

***Tailoring support to each specific country: Dialogue with Host Governments, RCs and UNCTs***

***RC – Sudan***

**Wednesday, 15 May 2024, 3:00 – 5:00 pm**

**Objective:** “This session will discuss how the UNDS is working together to provide tailored policy advice and technical support on SDG acceleration to countries based on their specific circumstances. Looking ahead to the 2024 QCPR, panelists will discuss the type of measures required to bridge SDG gaps in different country settings.”

**Key messages:**

- Your Excellency Tarek Ladeb, Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council.
- Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.
- I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this timely conversation.
- At a time when Sudan should be focusing on achieving its SDG commitments, over the past year the country has been embroiled in a conflict that has resulted in the displacement of 9 million people. As we gather here at ECOSOC, in El Fasher the capital of North Darfur, hostilities are escalating putting an entire city in peril. If the fighting continues and intensifies it could have devastating consequences for the city’s 800,000 civilian population.
- Excellencies, you may be asking yourselves why should we therefore be discussing sustainable development in the midst of a conflict?
- Let me be clear: Against this very complex backdrop of conflict and displacement, the reinvigorated UN Development System remains in Sudan, supporting the agency of the Sudanese people, protecting their livelihoods, shoring up service delivery systems, to prevent further institutional collapse. We do so knowing that when the guns are eventually silenced and there is a move towards recovery, we will have kept institutions more resilient and we will expand our support for health, education, justice for the people of Sudan.

- I am particularly inspired by the women of Sudan, they played an instrumental role in the revolution, yet they find themselves caught up in this crisis. Women are at the frontlines of the relief effort. They persevere, despite all odds, working selflessly in the emergency rooms, with NGOs and other grass roots civil society organizations. They are key stakeholders of the process that will bring peace back to Sudan.
- Excellencies, the plight of Sudan is an issue at the very heart of the 2030 Agenda – our commitment to reach the furthest behind first. The 2030 Agenda is universal, it applies to all countries, especially for those furthest behind. It is essential for countries impacted by conflict and crises, which are expected to house nearly 60% of the world’s extreme poor by 2030.
- I started this job more than a year ago, as the war in Sudan created the world’s largest displacement crisis. This exacerbates a development crisis of epic proportions, decades of hard-won development outcomes in reversal. Well over half-way to the **zero hunger goalpost, We have nearly five million people one step away from famine, including in besieged El Fasher, where the population is living in fear of a sudden escalation of violence and also in parts of Khartoum, where it would have been once unimaginable.** Think about it: the equivalent of 3 times the population of Manhattan is on the brink of starving to death. More than one-third of the country’s population (18 million) is facing acute food insecurity. 1.2 million pregnant and breastfeeding women in Sudan are facing alarming malnutrition. Appalling stories abound about sexual-based violence. Human Rights violations are widespread. These are added to pre-existing challenges in Sudan’s path to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.
- But with our commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, leaving no one behind, I am privileged to lead the UN Country Team and our Humanitarian Country Team in these most complex of times - the UN Development System has been able to adapt its planning assumptions quickly, gearing towards a renewed focus on mitigating development reversals even while shifting into crisis response mode.
- Excellencies, the reinvigorated Resident Coordinator System is making a difference. We are on the ground, close to the people. I am leading a

UN Country Team with the operational capacity to expand our agile community-based development support in a way that is adapted to the complex context. We are boosting local social protection systems, strengthening the capacity of health centers and schools. As we deliver life-saving aid, we prevent further SDG reversals, and we are ready to scale up support for reconstruction and recovery in pockets of stability when the time comes.

- Allow me to leave you with three reflection points as you deliberate on how the UNDS is working together to prevent further reversals of the 2030 Agenda in Sudan:

**First**, in contexts where Special Political Missions are abruptly phased down such as Sudan, the UN country team has been called upon to step up in short notice, to ensure that the UN can stay and deliver. The UN flag continues flying high outside my office in Port Sudan and in the locations where we have our Agencies, Funds and Programmes.

For years, we relied on the construct of Integrated Special Political Missions or Integrated Peacekeeping Missions for additional security and analytical resources to inform and support the UN Country Team's programming, in line with Mission mandate delivery priorities. In Sudan, have had to rethink this set up and bolster security and operational capacities now that the mission has left.

In this regard, let me emphasize the critical importance of the **Sudan Multi-partner Trust Fund, which has been strategically reoriented as a key financing instrument to support the “enabling aspects of operations and security” to scale up of UN programming in Sudan.** I thank those Member States who have contributed to it, and encourage all to support further.

**Second**, in leading this transition to a new UN country team configuration, I have to rely on my RCO core capacities. These have been essential to facilitate the transfer of tasks from UNITAMS. The UNCT is now carrying the weight of the whole UN system over its shoulders and the five core RC Office capacities are more important than ever to support these efforts. Let me highlight one as an example:

- My RC Office Economist is the key focal point on behalf of the UN country team facilitating new UN-IFI partnerships for the provision of basic social services in hard-to-reach areas. With the support of the World Bank and the African Development Bank, over **\$300M** in new programming is being targeted at local-level development and delivery of basic social services, even as the conflict lines shift.

Excellencies, as missions depart with no peace in sight, we must work together to adequately fund the UN Development System in line with the new Funding Compact to ensure that UNCTs are provided with flexible and quality funding and enable Resident Coordinators office to deliver on their coordination functions to achieve the SDGs, especially in such highly complex operational settings.

- **Third**, as the UN continues delivering lifesaving aid, **it is already looking at SDG acceleration pathways as enablers of the sustainability of humanitarian and development results**. In the context of Sudan, the various “transitions” we have heard discussed this week ,are an important frame for the work of the UNCT:
  1. Enabling the resilience of food systems in partnerships with IFIs; initiatives to ensure energy access for displaced populations, such as through solar panels in displacement areas cut out from the electric grid, as well as supporting digital learning in remote schools;
  2. reinforcing digital connectivity as internet blackouts threaten our ability to deliver aid and hinder digital banking payments that have become a lifeline for many Sudanese;
  3. scaling up the provision of education in emergencies with a view to mitigating further backsliding in this critical area.
- Excellencies, the Summit of the Future will be an important opportunity to reflect on the specific development challenges that conflict-affected contexts like Sudan face, and the urgent need to ensure we adequately support UNCTs in countries where peace operations have departed to be able to continue to stay and deliver life-saving assistance and protection, and to lay the ground for sustainable development outcomes.
- Thank you.