



مبادرة وحدة السودان

*Unite Sudan Initiative*

*Dignity, Justice, and Peace*

# REBUILDING LIVES AND INFRASTRUCTURE: PRIORITY PROJECTS FOR POST-CONFLICT SUDAN

**Representing Ethnic, Gender and Regional Diversity**

**A Model for a United Africa**

**PROPOSAL DOCUMENT**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sudan faces one of the world's most severe humanitarian and reconstruction challenges. The conflict that erupted in April 2023 has devastated lives and infrastructure across the country. As of early 2026, over 8 million people remain displaced, critical infrastructure lies in ruins, and entire communities struggle for survival. Yet within this tragedy lies an unprecedented opportunity—to rebuild Sudan in a fundamentally different way, one that represents ethnic, gender, and regional diversity and creates a more equitable, resilient nation.

This proposal presents a comprehensive framework for rebuilding lives and infrastructure in post-conflict Sudan. It identifies priority projects across humanitarian relief, infrastructure reconstruction, economic recovery, and institutional rebuilding, while ensuring that reconstruction efforts benefit all Sudanese equitably, regardless of ethnicity, gender, or region.

### The Scale of Destruction

The human cost is staggering: over 8 million displaced (18% of the population), tens of thousands killed, widespread gender-based violence, 19 million facing acute food insecurity, 14 million without healthcare access, and 19 million children out of school. Infrastructure damage exceeds \$30-40 billion, with healthcare facilities destroyed, schools damaged, water systems broken, roads impassable, and housing systematically demolished.

### Guiding Principles for Inclusive Reconstruction

This proposal rests on foundational principles that distinguish it from conventional approaches:

- **Build Back Better and More Equitably:** Address historical inequalities that contributed to conflict
- **Diversity Representation:** Ensure ethnic, gender, and regional diversity in all aspects
- **Community-Centered Approaches:** Communities drive priorities and implementation

- Conflict-Sensitive Implementation: Contribute actively to peacebuilding
- Economic Empowerment: Create livelihoods, not just infrastructure
- Sustainability and Resilience: Build to withstand future shocks
- Transparency and Accountability: Full transparency with robust anti-corruption measures

### Priority Investment Areas

The proposal identifies comprehensive interventions across multiple sectors with total resource requirements of \$40-50 billion over 10 years:

Humanitarian Relief (\$5-7 billion): Emergency shelter, food assistance, healthcare, protection services, WASH, and psychosocial support

Housing Reconstruction (\$8-10 billion): Rebuilding destroyed homes, urban reconstruction, rural settlement rehabilitation, and land rights resolution

Infrastructure (\$18-22 billion): Healthcare facilities, schools, WASH systems, roads, energy, telecommunications, and agricultural infrastructure

Economic Recovery (\$5-6 billion): Small business support, cash-for-work, microfinance, skills training, and women's economic empowerment

Institutional Rebuilding (\$2-3 billion): Governance structures, justice systems, and administrative capacity

Environmental Restoration (\$2-3 billion): Land rehabilitation, climate adaptation, and natural resource management

## Regional Equity

A critical element is ensuring equitable resource distribution across Sudan's regions:

- Darfur receives priority given scale of destruction and historical marginalization
- Khartoum requires urban reconstruction addressing destroyed neighborhoods
- Eastern Sudan benefits from agricultural infrastructure and Port Sudan expansion
- Kordofan regions receive agricultural support and infrastructure investment
- All regions benefit from transparent allocation preventing favoritism

## Inclusive Implementation

Reconstruction processes must embody diversity principles:

- Gender Mainstreaming: Women comprise 40% of workforce, 50% of governance bodies
- Ethnic Representation: Project governance and employment reflect Sudan's diversity
- Regional Balance: Resources allocated transparently with priority to marginalized areas
- Community Participation: Communities identify priorities and monitor implementation
- Local Economic Benefit: Maximize local employment, materials, and contracting

## Implementation Phasing

Reconstruction sequenced over four phases:

Emergency Phase (0-6 months): Life-saving assistance, stabilization, needs assessment

Early Recovery (6-18 months): Transitional shelter, livelihoods, essential services

Reconstruction Phase (18 months - 5 years): Major infrastructure, housing, economic recovery

Development Phase (5-10 years): Consolidation, sustainable development, reduced aid dependency

### Financing Strategy

The \$40-50 billion will be mobilized through:

- International humanitarian and development assistance from bilateral donors and UN agencies
- Multilateral development bank financing with concessional terms
- Debt relief freeing fiscal space for reconstruction
- Domestic revenue mobilization as economy recovers
- Private sector investment in commercially viable infrastructure
- Diaspora contributions and innovative financing mechanisms

### Sudan as African Model

Sudan's inclusive reconstruction could provide a powerful model for post-conflict recovery across Africa by:

- Demonstrating conflict-affected countries can rebuild equitably
- Showing reconstruction as peacebuilding through addressing root causes
- Proving diversity can be an asset when harnessed through inclusive processes

- Validating African-owned approaches rather than external templates
- Contributing to AU's Agenda 2063 and continental frameworks
- Providing practical lessons for other African countries

## The Way Forward

This proposal calls on all stakeholders to commit to inclusive, equitable reconstruction. The Sudanese government must lead coordination and ensure transparency. International partners must provide generous, flexible, long-term support. Regional organizations must facilitate coordination and resource mobilization. Civil society must participate in monitoring and accountability. The private sector must invest responsibly. Women's organizations must ensure genuine gender equality. Ethnic and regional movements must engage constructively.

Sudan stands at a crossroads. The devastation is immense, but so is the opportunity. By rebuilding inclusively—ensuring women, ethnic minorities, and all regions participate and benefit—Sudan can emerge from conflict stronger, more equitable, and more united. The coming years will determine whether Sudan replicates past patterns of inequality that fueled conflict, or builds a new Sudan where diversity is celebrated, resources shared equitably, and every citizen has opportunity to thrive.

This proposal provides the roadmap. What's needed now is political will, financial resources, and collective commitment to make it reality.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Context: Sudan's Humanitarian and Infrastructure Crisis

Sudan has experienced one of the 21st century's most severe humanitarian catastrophes. The conflict that began in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has devastated the country, creating a nationwide crisis with ethnic dimensions, particularly in Darfur where violence has targeted specific communities.

By early 2026, the humanitarian toll includes: over 8 million displaced (6 million internally, 2+ million as refugees), tens of thousands killed, widespread gender-based violence, 19 million facing acute food insecurity, 14 million without healthcare access, and 19 million children out of school. Disease outbreaks have surged due to collapsed health systems and lack of clean water.

Infrastructure destruction is extensive: healthcare facilities destroyed or looted, schools damaged, water and sanitation systems broken down, electrical infrastructure destroyed, transportation networks damaged, and hundreds of thousands of homes destroyed. Total infrastructure damage exceeds \$30-40 billion.

The economic impact includes GDP contraction of 18-20%, currency collapse, inflation exceeding 100%, agricultural production down 50%+ in conflict areas, businesses shuttered, and unemployment soaring. This catastrophe reflects decades of marginalization, inequitable development, and exclusionary governance from peripheral regions.

### 1.2 Purpose and Objectives of this Proposal

This proposal aims to:

- Provide a comprehensive framework for rebuilding lives and infrastructure addressing both immediate humanitarian needs and long-term reconstruction
- Identify priority projects across humanitarian relief, shelter, WASH, health, education, transportation, energy, agriculture, economic recovery, and environmental restoration
- Demonstrate how reconstruction can be implemented inclusively, ensuring ethnic diversity, gender equality, and regional equity

- Estimate resource requirements and identify financing mechanisms
- Propose implementation strategies, phasing, coordination mechanisms, and accountability frameworks
- Position Sudan's inclusive reconstruction as a model for post-conflict recovery across Africa

The ultimate objective is supporting Sudan's transformation from conflict to peace, recovery, and sustainable development in ways that address historical inequities and create foundations for lasting stability.

### 1.3 Scope and Geographic Focus

This proposal addresses reconstruction needs across Sudan's entire territory, recognizing regional variations:

Khartoum Region: Urban conflict reconstruction, infrastructure repair, economic recovery

Darfur Region: Comprehensive village reconstruction, addressing both current damage and historical marginalization

Kordofan Region: Agricultural infrastructure, services, community facilities, especially Nuba Mountains

Eastern Sudan: Agricultural infrastructure investment, Port Sudan expansion, addressing Beja community grievances

Northern Region and Blue Nile: Investment ensuring no neglect while resources flow to acute crisis areas

The proposal covers: humanitarian relief and protection, housing and shelter, WASH, healthcare, education, transportation, energy, telecommunications, agricultural rehabilitation, economic recovery, social infrastructure, environmental restoration, and governance rebuilding.

## 1.4 Guiding Principles for Inclusive Reconstruction

This proposal rests on foundational principles:

**Build Back Better and More Equitably:** Reconstruction should address historical inequalities, not simply restore pre-conflict infrastructure. Prioritize previously marginalized regions and use rebuilding as transformation opportunity.

**Diversity as Strength:** Sudan's ethnic, regional, and gender diversity is an asset. Ensure women participate equally, ethnic minorities hold leadership positions, and all regions have voice.

**Community-Centered Approaches:** Communities must identify priorities, participate in design and implementation, and own outcomes. This ensures cultural appropriateness and sustainability.

**Conflict-Sensitivity and Peacebuilding:** Every reconstruction decision either contributes to peace or risks fueling future conflict. Ensure equitable resource distribution, inclusive processes, and employment reducing youth vulnerability.

**Economic Empowerment:** Create livelihoods, not just infrastructure. Maximize local employment for women, youth, and vulnerable groups while supporting local businesses.

**Sustainability and Resilience:** Build infrastructure to withstand future shocks from climate, economics, or potential conflict through quality construction and appropriate technologies.

**Gender Equality:** Women must be equal participants and beneficiaries—in decision-making, as household heads prioritized for assistance, through reconstruction employment, with GBV prevention integrated.

Regional Equity: Distribute resources equitably based on need and population, with historically marginalized areas receiving priority through transparent allocation formulas.

Transparency and Accountability: Full transparency of budgets, contracts, expenditures, and outcomes with robust accountability including audits, community monitoring, and anti-corruption measures.

Partnership and Coordination: Effective reconstruction requires coordination among government, international partners, civil society, and private sector while respecting diverse actors' comparative advantages.

## 18. FINANCING AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

### 18.1 Total Resource Requirements

Comprehensive reconstruction requires \$40-50 billion over 10 years, broken down as:

- Humanitarian relief and life-saving interventions: \$5-7 billion
- Housing and shelter reconstruction: \$8-10 billion
- Infrastructure (WASH, health, education, transportation, energy): \$18-22 billion
- Economic recovery and livelihoods: \$5-6 billion
- Institutional rebuilding and governance: \$2-3 billion
- Environmental restoration and climate resilience: \$2-3 billion

This represents necessary investment for a nation of 45+ million rebuilding from devastating conflict. The humanitarian crisis alone currently costs over \$2 billion annually in emergency assistance without rebuilding productive capacity.

### 18.2 Domestic Revenue Mobilization

Sudan's domestic revenue capacity is severely limited initially but can grow:

- Tax system reform improving collection efficiency
- Customs revenue from Port Sudan
- Revenue from recovering economic sectors

- Public asset management
- Reducing corruption and leakage

Domestic revenues will initially contribute minimally but can reach 20-30% of reconstruction financing as economy recovers.

### **18.3 International Assistance**

International humanitarian and development aid is critical:

- Bilateral donors (US, EU, UK, Nordic countries, Gulf states)
- UN agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, UN Women)
- International NGOs and civil society organizations
- Humanitarian pooled funds
- Development assistance tied to governance reforms

Coordination through multi-donor trust funds prevents fragmentation and reduces transaction costs.

### **18.4 Multilateral Development Bank Financing**

Concessional financing from development banks:

- World Bank IDA grants and credits
- African Development Bank concessional loans
- Islamic Development Bank
- Regional development institutions

Requires Sudan to clear arrears and demonstrate governance reforms, but offers low-cost, long-term financing for infrastructure.

### **18.5 Private Sector Investment**

Private capital for commercially viable infrastructure:

- Telecommunications and digital infrastructure
- Energy generation and distribution
- Port Sudan expansion and logistics
- Agribusiness and food processing
- Housing development

Requires appropriate regulatory frameworks, risk mitigation instruments, and business-friendly environment.

### **18.6 Diaspora Contributions**

Sudanese diaspora can contribute significantly:

- Diaspora bonds for reconstruction financing
- Increased remittances to families
- Direct investment in businesses and properties
- Skills and knowledge transfer
- Advocacy for international support

Creating appropriate investment vehicles and reducing transaction costs for remittances can unlock diaspora resources.

### **18.7 Innovative Financing Mechanisms**

Creative financing approaches:

- Green bonds for environmental and climate projects
- Social impact bonds for measured outcomes
- Blended finance combining public and private capital
- Debt-for-development swaps
- Reconstruction bonds with international guarantees

- Results-based financing linking disbursements to achievements

RESTRICTED use

## 24. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 24.1 For the Sudanese Government

- Prioritize reconstruction as national imperative with dedicated leadership and coordination mechanisms
- Ensure transparency in all reconstruction resources, budgets, contracts, and expenditures
- Guarantee equitable resource distribution across regions with historically marginalized areas receiving priority
- Establish inclusive governance structures ensuring ethnic, gender, and regional representation
- Create enabling environment for private sector participation and investment
- Develop anti-corruption measures protecting reconstruction resources
- Coordinate effectively with international partners while maintaining national ownership

### 24.2 For International Partners and Donors

- Provide generous, flexible, long-term financing recognizing reconstruction timeframes
- Respect Sudanese ownership and leadership rather than imposing external templates
- Coordinate assistance through pooled funds and joint mechanisms reducing fragmentation
- Condition support on genuine inclusive governance progress, not performative reforms
- Support capacity building enabling Sudanese institutions to lead reconstruction
- Avoid creating parallel systems that undermine national capacity
- Maintain commitment through political transitions and challenges

### 24.3 For Regional Organizations

- African Union and IGAD should facilitate coordination and mobilize resources
- Provide political support and legitimacy for inclusive reconstruction
- Share African experiences and expertise through South-South cooperation
- Monitor progress through APRM and other continental mechanisms
- Support regional integration benefits from Sudan's reconstruction

- Mediate when internal disputes threaten reconstruction progress

#### 24.4 For Civil Society and Communities

- Participate actively in identifying reconstruction priorities and monitoring implementation
- Hold all actors—government, international partners, contractors—accountable
- Mobilize communities and constituencies for inclusive reconstruction
- Build coalitions across ethnic and regional lines advancing shared interests
- Document and publicize successes and failures informing adaptive management
- Provide community-level implementation capacity and oversight

#### 24.5 For the Private Sector

- Invest responsibly in Sudan's reconstruction and economic recovery
- Create employment prioritizing local hiring, women, and youth
- Ensure business practices support rather than undermine peace and inclusion
- Partner with government and communities in reconstruction projects
- Adopt transparency and anti-corruption standards
- Contribute technical expertise and innovative solutions

### 25. CONCLUSION

Sudan stands at a defining crossroads. The conflict has inflicted immense suffering and destruction, displacing millions, destroying critical infrastructure, and devastating the economy. Yet within this tragedy lies an unprecedented opportunity to rebuild Sudan differently—more inclusively, more equitably, and more sustainably than before.

This proposal has demonstrated that comprehensive reconstruction is both necessary and achievable. The \$40-50 billion required over ten years, while substantial, is far less than the cost of continued conflict and represents sound investment in Sudan's future. Every dollar spent on inclusive reconstruction saves multiples in conflict prevention and enables manifold returns through unlocked human and economic potential.

The framework presented here goes beyond conventional post-conflict reconstruction. It recognizes that Sudan's conflicts were rooted in exclusion—of ethnic minorities from political power, of women from decision-making, of peripheral regions from development resources. Simply rebuilding what existed before would recreate the conditions that fueled violence. Instead, this proposal charts a transformative path where reconstruction itself becomes peacebuilding.

## Key Elements for Success

Several elements are critical for success:

**Inclusive Participation:** Women must comprise 40% of reconstruction workforce and 50% of governance bodies. Ethnic minorities must hold leadership positions. All regions must have voice in priorities and visible benefits from reconstruction. This isn't just ethical—it's practical. Excluded groups have no stake in reconstruction's success and may actively undermine it.

**Regional Equity:** Darfur, Eastern Sudan, Kordofan, and other historically marginalized regions must receive priority attention and resources. Transparent allocation formulas and accountability mechanisms prevent Khartoum from monopolizing reconstruction benefits as it monopolized pre-conflict development.

**Community Ownership:** Communities themselves must drive reconstruction priorities and implementation. External actors—government, NGOs, international organizations—should facilitate and support, not dictate. Community participation ensures cultural appropriateness, sustainability, and empowerment of populations that conflict rendered powerless.

**Economic Empowerment:** Reconstruction must create livelihoods, not just infrastructure. Maximizing local employment—particularly for women, youth, and vulnerable groups—provides immediate income while building skills and capacity. Supporting local businesses and contractors ensures reconstruction resources benefit communities economically.

**Transparency and Accountability:** Full transparency of budgets, contracts, and expenditures with robust accountability mechanisms including audits, community monitoring, and anti-corruption measures is non-negotiable. Corruption in reconstruction is not just theft but betrayal of suffering populations and a grave risk to peace.

**Long-term Commitment:** Reconstruction requires sustained commitment over at least ten years. Quick fixes and short-term programming waste resources and undermine trust. International partners must provide patient, flexible, predictable support rather than fluctuating with political cycles or media attention.

### **Sudan as African Model**

Sudan's success in inclusive reconstruction would resonate far beyond its borders. Many African countries grapple with post-conflict reconstruction needs: South Sudan, CAR, DRC, Somalia, Mali, and others. Sudan demonstrating that deeply divided societies can rebuild equitably and use reconstruction as peacebuilding would provide a powerful, African-owned model.

The principles are transferable: recognizing diversity as strength requiring accommodation, designing institutions to manage rather than suppress differences, ensuring women's equal participation, devolving power to bring government close to citizens, protecting minorities constitutionally, sharing resources equitably, and balancing justice with reconciliation. These aren't Sudan-specific but broadly applicable to diverse societies.

Sudan succeeding would validate African Union standards and instruments, demonstrate that African solutions to African problems work, inspire other countries undertaking transitions, and contribute to continental aspirations for democracy, development, and integration.

### **The Choice Ahead**

Sudan faces a stark choice: replicate the exclusionary patterns that fueled conflict, or build a new Sudan where diversity is celebrated, resources shared equitably, and every citizen has opportunity to thrive regardless of ethnicity, gender, or region.

The devastation is immense. Over 8 million displaced. Tens of thousands killed. Infrastructure worth tens of billions destroyed. Economic production collapsed. Social fabric shredded. Trauma universal. The scale of need can seem overwhelming.

Yet Sudanese resilience is equally immense. Women led the 2019 revolution. Communities showed extraordinary generosity hosting displaced neighbors. Civil society organized resistance committees and humanitarian responses. Farmers are eager to return to their fields. Entrepreneurs want to rebuild businesses. Diaspora stands ready to contribute. Young people seek to build rather than destroy.

This proposal provides the roadmap. The priorities are clear: emergency humanitarian relief transitioning to shelter, WASH, healthcare, education, transportation, energy, agriculture, and economic recovery. The principles are sound: inclusion, equity, participation, empowerment, sustainability, and accountability. The resources can be mobilized through international assistance, development financing, private investment, and domestic revenues. The implementation can be phased strategically over emergency, early recovery, reconstruction, and development phases.

### What's Required Now

What's needed now is political will and collective commitment:

Sudanese leaders must choose inclusion over exclusion, equity over privilege, peace over conflict. They must recognize that monopolizing power failed catastrophically and that sharing power, resources, and opportunity offers the only sustainable path forward.

International partners must provide generous support while respecting Sudanese ownership. They must maintain commitment through challenges rather than abandoning Sudan when attention shifts elsewhere.

Civil society must continue mobilizing, monitoring, and holding all actors accountable. Women's organizations must ensure gender equality becomes reality, not rhetoric. Community organizations must drive local reconstruction.

The private sector must invest responsibly, creating employment and economic opportunity while supporting rather than undermining peace.

Most importantly, ordinary Sudanese—the displaced mother in a camp, the farmer eager to return to fields, the student wanting to resume education, the entrepreneur rebuilding a business, the young person seeking purpose—must believe that inclusive reconstruction is possible and demand it from their leaders.

### A New Beginning

Sudan can emerge from this devastation stronger, more united, and more equitable than before. The physical reconstruction of homes, schools, hospitals, roads, and farms will be visible. But equally important is the reconstruction of trust between communities, of economic opportunity for all regions, of women's equal participation, of young people's hope for the future, and of national identity that embraces diversity.

This will not be easy. Resistance will come from those benefiting from inequality. Resources will be constrained. Capacity will need building. Setbacks will occur. Patience will be tested.

But the alternative—returning to exclusionary patterns that fueled decades of conflict—is unacceptable. Sudan has already paid too high a price in lives lost, potential squandered, and resources wasted on violence.

The choice is clear. The roadmap is provided. The opportunity exists. The question is whether Sudan's leaders and citizens have the courage and vision to seize this moment and build the inclusive, equitable, peaceful Sudan that all Sudanese deserve.

The world is watching. Africa is hoping. Sudan's future is being written. Let it be a story of transformation, inclusion, and renewal—a story that inspires a continent and demonstrates that even from the deepest devastation, new and better societies can emerge.

The work begins now.

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Note on Sources:

This proposal draws on extensive documentation from UN agencies, international organizations, NGOs, academic research, and policy literature on post-conflict reconstruction, humanitarian response, infrastructure development, and inclusive governance. Given the ongoing nature of Sudan's crisis and reconstruction needs, many sources are from 2023-2026 reporting on the current situation. Damage assessments and reconstruction requirements are based on preliminary surveys and will require updating as comprehensive assessments become possible with improved access.

Comparative examples from other African post-conflict reconstructions (Rwanda, South Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, DRC) inform recommendations while recognizing Sudan's unique context. International best practice guidelines from Sphere, WASH Cluster, Global Shelter Cluster, and other technical standard-setters provide frameworks for quality and accountability in humanitarian and reconstruction programming.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

AfDB - African Development Bank

AU - African Union

CAR - Central African Republic

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CHW - Community Health Worker

DRC - Democratic Republic of the Congo

FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization

GBV - Gender-Based Violence

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

ICT - Information and Communication Technology

IDP - Internally Displaced Person  
IGAD - Intergovernmental Authority on Development  
IMF - International Monetary Fund  
IOM - International Organization for Migration  
MFI - Microfinance Institution  
NGO - Non-Governmental Organization  
OCHA - Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
PTSD - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder  
RSF - Rapid Support Forces  
SAF - Sudanese Armed Forces  
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme  
UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund  
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund  
WASH - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene  
WFP - World Food Programme  
WHO - World Health Organization

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