.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:**
 - Develop and maintain a comprehensive SDG data framework.
 - Ensure accurate and timely data collection for all SDG indicators.
 - Analyze data to track progress and identify trends.
 - Prepare regular SDG monitoring reports.
 - Provide recommendations for improving data collection and management practices.

5. Awareness and Capacity Building Sub-Committee

- **Leadership:** Headed by a senior representative from the Ministry of Education, with support from the SDGs Secretariat.
- **Membership:** Representatives from MDAs, CSOs, academia, and the private sector.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:**
 - Design and implement SDG awareness campaigns targeting various stakeholder groups.
 - Develop educational materials and training programs on SDGs.
 - Organize workshops, seminars, and conferences to build capacity on SDG-related issues.
 - Promote public engagement and participation in SDG initiatives.

6. Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Sub-Committee

- **Leadership:** Co-chaired by representatives from the Ministry of Finance and Planning and a senior official from the private sector.
- **Membership:** Representatives from MDAs, UN agencies, donor organizations, and the private sector.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:**
 - Identify and secure funding opportunities for SDG projects.
 - Foster partnerships with international and regional organizations.
 - Encourage private sector investment in SDG initiatives.
 - Monitor and report on resource allocation and utilization.

Implementation Steps

1. **Establish the SDGs Secretariat:** Formally appoint the DG and allocate necessary resources.
2. **Form Inter-Agency Committee:** Nominate members and establish a regular meeting schedule.
3. **Create the Steering Committee:** Ensure high-level political endorsement and participation.
4. **Set Up Sub-Committees:** Define roles, select members, and begin regular operations.
5. **Develop a National SDG Strategy:** Align with the 2030 Agenda and national development plans.
6. **Launch Awareness Campaigns:** Increase stakeholder and public awareness of the SDGs.
7. **Regular Monitoring and Reporting:** Implement robust data collection and reporting mechanisms.

