

South Sudan: 2024 Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report Main Messages

Ministry of Finance and Planning

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The Context

Rooted in the aspirations of Vision 2040, South Sudan Revised National Development Strategy (R-NDS), 2021-2024, provides a strategic framework for steering the nation towards sustainable development. The R-NDS is not only aligned with Agenda 2030 and Africa Agenda 2063 but also resonates with the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), which focuses on consolidating peace, stabilizing the economy, and fostering sustainable development.

VNR Main Messages on selected SDGs

- **SDG 1- No Poverty:** The government is making efforts to alleviate poverty in all its forms. However, aspiration and determination for citizens to benefit from natural resource abundance is hindered by protracted conflicts, natural disasters, pandemics, economic hardships, and humanitarian crisis. The World Bank estimates that 80% of South Sudanese live below the poverty line. Preliminary results of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (2024) show that 86% of South Sudanese are multidimensionality poor.
- **SDG 2 – Zero Hunger:** Over the last 5 years, there has been an increase in net cereal production due to expansion of cultivated areas and because of relative peace and government prioritization of agricultural production. Unfortunately, the gains made are impacted by sub-national violence and climate shocks, leading to severe food insecurity. About 7.1 million people are food insecure and 2.5 million people are at risk of acute malnutrition in 2024. Nonetheless, the government continues to consolidate peace to enhance food production in areas not affected by floods.
- **SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being:** The government is collaborating with development partners to reduce morbidities and maternal and child mortality. Still, limited access to quality healthcare services derails comprehensive healthcare interventions.
- **SDG 4 – Quality Education:** The country's literacy rate has improved from 27% (2008) to 35% (2018) among adults aged 15 and above. Likewise, there has been an increase in enrolment, from 1.9 million in 2021 to 2.2 million in 2023. Although the constitution guarantees compulsory and free basic education, access to education remains limited, especially in conflict and flood affected areas, with about 2.8 million children out of school. The government is prioritizing vocational training, digitalization of learning, and alternative education systems to encourage inclusive education for all.

- **SDG 5- Gender Equality:** R-ARCSS provides for 35% quota for women’s participation in leadership positions at all levels to promote gender equality. Despite this affirmative action, social stratification problems, including gender inequality, hinder women empowerment, and participation in development. Enhancing women participation in entrepreneurship and gender mainstreaming in policy frameworks are a priority for the government.
- **SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth:** The government is making strides to foster inclusive economic growth, private sector development, and jobs creation. Economic diversification across sectors including agriculture, mining, and private sector to promote economic growth are top priorities for the government and partners.
- **SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure:** The government has prioritized construction of road networks to connect Juba with the States and Administrative Areas. South Sudan has limited infrastructure, industrialization, innovation, and technology which are catalysts for accelerated development. The government plans roads that connect South Sudan to Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, and Ethiopia.
- **SDG 13 – Climate Action:** The government investment in climate-resilient development and adaptation strategies is a fundamental step to mitigating the adverse impacts of climate change on communities and ecosystems. The effects of recurrent floods, droughts, heatwaves, and deforestation exacerbate vulnerability and food insecurity.
- **SDG 16- Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions:** The relative peace since 2018 has provided an opportunity to accelerate Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development. However, sub-national violence poses significant obstacles to achieving sustainable peace. Efforts to promote accountable governance, access to justice, and strong institutions are government priorities to build the foundations of long-term development and peace.

SDGs Opportunities

Full implementation of the R-ARCSS and the R-NDS priorities can accelerate achievement of Agenda 2030. Provision of resources by government and partners to implement Development Plans and Sector Strategies will fast-track progress on SDGs. In addition, South Sudan’s Rescue Plan 2023, if keenly followed, could rapidly enhance Sustainable Development. Furthermore, strengthening of National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and Sector Working Groups (SWGs) would enhance coordination mechanisms and development data ecosystem.