



**CONFLICT PREVENTION AND
DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION IN
AFRICA:
A POLICY WORKSHOP**

Country Case Study

**THE ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICTS IN SUDAN
AND THE MAKING OF THE DARFUR TRAGEDY**

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OF THE DARFUR TRAGEDY**

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*“..the poor and oppressed do not take up arms against the state, it is when there is growth that does not benefit them that gives cause to mobilisation”.*¹

1. Background

Sudan is the largest country in Africa with a total surface area of 2.5 million square kilometres. The country is endowed with a wealth of resources ranging from oil, which has become an important factor in the economic equation, to a vast agricultural, and livestock resource base. The country's GDP is estimated at \$22.75 billion, annual per capita income of around \$530 and annual rates of growth in the order of 5-8%.² Despite this, widespread poverty and large but unmeasured proportion of the population lives on less than US\$1 per day, and highly skewed income distribution, inadequate delivery of social services and run-down infrastructure services remain serious problems.

Sudan is one of the most diverse countries of the African continent with an estimated population of around 31.7 million in 2001 with 40-50 percent claiming Arab descent and 60-50 percent is African; 60 percent are Muslims and the rest Christians and practitioners of traditional African religions³. There are two distinct major cultures "Arab" and "black African", and the country has more than 300 tribes with more than 100 widely spoken local dialects. Successive Sudanese governments since independence of the country in 1956, however, have failed to recognise the importance of this diversity as an important factor in the process of nation building. Instead, they have abused and exploited this diversity, turning it from a wellspring of strength into a source of diversion and violence. The result was that the entire country has become at war with itself through protracted conflicts that retarded the country's economic and political development and jeopardised its unity.

The first civil war erupted in the South of the country in August 1955, shortly before independence between the forces of the central government and the "Anyanya Movement". The war intensified after independence of the country when the promise to grant a "Federal System of government" to the South of the country was denied by the ruling elites in Khartoum. After 16 years of war, the conflict war resolved in 1972 when the Addis Peace Accord, brokered by Emperor Haile Selassie

¹ Fukuda-Parr, S., and Piceiotto, R., (2007), "Concept paper ", Conflict prevention and development cooperation conference, a joint project of JICA and UNDP, Wilton Park, May, pp. 13

² EU Commission, "Country Review", <http://ec.europa.eu/development>

³ Rone, J., (1998), "Crises in Sudan and Northern Uganda" Testimony of Jemera Rone, Human Rights Watch before the House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights and the Subcommittee on Africa July 29

of Ethiopia, was signed by the two parties, according to which the South was granted regional autonomy. However, after 11 years of peace the civil war resumed in 1983 when, contrary to Addis Peace Accord, the South was divided into three regions and the Sharia's laws were imposed in Sudan. The second civil war led by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) was more intense than the first one. While there are no precise figures on the human tolls, some estimates put the number of those who have been killed in the conflict at about 2.9 million people and about 4.5 million have become internally displaced people (IDPs) while some have fled to the refugee camps in the neighbouring countries⁴.

In July 1994 the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the SPLM/A agreed to negotiate peace on the basis of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) "Declaration of Principles" which recognised the right of self-determination for Southern Sudan. However, peace negotiations dragged on until 2002 when the Machakos Protocol, which concluded the first round of talks, sponsored by the IGAD, was signed by the GoS and the SPLM/A in which issues of self-determination and separation of religion and state have been tackled. In May 2004 a framework peace agreement was signed in Kenya, which paved the way for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed on 9 January 2005, thus, marking the end of two decades of civil war. The Nuba Mountains of Southern Kordofan and the people of Angassana of the South East (Blue Nile) fought alongside the SPLM/A since the early 1980s. The grievances of the two areas, in addition to the problem of Abyei have been addressed by two separate protocols in the CPA⁵.

Eastern Sudan, on the other hand, has been afflicted by war since the mid 1990s when the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) launched a military campaign against the government spearheaded by the Beja Congress, the political group that represents the Beja of Eastern Sudan. The Beja rebels as well as forces of other factions, including the SPLM/A were based in Eritrea from the early 1990s. In October 2006, the GoS and the Beja congress signed the Eastern Sudan Peace agreement in Asmara, Eritrea, ending a ten-year civil conflict in Eastern Sudan.

The breakthrough in the north-south peace process has come at a time of escalating fighting in the far-flung region of Darfur. In early 2003, two rebel groups, namely, the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) launched attacks against Sudanese army garrisons in Darfur. The rebel groups declared that their struggle is for the creation of a democratic united Sudan based on

⁴ De Chand, D., "The Sources of Conflict between the North and the South in Sudan", <http://www.dur.ac.uk/justin.willis/chand.htm>

⁵ "The Resolution of Conflict in Southern Kordofan (Nuba Mountains) and Blue Nile States" and "The Resolution of Abyei Conflict"

equity and justice. The conflict witnessed the mobilisation of the government-backed Janjaweed militia, which conducted a terror campaign against the civilian population of the region described by many as genocidal⁶. The Janjaweed attacks culminated in the most appalling humanitarian disaster in the history of the country. More than 2500 villages have been torched and completely destroyed, over two million people have been driven away from their areas of origin and are living in IDP camps, in addition to more than 200,000 who crossed the borders to take refuge in Chad and Central African Republic⁷. NGO reports estimated the figure of those who have been killed at more than 200,000⁸ while Sudan government's estimates put the number of civilian casualties at less than 9,000.

The tragic events brought Darfur to the forefront of the regional and international attention within a short period of time. The crisis has been widely debated within the UN, the African Union (AU) and among other international organizations and human rights groups. The AU, the continent's most authoritative political body, has taken on the main responsibility for facilitating a solution by fielding the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) which currently has about 7,000 personnel, including peacekeepers and observers deployed across the region to monitor the agreements, in addition to sponsoring peace talks launched in Abuja in 2003. In 2004, the N'djamena Ceasefire Agreement was signed by the GoS and the two rebel groups to allow humanitarian access to the displaced population but the parties did not commit themselves to the ceasefire agreement. Despite threats from the UNSC as well as an accord to establish a no-fly zone over the area, aerial bombardment and Janjaweed militia attacks on civilian villages continued unabated.

The UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted a number of resolutions in sustained efforts to stop the attacks on the civilian population.⁹ The resolutions underscored the concerns of the international community and called on all parties to resume the Abuja talks. More significantly, on 31 March 2005, the UNSC voted to refer the situation in Darfur to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and called on the Government of Sudan and all other parties to the conflict in Darfur to cooperate with the ICC.¹⁰

⁶ Speaking to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in September 2004, Secretary of State Colin Powell concluded that genocide has taken place in Sudan and that the government in Khartoum and government-sponsored Janjaweed militias "bear responsibility" for rapes, killings and other abuses against black Africans.

⁷ Eltigani S. Ateem, (2007), "Causes and background to the conflict in Darfur Region", presented to the Consultative Meeting of the Parliamentarians of the Member States, held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 26-28, May.

⁸ Wikipedia, 2007, "Darfur conflict", http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darfur_Conflict

⁹ United Nations Security Council resolutions, 1555; 1564; 1591; 1593,

¹⁰ UNSC resolution no. 1593 adopted on 31 March 2005

After several rounds of talks, the Abuja negotiations were concluded in May 2006 and the draft of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) was partially signed by the GoS and one faction of the SLM under the command of Arko Minawi, the Secretary General of SLM. The other SLM faction under the command of Abdulwahid Osman, the Chairman of SLM and JEM, however, rejected the agreement on the ground that it does not reflect the aspirations of the people of Darfur. Persistent efforts by the AU and the international community at large to re-energise the political process and to achieve some further buy-ins to the DPA were not successful. The non-signatories regrouped into the newly constituted National Redemption Front (NRF) and renewed fighting flared up exacerbating an already deteriorating humanitarian situation in the region. Taking advantage of the divisions among the SLA ranks, the (GoS) consolidated its military grip on the region through mobilisation of further troops as well as further support to the Janjaweed who have been fully integrated into the regular forces. Thus, instead of the long awaited peace the region witnessed serious escalation of the conflict and the optimism generated from the Abuja negotiations has been overshadowed by the chaos and collapse of order on the ground.

In August 2007, the AU and the UN succeeded to organise a meeting for the non-signatories in Arusha, Tanzania. This was followed by a visit to the Sudan and to the troubled region by Mr. Ban Ki-Moon the UN Secretary General in early September 2007. In a statement released on 9 September 2007, the UN Secretary-General, and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission agreed to convene renewed peace negotiations for Darfur on 27 October 2007 in Libya under the lead of the AU-UN Special Envoys for Darfur.

The foregoing chronology of civil conflicts in the Sudan shows that areas of the country which have most been afflicted by conflicts are the South, the East, the Nuba Mountains in Southern Kordofan, the Angassana area and Darfur region. These areas are commonly known as the “periphery”, the “rural” or the “marginalised” areas. Why violence and conflicts have been restricted only to the periphery of the country? And what are the main reasons behind the vulnerability of these areas to conflicts over the last five decades since independence of the country? These are some of the key questions this paper attempts to answer, with particular emphasis on the causes of the current conflict in Darfur Region¹¹. Therefore, before addressing the causes of the conflict in Darfur, a short background on the war-stricken region is necessary.

¹¹ Darfur in this context refers to Greater Darfur Region before its partition into three separate states.

Darfur, Sudan's westernmost region is the largest region of the country with an estimated population of 5.6 million and an area approximately the size of France. It is bordering Chad from the West, Libya and the Northern Region from the North, Central African Republic and Bahr el-Ghazal region from the South and Kordofan Region from the East. Established in the 16th century the *Fur* Sultanate attracted a constant flow of migrants particularly from West Africa. The Arab scholars, in particular, were encouraged by the Sultans of Darfur to immigrate to the Sultanate when Islam was made the religion of the state towards the end of the 16th century, but Large-scale immigration of Arab tribes, however, took place in the 17th and the 18th centuries.

The expansion of the Sultanate was enhanced by its strategic location on the following three major commercial routes:

- The Western route from the Kingdom of Kanim through Barnu, Weddai, Darfur and the Fong Kingdom in central Sudan.
- Darb Elarbaein to Egypt through the Sahara desert, and
- A North-westerly route to Tripoli and Tunisia on the Mediterranean coast via Fezzan.¹²

These routes enabled the Sultanate to establish linkages with external States and attracted further migrants. From the mid-seventeenth century the sultanate was dominated by the *Fur* people from whom the ruling dynasty came, but ruled by a title-holding elite recruited from all the major ethnic groups.¹³ The Sultans of Darfur, therefore, succeeded to create and maintain an ethnically diverse, socially harmonious and politically stable society of more than 60 tribes. The majority of the present day population of Darfur is indigenous Africans who still retain their native languages, but speak Arabic as a lingua franca and are mostly sedentary farmers and a few are partly pastoralists while a small proportion is involved in cottage industry.

The *Fur* Sultanate continued as a thriving independent state until 1916 when it was invaded by the British troops and was finally annexed to the Sudan in 1918. But since independence of the Sudan, Darfur has become one of the most underdeveloped regions of the country and over the last three decades, the region witnessed episodes of instability in the form of tribal confrontations and foreign interventions. Since 2003, the region has been gripped by human tragedy as a result of a civil conflict.

¹² Young H. et al (2005) "Darfur- Livelihood under Siege", Feinstein International, Famine Center, June

¹³ O'Fahey, R.S., (2004), "Conflict In Darfur Historical and Contemporary Perspectives", In, University for Peace, 2004, "Environmental degradation as a cause of conflict in Darfur", Khartoum, December, Conference Proceedings, University for Peace,

2. Root and proximate causes of the current conflict in Darfur region

Many scholars have attempted to determine the most common factors that increase the risks for civil wars. In this context, economic analysis of the causes of conflicts and the economic motives of some parties to conflicts has attracted increasing attention. The most prominent in this regard is Collier and Hoeffler (2001)¹⁴ (henceforth C-H framework), which presents civil wars as a function of the opportunity structure for the organization of rebellion. The C-H framework argues that rebellion is sustained through the looting of natural resources, extortion of local population, and support from ethnic Diasporas. Using data set of wars during 1960-99 the C-H framework concluded that economic viability appears to be the predominant systematic explanation of rebellion and that grievances, such as inequality, political rights, ethnic polarisation, and religious fractionalisation only weakly explain the origins of civil conflict.

Furthermore, in an earlier paper, Collier and Hoeffler (1998)¹⁵ argued that higher per capita income reduces the risk of civil war due to the high opportunity cost of rebellion, while the existence of natural resources in low-income states together with a large dually polarised population increase its probability. Similarly, Fearon and Laitin (2002)¹⁶ looked at 127 civil wars, most often in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia and concluded that regardless of how ethnically mixed a country is, the likelihood of a civil war decreases as countries get richer and that there is little evidence in favour of the dominant view that one can predict where a civil war will break out by looking for where ethnic or other broad political grievances are strongest.

These views have not gone unchallenged by other researchers. Ali et al (2002)¹⁷ pointed out a range of economic, political, ethno-cultural-religious and external factors that both trigger civil wars and increase their duration. Using models of the overall prevalence of civil wars in 161 countries for the period 1960-1999 Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000) concluded that the relatively higher prevalence of war in Africa is not due to the ethno-linguistic fragmentation of its countries, but rather to high levels of poverty, failed political institutions, and economic dependence on

¹⁴ Collier, P. and Hoeffler, A. (2001), "Greed and Grievance in Civil War", World Bank Policy Research Paper, The World Bank, Washington, DC

¹⁵ Collier, P., and Hoeffler, K., (1998), "On Economic Causes of Civil War", *Oxford Economic Papers*, 50, pp. 563-573.

¹⁶ Fearon, D. and Laitin D., (2002), "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War", Department of political science, Forthcoming in *American Political Science Review*, August 27,

¹⁷ Ali A. G., Elbadawi, I., El-Batahani, A. (2003), "The Sudan's civil war: Why has it prevailed for so long?" Paper prepared for case study project on civil wars, On the Causes, Consequences, and Resolution of the Civil War in Sudan." March.

natural resources. In a like manner (Stewart, 2004)¹⁸, noted that horizontal inequalities are an important dimension of well-being, and can have damaging consequences for development.

Much has been written on the conflict in Darfur following the eruption of the war in 2003, and various explanations were given on the causes of the conflict. Most of these explanations, however, confused between two types of conflicts, namely, “tribal” or “grassroots” conflicts and the current conflict, which is different in nature as well as in its dynamics. Tribal conflicts are often resourced-based inter-tribal confrontations that have been a long-standing feature of Darfur and are predominantly between sedentary farmers and pastoralists. These types of conflicts are resolved through local traditional mediation and reconciliation councils. The current conflict, on the other hand, is between the central government and its security apparatus and rebel groups that advocate political agenda. Quite often some of the causes of tribal conflicts have been attributed to the current political conflict something that has grave implications on the mechanisms for conflict resolution. This distinction is vital for developing a better understanding of the root causes of the conflict and in designing the right interventions. Though the causes of these two types of conflicts may differ, the emphasis in this paper is on the causes of the political conflict and those causes of the tribal conflicts, which are inextricably linked to the political conflict.

Recent research has shown that ecological degradation can act as a cause of violent conflicts.¹⁹ Most of the scholastic research and media reports on the causes of the current conflict in Darfur focussed on ecological degradation and ethnicity as the root causes of the conflict.²⁰ According to O’Fahy (2004), the prolong periods of drought of the 1970s and 1980s and the creeping desert caused permanent visits of entire nomadic tribes from Northern Darfur to Southern Darfur. These North-South movements of nomadic groups have been blamed for intensifying competition for depleted local natural resources, and as a consequence tribal confrontations between farmers and nomads became inevitable. It should be noted that competition between settled farmers and nomads has always been a feature of the local natural resources-based conflicts in Darfur for over several decades, and that tribal conflicts are not a new phenomenon. The first tribal conflict recorded in the modern history of Darfur was in 1932 between the *Kababish*, the *Berti*, the *Kawahla*, and the *Medoub* and in the last three decades Darfur has witnessed more than 40 grassroots conflicts.

¹⁸ Stewart, F., (2004), “Historical Inequality: A neglected Dimension of Development” CRISE Working Paper No. 1,

¹⁹ See for example, Beachler (1993), Salih (2005) and Homer-Dixon (1994)

²⁰ See for example, O’Fahey (2004), An-Naim, (2004), Wikipedia (2007)

While the argument on ecological degradation is valid in the case of tribal conflicts and disputes it, nevertheless, cannot sufficiently explain the current conflict in the region because it limits conflict resolution to addressing the causes of ecological degradation and thus the appropriate conflict resolution mechanisms are more technical than economic or political. In such case the crucial issues of the economy, the state and politics are inadvertently pushed aside²¹. One important question that has often been raised in the literature is whether Darfur's natural resources, in terms of land, pasture and water are depleted. While pointing out that conflicts have always existed over these natural resources Fouad (2004) argued that the natural resources of Darfur are not meager at al.²²

Many researchers have also portrayed the current conflict in Darfur region as an ethnic conflict between Africans and Arabs.²³ However, a number of reasons cast serious doubts on the validity of this view. Firstly, historically different ethnic groups in Darfur generally used to live peacefully and, ethnicity has only recently become a factor in tribal conflicts. In fact, until before the end of the 1980s, inter-Arab conflicts were the main feature of grassroots conflicts in Darfur. Examples are the conflict between the *Ma'alia* and the *Rezighat* in 1968; the conflict between the *Aballa Arabs (Northern Rezeighat)* of Northern Darfur and the *Beni Halba* of Southern Darfur; the conflict between the *Ta'aisha* and the *Salamat* and the conflict between the *Gimir* and the *Falata*, all of which took place in the 1970s. To validate this view we examined the nature of 40 tribal conflicts and disputes that took place in Darfur region during the period 1970-2000. These tribal conflicts and disputes (appendix 1) have been classified into the following three categories:

- a. Conflicts between tribes of African origin and tribes of Arab origin are denoted by AF/AR. For the purposes of this paper all conflicts of this type are classified as "ethnic-based"²⁴
- b. Inter-Arab conflicts (AR/AR), referring to conflicts among Arab tribes, and
- c. Inter-African conflicts (AF/AF), referring to conflicts among tribes of African origin.

The results are shown in figure 1, which clearly shows that over the period 1970-2000, inter-Arab conflicts and disputes were dominant in Darfur region claiming

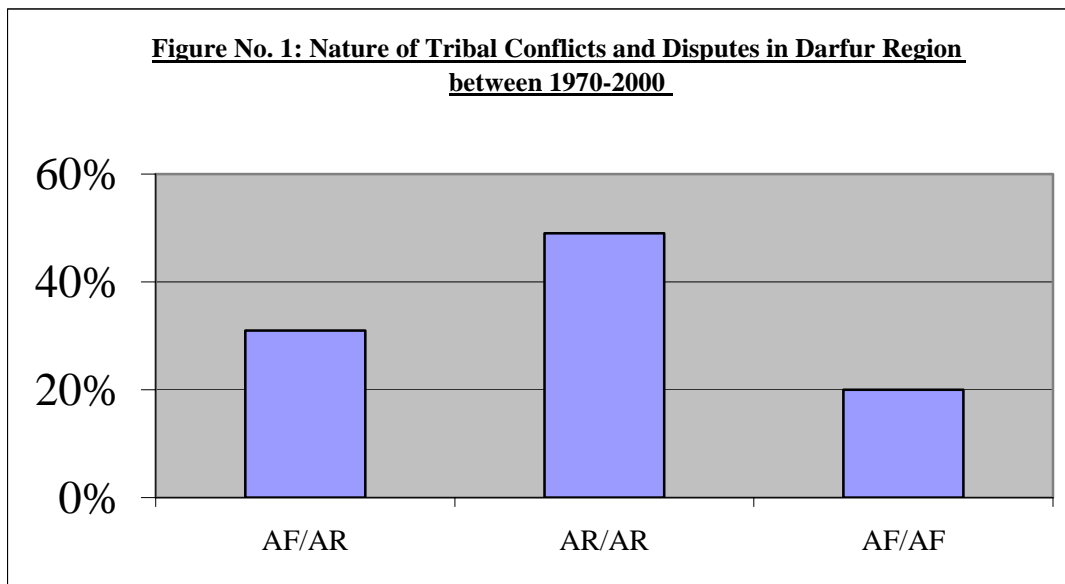
²¹ Suliman Mohamed, (1998), "Resource access: a major cause of armed conflict in the Sudan: the case of the Nuba mountains", International workshop on community based natural resource management, Washington D.C. May 10-14.

²² Fouad Ibrahim, 2004, "Ideas on the Background to the Present Conflict in Darfur", A memo, University of Bayreuth, Germany, May

²³ See, for example, O'Fahy (2004), UNICEF (2003)

²⁴ This does not necessarily mean that all conflicts of this type have been "ethnic-based".

49% of the total grassroots conflicts. These are followed by conflicts between tribes of African-origin and tribes of Arab origin with 31% while inter-African conflicts were 20% of the total conflicts. In addition to that, out of the total border disputes and tribal conflicts that took place in Southern Darfur Province²⁵ during the 1970s following the implementation of the 1971 Local Government Act, (70%) were inter-Arab disputes.²⁶



Secondly, as pointed out by Tanner (2005)²⁷ ethnic boundaries in Darfur are fluid and flexible for three main reasons;

- The people of Darfur share a strong feeling of identity, of being from Darfur
- There is a long history of political, economic and social cooperation, and
- Smaller groups sometimes assimilate into larger ones and throughout the history of the *Fur* Sultanate newcomers have continued to assimilate into the dominant groups.

²⁵ Darfur at that time comprised two provinces, Southern Darfur with its provincial capital in Nyala and Northern Darfur with the capital in Elgeneina.

²⁶ Four inter-Arab tribal conflicts stated in this section in addition to 16 border disputes reported in Takana (1997)

²⁷ Tanner, V. (2005), “ Rule of Lawlessness: Roots & Repercussions of the Darfur crisis”, Inter Agency Report, The Sudan Advocacy Coalition

Moreover, the ongoing confrontations between some Arab tribes in Southern Darfur, most significantly the recent confrontations between the *Aballa Arabs* and the *Tarjam* tribe, both of which were initiators of the Janjaweed militia as well as the confrontations between the *Aballa Arabs* and the other *Baggara* groups in Western Darfur refute the view that the conflict is ethnic.²⁸

Thirdly and most importantly, if the assumption that the current conflict in Darfur emanates from ethnic differences is true, then the policy interventions for resolving the conflict and sustaining the resulting peace would differ markedly from the current UN/AU sponsored peace talks which recognised the political nature of the conflict in the “declaration of principles” signed by the parties to the conflict in Abuja on 6 July 2005.

It must, however, be recognised that the nature of tribal conflicts in the region changed from low intensity small-scale confrontations to a more ethnic-type conflicts motivated by systematic drive by the nomads to occupy sedentary farmer’s land²⁹. This ethnicization of tribal conflicts in Darfur region is a recent phenomenon. Perhaps the first conflict that has been identified as ethnic occurred in 1987 when thirteen Arab tribes congregated and fought the Fur tribe. Even by then, the large Arab tribes like the *Rezighat* of Southern Darfur, the *Habania* and the *Ta’aisha* were not party to that conflict. In this regards, O’Fahy (2004)³⁰ pointed out that ethnicization of the conflict has grown ever more rapidly since the coming to power by military coup in 1989 of the National Islamic Front (NIF) regime which is not only Islamist but also Arabo-centric³¹. The evidence available so far supports this view as shown in figure 2 below, which looks into the nature of the tribal conflicts in Darfur over two periods, namely, 1970-1989 and the post NIF period of 1990-2000.

The period 1970-89 witnessed an increasing level of inter-Arab conflicts, almost 70% of all the conflicts between 1970 and 1989 while conflicts between tribes of African origin and Arab tribes (AF/AR) accounted for about 20%. During the post NIF era (1990-2000), however, the pattern of conflicts has changed markedly. During this period the conflicts between the Arab tribes and those of African origin (AF/AR) were dominant and have increased to 54%, i.e. an increase of 170%

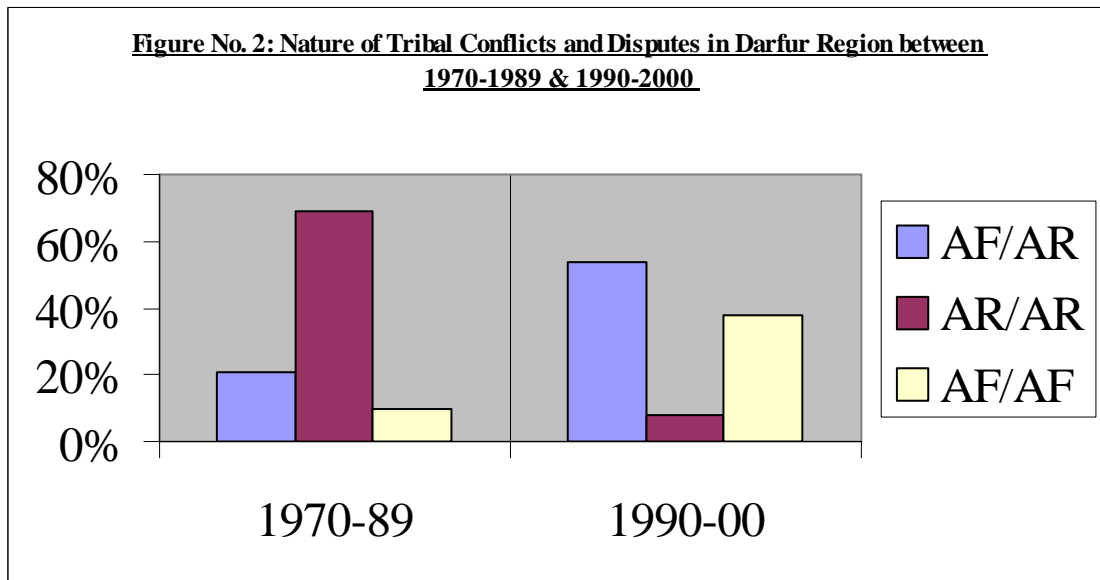
²⁸ Among other inter-Arab conflicts that occurred in Southern Darfur in 2006/2007 were the conflicts between the *Rezighat* and the *Habania* and the conflict between the *Falata* and the *Habania*

²⁹ UNICEF (2003), “Analysis of Nine Conflicts in Sudan” <http://www.unicef.org>

³⁰ O’Fahey, R.S., (2004), *Ibid*

³¹ According to O’Fahy, (2004), “the paradox here is that many Northern Sudanese have experienced racist incidents while traveling in the Middle East. Ironically the ‘Arabs’ appear to regard the Northern Sudanese as only marginally Arab. In the context of the present conflict this has led to the injection of a kind of ‘handed down’ ideological/racist dimension with each side defining themselves as ‘Arab’ and ‘Zurq’, i.e. ‘Black’ ”

compared with the pre-NIF period, indicating escalation in ethnic-based conflicts. As could be noted from the chart, the inter-Arab conflicts have receded during the post NIF period.



While ecological degradation, movements of nomadic groups, overgrazing, competition for natural resources and ethnicity fanned the flames of conflicts and disputes between nomads and farmers in the region, the idea that these factors are the main causes of the present conflict in Darfur is misleading.

This paper challenges the the C-H framework within the context of Darfur and argues that grievances resulting from economic and political marginalisation are major causes of the current conflict in Darfur. The paper also argues that explaining the current conflict in Darfur in terms of competition for natural resources and ethnicity or in terms of rebel economic opportunity devoid of the grievances resulting from long-term marginalisation of the region is flawed and confusing. In doing so, a strictly political and socio-economic problem is downsized and mischaracterized as a local resource-based ethnic conflict. This without doubt, detracts from the ability to address the root causes of the conflict. In this respect, as part of the government’s persistent efforts to thwart political solutions to the conflict, which entails power and wealth sharing the GoS has constantly maintained the view that the crisis in Darfur is an accumulation of ethnic disputes between the Arab and indigenous African population of the region over resources, mainly land and water. The regional and the international community have been misguided by

such characterisation of the conflict and therefore their response to the horrendous humanitarian situation was late.

Mounting grievances within the region have become so severe as a result of horizontal inequalities between the opportunities and access to the national resources that prompted some activists from Darfur to anonymously author a book code-named “the black book”. The black book was the first attempt to document the disproportionate access to power – since independence of the country through unveiling “*the level of injustice practised by successive governments, secular and theocratic, democratic or autocratic, since the independence of the country in 1956 to this date*”³². According to Eltom (2003) the black book touches a raw nerve in the Sudanese identity construction debate by deconstructing the political use of identity politics in cementing the dominant discourse of power³³.

This paper argues that the causes of the current conflict in Darfur region are rooted in the structural inequality between the center of the country and the 'peripheral' areas, something that has been kept out of the limelight by many of the researchers who looked into the root causes of the conflict. To be more precise, it is rather the dynamics between the domination of the central elites, political and economic marginalisation of the periphery that are the main culprits in the current conflict in Darfur. Based on this the entry point for examining these arguments is to define the concept of “marginalisation” within the context of Sudan, trace its roots and its consequences.

2.a. The concept of Marginalisation

Marginalisation, a term that has recently become ingrained in the Sudanese political jargon refers to the process of exclusion of the forces of the periphery from political power sharing. The term also denotes the set of policies adopted by successive governments of Sudan that favoured the concentration of economic activities in the centre of the country, mainly in the Northern and Central regions, thus signifying unequal wealth sharing. Marginalisation in the Sudan, nevertheless, is not a new phenomenon. It dates back to the Turco-Egyptian rule (1820-1885) and to the Condominium rule under Britain and Egypt (1899-1956). The Turco-Egyptian rule initiated the policies of concentrating economic development activities primarily in the center and the Anglo-Egyptian condominium pursued educational and developmental policies that resulted in unequal distribution of economic opportunities and human resource development.

³² The Black book, (2002), Anonymous

³³ El-Tom Abdullahi, (2003), “The Black Book of Sudan: Imbalance of Power and Wealth in Sudan” in Journal of African National Affairs, Vol 1,2:25-35.

As the British colonial rule prepared Sudan for independence in the 1940s they were increasingly inclined to listen to the demands of the riverine elites who mainly graduated from Khartoum Graduate College.³⁴ In this respect the “Sudanisation” process implemented by the British favoured these groups and consequently they replaced the colonial officials. Out of the eight hundred administrative posts that have been sudanised by 1954 only six were filled by people from the marginalised areas and were all from Southern Sudan³⁵. Following independence of the country, the riverine elites were best prepared to assume political control because they were better educated and above all they controlled the national economy. Consequently, emerging as the dominant group in the country they inherited political power and continued the policies of marginalising the periphery.

As for Darfur, the region has suffered decades of marginalisation as part of broader patterns of marginalisation of the peripheral areas of the Sudan. Add to that, the complex economic and political history of Darfur has also contributed to the marginalisation of the region. According to a Darfur Joint Assessment report (D-JAM, 2007);

*“the incorporation of the independence of Darfur into the Sudan marked a turning point in the political consciousness of the region –altering the traditional mechanisms of governance and sub-dividing the subregional configuration of Darfur into three states. This slicing up of authority was not one of devolution to the grassroots but one which consolidated Khartoum’s divide and rule ethos over Darfur and stretched the states meager resources thinly over a much inflated public sector that was unable to deliver basic services”.*³⁶

It must be pointed out that exclusion of Darfurians from power sharing began immediately after independence of the country with the process of “exportation” of riverine elites to contest parliamentary elections in Darfur, a practice which has greatly impeded the emergence of locally borne leadership. In addition to being bypassed by the Sudanisation process, the people of the region have also been marginalised at the local level where representation in the local government structures was limited to those who came from Northern and central Sudan. Most of the key positions at the local level, such as district commissioners, provincial

³⁴ Ylönen Aleks, (2005), “Grievances and the Roots of Insurgencies: Southern Sudan and Darfur” Peace, Conflict and Development: An Interdisciplinary Journal, Vol. 7, July

³⁵ Taisier Ali and Robert Matthews, (1990) “Civil Wars in Africa: Roots and Revolution”, London: McGill-Queen’s University Press

³⁶ D-JAM, (2007), “ Governance Report”, Interim Findings of the Darfur Joint Assessment Mission, track 2, Draft Cluster Report, 21 April, pp. 5

commissioners, assistant district commissioners, police, army and prison officers and the judiciary were non-Darfurians, mainly from the centre. Marginalisation of the Darfurians at the local level had only changed course after a popular uprising following the implementation of the regional government act of 1981, as referred to in section 2.b. below.

While the marginalisation process contributed to stirring up local grievances, it has also enhanced political awareness within the region manifested in the varied responses of the people of Darfur towards the marginalisation process. Such responses initially started peacefully in the early 1960s when Darfur advancement Front (DAF) “*Jabhat Nahdat Darfur*” was formed, along with the Beja Congress in Eastern Sudan and the General Union of the Nuba Mountains in Southern Kordofan. As a regional pressure group DAF aimed to end the exportation of riverine parliamentary candidates and to campaign for equitable power sharing and more balanced development. However, the central authorities were less and less responsive to the concerns and grievances of DAF, something that encouraged some elements from Darfur to express their grievances in a militant manner. Clandestine military groups advocating military means, such as *Sooni* and the Red Flame Movements, were initiated in the mid 1960s in an attempt to address the grievances of the region, but the response from the central authorities was swift and the movements were ruthlessly suppressed. In 1991, Dawood Bolad, who had initially supported the NIF coup, led an SPLM/A-supported revolt in Darfur, against the government. Though Bolad was killed and the incursion was crushed, his attempted uprising marked a turning point in many people's consciousness in Darfur.

Key to the marginalisation process as we have noted above is the monopoly of political power by the riverine elites, which caused disproportionate power sharing between the centre and the periphery, and contributed in creating conditions of unbalanced development, widespread rural poverty and mounting grievances in the periphery in general and in Darfur in particular. Eventually the bottled-up sense of injustice felt by the people of Darfur exploded in form of military insurgency against the central authorities.

2.b. The Disproportionate Power Sharing in the Sudan

To examine the disparities in power sharing the composition of the Sudanese governments in terms of regional representation since independence of the country to date has been considered. Table 1 shows representation of the five regions of the Sudan in the successive regimes that ruled the country from 1954 to date. While the population of the marginalised areas was nearly 60% of the entire population of the country, their ministerial representation accounted to 17.4% for the period 1954 –

1964 during which five different regimes were in power. The Northern and the Central regions had a share of 81.8%³⁷ of the ministerial positions for the same period while the Western region of Kordofan and Darfur was entirely excluded. During the period 1964-69, the share of the marginalised areas was about 26%, and the share of the Western Regions of Kordofan and Darfur was 6.2%. This was the era of the second democracy during which a Darfurian was appointed for the first time in the history of the country to a cabinet position³⁸.

During the second autocracy (1969-85) political exclusion of the marginalised areas continued and deepened through under representation at the regional levels. During this period the share of the marginalised areas fell to 13.9%. With regards to Darfur and following the implementation of the Regional Government Act of 1981 according to which Northern Sudan was divided into six regions, a non-Darfurian was imposed as a governor of Darfur while all other regions had appointees from within their indigenous population. This triggered a strong protest and a popular uprising in Darfur that forced the central government to revoke its decision and appoint a Dafurian as a governor of the region. By 1999, representation of the marginalised areas in the federal government was 33.3% while that of the Northern region alone was 60.1%³⁹, indicating that the riverine elites from Northern Sudan and the Central region continued to have the lion's share of political power.

In the more recent years calls for total exclusion of the marginalised areas from developmental activities started to emerge from within some circles in the centre. In a conference organised by the ruling Party in Khartoum in 2005 on "*the future of investments during the transitional period*", a former Minister of Finance who is currently the economic advisor of the ruling Party (the National Congress Party - NCP) presented a paper that divided Northern Sudan into two zones⁴⁰:

- Elshamalia (Northern Region), the states of Sennar, Elgezeira and the White Nile, i.e. the Central region, and
- Eastern Sudan and Western Sudan

The paper advocates the view that during the transitional period investments should be directed to the first zone because it has the voting power to decide the result of

³⁷ According to the black book (2002), representation of the marginalised areas was 17.1 and that of the Northern and Central regions was 82.9%.

³⁸ Mr. Ahmed Diriege from Darfur was appointed the Minister of Co-operatives while Dr. Ahmed Salah Bukhari from Kordofan was appointed a Minister of Health.

³⁹ The Black Book, 2004

⁴⁰ Hamdi, A., R., (2005), "The future of investments during the transitional period", Conference Proceedings, Khartoum

any future elections, a clear call for deliberate marginalisation and economic strangulation of the periphery.

Table No. 1: Sudanese governments – regional representation (%)

Region	Regimes Population share (2001)	Alazhari Khalil Abood	Second democracy	Nimairi	Transitional Military Council	Third Democracy	Revolutionary Command Council (Elbashir)		
		1954-64	1964-69	1969-85	1985-86	1986-89	June 1989	Jul 1989 Dec 1999	Post Turabi period
Eastern	11.7	1.4	2.05	2.5	0	2.6	0	3	3.3
Northern	4.7	79	67.9	68.7	70	47.4	66.7	59.4	60.1
Central	36.9	2.8	6.2	16.5	10	14.7	0	8.9	6.6
Southern	16.0	16	17.3	7.8	16.7	12.9	13.3	14.9	13.3
Western	30.6	0	6.2	3.5	22.4	20	13.8	16.7	16.7

Source: Cobham, Alex, (2005), “Causes of conflict in Sudan: Testing the Black Book”, The European Journal of Development Research, Volume 17, Number 3, September, pp.462-480.

Taking advantage of their monopoly of political power, the riverine elites manipulated distribution of government resources and therefore distorted the economic development opportunities to the favour of their areas. The ultimate result was huge disparities in economic diversity and social structures that eventually affected human development levels. The situation has been exacerbated by a set of macro-economic policies that deepened inequalities and poverty in the marginalised areas in general and in Darfur region in particular.

2.c. Macro economic Policies and Poverty reduction⁴¹

A common problem in the Sudan is paucity of up-to-date data on economic indicators, in particular on poverty levels, income inequalities as well as on human development indicators. The available data on poverty and inequality dates back to 1992. In this regard, the most reliable is Ali (1994), the World Bank (2003) on social indicators and UNDP (2006) that relied on, among others, Ali (1994). It is worth noting that since independence, Sudan’s economy has gone through different phases of macro-economic policies. UNDP (2006) identified five phases of macro-economic policies during the period 1970-2001 with corresponding GDP growth

⁴¹ The analysis in this section are based on UNDP (2006), “Macroeconomic Policies For Poverty Reduction: The Case of Sudan”, United Nations Development Programme, Sudan, June,

rates, inflation rates and policy responses. These are summarized in table 2 which shows three episodes of stability 1970-78, 1982-89, 1996-2001, and two sub-periods of instability: 1979-81 and 1990-95. During the first period (1970-78) which coincided with the first oil price shock and the signing of Addis Ababa Peace Accord that put an end to the first civil war real GDP grew by 6.4 per cent, with a coefficient of variation of 0.94. Growth, during this period, was boosted by substantial inflows of capital from oil-rich Arab countries. Public expenditure share in GDP averaged 27.9 per cent as a result of strong involvement of the state in all sectors of the economy. The dominant macroeconomic policy during this period was outward orientation focusing on the expansion of cotton production and other main export crops, and in the promotion of private sector investment⁴². The macroeconomic policy adopted during the sub-period 1979-81 focussed on exchange rate devaluations, implementation of administrative control policies and expansion of money supply to finance the fiscal deficit. These policies have caused a drop in the real GDP growth to 5.5 per cent.

The sub-period 1982-89 was dominated by policy reforms with the help of the IMF and the World Bank that emphasized outward orientation, nominal devaluation, aggregate demand retrenchment and trade and institutional reforms to create an incentive structure consistent with the reform strategy⁴³. Despite real GDP growth showing a positive rate of 3.3 per cent, the period was, nevertheless, plagued by continued balance of payment deficits driven mainly by the fiscal expansion.

Following its military coup in June 1989 the current government implemented home-grown liberalization programme in 1992 as a part of its National Salvation Strategy (1992-2002). The main elements of this programme which was neither negotiated with nor supported by the World Bank and the IMF, were the following:

- Decontrol and deregulation of imports, foreign exchange, and prices,
- Stabilization of the foreign exchange rate through managed floating,
- Fiscal retrenchment and strict budget cash control,
- Privatisation of non-performing public enterprises and
- Encouragement of saving through reform of the financial system

⁴² UNDP (2006), Ibid.

⁴³ UNDP (2006), Ibid

Table No. 2: Major Economic Episodes and Policy Responses, 1970-2001

	1970-78	1979-81	1981/82- 1988/89	1989/90- 1994/95	1996-2001
Period average GDP real growth	6.4 (-0.94)	5.5 (-1.93)	3.3 (-2.64)	-9.3 (1.58)	11.6 (.79)
Period average Inflation	14.3 (0.62)	27.0 (0.15)	39.5 (0.54)	118.7 (0.22)	35.8 (1.07)
Major Episodes	1. Oil price shock in 1973. 2. Inflow of capital from oil surplus Arab countries to finance the Breadbasket Plan. 3. Build-up of balance of payments imbalance.	1. Balance of payments deficit driven mainly by fiscal expansion. 2. Build-up of inflationary pressure.	1. Continued balance of payments deficit driven mainly by the fiscal expansion, the adverse terms of trade shocks as well as by reversal of capital flow in payments of debts and interest. 2. Investment saving gap. 3. Outbreak of the civil war. 4. Inflation started to run loose in the economy	Deterioration of the balance of payments due to the continued capital outflow, loss of competitiveness and the meat export ban in 1992. 2. Triple digit inflation crossing the classical threshold of hyperinflation. 3. Huge investment saving gap	1. Fiscal retrenchment. 2. Inflow of direct foreign investment in connection with the commercial exploitation of oil. 3. The commercial exploitation of oil.
Policy Response	1. Outward orientation in order to promote cotton production and to initiate the breadbasket strategy. 2. Adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) as from late 1978	1. A series of nominal exchange rate devaluations under the SAP. 2. Expansion of money supply to finance the fiscal deficit. 3. Implementation of various administrative control policies.	1. Nominal devaluation of the exchange rate and partial shift of imports and to some extent export to the free market. 2. Foreign exchange and price controls.	1. Implementation of a homegrown vintage of the SAP. 2. Continued policy of controls despite the announced liberalization package in 1992	1. Serious commitment to the liberalization and privatization policy of 1992. 2. Price and quantitative decontrols. 3. Substantial progress in the peace talk

Source: UNDP (2006) "Macroeconomic Policies For Poverty Reduction: The Case of Sudan", United Nations Development Programme, Sudan, June

The results of these programmes were abysmal as real per capita consumption declined by about 11 percentage points and inflation reached a record rate of 118.7 per cent. Over the sub-period 1996-2001, the government further committed itself to the liberalization package of 1992. Coinciding with the substantial inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) related to the commercial exploitation of oil, the policy stance contributed to enabling a macroeconomic environment. This was also helped by improvements in the terms of trade, averaging about 17 per cent, and growth of real exports (including oil) by 13 per cent.⁴⁴

Sectoral data for the same period indicate a decline in the contribution of the agricultural sector while the contributions of the industry and services sectors recorded an increase as shown in table 3. The overall long-term trends indicate stagnation in the share of the manufacturing sector in total GDP in the 1980s and 1990s, albeit some progress in the sector in the 1970s. Fast and steady growth in the traditional rain-fed agricultural sector, which represents the backbone of the rural economy, since the early 1990s was apparently associated with increased poverty. Over the longer period 1970-2001 as a whole, the average share of agriculture in the GDP was about 37 per cent⁴⁵. Thus, it seems that the long-term growth experience in Sudan has not been accompanied by any appreciable structural transformation.

In terms of poverty and inequality the implications of these macro-economic policies were immense, particularly for the marginalised areas. The poverty indicators are not encouraging for a country with wealth and massive potential like the Sudan. Deriving estimates for poverty in Sudan at four time points over the period 1968-93 Ali (1994)⁴⁶ concluded that poverty measured by the head count index showed an increasing trend at a varying rate of increase over 1978-93, as the head count index increased from 54.3 percent to 77.8 per cent and 91.4 per cent in 1978, 1986 and 1993, respectively. The analysis have also indicated that the rate of spread of poverty started high in the rural areas but urban areas were hit worst by both the spread and the incidence of poverty especially over 1986-92. Increases in Urban poverty are fuelled by internal displacement resulting from the deteriorating situation in the rural areas as a result of civil wars and from a weak demand for labour. It has also been observed that transcending the rural-urban divide, are wide regional differences in income poverty.

⁴⁴ UNDP (2006), Ibid

⁴⁵ UNDP (2006), Ibid

⁴⁶ Ali, Ali A. G., (1994), structural Adjustment Programmes and Poverty in Sudan, Arab Research Centre, Cairo

Table No. 3: Sectoral Contribution to GDP and Sectoral Growth Rates (1982 constant prices)

	Sectoral Share of GDP (%)			Sectoral Output Growth (%)		
	1978-91	1992-98	1992-01	1978-91	1992-98	1992-01
Agriculture	34.1	43.6	44.6	3.2	11.2	9.4
Industry	15.2	15.5	5.4	5.4	5.2	11.1
Manufacturing	8.0	8.3	9.7	5.5	4.3	13.5
Electricity & Water	1.8	2.1	2.0	5.6	5.0	4.8
Construction	5.3	5.2	5.0	2.6	5.5	4.8
Services	50.7	41.2	37.0	2.6	2.2	2.4
Overall GDP	100.0	100.0	100.0	2.8	5.9	6.2

Source: UNDP, (2006), “Macroeconomic Policies For Poverty Reduction: The Case of Sudan”, United Nations Development Programme, Sudan, June

As the Sudanese economy suffered sectoral regress from the late 1970, steadily declining income and consumption per-capita, huge disparities in real incomes have been reported. Ibrahim *et al* (2001)⁴⁷ identified the following three dimensions of inequality that developed over the period 1968-2000, in close association with development of poverty in the Sudan:

- Regional inequality; between North and South
- Vertical inequality; between income groups, and
- Horizontal inequality; between rural and urban areas

⁴⁷ Ibrahim Et al, (2001), “Poverty, Employment and Policy Making in Sudan: A Country Profile.” Draft, November, Khartoum

Table No. 4: Income Inequality in Sudan, 1968-1996

Area	Gini Coefficients			
	1967/68	1978/80	1990	1996
Rural	0.34	0.51	0.69	0.65
	(0.38)	(0.48)	(0.66)	
Urban	0.41	0.42	0.56	0.72
	(0.41)	(0.40)	(0.55)	
Total	0.41	0.50	0.61	0.74
	(0.44)	(0.46)	(0.64)	

Source: UNDP (2006), “Macroeconomic Policies For Poverty Reduction: The Case of Sudan”, United Nations Development Programme, Sudan, June

Table 4 indicates that the Gini coefficient increased from 0.41 in 1967/68 to 0.74 in 1996 indicating that inequality has been on the rise during this period. The 1990s witnessed an accelerated increase in inequality almost 40 per cent of the absolute increase in overall inequality indicating that income distribution in Sudan have shifted from moderately unequal to extremely unequal over 30 years⁴⁸. Furthermore, as could be seen, inequality in rural areas increased much faster during the 1970s and 1980s, while it has increased much faster in the urban areas during the 1990s, for reasons mentioned earlier.

In an attempt to protect the vulnerable groups from the adverse effects of the liberalisation programme, the government initiated a number of social support funds as safety nets. These include the solidarity fund (*Takaful Fund*), the social insurance fund, the students support fund, the national retirement fund, the medical insurance fund and a fund to assist workers affected by the privatisation, in addition to the *Zakat* fund established in the early 1980s. Furthermore, the government established the Ministry of Social Welfare and Development to lead the efforts in poverty reduction. Despite these measures and despite modest government policy instruments to mitigate inequalities, high poverty levels and extremely unequal income distribution persisted particularly in the marginalised areas. Migration and labour surveys estimated rates of poverty at 85% for the urban areas and 94% in the rural areas for the mid and late 1990s.⁴⁹ In the Beja area of Eastern Sudan, for instance, poverty rates of 83% in Port Sudan, 95% in Sinkat, 87% in Tokar and 89% in *Halayeb* were reported⁵⁰. According to some estimates 95% of the households in the Sudan are below the poverty line and that for the Southern and Western states

⁴⁸ UNDP (2006), Ibid

⁴⁹ Ministry of Manpower, Migration and Labour Force Surveys, 1990 and 1996

⁵⁰ Sudan Forum, (2004), “Approaches to implementing a peace agreement in Sudan”, Report of the Sudan Conference 2004, Heimvolkshochschule Hermannsburg, April 30 – May 2, 2004

(Darfur and Kordofan) the figure rises to 97%⁵¹. Because economic growth has not been underpinned by pro-poor economic policies the benefits have not been equitably distributed and therefore the poor and most vulnerable have not been protected.

Poverty rates have also been exacerbated by indirect taxes, which were the dominant source in the total government revenue until before exportation of oil. Add to that the burden of debt service payments averaging 17.8% for the period 1978-1988 while total external debt position of the Sudan as at 31st December 2006 amounted to US\$ 28,447 million⁵². Despite belonging to the group of Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC), the country is yet to qualify for support and debt relief under the HIPC Initiative and its ability to resolve its external debt problem is still pawned to the large arrears to various creditors. From the forgoing analysis, it is clear that the government's macro-economic policies have contributed to meagre outcomes in the areas of poverty reduction. One possible reason for the poor results in this regard is that such policies were not pro-poor and that poverty was associated with both negative and very fast growth of the Sudanese economy.

Furthermore, with low collection of public revenue, and limited access to external financing, the government's macro stabilization efforts were mainly concentrated on cuts in public expenditures.⁵³ The federal system adopted in 1992 compounded the problems of the periphery. Under this system the Sudan was divided into 26 states and the delivery of key services such as education, health, sanitation, local roads, and agriculture were delegated to the states, which had neither the revenues nor the administrative capacity for these tasks⁵⁴. The criteria for transferring funds of the State Support Fund (SSF) established, as a mechanism for channeling federal assistance to the needy states were not pro-poor because they were based on population size and the level of development rather than on the level of poverty at the state level. Consequently, the transfers correlated more strongly with state population size than with the percentage of rural population.⁵⁵ According to the World Bank (2003), regional expenditures have remained a low priority for the federal government. By 1998, the total budget received by the states and local communities was 2.4 percent of GDP. This figure has increased to only 4% in 2001 when net oil revenues were added to the government's budget but was quite inadequate, given the enormous responsibilities of the states to deliver social services for sustainable socio-economic development.

⁵¹ Awad, M., 1999, "Daily News" Al Ray Alaam, 14 October.

⁵² "Sudan external debt as at 31 December 2006", www.unsudanig.org

⁵³ World Bank (2003), Ibid

⁵⁴ World Bank, (2003), Ibid

⁵⁵ UNDP, (2006), Ibid

2.d. Oil revenues

Despite increasing revenues from the rapidly growing oil industry poverty has shown no signs of abating. As shown in table 5, oil revenues jumped from \$61.1 million in 1999 to \$805.1 million in 2002. They increased from 7.6% of the total government expenditure in 1999 to 44.8% in 2002. According to the GoS records, revenues for the first five months of 2007 (January–May), amounted to \$297.4 million.⁵⁶ In terms of output Sudan’s production jumped from 185,000 barrels per day (b/d) in the third quarter of 2000, to an average of 332,000 b/d in the first quarter of 2007⁵⁷. This rate of production would yield a total of US\$9.452 billion of oil revenues for the year 2007 calculated at a price of \$78/barrel.

Table No. 5: Sudanese Government Oil Revenue and Military Expenditures, 1999-2002, in millions of U.S. Dollars

	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total Government Revenue	799.9	1,267	1,415	1,798
Government Oil Revenue	61.1	547.4	572.6	805.1
Government Oil Revenue as % of Total Government Revenue	7.64%	43.18 %	40.45 %	44.76 %
Government Expenditures	884.4	1,359	1,534 b	1,923
Government Military Expenditures	242	250.9	345	312.7
Government Military Expenditures as % of Government Oil Revenue	27.38%	45.8 %	60.25 %	38.8 %

Source: “Oil and Human Rights”, Human Rights Watch, www.hrw.org

It is worth noting that while the revenues from oil increased, cash military spending, on the other hand has also increased from US \$242 million in 1999 to US \$ 250.9 million in 2000. In 2001, defence expenditures peaked to US \$ 345 million, more than 60 percent of the oil revenues for the year, representing an increase in military budget of 39.6 percent while government revenue increased by 13.4 percent, indicating that substantial share of oil revenues has been spent by the government to update its military. The pattern of government military expenditure is incomparable with the expenditure on social services, which was only 6.3 per cent of total

⁵⁶ Ministry of Finance and National Economy, (2007) “Revenue of Crude Oil” www.mof.gov.sd

⁵⁷ Average figure calculated from the data of Ministry of Finance and National Economy, (2007)

expenditure out of which spending on education was 4.4 per cent, 1.6 per cent on health and 0.3 per cent on water, for the period 2001-2003⁵⁸. While the discovery of oil improved the government's fiscal position, it nevertheless, had little impact on socio-economic development of the country as poverty levels and inequalities in the periphery persisted.

2.e. Regional disparities in the Sudan

Earlier it has been shown how the marginalisation policies resulted in disproportionate power sharing to the favour of the riverine elites who concentrated economic activities in their areas resulting in huge disparities in economic diversity between the centre and the periphery. A set of macro-economic policies exacerbated poverty and inequality in the periphery and ultimately resulted in further disparities in human development evident in basic development indicators, such as education and health services.

i. Disparity in economic diversity and activities

As a result of the imbalanced development policies the centre has become the focus of economic activities while the periphery has been largely ignored. In the case of Darfur few development projects and programmes were implemented during the 1960s and the 1980s with international support. These include the extension of Sudan railways from *Babanoosa* in Kordofan to Nyala in Southern Darfur in 1962, as a cost-effective means of transporting cheap labour to *Gezeira* Scheme for cotton picking⁵⁹. In addition to that, Jebel Mara rural development project, Western Savannah development project and *Nyala-Kass-Zalingi* paved road were implemented. These projects were plagued by weak management and inadequate institutional structures, and thus in the early 1990s the two development projects collapsed as external funding ceased and the paved road reverted to an earth track due to lack of maintenance.

Regional biases in the Sudan are also evident from the distribution of development expenditures. Table 6 and Figure 3 show regional development expenditure in the Sudan (excluding Southern Sudan) during the period 1996-2001. As could be seen, the period has been marked by huge disparities in the distribution of development expenditure as Khartoum alone accounted for 75% of the total development

⁵⁸ World Bank, (2003)

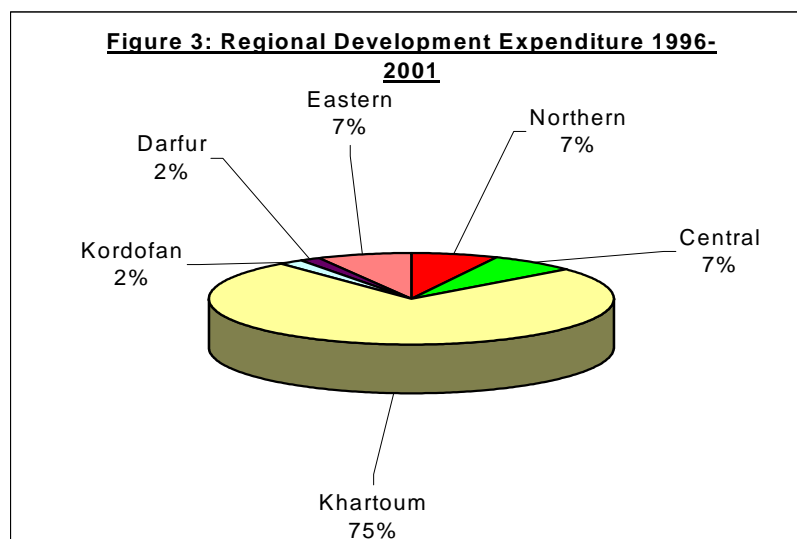
⁵⁹ Eltigani, A., (2000), "Muslim marginality in the Sudan: the case of Dar Fur region", The symposium on "Muslim communities, power and politics in Africa" Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, 14th October.

expenditure while the share of Darfur and Kordofan were 2% each. The centre and the North accounted for 89% of the total development expenditure while the share of all marginalised areas in Northern Sudan accounted for 11 per cent only.

Table No. 6: Regional Development Expenditure, 1996-2001, in millions of Dinars

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Total Dev. Expenditure	Population 2003, Million
Northern	121.3	368.5	763.8	823.6	1402.4	659.6	4139.2	1.568
Central	340.8	634.5	1788.1	806.9	492.1		4062.4	7.251
Khartoum	4351.4	6477.3	11461	13355.5	3313	5740.6	44698.8	5.352
Kordofan	14.6	122	265.2	302.1	164.6	175.2	1043.7	3.895
Darfur	168.3	433.2	169.9	350.6	12.8		1134.8	6.360
Eastern	614.1	741.5	580.1	1117	922.6	413.3	4388.6	3.937
South Sudan	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	59476.5	5.258

Source: Ministry of Finance and National Economy, National Accounts Directorate General, United Nations Population Fund, Sudan, 2003



ii. Disparity in human development levels

Disparities in economic activities, bias in the allocation of expenditure, and the spread of poverty have been accompanied by similar disparities in the human development levels, specifically in health and education. Social indicators reported so far point to low levels of welfare throughout Sudan with some indicators well below those in Sub-Saharan Africa. In this regards, available data on social indicators reveal a multi-dimensional centre-periphery and gender divides. The national adult literacy rate in 2001 was more than 60% for men and about 42% for women. In the case of Darfur, these rates were 39% for men and 37% for women while for some other peripheral areas the figures were substantially lower as was the case for Southern Sudan where the rates were 30 percent for men and 10 percent for women.⁶⁰ Literacy rate varies throughout the country but as shown in table 7 are high in the Northern region, the Central Region and Khartoum – 65; 51 and 69 respectively, while low in Kordofan, Darfur, the Eastern and the Southern regions, with 39; 46; 49 and 52.6 respectively. The enrolment rate in primary education shows considerable regional variations. While high enrolment rates of 85.7, 62.6 and 67.6 have been reported for the Northern region, the Central region and Khartoum respectively, the reported enrolment rate for Darfur is 33.4. Other extremely low rates were also reported in other areas such as the Eastern region, Kordofan and the South with enrolment rates of 34.5%, 41.3%, and 13.3% respectively.

Table No. 7: Multiple regional indicators.

Region	Literacy rate average 1993	Male Enrolment Rates 98/99	Infant mortality	Child Mortality 1-4	Under Five mortality	Medical Doctors/ 100000	Hospitals
Northern	65	85.7	56	25	80	-	-
Central	51	62.6	66	44	110	-	-
Khartoum	73.6	67.6	69	38	103	46	111
Kordofan	39	41.3	76	40	112	-	-
Darfur	46	33.4	65	37	100	1.9	25
Eastern	49	34.5	94	54	143	-	-
Southern	52.6	13.3	82	54	132	2.8	68

Source: UNICEF, Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey, (2000); Safe Motherhood Survey, (1999); Sudan forum, (2004); The Black book, (2003); World Bank, (2003)

More recent figures for 2002/2003 have continued to reveal marked disparities between the center and the periphery. Average enrolment rate in primary education

⁶⁰ World Bank, 2003, Ibid

for Northern Sudan reached 75.2 per cent, and enrolment rates in individual states ranged from a high of 97.6 per cent for the Northern State (95.5 per cent boys and 99.7 per cent girls to a low of 49.3 per cent in Western Darfur (53.1 per cent boys and 45.2 per cent girls).⁶¹ While no up-to-date figures are available for Darfur, enrollment rates must have deteriorated further over the last few years as a result of the war and due to lack of educational services in the IDP camps, a part from those provided by the NGOs. Because of low levels of public expenditure the quality of educational services in the periphery, in general, has declined with only 64 percent of teachers having some training and in some areas only 7 percent of teachers are trained.⁶² Educational facilities have also deteriorated considerably in the periphery and default in payment of teacher salaries for periods over eight months has been reported in Darfur.⁶³

Health indicators throughout the country have also been characterised by marked regional variations. Indicators are worst in Southern Sudan, Eastern region, Darfur and Kordofan. Infant mortality in these areas is substantially higher than in Central and Northern Sudan. The Eastern region has infant mortality rate of 94, while in Southern Sudan, Kordofan and Darfur; the rates are 82; 76 and 65 respectively. In 1984/85, Khartoum with 8.8% of the country's population had 64% of the total number of doctors, 68% of the dentists and 88% of the allied professionals⁶⁴. In 2002, Khartoum's share has improved as the percentage of doctors increased to 78%, 63% of the specialists and 77% of the dentists. Furthermore, while the ratio of doctors/100,000 population was 46 in Khartoum in 2003, such ratios were 2.8 and 1.9 for Southern Sudan and Darfur respectively. The government's policies on private health services have compounded the vulnerability of the marginalized population to various health risks. For much of the rural poor, accessing free healthcare has become something of the past as public health services are provided at unaffordable cost. Public health expenditure, as a percentage of GDP was 0.90 in 2000 (the third lowest in Sub-Saharan Africa), while the private health expenditure reached 2.1% of the GDP for the same year. This has led to poor coverage of the health system, with poor capacity for delivery at all levels, but particularly the deterioration of primary health centers in rural areas where shortages of drugs, doctors and nurses are chronic. Furthermore, tropical diseases such as malaria that

⁶¹ UNDP, (2006) Ibid

⁶² World Bank, (2003), Ibid.

⁶³ Eltigani, (2000), Ibid.

⁶⁴ Umbadda S., (2004), "The problem of Development and services in Darfur", presented at the Workshop on Darfur, Friendship Hall, Khartoum, 28-30 November

have been eradicated elsewhere in the world are still prevalent and malnutrition rates vary widely and are excessively high⁶⁵.

A World Bank survey, undertaken well before the war broke out in Darfur and published in May 2003, summarized the conditions in Sudan as follows:

“The poorest parts of Sudan are in the west and the war-torn areas mostly, but not only, in the south. The displacement of whole communities has ravaged traditional safety net systems and resulted in “man-made” famines. There is perennial vulnerability to insecurity of both persons and property. Basic human needs are often unmet. Even those areas that are relatively stable face isolation from markets and lack secure access to services for human development that can break the inter-generational poverty cycle”⁶⁶.

This represents further compelling evidence of a state of affairs in the periphery most conducive to reinvigorate grievances and civil conflicts.

2.f. Problems of governance

Sudan’s history of bad governance lies at the heart of the conflicts that engulfed the country over the last fifty years. The country’s governor’s indicators are sobering. According to the World Wide Governors Indicators (1996-2005), Sudan’s governance performance has been recorded in the lowest 10 percent of nations in most areas of governance. The World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessment data places Sudan in the lowest quintile with many of the fragile states of Africa. Similarly it is among the very lowest (69th out of 76 countries) in the IDA ranking in terms of weak governance.⁶⁷

Monopoly of powers by certain groups, concentration of economic activities in certain areas of the country, rampant corruption, lack of transparency, are factors that characterise the nature of governance in the Sudan (box 2). History shows that peace agreements between the government and rebel movements didn’t guarantee sustainable peace for the country, but on the contrary, jeopardized the ensuing peace processes. Military dictatorships and the centre’s tendency of dishonouring peace agreements have been at the centre of the governance problems. The Addis Ababa Accord was rescinded unilaterally by the government after eleven years of relative calm. The Khartoum agreement, signed between Southern Sudan Independence

⁶⁵ In 2001, malnutrition rate was 17 percent in urban areas, 30 percent in some parts of Southern Sudan.

⁶⁶ World Bank, (2006), a note on “Sudan”, 21 November, <http://web.worldbank.org>

⁶⁷ Darfur JAM, (2007), Ibid

Movement (SIM) and the GoS in 1997 collapsed because it was not honoured by the central government and the SIM leaders rejoined the SPLM/A ranks again. The CPA signed in Kenya in January 2005 is gradually losing momentum and its implementation is becoming increasingly wobbly with counter accusations between the two parties and on the 11th of October 2007 the SPLM suspended their participation in the government of the national unity because of NCP's violations of the CPA. This may have serious consequences across the Sudanese political scene including on the proposed resumption of Darfur talks in Libya at the end of October 2007. The CPA signed by one faction of the SLM lost credibility and its implementation has been seriously hampered by continuous deterioration in the security situation in Darfur as well as by the continuous undermining of the rebel faction that originally signed the agreement and other factions that have subsequently acceded to.

Box No. 1: Some problems of governance in Sudan

- Military dictatorships, sectarian monopolies on political and economic power and construction of a narrow religious, cultural and linguistic national identity.
- Unclear roles and responsibilities between government and security services as many security operatives work behind the scenes to direct policy and take executive decisions.
- Use of legal and constitutional frameworks to maintain control of all aspects of political, economic and social activity. Slow and non-transparent administrative procedures serve as a political tool to obstruct freedom of movement and organisation.
- Elite monopoly on the use of natural resources
- Lack of accountability in the management of state finances, including a pervasive lack of transparency and corruption.
- Neglect, marginalisation and underdevelopment of peripherals.
- Formal economic activity and employment opportunities and credit are restricted to those who are politically affiliated with the (*Ruling Party*).
- The dismantling of a vibrant and active civil society.

Source: Savage, Paul, 2003.

A local proverb in Sudan says “*the shade never straightens when the pole is bending*”, and therefore in the case of Darfur, governance is not expected to be in a better shape while at the national level governance indicators are a disaster. Governance in Darfur has been in crisis for a long period as most of its dimensions are severely undermined and limited. Key governance constraints that have severely limited the capacities of local governance structures to undertake development activities are; (a) marginalisation; (b) eroded capacity and low credibility of

governments as a result of being poorly funded and under-resourced; and (c) weak mechanisms for accountability as the public has limited access to information on public sector resources and plays no role in planning and budgeting.

Moreover, community governance though there is a dynamic emerging trend that promises significant locally led change, is still feeble and has not been empowered to effect positive changes yet. The Native Administration System, which played an important role in conflict resolution in the past, is still crippled as result of numerous government interventions as explained in section (2.g) below. The D-JAM (2007) summarizes the situation of governance in Darfur as follows:

*“The accountability and responsiveness of the Sudanese state to Darfur, and the capability, accountability and responsiveness of the state and local governments in Darfur to Darfurian citizens are both severely limited. Institutional checks and balances have failed, public sector management is ineffective and biased, political accountability is non-existent, the private sector struggles to operate in an non-transparent, monopolistic environment dominated by political interest. Decentralisation has shifted responsibility but not improved service, civil society and the media are heavily constrained, traditional leadership has been eroded and is in crisis, and citizen participation is limited to pockets and disenfranchised by existing bureaucratic elements”.*⁶⁸

2.g. Adverse interventions of the central authorities

Since independence of the country, successive central governments played key roles in destabilising Darfur region through adverse policies that have weakened local governance structures, incapacitated local conflict resolution mechanisms and above all destroyed the social fabric of the region through the incitement of tribalism and ethnicity. Some of the interventions that have played key roles in this respect and contributed in escalating the current conflict are the following:

i. Abolition of native administration:

Native administration (NA), “*idara ahliya*” as a traditional administrative and judicial system dates back to the period of the Sultanate. In the NA system, each tribe has its own chief carrying a title that indicates his rank⁶⁹. Historically, tribal chiefs were key actors in the governance structures through performing advisory

⁶⁸ D-JAM, (2007),Ibid. pp.5.

⁶⁹ Tribal chiefs in Darfur carry different titles. Some of these titles are; Demengawi, Umda, Shartai, Al-Basi, Malik (King), Sultan, Elsheikh, Magdoom, Elnasir, Fursha, Dimlij

role to the government in matters relating to the administration of their tribes as well as the administration of the region and in maintaining security, performing judiciary roles, collecting taxes, and contributing in resolving tribal disputes. As an institution that contributed in managing conflicts in the region Native administration has been deliberately weakened by the central authorities. It was formally abolished in 1971, when the local government act was enacted but the government's dismantling of NA shifted the burden of traditional conflict resolution and tribal land governance to a weak local administration system that abysmally failed to fill the resulting vacuum. Despite being reinstated in 1987, the NA system was not empowered to play its traditional role effectively. Numerous reasons contributed to this, including the limited powers granted to tribal chiefs and unclear legislative frameworks. In 1995 the central authorities introduced a new parallel NA system known as "*Amarat*" or "*Principalities*", where 'princes' who in most cases were political activists have been appointed on top of the new structure. These political appointees performed tasks that overlapped with the jurisdictions of the traditional NA system and seriously undermined its role and its credibility.

ii. Continuous destabilisation of Local government structures

The local government structure in Darfur has undergone a series of changes over the last few decades. Originally one region, with eight localities until 1971, Darfur was divided into two provinces in the early seventies, Southern Darfur with the provincial capital in Nyala and Northern Darfur retaining the traditional Capital of Darfur in Elfashir. The 1971 local government act created numerous local councils and in 1981, with the promulgation of the regional government act, Darfur region was established comprising the two provinces. In 1994 the region was further subdivided into three states with provinces and localities, and in 2003 the local government was again restructured. Today, the hierarchical structure of the region comprises 3 states, 24 localities and 70 administrative units. Some of these transformations have seriously undermined the stability of the region.

The 1971 local government act which could deservedly be denoted, as the "*mother of tribal conflicts*" in Darfur, has contributed in fuelling tribal conflicts at a wider scale in the region because tribal boundaries have been redrawn during the process of establishing the new local councils. Soon after its implementation, border disputes among the local councils started to emerge. In Southern Darfur province alone sixteen border disputes of this nature have been recorded in the early 1970s some of which have rapidly evolved into armed tribal confrontations. In addition to that the re-division of the region into three states despite strong opposition from the

people of Darfur⁷⁰ has seriously undermined its unity, and raised questions on the true motives behind the way the region was divided because prominent tribes like the *Fur* ended up fragmented into the three different states and as a result destabilised and considerably weakened. The partition of the region has not contributed in effective devolution of powers to the region but on the contrary, it has further fuelled tribal and ethnic tensions resulting from tribal and ethnic power struggles to control the newly created states.

iii. Destabilisation of the “hakura” “Dar” or “tribal homelands” system⁷¹

During the 17th century the sultanate of Darfur introduced a system of granting land titles (estates), called “*hakura*”⁷², or “*Dar*” literally meaning “homeland”. The “*hakura*” was either granted to the tribal chiefs by the Sultan or acquired through occupation from the pre-sultanate period and as a result, land in Darfur became a tribal property. When Darfur was annexed to the Sudan the colonial authorities adopted a system based on the one inherited from the Fur Sultanate and accordingly, many of the large tribes had tribal homelands in their names while some of the smaller ones found themselves under the administration of the larger tribes.⁷³ For a tribe to have an independent administration it needs to have its own homeland, and as the entire area of Darfur was allocated since the days of the Sultanate, the claims of many of the small tribes for their own homeland triggered many tribal conflicts in the region. Add to that the tribes that recently immigrated from Chad and other West African countries found themselves outside the “*Hakura*” system and therefore resorted to violence against the indigenous population to ascertain their claims for a tribal homeland. In most cases the central government has either encouraged or turned a blind eye to the violence of these groups, which included torching of villages, killing of civilians, rape and looting of property.

In many occasions, too, the central authorities encouraged destabilisation of the “*Hakura*” system through the promotion of chiefs of the smaller tribes bringing

⁷⁰ Northern Darfur State (Elfasher), Southern Darfur State (Nyala), and Western Darfur State (Elgeniena)

⁷¹ For more information on the “*hakura*” system refer to, Abdul-Jalil, Musa Adam “Emergency Assistance to vulnerable households and Initial support to land tenure matters in Darfur; The Dynamics of Customary Land Tenure and Natural Resource Management in Darfur”, for FAO, Project OSRO/SUD/507/CAN

⁷² The Arabic plural is (*hawakir*)

⁷³ In Dar Dima, which comprises the areas of Kass, Jebel Mara, Zalingi and Wadi Saleh, (Fur area) there are a number of Arab and non-Arab tribes whose chiefs are under the administration of the Demingawi. The same is true of Dar Rezeighat where the chief of the Ma’alia tribe is under the administration of the Nazir of Dar Rezeighat as is the case in the Magdoomia in Nyala and in the Sultanate of Dar Massaleet in Elgeneina.

them at parity with the chiefs of the larger tribes. Furthermore, in certain areas, lands that historically belonged to some tribes have been re-allocated by the authorities to other tribes thereby creating further tensions between the different ethnic groups. In 1995, for instance, the Governor of Western Darfur decreed to divide Dar Massaleet into thirteen “*Principalities*”, allocating the Arab tribes in the area six new principalities, thereby sparking an ethnic conflict between the Massaleet and the Arab groups (box 2). The ensuing conflict lasted until 2000 claiming more than 2,000 lives and about 100,000 became IDPs. The Governor’s decision has also created an administrative vacuum at the grassroots level and ultimately a state of emergency was imposed in the area between 1995 and 1999.⁷⁴

Box no. 2: The tribal conflict in Dar Massaleet

Before its establishment by Elfaki Ismail Abdul Nabi, Dar Massaleet, at the Western edge of Darfur, was part of Darfur Sultanate. During the Mahdia era, Elfaki Ismail was recalled to Omdurman and he was succeeded by his son Abubaker whose reign lasted for 18 years. Abubaker was succeeded by his brother Sultan Mohamed Tag El-Din who was subsequently killed in Droti battle by the French army, and his cousin Mohamed Bahr El-Din was appointed the Sultan of Dar Massaleet. Throughout its history, the Sultanate of Dar Massaleet was harmonious and various ethnic groups lived peacefully. Following the invasion of Darfur, the British authorities signed a treaty with Sultan Mohamed Bahr El-Din according to which Dar Massaleet became the first Sudanese territory to be granted self-rule. According to the treaty the Sultan of Dar Massaleet retained his institutions including, the native administration, the Sultan prison, and the Sultan court. When Native Administration was abolished across Darfur in 1971, Dar Massaleet continued to retain the structure of its NA system. On the 13th of March 1995, the Governor of Western Darfur State issued a decree according to which the State has been reorganized into 34 Emirates each one headed by a government appointed "Amir". Dar Massaleet alone was divided up into 13 Emirates and 6 of those Emirates were allocated to the Arab groups in the area. As the NA system is closely linked to the tribal land system (or Hakora system) this decision meant that land which historically belonged to the Massaleet has been offered the Arab tribes living in the Sultanate. The result was severe ethnic polarisation that caused a tribal war between the Massaleet and the Arab tribes that continued to date.

Source: Takana, Y.S. "Report on the tribal conflict in Darfur" 1997.

iv. Mobilisation of local militias and promotion of tribal conflicts

One of the main factors that contributed in triggering and escalating the conflict in Darfur is the mobilisation of tribal militias. Mobilisation of militia by the central

⁷⁴ Young et al, 2005, Ibid.

authorities as a counter insurgency tool, however, is not a new phenomenon in the Sudan. As early as 1985 the then transitional government led by General *Suwar Eldahab* adopted an open policy of arming the Arabs “*Murahleen*” to fight the SPLA in Southern Kordofan. The current Sudanese government resorted to a full-fledged militarization of the Sudanese society with the promulgation of the Popular Defense Forces (PDF) Law in 1989. The aim of the PDF, as it was envisaged, was to organise the *Mujahideen* to fight a holy war in the South. Salih (2005), however, pointed out that:

*An important observation to bear in mind is that the invocation of jihad by the NIF regime is not directed solely at the South, where Christianity was introduced during the colonial period and later became associated with southern resistance to northern domination. Neither is it solely directed at the SPLA, which has made the abolition of sharia a precondition for peace negotiations. PDF forces have been active against suspected dissidents in northern Sudan, including regions where the majority of the population is Muslim but non-Arab, such as Darfur, Kordofan, the Nuba mountains, and the eastern region*⁷⁵.

In Darfur, large-scale mobilisation of tribal militia was seen in the early 1990s during Dawood Bolad’s revolt. Since then the authorities resorted to organising tribal militias that repeatedly launched campaigns of torching villages of the farming communities around Jebel Mara area during the late 1990s and early 2000s. It was this continuous torching of villages by the militia, without deterrence from the GoS that prompted a group of local activists from the area to establish military training camps to train the locals on firearms under the cover of protecting civilian villages. It was this group that constituted the SLM movement. Soon after the rebel movements attacked government army garrisons in 2003, the GoS mobilised the tribal militia, known as “Janjaweeet” infamous for genocidal atrocity in Darfur.

The idea of the Janjaweeet was first initiated in the 1970s by both Sudanese and Chadian Arabs⁷⁶. The present day militia are largely recruited from the Arab tribes spearheaded by the *Aballa* Arabs. While their conventional role was to fight the rebels, the Janjaweeet, nevertheless, had other politically motivated objectives,

⁷⁵Salih Mohamed (2005), “Understanding the Conflict in Darfur”, Occasional Paper, Centre of African Studies, University of Copenhagen, May

⁷⁶ According to De Waal (2005) the initiator of the Janjaweeet militia was Ahmat Acyl Aghbash, who was both a commander in the multinational pan-Sahelian ‘Islamic Legion’ and leader of a Chadian Arab militia known as the Volcano Brigade, and that the Salamat of South-central Chad and the Sudanese intermediaries who smuggled their weapons can take a good claim to be the original Janjaweeet.

including the forcible displacement of the local population, occupation of their lands and eventually resettling members of their tribal groups from West Africa in the areas vacated by the indigenous groups. Quoting a UN report, Bloomfield (2007) reported that:

*“30,000 Arabs have crossed the border in the past three months. Most arrived with all their belongings and large flocks. They were greeted by Sudanese Arabs who took them to empty villages cleared by the government and Janjaweed forces. ... “Most have been relocated by Sudanese Arabs to former villages of IDPs (internally displaced people) and more or less invited to stay there”.*⁷⁷

Principally, all tribal militias including the Janjaweed are part of the Popular Defence Forces (PDF), a paramilitary force established by the GoS with the aim of acting on behalf of the state when the army is unable to fulfil its duties.⁷⁸ It was under this official cover that the Janjaweed militia acted with impunity and committed grave atrocities against the civilian population of Darfur, unprecedented in the history of the country. *“Whenever we go into a village and find resistance we kill everyone. Sometimes they said wipe out an entire village”*, said a former member of the Janjaweed in the BBC's News night programme in October 2006.

On the ground, co-operation and partnership between the government forces and the Janjaweed is virtually inexorable one, and so is the commitment of the GoS to provide the militia with resources (financial, institutional and material) as well as protection, including to those who have been indicted by the ICC for crimes against humanity. According to the report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur to the UN Secretary General in January 2005, the *Janjaweed* militia operated under the authority, with the support, complicity or tolerance of the GoS.⁷⁹ Though article 22 of the DPA called for the parties to *“undertake measures to neutralize and disarm the Janjaweed militias in line with UN resolutions 1556 and 1564, the AU Summit Resolutions, the N’djamena Agreement and the November 2004 Abuja Protocol, such that security in Darfur is assured”*,⁸⁰ in reality, the Janjaweed militia has been reinforced and integrated into the regular security forces as “border patrol” and the distinction between them and the GoS armed forces has become somehow superfluous. In some parts of the region, particularly in the conflict areas, the

⁷⁷ Bloomfield, Steve (2007), “Arabs from Chad, Niger pile into Sudan’s Darfur”, July 14, WWW.Sudantribune.com

⁷⁸ Salih (2005), Ibid.

⁷⁹ Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur to the UN Secretary General, 25 January 2005, pp.33

⁸⁰ Darfur Peace Agreement, 5 May 2005.

government abdicated responsibilities for law, order and security to the Janjaweed militia who continued to commit further atrocities but this time under the protection of the law.

The initiation of the Janjaweed triggered another equally alarming phenomenon. In 1986 elites from the Arab tribes issued a statement in the name of the *Arab Gathering* “*Arab Congregation*”. The statement claimed that the Arabs of Darfur are the marginalised majority and called on the central government to increase the share of the Arab tribes in the government. The statement, which professed an Arab supremacist agenda, was the first attempt in the history of the region to legitimise power sharing on ethnic basis and has effectively polarised the entire region along ethnic lines into Arabs and *Zurga* “*blacks*” a reference to the indigenous African population of Darfur. Less than a year after the statement was released a bloody confrontation occurred between the *Fur* tribe on the one hand and thirteen Arab tribes on the other hand, resulting in the loss of about 4,000 innocent lives, destruction of villages and properties.⁸¹

2.h. Role of neighbourhood

Without doubt Darfur’s neighbourhood played significant roles in destabilising the region. From the early 1970s, Darfur region witnessed increasing levels of armed foreign interventions coinciding with the escalation in the *Chadian-Chadian* war. Darfur’s ethnic composition is unique in a sense that there are numerous shared tribes between the region and the neighbouring countries, in particular Chad. During the *Chadian-Chadian* war some Darfur-based Chadian opposition groups have been supported by their tribal extensions in the region. Large amounts of weapons have also been distributed to members of the tribal extensions resulting in further proliferation of firearms. In addition to that, the *Chadian-Libyan* war of the 1980s had also impacted the stability of Darfur because the region became a combat zone and was subjected to substantial influx of Chadian Arab tribes. It is noteworthy that the *Chadian-Libyan* war was racialized with the Libyans supporting the Chadian Arabs in their quest to oust the government of President *Hussein Habre* of Chad, which drew support from Chad’s African tribes, mainly the *Gura’an* and the *Zagawa*. Within this racially polarised environment in Chad, the warring parties have also deliberately polarised ethnicity in Darfur in order to gain ground in the region.

The government of Sudan and Chad have enjoyed good relations since the early 1990s. This harmony continued after the conflict broke out in Darfur, though the

⁸¹ The war between the Fur tribe and the 13 Arab tribes broke out in 1987 in Jebel Mara and within a short period of time the entire Fur area was engulfed by the tribal conflict.

Zagwa of Darfur whose tribal extensions are ruling Chad, were key initiators of the rebel movement in Darfur. Under what seemed to be harmonious relations between the two regimes, however, was a deep suspicion from the part of the Sudanese government of Chad's complicity in Darfur's rebellion. Such suspicion prompted the GoS to organise an anti-Chadian government rebel group harboured in Darfur. The Chadian rebels launched several attacks against Chadian government military garrisons inside the Chadian borders, including an attack on the Chadian capital N'djamena that threatened to topple the Chadian government. This has provoked a counter Chadian offensive inside the Sudanese borders raising tensions between the two countries and threatened to add further escalation to the conflict. Cross-border raids by insurgents undermined the DPA, added further complications to an already volatile situation and threatened to transform what is considered as an internal Sudanese problem into a sub-regional conflict.

Some neighbouring countries have also played a detrimental role in the aftermath of the signing of the DPA. The polarisation among the movements that followed the signing of the DPA, the failure to secure solid support from within the non-signatories to the DPA, the GoS mobilisation against UNSC resolution number 1706 which called for deployment of UN forces in Darfur and the subsequent deterioration of the security situation are factors that have jeopardized regional and international efforts to achieve peace in the area. Nonetheless, the regional and the international community are also responsible for some of the chaos that followed the signing of the DPA. Multiplicity of initiatives, uncoordinated efforts, and lack of coherence between different actors at the regional and international levels have added further turmoil and created growing feelings that the international community is confused and doesn't have plans in place to bring the spiralling humanitarian and security crisis to an end. Most significant in this context is the that these uncoordinated efforts polarised the rebel groups which started shopping from among numerous platforms on offer, something that resulted in further fragmentation of the rebel movements and seriously jeopardized efforts to resuscitate the peace talks.

2.i. Political factors

Political factors both from within and external to Darfur region have also played a role in promoting conflicts. Since the 1960s competition between local elites who were mostly elementary school leavers such as nurses, clerks and bookkeepers, was detrimental to the social harmony of the region. In the 1970s, political mobilisation by these groups contributed in further polarisation of the local society in Darfur. Such polarisation has also crept into the structures of local government. In addition to that the conflict in Darfur has also been viewed as a power struggle between *Hassan Elturabi* and President *Elbashir* after the former has fallen out with his

former NIF disciples in 1999 and that the current conflict is a proxy war between the Popular Congress under the leadership of Sheikh Hassan Elturabi and the National Congress led by President Bashir.⁸² Against this background, JEM has been linked with the Popular Congress party, something the leaders of JEM have vehemently denied.

3. The development role of the international community

Since June 1989 when the current government took over in a military coup overthrowing a democratically elected government a major shift has occurred in the donor's policies towards Sudan. The immediate reaction of the donor community in the aftermath of the military coup was to scale down foreign aid by almost 50%.⁸³ As a result, development aid has been greatly affected because of the regime's fundamentalist domestic and foreign policies. With major donors withdrawing and various sanctions regimes imposed by the international community, development aid has been suspended and only humanitarian aid continued to be channelled through the individual and collective efforts of indigenous and international nongovernmental organizations and UN agencies. This situation continued until the signing of the CPA in January 2005 which opened a new chapter in the donor-Sudan relationships.

The best example of donor coordination has been the Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) process with a total of about ten bilateral, seven multilateral and seventeen UN agencies involved in the assessment. The JAM process was co-led by the World Bank and the United Nations with the endorsement and participation of the GoS and the SPLM/A. The process produced the "Framework for Sustained Peace, Development and Poverty Eradication" released in April 2005 at the International Donors Conference in Oslo. The UN and the World Bank estimated the post conflict reconstruction and development costs of the war affected areas of the Sudan at \$7.9 billion to build roads and schools, improve health care and boost economic growth over a three year period. At the Oslo conference, a total of \$4.5 billion was pledged by nations and international organisations. Among the pledges, the European Commission promised about \$765 million, Britain \$545 million, Norway \$250 million, the Netherlands \$220 million while the United States promised 1 to 2 billion dollars⁸⁴. However, the EU and the US tied their support to improvements in the situation in Darfur.

⁸² see for example Prunier (2005), Salih, (2005)

⁸³ Ali, A. and Elbadawi, I., (2002, "Explaining Sudan's Economic Growth Performance", AERC Collaborative Research Project on Explaining Africa's Growth Performance, May, draft.

⁸⁴ Kessler Glenn, "\$4.5 Billion in Aid Pledged For Post-war Efforts in Sudan", Washington Post Wednesday, April 13, 2005; Page A11

Following the Oslo Meeting two Multi Donor Trust Funds (MDTFs) were established, one fund supports the Government of National Unity, for reconstruction of the war-affected marginalised areas of the North (MDTF-N), and another supports the Government of Southern Sudan (MDTF-S). The objectives of the MDTFs include supporting priority activities identified by the JAM for pro-peace, pro-poor investments, while ensuring government ownership, transparency and accountability in the use of MDTF resources⁸⁵. Tables 8 and 9 summarize pledges, commitments and deposits, as of December 31, 2005, for MDTF-N and MDTF-S, respectively. As could be seen, twelve donors pledged \$558.5 million for 2005-2007. Donor commitments (in terms of formalized agreements) stood at \$494.7 million of which pledges for the North amounted to \$194.2 million with commitments at \$188 million. Pledges for Southern Sudan on the other hand amounted to \$304.4 million, with \$306.3 million in commitments. Actual deposits, however, amounted to \$49.8 million to MDTF-N and \$100.7 million to MDTF-S, i.e. 26 percent and 33 percent of formal commitments, respectively. The only country that fulfilled its commitment for 2005 for both funds is the Netherlands with Sweden fulfilling its commitments to MDTF-S.

As mandated in the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) the GoS and SLM, have embarked upon the Darfur Joint Assessment Mission (D-JAM) to identify key early recovery and long-term reconstruction and development needs for Darfur. The process, is led by the parties with support from the international community, particularly the United Nations, the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB) which adopted a “multi-track” approach based on two mutually re-enforcing tracks; Track I focuses on immediate priority needs for returning IDPs and refugees to re-establish their livelihoods and Track II focusing on post-conflict economic recovery, reconstruction and development needs to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The interim reports of the D-JAM have been completed in April 2007, and implementation of the D-JAM process is pending progress on the political solution of the conflict.

For obvious reasons, most of the support that has been provided to Darfur so far is on humanitarian aid, in addition to assistance to AMIS, at the operational level, from the UN, NATO and the EU. Needless to say, development assistance coordination in the Sudan remains a challenge because it lacks clear mechanism for aid coordination at the Government level and it continues to revolve around the different priorities of humanitarian assistance, recovery efforts and development.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ World Bank, 2006, “Sudan Multi Donor Trust Funds, first progress report, Reporting Period, July 1 - December 31, 2005”, Multi Donor Trust Fund – National, February 26,

⁸⁶ World Bank, (2003)

Table No. 8: MDTF-N: Pledges, Commitment and Deposits, 2005-2007
(as of December 31, 2005)

	2005-07	2005	2005	2006	2007	2005-07
Donor	Total Pledge*	MDTF-S Pledge	Deposited	Committed	Committed	Total
Netherlands	195.0	22.8	23.4	35.1	33.8	92.3
Norway	100.0	**	20.3	23.7	12.5	36.5
UK	80.7	12.3	11.8	15.4	15.4	42.6
EC	45.5	39.9	28.2	28.2		0.0
Sweden	28.6	5.2	6.3	7.8	7.8	11.8
Denmark	15.0	2.0	6.2	0.0		0.0
Finland	12.0	6.0	4.4			0.0
Iceland	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Greece	0.06					0.1
Germany	26.0	13.0				0.0
Italy	5.2	2.6				0.0
Total (Oslo)	508.5	103.9	100.7	115.1	85.5	301.3
Post Oslo						
World Bank				5.0		
Saudi Arabia	50.0					
Grand Total	558.5	103.9	100.7	120.1	85.5	306.3
<i>Cumulative Commitment Authority</i>			100.7	220.8	306.2	

Table No. 9: MDTF-S: Pledges, Commitment and Deposits, 2005-2007

	2005-07	2005	2005	2006	2007	2005-07
Donor	Total Pledge*	MDTF-N Pledge	Deposited	Committed	Committed	Total
Netherlands	195.0	22.8	23.4	35.1	33.8	92.3
Norway	100.0	**	11.2	12.8	12.5	36.5
UK	80.7	12.3	11.8	15.4	15.4	42.6
EC	45.5	6.5				0.0
Sweden	28.6	1.4	3.4	4.2	4.2	11.8
Denmark	15.0	2.0				0.0
Finland	12.0	0.0				0.0
Iceland	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2
Greece	0.06		0.06			0.1
Germany	26.0	13.0				0.0
Italy	5.2	2.6				0.0
Total (Oslo)	508.5	60.6	49.8	67.6	66.0	183.4
Post Oslo						
World Bank				5.0		
Saudi Arabia	50.0					
Grand Total	558.5		49.8	72.6	66.0	188.4
<i>Cumulative Commitment Authority</i>			49.8	122.4	188.4	

* Total MDFTs combined pledged at Oslo at April 2005 exchange rates

** Norway did not disaggregate MDTF-NS and MDTF-SS

Source: World Bank, 2006, "Sudan Multi Donor Trust Funds, first progress report, Reporting Period, July 1 - December 31, 2005", Multi Donor Trust Fund – National, February 26

4. Trigger and augmenting factors

It has so far been demonstrated that the conflict in Darfur region has not erupted out of a vacuum but numerous factors have contributed to its spark. In addition to the causes identified earlier, there were other triggering factors. In this regard one of the most critical structural conditions that triggered large-scale conflict in Darfur has been the government's inadequate and often, tribal and ethnic response to the worsening situation in the region. During the late 1990s and by the turn of the new millennium, *Fur* villages between *Jebel Mara* and *Kebkabia* have been subjected to a systematic, organised and brutal dawn raids by the Janjaweed militia. In 2001 the historic village of Shoba that was once the capital of the *Fur* Sultanate in the 17th century and its vicinity were attacked and torched resulting in colossal civilian casualties. On 22nd of April 2002 three villages have been attacked and torched⁸⁷ and the attack resulted in the death of 26 villagers and 57 have been seriously wounded. These atrocities were repeated over on the 28th of April 2002 when Shoba was raided by the militia and torched for the second time in less than a year. During the same period of time the *Massaleet* villages in Western Darfur were subjected to similar attacks. Despite appeals to the government by the people of the affected areas, the authorities turned a blind eye, as has been the case with so many other brutal incidences during the previous years. The people then considered the local authorities and the central government complicit in their persecution and some local leaders decided to defend themselves through acquiring firearms and opening up training camps in *Jebel Mara*. It was evident that the authorities were aware of these training camps and some government sources admitted that the GoS has indeed encouraged the locals to go along these lines in order to defend their villages from militia attacks.⁸⁸ Other reports, albeit unsubstantiated indicate that the government in fact supplied this group with arms and ammunition and at the same time provided support to the Janjaweed to incite a conflict along the ethnic divide of Arabs and “*Zurga*”. However, instead of launching attacks against the Janjaweed militia the group that later called itself Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) issued statements that it seeks greater political autonomy and a more equitable share of resources from the central Sudanese authorities.

In addition to the developments in the Northern Parts of *Jebel Mara*, other reports in 2002 by local and international organisations as well as by Darfur groups in diaspora raised alarms on possible crisis in the region and called for preventive measures but

⁸⁷ The destroyed villages are; Umm Haraz, Um Haraz Elmadrassa and Daba.

⁸⁸ In a televised interview on Sudan Television in early 2003 before the war broke out, General Suleiman Abdullah Adam, the Commissioner of *Jebel Mara* by then admitted that the authorities were aware of the training camps and the view from the side of the government is that the locals have the right to defend their villages from militia attacks.

these were ignored. General Ibrahim Sulieman, the Governor of Northern Darfur, himself a Darfurian, who was well aware of the level of grievances and attentive of the complexity and dynamics of conflicts in the region opted for a peaceful settlement of the conflict through engaging the *Jebel Mara* rebel group, a decision that later compromised his own position. The Governor organised an “all-Darfur” inter-tribal leadership conference in Elfasher on 24-25 February 2003 to address the crisis. The conference formed mediation committees to negotiate with the rebel leaders who, while critical of the tribal orientation of the mediation committees, agreed to negotiate and presented nine demands including regional development and dismantling of the Janjaweed militia. But the conference ultimately failed because the GoS publicly refused to acknowledge the rebels' political grievances and opted for a military solution.

In March 2003 while the mediation committees have been canvassing for opinions and ways to contain the situation a confrontation occurred to the East of Jebel Mara between GoS forces and a contingent of the rebels. The rebel group issued a statement in the name of “Sudan Liberation Movement” (SLM) seeking a nationwide struggle against the government and demanding greater political autonomy and a more equitable share of resources for the region. The GOS response was to label the rebels “bandits and armed gangs” and to dispute the SLM political agenda, labelling the crisis as a local tribal conflict. Another rebel group, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) emerged by this time and a series of engagements between the rebels and the GoS forces took place culminating in the attack on Elfasher on 24 April 2003 in which the rebels destroyed the government’s military aircrafts.

5. Conclusions

The Sudan has been at war with itself since its independence in 1956. A series of civil conflicts that engulfed the country have severely impeded its political and economic development. All of these conflicts have only affected the peripheral areas of the country, in the South, the East, the Southeast, and the West, where livelihood has been overwhelmingly obliterated. The most recent of these conflicts is the current one in Darfur, which instantly brought the region to the forefront of the regional and international attention because of the severity of the human rights violations that have been committed in the region. The war that broke out in early 2003 when two rebel groups, SLM and JEM, attacked Sudan army garrisons has seen wide-scale mobilisation of the tribal militia that committed colossal atrocities against the civilian population of the region. Despite the signing of a peace agreement and despite strong involvement of the regional and international

community, the intensity of the conflict escalated resulting in worsening of the humanitarian situation in the region.

Numerous explanations have been given for the causes of the conflict in Darfur region. It is not principally rebel economic opportunity as argued by Collier and Hoeffler framework, environmental degradation or ethnicity as argued by some other researchers that are the root causes of the current conflict in Darfur. The seeds of the conflict have been sown by decades of deliberate marginalisation and neglect of the region; disproportionate power sharing to the favour of the riverine elites; manipulation of and persistent inequity in resource allocation; and incitement of tribal and ethnic conflicts, all of which are inherently political and economic. The prolong marginalisation of Darfur resulted in huge disparities between the center and the region, where life has become untenable. It contributed in creating conditions of imbalanced development, Socio-economic under-development where indicators, including education and health, are worst compared with the centre, compounded by low levels of public expenditure resulting in declining educational services and poor coverage of the health system with poor capacity for delivery at all levels.

The macro-economic policies adopted over the last three decades resulted in accelerated increase in inequality and ultimately have those living in the marginalized areas in general, and the people of Darfur in particular appear to be incidental to development rather than its focus. The macro-economic policies contributed to meagre outcomes in the areas of poverty reduction and though growth rates of more than 7% have been reported poverty rates remained exceptionally high. The result was mounting grievances and conflicts were inevitable.

The country's oil revenues, if properly used, could have at least partially alleviated poverty across the country. Oil revenues, however, have been misused and substantial amounts have been spent on the military. The government's military expenditure is incomparable with the expenditure on social services.

Bad governance in the Sudan in general and in Darfur in particular has been in the heart of the causes of the conflict. Among the characteristics of the country's bad governance are monopoly of power, rampant corruption, lack of transparency, dishonouring of peace agreements and military dictatorships that disbanded political parties, confiscated the right to assembly and freedom of expression. Governance in Darfur has been in crisis for a long time, limited and undermined. Key constraints that have limited the capacities of local governance structures are marginalisation, erosion of government capacity and weak mechanisms for accountability. The Native Administration system, which played greater roles in the past in conflict

resolution has been weakened, politicised and undermined by continuous government interventions. Achieving sustainable peace and a more balanced economic development in the Sudan requires a system of government based on effective devolution of powers between the centre and the peripheries.

The development role of the international community in the Sudan has been weak since 1989 when a military coup toppled a democratically elected government. Development aid has been initially scaled down but subsequently suspended a part from humanitarian aid. It has only resumed after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended the war in Southern Sudan. However, the commitments by the donor community to the Multi Donor Trust funds earmarked for reconstruction and development of the areas affected by war, in the South and the North has been weak. Actual deposits amounted to 26% and 33% of formalised commitments for the MDTF-N and MDTF-S respectively.

Interventions by some neighbouring countries contributed in escalating ethnic tensions in the region, in particular the Chadian-Libyan war. After the DPA was partially signed by one faction of the SLM in May 2005, some neighbouring countries introduced further polarisation within the rebel movements, something that has seriously jeopardized the AU/UN-led efforts to resuscitate the peace talks with the non-signatories.

Appendix 1: Conflicts and disputes in Darfur Region between 1970-2000
by conflict category

1970-1989		1990-2000	
Conflict/dispute	Category	Conflict/dispute	Category
Rezeighat and the Ma'alia	AR/AR	Rihaid Elburdi rural council and Edelfirsan rural council	AR/AR
Benihalba and Northern Rezeighat	AR/AR	Rihaid Elburdi rural council and Kabum rural council	AR/AR
Ta'aisha and the Salamat	AR/AR	Rihaid Elburdi rural council and Mukjar rural council	AF/AR
Benihalba and the Northern Rezeighat	AR/AR	Edelfirsan rural council and Kass rural council	AF/AR
Kababish, the Berti and the Zayadia	AF/AR	Zalingi rural council and Kass rural council	AF/AF
Rezighat and the Misairya	AR/AR	Kass rural council and Nertete rural councils	AF/AF
Misairya and the Hawasma	AR/AR	Zagawa and the Gimir	AF/AR
Gimir and the Flata	AR/AR	Zagawa Kube, Kebga, Gula, and the Gimir	AF/AR
Shartai Adam Ahmadai and the Bedeyiat	AF/AR	Zagawa and the Ma'alia	AF/AR
Fur and the Arabs	AF/AR	Ta'aisha and the Gimir	AR/AR
Adeela rural council and Abumatarig rural council	AR/AR	Zagawa and the Marareet	AF/AF
Abumatarq rural council and Elfirdos rural council	AR/AR	Zagawa and the Beni Hussein	AF/AR
ElDai'n rural council and South Western Nyala rural council	AR/AR	Zagawa, the Mima and the Birgid	AF/AR
Elfirdos rural council and Buram rural council	AR/AR	Zagawa and the Birgid	AF/AF
Buram rural and Giraida rural council	AF/AR	Zagawa and the Birgid	AF/AF
Graida rural council and Tulus rural council	AF/AR	Fur and the Tarjam	AF/AR
Tulus rural council and Wadhajam rural council	AR/AR	Zagawa and the Arabs	AF/AR
Western Nyala rural council and Tulus	AF/AR	Sudanese Zagawa and the Chadian Zagawa	AF/AF
Tulus rural council and Kateela rural council	AR/AR	Zagawa and the Rezeighat	AF/AR
Kateela rural council and Edelfirsan rural council	AR/AR	Arabs and the Massaleet	AF/AR

Source: Takana, Y.S., "A Report on tribal conflicts in Darfur" 1997, unpublished report

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