



**NATIONAL REVIEW REPORT**

**ON**

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION**

**AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION (1995)**

**JULY 2024**

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## 1. ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
BPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MGCSW	Ministry of Gender Child and Social Welfare
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
SSNBS	South Sudan National Bureau of Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDHR	United Nations Declaration on Human Rights
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

## 2. MAP OF SOUTH SUDAN BY STATE



Source: World Maps 2015

### 3. LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. List of laws and policies on gender equality and Women's economic empowerment (2020-2024).

Table2. Women's representation in national Assembly (2020-2020)

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Table 4. Overall women representation in the R-TGONU

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#### 4. FOREWORD

There have been numerous pivotal moments in South Sudan's journey towards gender equality and women's empowerment over the past years. This followed the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995.

The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) provides a 35 per cent quota for women's representation in government at national and local levels. Currently, more South Sudanese women and girls are actively involved in the country's political processes at different levels serving as but not limited to: Vice President, Ministers, Speaker, Undersecretaries, Governor, Deputy Governors, State Ministers, Members of the Commissions, and party representatives. The Revitalized Peace Agreement for the Resolution of Conflicts in South Sudan (2018) provided for a 35 per cent quota for women's representation in government.

However, achieving gender equality in women's political participation is still a distant reality. The quota is not consistently implemented and equal participation of women in politics necessitates more than affirmative action in government appointments.

As it stands, the MGCSW has done a lot to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment through several initiatives, policies, and legislation.

Last but not least, MGCSW applauds its partners and other government agencies who have demonstrated dedication to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

**Aya Benjamin Libo Warille**  
**Minister,**  
**Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare,**  
**The Republic of South Sudan)**

## 5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The Ministry extends its gratitude to the stakeholders: Government (from National and States), MPs, CSOs, INGOs, UN Agencies and other IPs for their generous contribution during the stakeholder consultations and review.

Furthermore, the Ministry expresses gratitude for the contributions from the Office of Her Excellency, Mama Rebecca Nyandeng De Mabior, the Vice President of the Republic of South Sudan, as well as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, National Bureau of Statistics, Central Bank of South Sudan, and other government entities that provided valuable reports, documents, and data for this report.

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**Esther Ikere Eluzia**  
**Undersecretary,**  
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**The Republic of South Sudan**



## 6. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As evidenced by various achievements in the past five years, South Sudan has made significant progress in advancing gender equality and women empowerment. These include the incorporation of gender perspectives into national security and peace efforts, the development of the Anti - GBV Bill (2023), Family Law Bill (2023), and the implementation of targeted programs to enhance girl child participation in education.

In addition, women's empowerment is evident through their increased presence in economic activities, active engagement in public policy discussions, and increased representation in decision making. The establishment of gender departments and research centres in universities, such as University of Juba and development of favourable policies, such as the Women Empowerment Bill (2023) and Women Enterprise Development Fund Bill (2024) to create opportunities for women increased leadership and participation in decision making and businesses. These efforts demonstrate the country's commitment to promoting gender equality and women empowerment.

The increased influence and empowerment of women is evident in the integration of gender concerns in public policy discussions, the active presence of women-focused NGOs, their growing participation in the economic sphere, and the rising number of women involved in electoral processes. Stakeholder interviews preceding this report highlighted these as indicators of gender-specific progress over the past 25 years, including the last five years.

Additionally, some universities, including the Universities of Juba, Catholic University, and the late President Dr. John Garang De-Mabior established gender departments and research centres to provide education and access to gender-related data. However, despite these advancements, there are still challenges, such as low representation of women in political and public office, limited gender-related results from policy commitments, and the reinforcement of limitations to women's choices and opportunities due to patriarchal beliefs and social norms.

The various data from South Sudan indicates that there are clear signs of alignment with the objectives outlined in the Beijing Platform's 12 Areas of Concern. This is evident through various achievements, such as implementing policies focusing on promoting inclusive growth and enhancing women's economic involvement, efforts to ensuring high enrolment rates of girls in primary schools translate into equally high completion rates at primary and secondary levels, initiatives to improving access to education for women and girls in conflict-affected areas, programs to combating gender-based violence, and reallocating sector budgets to addressing gender disparities and providing social safety nets.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action continues to serve as a benchmark for developing subsequent international, regional, and national frameworks aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women. For example, the 14 indicators under Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals largely reflect the 12 critical areas of concern outlined in the Platform. At the country level, progress varies across different indicators of Goal 5, with some areas showing more advancement than others. Progress has been more noticeable in indicator 5.1.1 (laws and frameworks) compared to indicators 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 (increasing women's participation and leadership). Similarly, efforts to combat violence against women and girls (indicator 5.2.1) have seen more visible progress than initiatives to end harmful practices, such as child marriage and women genital mutilation/cutting (indicator 5.3.2). These disparities in performance can be attributed to various factors, including conflicting priorities for funding allocation and competing national agendas.

The Government of South Sudan is continuously seeking ways to improve the situation of women and girls through collaboration and partnerships at different levels in line with the Beijing Platform.

However, challenges in different geopolitical zones and the difficulty in reaching women and girls in rural areas pose serious obstacles. In addition, gender equality programs often overlook specific categories of women and girls, such as those with disabilities. These challenges have been acknowledged by the National Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare. Discussions are ongoing to address these challenges. The report is divided into 4 chapters, each highlighting achievements and challenges specific to the 5-year period under review. The introduction provides background information, while chapter 1 gives an overview of achievements and challenges. Chapter 2 focuses on progress with the Beijing Platform's 12 Areas of Concern, Chapter 3 discusses institutional arrangements for gender-specific data, and Chapter 4 explains challenges in implementing the BPfA and the emerging priorities for the next 5 years.

## 7. INTRODUCTION

The Republic of South Sudan has consistently shown its dedication to promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) by ratifying numerous global and regional normative frameworks. These include CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security, the African Union Women Peace and Security Continental Framework, the Maputo Protocol, the Generational Equality Agenda, etc. National commitments include the National Gender Policy Strategic Plan, the South Sudan National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325, and other frameworks aimed at advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

The government of South Sudan has been proactive in implementing the legislation and policies to enhance the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. As such, national reviews shall be based on the following six dimensions of the 12 concerns areas of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action but not limited to:

1. Inclusive development, shared prosperity, and decent work;
2. Poverty eradication, social protection, and social services;
3. Freedom from violence, stigma, and stereotypes;
4. Participation, accountability, and gender-responsive institutions;
5. Peaceful and inclusive societies; and
6. Environmental conservation, protection, and rehabilitation.

Aimed at promoting women's rights and gender equality globally, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) was adopted during the 4th World Conference on Women in 1995. It outlined commitments in 12 key areas to support women's full development and equality with men. The BPfA established guiding principles for future actions and strategies for women and emphasizing the integration of women's concerns into national plans and policies. Governments and the UN are committed to promoting gender mainstreaming to ensure a gender perspective in all policies and programs at various levels.

South Sudan is preparing to submit the BPfA+30 report, which will assess current challenges in implementing the BPfA agreements, highlight achievements in gender equality and women's empowerment, and contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development from a gender perspective.

## 8. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The primary purpose is to facilitate a comprehensive national review and appraisal of progress made in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for action, aligning with the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development.

## 9. METHODOLOGY

This report was produced using a knowledge synthesis approach, which involved reviewing multiple country reports, sector situation updates, and studies. Additionally, feedback was gathered through stakeholder consultations and structured interviews with key government Institutions and a few civil society groups representing the ten states and three Administrative Areas. The National Bureau of Statistics, the Office of His Excellency the Vice President of the Republic of South Sudan, various government ministries and the United Nations Agencies, and other international organizations provided the information for the report.

The hunter-gatherer approach involved reviewing workshop reports and recent stakeholder consultative forums organized by the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare and UN Women over the last four years. These forums were held as part of the processes to discuss the revised National Gender Policy and the implementation status of the UNSCR 1325. In addition, a desk review of grey literature and secondary data complemented the hunter-gathering process.

The Government of South Sudan has been proactive in implementing laws and policies to support these frameworks, such as NG Policy Framework and its Strategic Plan (2013–18), the Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development, focusing on eliminating discrimination at the workplace.

- Provisions in the TCSS to improve women’s representation in government, judiciary, independent institutions, and commissions.
- Labour Act 2017 provisions for special measures to assist persons requiring special assistance.
- Launch of the South Sudan Women’s Charter by the Ministry of Gender Child and Social Welfare.
- In 2025, the global community will mark the significant anniversary related to gender equality:
  - 30th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing 1995).
  - 25th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.
  - 10 years of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The National review will focus on six dimensions, which cluster in the 12 critical areas of the Beijing Declaration:

1. Inclusive development, shared prosperity, and decent work
2. Poverty eradication, social protection, and social services
3. Freedom from violence, stigma, and stereotypes
4. Participation, accountability, and gender-responsive institutions
5. Peaceful and inclusive societies

6. Environmental conservation, protection, and rehabilitation

10. CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW ANALYSIS OF ACHIEVEMENTS, GAPS AND CHALLENGES.

Achievements

SNAPSHOTS OF ACHIEVEMENTS (2020-2024)	MAJOR SETBACKS (2020-2024)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gender-specific law/policy reforms at national and state levels respectively</li> <li>- Implementing aspects of UNSCR 1325. e.g. inclusions of women in Local Government, Executive and periodic gender training for security sector agencies.</li> <li>- Marginal upsurge in Women’s political participation, generally.</li> <li>- Targeted actions for expanding women’s engagement in the agriculture sector.</li> <li>- Sector gender policies adopted in some key sectors, such as agriculture.</li> <li>- Developing the South Sudan Women’s Charter that consolidates women’s demands in the Permanent Constitution Making Process.</li> <li>- National Action Plan II on UNSR 1325.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Heighted gender-specific vulnerabilities due to insurgency in some parts of the country.</li> <li>- Reduction in numbers of women appointment into political and public offices.</li> <li>- Patriarchal customs and social norms still limit women’s access to productive resources, opportunities and choices.</li> <li>- Consistently low budgetary allocation to empowerment.</li> </ul>

Equality and Non-Discrimination under the Law

South Sudan’s law and policy regime on gender equality comprise national laws and policies, regional policies and international treaties. South Sudan developed national laws, such as the *Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011 (as amended)* which guarantee equality before the law under Article 14, *Penal Code Act (2008)*, which protects women against rape and other sexual offences under Chapter XVIII, *Child Act (2008)*, which reflects the provisions of the CRC on the protection of the rights of the Child, including the right to non-discrimination, the *Labour Act (2017)*, which guaranteed the principle of non-discrimination in the work place, *Nationality Act (2011)*, and *Nationality Regulations (2011)*, which guarantee the equal rights of women and men to acquire, change or retain their citizenship and nationality and the *Local Government Act (2009)*, which embodies the principle of equality of men and women under *Section 110*.

The international and regional human rights treaties South Sudan acceded to include the CEDAW, CRC, ICCPR, ICESCR, CRPD, Maputo Protocol, African Union Gender Policy, Continental Policy Framework on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights among others.

There are also several institutional arrangements in place to ensure implementation of the Penal Code Act, 2008 (as amended) and the various gender-specific commitments, which South Sudan has signed up to. Some of them were established before the 5-years reporting period. For instance, Ministries of Gender, Child and Social Welfare were established in each of the 10 States and 3 Administrative Areas, Inter-ministerial Gender Focal Persons placed in all government Institutions, and the Committee on the

Trafficking of Person, which deal with specific thematic issues that affect women and girls have also been established and has an office at National level.

In order to ensure that gender issues are mainstreamed across sectors and that there is synergy between the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare and all sectors, a gender focal unit system is in place. Within this system, gender focal persons have been appointed for each Ministries and Commissions.

Table 1: list of some gender related legislation

National/State	Name of Law
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan (as amended)</li> <li>- National Elections (amendment) Act, 2023</li> <li>- Political Parties (Amendment) Act, 2023</li> <li>- Constitution Making Process Act, 2022</li> <li>- Penal Code Act, 2008 (as amended)</li> <li>- Child Act, 2008</li> <li>- Labour Act, 2017</li> <li>- Local Government Act, 2009</li> <li>- Nationality Act, 2011</li> <li>- Nationality Regulation, 2011</li> </ul> <p><u>Developed Bills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <u>Anti-GBV Bill, 2023</u></li> <li>✓ <u>Family Law Bill, 2023</u></li> <li>✓ <u>Women Empowerment Bill, 2023</u></li> <li>✓ <u>Women Enterprise Development Fund Bill, 2024</u></li> </ul>
State	Not available

### Poverty reduction, agricultural productivity and food security

Also, women’s economic empowerment through targeted support within the agriculture sector has also been sustained over the past 5 years. This has been achieved through different programmes that aim to improve access to credit and general input support for women in agriculture.

In 2023, The Government launched a major USD 9 million-initiative to help communities adapt to climate change by strengthening climate early warning systems and restoring the country’s ecosystems in 2 of the 10 states (Kapoeta and Tereka).

South Sudan launched a 5-year US\$ 33 million project to build long-term resilience within vulnerable agro-pastoral communities. However, a multi-hazard early warning system; ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions, including the restoration of 16,000 hectares of land. 75,000 expected people will benefit from the initiatives and 30,000 pastoralists will have better access to water for their livestock.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) launched RALP supports capacity building of farmers in good agronomic practices through formation and strengthening of farmer groups and improving farmers knowledge and skills. The project supports investment by increasing access to food

for households facing acute food insecurity, increasing the availability of quality seeds and enhancing access to technology and mechanization. The project provides technical assistance and capacity building to the MAFS.

MAFS has established a Single Project Coordination Unit to provide technical support to the implementation of the project. The Project Achievements are: 15,500 (including 11,454 women headed) farming households reached with agricultural inputs and services; 5,319 (including 3,935 women headed) small scale farmers provided with climate-resilient seeds; 149 farmer organizations established and strengthened; 149 National, state and county staff trained in delivering agricultural services; and 25,779 (including 13,137 women) farmers biometrically registered to receive support.<sup>1</sup>

Also, the Ministry has introduced a six year plan (2021-2027) called South Sudan Livelihoods and Resilience Project (SSLRP). The SSLRP supports agriculture recovery and income stabilization efforts through Community-Driven Development (CDD) approach. This project contributes towards strengthening household and community institutions, strengthening social cohesion whilst contributing to the economic empowerment of communities.

SSLRP employs a community driven development planning approach to build strong and inclusive community-based organizations to develop community driven development plans. The plans support the community to improve agricultural production and livelihoods through investment for climate sensitive agriculture production and rural livelihoods as well as building community infrastructure to support production and marketing. The project supports MAFS through building institutional capacity and policy support.

#### [Marginal upsurge in women's leadership and political participation](#)

BPfA, which indicates that more women have, within this period, become politically active in South Sudan and have participated at different levels of government.

This surge in women's political participation is due to a number of factors: an emerging policy framework which reinforces the need for women's access and engagement; high level advocacy, and mobilization of women led CSOs; ongoing advocacy, enrichment campaigns and training support by civil society; partnerships and collaboration between the national gender machinery, civil society and international organizations.

There have been efforts made to sustain and build upon the above successes. A number of institutional and policy mechanisms have been put in place. One of these is the Revitalized Peace Agreement for South Sudan (2018) which provides a 35 per cent minimum threshold for women's participation.

- There is one women VP in government and one women speaker and one women governor (in Wau state) and 8 ministers out of 35 ministers.<sup>2</sup>
- There is an increase of women numbers in the national legislature parliament because of the Revitalized peace agreement.
- At the state level, the number of women has decreased because women are dropped and replaced by men (apart of Jonglei and few other states).

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security. 2022. "Resilient Agricultural Livelihoods Project (RALP)." Accessed on 26 July 2024 <https://mafs.gov.ss/resilient-agricultural-livelihoods-project-ralp/>

<sup>2</sup> National consultation held on the 25<sup>th</sup>- 26<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

- At the ministerial level State at the CES, there is change of number of women are more due to the implementation of affirmative action.
- At the executive and commission levels, women are less because some parties did not respect /implement the 35 per cent.
- Electoral bodies for elections have not met the affirmative action.
- The government has increased the affirmative action from 25 per cent to 35 per cent in decision making positions through the 2018 R-ARCSS
- The Standard Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Gender will provide the gender aggregated data.
- The national legislative parliament passed Political Party Council to ensure the representation of the women in the various political parties.
- The establishment of national Election Commission has recognized the 35 per cent representation of women at the national and state electoral offices.
- The National Constitution Review Committee also revered the 35 per cent affirmative action.
- The state legislative assemblies have achieved the 35 per cent women representation, such as EES, 33 women out of 100 members, the WES 44 women out of 100 members, Speaker of the National Legislative Assembly, the Speaker of WES Assembly.<sup>3</sup>
- Women governor 1 in WBGs, Deputy governor in Jonglei, Deputy governor in Central Bank of South Sudan.<sup>4</sup>

Table 2 Percentage of women in National Assembly: 2016-2020

Position	2016				2020			
	Male	Female	Total	Female %	Male	Female	Total	Female %
<b>National Legislative Assembly</b>	274	109	383	28%		116	350	33%
<b>Council of States</b>	44	6	50	12%		2	50	4%
<b>Governors</b>						1	9	
<b>Electoral management</b>						1		
<b>National Ministers</b>	30	8	38	22%		10*	35	28%
<b>Undersecretaries</b>						2	35	5.7%

<sup>3</sup> Interview with the participants.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with the participants.

<b>East Africa Legislative Assembly</b>	6	3	9					
<b>National Dialogue Steering Committee members</b>	81	21	102					
<b>Independent Commissions</b>	19	2	21		17	3	20	3.3%
<b>*One female is a deputy minister</b>								

Source: Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs (2020)

Broad stakeholder collaborative initiatives on gender equality and women’s empowerment, including men and boys have been introduced and sustained. The role of men and boys in promoting gender justice is now a topical issue within the national discourse. In 2020, the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare with funding from the World Bank is implementing two projects:

South Sudan Productive Safety Net for Socioeconomic Opportunities Project Development Objective: To provide cash transfers and access to income generating opportunities and strengthen the National Safety Net Delivery System.

The development objective of the Productive Safety Net for Socioeconomic Opportunities Project for South Sudan is to provide cash transfers and access to income generating opportunities and strengthen the national safety net delivery system. The project comprises of four components.<sup>5</sup>

Cash transfer and complementary social measures will provide cash assistance to poor and vulnerable households (HHs) in selected counties. This initiative is aimed to meet immediate consumption gaps while also supporting resilience building to withstand future natural shocks and promoting improved HH awareness and investment in human capital growth.

It consists of following sub-components: Cash for labour-intensive public works and complementary social measures; Direct income support; Provision of economic opportunities will implement measures aimed to enhancing economic opportunities of poor and vulnerable youth in an effort to support them to become productive citizens of South Sudan.

Strengthened institutional capacity and social protection system will support institutional capacity building for SP and strengthening of the safety net delivery system to serve as the foundation of an eventual government-led national safety net program in South Sudan. Project management, monitoring and evaluation, and knowledge generation will support the day-to-day project management, monitoring, and coordination, as well as broader knowledge generation.<sup>6</sup>

#### South Sudan women’s social and Economic Empowerment Project Development Objective

The project development objective is to increase girls and women’s access to livelihood, entrepreneurial and GBV services and to strengthen the government’s capacity to provide these services.

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare. 2024. “South Sudan Productive Safety Net for Socioeconomic Opportunities Project.” Accessed on 27 July 2024 <https://mgcsw.gov.ss/snsop/>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid



The development objective of Women's Social and Economic Empowerment Project for South Sudan is to increase girls and women's access to livelihood, entrepreneurial and Gender-based violence (GBV) services and to strengthen the government's capacity to provide these services.

This project has four components.

The first component, Community Empowerment Support to Women and Girls. This is aimed to support an increase in women's and girls' access to social and livelihoods support services through a community-based approach focusing on the construction of Women's Economic Community Centre (WECCs). This initiative will offer a core package of integrated services in women and girl friendly spaces.<sup>7</sup> The second component, Women's Entrepreneurial Opportunity Facility, will focus on women owned SGBs. The third component, Services for Survivors of GBV, has the following sub-components: (i) National GBV Hotline and Coordination; and (ii) A Safe House Facility for Survivors of GBV. The fourth component, Institutional Strengthening and Project Management, has the following sub-components: (i) Institutional Strengthening; and (ii) Project Management.

The strong interface between the policy space and civil society, including gender focused NGO's and coalitions. The interface between the Government of South Sudan and Civil Society continues to be robust. The National Gender Policy (NAP) identifies interaction between government and civil society as one of its four key principles. The policy provides that strategies partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including civil society shall form part of the government's broad delivery strategies. Following the formation of the government of national unity, civil society and government began to interface more constructively. The CSOs have arching national development framework as a constituency that should form part of every national dialogue, policy formulation or review process. They have provided technical support to government led processes on gender equality and are regularly invited to participate in the monitoring and evaluation of gender equality programmes.

#### [Ongoing Bilateral cooperation, knowledge management, information sharing and monitoring](#)

South Sudan has several gender-focused cooperation agreements with international partners, such as UN Women, UNFPA, IFAD, UNDP, UNODC, UNICEF, AfDB and the World Bank. These have all been extremely instrumental to delivering on the BPfA and other national level commitments. The country has also volunteered for international and regional peer review processes, promoting shared learning with regional stakeholders. This has ensured that sectors develop their respective annual monitoring and evaluation (M &E) plans and improving access and content on the web portals of various Ministries, Departments and Agencies.

The consistent, institutionalized tracking of gender results in holistic manner and the coalescing of sector specific gender results into one national database has remained a major challenge. However, within the period under review, the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare has continued to work towards an improved research, documentation and dissemination regime. This has involved the creation of thematic data banks, strengthened medial interface and the publication of periodic internal reports. These efforts have also been complimented by civil society's documentation of experiences, milestones and best practices. These improved documentation and information sharing practices have led to increased positive reporting of women's contributions to national development and achievements in the media.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

## Gaps and Challenges

South Sudan still has considerable challenges in spite of the achievements registered by the government. This calls for aggressive and holistic approach in promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women in South Sudan. These challenges are interrelated and re-enforce each other. For example, issues of security and justice are closely related to the sexual gender-based violence, which have direct impacts on the health and livelihood of women, men and children. These affect the socio-economic status, including the education, income, employment and representation in decision-making process.

- I. Patriarchy: With clear demonstrated political will and other national legal document guarantees, the attitudes toward gender, equality and the rights of women are still predominantly strong in the patriarchal social systems. This entrenches gender based discrimination and exposed women and other vulnerable groups to marginalisation, violations and abuse of human rights, especially of women and children. This patriarchal system means that men dominate most social spheres and are accorded most productive assets, powers, privileges and authority. The negative effect of this marginalisation is witness always in all sectors both private and public, and this heavily impinges on the development of the country.
- II. Obstacle in political participation and governance: South Sudan still faces or experiences unbalanced power relations and opportunities between women and men at all levels of government. While the 35 per cent in the affirmative action are commendable and has brought increased political participation of women in the legislative assembly, differences and disparities are still evident in legislative assemblies, executive level, in public administration. In Lakes state and Northern Bahr el Ghazal, the disparities are 50 per cent and 56 per cent respectively. Great disparities exist in the Judiciary, Executives and in the local government structures. The capacity of women to effectively participate and engage with their male counterpart in leadership and decision-making is low.
- III. The weak legal and justice sectors: South Sudan legal systems is still facing a lot of challenges in terms of human resources to handle many cases. The challenges to equity in accessing justice is one issue that affects women most, especially in rural areas where cases are handle by customary court systems, which are dominated by the deeply patriarchal beliefs and practices. There is, therefore, urgent need to streamline and harmonise the legal systems and judicial practices, and capacity improvement and development in the justice sectors to ensure that existing legislation within the country are properly used and are correctly enforced. Initiatives in the legal sectors, such as legal aid to be put in place, especially in rural areas to cater for the disadvantage women and men. More effort should be put in the informal justice systems, such as the paralegals in the community and village mediators.
- IV. Security: South Sudan still grapples with the aftermaths of the conflicts before independence and the existing internal crisis, unresolved issues with the neighbouring country, Sudan and the internal conflicts in both Sudan and South Sudan, inter communal violent cause by such practices like cattle raiding and other clashes over land issues, which has been worsened by the small arms among the civilian. These leads to insecurity and soil problems in the community and has gender related dimension, such as increased incidence of rape, abduction of women and children, disease and deprivation of human dignity. Gender equality interventions must take into consideration, not only the gender effects of insecurity, but also the role women can play in conflict prevention and peace building at national and community

levels. This means, carefully scrutinising the role of women in disarmament, demobilisation and re-integration (DDR) process, mediation and peace building initiatives.

- V. Poor retention, promotion and recruitment in security sector: Inasmuch as the security sector has demonstrated willingness and gender responsiveness by taking initiatives to train and raise gender awareness, there is need to focus and increased commitments on the retention, recruitment and promotion of women in the security sector including the South Sudan liberation army (SPLM), the South Sudan Police Service (SSPS) and other correctional and organised forces in South Sudan,
- VI. Harmful traditional practices and sexual violence: Civil war in South Sudan where marred by widespread forms of sexual gender-based violence, including rapes as weapon of war, abduction, force sexual favours and new risk and forms of violence against women. In post war, South Sudan sexual gender-based violence remains one the serious health and development indicator. Protection and response mechanism remains weak. Prevalent forms of SGBV, include domestic's violence and wife battery, abduction of women and children during cattle raiding, rape and sexual assault, wife inheritance, forced and child marriages.
- VII. Structural causes of SGBV and lack of access to justice, especially to rural women and men are also manifested in the denial of women to inheritance of productive assets, lack of voice and decision-making in family and community matters, denial of right of choice to found a family, all of which are common in rural areas. However, this is positive in the transitional constitution of the republic of South Sudan and the bills of rights. However, there is serious challenge in the awareness and the under reporting and ignorance in understating whether they are being subjected to violence.
- VIII. In adequate psychosocial support mechanism and other protection and medical services, especially in conflict prone areas, provision means that many do not seek protection or redress, even where the facilities are available and this calls for more multifaceted approach in making sure that the government together with development partners address the reporting and monitoring of such challenges, especially in the rural settings.

## 11. CHAPTER TWO: PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION.

This chapter describes the achievements of the past five years (2020-2024), which are grouped into 6 categories, namely:

- (1) inclusive development, welfare and decent work;
- (2) poverty eradication, social protection and social services;
- (3) freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes;
- (4) participation, accountability, gender responsive institutions;
- (5) a peaceful and inclusive society;
- (6) nature conservation, protection and rehabilitation.

### (1) INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, WELFARE AND DECENT WORK

This part covers critical areas including A. Women and poverty; F. Women and the economy; I. Women's human rights, and L. The girl child

#### The role of women in paid work and employment

Achieving gender equality and empowering women in all sectors, including the economy and development as well as employment, has become a national goal in the domestic and foreign policies of the Republic of South Sudan's government. South Sudan has ratified the main international human rights instruments that protect women's rights, including those related to work:

To implement ILO Convention No. 100 on Equal Remuneration, the Government of South Sudan has enacted Labour Act, 2017 Laws of South Sudan replacing the Labour Act of 1997. The Labour Act of 2017, Section 49 provides that all employers shall pay the wages/salaries of their employees without discrimination on the bases of nationality and in the same legal tender.<sup>9</sup>

The country unemployment rate for 2022 was 12.44 per cent, a 1.85 per cent decline from 2021. South Sudan unemployment rate for 2021 was 14.30 per cent, a 0.12 per cent decline from 2020.<sup>10</sup>

ILO Convention No. 111 on the Elimination of Discrimination related to the Employment (through Law No. 21/1999). The National and State Ministries of Labour have emphasized their commitment to create decent work for women. South Sudan has adopted the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958, No. 111, on 29 April 2012 and has since made progress to domesticate the provisions of the Convention through the national Labour Act, 2017 and the Labour Regulation, 2022 that strengthened the Government's commitment to eliminate discrimination related to employment.

Women, Business and the Law 2020 presents an index covering 190 economies and structured around the life cycle of a working woman. In total, 35 questions are scored across the eight indicators. Overall scores are then calculated by taking the average of each indicator, with 100 representing the highest

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<sup>9</sup> Section 49(1) of the Labour Act, 2017 Laws of South Sudan.

<sup>10</sup> World Bank.2024. "South Sudan Unemployment Rate." Accessed 29 July 2024.<https://www.macrotrends.net/global-metrics/countries/SSD/south-sudan/unemployment-rate#:~:text=Unemployment%20refers%20to%20the%20share,a%200.12%25%20decline%20from%202020.> (

possible score. Data refer to the laws and regulations that are applicable to the main business city (Juba). Different rules may apply in other so local legislation should be reviewed. Based on this approach, South Sudan scores 70 out of 100. The overall score for South Sudan is higher than the regional average observed across Sub-Saharan Africa (69.9).<sup>11</sup>

The ministry of Labour is working on the growth in the service sector and expansion of formal employment encourages increase of employment in the formal sector. Employments in the agricultural sector, even though women do an estimated 80 per cent of the agricultural work in South Sudan, they are still expected to do all the domestic chores before and after their productive labour, with limited assistance from men. An alarming trend is the increase of informal work segment among women, which has increased the gender gap in South Sudan. Therefore, women in rural areas have a higher opportunity to work in the informal sector.<sup>12</sup>

#### Steps related to unpaid care and domestic workers as well as promoting work-family conciliation

South Sudan has implemented measures to support the rights of female workers, particularly in ensuring work-family balance through provisions for maternity leave, flexible working hours for pregnant women, and the availability of lactation and childcare rooms in office buildings. The Ministry of Labour is actively advocating for the allocation of dedicated spaces for childcare and breastfeeding in both public and private sector offices, apartment buildings, and public areas to ensure the effective enforcement of these rights. In addition, some ministries and private sectors have started to offer leave for new fathers. However, there no available data to support this claim.

The impact of fiscal budget cuts/savings on spending for public services or downsizing the public sector for women. The Government of South Sudan does not make fiscal budget cuts or savings on spending for public services. There are no available data to support this.

## (2) POVERTY ERADICATION, SOCIAL PROTECTION, AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**Critical areas: A. Women and poverty; B. Women's education and training; C. Women and health, and I. Women's human rights.**

#### Reducing women's poverty rate

South Sudan's poverty rate has increased since 2020 up to date its estimated to be at 82.3 per cent, which is one of the highest poverty rates in the world.<sup>13</sup>

World Bank, UN Agencies and other developmental partners in collaboration with the government has implemented a number of poverty reduction programs for women and social protection, including The South Sudan Safety Net Project (SSSNP). The SSSNP has been a source of great hope for thousands of South Sudanese households across the country. The SSSNP has improved the livelihoods and resilience of thousands of beneficiaries, providing temporary income opportunities, such as re-stocking small home-based shops, selling farm produce to 423,100 individuals from 65,045 households across the ten

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<sup>11</sup> World Bank Report. 2020. "Women, Business and the Law" Accessed 29 July 2024 <https://wbi.worldbank.org/content/dam/documents/wbi/2020/sep/South-sudan.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> World Vision, Gender Analysis Report. 2021. "Feed II Gender Analysis: Key Findings in South Sudan" Accessed 29 July 2024. <https://www.worldvision.es/media/sxtm5ein/feed-ii-summary-gender-analysis-august2021.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> The Global Population Review Report. 2024.

counties in South Sudan, including the capital Juba Municipality, through Direct Income Support (DIS) and Labour-intensive Public Works (LIPWs).<sup>14</sup>

National Economic Recovery and growth Plan comprises a total of 4 pillars. One of these pillars is promoting inclusive growth through social cohesion and social inclusion. For instance, the poverty level was at 83.2 per cent in 2024 couple with the economic crisis.

- The South Sudan for women projects are managed by the National Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare is facilitating women’s access to improved livelihoods through targeted assistance following key principles of inclusion, objective targeting transparency and accountability, enabling culture, openness to learning.
- In 2020, the National Government, through the MGCSW and in partnership with the World Bank designed the South Sudan for Women Projects.<sup>15</sup> This is a pro-poor program specifically targeted at marginalized and disadvantaged women in rural and per-urban communities with the overall objective of supporting women’s improved livelihood opportunities in selected communities across South Sudan the 10 States and 3 Administrative Areas.
  - Despite the improved efforts at expanding women’s economic opportunities, there are challenges to women’s access to these opportunities. These include;
- Low financial literacy and awareness among women.
- Eligibility criteria often so stringent that they tend to exclude a lot of the women from accessing existing opportunities for financial support.
- Low levels of participation by women in the development of guidelines from accessing credit support leads to the emergence of eligibility guidelines that tend to restrict rather than expand women’s access.
- Large numbers of women are involved in small businesses and many of the existing support excludes this level of business from accessing their funds.
- Most banks which can provide support to women who do not qualify for other support charge high interest rates 16. 4 per cent <sup>16</sup>and this further excludes potential female beneficiaries.
- While there are still several gaps in terms of performance and results, women’s groups, research institutions and civil society as whole have regularly brought the voices and experiences of women and girls to bear in macroeconomic policy making.

#### Increase the access to social protection for women

The Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare (MGCSW) is responsible for supervising the combination of private and public measures aimed to shielding individuals and households from the negative impacts of shocks and stresses.

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<sup>14</sup> World Bank. 2023. “Enhancing the Resilience of Poor Households in South Sudan.” Accessed on 27 July 2024 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2023/02/22/enhancing-the-resilience-of-poor-households-in-afe-south-sudan#:~:text=The%20SSNP%20has%20improved%20the,incluing%20the%20capital%20Juba%20Municipality%20C>

<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare. 2024. “South Sudan Productive Safety Net for Socioeconomic Opportunities Project.” Accessed on 29 July 2024 <https://mgcsw.gov.ss/snsop/>

<sup>16</sup> World Bank. 2024. “Lending Interest Rate (%) – South Sudan.” Accessed 29 July 2024. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FR.INR.LEND?locations=SS>

Proposed program improvement: continue and perfect the implementation of poverty eradication strategies that has already been going. The development of social protection needs to be directed at increasing the value of program benefits and its coverage. In addition, it is necessary to develop a policy/guideline to address the issues of social protection for women.

#### Improving the health of women and girls

The interim constitution of the Republic of South Sudan recognises health and health services as a human right. Government shall promote, respect, and protect the people's right to health and health services. The South Sudan has a historical heavy burden of diseases, including communicable diseases, neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), with a rising trend of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and mental health disorders significantly affect the population (HSSP, 2021). According to the 2011 health facility mapping, only approximately 44 per cent of the population lived within a five-kilometre radius of a health facility. The health sector in South Sudan receives a meagre 2.5 per cent of the government's budget in the 2022/2023 fiscal year, which is significantly lower than the 15 per cent target set in the 2001 Abuja Declaration. The health system governance, leadership and coordination are also weak due to inadequate capacity and skills at both national and sub-national levels, the nation is substantially depended on external funding's. There is a severe shortage of trained health professionals in South Sudan. However, the health system is confronted with significant challenges due to a shortage of health products, which has resulted in severe service interruptions (HSSP, 2021).

The delivery of essential health products to health facilities (last mile delivery) continues to be a challenge. The infrastructure of the health sector is still insufficiently developed. Additionally, the availability and sustainability of the necessary infrastructure to effectively deliver health services have been compromised by the chronic conflict. The access to water supply was estimated at 41 per cent (65 per cent in urban areas and 35 per cent in rural areas). In 2017, access to safely managed pipe-borne water is almost non-existent, estimated at 3 per cent nationally. Regarding sanitation, only 1 in 9 people have access to basic sanitation services nationally. This problem is more severe in rural areas, where only 1 in 20 residents have access to improved sanitation infrastructure, compared to 2 in 5 urban residents (Joint Monitoring Program data, 2019). However, the use of rudimentary sanitation facilities remains high in the countryside, causing persistent and major cholera outbreaks and other health related diseases.

#### Health care service Delivery:

The overall general health services availability is so low at 30.4 per cent, with the health infrastructure and service utilization indices at 43.2 per cent and 15.05 per cent respectively. The health workforce stock is far below the recommended to attain universal health coverage. The overall general service readiness score is also low at 37 per cent, implying poor quality and overall capacity of health facilities to provide health services.<sup>17</sup> The Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescents' Health (RMNCAH) services are a priority. However, maternal mortality ratio continues to be one of the highest in Africa (1050/100,000 Live Births). Total fertility rate is reported at 4.6 in 2020.<sup>18</sup> The coverage of the fourth antenatal care visits (ANC4+) was 20.4 per cent. Meanwhile, the coverage of the first antenatal care (ANC1) visits stood at 53.4 per cent. This huge gap between ANC1 and ANC4+ indicates high drop-out rate of pregnant women making timely detection and management of pregnancy related complications challenging.<sup>19</sup> Deliveries attended by skilled health personnel remains very low, standing at 18 per cent as of 2021. Most of South Sudan's States coverages were above the baseline except Abyei

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<sup>17</sup> WHO, 2021.

<sup>18</sup> World Bank Development Indicators. 2020. "South Sudan - Fertility Rate, Total (births Per Woman)" Accessed?

<sup>19</sup> World Population-South Sudan. 2020.

Administrative Area with (2 per cent), Jonglei (5 per cent), Upper Nile State and Greater Pibor Administrative Area at 7 per cent respectively.<sup>20</sup> Family planning uptake is very low with the contraceptive prevalence and unmet need for contraception estimated at 4.7 per cent and 29.7 per cent respectively. South Sudan is with the highest prevalence of child marriage (52 per cent). According to the latest Household and Health Survey, one-third of the 15–19-year-old girls has started childbearing and 96 per cent of women of reproductive ages were not using any contraceptive method. Fistula is a major issue in the country, as about 5,000 girls and women suffer from it each year.<sup>21</sup>

Malaria, lower respiratory tract infections, diarrhoea, and HIV and AIDS, are still the top causes of morbidity and mortality in South Sudan. Other infections include Cholera and meningitis are common causes of outbreaks in the country. The Malaria indicator survey (2017) estimated Malaria prevalence of 32 per cent, 34 per cent and 18 per cent among children under-five, Protection of Civilians sites, and Internally Displaced Persons respectively. Percentage of population sleeping under insecticide-treated nets was reported as 39 per cent in 2017 majority were women, which was a drop from the baseline (48 per cent). There was a slight decline in the number of confirmed malaria cases treated in 2020 (3,306,095), however, by June 2021, the total number treated had reached 3,150,952.<sup>22</sup> The TB prevalence was at 146 per 100,000 populations (2021). HIV prevalence is estimated to be 1.9 per cent, among general populations (1.6 per cent for males and 2.5 per cent for females, 2022) compared to 2.5 per cent in 2019, with an estimated 11,893 new infections in 2022 majority were women and girls along with 8,761 AIDS-related deaths. The 2023 Ante Natal Care (ANC) Sentinel Surveillance Survey revealed an overall HIV prevalence of 1.9 per cent, among pregnant women with urban areas exhibiting higher rates (2.3 per cent). The prevalence was ranging from 0.3 per cent in Northern Bahr El Ghazal to 5.3 per cent in Western Equatoria states respectively.

The high-risk group to HIV infections in the country's context, include female sex workers (FSW), men having sex with men and their clients. In 2019 Bio-Behavioural Survey (BBS) in Yambio and Wau showed an HIV prevalence of 13.6 per cent, and HIV prevalence and was found to be 6.7 per cent, in Wau. However, as much there is a decreased in epidemic in general population, the epidemic in the Key and Vulnerable population does not show the same trend. Nevertheless, the country continues to make progress towards its 95-95-95 Global Target commitments but remains at some distance away from achieving these goals by 2030. By December 2023, 51 per cent of PLHIV knew their HIV status and 47 per cent of all PLHIV were on ART (UNAIDS Spectrum, 2023). Viral load coverage remained low but of the 42 per cent of PLHIV on ART that received a viral load test, 86 per cent had achieved viral suppression. The Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) and paediatric HIV interventions coverages has increased from 53 per cent in 2022 to 76 per cent in 2023 (Spectrum, 2023). Whilst the prevalence of Hepatitis B (HBV) and Hepatitis C (HCV) in the general population is not well known, a 2016 situation analysis report of viral hepatitis indicated HBV as endemic with a prevalence estimated at 8 per cent. Statistics from national blood donors estimated prevalence of HBV and HCV at 8.18 per cent and 5.60 per cent respectively.<sup>23</sup>

These structures are aligned to the administrative units of the country. The Health Pooled Fund (HPF), HPF3 programme supports a total of 794 health facilities at different levels of care including: 25 hospitals (3 per cent), 192 Primary Health Care Centres (PHCC) (24 per cent) and 577 Primary Health

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<sup>20</sup> UN Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality estimation. 2020.

<sup>21</sup> World Bank Development Indicators, (2016, 2017). "South Sudan - Fertility Rate."

<sup>22</sup> Malaria Indicators Survey. 2017.

<sup>23</sup> MOH. 2016. "Situation Analysis Report of Viral Hepatitis in South Sudan."



Care Units (73 per cent).<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, the National Health Policy (2016-2026) lays emphasis on primary healthcare as the bedrock of the national health system in addition to the provision of financial risk protection to all South Sudanese particularly the poor and vulnerable population.<sup>25</sup>

**Table 3: Key Performance Indicators**

Indicator	Value	Source of information
<b>Status of Selected JAR 2021 RMNCAH Indicators</b>		
Maternal mortality ratio	1050/100,000 live births	UNFPA 2022
Newborn mortality rate	40/1000 live births	UNFPA 2022
Contraceptive prevalence rate	4.7%	JAR 2021
Proportion of mother receiving at least 4 ANC	20.4%	DHIS 2
% Of births attended by skilled personnel	18%	DHIS 2
% Of HFs providing BEmONC services	39%	SARA 2018
% Of HFs providing CEmONC services	5%	SARA 2018
Caesarian Section Rate	2.2%	DHIS 2

**Source Ministry of Health (2024).**

#### **Some Achievements:**

Progress has been achieved in the institutionalization of the District Health Information Software (DHIS) from the county to the national levels. Nevertheless, the health information system is fragmented because of the existence of numerous disease-specific programs that operate parallel/vertical reporting systems, such as NTDS, HIV, Nutrition, and EWARS.

The Ministry of Health South Sudan has developed its remarkable National Health Policy 2016-2026 providing the vision for the health sector development. Also, the second five-year Health Sector Strategic Plan 2023-2027 to continue the strategic promise and implement the second phase of the National Health Policy.

The 2021 uptake coverage for Penta1 stands at 54.3 per cent, slightly surpassing the Penta3 coverage (53 per cent).

Private sector is expanding from 2019 -2024 though lacking any kind of regulatory arrangement to secure safe clinical practice and quality of care.

Routine immunization coverage is very low with the 2021 uptake coverage for DPT 1 stands at 51 per cent, and the DPT 3 coverage is 49 per cent <sup>26</sup> (2021).

<sup>24</sup> Health Pooled Fund. 2018. "HPF Phase 3." Accessed 29 July 2024. <https://hpfsouthsudan.org/phases/hpf-phase-3/>

<sup>25</sup> MOH (2016).

By end of June 2021, out of the 52 indicators assessed from the selected list of core Key Performance Indicators, at least 13 indicators (25 per cent) had achieved or surpassed their Health Sector Service Package (HSSP) target. Moderate progress (over 50 per cent change from baseline) was seen in other 16 indicators (31 per cent). The trends in performance varied across services, and across States and Counties.

There was a significant improvement in the reduction of stunting rates from 31 per cent to 16.3 per cent by 2020. But the Global Acute Malnutrition rates dropped from a 21 per cent to 12.4 per cent (2019). Severe Acute Malnutrition rate also improved from 7.6 per cent to 3.8 per cent (2019).

In the recent JAR 2021 and SARA 2018, the percentage of facilities delivering (IMNCI) stood at 48 per cent. Children receiving ORS for treatment of diarrhoea was 79 per cent in (JAR, 2021 and SARA 2028 reports).

### **Challenges:**

- The health specific SDG number 3 is considered stagnant with no progress nor deterioration;
- Health Sector is impacted by the overarching socio-economic context;
- Overall weak leadership and governance structures and functions with weak accountability;
- Inadequate Government funding to the health sector (2.4 per cent) in FY2022/2023;
- Poor health workforce, education, training, sustainable employment, deployment, retention, and performance in the country;
- Availability, affordability, and quality of medicines;
- Approximately two-thirds of South Sudan's more than 2,300 health facilities are already non-functional;
- Adolescent pregnancies account for 20 per cent of maternal deaths;
- South Sudan records one of the highest maternal mortality ratios (MMR) in the region of 1050 per 100000 live births with performed C section only 2.6 per cent it has also the highest <5 mortality in the region (98/1000 Live Births);
- Malaria, pneumonia, diarrhoea and congenital factors are the main causes of mortality;
- Less accessibility to health services;
- Insufficient human resources;
- Inadequate quality of medical products and technology supplies;
- Inadequate coordination framework;
- Inadequate subsector policies, strategies and regulations;
- Inadequate availability and use of strategic information for decision-making;
- Inadequate capacity to regulate quality and safe medical supplies;
- Lack of legal framework and policy for the regulation of medical and toxic waste management;
- Inadequate HIV and tuberculosis services in the community;
- Inadequate human resource capacity;
- Lack of state HIV infrastructure and poor coordination;
- Weak intersectional collaboration; and
- Weak core capacity for compliance with international health regulations.

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<sup>26</sup> GAVI. 2024. "South Sudan" Accessed? <https://www.gavi.org/programmes-impact/country-hub/africa/south-sudan>

### Need and Demand for family planning

Nevertheless, we are witnessing encouraging signs of a shift in favour of increased acceptance of modern family planning methods in South Sudan. The number of family planning clients has steadily increased, and, notably, more women are adopting Long Acting and Reversible Contraceptives (LARCs).<sup>27</sup> IRC's data reveals a doubling in the proportion of clients opting for implants between 2019 and 2022.<sup>28</sup> These positive changes indicate progress and reflect the ongoing efforts to address barriers to family planning.

### HIV/AIDS and other transferable diseases

CDC implementing partners provide HIV testing and treatment support across the greater equatorial region and Lakes State. PEPFAR data for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 indicates CDC directly supported 35,782 people living with HIV (PLHIV) on antiretroviral therapy (ART). This accounted for more than two-thirds (68 percent) of PLHIV on ART nationally. CDC partners initiated 8,447 new PLHIV on ART. This was more than half (54 percent) of the 15,437 new ART initiations in the same period nationally.

CDC provides the MOH with critical support to expand in-country viral load (VL) testing for those on ART. In FY 2022, 70 percent of PLHIV eligible for VL testing were tested (30,586) in PEPFAR supported facilities. CDC results contributed to 72 percent of national VL tests. In FY22, CDC supported 353,945 HIV tests, with 7,729 individuals with HIV were identified (yield 2.2 percent). In addition, linkage to ART was 109 percent (8,447).<sup>29</sup> Over the past five years, the allocation of the national budget to the health sector has remained below 2 per cent, with the country heavily reliant on development assistance for over 70 per cent of its total health expenditure. Public financing for essential medicines has decreased, and regulatory capacity is lacking. Despite these challenges, the health sector has established policies, strategies, sub-thematic strategies, and guidelines. The budgetary allocation for the health sector has increased to 7.9 per cent of the national budget for the 2021/2022 fiscal year.<sup>30</sup>

Some of the efforts being made to further improve the country profile on this issue include:

- The National Ministry of Health continues to partner with the Centre for diseases Control to support the scale up of high-quality HIV prevention, interventions including HIV treatment and prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) services.
- The Ministry is also working to improve and expand HIV counselling, testing and TB/HIV integrated service delivery.
- Specific laboratory capacity building efforts have included the expansion of laboratory services to support the rapid scale up of HIV treatment services as well as the establishment of a national reference lab capable of performing diagnostics for TB and other infections and non-infectious diseases.

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<sup>27</sup> IPPF (International Planned Parenthood Federation). 2023. "In South Sudan, Encouraging Shifts in Reproductive Health Outcomes." Accessed 29 July 2024. <https://www.ippf.org/featured-perspective/south-sudan-encouraging-shifts-reproductive-health-outcomes>.

<sup>28</sup> IRC, Survey Report. 2022.

<sup>29</sup> CDC. 2024. "HIV and TB Overview: South Sudan." Accessed 29 July 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/global-hiv-tb/php/where-we-work/southsudan.html#:~:text=CDC%20provides%20the%20MOH%20with,percent%20of%20national%20VL%20tests>.

<sup>30</sup> FP. 2023. "Worsening Humanitarian Crisis in South Sudan Prevents Teenage Girls from Accessing Family Planning Services." Accessed 29 July 2024. <https://www.fp2030.org/news/worsening-humanitarian-crisis-in-south-sudan-prevents-teenage-girls-from-accessing-family-planning-services/#:~:text=South%20Sudan%20has%20a%20total,%2DSaharan%20Africa%20at%204%25>.

- CDC is also providing support for HIV rapid test kits among others.

### (3) FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE, STIGMA AND STEREOTYPES

**Critical Area: D. Violence against women; I. Women's human rights; J. Women and the Media; and L. The Girl Child.**

#### Priority in eliminating forms of violence against women and girls

Generally, in 10 South Sudanese women have experienced physical violence by age 15 and above through either forced and early marriages or the physical, mental or sexual assault on women. It is important to note that many cases of GBV in South Sudan are not documented as victims and survivors prefer not to speak out about their experiences due to the fear of being stigmatized and blamed by society. Available data on GBV occurrence rates, is not substantive.

Several efforts at addressing gender-based violence (GBV) are ongoing.

These include:

- The establishment of shelters for victims and survivors of GBV. This has been initiated at both governmental level by the MGCSW in the country's 10 States and 3 Administrative Areas and at non-governmental level by women focused civil society groups in Juba. At the moment only 3 shelters are available in Juba, Wau and Torit. However, the ministry is working towards establishing shelters in other States.
- Laws and policies which address this issue have been put in place. These include: the Penal Code Act, 2008 (as amended), the National Gender Policy and the Child Act, 2008. The draft GBV bill and Family Bill by the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare will address the gaps in future if they are passed into laws.

#### Intimate Partner violence

- At least 50 per cent of women in South Sudan have experienced violence from their intimate partner, in 25 per cent of the reported sexual violence cases, the victim is a child. We know that this is an underreported issue and the real numbers are probably higher.

#### Non-Partner Sexual violence

- Approximately 35 per cent of respondents have experienced rape, attempted rape or other forms of sexual violence by a non-partner during their lifetime. For ever-partnered women, lifetime prevalence of physical and/or sexual partner violence ranged between 54 per cent in the Juba PoCs and 73 per cent in Rumbek.

#### GBV perpetrated by Agents of the state

- The South Sudan Army had launched an action plan on CRSV in 2021 to check the occurrence of GBV within or by the force through its officers.

#### GBV in the context of South Sudan

- An estimated 65 per cent of women and girls in South Sudan experience physical, sexual or gender-based violence during their lifetime. For displaced women and girls, the risk is particularly high. In South Sudan, violence and human rights violations often go unpunished. Many victims are unaware of their rights.

#### Overcoming violence against women and girls

There are a number of factors that contribute to the case of VAW in South Sudan, such as 1.) Socio-cultural barriers including patriarchal values, unequal social and economic status between men and

women; 2.) Lack of comprehensive and verifiable data to formulate effective policies; and 3.) Inconsistencies in law enforcement contribute to the impunity of violence’s perpetrators.

Based on the findings of the 2021. UNICEF. At least 50 per cent of women in South Sudan have experienced violence from their intimate partner, in 25 per cent of the reported sexual violence cases, the victim is a child. We know that this is an underreported issue and the real numbers are probably higher.<sup>31</sup>

#### Efforts to Tackle and Prevent Female Circumcision

Female circumcision is a part of tradition and belief inherited from generation to generation of family and society and was done symbolically. Although the Ministry of Health do not promote female circumcision, there is still a demand for female circumcision in society.

Government of South Sudan have conducted an awareness program for health and medical workers, parents, public figures and religious figures to prevent female circumcision practice in society.

In 2015, the United Nations Population Fund estimated that almost 32,000 women in South Sudan had been affected by gender-based violence in the two years since conflict broke out. As well as victims of sexual and physical violence, victims of FGM/C and child marriage were included in this estimate.<sup>32</sup>

UNICEF previously reported the prevalence of FGM in South Sudan to be 1 per cent among women aged 15–49, but there are no recent surveys to confirm this figure.

FGM/C has been reported in both Christian and Muslim communities, particularly in the northern regions of the country, including Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile, which border Sudan, where the prevalence of FGM/C is 86.6 per cent. These are also the regions where camps for displaced Sudanese are located. Therefore, it is likely that this accounts for the higher prevalence in these regions.<sup>33</sup>

#### Trafficking and efforts to countermeasure

- South Sudan is a source, transit and destination country when it comes to human trafficking. The Republic of South Sudan's government has not fully met the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, and despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has not made significant efforts to do so. As a result, South Sudan has remained on Tier 3. Although the government has taken some steps to address trafficking, such as convening its anti-trafficking inter-ministerial task force and conducting training activities in partnership with international organizations, there was a government policy or pattern of employing or recruiting child soldiers during the reporting period. In addition, government security and law enforcement officers continued to forcibly recruit and use child soldiers without holding any members of the South Sudan People’s Defense Forces (SSPDF) or South Sudan National Police Services (SSNPS) criminally accountable for these unlawful acts.
- In December 2019, the Minister of Interior signed the Ministerial Order for the Establishment of Technical Taskforce on Anti-Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Persons (2019). The Technical Taskforce is part of the National Aliens Committee/National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NAC/NCM) an inter-ministerial committee, which makes policy decisions and provides advice on migration management, including advising on deportations.

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<sup>31</sup> UNICEF South Sudan. 2021. “Making strong stronger: How UNICEF is fighting Gender-based violence in South Sudan.” Accessed 29 July 2024. <https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/stories/making-strong-stronger>

<sup>32</sup> UNFPA Report. 2015. “Female genital mutilation / cutting: Toolkit for the Care of Women and Girls.” Accessed July 2024. <https://www.fgmcri.org/country/south-sudan/>

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

- In 2024, Anti-Human Trafficking Bill is drafted and table before the council of Ministers for deliberation and subsequent send it to the National Legislative Assembly. Once the law is passed and signed into law by the President, it will help to combat human trafficking in the country.

#### Gender stereotyping within the media

- The media, globally and specifically in South Sudan, have a tendency to heighten the vulnerability of women to gender discrimination by perpetuating stereotypes about women's roles and contributions to society.
- Often, stories about men than women in media coverage. However, when stories are about women, they are usually negative ones. For example, stories of rape and other GBV cases. The MGCSW, in collaboration with both international and local partners, is strategizing to combat the gender stereotyping of women in political leadership positions.

Although Female Journalist Networks introduced profiling of women leaders in the country. it should be noted that most of the media institutions are headed by women.

- The chairperson of the South Sudan Broadcasting Corporation is a woman by the name Mary Ajith and others in the private sectors are playing a crucial role in advancing women rights and gender empowerment in their institutions.
- The chairperson of the Media Authority is also a woman-Adv. Atong Majok Kur.
- The chairperson of the Association for Media Development in South Sudan is a woman by the name Josephine Achiro and Executive Director is also a woman by the name Ayaa Irene. These shows that women are technocrats in their respective capacities.

#### Access to new technologies of communication

More broadly, in 2024, its believe that 28.5 per cent of South Sudan's social media users were female. However, the elderly women don't use internet.

Some of the factors responsible for this disparity include lower levels of computer literacy, social norms which steer women and girls away from interest in the communications technology sector and non-availability of ICT infrastructure in some states and local government areas.

- In South Sudan, nearly 80 per cent of the population resides in rural areas with extremely limited access to the internet or mobile services. In 2021, only 8 per cent of South Sudan had internet access, severely limiting the population's access to the global market as well as valuable international and regional information.
- The other is the Go ICT Girls an NGO in partnership with UN Agencies in South Sudan worked with some schools in the country. The goal of the ICT NGO is to ensure that more girls embrace and adopt career in ICTs. The clubs focus on providing training in the design, games and computer programming.
- The 2017-22 General Education Strategic Plan aims to enhance ICT infrastructure in schools, while the South Sudan Curriculum Framework supports the development and integration of ICT skills in the national curriculum.<sup>34</sup> There are also objectives for the provision of assistive devices for students with disabilities in the 2020 National Inclusive Education Policy.<sup>35</sup>
- The 2021-24 Revised National Development Strategy has a dedicated section on ICT, which is viewed as an important tool for the country's development, with the government aiming to put in place the

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<sup>34</sup> General Education Strategic Plan (2017-2022).

<sup>35</sup> National Inclusive Education Policy. 2020.

appropriate infrastructure, systems and culture for its integration.<sup>36</sup> Education objectives relating to ICT, include strengthening the use of ICT in education implementation programs, equipping offices and schools and ICT, training staff on the use of ICT, and promoting digital transfer.

- It is important to highlight the impact of new media on issues pertaining to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Women's groups such as the national feminist movement is one of the many online groups addressing gender justice from diverse viewpoints. They have played a major role in shaping and influencing public opinion on women's concern.

#### (4) PARTICIPATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, GENDER RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONS

**Critical Area: G. Women in power and decision making; H. Institutional mechanisms for women; I. female human rights; J. Women and the Media; and L. The Girl Child.**

Women's equality in politics and decision-making have been generally recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The participation of women in Government is not merely a counterbalance in decision making and can better represent a balanced society, but also the existence of women is expected to fight for their interests. In practical world, women's role in decision-making is still limited. This is due to the existence of a patriarchy culture limiting women's participation in the decision-making process. The steps taken by the Government to increase women's participation in decision making are 35 per cent affirmative action.<sup>37</sup>

The effort to enhance women's participation in governance, power, and decision-making is an ongoing endeavour, despite notable advancements in the last 20 years. Women in South Sudan make up approximately half of the country's population. However, despite their significant numbers and active involvement as campaign supporters, mobilizers, and dedicated voters in every election, they have consistently encountered obstacles and opposition when attempting to engage in politics or gain political empowerment.

- The National Ministry of Gender Child and Social Welfare is South Sudan's national coordinating unit on gender issues with the government.
- MGSCW is working on the gender mainstreaming in all the 10 states and 3 administrative areas.
- Apart from ongoing law and policy reforms, the Anti-GBV bill which is before the ministry of Justice and Constitutional affairs.
- In the Local Government Board, they formed association called South Sudan Women in Local Government Administrators(SSWLGA) established in 2021 to ensure full participation of women in local government offices including women in leadership in communities.<sup>38</sup> They have developed a 10 points plan developed in 2022 with support from the GIZ is on women inclusion, assignments and their participations in other institutions.<sup>39</sup> Currently, the Local Government Board is working on other guidelines and policies and its implementations.
- They further, ensure that more women are involved in the traditional justice system such as chiefs and other members of the customary courts at the county levels and payams and bomas respectively.
- One of the key challenges to achieving gender equality in South Sudan is the existence of a legal system that accommodates statutory, and customary laws.
- An additional obstacle lies in the normalization of certain types of gender discrimination as cultural traditions, along with the resort to violence to uphold patriarchal dominance. The gender-biased

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<sup>36</sup> National Development Strategy. 2021-2024.

<sup>37</sup> R-ARCSS. 2018.

<sup>38</sup> South Sudan Women in Local Government Administrators (SSWLGA). 2021.

<sup>39</sup> Local Government 10 points Plan. 2022.



frameworks that have emerged from these constraints will necessitate ongoing advocacy efforts in the foreseeable future to bring about significant advancements in gender equality in South Sudan.

Challenges and Recommendations: lack of education and political training for women is still an obstacle in women's participation in politics and decision-making. This causes the regeneration of women in political parties to run well within the right quantity but lacking in terms of quality. Lack of education causes women not to fight for women's interests at the level of decision-makers. This issue also led to the willingness of women to plunge into politics, moreover with the stigma in the community that decision-making is generally done by men. Political parties should be more active in preparing or conducting female recruitment ranging from grassroots to national level.

Another challenge is to increase the representation of women, both in the number and quality of the positions held in the executive and the judicative institutions responsible for the governmental administration and the makers and the executors of the state policies. Women's leadership in various non-governmental institutions that are also an important force in politics and decision-making must also continue to be encouraged, such as women's leadership in private institutions, academics and media.

#### (5) PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

##### **Critical Areas: E. Women and Armed Conflicts; I. Women Human Rights; and L. The Girl Child**

###### *Efforts to build and maintain peace, promoting a peaceful and inclusive society*

Peace is a key requirement for the achievement of gender equality and sustainable development. Various types of conflicts, including armed conflicts of social conflicts continuing to occur in various parts of the world, create a conducive situation to the occurrence of human rights and humanitarian law violations. As a group often marginalized in the community in peaceful situations, women and girls are vulnerable to be violent victims even though they are not directly involved as a combatant (the disputing party). Even civilian victims of women and girls often exceed the number of victims of the combatant. Besides, the majority of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are women, teenagers and children. Later in post-conflict, women generally bear the responsibility to care for the victims of conflict, including those who are disabled, as the head of the family who had been abandoned by men who became combatants and victims of conflict.

**Table 4. Overall women representation in the R-TGONU**

POSITIONS	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	FEMALE (%)
Ministers	26	9	35	26%
D/Ministers		1	5	20%
RTNLA		170	550	31%
Governors	9	1	10	10%
Deputy Governors	7	3	10	30%



Independent Commissions	17	3	20	15%
State Ministers	143	37	180	20%
State Advisors	55	9	64	14.1%
Undersecretaries	35	5	36	14%

Source: Ministry of Cabinet Affairs

#### Improving judicial and non-judicial accountability

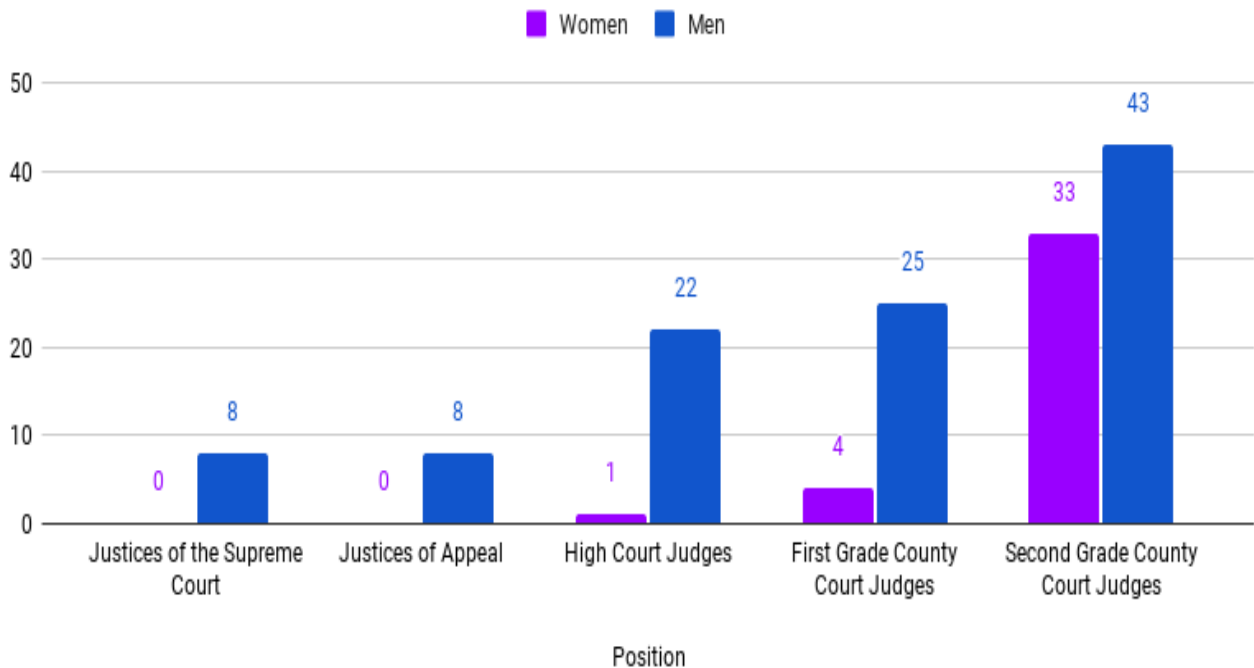
For the last five years, Government of South Sudan has implemented efforts to improve judicial and non-judicial accountability of international humanitarian law violation and women and children rights law violation in armed conflict or other or humanity situation. Also, the Government of South Sudan has conducted solidarity act and crisis response to countries suffering from social conflict situation and in humanitarian affairs, conducting reconstruction after disaster, and also refugees.

There is a high level of attrition of judicial employees generally at 22.9 per cent. This is, especially significant given the already small size of the employee body vis a vis the population it serves, and the high demand for their services. The level of attrition may be higher given the unconfirmed statuses of those on extended sick and unpaid leave.

There is a higher attrition of women judicial employees compared to men. 31.6 per cent of all women recruited have left their jobs compared to 14.5 per cent of men.

Similarly, 50 per cent of all women appointed to the First Grade County courts and 30.3 per cent of women appointed to Second Grade County courts have left compared to 31 per cent and 7 per cent of men respectively. There are currently only 26 women in judicial positions at 24.5 per cent compared to 80 men at 75.4 per cent.

#### **Table 5. Number of Women in office in the Judiciary of South Sudan as of 2023**



Source: Judiciary 2023

#### Eliminate discrimination against and violation of female children rights

Female circumcision is a part of tradition and belief inherited from generation to generation of family and society and was done symbolically. Several efforts have done by Government of South Sudan, such as:

Conducting awareness program for health and medical workers, parents, public figures and religious figures to prevent female circumcision practice in society.

Government of South Sudan efforts to decrease HIV, Syphilis and Hepatitis B prevalence. The primary effort was by conducting viral screening for pregnant women, which required once per pregnancy period minimum. With this effort the hope is to decrease the transmission of HIV, Syphilis and Hepatitis B infection from infected mother to her child. Triple elimination program (HIV, Syphilis and Hepatitis B) have been conducted since 2015 to 2016. However, HIV and syphilis prevalence among female sex workers in Juba, South Sudan.<sup>40</sup>

In 2023 – 2027 NAP 2, the National Ministry of Gender Child and Social Welfare with support from UN Women launched the revised National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325.<sup>41</sup> The revised NAP focuses on women’s participation in security sector governance within the following key pillars:

- i) Prevention and Disaster preparedness
- ii) Participation and representation
- iii) Protection and prosecution
- iv) Crises Management, early recovery and post conflict reconstruction

<sup>40</sup> Hakim AJ, Bolo A, Werner M, Achut V, Katoro J, Caesar G, Lako R, Taban AI, Wesson J, Okiria AG. 2020. “High HIV and Syphilis Prevalence among Female Sex Workers in Juba, South Sudan.” *Plos One*. 15(9).

<sup>41</sup> NAP 2(2023-2027).

- The revised NAP contains a monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework for which the National Technical Working Group is expected to play a critical role.
- Each of the states will have to disseminate the NAP at state level. South Sudan will have to produce action plans in 10 states and 3 Administrative Areas.
  
- Also, some security sector agencies have taken steps to upgrade the participation of women in their operations and ensure gender responsive institutional practices. For instance, the South Sudan Police service, the SSPDF now organize periodic training on gender for their officers and promote the intake of more young women as trainees. This will be based on the 35 per cent affirmative action.
  
- Women in security network established in 2023  
 This area of concern focuses on the ratification and domestication of international human rights Conventions, especially those that have implications and for women’s access and choices  
 South Sudan has 6 out of the 13 global human rights frameworks in existence. They are:
  - The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
  - The Convention against Torture (CAT)
  - The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
  - The Four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and their Additional Protocols
  - The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
  - The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
 Regional legal instruments
  - Maputo protocol
  - ICGLR
  - EAC
  - African Charter on Human and People’s Rights

Some of the institutional mechanisms which currently exist in order to safeguard and advance the human rights of men and women in South Sudan includes:

- The establishment of the South Sudan National Human Rights Commission, which has been established in the 10 states and 3 Administrative Areas.
- The Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan covers many of the rights that are identified within international and regional human rights paradigms. Part two of the South Sudan constitution 2011(as amended), which is also known as known as the Fundamental Rights” Part two of the Constitution has extensive provision on Human Rights.<sup>42</sup>

The following rights which are covered in Part two, apply to both women and men:

- Right to life;
- Right to Dignity of Human Person;
- Right to personal Liberty;
- Right to Fair Hearing;
- Right to Found Family;
- Right to Assembly and Association;
- Right to Freedom of Movement;
- Right to Freedom from Discrimination; and

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<sup>42</sup> Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011(as amended).

- Right to Acquire property.

## (6) NATURE CONSERVATION, PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION

### Critical Area: I. Rights of Woman; K. Woman and the Environment; and L. The Girl Child

#### Integrating gender perspective and concern about environmental policy

- The TCSS, 2011 commits all levels of government to securing sustainable development in order to ensure that the environment is protected for present and future generations, through reasonable legislative action and other measures.<sup>43</sup> The TCSS also gives every person or community the right to a clean and healthy environment and also obliges each person to respect and protect the environment.<sup>44</sup> These includes, for instance, the Environmental assessment concerning women living around oil extraction areas (women giving birth to deformed children). Furthermore, the Formation of Public consultation on environmental issues, examples on the issue of dredging of Nile water.

While there is still substantial work to be done in this area, South Sudan is taking an increasingly proactive and engaged approach to climate proofing its agriculture sector. However, significant additional activity and partnerships will be needed to ensure the transformation required.

#### Policy making in the environment sector

- The Revitalized Agreement for Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) in Articles 1.10.3.7, 4.6.1.3, 4.9.1 and 4.9.2 provide that: The national Ministry of Environment and Forestry was established in the RTGoNU under the Economic Cluster; The RTGoNU shall establish the Environmental Management Authority (EMA) upon commencement of the transitional period; and The RTGoNU shall develop comprehensive policies and legal institutional frameworks for the preservation, conservation and sustainable use of the environment.<sup>45</sup>
- The National Environment Policy (2015-2025) will: give effect to the Constitutional environmental rights of the people or Community; give effect to the Ministry's vision of ensuring a healthy and clean environment for all; promote compliance with the environmental legal frameworks; <sup>46</sup>demonstrate the Ministry's commitment to sustainable development; and provide an institutional framework for Policy implementation.
- The Ministry of Environment has drafted a bill called Environment Bill (2023). The purpose of this Bill is to provide for establishment of a legal and institutional framework for the protection and sustainable management of the environment.<sup>47</sup> This Bill is drafted in accordance with the provisions of Article 4.6.1.3, 4.9 of the R-ARCSS<sup>48</sup> and 41 of the Transitional Constitution, 2011, which grants the Government of South Sudan concurrent authority over protection and management of the environment. The provisions of this Bill apply throughout South Sudan in all matters related to environment.<sup>49</sup>
- In 2023, the Government has launched a major USD 9 million-initiative to help communities adapt to climate change by strengthening climate early warning systems and restoring the country's ecosystems in 2 of the 10 states (Kapoeta and Tereka).

<sup>43</sup> Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011(as amended).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> The Revitalized Agreement for Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS)2018.

<sup>46</sup> The National Environment Policy 2015-2025.

<sup>47</sup> Environment Bill (2023).

<sup>48</sup> R-ARCSS (2018).

<sup>49</sup> Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011(as amended).

- The ministry launched a 5-year US\$ 33 million project to build long-term resilience within vulnerable agro-pastoral communities. However, a multi-hazard early warning system; ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions, including the restoration of 16,000 hectares of land; and 75,000 expected people will benefit from the initiatives and 30,000 pastoralists will have better access to water for their livestock.
- 13,000 women will benefit from 'climate-smart' agricultural practices.
- Invests in flood resilience of local communities and preparedness activities, including pre-positioning of supplies during the dry season when roads remain accessible and setting up a Climate Change Centre at the University of Juba 2021/2022.
- In 2021, the government has developed the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) that fulfils the mandate to strategies climate change adaptation and efforts to reduce community vulnerability and variability to climate change at national and sub-national.
- An adaptation and mitigation: wildlife conservation, integrated water resources management and wetlands management, forest resource management, and urban waste management instituted.
- Livestock and pastoralism: South Sudan are helping farmers to adopt modern livestock farming practices. It is also raising their awareness about optimal livestock numbers and practices that expose them to livestock diseases and cattle raiding.
- The Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation has developed an Irrigation Development Master Plan and Water Resources Utilization and Development Master Plan to guide water use. Response to the immediate needs of people affected and displaced by floods, by providing them with essential supplies, and lifesaving services such as healthcare, vaccination, nutrition and access to water, sanitation and hygiene.
- Community-based support is being provided through cash-for-work and food-for-work assistance, with flood-affected communities working alongside humanitarian organizations to repair and build dikes to stop water from taking over the land in Unity state and in Bentiu town, water pumps and excavators have been deployed to prevent further flooding of airstrips, IDP camp, the main supply route and higher grounds. And further, Community-driven solutions: help move to self-reliance, dignity and independence to prevent future humanitarian needs/crises.

## 12. CHAPTER THREE: DATA AND STATISTICS AND STRATEGIED FOR ADDRESSING GAPS IN THE SIX DIMENTIONS SEPCIFIED IN THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS

### Statistical programme/strategy setting out the development of gender statistics

The Government of South Sudan has developed the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) 2020-2024, a major component of which is development of gender statistics. It has a comprehensive schedule of integrated household surveys with core questions on demography, health, education, work and living conditions to allow indicators to be tracked over time. As part of its schedule,

a survey on GBV is to be conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in the latter part of 2024 with the support of International Monetary Fund.

An Inter-Agency Working Group has been established comprising of National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the Line Ministries for data collection. Training and capacity building have been given to members of the Working Group in Tanzania, Ethiopia and Uganda in Time Use and Asset Ownership.

#### [Gender-sensitive data in formulation of policy and implementation of programmes](#)

The Government of South Sudan has, through various Ministries, conducted research whose findings have guided the formulation of policies and implementation of programmes and projects. The South Sudan National Gender Assessment conducted in March 2022, for example, evaluated the socio-economic and legal environment in South Sudan and highlighted existing barriers that hinder women's empowerment and laid basis for an evidence-based strategy for gender mainstreaming. The assessment proposed concrete recommendations and possible strategies for gender mainstreaming that guided the development of the National Gender Policy for the Republic of South Sudan (March 2022). In 2022, a Gender Strategic Plan was developed to guide implementation of the National Gender Policy. Similarly, data was derived from multiple sources (trainings, research and evaluations, South Sudan Bureau of Statistics, World Bank and the United Nations to guide the development of the National Action Plan on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security; HIV&AIDS Policy; National Health Policy and Education Policy among others. Resulting from these policies, various stakeholders run programmes that respond to the issues identified.

#### [Knowledge products on gender statistics \(user-friendly reports, policy briefs, research papers\)](#)

The South Sudan General Education Strategic Plan (2017-2022) is a vital document that encourages team work to avail an opportunity to every South Sudanese citizen to exercise their right to education as stipulated in the Constitution, 2011 (As Amended). The objectives are to build an educated and informed nation; and to help the country transit from an oil dependent economy to a knowledge-based economy and achieve prosperity for all. The Strategic Plan was developed against the backdrop that education in South Sudan was irregular, particularly because of the long-standing civil war.

Some of the South Sudanese who were educated both in South Sudan and outside the country have come back to contribute to nation building. Their contribution is varied – ranging from agricultural production, teaching in colleges and Universities, working in research institutions. Notable knowledge products include user friendly reports that are produced by such organizations as the SUDD Institute; Human Rights Institute; Search for Common Ground; Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC) among other knowledge products. These publications have simplified information that can be understood without strain – most importantly, the information is well researched and keeps one wanting to read more.

#### [Top three priorities for strengthening national gender statistics over the next five years](#)

The top three priorities for strengthening national gender statistics are (a) establishment of an inter-ministerial coordination mechanism on gender statistics, (b) use of gender sensitive data, (c) and conduct of new surveys.

Within the NBS, there will be an inter-departmental coordination structure on gender statistics. The structure will be coordinated by the Gender Focal Person for the NBS. The structure will interface with the inter-ministerial coordination mechanism on gender statistics comprising of Focal Persons from other Ministries and Agencies of Government. Gender sensitive data will be analysed and disseminated for use in the formulation of policies and implementation of projects. New surveys will be conducted, especially national household survey to track to difference or progress since the 2009 baseline survey.

The new household survey will take care of time use, gender base violence, asset ownership, poverty and disability.

### 13. CHAPTER FOUR: IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND EMERGING PRIORITY AREAS.

#### Major Challenges and Recommendations

The major challenges to achieving gender equality and the empower of women in South Sudan since the adoption of the BPPA include:

- Gender stereotypes, social norms and cultural barriers.
- Discriminatory laws
- Lack of enough, up to date gender disaggregated data.
- Addressing the intersectional nature of gender inequality.
- Inadequate funding to implement programmes and policies.
- Insecurity, Gender violence (GBV) and conflict.
- Non domestication of major treaties and poor implementation of some of the sector specific laws and policies.
- Inter-communal violence.
- Climate shocks.
- Economic crisis.

#### Gender stereotypes, social norms and cultural barriers

Despite the high levels of awareness and acceptance during this review period, gender equality and its associated programs continue to face strong resistance across different geopolitical zones. This resistance is based on perceptions regarding the roles of men, women, boys, and girls in various aspects of life. These perceptions are influenced by patriarchal social norms and cultural beliefs, which in turn shape the nature of social institutions and pose challenges to achieving gender justice. While there have been some successful renegotiations, such as the inclusion of women chiefs in traditional leadership hierarchies in certain states, many of these social norms and cultural beliefs remain deeply rooted and unchanged. It is recommended to launch renewed community-level advocacy initiatives over the next five years through sustained partnerships with local, national, and international NGOs to address this issue. Women-focused NGOs and CBOs are in a unique position to collaborate with the Ministry in this endeavour, given the social capital they have built with traditional institutions and gatekeepers.

#### Lack of enough up to date gender disaggregated data / addressing intersectionality

Despite the high levels of awareness and acceptance during this review period, gender equality and its associated programs continue to face strong resistance across different geopolitical zones. This resistance is based on perceptions regarding the roles of men, women, boys, and girls in various aspects of life. These perceptions are influenced by patriarchal social norms and cultural beliefs, which in turn shape the nature of social institutions and pose challenges to achieving gender justice. While there have been some successful renegotiations, such as the inclusion of women chiefs in traditional leadership hierarchies in certain states, many of these social norms and cultural beliefs remain deeply rooted and unchanged. It is recommended to launch renewed community-level advocacy initiatives over the next five years through sustained partnerships with local, national, and international NGOs to address this issue. Women-focused NGOs and CBOs are in a unique position to collaborate with the Ministry in these endeavours, given the social capital they have built with traditional institutions and gatekeepers.

#### Inadequate Funding

Insufficient funding continues to be a significant obstacle to the execution of initiatives aimed at closing gender disparities. Inadequate participation from private enterprises, insufficient government funding, and brief donor assistance have continuously hindered the ability of state and national gender mechanisms to achieve their yearly objectives. As a result, the success rate in reaching established gender equality goals has been constrained.



It is advised to tackle this issue by securing additional financial backing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) through government budgets and by increasing support from global partners and obtaining new funding from the private sector.

#### [Insecurity, Gender violence and conflict](#)

South Sudan's achievement in meeting the BPfa goals is a result of the advancements made in the 10 states and 3 Administrative Areas. However, challenges such as security issues in certain areas of the country and gender inequalities, including a high number of internally displaced persons, increased gender-based violence, loss of livelihoods, and feminized poverty, have hindered the nation's progress in fulfilling its gender equality commitments.

It is advised that continuous efforts to tackle the gender disparities stemming from conflict in the country be strengthened and maintained.

#### [Non Implementation of some gender specific laws and policies](#)

The enforcement of certain gender-specific laws and policies has been delayed in some instances, such as the implementation of the Child Act and the National Gender Policy. This can be attributed to the failure to adopt the laws in some states, inadequate funding and gender expertise, as well as deficiencies within government institutions, particularly at the state and local levels.

It is suggested that the MGCSW, in collaboration with other stakeholders, should advocate for better institutional monitoring of gender outcomes across various sectors to tackle these issues.

#### [Discriminatory laws](#)

South Sudan still has discriminatory laws in some of its legislation such as the Penal Code Act that condones marital rape, criminalizes abortion, and criminalizes adultery. This affects women disproportionately compared to men.

#### [Recommendations](#)

South Sudan has made notable advancements in the implementation of the BPfA. However, a recent assessment has identified areas of improvement and obstacles in the process. Despite the remaining tasks on the agenda, new gender inequality issues have emerged. The country has successfully integrated the BPfA and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into its national development plans.

In anticipation of the UN General Assembly's high-level meeting in 2025 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the BPfA and enhance gender equality and women's empowerment, South Sudan is grateful for the opportunity. To maintain progress and ensure inclusivity in development, South Sudan proposes the following recommendations:

- i. Emphasizing the importance of addressing harmful social norms, practices, and gender stereotypes that hinder the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals, especially in poverty alleviation, universal education, healthcare access, hunger eradication, and energy sustainability.
- ii. Supporting initiatives that focus on empowering young girls to combat the prevalent issues of teenage pregnancies, child marriages, and to ensure their continued education.
- iii. Enhancing livelihood and economic empowerment schemes, with a specific focus on acknowledging the significant role of unpaid care and domestic work in the economy.

- iv. Allocating resources towards the development of gender-responsive national statistical strategies to facilitate evidence-based monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
- v. South Sudan should eliminate discriminatory laws to achieve gender equality in law.

#### Priority Areas of Action (5 years)

The 3 key priorities for action on gender equality and women empowerment over the next 5 years are:

##### I. Increased funding for GEWE interventions

The MGCSW is committed to advocating for increased budget allocations and new funding opportunities for GEWE programs and interventions. Efforts to engage the organized private sectors will be expedited within this framework.

##### II. National Gender Results Tracking Mechanism

It is essential to establish a national mechanism for tracking gender results across sectors to complement and regularly update the gender data bank. Over the next 5 years, there will be continuous efforts to upgrade and enhance the country's sex-disaggregated database. This initiative will be led by the MGCSW in collaboration with the National Bureau of Statistics, civil society groups, international partners, such as UN Women, and representatives from various stakeholders. Additionally, there will be ongoing collaboration between academic institutions, CSOs, and the MGCSW to conduct gender-specific research to influence policy and practice changes at the national, state, and local government levels.

##### III. Domestication and implementation of major treaties

Various multi-stakeholder actions will be developed to support the domestication as well as implementation of major regional and international treaties in order to increase the number and meaningful participation of women in political and public life, as well as to provide ongoing support for the improved quality of women's leadership in public life. These actions will prioritize advocacy at the political party level, as well as provide ongoing technical and financial support to women, mentorship, training, and other forms of support for women in public office.

#### 14. CONCLUSION

South Sudan has demonstrated a strong dedication to the fundamental principles and 12 Areas of Concern of the BpFA through its ongoing efforts to turn policy statements into tangible actions to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The nation's vast size and dispersed population, among others, present obstacles to swiftly implementing key policy measures, highlighting the competing demands of various priorities amidst limited resources; climate shocks, pervasive insecurity to mention but few. Nevertheless, we remain committed to identifying new opportunities for cooperation, such as with the private sector, national, regional and international partners to guarantee that our commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment at national, regional, and international levels are honoured.

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