



National Adaptation Plans in focus: Lessons from South Sudan

The Republic of South Sudan became the world's newest nation on 9 July 2011ⁱ. It is a landlocked country in east-central Africa, located south of Sudan, north of Uganda, Kenya, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, west of Ethiopia, and east of the Central African Republic, with total land boundaries of 6,018 km.ⁱⁱ South Sudan's territory totals 644,329 km² with about 11 million inhabitants^{iii,iv}. The northern and central parts of the country are characterized by plains, which gradually rise to the highlands in the south. The country is located in the White Nile catchment area, which also forms the *Sudd*, one of the world's largest wetlands. The climate is tropical with seasonal rainfall. The heaviest rainfall occurs in the upland areas in the south, diminishing further to the north. The main natural resources of South Sudan are fertile agricultural land, gold, diamonds, and petroleum^v. It also has a significant hydro hydropower potential.

South Sudan is highly dependent on petroleum, with oil accounting for almost all its exports, 90 percent of government revenue, and more than one-third of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Besides the oil sector, livelihoods are concentrated in low productivity subsistence agriculture and pastoral activities with about 82 percent of the

population being classified as "poor", based on the World Bank's poverty line of US\$1.90 per day. Food insecurity is a recurring issue, and as of 2020 nearly 7.5 million people needed humanitarian assistance and protection, while almost 4 million people remained displaced by the civil war that lasted from 2013 until 2020. However, the country has yet embarked upon the road to recovery and reconciliation^{vi}.

COVID-19 represents potentially the greatest threat to South Sudan's already fragile health system as suggested by the United Nations^{vii}.

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"This first National Adaptation Plan (NAP) embodies South Sudan's commitment to overcome our multifaceted challenges. Over the next five years, the first NAP will guide our efforts from a national level, down to our communities and households."

Hon. Josephine Napwon Cosmas, Minister of Environment and Forestry

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Climate change risks

South Sudan is affected by climate-induced disasters such as frequent flooding and droughts. The country has registered a decrease in rainfall ranging from 10 to 20 percent since the mid-1970s. Furthermore, a substantial increase in temperatures has occurred over the past 30 years with the central and southern regions experiencing some of the highest rates of warming in the world (0.4°C per decade)^{viii}.

Climate projections for South Sudan^x suggest i) an increase of 1°C in average temperature by 2060, ii) increased unpredictability and intensity of seasonal rainfall, and iii) increased occurrence of drought. Agriculture, ecosystems, and water resources will be among the most

vulnerable sectors in the country. For agriculture, impacts are forecast to include increased crop losses/failure, loss of pasture lands and water resources for livestock and increased local conflict over land. Forest and wetland ecosystems are expected to be particularly impacted by climate change, leading to a reduction in critical habitats and a loss in biodiversity. Key impacts in the water resources sector are related to reduced river flows, reduced water quality, and increased conflict over rights and access to water^x.



Groundwork for supporting the NAP process

Adaptation-relevant policies, plans, and programmes

As the youngest least developed country (LDC) in the world, South Sudan has taken steps to participate in multilateral environmental agreements and global efforts to address environmental issues by becoming a Party to the following Rio Conventions:

- United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD),
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)^{xi}.

South Sudan has adopted a National Environmental Policy as its key document that governs the natural resources in the country. The policy calls for: i) the development of a national strategy for climate change adaptation and mitigation; ii) the formulation of the climate change policy; and iii) increasing the country's efforts to reduce communities' vulnerability to climate variability and change.

After its accession to the UNFCCC in May 2014, the new nation launched diverse initiatives to meet its climate change-related obligations and commitments and prepared a National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) submitted to the UNFCCC in February 2017. South Sudan's NAPA identified five priority areas for effective climate change adaptation: i) Environment; ii) Water Resources; iii) Agriculture; iv) Disaster Risk Reduction; and v) Policy and Institutional Framework^{xii}.

In 2015, South Sudan submitted its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) to the UNFCCC and in 2019 its Initial National Communication (INC). The INC identified priority mitigation and adaptation measures and provided information on how to integrate them into national development plans^{xiii}. The process included consultations with representatives from government, academia, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In addition, South Sudan developed its Second Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in November 2021 that has captured adaptation actions that will be implementing for the period of 2020-2030.

Efforts to integrate adaptation in development planning processes are underway as adaptation is being integrated in the National Policy on Food Security and the Disaster Risk Management Policy (DRMP), both of which are currently under development. The National Policy on Food Security identifies the adoption of drought- and flood-resistant seed varieties as a promising way forward to strengthen adaptive capacity in the country. The draft DRMP includes measures to address flood risks.

The country's NAP priority areas for adaptation are agriculture and forestry, livestock, health, water, and disaster risk management^{xiv,xv}.

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"The First NAP and the process it represents provides a comprehensive framework for building resilience across all segments of our society. It is the first step on the road to a prosperous and climate-resilient future for all South Sudanese."

Hon. Joseph Africano Bartel, the Undersecretary of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forestry

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Adaptation actions implemented

The Government of South Sudan, together with national and international partners, has implemented several climate change-related projects and programmes to address adaptation in priority sectors. The three most important ones in investment size are^{xvi}:

- [Watershed approaches for climate resilience in agro-pastoral landscapes, GEF-UNDP \(approved in 2020, \\$28,884,703\)](#): develop approaches to increase climate resilience in agro-pastoral landscapes.
- [Strengthening the Capacity of Government and Communities in South Sudan to Adapt to Climate Change, GEF-UNDP \(approved in 2017, \\$35,062,420\)](#): working with the government and communities to increase their capacity to adapt to climate change.
- [South Sudan Safety Net Project \(SSSNP\), World Bank-UNOPS \(approved in 2020, \\$40,000,000\)](#): providing temporary income opportunities to selected poor and vulnerable households and to strengthen safety net delivery tools in the Republic of South Sudan.

In addition, the Ministry of Environment, with relevant institutional partners, is working on enabling activities supported by technical assistance from donors^{xvii,xviii,xix}.

Institutional arrangements

The NAP process is spearheaded by the Department for Climate Change under the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has been nominated as the political focal point for the international environmental conventions and treaties but due to a lack of financial and human resources, it is not yet operational^{xx}.

NAP formulation

The NAP process constitutes a landmark achievement in the country's response to climate change and the country's First NAP represents an important milestone in establishing a coordinated approach to building adaptive capacity and resilience from climate change. The NAP is aligned with national and sectoral planning processes and priorities and outlines entry points for action to be taken in building the resilience of South Sudan's development trajectory. Drawing from existing climate change documents, it groups adaptation priorities into 9 sectoral programmes (agriculture, livestock and fisheries; disaster risk reduction; energy; environment, ecosystems and biodiversity conservation; health; human settlements; tourism and recreation; industry infrastructure and transportation; water resources). These programmes represent South Sudan's current adaptation priorities and should be used as the basis for all climate change adaptation projects formulated over the next five years.

Challenges and successes

Support programmes

The NAP-GSP, UNEP, UNDP, national experts, and the GEF have provided technical and/or financial support to the NAP process. Additional funding has been provided by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the (former) Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom, the African Water Facility (AWF), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

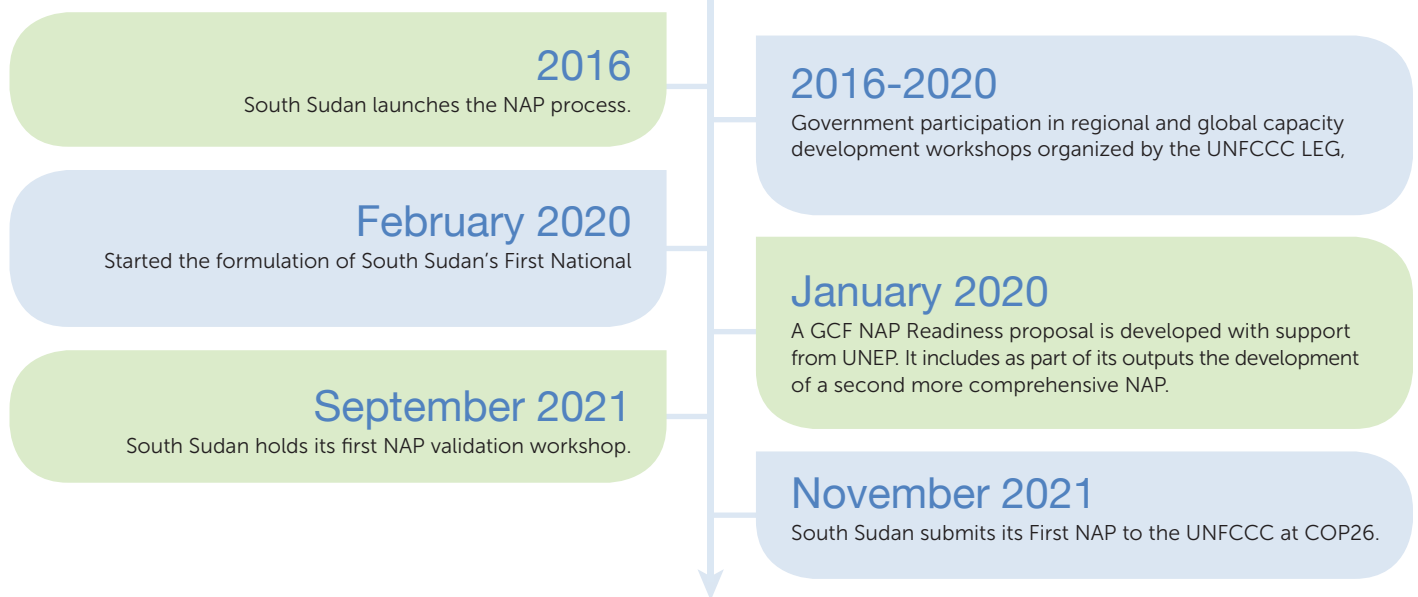
Challenges

South Sudan faces numerous challenges due to decades of political instability, poverty, and persistent food insecurity, all of which are exacerbated by climate change^{xxi}. These include i) internal conflicts and security concerns; ii) lack of a clear and transparent institutional framework for climate change adaptation, iii) limited

coordination between ministries and line departments to maximize climate change adaptation, iv) insufficient institutional and technical capacity to implement planned activities, v) economic challenges and limited budget; and vi) low level of environmental awareness^{xxii}.

Successes

South Sudan, as the youngest country in the world, has made great progress towards establishing a foundation for stability for the years to come. With respect to its climate change response, the country has demonstrated strong commitment to addressing climate change having successfully developed a NAPA, INC, Second NDC, and a First NAP within five years. National efforts towards capacity-building and institutional strengthening, as well as improving the country's climate information and understanding, are pursued^{xxiii}.



The Process to Formulate and Implement NAPs in South Sudan

The Government of South Sudan launched its NAP process in 2016. Technical consultations with key ministries and a stakeholder workshop were organized as part of this event.

Opportunities and next steps

The development of the country's First NAP is a milestone achievement for South Sudan. The short-term adaptation options it contains will be the first ones to be implemented as they will help strengthening adaptation planning and implementation including by: i) formalizing institutional arrangements, establishing a formal legal mandate, and ensuring buy-in and ownership on the part of line agency stakeholders; ii) formalizing institutional arrangements, establishing a formal legal mandate, and ensuring buy-in and ownership on the part of line agency stakeholders; iii) formulating NAP communication and outreach strategy; iv) developing a costing and financing plan; and v) establishing a monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework. The readiness NAP window of the GCF provides a financing opportunity for implementing these enabling activities.

The world's
**newest
nation**
since 9 July
2011

Decline in
precipitation
by **10-20%**
since the
mid-1970s

Substantial
warming
over the past
30 years
(0.4 °C)

Increase of
1 °C in
temperature
on average
by 2060

7.5 million
people
in need of
humanitarian
assistance and
protection

82% of the
population
lives below
poverty line of
\$1.90 a day

Key documents

- [Initial National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(2019\)](#)
- [Republic of South Sudan's National Adaptation Programme of Action \(NAPA\) \(2016\)](#)
- [Republic of South Sudan's First National Adaptation Plan for Climate Change \(2021\)](#)
- [South Sudan Second Nationally Determined Contribution \(2021\)](#)

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About the NAP-GSP

The joint UNDP-UN Environment National Adaptation Plan Global Support Programme (NAP-GSP) was launched in June 2013, financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). The NAP-GSP, together with partners, are assisting developing countries to identify technical, institutional and financial needs to integrate climate change adaptation into medium and long-term national planning and financing. The NAP-GSP provides technical expertise and guidance on country NAP processes, and opportunities for knowledge exchange on NAPs.



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