

# **The European Union's Political and Development Response to Sudan**

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ECDPM would like to thank Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Belgian Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) for their financial support.

ECDPM would also like to thank the Horn of Africa Unit in Brussels, the EC Delegation in Khartoum, ECHO in Khartoum and Nairobi for their support for the field study and all the interviewed officials in embassies and donor agencies, as well as local actors, for their constructive contribution.

The study describes the situation in Sudan before June 2001.

July, 2001



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## Acronyms

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific countries
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
DED	Deutsche Entwicklungsdienst
DG DEV	Directorate-General for Development
DG RELEX	Directorate-General for External Relations
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
EDF	European Development Fund
EU	European Union
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Programme
GAA	German Agro Action (Deutsche Welthungerhilfe)
HAC	Humanitarian Assistance Committee
ICC	International Council of Churches
IDP	internally displaced person
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IGAD	Intergovernmental Agency for Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPF	IGAD partners' forum
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NSCC	New Sudan Council of Churches
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OCHA	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
ODA	official development assistance
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID)
OLS	Operation Lifeline Sudan
PACE	Pan-African Programme for the Control of Epizootics
PMU	Programme Management Unit
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SRRA	South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association
SSLM	Southern Sudan Liberation Movement
STAR	Sudan Transitional Assistance Rehabilitation
TCC	Technical Coordination Committee
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

## Summary

This study explores the European Union's (EU) political and development response to Sudan, which is a classic case of a complex political emergency. Sudan has experienced decades of protracted civil war and its fundamentalist government, accused of supporting international terrorism and human rights violations, has faced sanctions policies imposed by the international community. The EU policy response in Sudan has ranged from the suspension of development aid, its replacement by flows of humanitarian assistance, to the recent resumption of political dialogue with the Sudanese government.

Sudan is the largest country in Africa and remains politically and economically important due to its strategic position on the Nile, at the crossroads of Arab and African cultures, and its abundant natural resources and fertile land. Sudan can be considered as a 'politically fragile state', despite its strong military rule, because the government controls only part of the territory, northern Sudan. In contrast, the southern territory is divided among several rebel groups, of which the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and its military wing, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), are the most important.

The approaches of the major donor agencies in Sudan differ according to their basic mandates (i.e. humanitarian versus political), geographical location and attitudes to the Sudanese government and local administrations. The southern sector is managed through embassies based in Nairobi and the donor agencies' regional offices. Donors channel funding to international NGOs according to their basic approaches and analyses of the situation. Many donors seem to be exploring ways to introduce development-oriented activities in Sudan, although several practical challenges remain. Most donors have faced the difficulty of executing projects with the state administration, without appearing to legitimise the government politically. However, the EU and many other donors now believe that complete refusal to consider any dialogue with the government is counter-productive, and prefer to address issues of concern through political dialogue as a part of a new approach, often called 'constructive engagement'.

In the EU's approach to Sudan, development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) considerations are closely linked, and multiple tracks are followed in parallel. Sudan belongs to the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. However, the Lomé cooperation with Sudan was suspended unilaterally in 1990 due to human rights violations, and the ongoing development assistance was phased out. The EU has decided that development cooperation cannot be resumed before the Sudanese government shows some progress in its respect for human rights, the process of democratisation and in its efforts to find a peaceful solution to the civil war.

Since the suspension of Lomé cooperation, ECHO has been a major player in Sudan. It has provided substantial humanitarian assistance to the victims of the civil war and natural disasters. In parallel, within the Commission's structures, ECHO has tried to put pressure on DG DEV and DG RELEX to ensure a more effective handover from relief to development assistance. It is widely recognised that it will be necessary to fund mid-term rehabilitation from the development budget rather than from short-term emergency funds. To address the lack of a legal framework for development cooperation, in November 2000 the EU agreed on the implementation of a 'Humanitarian Plus' programme, which provides a grant of some EUR 15 million from the balance of uncommitted funds from the 6th EDF for rehabilitation beyond relief in Sudan. The programme aims to provide a framework and a strategy with a long-term perspective, linking relief operations to rehabilitation. DG DEV is responsible for the Humanitarian Plus programme, which will be implemented through international NGOs on a three-year basis. It will thus provide a longer-term perspective for partner organisations in the field. The programme is supposed to be complementary to and is closely coordinated with ECHO's interventions.

In the field of the CFSP, the EU has been engaged in a political dialogue with the Sudanese government since November 1999, and has attempted to support parallel activities in the field of human rights, subject to the political dialogue.

## **Challenges and Opportunities for the EU**

In the design of a coherent approach to the situation in Sudan, the EU faces several political challenges:

- addressing the positive and negative impacts of the EU's political dialogue on the Sudanese peace process;
- assessing the linkages between the government's military expenditures and oil revenues; and
- resolving the issue of capacity building without political recognition.

Although the EU has attempted to adopt more coherent approach, combining political, development and humanitarian instruments, its effective implementation has been complicated by factors at various levels. At the institutional level, these include:

- the insufficient use of instruments;
- the blurred mandates of the Africa working group and the EDF committee;
- the subordination of technical projects to foreign policy considerations;
- the division of responsibilities between DG DEV, DG RELEX and AIDCO; and
- the lack of coordination between ECHO and DG DEV.

At the level of implementation on the ground, the challenges for the EU include:

- clarifying the uncertainties about the implementation modalities for the Humanitarian Plus programme;
- removing the effects of uncertainties in funding on partner NGOs, allowing them to adopt a longer-term strategic perspective; and
- addressing the lack of local ownership and sustainability.

Nevertheless, the new approach also offers several opportunities. At the political level, these include:

targeting support to critical areas included in the political dialogue;

- introducing confidence-building measures;
- supporting initiatives that will create the conditions for peace; and
- distinguishing between technical capacity building and political recognition.

The various institutional opportunities include:

- encouraging the active involvement of the heads of donor agencies;
- adapting the legal framework;
- ensuring regional coordination;
- adapting instruments to support the economic recovery of stable areas in the south; and
- addressing regional aspects of economic recovery.

Finally, the approach also offers opportunities for more flexible implementation on the ground. In particular, it will provide long-term support for partner NGOs, allowing them to employ more local staff, thus improving institutional memory. The greater involvement of community representatives will increase the sense of local ownership, and thus the sustainability of capacity building efforts.

## **Added Value of the EC**

The Commission plays a key role in implementing programmes and in monitoring political developments in Sudan. There are several areas in which the EC offers true added value in relation to Member States' bilateral approaches:

- it has established a permanent presence and is engaged in dialogue with the Sudanese government;
- it offers a 'neutral' platform for Member States' actions;
- it provides the potential flexibility of the Cotonou framework and the integrated use of Community instruments; and
- it has adopted a regional perspective on conflict resolution and cross-border flows.

The EU, like most donor agencies, has to work in Sudan within a legal framework that was designed for normal situations. However, new thinking is emerging, with the aim of designing donor approaches that can be adapted to the specific situations of politically fragile states. It seems to be clear that 'conditionality' will not disappear; on the contrary, performance-based assessments will remain the basis for aid allocations. However, donors have started to combine leverage with dialogue.

The EU, which has ambitions to become a 'global political player', aims to 'influence' the Sudanese government through political dialogue, addressing all issues of concern. The Sudan case shows the limitations of sanctions policies in bringing about changes in government policies. The experience in Sudan seems to suggest that it is intolerable for donors simply to withdraw from politically fragile states until the arrival of peace and democracy. Rather, it is crucial that they take a more pro-active, integrated approach, combining dialogue and leverage, in order to create the conditions for improved stability and peace. The cooperation in Sudan is undergoing a transition towards a more development-oriented approach, as donors have recognised the limitations of humanitarian aid and sanctions policies in such protracted conflicts.



## **1. Introduction**

‘Fragile states’ are understood as countries that are facing latent or protracted conflicts (including situations of war), countries emerging from conflict (with major uncertainties on their future stability) or countries that are indirectly affected by regional conflicts. Their ‘fragility’ can take different forms. In extreme cases, the state structures have disappeared. In other cases, the central state may appear strong (e.g. in terms of military control), but it lacks legitimacy, controls only part of the national territory or fails to deliver even the most basic services (including in development terms). The net result is a situation characterised by chronic instability, insecurity, violations of human rights, economic and social collapse, high levels of aid dependency and rising levels of absolute poverty.

This study explores the European Union’s (EU) political and development response to Sudan, which is a classic case of a complex political emergency. Sudan has experienced decades of protracted civil war and its fundamentalist government, accused of supporting international terrorism and human rights violations, has faced sanctions policies imposed by the international community. The EU policy response in Sudan has ranged from the suspension of development aid, its replacement by flows of humanitarian assistance, to the recent resumption of political dialogue with the Sudanese government.

### **1.1 Historical Background to the North–South Divide in Sudan**

Sudan has experienced a long-term civil war between north and south, which has challenged donors’ approaches to conditionality and humanitarian aid. Sudan can be considered as a ‘politically fragile state’, despite its strong military rule, because the government controls only part of the territory, northern Sudan. In contrast, the southern territory is divided among several rebel groups, of which the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) and its military wing, the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), are the most important.

The conflict in Sudan is the culmination of a long historical process in which northerners and southerners are the principal antagonists in a war for racial, cultural, and religious identities and the country’s economic resources. The north–south divide is further complicated by local wars between southern tribes, which have caused large numbers of casualties.

Until it gained independence in 1956, Sudan was part of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium. The southern policy, dividing the north and the south, dates back to the 1920s, when the British imposed indirect rule in the south. The British attempted to limit the spread of Islam in the south by declaring it a closed district. Education was provided by foreign Christian missionary societies, in English. The combination of the closed district system, indirect rule and the education policy encouraged the differentiation of south and north. The southern policy was designed with a view to the eventual political independence of the south. In the 1950s, disenchantment in the south increased with the policy of rapid ‘Sudanisation’; in the eyes of many southerners, self-government would mean simply a change of master. The southern Liberal Party expressed its willingness to accept federal status. In contrast, the northern government declared its intention to nationalise the missionary schools and to integrate them into the national education system. The processes of Arabisation and Islamisation, which could have strengthened the national character in the early days of the Condominium, were now seen as suppressing the emerging southern identity.

Because of the southern perception of northern Arabic and Islamic hegemony following independence, southern resistance was initially organised politically into the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM). In 1972, the Addis Ababa Accord granted regional self-government to the south, unifying three regions into one, with a people’s regional assembly and an executive cabinet. However, armed resistance re-emerged when the authorities in the north failed to respect the Accord. The organisation of the southern rebellion became militarised, leading to the establishment in 1983 of the Sudan

People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and its military wing, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), led by John Garang.

The hostility between the north and the south in Sudan is related to the exploitative economic structure of interactions between the two regions. The inequalities in economic, educational and political opportunities fostered by the British colonial policy were aggravated by successive independent governments, which built upon earlier patterns of socio-economic and political injustices. The use of the Nile has also been an important source of conflict.

The present Islamic government of President Al Bashir, which has been in power since 1989, has increased the military build-up with support from China, Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The increasing amount of weaponry, Islamic militancy and authoritarianism in Sudan soon led to the aggravation of the conflict, violations of human rights, and frustration among Western relief agencies at a time of famine, drought and dislocation, all of which have contributed to the instability in southern Sudan.

## 1.2 Major Challenges in Sudan

Sudan is the largest country in Africa and remains politically and economically important due to its strategic position on the Nile, at the crossroads of Arab and African cultures, and its abundant natural resources and fertile land. The situation in Sudan can be characterised as follows:

- *Famines despite the economic potential.* Despite the periodic famines and high levels of poverty, occurring in a war situation, Sudan has the potential to become the 'breadbasket' for the entire region. In the midst of the war, some areas in the south are now beyond the emergency stage, and require development activities and support to encourage local economic dynamics.
- *Continued human rights violations and the problem of landmines.* The human rights situation in Sudan continues to be a matter of concern for the international community. In particular, reports of slavery and kidnappings reflect the instability of the situation, and the problem of landmines in the south threatens security on the ground.
- *Dependency on humanitarian assistance.* According to several reports, the provision of humanitarian assistance to the south over several decades has fuelled the war economy and has created a dependency on aid, without building local capacities.
- *The problem of internally displaced persons.* In the north, even in Khartoum, many donors are working in the camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs), which over the last 10–15 years have become almost permanent settlements. The continued fighting is forcing people to leave their homes and 'resettle' in other regions, where the potential for conflicts with the local populations requires special attention.
- *The challenge of decentralisation and disengagement of the federal state.* The recent administrative decentralisation to states has been marked by the disengagement of the federal state from crucial sectors such as health and education, but without providing sufficient resources to local authorities to set up the necessary structures. Many international NGOs have therefore tried to compensate for the weaknesses of the line ministries and local administrations.
- *Unequal distribution of oil revenues and conflicts in the oil-producing regions.* Oil resources, which are abundant in the south, represent a strategic source of revenue for the Sudanese government. Oil exploration by multinational companies has fuelled conflicts in the oil-producing regions, where the local populations draw no benefits from the oil revenues.

## **2. International Donor Responses to Sudan**

### **2.1 Historical Background**

Until the late 1980s, Sudan enjoyed significant official development assistance (ODA), which peaked in 1985 at US\$ 1,907 million,<sup>1</sup> but dropped to US\$ 100 million in 1996. The prevailing situation in the country brought about a radical shift in the support provided by the international community towards humanitarian objectives, with more than 80% of donor resources going to relief and emergency operations, leaving less than 20% for development. This shortage of resources, coupled with the national debt burden, has meant that most national development programmes in Sudan have had to be curtailed.

In the 1990s, the government of President Al Bashir was accused of human rights violations, bombing civilians in the south, abductions of civilians, slavery and supporting international terrorism. In particular, the United States, a former ally of Sudan in the 1980s, took a strong stance against the Sudanese government, leading to the bombing of Khartoum following a terrorist attack on the US Embassy in Nairobi in August 1998. The UN Security Council also imposed sanctions on Sudan in 1996 to force the government to extradite three people suspected of trying to kill President Mubarak of Egypt. Similarly, the EU unilaterally suspended its cooperation in the framework of the Lomé Convention with Sudan in 1990. Ever since, the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) has provided humanitarian assistance, often in the 'grey zone' between relief and rehabilitation.

Recently, the Sudanese government has improved its relations with neighbouring countries and it has gained self-confidence due to the improved economic situation through oil revenues. The UN Security Council has begun to examine a draft resolution to lift the sanctions, although the United States appears to have qualms about this. The EU is pursuing efforts to reinforce its relations with Sudan through political dialogue, which started in November 1999. Also, the United States has appointed a special envoy for Sudan to monitor human rights, relief aid and the peace process, and junior US diplomats have been posted to Sudan. In May 2001 it also promised a major food aid package to the war-affected populations.

The Sudanese government and the SPLM are conducting peace negotiations under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Agency for Development (IGAD). The main points of disagreement concern the separation of religion and state, and the issue of territorial delineation. In parallel, Egypt and Libya have initiated another peace process, but this 'Arab'-led initiative is regarded with suspicion in the south. Egypt has a major interest in the 'territorial integrity' of Sudan due to its strategic position in the Nile. Attempts to mediate a settlement of the conflict have also been made by Nigeria, IGAD, the International Council of Churches (ICC), the government of Norway, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), and the Arab League. These efforts, however, have focused on bringing about a cessation of the violence and the facilitation of humanitarian assistance, without sufficiently addressing the heart of the dispute and the root causes of the conflict. The latest peace talks, held in Nairobi in June 2001 under the auspices of IGAD, represent the first direct negotiations since 1997. The conflicting parties accepted the Egyptian-Libyan memorandum in July 2001, setting the broad guidelines for the settlement of the conflict.

### **2.2 Major Players**

The approaches of the major donor agencies in Sudan differ according to their basic mandates (i.e. humanitarian versus political), geographical location and attitudes to the Sudanese government and

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP Country Cooperation Framework (1997–2001), p.3.

local administrations. The southern sector is managed through embassies based in Nairobi and the donor agencies' regional offices. Donors channel funding to international NGOs according to their basic approaches and analyses of the situation in Sudan. Major international NGOs, such as CARE, OXFAM and Save the Children-UK, are present in Sudan and receive 'relief funding', although their activities include important development elements. They have contacts with local administrations and line ministries. Since 1997, Sudan has committed itself to make scheduled payments to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and has made progress in a medium-term reform programme, monitored by the IMF.

Donors face a major predicament in build the 'technical' capacities of ministries and local authorities, without appearing to grant political recognition to repressive governments. Donors have different mandates in dealing with the technical versus political cooperation with the Sudanese authorities. The main dividing line occurs in their relations with the Sudanese government, which represents a state entity, and with the rebel movements, in particular the SPLM, which is a non-state entity, although *de facto* it controls the territory of southern Sudan. The question of recognition is complex, because even the Sudanese government has signed documents with the SPLM, thus implicitly recognising it as an interlocutor. The donors' approaches vary according to their mandates, which range from dialogue with the Sudanese government, strict humanitarian or combined relief/development activities, to open cooperation with opposition groups in the south:

- *Mandate to cooperate with the government of Sudan*

The EC Delegation has overall responsibility for EU–Sudan relations in Khartoum. In the absence of Lomé cooperation, the EC Delegation manages funding through selected budget lines and plays an important role in the EU–Sudan political dialogue and in diplomatic reporting.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is present only in the north, and executes area-based development projects. According to its mandate, the UNDP can only deal with state actors. Recently, UNDP has initiated a 'constructive engagement' with the Sudanese government, and is supporting, for example, the ongoing civil service reforms.

- *Strict humanitarian mandate*

ECHO is present in the north, and has recently withdrawn from the south. Despite its willingness to limit itself to its core mandate, in the absence of direct development funding, ECHO has been drawn towards rehabilitation-type activities. The United Kingdom has also stressed its strict humanitarian mandate in Sudan. Similarly, France is unwilling to launch 'post-conflict' activities in the south while fighting continues in some areas.

- *Combined relief/development-oriented mandate*

The Netherlands has designed a more political approach linking relief and development since a speech made by the former Minister for Development Cooperation, Jan Pronk, some years ago. The mandate for human rights funding is more flexible than that for humanitarian aid. The Netherlands has stressed the gender perspective by supporting the Sudanese Women's Peace Initiative (see Box 3). Similarly, Denmark, whose embassy is based in Nairobi, has designed a more strategic approach to humanitarian assistance for southern Sudan. Germany provides no development funding, although the German technical assistance service (Deutsche Entwicklungsdienst, DED) is helping to build the capacity of the Sudanese Humanitarian Assistance Committee (HAC). Switzerland and Norway have also developed more development-oriented approaches in Sudan.

- *Mandate to cooperate with the rebels (SPLM) and local communities in the south*

Various UN agencies, such as UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP), the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), have programmes in both northern and southern Sudan. The UN programmes receive their funding from different donors. The WFP has built up an effective infrastructure in the south. UNICEF, which has executed many projects in the fields of health and education, does not work directly with the authorities, but cooperates with local communities in the rebel-controlled areas. UNICEF considers

economic development as an incentive for peace, and aims to support local coping mechanisms and peace education in the south. UNICEF’s civil administration programme is linked to the US-funded Sudan Transitional Assistance Rehabilitation (STAR) programme.

The US Agency for International Development (USAID), in line with the US government policy in Sudan, has concentrated its activities in the southern opposition-controlled areas. The USAID programmes combine humanitarian food assistance and more development-oriented activities, in particular in the framework of the STAR –programme (see Box 2). These programmes aim to strengthen the capacity for peace while assisting war-affected populations to meet their health and food security needs by creating greater reliance on local resources and capacities.<sup>2</sup> USAID also supports a grassroots people-to-people reconciliation process between the Nuer and Dinka ethnic groups in southern Sudan, as well as the Sudan peace process conducted under the auspices of IGAD. USAID has contributed to the recovery from the 1998 Bahr el Ghazal famine through a major emergency food aid programme.

Table 1 presents the basic mandates and approaches of selected international actors – the EU (including the EC Delegation and ECHO), UNDP, UNICEF, USAID, and some EU bilateral donors – in dealing with the Sudanese government and the rebel movements.

**Table 1: Mandates and Approaches of Selected International Actors**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Mandate</b>	<b>Relation to Sudanese government</b>	<b>Relation to rebel movements</b>
EC Delegation, Khartoum	Political mandate. No legal framework for development cooperation beyond specific budget lines.	Official partner in political dialogue. Concern about human rights situation.	Monitors the political and humanitarian situation in the south. Avoids recognising the SPLM/SPLA.
ECHO, Nairobi (part of the Commission with an independent mandate)	Mandate for humanitarian assistance, involuntary extension of assistance to ‘grey zone’ in the absence of development instruments.	Activities in the north managed by ECHO, Khartoum.	Refused to sign the MoU and to recognise the SPLM. ECHO has withdrawn from the south.
USAID, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), Nairobi	Political mandate for emergency aid. Rehabilitation-oriented activities in the south.	Hostility. Islamic government accused of terrorism, slavery and human rights abuses.	Provides direct support and capacity building in the south through the Sudan Transition and Rehabilitation (STAR) programme
UNDP, Khartoum	Activities only in government-controlled areas. Dependent on donor funding.	Constructive engagement with the government. Support to civil service reforms.	No mandate for rebel-controlled areas.
UNICEF, Nairobi	Partnerships with NGOs in the field. OLS framework.	Concerns about government bombing of civilians in the south.	Civil administration project in the south (part of the STAR programme).
Denmark, Nairobi	Emerging development-oriented strategy.	Northern Sudan covered by Cairo-based embassy.	Funding through NGOs in the south.
Germany, Khartoum	No development funding available.	DED (Deutsche Entwicklungsdienst) is building the capacity of the HAC.	Southern sector covered by Nairobi-based embassy. Concerned about the MoU.
The Netherlands, Nairobi, Khartoum	Human rights funding. Political approach. Gender sensitivity.	Women’s peace initiative in the north.	Broad mandate linking relief and development in the south.

<sup>2</sup> USAID assistance to Sudan, fact sheet, 29 February 2000.

Many donors seem to be exploring ways to introduce development-oriented activities in Sudan, although several practical challenges remain. Most donors have faced the difficulty of executing projects with the state administration, without appearing to legitimise the government politically. However, the EU and many other donors now believe that complete refusal to consider any dialogue with the government is counter-productive, and prefer to address issues of concern through political dialogue as a part of a new approach, often called 'constructive engagement'.

## 2.3 Aid Flows

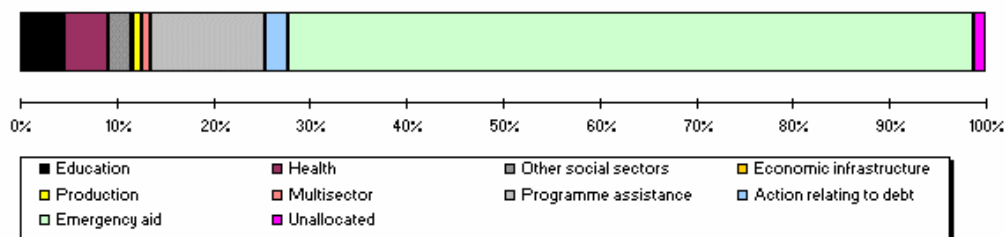
### Sudan

Net Receipts	1997	1998	1999
ODA (US\$ million)	138	209	243
Bilateral share	62%	72%	65%
ODA / GNP	1.5%	2.2%	2.8%
Private flows (US\$ million)	- 52	3	- 105

For reference	1997	1998	1999
Population (million)	27.7	28.3	29.0
GNP per capita (US\$)	270	290	330

Top Ten Donors of net ODA (1998-99 average) (US \$m)	
1 UNITED STATES	42
2 UNITED KINGDOM	22
3 NETHERLANDS	21
4 EC	18
5 NORWAY	17
6 GERMANY	15
7 WFP	10
8 UNHCR	9
9 SWEDEN	9
10 UNDP	8

**Bilateral ODA by Sector (1998-99)**



Sources: OECD, World Bank.

## 2.4 Coordination Mechanisms and Regional Perspectives

### 2.4.1 Coordination Mechanisms

There are multiple coordination mechanisms both in Khartoum and in Nairobi. The European coordination among the embassies of five Member States and the EC Delegation in Khartoum is part of the overall donor coordination through numerous meetings involving donors and NGOs, donors and UN agencies, and among donors themselves, at which they exchange information about ongoing projects and the security situation. The other EU Member States follow the situation in northern Sudan from their Cairo-based embassies. In contrast, the southern sector is managed through Nairobi-based embassies. However, donors come together at annual round table meetings, and every six months there are meetings between the agencies based in Nairobi and Khartoum. The day-to-day coordination for

the southern and northern sectors is conducted separately. The Technical Coordination Committee (TCC) maintains a dialogue with the Humanitarian Assistance Committee (HAC) set up by the Sudanese government to regulate NGO activities in the north. Recently, the relief agencies organised under Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) in the southern sector have discussed the question of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and the payment of fees for services in the SPLM-controlled areas in the south (see Box 1).

#### *2.4.2 Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS)*

For the southern sector, the main coordination mechanism is the OLS, the first humanitarian programme to be established inside a sovereign country to provide relief to war-affected people and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Since 1989, the OLS has mainly operated in the areas of nutrition, health, household food security, water and sanitation, and education. The OLS serves the northern sector from its offices in Khartoum, and the southern sector from Nairobi. The OLS is a consortium consisting of various UN agencies – FAO, OCHA, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP and WHO – and some 43 NGOs. Cooperation is managed by the OLS–NGO steering committee. The OLS has focused on gaining access to populations and ensuring respect for the ‘ground rules’ jointly agreed between the government of Sudan, the SPLM and the OLS. Recently, the OLS agencies have recognised that ‘humanitarian initiatives’ must extend beyond life-saving activities into building resilience and a capacity for recovery’.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the complex structures of coordination at different levels, there are some constraints on effective coordination:

- *The ‘institutionalisation’ of the OLS.* It has been argued that the OLS has become an institutionalised structure with its own agenda, whose main role is to guarantee access to populations rather than to be an effective coordinating body. In particular, it appears that the OLS has failed to ensure that international actors present a common front vis-à-vis the SPLM in the negotiations on the MoU. Recently, some NGOs have left the OLS.
- *The divide between OLS and non-OLS NGOs.* It has been argued that the division between NGOs belonging to OLS system and the non-OLS NGOs is hampering the effective coordination of NGO activities, although different mechanisms for information sharing formally exist.
- *Insufficient strategic coordination and joint planning.* Despite the frequent meetings of donor representatives, it appears that coordination is often limited to exchanges of information on the security situation and ongoing projects rather than joint ‘strategic’ coordination and planning of activities.
- *The complexity of co-funding procedures.* The complexity of EC procedures makes co-funding with other donors, such as the UNDP, difficult, although there are some areas of common interest. The UN agencies could play an important coordinating role, but their resources and instruments are dependent on donor funding. In contrast, although the EU has considerable financial resources, its mandate is limited to providing humanitarian aid in Sudan.
- *Divergent views about European approaches.* European donors have developed very different approaches to the situation in Sudan. Some Member States have been critical of ECHO’s unilateral disengagement from the south, whereas others disapprove of the EU’s engaging in political dialogue with the Sudanese government. European coordination efforts in Brussels seem to have had only a limited impact on local coordination on the ground.

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<sup>3</sup> UNICEF, *From Survival to Thrival: Children and Women in the Southern Part of Sudan*, p.3.

### 2.4.3 Regional Perspectives

The Sudanese conflict has important regional implications. Coordination among donor agencies working in the region is therefore essential, as well as regional efforts in the framework of IGAD to analyse the Sudanese conflict also in the context of instability in neighbouring countries:

- *Strategic natural resources.* For Sudan and its neighbours, especially Egypt, the Nile is strategically important for the stability and prosperity of the region. Sudan, with its fertile lands, has the potential to become the ‘breadbasket’ for the entire region, but the war has caused famine and flows of refugees in the region. Also, the country’s oil resources could have regional importance.
- *The cross-border refugee problem in Kenya.* Many relief agencies based in Nairobi are dealing with the Sudanese refugees fleeing to Kenya and have set up field offices in Lokichoggio, close to the Sudanese border. The refugee problem is coupled with considerable flows of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in northern Sudan.
- *Regional terrorism and instability in Uganda.* Southern rebel groups have established bases in northern Uganda, and this has increased instability in the region. Some international organisations such as the US-based Carter Center have attempted to mediate in the conflicts among different cross-border rebel groups.
- *Regional coverage of donor agencies based in Khartoum, Nairobi and Cairo.* The division of Sudan into northern and southern sectors has also divided the approaches of donor agencies based in Khartoum, Nairobi and Cairo. Some agencies in Nairobi also monitor the situation in Somalia or in the Great Lakes region, which contributes to their understanding of the regional linkages of the conflict. This understanding adds to the regional dimension of donor responses, as most of them have no permanent presence in southern Sudan, but instead use international NGOs to implement their relief programmes.
- *Regional cooperation in the Pan-African Programme for the Control of Epizootics (PACE).* Sudan benefits from the regional PACE programme, whose main aim is to improve veterinary and animal health services and to combat rinderpest; EUR 3.3 million is distributed equally among north and south Sudan.

## 2.5 Key Challenges facing the International Community

The international community faces several challenges, all of which impact on their capacity to respond to the situation in Sudan:

- *The geographical divide between donor activities.* Sudan is a divided country, so that most donors manage the southern sector from their offices in Nairobi, and the northern sector from their offices in Khartoum. This division creates major problems in countrywide coordination, as each donor tends to take a position (either for or against southern ‘autonomy’) according to its geographical location. Some donors have cooperated with local authorities in southern Sudan without consulting the Sudanese government,<sup>4</sup> which creates tensions throughout the region.
- *The ‘ideological’ divide between donor activities in the north and the south.* The donor countries’ political considerations and perceptions of the Sudanese civil war have affected the geographical

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<sup>4</sup> For example, when US official Susan Rice travelled to southern Sudan in November 2000 without requesting a visa from the Sudanese authorities, this provoked reactions against the United States in Sudan.



scope and the content of their humanitarian aid and development-oriented activities.<sup>5</sup> There appears to be a conceptual difference between ‘emergency aid’ provided by the United States on the basis of political considerations in the US Congress, and ‘humanitarian aid’ provided by ECHO on the basis of ‘humanitarian principles’ such as neutrality and impartiality.

- *Donor ‘surveillance’ by the Sudanese government and the SPLM.* The Sudanese government closely controls the activities of international NGOs through the Humanitarian Assistance Committee (HAC). In the south, the SPLM has created a humanitarian wing, the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association (SRRA), in an attempt to improve its control of international relief work in the rebel-held areas. Donors have accepted the need to maintain a minimum level of cooperation with local authorities in order to gain access to populations on the ground (see Box 1).
- *Security concerns.* The relief agencies on the ground in the south face constant threats of looting, insecurity and Sudanese government bombing. Since its withdrawal from southern Sudan, ECHO’s relief flights have been cancelled.
- *The existence of stable areas within the ‘war zones’.* Donors face difficulties in adapting their activities to meet local needs in different areas of southern Sudan. Some of the stable areas require support to enable economic recovery and to foster local coping mechanisms.
- *Dependency on humanitarian assistance.* It has been widely documented that the provision of humanitarian assistance over the long term creates economic and political dependency, fuels the war economy and conflicts through spin-off effects, and undermines local capacities. Many donors therefore wish to halt food aid in favour of support that will enable local communities to become self-reliant.

**Box 1: The Issue of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)  
with the SPLM in Southern Sudan<sup>6</sup>**

In March 2000 the SPLM, the main rebel group in southern Sudan, asked the OLS NGOs to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) stipulating the conditions under which they may operate. The conditions laid out in the MoU violate the customary principles of neutrality and independence of relief operations. In southern Sudan (the ‘New Sudan’), the SPLM holds power of approval over NGO decisions to hire and fire staff, with preference given to local staff, often affiliated to either the SPLA or the rebel group’s humanitarian wing, the SRRA. The SPLM also imposes arbitrary taxes on NGO operations, including levies on relief flights. In some cases, the SPLM and SRRA have decided to control NGO assets, movements of NGO staff, and project approval. Failure to sign the MoU means that NGOs lose the security that the signing of the MoU is supposed to provide. Some NGOs have refused to sign and have withdrawn their staff from the field. ECHO has taken a strong stance against the arbitrary taxes and has suspended ECHO’s humanitarian flights in the region. Some NGOs, despite signing the MoU, have continued to suffer from the deteriorating security situation and further demands from the rebel authorities. The SPLM has used the MoU to gain recognition of its independent identity by the international community. The long-term effects of the suspension of ECHO’s activities in southern Sudan remain unclear, but its re-engagement on the ground might be problematic in the event of a major emergency. However, ECHO continues to provide support to other areas in the south outside the control of the SPLM. It has argued that the economic recovery in the SPLM-controlled regions has gone beyond emergency stage so that its withdrawal has not had a major impact on people’s lives. The issue of the MoU has highlighted the problem of how to deal with local ‘authorities’ at a minimal level, without legitimising them politically.

<sup>5</sup> For example, ECHO’s reluctance to engage with the rebels is in clear contrast with the US, which is openly helping to build the capacity of local authorities in the rebel-held areas, and is carrying out development-oriented rehabilitation projects in southern Sudan.

<sup>6</sup> El Maroufi, N. (2000) ‘Humanitarian aid and the ‘New Sudan’,’ *The Courier*, no. 182, pp.10-12.

## 2.6 Trends in International Responses: from Sanctions to Constructive Engagement

There is broad consensus among the donor community on the need to move towards partnerships based on performance rather than on previous entitlements. However, many developing countries have weak state structures and fail to meet performance requirements, yet the populations of these countries need development assistance the most. Overcoming the dilemma involved in providing assistance based on ‘needs’ or ‘merits’ requires new approaches to international cooperation.

There are two parallel tendencies in this regard. On the one hand, donors are increasingly promoting performance-based aid allocations with ‘carrots’ to encourage ‘good performers’, and ‘sticks’ to penalise ‘bad performers’. On the other hand, there is a growing awareness of the limitations of sanctions policies. As a consequence, donors are turning to more constructive approaches in politically fragile states, by initiating political dialogue with governments and by promoting decentralised forms of cooperation with non-state actors and local authorities, in order to reach civilian populations in the field.

The effective application of performance criteria is problematic, however, for a number of reasons:

- *Double standards.* The divergent political interests within the donor community often undermine coherence and transparency in the practice of cooperation. This can lead to situations of apparent ‘double standards’ with regard to partner countries whose political and economic importance to the donor countries differ. There are important differences and some incoherence in the EU’s approaches in different regions. It can be argued that foreign policy and economic interests are often the rationale behind international assistance, and guide donor operations in the field.<sup>7</sup>
- *Semantic problems.* The interpretation of performance criteria such as ‘good governance’ is a difficult task and consequently, the measures taken are based on case by case interpretations. The Cotonou Agreement aims to jointly define the essential and fundamental elements of EU–ACP cooperation.
- *Bureaucratic inflexibility.* Donors’ bureaucratic structures and inflexible decision-making mechanisms may undermine the effectiveness of cooperation instruments. For example, EU decisions on foreign policy issues often require unanimous agreement, which makes it difficult for the EU to react adequately political events. The effectiveness of the EU’s external assistance is also limited by cumbersome bureaucratic procedures and the lack of human resources.
- *Quick disbursements versus quality.* Although the financial resources allocated to development cooperation are declining, the ‘performance’ of cooperation is often judged on quantitative basis (i.e. absorption capacity). As a consequence, aid agencies have become more concerned with quick disbursements than the quality of their interventions.
- *Ineffectiveness of sanctions policies.* The international community is increasingly aware that straightforward sanctions policies, implemented through embargoes, UN Security Council resolutions or by the suspension of aid, are fairly ineffective in bringing about policy changes in the countries concerned. On the contrary, sanctions policies may actually strengthen the leaders’ prestige internally, by creating nationalistic images of ‘martyrs’ and/or fears of an ‘international conspiracy’. Besides, sanctions policies often affect the poorest populations on the ground, while the impacts on government policies may be minimal. Sanctions tend to be rather blunt tools that do not allow for targeted interventions.

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<sup>7</sup> For example, the recent discovery of rich oil resources has increased the donors’ interest in ‘re-engaging’ in the country. Also, US interests in southern Sudan are linked to the region’s economic and agricultural potential and its strategic position on the Nile, which can be realised only with stability and economic exchanges with neighbouring countries (O’Toole Salinas and D’Silva, 1999).

- *The limits of decentralised cooperation.* Donors have tended to avoid cooperating with repressive governments by channelling funds through decentralised actors, such as NGOs. However, the effectiveness of bypassing the government has its limits, as genuine institutional changes require some government involvement at central and/or local levels.
- *The negative effects of humanitarian assistance.* In countries where structural development cooperation has been suspended, donors have limited their interventions to the provision of humanitarian aid. In protracted long-term crisis situations, however, donors are increasingly aware of the negative effects of humanitarian aid and are now aiming to design more development-oriented interventions that fall in the 'grey zone' between relief and development assistance.

In view of all of these problems, some donors have engaged in constructive dialogue with governments and even with opposition movements. This constructive engagement through political dialogue aims to address sensitive issues, such as human rights violations, terrorism or corruption, with a view to a potential change of policies. In parallel, donors may target their financial support to areas relevant to the political dialogue.

### **3. The EU's Approach to Sudan: from Humanitarian Assistance to Political Dialogue**

#### **3.1 The EU's Overall Strategy in Sudan**

In the EU's approach to Sudan, development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) considerations are closely linked, and multiple tracks are followed in parallel. There is a major difference in the approaches of ECHO, in charge of humanitarian aid, and the EC Delegation, whose mandate includes both political dialogue and development issues. This division is further complicated by the geographical division of Sudan into two separate entities, leading to a situation where the cooperation with the Sudanese government in northern Sudan is managed from the EC Delegation in Khartoum, whereas the humanitarian operations in the south are mainly covered by the ECHO's office in Nairobi, although the EC Delegation in Khartoum has overall responsibility for the EU's approach in Sudan. This geographical distinction has created separate bureaucratic cultures and even different perceptions of the Sudanese conflict.

##### *3.1.1 The Situation of Sudan Vis-à-Vis the EU-ACP Agreement*

Sudan belongs to the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. However, the Lomé cooperation with Sudan was suspended unilaterally in 1990 due to human rights violations, and the ongoing development assistance was phased out. The European Parliament has also issued resolutions against Sudan. Funds from the 7th and 8th European Development Fund (EDF) were never programmed for Sudan, but the balance of uncommitted funds from the 4th, 5th and 6th EDF, programmed in the 1980s, amounts to EUR 103 million. The EU has decided that development cooperation cannot be resumed before the Sudanese government shows some progress in its respect for human rights, the process of democratisation and in its efforts to find a peaceful solution to the civil war.

The decision to suspend Lomé cooperation in 1990 was taken before the legal basis (Article 366a, and now Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement) existed. Therefore, the European Commission is currently exploring the possibility of opening 'consultations' under Article 96 in order to 'legalise' the situation, to re-examine the suspension, and eventually to initiate the programming of the 9th EDF. The reasons for this are numerous.

- *The lack of a legal basis for the suspension.* The decision to suspend Lomé cooperation was taken unilaterally, without consulting the Sudanese government, in contravention of the provisions of the Cotonou Agreement. It is therefore necessary to review the situation in accordance with Article 96 in order to find an appropriate legal basis.
- *Double standards.* The European Commission is aware that the political and human rights situation in Sudan, whose cooperation has been suspended, is actually better than in some other ACP countries, with which EU cooperation has not been suspended. This raises the problem of 'double standards', in that the Sudanese government would be treated more harshly than other ACP countries.
- *Flexible instruments of the Cotonou framework.* The Cotonou Agreement provides for a more flexible framework for dealing with politically fragile states, as funds can be allocated in a progressive manner, according to 'needs' (first tranche) and to 'merits' (second tranche, allocated on the basis of performance review). This will enable the EU to move away from the 'stop-go'

approach, leaving room either for full cooperation or for total suspension. Also, the design of the country support strategy would allow an integrated analysis of the country situation and the division of roles between the Commission and Member States.

### *3.1.2 The Role of Humanitarian Aid in the Absence of a Legal Framework for Development*

Since the suspension of Lomé cooperation, ECHO has been a major player in Sudan. It has provided substantial humanitarian assistance to the victims of the civil war and natural disasters. Since 1994, relief assistance has amounted to more than EUR 206 million. This amount includes EUR 143 million of ECHO funding, of which EUR 11 million for the latest ECHO global plan for the year 2000, and EUR 64.4 million for food aid.<sup>8</sup> ECHO's activities are channelled through international NGOs such as CARE, Oxfam and the Save the Children Fund. Despite its willingness to limit itself to its core mandate, in the absence of direct development funding, ECHO has been drawn into development-type activities, which are 'dressed up' as 'relief' in NGO funding proposals. Since its recent withdrawal from southern Sudan, ECHO has shifted its activities to the north.

It is widely recognised that short-term humanitarian aid does not allow for any capacity building of local actors, nor long-term development planning by NGOs. The negative effects of humanitarian aid in Sudan are well documented. The exclusive use of humanitarian aid is clearly an inappropriate response to a complex political emergency. Especially in the south, the SPLM's war economy has profited from humanitarian aid. Over the years, ECHO has funded short-term 'hit-and-run' operations with no peace-building mandate.

In parallel, within the Commission's structures, ECHO has tried to put pressure on DG DEV and DG RELEX to ensure a more effective handover from relief to development assistance in Sudan. It is widely recognised that it will be necessary to fund mid-term rehabilitation from the development budget rather than from short-term emergency funds. However, this is not possible in the current legal framework, which has resulted in an 'involuntary extension of humanitarian aid'.

ECHO's strict humanitarian mandate has been problematic in the negotiations on the MoU. ECHO's complete disengagement from the SPLM-controlled areas in the south, where there is still a risk that humanitarian emergencies may arise in the future, appears to have been short-sighted, as ECHO might find it difficult to 're-engage' on humanitarian grounds without losing credibility (see Box 2). Some donors believe that ECHO's withdrawal was done too hastily, without proper analysis of the situation, and has had a major impact on the ECHO-funded NGOs, which no longer receive funding for the south. Many of ECHO's partner NGOs have signed the MoU and face constant security problems, harassment and pressure to pay supplementary taxes. Furthermore, the fact that the OLS lacks a firm position appears to have weakened the position of international NGOs *vis-à-vis* the SPLM, thus making project implementation very difficult on the ground.

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<sup>8</sup> Background note on Sudan, European Commission, 2000.

### **Box 2: Contrasting Approaches in Southern Sudan: USAID's STAR Programme**

The Sudan Transitional Assistance Rehabilitation (STAR) programme<sup>9</sup> was set up in 1997 in addition to US humanitarian assistance in southern opposition-held areas. The STAR programme arose in response to a number of factors: the economic transition occurring in secure areas; the establishment of a civil administration under the SPLM; the perceived need to strengthen local capacities and structures in the region; and the desire to improve human rights and democracy in opposition-held areas. The primary purpose of the STAR programme is to increase participatory democracy and good governance in opposition-held areas while reducing the heavy reliance on relief. The programme aims to assist in laying a strong foundation for the eventual post-conflict transition, and has three components:

- strengthening Sudanese grassroots organisations working to solve local rehabilitation problems, reducing their heavy reliance on relief and strengthening self-reliance;
- providing governance training to the nascent civil administration in order to improve transparency, accountability, public financial management and respect for human rights; and
- providing a forum that can contribute to the development of policies.

The SPLM has been involved in all stages of programme design and implementation. USAID also has plans to provide training in good governance for opposition groups in the Nuba Mountains and eastern Sudan. USAID has initiated innovative activities in the stable areas of southern Sudan, to encourage the transition from relief to development. The US is focusing on the rehabilitation of roads and agricultural systems, and on small-scale economic recovery activities, with the aim of restoring people's coping mechanisms and their ability to resume normal economic activities. This approach is intended to reduce dependence and the overall costs of relief interventions in the area.

#### *3.1.3 The Humanitarian Plus Programme: Towards a More Adaptable Approach?*

To address the lack of a legal framework for development cooperation, in November 2000 the EU agreed on the implementation of a 'Humanitarian Plus' programme, which provides a grant of some EUR 15 million from the balance of uncommitted funds from the 6th EDF for rehabilitation beyond relief in Sudan. The financing agreement was signed in April 2001. The programme aims to provide a framework and a strategy with a long-term perspective, linking relief operations to rehabilitation. There is a fund for micro-projects with local communities. The programme also aims at 'improving the living conditions and human dignity of the distressed civilian population of the Sudan by re-establishing a minimum capacity for self-reliance in the sectors of food security, basic water and health'.<sup>10</sup> DG DEV is responsible for the Humanitarian Plus programme, which will be implemented through international NGOs on a three-year basis. It will therefore provide a longer-term perspective for partner organisations in the field. EuropeAid will play a role in the implementation process. The programme is supposed to be complementary to and closely coordinated with ECHO's interventions.

Some Member States were reluctant to use EDF funds for Sudan because they feared that to do so would give the wrong political signal to the Sudanese government. Consequently, the programme is to be managed by a special Programme Management Unit (PMU). The Commission, rather than the Sudanese government, plays a role as a 'national authorising officer'. The Humanitarian Plus programme might not be implemented in the south due to the EU's disagreement with the SPLM over the MoU and the subsequent withdrawal of ECHO.

<sup>9</sup> O'Toole Salinas, A. and D'Silva, B.C. (1999), *Evolution of a Transition Strategy and Lessons Learned: USAID-Funded Activities in the West Bank of Southern Sudan, 1993 to 1999*, USAID, Washington, DC.

<sup>10</sup> Humanitarian Plus, financing proposal, 2000.

### 3.2 Components of the EC's Activities in Sudan

The Commission's activities include four major components (see Table 2). First, in the absence of development funding, ECHO plays a major role in providing humanitarian assistance through international NGOs. Second, the design of the Humanitarian Plus programme, with a three-year perspective, will allow the implementing NGOs to make the transition towards a more development-oriented approach. Third, the EC has set up budget lines for human rights, environmental protection and NGO co-financing that have also been implemented in Sudan. Finally, food aid remains an important component of the EC's approach in Sudan. In December 2000, The Commission established a food security unit in Khartoum with a long-term technical assistant, under the supervision of the EC Delegation.

**Table 2: The EC's Activities in Sudan**

Type of financing	Amount (EUR)	Management	Implementation
ECHO funding	11 million in 2000	ECHO	NGOs
Humanitarian Plus	15 million (3 years)	DEV/AIDCO/PMU	NGOs
Food aid	64.4 million in 2000	DEV/ AIDCO	
PACE programme	5.3 million		
Budget lines		DEV/AIDCO	NGOs

### 3.3 The EC and Member States in Sudan

The embassies of five EU Member States (France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) are located in Khartoum, and the rest of the European countries monitor Sudan from their embassies in Cairo. Member States' contributions are predominantly linked to humanitarian interventions, but variations in strategies are visible.<sup>11</sup> (See Box 3 for an example) The Member States and the EC coordinate their humanitarian activities as part of the overall donor coordination mechanisms. At the political level, the heads of missions of Member States participate and closely monitor advances in the political dialogue and debates on opening consultations with Sudan. The questions of programming of EDF funds and the design of the country support strategy are under discussion.

#### **Box 3: The Netherlands Support to the Sudanese Women's Peace Initiative**

The Netherlands has aimed to 'engender the Sudanese peace process' by supporting the Sudanese Women's Peace Initiative since 1998.<sup>12</sup> The initiative is incorporated in the activities of the Netherlands embassies in Khartoum and Nairobi, where there are specific gender experts. The initiative is 'a neutral structure in which women from opposing parties can work together, or work within their own constituency. The Netherlands government acts as a facilitator when common activities are organised'. The main objective is to support the process of consciousness-raising among Sudanese women on their roles and responsibilities in the peace process, at all levels of society and in particular within the conflicting parties. Sudanese women from different backgrounds have organised themselves into working committees, and receive training to take responsibility for advocating women's participation in the peace process. The women's groups participated in the Hague Appeal for Peace, a conference held in the Netherlands in May 1999, and attended a seminar in Maastricht, leading to the Maastricht Declaration of the Sudanese Women's Peace Initiative, in April 2000. The Netherlands embassies have therefore taken an active role in supporting women's empowerment in the Sudanese peace process. This has met with some resistance among this traditional male-dominated society, and questions regarding the role of foreign embassies in bringing about change in a society.

<sup>11</sup> See section 2.2, Major players.

<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.sud-women-peace.com>.

### 3.4 Linking Development and Foreign Policy Considerations

In the field of the CFSP, the governments of EU Member States are increasingly aware of the limitations of sanctions in bringing about changes in partner government policies. Sudan's political and economic importance is reflected in the Member States' interest in monitoring the impacts of EU policies in Sudan. The EU has been engaged in a political dialogue with the Sudanese government since November 1999, and has attempted to support parallel activities in the field of human rights, subject to the political dialogue. The European Commission explained the rationale behind the political dialogue as follows:

'The continuing the EU–Sudan dialogue is the only way through which influence can be exercised over Sudan, especially in the areas of human rights and democratisation. The decision to renew the dialogue was taken on the basis of tangible, though still insufficient improvements in the performance of the Sudanese government in the areas that had been particularly criticised in the past, i.e. respect for human rights, democracy and freedom of the press and religion'.<sup>13</sup>

Political dialogue is thus seen as a means of leverage through engagement. In parallel, the Sudanese government has strengthened its internal authority by being an interlocutor with the international community. The European Parliament has issued several resolutions on the situation in Sudan.

The political dialogue has addressed the peace process, democracy and the rule of law, human rights, terrorism and relations with neighbouring countries. Sudan is a politically important country, and its situation is often discussed in the Africa working group of the European Council. In particular, Member States are following closely the political dialogue, and a troika mission,<sup>14</sup> mandated to assess the progress of political dialogue, was sent to Sudan in November 2000. The decision to launch the Humanitarian Plus programme was linked to the progress in the political dialogue, which for a long time had been considered insufficient. Finally, the green light was given to the programme on the basis of positive assessment of the troika mission.

The Sudanese government<sup>15</sup> sees the EU as an important partner in the Cotonou framework. It is conscious of the importance of Sudan at the crossroads of African and Arab cultures, and of its strategic position on the Nile. It finds the EU's constructive approach more productive than the previous sanctions policies, and stresses the progress that has been made in the areas of the political dialogue. Consequently, Sudan considers that it has been 'rewarded' with the launch of the Humanitarian Plus programme. In parallel, the Commission has assessed the possibility of opening 'consultations' with Sudan. However, since the troika mission in November 2000 the political situation in Sudan has deteriorated, and the time might not be right to propose the resumption of cooperation.

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<sup>13</sup> Background note on Sudan, European Commission, 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Troika missions include the current and upcoming presidents of the EU and the Commission.

<sup>15</sup> Interview at the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Khartoum.



## 4. Adaptations in the EU's Approach to the Situation in Sudan

### 4.1 Strategic Adaptations

The EU has now recognised the ineffectiveness of sanctions policies and the suspension of Lomé cooperation in bringing about changes in the Sudanese government's policies. With the new approach of constructive engagement, the EU can address problematic areas, such as the peace process and human rights, through the EU-Sudan political dialogue, combining both 'sticks' and 'carrots'. Also, the launch of the Humanitarian Plus programme reflects a new understanding on the need to elaborate adaptable instruments to address the complex political situation in Sudan. Strategically, the EU has a political mandate, which would require it to play an active role in peace building and conflict resolution. An integrated strategic analysis allows a distinction to be made between the civil war between the north and the south, and the prevailing conflicts between southern tribes, mediated by the New Sudan Council of Churches. The EU has supported the activities of the IGAD partners' forum. Support to the peace efforts requires actions in both the south and the north of the country.

However, there is a difference between the EC Delegation's political analysis and the ECHO representative's emphasis on the need for humanitarian 'neutrality' and ground rules. The EU seems to have two separate ways to deal with Sudan – in Khartoum (EC Delegation) and in Nairobi (ECHO, which has recently withdrawn from the south). The EU's strategies are regularly discussed among the Member States in Khartoum and in the Africa working group in Brussels.

Donors face a major predicament in building the 'technical' capacities of ministries and local authorities, without appearing to grant political recognition to repressive governments. ECHO's short-term activities do not allow local capacity building and consultations with local communities. In the north, the EU Delegation is engaged in political dialogue with the Sudanese government, and refuses to recognise southern rebel groups as legitimate authorities. Within the overall EU approach in Sudan, ECHO and the EC Delegation have different mandates *vis-à-vis* the Sudanese authorities. It is important to improve coordination and complementarity among the different community instruments.

The donors' relations with local authorities are 'mediated' through international NGOs, which cooperate with local communities. International NGOs have even taken over some government functions, especially in the context of decentralisation. NGO cooperation is dependent on donors' policy orientations and short-term funding, and consequently the systematic capacity building of local communities remains problematic. Also, the Sudanese government, as well as the southern opposition movements, accuse international actors of lacking transparency, and require information about the budgets, equipment and staff of relief programmes. In practice, most EC-funded projects have been executed by NGOs, which have had to accept the rules and instructions of the HAC or the SRRA in order to gain access to the war-affected populations.

Donors have supported the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC), an indigenous organisation that has actively facilitated the people-to-people peace process between the Nuer and Dinka tribes in the south (see Box 4). The churches appear to represent 'civil society' in the south. In parallel, Islamic NGOs in the north seem to be aligned with the Sudanese government.

#### **Box 4: Donor Support to the People-to-People Peace Process and Churches as Representatives of Civil Society in Southern Sudan<sup>16</sup>**

Several donors have supported the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) in its efforts to facilitate reconciliation between local tribes in southern Sudan. The NSCC was created in 1989 and donors regard it as one of the main civil society groups in southern Sudan, where religion plays an important role.

##### *Church/opposition movement dialogue*

Relations between opposition movements like the SPLM and the churches deteriorated during the 1990s. Eventually, a special church/SPLM dialogue was organised in 1997. The dialogue raised the hope of reconciliation between the southern tribes, whose internal conflicts have resulted in more human casualties than the north-south divide. A special meeting of the leaders of traditional Nilotic peoples from the east and west banks of the Nile and church leaders was convened in Lokichoggio in Kenya in 1998, and the idea of involving ordinary people in the peace process was introduced. In particular, the dialogue between the rival Dinka and Nuer was considered as important, and the role of the NSCC as facilitator was widely recognised.

##### *Permanent field presence*

The NSCC has set up ecumenical centres in various parts of Sudan to strengthen its capacity to support the peace process and to anticipate emergencies.

##### *The people-to-people peace process at the Wunlit and Liliir conferences*

The Wunlit conference in 1999 brought together the two peoples, including women, and both sides expressed their grievances and initiated a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The ceasefire declared between the Dinka and Nuer at the Wunlit conference has so far been respected. The people-to-people peace process was strengthened at the Liliir conference in 2000, where more ethnic groups convened to seek peaceful solutions to local disputes. The conference allowed these smaller ethnic groups to gain visibility and to express their stories of marginalisation. It also allowed a broader analysis of the region's problems and the 'crisis of governance'.

##### *Local ownership and use of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms*

The people-to-people peace process is based on local people's ownership and on traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution. It also aims to consolidate peace through the provision of essential services in areas where peace agreements have been brokered.

##### *The church as a representative of indigenous civil society*

The donors' decision to support a church-based peace process is unique in the context of southern Sudan. The perception of the NSCC as an 'indigenous organisation' that can facilitate an internal peace process contrasts with the role of international NGOs, which often employ expatriate staff and whose permanent field presence on the ground is often limited.

## **4.2 Institutional Adaptations**

In the absence of a legal framework for development funding, ECHO has been drawn into the grey zone between relief and development assistance. ECHO aims to coordinate the work of its offices in Khartoum and Nairobi, but the division of country into two parts clearly requires institutional adaptations to deal with specific situations.

Similarly, Member States' interest in monitoring the European Commission's policy in Sudan, as well as the lack of time and human resources, leaves little autonomy for the EC Delegation to act in the field. Despite this, the EC Delegation in Khartoum has created some space for local initiatives, due mainly to the personal commitment of the Head of Delegation. The EC Delegation has provided funds for small-scale development activities despite the suspension of Lomé cooperation through specific

<sup>16</sup> Strategic Review of the Southern Sudanese People-to-People Peace Process and the Support Role of the NSCC, July/August 2000.

budget lines, such as NGO co-funding, food aid and human rights. The EC Delegation has also played an active role in fostering the political dialogue with the Sudanese government. The situation in the country is now changing, and the importance of integrating operations in the north and the south has become a more important aspect of the EC Delegation's mandate in Khartoum.

The EU has adapted its approaches to the division of the country. However, this has created two separate 'bureaucratic' cultures within the same agency, and in some cases the information flows remain limited.

The separation between 'neutral' humanitarian aid and political recognition remains blurred. The Khartoum-based NGOs have complained that donors are reluctant to fund humanitarian activities in the north because that could be seen as supporting the Sudanese government. At the same time, ECHO decided to withdraw from the south to avoid recognising the SPLM as an authority with the 'right' to impose service fees on the relief agencies in its territory. Thus ECHO shifted its humanitarian activities to the north. Also, no humanitarian aid has been provided to the stable areas in the south, where a more development-oriented approach could be adopted. The development funding for these stable areas is limited due to the general conception that the security situation there is not suitable for development activities. These contradictions also reflect the close linkages between foreign policy considerations and international assistance.

However, it has been recognised that there are areas with different levels of development and peace, which also require adaptable approaches. In this context, the donors have engaged in a consultation process with stakeholders in the context of the IGAD partners' forum (IPF) 'Planning for Peace' initiative (see Box 5).

#### **Box 5: The IGAD Partners' Forum 'Planning for Peace' Initiative<sup>17</sup>**

The IGAD partners' forum (IPF) aims to support the Sudanese peace process under the auspices of IGAD. It has set up a specific IPF working group, composed of major donors (Canada, Egypt, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK, the EU, UN agencies, and the World Bank), to launch a 'Planning for Peace' initiative. The initiative is based on consultations with all stakeholders in order to build ownership in preparation for post-conflict activities. Three parallel processes are envisaged: a systematic 'stocktaking' of existing databases and other sources of relevant information; an ongoing series of sectoral evaluations of needs and priorities under the umbrella of technical sub-working groups; and, finally, ongoing bilateral consultations with relevant Sudanese stakeholders. The programme includes the following innovative components:

- *Creating the conditions for peace through joint participatory planning.* The result of the consultations should be a planning framework for the resumption of cooperation after a peace agreement has been signed. The participatory design of the planning framework could give an opportunity for alternative voices to be included in the dialogue other than the leaders involved in the IGAD peace talks.
- *Building linkages between grassroots peace efforts and the official IGAD peace talks.* The consultations offer opportunities for opening channels of communication between the grassroots peace processes promoted by civil society organisations, and the political dialogue being furthered within the official peace talks.
- *The peace dividend approach or potential donor engagement prior to a peace agreement? The rationale behind the initiative is similar to the 'peace dividend approach',<sup>18</sup> according to which peace will be rewarded by financial flows from donors. However, the donors will most likely engage in some 'pre-peace agreement' measures in order to create the conditions for a sustainable peace.*
- *Coordination and confidence building among local actors.* The IPF working group includes representatives of missions based in both Nairobi and Khartoum. The communication and consistency of approaches among the different agencies are crucial. Also, because Sudanese groups on all sides feel that they have been let down by the international community several times in the past, confidence-building measures and a serious international commitment to the peace process are the cornerstones of the approach.

<sup>17</sup> IPF Working Group, Planning for Peace: Interim Report to the IPF Sudan Committee, June 2000.

<sup>18</sup> The peace dividend approach has been used in Somalia.

### 4.3 Adaptations in Financial Instruments

Short-term ECHO funding remains the largest source of funding for EU cooperation in Sudan. However, the recently approved Humanitarian Plus programme allows the use of the remaining EDF funds allocated to Sudan. There are also other positive changes in the funding base, for instance the NGO co-financing budget line can now be utilised for small-scale, long-term development projects in Sudan. There have also been calls for proposals in the Sudan food security budget line. In addition, the EC Delegation may use some EDF funds below the threshold for decision-making procedures in the EDF Committee in Brussels. The EC Delegation has thus created innovative approaches at the local level in order to use the available funding in an adaptive way despite strict legal frameworks. However, most funding is channelled through international NGOs, and no development funding is available for local partners or for work with civil society organisations.

ECHO and the EC Delegation are addressing the question of accountability and performance at different levels. At the project level, ECHO has developed performance indicators to ensure accountability (see Box 6), whereas the EC Delegation, in close contact with DG DEV, aims to assess performance at the macro-level in its relations with the Sudanese government.

**Box 6: Adaptations in Project Level Accountability and Implementation:  
the German Agro Action (GAA) Livestock/Agriculture Project in Unity State**

The ECHO-funded activities of the German Agro Action (Deutsche Welthungerhilfe, GAA) aims to enable people to obtain food security through their own efforts, and to improve the living conditions of rural populations. In close cooperation with the communities, GAA acts as a donor for local organisations in order to lay the foundations for sustainable development. The GAA has been present in Sudan since 1992. It is active in Unity State, where the local population has been affected by both natural disasters and civil strife. The fighting between ethnic groups has contributed to massive population movements, the loss of livestock and the deterioration of animal health and agricultural production in the region. Since the whole social structure is based on wealth in terms of livestock, the loss of animal resources has been devastating. As a consequence, people have been forced to find alternative ways to address their food needs. The need to rebuild community seed stocks is essential.

The GAA has designed an integrated approach, including sustainable rehabilitation, in its agricultural, livestock and environmental interventions to reverse the appalling socio-economic situation. The approach includes the following innovations:

- *The use of local knowledge as the basis for programme design.* The use of local knowledge of suitable seeds for the land and the manufacture of suitable tools are crucial in designing a sustainable approach to food security. On the basis of the advice of local groups, the project identifies lost seeds and adapts agricultural tools to meet local needs.
- *Changes in attitudes and methods in pastoral societies.* The project supports households by providing agricultural tools and seeds. For the members of pastoral societies who have traditionally been dependent on livestock, the project also provides training in agriculture and horticulture. In this way it is hoped to develop a sustainable society that can produce its own food requirements in changing socio-economic circumstances, as well as to reduce the dependence on relief food supplies. This will require profound changes in the attitudes of members of these formerly pastoral societies.
- *Local implementation and selection of workers to ensure access to the affected populations.* The project is being implemented with the support of the federal Ministry of Agriculture and in close collaboration with various community structures, including agricultural extension workers who are trained to become trainers themselves at the community level. Local leaders select workers on the basis of their recognised honesty and willingness to share their knowledge with the community. This local involvement ensures access to the affected populations, since expatriate trainers have limited access to areas where the security situation is difficult.

- *Equal ethnic representation in project design and implementation.* The project is also involved in the distribution of agricultural implements to selected farmers. The project tries to ensure that all ethnic groups are equally represented in design and implementation in order to improve transparency.
- *Innovative monitoring system.* The project is monitored by the farmers themselves, using report sheets and simple reporting methods (drawings) that do not require literacy. The work is also monitored by GAA staff through on-site visits, and by interviewing farmers and their households to assess the implementation rate and improved access to food. The idea is to ensure a constant dialogue in identifying problems and needs in an evolving situation. To ensure local ownership, the distribution of tools and seeds is organised locally, workers are paid by the community, and local problem-solving methods are used.
- *Crucial role of women in household food security.* The project also works with local women, who have set up their own gardens and play an important role in organising household food security.
- *Focus on relations between internally displaced persons and host communities.* The project also involves negotiations between displaced persons and the host communities in order to avoid conflicts over available resources.

The GAA's integrated approach to food security aims to address the issue of food security in various ways, emphasising local participation and ownership, rather than traditional emergency deliveries of food aid.

## 5. Challenges and Opportunities for a More Adaptable Approach to Sudan

### 5.1 Major Challenges in designing a Coherent EU Approach

#### 5.1.1 Political Challenges

The design of a coherent EU approach to the situation in Sudan is politically challenging for the following reasons:

- *The impacts of the EU's political dialogue on the Sudanese peace process.* It has been argued that the EU's political dialogue has reinforced the position of the Sudanese government despite the lack of progress in the peace negotiations. The question is whether the EU's leverage can go beyond encouraging the parties to negotiate, or whether conditions can be attached to the obligation of achieving results in the peace talks. Also, some critics see the Humanitarian Plus programme as a 'reward' to the government and, consequently, as a potential disincentive for peace.
- *The need to assess the linkages between military expenditures and oil revenues.* Defence expenditures drain some 50% of the Sudanese government's annual budget. Also, the considerable foreign debt arrears that burden the government have coincided with major private investments in oil exploration and production. In this context, donors need to address the linkages between the continuation of the civil war and the exploitation of the country's economic resources.
- *Capacity building and political recognition.* Donors are reluctant to build the technical capacities of ministries and local authorities (i.e. in rebel-held areas), as this might appear to be a sign of political recognition. However, cooperation with the authorities is inevitable, for example, in order to ensure access to populations. The EC Delegation is engaged in political dialogue with the Sudanese government, thus recognising its legitimacy as a state authority. In parallel, ECHO refuses to negotiate with the SPLM in the south, although it is *de facto* the authority in the south. The EU wants to be careful not to recognise the rebel groups, since this would antagonise the Sudanese government. ECHO's decision to withdraw from the south has been criticised by some other relief organisations, as the total disengagement took away ECHO's 'leverage' with regard to the SPLM, even though the emergency is not yet over. In practice, this means that if ECHO has to return to the south at later stage, its position in negotiating with the SPLM will have been weakened. It is not yet clear how the withdrawal of ECHO will affect the implementation of the Humanitarian Plus programme, which is managed by the EC Delegation.

Although the EU has attempted to design a more coherent approach to Sudan, combining political, development and humanitarian instruments, its effective implementation has been complicated by several factors.

#### 5.1.2 Institutional Challenges

The EU faces numerous institutional challenges, including the following:

- *Insufficient use of instruments.* The EU lacks both an appropriate legal framework and operational instruments to deal with the complex political emergency in Sudan. Due to the suspension of

Lomé cooperation, there is no real possibility for a ‘handover’ from humanitarian aid to development instruments. There is a need to explore linkages between the CFSP and Cotonou instruments. The approach is further complicated by multiple institutional views in Nairobi, Khartoum and Brussels.

- *The blurred mandates of the Africa working group and the EDF committee.* There is some confusion between the technical and political mandates of Member States committees. On the one hand, the political discussions of the Africa working group seem to be ‘detached’ from field reality and have little operational effect on the ground. On the other hand, project-level discussions in the EDF committee remain technical, and ignore political analysis. The Commission and the Council Legal Services are concerned about the lack of appropriate mandates in the committees, as the EDF committee is not supposed to discuss politics, and the Africa working group does not have a technical mandate.
- *Subordination of technical projects to foreign policy considerations.* The EU Member States play a crucial role in determining the EU’s foreign policy interests, which in turn, ‘condition’ the EU’s development cooperation. For example, the launch of the Humanitarian Plus programme, which is managed by the European Commission, was linked to the satisfactory progress in the political dialogue, as judged by EU Member States.
- *Division of responsibilities between DG DEV, DG RELEX and AIDCO.* Responsibility for the EU–Sudan political dialogue lies with DG RELEX, although there is no expertise on Africa. Consequently, within DG DEV, the Horn of Africa continues to play a crucial role even in the political sphere. Following the launch of the Humanitarian Plus programme, the policy analysis-oriented tasks of the Sudan desk officer in DG DEV have become increasingly important. Also, the roles of AIDCO and the PMU in implementing the Humanitarian Plus programme need to be further clarified.
- *Coordination between ECHO and DG DEV.* More effective coordination between DG DEV and ECHO, both in Brussels and in the field, is essential when the Humanitarian Plus programme is launched in Sudan. So far, the coordination has not been systematic, but rather on a case-by-case basis.

### 5.1.3 *Implementation Challenges*

The EU also faces a number of challenges at the level of implementation on the ground, including:

- *Uncertainties about the implementation modalities for the Humanitarian Plus programme.* The concrete modalities for the implementation of the programme and the institutional roles of DG DEV, AIDCO and the PMU need to be further clarified, as well as the exact geographical coverage of activities, particularly in southern Sudan. The financing agreement was signed in April 2001.
- *The effects of uncertainties on the partner NGOs’ strategic perspectives.* The fact that ECHO funding is provided on an annual basis precludes any capacity building or long-term planning by the executing NGOs. Also, NGO activities are dependent on the donors’ policies and political considerations. The lack of development funding has led to situations in which NGOs have had to ‘dress up’ their proposals as relief projects, even though they include rehabilitation elements. In emergency situations, the partner NGOs often lack an institutional memory due to the high rates of staff turnover, and staff members face serious security problems in the field.
- *Encouraging ownership and sustainability.* There is a clear linkage between ownership and sustainability. The lack of sustainability of humanitarian aid is widely recognised, stemming from

the lack of capacity building and of the involvement of local organisations in the relief efforts, which are often perceived to be external to local society.

## 5.2 Opportunities for a More Adaptable EU Approach to Sudan

### 5.2.1 *Political Opportunities*

The EU's approach to Sudan offers several political opportunities, including the following:

- *Targeting support to critical areas in the political dialogue.* The EU could improve the effectiveness of the political dialogue by targeting its support to areas included in the dialogue, such as human rights, democracy and removing landmines, and by establishing clear linkages within the dialogue with a willingness to make progress in the IGAD peace process.
- *Confidence-building measures.* The EU could play a role in building confidence among the conflicting parties (in the north–south and south–south conflicts), at different levels. In the current situation, the EU's political capacity to mediate in the conflict in Sudan may have been undermined by ECHO's confrontation with the SPLM and its withdrawal from the south.
- *Supporting initiatives that will create conditions for peace.* Financial support to the IGAD partners' forum Planning for Peace initiative, including consultations with stakeholders, could be part of a broader strategy to support initiatives that will create the conditions for a peaceful transition of society. This could also include support for economic recovery in the stable areas within the areas of conflict.
- *The distinction between technical capacity building and political recognition.* It is important to recognise the difference between providing technical support to line ministries (health, education, etc.) and political legitimisation of government policies. In the south, capacity building of local communities may be separated from the issue of political recognition of rebel movements or their humanitarian wings.

### 5.2.2 *Institutional Opportunities*

The EU's approach in Sudan offers several institutional opportunities, including:

- *Active involvement of the heads of donor agencies.* The personal involvement of the head of delegations and of other donor agencies is crucial in designing adaptable approaches to the specific country situation. It appears that the head of the EC Delegation and of UNDP have both engaged in a constructive way with the Sudanese authorities.
- *Adaptation of the legal framework.* The launch of the Humanitarian Plus programme and the provision of a legal basis through consultations under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement will allow more flexible and coherent use of long-term funding in Sudan. More flexible instruments will also contribute to the evolution of a more integrated approach, linking development and conflict prevention activities.
- *Regional coordination.* There is a need for improved coordination between the EC Delegation in Khartoum and ECHO in Nairobi, as well as between DG DEV and ECHO in Brussels, in order to improve the coherence of the EU's approach in Sudan.



- *Adaptable instruments to support the economic recovery of stable areas in the south.* The EU needs to adapt its instruments to support the economic recovery of stable areas in the south. This is problematic due to ECHO's withdrawal and the absence of development funding for the SPLM-controlled areas.
- *Regional aspects of economic recovery.* Donors should pay special attention to building cross-border commercial links with Uganda both to support local economic dynamics, and to break the cycle of dependency on aid.

### 5.2.3 *Implementation Opportunities*

The EU's approach opens new perspectives for more flexible implementation on the ground, including:

- *Long-term support for partner NGOs.* The Humanitarian Plus programme allows the provision of long-term funding for NGOs, potentially contributing to their planning mechanisms and local capacity building activities. Establishing mechanisms for micro-projects would also improve access to funding for local communities.
- *Local staff and institutional memory.* The recruitment of local staff in partner NGOs would improve the problem of high staff turnover and the lack of institutional memory. It would also allow NGOs to adapt their approaches to different situations in the field.
- *Local ownership and sustainability.* It has been argued that community contributions, such as human resources or land for local programmes, can have a major impact in terms of increasing the sense of ownership and thus sustainability. Also, the involvement in projects of local representatives, selected by communities, will contribute to grassroots capacity building.

## 5.3 Added Value of the EC

The Commission plays a key role in implementing programmes and in monitoring political developments in Sudan. There are several areas in which the EC has true added value in relation to Member States' bilateral approaches to Sudan:

- *Permanent presence and dialogue with the Sudanese government.* The EC has established a permanent presence in northern Sudan through the EC Delegation in Khartoum. It allows the EU to maintain relations with the Sudanese government even in the absence of extensive development programmes. The Sudanese government recognises the EC as an interlocutor in the EU-ACP context.
- *A 'neutral' platform for Member States' actions.* The EC Delegation may play a role in coordinating the divergent foreign policy and economic interests of individual Member States. It could also channel significant funds to areas such as human rights or the removal of landmines, which would allow support to be targeted to the areas included in the political dialogue.
- *The potential flexibility of the Cotonou framework and integrated use of Community instruments.* The Cotonou framework offers new opportunities for introducing flexible performance assessments and for monitoring the country situation. Furthermore, the possibility of designing the country support strategy, including a donor matrix, would allow the better use of different instruments, as well as the handover from relief to development activities.

- *Regional perspective on conflict resolution and cross-border flows.* The EC has a special mandate to support regional integration, and this could also include a regional perspective in dealing with conflicts that could have significant regional implications.

## **6. Concluding Remarks**

We have seen that the EU, like most donor agencies, has to work in Sudan within a legal framework that was designed for normal situations. However, new thinking is emerging, with the aim of designing donor approaches that can be adapted to the specific situations of politically fragile states. It seems to be clear that ‘conditionality’ will not disappear; on the contrary, performance-based assessments will remain the basis for aid allocations. However, donors have started to combine leverage with dialogue.

The EU, which has ambitions to become a ‘global political player’, aims to ‘influence’ the Sudanese government through political dialogue, addressing all issues of concern. The Sudan case shows the limitations of sanctions policies in bringing about changes in government policies. The experience in Sudan seems to suggest that it is intolerable for donors simply to withdraw from politically fragile states until the arrival of peace and democracy. Rather, it is crucial that they take a more pro-active, integrated approach, combining dialogue and leverage, in order to create the conditions for improved stability and peace. The cooperation in Sudan is undergoing a transition towards a more development-oriented approach, as donors have recognised the limitations of humanitarian aid and sanctions policies in such protracted conflicts.

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## **Interviewed Organisations**

Sudan desk officer, European Commission, Brussels  
French cooperation, Nairobi  
The Netherlands Embassy, Nairobi  
Finnish Embassy, Nairobi  
Danish Embassy, Nairobi  
Sudan desk, ECHO, Nairobi  
UNICEF, OLS  
UNESCO-Peer, Nairobi  
IGAD partners' forum, Nairobi  
The New Sudan Council of Churches, Nairobi  
Veterinaires sans Frontiers, Nairobi  
Sudan Lutheran Church  
Netherlands Embassy, Khartoum  
Head of the EU Delegation, Khartoum  
ECHO, Khartoum  
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)  
German Embassy, Khartoum  
Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Khartoum  
German Agro Action, Khartoum  
Save the Children-UK, Khartoum  
Oxfam, Nairobi  
IPF peace process, Khartoum  
GOAL, Khartoum  
UNDP regional representative, Khartoum  
USAID Sudan team, Washington