**The International Alliance for Peace and Development**

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**A Report on the Technical or the other Forms of Support Needed to Meet the Identified Challenges, Including the Social and Economic Impacts of COVID-19, and the Response Measures in The Republic of Sudan**

**An Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a devastating toll on many countries across the world, including the African countries in general and Sudan in particular. In this context, the social and economic impacts of the pandemic have raised issues related to the support needed to meet the challenges.

Covid-19 was not the only crisis threatening Sudan in 2020. The country had suffered from other problems and disasters that has reflected on the social and economic levels. Therefore, these effects need to be clarified, and the questions of how they were carried out or how the country can be supported need to be answered.

The following report shows the implications of these crisis on Sudan and how the government of the State party has handled them, along with mentioning the necessary support that can be provided.

**First:** **The Implications for Gender Equality**

In July and since the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis, (40) cases of domestic violence against women had been recorded by the Unit to Combat Violence Against Women and Children at the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, most of them are concentrated in the capital Khartoum. As reported by the director of the government unit, all these documented cases have received psychological support; however, it was not enough.

Despite the expectation that this support will be accompanied by legal procedures, the prosecution and courts' suspension of work during the period of blanket closure has hindered the access of a number of victimized women to support. According to the director of the government unit, some of the battered women have complained against their assailants in the police station, but the assailants come out with the normal guarantee, increasing the risk to the victim, who is now with her aggressor in one place.

However, launching a hotline service to receive complaints of domestic and gender-based violence last April was one of the good steps taken by the Violence Against Women Unit at Sudan’s Ministry of Labor and Social Development.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Sudan declared in April 2020 that women are expected to be uniquely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, as they are more likely to come into contact with health services, specifically antenatal care, childbirth and breastfeeding. Therefore, women face a greater threat of exposure to Coronavirus in these health facilities.

The UNFPA also explained that the curfews and closures made women more vulnerable to gender-based violence and domestic abuse. Besides, given the role of women as a primary care provider, it means that they would bear the brunt of financial suffering as a result of the economic downturn.

It further noted that women are more likely to contract the virus due to their prevailing roles as caregivers and front-line health care workers, as about 70 percent of health care workers and social workers are women.

**Second: The Implications for Nutrition**

In the 2020 Global Hunger Index, Sudan ranked 94 out of 107 countries that have sufficient data to calculate the results of the 2020 Global Health Index and with a score of 27.2, Sudan suffers from a serious level of hunger.

Taking into account the decline in the percentage of hunger between 2012 and 2020, as it decreased from 32.5% to more than 27%, which means that there are effective policies and methods to deal with this indicator. However, the percentage is still high, and the percentage that falls between 20 and 30% is critical, according to the Global Hunger Index.

1.1 million children in Sudan are going hungry as the country faces its worst food crisis in recent years. [i][i] The number of children who are living through emergency levels of food insecurity has doubled since 2019, with half a million more children at risk of suffering the severe consequences of extreme hunger compared to the same time last year.

The food crisis in 2020 was chiefly attributed to a combination of skyrocketing food prices, inflation and job losses due to the impact of COVID-19 which has taken a devastating toll on Sudanese families. In total, an estimated 9.6 million people do not know where their next meal is coming from.

According to the index of spiraling food prices, lockdown measures designed to prevent the outbreak of COVID-19 have disrupted markets and cross-border trade, crippling livelihoods and pushing prices so high. As of June 2020, cereal prices tripled compared to last year, with nearly four times higher than the average of the past five years.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Around 120 children die every day as a result of malnutrition and related causes. There is an urgent need to support family with money and food during the COVID-19 response, including providing emergency cash and supplies.[[2]](#footnote-2)

An estimated 21% of the population are experiencing Crisis or worse levels of food insecurity and are in need of urgent action. This is the highest figure ever recorded in the history of Sudan compared to previous years.[[3]](#footnote-3)

**Third:** **The Implications for Medicine and Health**

In the mid-2020, medical doctors threatened several times that they could suspend their work and stop practicing their profession in protest over the interference in their affairs and their exposure to physical attacks.

Coronavirus cases have remarkable surged in Sudanese prisons amid government indifference and apathy. Confirmed cases in Sudan's Notorious Kober Prison has reached three cases. The family of the 72-year-old former leader, Ali Othman, announced that the doctor of Kober prison told them that he was infected with the Coronavirus, although he had been in contact with many prisoners until recently. The second patient whose infection was confirmed is Abdul Rahim Muhammad Abdul Karim, 71 years old, who was arrested by the Sudanese Rapid Intervention Forces and the Sudanese Intelligence Service in April 2019, and the third was the prisoner, the 55-year-old Ahmed Haroun, who initially showed symptoms as pneumonia, and he remained in prison in contact with prisoners for ten full days. He was only admitted to hospital two days after his condition has deteriorated.

**Fourth: The Implications for Economy**

Food prices rose dramatically in 2020, which led to an increase in inflation rates, which reached 99% in April 2020 compared to only 82% in March of the same year, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics, with an increase of more than 17%, which made it difficult for many Sudanese families to secure their basic nutritional needs.

The high inflation rate is chiefly due to the continuing increase in food prices and basic supplies such as oils, cereals, meat, legumes, milk and bread. The Sudanese have been suffering for months to obtain bread, car fuel and cooking gas, and the petrol stations have been witnessing long queues. Besides, since South Sudan gained independence from Sudan, the country's economy has witnessed an escalation in inflation rates and the value of the Sudanese pound declined due to the loss of large oil revenues. Some considered that food poverty was one of the main reasons for the revolution against the Bashir regime, as protests began in the city of Atbara, north of the capital Khartoum, as a result of the regional authorities raising the price of bread, which led to violent demonstrations that extended to include the entire Sudanese country, and many of those affected by food poverty participated in it.

**Fifth: The Implications for Engaging Affected Groups and Farmers**

Although the Sudanese strategy for sustainable development aims to reduce poverty in general and the rate of food poverty in particular, the foregoing shows the discontent of citizens with the economic policies that pushed up inflation during one month, from March to April 2020, from 82% to 99%, which made it difficult to provide basic food commodities for many citizens.

However, Sudan has worked to include farmers in remote areas and areas not included in many plans by concluding agreements with a number of banks to finance agricultural projects in those areas and raise their efficiency, which is expected to see its effects and impact on citizens soon, and which reflects fear of wasting potential in bureaucratic procedures.

**Conclusion**

In light of the above, Sudan had realized the grave impact of Covid-19 on gender balance and equality, including issues such as the increase in domestic violence. This was achieved through its recommendations and assistance to those affected through responding to government complaints and adopting them. However, despite the effectiveness of this mechanism at times, it doesn’t work most of the time.

Food support was another issue that received assistance and support, which means that the decision-maker in the political government is aware of the importance of that issue and the threat it poses. However, the number of children affected by the pandemic remained high.

Among the other forms of support was inviting farmers to participate in dialogue and take care of their issues and work to activate them.

**Recommendations**

Taking into consideration the aforementioned, the International Alliance for Peace and Development recommends the following:

* The Sudanese government must launch a social welfare program for groups affected by the pandemic, especially women and children.
* The World Food Organization must seek to accurately quantify the effects of the pandemic on the levels of food security in Sudan.
* Doctors, medical staff and hospitals must be protected during their work time.

1. Relief World, Number of Sudanese children facing extreme hunger doubles to 1.1 million due to impact of COVID-19, July 2020, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/number-sudanese-children-facing-extreme-hunger-doubles-11-million-due-impact-covid-19> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-3)