



**International Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms
of Racial Discrimination**

Distr.: General
2 October 2013
English
Original: Arabic

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

**Consideration of reports submitted by States
parties under article 9 of the Convention**

**Twelfth to sixteenth periodic reports of States parties due in
2008**

Sudan* **

[18 March 2013]

* This report contains the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth periodic reports of the Sudan, due on 20 April 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008, respectively, submitted in one document. For the ninth to eleventh periodic reports and the summary records of the meetings at which the Committee considered those reports, see documents CERD/C/334/Add.2 and CERD/C/SR.1451, 1452 and 1460.

** In accordance with the information transmitted to States parties regarding the processing of their reports, the present document was not formally edited before being sent to the United Nations translation services.

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I. Introduction

1. Since ratifying the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1977, the Sudan has worked consistently hard to fulfil its obligations thereunder. It has demonstrated an increasing interest in the efforts and activities of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, with which it is eager to cooperate and maintain an objective and constructive dialogue in order to strengthen and promote human rights in the Sudan.

2. The Sudan submitted its reports, up to and including the eleventh periodic report, under article 9 of the Convention. Having considered the ninth to eleventh periodic reports, the Committee adopted its concluding observations thereon at its 1460th meeting, on 21 March 2001. We now present the twelfth to sixteenth periodic reports covering the years 2002–2012.

II. Methodology for preparation of the report

3. In this report, the following methodology was employed:

(a) Avoiding repetition of information included in previous reports, except where necessary in order to eliminate ambiguity or report new institutional or legal developments;

(b) In reviewing fundamental rights, following the same order in which they appear in articles of the Convention and referring to the articles by number;

(c) Responding to the concluding observations on the previous report either under a separate heading or in the course of dealing with the articles of the Convention, as appropriate, in order to avoid repetition;

(d) Using short paragraphs and numbering each new paragraph for ease of reference;

(e) Discussing the report in a group composed of 30 individuals, including representatives of civil society organizations, the independent Human Rights Commission and government agencies, in addition to academics and legal advisers. The draft report was presented to the group for discussion and suggested amendments were incorporated.

4. The Government of the Sudan affirms its sincere desire to defer to and cooperate with the Committee, which is a tool for guaranteeing the promotion and protection of civil and political rights, guided by the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, neutrality, non-selectivity and non-politicization, and likewise for guaranteeing the promotion and protection of human rights, based on the principles of cooperation and genuine dialogue between the Committee and Member States. It is also mindful of the fact that, as recognized in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, all rights are “indivisible, interdependent and interrelated” and that the Committee’s modus operandi is a strategic choice aimed at the protection of human rights, entailing the rejection of any form of exploitation for political, ideological or other ends.

5. This report describes the human rights situation in the north of the Sudan, as Southern Sudan remained fully autonomous in administering its internal affairs during a large part of the 10-year period, i.e., since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 and the proclamation of the Interim Constitution of the Republic of the Sudan, also in 2005, which affirmed as a principle the autonomy of that region until it seceded from the Sudan to form its own fledgling State.

6. This report presents a synopsis of the main aspects of progress attained in preventing all forms of discrimination in the Sudan, exemplified in the efforts of the State to that end at the legislative, judicial and executive levels at a time when the country faces a multitude of challenges and difficulties.

III. Land and people

7. In response to the Committee's concluding observations, detailed information concerning the population is set out below.

8. The Sudan is one of the largest countries in Africa in terms of its surface area, which was reduced after the secession by roughly one quarter, from 2.5 million to 1.881 million square kilometres. Its borders with Ethiopia also diminished in length from 1,605 to 725 kilometres and with the Central African Republic from 1,070 to 380 kilometres but remained the same with Chad, at 1,300 kilometres, with Libya at 380 kilometres, with Egypt at 1,280 kilometres, and with Eritrea at 605 kilometres. The length of its borders with South Sudan is 2,000 kilometres.

9. The Sudan has borders with seven States: Egypt and Libya to the north; South Sudan to the south; Chad and the Central African Republic to the west; and Ethiopia and Eritrea to the east. It is separated from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by the Red Sea.

10. Estimates of the population for the period 2006–2010 and of its distribution by state for 2009 and 2010 are contained in annexes 1 to 4, which include tables and diagrams showing the precise details.

11. In its concluding observations on the Sudan's previous report, the Committee noted the lack of demographic and social indicators, details of which are now provided in annexes 5 and 6 to this report. Serving as a key source of data on population size and demographics, five censuses have thus far been conducted in the Sudan. The first was in 1956, when the population stood at around 10.25 million, increasing to 14.11 million in 1973, 20.59 million in 1983 and 25.1 million in 1993. A fifth census had been due to take place in 2002 but, owing to the circumstances in the country at that time, it was postponed until after the signing of the Peace Agreement, which provided for a full census covering the whole of the Sudan as it then was. The fifth census was thus conducted in April 2008 and showed that the population stood at 39.1 million, with the population of northern Sudan, i.e., the present Republic of the Sudan, amounting to roughly 30.9 million.

12. The annual population growth rate was estimated at around 2.1, 2.13, 2.57 and 2.88 per cent in the first four censuses, respectively. According to the fifth census conducted in April 2008, the annual population growth rate in the Republic of the Sudan was approximately 2.4 per cent. In other words, the population number doubles every 27 years, which is at one of the highest rates in the world, the global average being about 1.4 per cent.

13. According to projections, the population of the Sudan is set to increase to either 55.5, 58.6 or 61.7 million by 2031.¹

14. The overall population density in the Sudan was roughly 16 inhabitants per square kilometre in 2008. The population is concentrated in the strip of land along the Nile and its tributaries and in the rich savannah areas from east to west. In essence, the population density is ultimately determined by physical, economic and administrative factors. The most populous states are those of Khartoum and Gezira (238 and 153 persons per square

¹ *Source of information:* Central Bureau of Statistics.

kilometre, respectively) because access to basic education, health and security services and jobs is better in those two states than elsewhere. Natural disasters and armed conflicts have also caused millions to migrate from the south, west and east to the capital and the central region, with the result that development policies and projects must be formulated to even out the population density among the different states.

15. According to the census of 2008, the under-15 age group accounts for 42.6 per cent of the population, meaning that the Sudan has a young society, with the over-60s accounting for 5.2 per cent. These two age groups are unproductive and the consequently high dependency rates are something that the State has to take into consideration (see annexes 7 to 12 for a full report on population size, distribution and growth according to population statistics for 2008).

IV. General legal framework

16. When the Sudan submitted its earlier reports, the country's supreme law was the Constitution of the Sudan of 1998. On 9 January 2005, the Sudan entered a new phase of its political, social and legal history by signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which, in addition to ending the war in the south, established a number of binding legal frameworks relating to the economy, policy, public freedoms and system of governance. Each of these frameworks was fully incorporated into the Interim Constitution of the Republic of the Sudan of 2005.

17. After the Comprehensive Peace Agreement ending Africa's longest war was signed by the Government of the Sudan and the Sudanese Popular Liberation Movement (SPLM), on 9 January 2005 in Nairobi, an interim constitution was drafted in accordance with subsection 2.12.5 of the Agreement, which stipulated that a constitutional text was to be prepared by the National Constitutional Review Commission. Pursuant to subsection 2.12.4.3, the Commission was composed of both parties to the Agreement and representatives of other political forces and civil society in Sudan. The Commission drafted the Interim Constitution of the Republic of the Sudan, which became effective and legally binding upon its signature by the President of the Republic on 9 January 2005.

18. The Constitution comprises 226 articles divided over 17 parts dealing with:

1. The State, the Constitution and guiding principles;
2. The Bill of Rights;
3. The national executive;
4. The National Legislature;
5. National judicial organs;
6. Public prosecution and advocacy;
7. The national civil service;
8. Independent national institutions and commissions;
9. Armed forces, law enforcement agencies and national security;
10. The national capital;
11. Government of Southern Sudan;
12. The states and Abyei area;
13. Finance and economic matters;

14. State of emergency and declaration of war;
15. Census and elections;
16. Right of Southern Sudan to self-determination;
17. Miscellaneous provisions.

These parts contain articles determining the nature, functions and powers of the State and its machinery and the relationship between them. They also spell out freedoms and rights and the protection of both.

Nature of the State

19. Chapter 1, article 1 (1), of the Constitution defines the nature of the State by providing that: “The Republic of the Sudan is an independent sovereign State. It is a democratic, decentralized, multicultural, multilingual, multiracial, multi-ethnic and multireligious country in which diverse groups, races and religions coexist.” The Constitution thus recognizes the principle of democracy, decentralization multiculturalism, multiracialism, multi-ethnicity, multireligion and multilingualism within a single republic, the Sudan.

20. Concerning the practice of multilingualism, article 8 (1) of the Constitution provides that: “All indigenous languages of the Sudan are national languages and shall be respected, developed and promoted.” Article 8 (4) also provides that state legislatures may adopt as an official working language any other national language in addition to Arabic and English.

21. Affirming the requirement to respect the diversity of languages used by the inhabitants of a region, article 8 (5) of the Constitution provides that there must be no discrimination against the use of either Arabic or English at any level of government or stage of education.

22. As recognized in article 1 (3) of the Constitution, the diversity of religions and cultures in one homeland is a source of strength and inspiration. Under article 1 (2) of the Constitution, furthermore, the State is under a fundamental obligation to promote human dignity, justice and equality, advance human rights and fundamental freedoms, and allow for a multiparty system.

23. Article 2 of the Constitution also establishes and affirms the principle of democracy, providing as it does that: “Sovereignty is vested in the people and shall be exercised by the State in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and the law, without prejudice to the autonomy of Southern Sudan and the states.”

Fundamental freedoms and rights

24. Part two of the Constitution, entitled “Bill of Rights”, makes provision for all fundamental rights and freedoms, as in:

- The right to life and human dignity (art. 28);
- Personal liberty (art. 29);
- Protection from slavery and forced labour (art. 30);
- Equality before the law (art. 31);
- Rights of women and children (art. 32);
- Protection from torture (art. 33);
- Fair trial (art. 34);

- Right of legal recourse (art. 35);
- Right to privacy (art. 37);
- Freedom of belief and worship (art. 38);
- Freedom of expression and information (art. 39);
- Freedom of assembly and association (art. 40);
- Right to vote (art. 41);
- Freedom of movement and residence (art. 42);
- Right to own property (art. 43);
- Right to education (art. 44);
- Rights of persons with special needs (art. 45);
- Public health care (art. 46);
- Rights of ethnic and cultural communities (art. 47).

25. The Constitution not only provides for those freedoms but also broadens them by ensuring that international instruments ratified by the Sudan are an integral part of that Bill (art. 27 (3)). It also requires the State to protect, promote, guarantee and implement the freedoms set out in the Bill (art. 27 (2)).

26. In order to avoid any curtailment of these freedoms by law, article 27 (4) of the Constitution provides that: "Legislation shall regulate the rights and freedoms enshrined in this Bill and shall neither detract nor derogate therefrom."

27. In order to strengthen the freedoms set out in the Bill of Rights, the Constitution entrusts to the judiciary the task of protecting and safeguarding them and prohibits their suspension, even in a state of emergency. Those freedoms are also treated as immutable; provisions relating to them may not be undermined or amended by legislative institutions unless put to a general referendum.

Democratic parliamentary representation

28. An unswerving principle affirmed in the Constitution, as indicated in articles 36, 56, 67 and 97 thereof, is that of free elections, fair competition and a popular mandate as the basis for the legitimacy of government institutions, starting with the President of the Republic and state governors and ending with federal and state legislatures and local government councils. The task of administering elections is assigned to an independent commission, with integrity, impartiality and competence as prerequisites for selection as one of its members.

Sources of legislation

29. Article 5 of the Constitution reaffirms the stipulation in successive Sudanese constitutions that sharia law, popular consensus and custom are the main sources of legislation enacted at the national level and applicable in the north of the Sudan. This article is consistent with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and takes into account the religious composition of the Sudanese people. In the event that national legislation is either in place or to be enacted in any of the states in Southern Sudan, the legislative authorities of the state concerned may introduce legislation, allow practices or establish institutions in line with the religion and customs of the majority of its citizens. Under article 5 (3) (b) of the Constitution, legislation is referred to the Council of States for approval by a two-thirds majority.

The presidential system

30. The Sudan is a country of diverse races, cultures and religions, covering an expanse of over 800,000 square miles with poor communications, and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in January 2005 is binding. Accordingly, the presidential system was adopted under part three, chapter I, of the Constitution as being the most suitable for governing the country and maintaining its national unity and homogeneity, as well as the most likely to achieve the desired political stability, in that its Head of State would have a direct mandate from the mass of the people and be endowed with real authority.

The federal system of government

31. The Constitution opts for the federal system of government, in article 177 (1), in the interest of guaranteeing equitable power- and wealth-sharing among the different parts of the country; empowering cultural communities to preserve their specificities and promote their culture and heritage; broadening the base of popular participation; and reducing central control. The aim of this option is to facilitate the smooth and efficient administration of a country as vast as the Sudan. It is therefore necessarily divided, by virtue of national legislation, into a specific number of states with set boundaries, in accordance with provisions of article 177 (2). Each state must have its own government and legislature, as provided for in article 178 (1). A similar procedure is required for the division of wealth and the apportionment of financial resources at the federal, state and local levels of government is therefore such that each level has its own specific taxes and revenues. To achieve solidarity, a national fund was created to support the more disadvantaged states. Under article 195 of the Constitution, moreover, every state may enact laws for raising revenue.

Interim measures for Southern Sudan

32. Before the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed with SPLM, and in order to ensure the fundamental human rights principle of the right to self-determination, the Khartoum Peace Agreement was signed in 1997 with various armed factions in the south and incorporated into Constitutional Decree No. 14 (Implementation of the Khartoum Peace Agreement) so as to give it the required legal force. Provision was made for the Decree to be considered a part of the Constitution and to continue in force throughout the four-year interim period ending with the referendum in the south on the options of unity or secession.

33. After the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in Nairobi, on 9 January 2005, the whole of Southern Sudan as recognized at the time of independence, in 1956, acquired the right to self-determination, to be expressed through a referendum monitored by international observers.

34. Under the Constitution, Southern Sudan, within the borders recognized in 1956, was afforded the right to its own separate legislative, judicial and executive organs and a separate constitution, in addition to 5 per cent of oil revenues, an assessed share of national income, and participation in the political and legislative management of the north.

V. Political and legal structures**The Presidency of the Republic**

35. The Presidency of the Republic consists of the Presidential Council, which comprises the President and the two Vice-Presidents (art. 51 (1) of the Constitution). This composition was designed to reflect the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in

January 2005. Under article 52 of the Constitution, the President must be directly elected by the people in national elections conducted in accordance with regulations established by the National Constitutional Review Commission. Article 53 of the Constitution sets out the conditions for nomination as a presidential candidate, which is not contingent on any particular religion, race, sex or affiliation. The only requirements under the Constitution are that the candidate must be a Sudanese national by birth, of sound mind, at least 40 years of age and literate, in addition to having no convictions for any offence involving dishonesty or moral turpitude.

36. The President of the Republic has two Vice-Presidents, including a First Vice-President, one from the north of the country and the other from the south, in accordance with article 62 (1) of the Constitution. If the election outcome is a President from the north, the First Vice-President must then be from the south, and if the outcome is a President from the south, the First Vice-President must be from the north. The two Vice-Presidents are subject to the same eligibility requirements as candidates standing for election as President, set out in article 53 of the Constitution.

The National Council of Ministers

37. The National Council of Ministers represents the federal government and comprises several ministers who are appointed by the President of the Republic, pursuant to article 70 (1) of the Constitution, after consultation with his two Vice-Presidents, and who are collectively and individually responsible before the National Assembly, whereas a national minister is answerable to the President of the Republic and the National Council of Ministers. The federal government, as represented by the National Council of Ministers, is responsible for planning the country's overall trajectory, performing executive functions, drafting laws and preparing the general budget.

State governments

38. The Constitution prescribes that every state must have its own executive organ headed by a governor elected by the citizens of the state, in accordance with the Constitution and the procedures established by the National Elections Commission (art. 179 (1)). The governor is responsible for the appointment of state ministers, in accordance with the state Constitution, who are collectively and individually accountable to the governor and the state legislature.

The National Legislature

39. The National Legislature is the federal legislative authority and is composed of two chambers: the National Assembly and the Council of States (art. 83 (1) of the Constitution). Each chamber is representative of a different level of government.

The National Assembly

40. The National Assembly is composed of members chosen in free and fair elections. The National Elections Act determines the number of members and composition of the National Assembly (art. 84 (1) and (2) of the Constitution). The term of office of the National Assembly is five years.

The Council of States

41. The Council of States is composed of two representatives from each state, elected by the state legislature in accordance with the National Elections Law and regulations established by the National Elections Commission (art. 85 of the Constitution). The term of membership is five years. The Constitution also determines the conditions for membership

of the National Legislature (art. 86), the circumstances in which membership thereof is withdrawn (art. 87), the seat of the National Legislature (art. 88), the formation of committees (art. 95) and the issuance of regulations (art. 96).

State legislatures

42. Under article 180 of the Constitution, states may set up a state legislature composed of members elected in accordance with the state Constitution and regulations established by the National Elections Commission. State legislatures are empowered to prepare and approve the state Constitution, enact laws and draw up regulations.

The judiciary

43. The Constitution provides for the establishment of an independent national judiciary that is responsible for the administration of justice, national in character, accountable only to the President of the Republic and fully independent of the executive and legislative branches of government. It is administered by a Judiciary Council, headed by the Chief Justice and comprising senior judges and others, which recommends the appointment, promotion, transfer, discipline and removal of judges. The financial independence of the judiciary is guaranteed by law. Judges have immunity and may not be subjected to any interference. They are bound by the Constitution to dispense justice and apply the rule of law. Public organs are required by the Constitution to implement the decisions of the judiciary.

The Public Grievances Chamber

44. Article 143 provides for the establishment of an independent Public Grievances Chamber, the members of which are nominated by the President of the Republic from among persons of competence and integrity and approved by the National Assembly. The Chamber is answerable to the President of the Republic and the National Assembly.

45. The Public Grievances Chamber settles grievances and ensures efficiency, probity and justice in the performance of the State. Its functions are such that it closely resembles the system of administrative oversight (ombudsman). Its importance lies in its efforts to settle grievances by considering complaints, notwithstanding the finality of court judgements, without prejudice to the judgement concerned.

The Constitutional Court

46. Article 105 of the Constitution of 1998 provides for the establishment of an independent constitutional court, with a president and members appointed by the President from among highly experienced persons in the justice system, with the approval of the National Assembly. The court is composed of a president, a vice-president and seven members and its activities are regulated by law.

The National Elections Commission

47. Article 141 of the Constitution provides for the establishment of an independent elections commission, composed of nine members appointed by the President, with the approval of the First Vice-President, each of whom must be impartial, non-partisan and competent. The appointments must also be made with a view to achieving broad representation. The National Elections Act sets out the general rules and procedures for elections and the functions and conditions of service of persons working at the Commission.

48. In accordance with article 141 (2) of the Constitution, the National Elections Commission prepares and annually revises the public electoral roll and organizes elections

for the President of the Republic, the President of the Government of Southern Sudan, governors, the National Legislature, state legislatures and the Southern Sudan Assembly, in addition to any other referendum provided for in the Constitution.

VI. Human rights guarantees

49. The concern for respect and observation of human rights in the Sudan stems from the fact that, by and large, those rights are a part of the religious teachings, moral heritage and social conduct of the Sudanese people, who are well-known for their tolerance and inherent rejection of injustice, violence and cruelty.

50. The adoption of an all-embracing Constitution, which came into force on 9 June 2005 and part two of which guarantees fundamental freedoms and rights, gives immense legal weight to those freedoms and rights to the extent that no amendment affecting them can be made without the approval of two thirds of all members of the National Legislature and the Council of States, sitting separately (art. 224 of the Constitution). Under article 48 of the Constitution, those rights and freedoms are also safeguarded by the Constitutional Court and other competent courts and monitored by the Human Rights Commission.

51. The existence of an independent judiciary, a competent constitutional court and an ombudsman to settle grievances and deliver justice is guaranteed in the Sudan.

52. A special commission for the rights of non-Muslims was established in the national capital, the main function of which is to ensure that, pursuant to article 157 of the Constitution, the rights of non-Muslims are protected in conformity with the Constitution and that non-Muslims are not adversely affected by the application of sharia law in the national capital.

53. The Sudan has ratified a certain number of human rights treaties and instruments, which are considered part of national legislation, in accordance with article 27 (3) of the Constitution. These instruments include the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and the four Geneva Conventions, together with the two Protocols Additional thereto, relating to the Protection of Victims of International and Non-International Armed Conflicts. At the African level, it has ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

54. Many provisions of these instruments have been incorporated into national legislation, such as those relating to fair trial guarantees, right of legal recourse, treatment of prisoners, preventive detention monitoring and so on.

55. Legislative oversight bodies have been established to monitor the executive performance at the federal and state levels through their right to call the executive to account and through parliamentary human rights committees involved in receiving complaints, carrying out investigations and visiting detention centres.

56. An independent Human Rights Commission has been established and its 15 members are independent, competent, impartial and non-partisan (art. 142 of the Constitution).

57. Governmental advisory and coordinating mechanisms composed of experts and specialized persons have been set up. Examples are the Advisory Council for Human Rights, established pursuant to Republican Decree No. 98 of 1994, and the National Council for Childhood, established pursuant to Decision No. 900 of the General Secretariat

of the Council of Ministers. These mechanisms formulate and implement the State's human rights policy, provide advice to official bodies, follow up the implementation of international and regional instruments and reflect the deliberations of international forums dealing with human rights situations.

58. The existence of an independent free press helps in scrutinizing performance and monitoring lapses.

59. Civil society organizations are active, effective and substantially represented in the above-mentioned advisory and coordinating mechanisms, such as the Federation of Jurists, the Bar Association and the Federation of Sudanese Women, where women play a valuable role at all levels.

VII. Response to the concluding observations

60. In its previous concluding observations, the Committee requested information on refugees, displaced persons and women, which is set out below.

Situation of refugees²

61. Asylum in the Sudan is a matter that continues to preoccupy the international community, having lasted well over four decades in which the consequences of a long-term refugee presence have been felt. The Sudan continues to be one of the countries with the longest track records for dealing with and hosting refugees with a conviction stemming from its religious values and deep-rooted customs, traditions and cultural legacies, which put it ahead of the international and regional instruments governing the situation of refugees, such as the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 and its Protocol of 1967, and the Organization of the African Union Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. Indeed, the Sudan was the first African State to promulgate an asylum law, in 1974, and it has extensively engaged in and provided input to a number of spheres with a view to fine-tuning those conventions, protocols and laws in line with new developments in the area of asylum.

62. The Sudan is a major donor when it comes to asylum and refugees; despite the scarcity of its resources, it has made land available to refugees for housing, agriculture and pasturage, provided security and enabled them to share the services provided by the State to its citizens. The Commission on Refugees was also established as a governmental body involved in caring for, protecting and assisting refugees and in drawing up plans and programme for that purpose, in cooperation and collaboration with stakeholders. An office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was additionally established in Khartoum and branches were opened in a number of states.

63. The Sudan's refugee experience has centred on the following elements:

1. Adopting the principles of an open-door policy and non-refoulement of asylum-seekers, engaging in international and regional cooperation, particularly with refugee-sending countries, in accordance with the provisions of conventions and laws, and treating the grant of asylum as a humanitarian and civilian issue;

2. Managing migration emergencies in the event of disaster, conflict and instability in neighbouring States;

² Information obtained from the Ministry of the Interior, Commission on Refugees.

3. Preparing and organizing reception centres for asylum-seekers and establishing refugee camps offering sustenance, essential services, employment and self-sufficiency;

4. Focusing on the transition of refugees from the stage of receiving aid to that of development by adopting a policy of self-sufficiency, in which context the Sudan, in cooperation with UNHCR and various States and organizations, set up several self-sufficiency projects, including projects in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO), a rotating credit scheme and projects in refugee-affected areas, although these projects foundered for reasons of external politics;

5. Exploring with UNHCR durable solutions to the asylum and refugee, including voluntary repatriation, resettlement in a third country and local integration;

6. Supervising the return of Sudanese refugees from neighbouring countries.

Current situation of refugees in the Sudan

Refugees in camps and towns

64. There are 15 refugee camps in the Sudan: 8 in Gedaref and Kassala states; 4 in the Gezira and Sennar states; and 3 in West Darfur state.

65. The number of refugees registered in camps amounts to 85,374, broken down as follows: 64,413 living in refugee camps in eastern Sudan (Gedaref and Kassala states); 2,298 in camps in the central states (Sennar and Gezira states); and 18,636 living in refugee camps in West Darfur state.

66. An estimated 150,000 refugees live outside the camps in towns and urban areas. They receive no assistance from the international community and rely on sharing with citizens the already minimal social services available in those areas.

Challenges facing the State

67. As a result of UNHCR action to implement the decision to suspend international assistance to Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees, some refugee camps were closed and merged with other camps without sufficient consideration being given to how those refugees would live and without any fair alternative being found. The majority of refugees from the closed camps therefore migrated to the major towns in search of work and stability.

68. The flow of asylum-seekers persisted on the country's eastern borders in Kassala, Gedaref and Red Sea states, as well as in the central states. UNHCR also continued the policy of starving refugee camps of basic services by deploying a bare minimum of financial resources, which were insufficient to provide services and led to a shortage and deterioration in humanitarian services in the camps (water, health, education and food). The situation in the camps in Kassala state is now such as to discourage refugees from staying for a variety of reasons, above all the fact that most recent refugees are young educated people with urban backgrounds and high ambitions, whereas the camps are in remote rural areas, have no urban facilities and are difficult to control and monitor effectively. The key services provided to refugees are also declining, both in the old camps and in the new Shagarab camp. Refugees are therefore being driven out and spilling into the towns in search of better living conditions.

69. The challenges facing the State are as follows:

- As a result of illegal migration, the involvement of organized gangs in human smuggling and trafficking activities, which start from inside the countries of the Horn of Africa and continue in the Sudan;

- Environmental degradation in the refugee-affected areas and the failure of the international community to fulfil its obligations towards this programme;
- The socioeconomic, security and health consequences for refugees, particularly those in towns who receive no assistance from the international community but share with citizens the already minimal services provided by the State;
- Lack of any real statistics on refugees in the Sudan, although we had hoped that UNHCR would provide assistance to help in conducting a true census of those refugees;
- The development of a clear policy on the integration of refugees into local communities.

Efforts of the Commission on Refugees to resolve those problems

70. The efforts of the Commission on Refugees to resolve those problems are as follows:

1. Working with UNHCR and the international community to improve refugee services in the camps;
2. Working with UNHCR and the international community to combat human smuggling and trafficking activities through workshops to raise awareness of the dangers of illegal migration and to secure assistance for advancing the fight against gangs involved in those activities;
3. Working with UNHCR and the international community to implement self-sufficiency projects for refugees in the camps, covering:
 - (a) Rain-fed and irrigated agriculture by supplying farming equipment, seeds and fertilizer and preparing the land;
 - (b) Animal husbandry;
 - (c) Small-scale and skills development activities, such as metalwork, plumbing, electrical work, car mechanics, building and construction, and computing;
 - (d) Women's activities, including knitting, sewing and palm-weaving;
4. Working with UNHCR to explore lasting solutions to the asylum and refugee problems by resuming voluntary repatriation programmes for Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees wishing to return home, in addition to working with UNHCR and donors to increase opportunities for resettlement in a third country;
5. Seeking to ensure that the socioeconomic and security consequences of the refugee situation are fairly and equally shared between the Sudan and the international community through supporting health and education services and reviving projects in refugee-affected areas in all states hosting refugees;
6. Capacity-building and further training for staff working at the Commission on Refugees through creating training opportunities at home and abroad in order to enhance their expertise.

Sudanese refugees in neighbouring States (eastern Chad)

71. As part of the Darfur peace strategy, a higher committee was formed under the chairmanship of the Minister of the Interior to secure the voluntary repatriation of displaced persons and refugees to the states of Darfur.

72. Two action plans were elaborated to enable the subcommittee on refugees to discharge its functions, comprising the following:

(a) A short-term plan, for January to June 2011, for the repatriation of Sudanese refugees stranded on the Sudanese-Chad borders;

(b) A long-term plan, for 2011, for the repatriation of Sudanese refugees in the camp in eastern Chad.

73. Once the higher committee had secured some of the necessary resources, the short-term plan was put into operation, in cooperation and coordination with the local authorities in West Darfur state, civil administrations and the Office of the Assistant Commissioner for Refugees in Geneina, and 4,000 families stranded on the borders were repatriated to the areas of Noro, Tarbiba and Angamei in West Darfur state.

74. Following the success of the automatic return, a tripartite meeting of the Government of the Sudan, the Government of Chad and UNHCR was held in Khartoum, from 26 to 27 July 2011, to discuss means of implementing the voluntary return of Sudanese refugees in Chad within the framework of the Tripartite Agreement, which is the legal instrument for the organized return of refugees, the aim being to protect refugees, the host State and the mother State.

75. The final communiqué signed by the parties referred in its introduction to the development of cooperation between the Government of the Sudan and the Government of Chad, which led to the establishment of bilateral relations between the two countries for the purpose of discussing the matter of the voluntary return of Sudanese refugees. The communiqué attested to the improvement of the security situation on the borders, which culminated in the signing of a bilateral agreement between the Sudan and Chad for the automatic return of refugees stranded on the borders between the two countries.

76. Meetings between the Sudan, Chad and UNHCR continued on this subject; a tripartite meeting was held in Khartoum in July 2011, in addition to a further meeting of the three parties in November 2011, in N'Djamena, in order to pursue the talks on the organized voluntary return of Sudanese refugees from Chad under the Tripartite Agreement, which is the legal framework for voluntary return. Meetings of the three parties on this subject will continue.

Situation of displaced persons

77. Displaced persons are Sudanese citizens who enjoy all the rights and duties guaranteed to citizens under the Constitution. The provision of protection and assistance to these persons is primarily the responsibility of the State, with partners delivering national and international humanitarian aid.

78. In order to deal fully with the problems of displaced persons, a displacement and voluntary return unit was established in 2003, as a body attached to the Humanitarian Aid Commission, with the aim of following up the voluntary return programmes for these persons. After the signing of the Policy Framework between the Government of the Sudan and SPLM in July 2004, it was agreed to establish two units for displaced persons, one in Khartoum and one in Rumbek, that would plan, coordinate and follow up the voluntary return programmes. In the second half of 2005, the unit was upgraded to become the National Centre for Displacement and Voluntary Return.

Activities of the National Centre for Displacement and Voluntary Return

79. Typical examples of the Centre's activities are as follows:

- Active involvement, in July 2004, in preparing the State's unified policy with SPLM on voluntary return, which resulted in the signing of the Policy Framework;
- Active involvement in discussing the details of the memoranda of understanding signed with the International Organization for Migration and UNHCR on the voluntary return of displaced persons from Darfur to their homes;
- Full coordination with Khartoum state, and with the organizations operating in the state, in order to consider the best solutions for the integration of displaced persons into the state in line with their wishes;
- Opening of branches in Kosti and the eastern states;
- The establishment of a joint task force, composed of United Nations agencies and voluntary organizations and operating under the leadership of the Centre, to coordinate the process of voluntary return to Southern Sudan and the three regions;
- The conduct of two polls, in collaboration with partners in all northern states, to determine whether displaced persons wished to return voluntarily or to remain in the host communities, which counted as one of the most important activities;
- Participation in preparing the national policy on displaced persons, which was approved by the Cabinet.

Voluntary return

Voluntary return and sources of authority

80. The importance of voluntary return is confirmed by the sources of authority ensuring the right of displaced persons to return voluntarily to their places of origin. These are:

- The Comprehensive Peace Agreement;
- The Interim Constitution;
- The report of the Sudan Joint Assessment Mission (JAM).

81. Each of these sources of authority ensured the right of displaced persons and refugees in neighbouring countries to return voluntarily to their places of origin, with the Government of National Unity and the Government of South Sudan (and international partners) sharing the responsibility.

82. In accordance with international instruments and the Sudanese Constitution, return means voluntary (optional) return. In order to base these policies on objective principles, identify the size of the problem and find out whether displaced persons wished to return voluntarily to their homes of origin, a random sample survey was conducted in 2005. The survey revealed that the number of displaced persons amounted to roughly 4 million, a figure that included all of the northern states, except Darfur, which was because of the security situation at that time. Concerning the wish to return voluntarily, the findings were as follows:

- (a) 66.7 per cent wished to return voluntarily;
- (b) 21.6 per cent wished to remain in the host communities;
- (c) 10.9 per cent were as yet undecided.

Second survey (2006)

- (a) 62.07 per cent wished to return voluntarily;
- (b) 25.3 per cent wished to remain in the host communities;

- (c) 12 per cent were as yet undecided.

83. An integrated study of a third survey is now under way. One of its main objectives is to calculate the remaining number of displaced persons and the size of the reverse flow of refugees, especially in Khartoum state.

The start of organized return

Displaced persons from Dinka Bor

84. The return of 134,000 displaced persons and their livestock from Eastern and Western Equatoria to the area of Bor was organized by land to avoid conflict between the Equatoria and Dinka Bor communities. Some 4,000 women and children were also returned by river from Juba to Bor.

85. Implementation of the voluntary return programmes began with a media campaign to inform displaced persons about the return areas and the security situation, the level of essential services and the presence or otherwise of mines, as well as make them aware of the optional and voluntary nature of the return process. The campaign is run jointly by the National Centre for Displacement and Voluntary Return, the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) and the United Nations, in cooperation with leaders of displaced persons. Thirty-five permanent centres and five mobile teams are involved in the voluntary return arrangements and registration is supervised by five teams composed of representatives of the National Centre for Displacement and Voluntary Return, SSRRC and the United Nations. As at April 2008, 137,627 families, amounting to 568,225 individuals, had been registered.

Preparation for departure

86. Three departure centres were established in Khartoum (Ombada al-Salam), Jabal Awliya' and Mayo. Their job is to assemble returnees in order to prepare them for the journey and carry out medical checks, and to distribute humanitarian assistance during the journey. Way stations were also established along the return route as rest stops offering basic assistance, including medical and food services. The Central Police Reserve Forces are on hand to ensure the safety of convoys transiting the states, while local community police forces ensure the safety of departure and the way stations. All available means are used for transfer purposes, i.e., land, air and the Nile corridor.

87. River transfer is along two basic corridors:

- (a) Kosti – Renk – Malakal – Shambi – Bor;
- (b) Juba – Terekeka – Bor.

88. In the case of air transfer, 15 flights were made from Khartoum airport to Juba and 1,529 returnees were transferred to Juba, Yambio, Tambura, Maridi, Yei and Mundri.

Achievements of the National Centre for Displaced Persons and Returnees for 2011

89. An overview of the main projects and programmes run by the National Centre for Displaced Persons and Returnees is provided below.

Details of the project for voluntary return to the State of South Sudan from April 2011 to date

<i>No.</i>	<i>Type of journey</i>	<i>Number of individuals</i>	<i>Number of families</i>	<i>Number of journeys</i>
1	Total return journeys by river	22 700	5 747	16
2	Total return journeys by air	21 132	4 065	13
3	Total return journeys by rail	7 036	1 507	6
Total		50 868	11 319	35

Details of the voluntary return project for displaced persons in Blue Nile state

<i>No.</i>	<i>Journey number</i>	<i>Journey date</i>	<i>Number of buses</i>	<i>Number of families</i>	<i>Number of individuals</i>	<i>Participating entities</i>
1	I	16 September 2011	5	62	311	The National Centre for Displaced Persons and Returnees, the Women's League, and the Rihab organization
2	II	21 September 2011	1	15	75	The National Centre for Displaced Persons and Returnees, and a benefactor
3	III	24 September 2011	10	142	712	The National Centre for Displaced Persons and Returnees, the Birr and Tawasul organization, and the Welfare and Reform Organization
4	IV	5 October 2011	6	31	283	The Cabinet Commissioning Committee
Total			22	250	1 381	

90. Surveys were conducted in order to calculate the number of displaced persons in Red Sea, Gedaref and Kassala states and find out whether they wished to return or to integrate. The State also approved the national policy for displaced persons for 2011 (as amended from 2009), which sets out the basic principles pertaining to the rights of displaced persons at every stage of displacement and the principles governing work among partners. It also sets out details of activities and the *modus operandi*.

91. A voluntary return programme for the Darfur states was also elaborated in accordance with the Doha Agreement.

Challenges

92. The challenges are exemplified in the following:

1. Continuation of the offensive by rebel movements;
2. Provision of security in the return locations and the conduct of local reconciliation initiatives;
3. Supply of minimum services in the return locations;

4. The international community's commitment to its obligations and announced financial pledges;
5. Mine clearance;
6. The spread of epidemics, such as enteritis and meningitis, in some of the southern states, which has caused some delays in schedule;
7. The brevity of the dry season (December–May), which means that land transport cannot be used to the utmost advantage;
8. The need for additional efforts to prepare the return destination areas so that the number of returnees in each convoy can be increased, especially in the cases of South Kordofan state and Darfur;
9. The cramped conditions in river barges and rail carriages.

Information on women

93. Under the Constitution, women are afforded full and equal rights with men. Article 32 provides as follows:

- “1. The State shall guarantee the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights, including the right to equal pay for equal work and other employment benefits;
2. The State shall promote women's rights through positive discrimination;
3. The State shall combat harmful customs and traditions that undermine women's dignity and status;
4. The State shall provide health care for mothers, children and pregnant women;
5. The State shall protect the rights of the child, as set out in the international and regional conventions ratified by the Sudan.”

94. Pursuant to article 28 to 47 of the Constitution, women enjoy fundamental rights, such as the right to life and liberty, nationality, freedom of movement, work, expression, political, social and trade-union association, ownership of property, communication, privacy, fair trial, legal recourse, education and health care.

95. Under the Constitution, women are entitled to hold high political office, as no distinction is made between women and men. Women in the Sudan may therefore hold office as President of the Republic or as a governor, minister or member of parliament.

Practical application of texts

96. Since the Sudan's independence in 1956, Sudanese women acquired the right to participate in elections as voters and candidates. Women representing various constituencies won parliamentary seats in 1964 and women continue to hold a substantial number of seats in the National Assembly and the Council of States, presiding in addition over some of the committees in the National Assembly, such as the Family and Child Protection Committee and the Legislation and Justice Committee. There are also appreciable numbers of women in the state legislatures.

97. Concerning the right of women to work, the Public Service Act of 2007 recognizes the principle of equal pay for equal work.

98. Under the Public Service Pensions Act of 1993, the family of a deceased pension-holder is entitled to a pension, to be divided among male minors and unmarried females of any age.

99. The Sudan has ratified various conventions relating to women's employment, including the ILO Convention No. 100 (1951) concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value; No. 111 (1958) concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation; and No. 118 (1962) concerning Equality of Treatment of Nationals and Non-Nationals in Social Security. These conventions are designed to prevent discrimination against women.

100. Women enjoy fundamental rights, such as the right to life and liberty, nationality, freedom of movement, work, expression, worship, political, social and trade-union association, ownership of property, communication, privacy, fair trial, legal recourse, education and health care. A concrete example is the fact that there are 57 women judges at the various levels. Leadership positions held by women include those of federal minister, deputy speaker of parliament, chairperson of parliamentary committees, advisor to the President of the Republic, minister of State, state minister, advisor to governors, supreme court judge, undersecretary of State, ambassador, holder of a Chair of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, senior ranking officer in the regular forces and chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission.

101. On the legislative front, the Government adopted the quota system, pursuant to the Elections Act of 2008, which guarantees an allocation of 25 per cent of all seats to women. The proportion of women's representation was over 27 per cent in the elections held in 2010. The following table shows the trend in women's participation in the legislature.³

<i>Year</i>	<i>Legislative institution</i>	<i>Total number</i>	<i>Number of women</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
2011	Interim National Assembly	360	35	7.9
2007	Interim National Assembly	450	85	21.8
2010	National Assembly	451	112	25

102. The Criminal Code of 1991 was amended to include a provision on special protection for women during armed conflict (art. 186) and from war crimes (art. 188 (i)).

103. The State has strengthened its organizational structures in order to combat violence against women and children. A violence against women unit was consequently established and a national plan for combating violence against women, developed in cooperation with the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), has been in place since December 2005. The plan is based on raising women's awareness of their rights and means of protecting those rights. The necessary legislation was also enacted to facilitate and simplify the procedures for protecting women's rights and a national policy on women's empowerment was adopted by the Government, in addition to a national policy on girls' education.

104. State committees to combat violence against women were established in all Darfur states. The membership of these committees comprises representatives of official state entities, including the governor, the police and health professionals, a UNMIS representative and a representative of African Union forces. These committees immediately embarked upon their tasks with substantial success.

³ Source: National Assembly.

105. The legislative enactments providing for the full equality of men and women are as follows:

- The National Civil Service Act of 2007 and the Regulation thereto;
- The National Civil Servants (Accountability) Act of 2007;
- The Public Service Pensions Act of 1994;
- The Social Insurance Act of 1990;
- The Trade Unions Act of 1994;
- The Vocational Training Act of 1974;
- The Minimum Wages Act of 1974;
- The Wages and Terms of Service Committees Act of 1976;
- The Domestic Servants Act of 1955.

106. Legislation according special rights to women is as follows: as part of positive discrimination

(a) The National Civil Service Regulation of 2007, which applies to the public sector and covers the following:

- The right to eight weeks of maternity leave with full pay;
- The right to leave of 4 months and 10 days to cover the waiting period following a husband's death (*'iddah*) or, if the woman is pregnant, until she gives birth, with maternity leave continuing thereafter for eight weeks as from the date of birth;
- Unpaid maternity leave of up to two years throughout a woman's term of service, with the option to divide the leave into more than one period;
- Unpaid leave for a woman to accompany her husband abroad or within the Sudan for a period of up to five years;

(b) The Labour Code of 1997, which applies to the private and public sectors and covers the following:

- Women may not be employed in hazardous activities;
- Women may not be employed between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.;
- Daily working hours for nursing women are reduced by one hour, which is still paid, for a two-year period from the date of birth;
- Overtime work is optional for women;
- Maternity leave of eight weeks, with pay, in addition to which working women may not be dismissed during the period of pregnancy and childbirth;
- Waiting period leave, with full pay, for a woman whose husband has died;
- A woman is granted unpaid leave for a period of up to four years to accompany her husband;
- In order to prevent employers from exploiting and overburdening a woman in need of work, article 19 provides that women may not be employed in hazardous activities;
- With respect to social security, male and female workers are entitled to an older person's pension and an ill-health or incapacity pension, in accordance with the provisions of article 57 of the Social Security Act of 1990.

107. Pursuant to article 15 (1) of the Constitution, the family is the natural and fundamental unit of society and is entitled to the protection of the law, the right of a woman and man to marry and found a family must be recognized, in accordance with the personal status laws applicable each of them, and no marriage can be entered into without the free and full consent of both parties.

108. In order to strengthen the rights of women, the State adopted a policy of positive discrimination, which is apparent in the special priority afforded to working women, as already mentioned. They are granted maternity leave, a one-hour period for nursing and one day to attend to health needs, all without loss of pay.

Challenges facing women

109. The challenges confronting women are typically related to the following:

1. The operationalization of policies and strategies for women;
2. The need for strengthening and empowerment of the role of all relevant actors, given that work relating to women is cross-cutting and entails official, voluntary and grass-roots efforts;
3. The establishment of a database on women and the biggest challenges encountered by women;
4. The improvement and development of structures, mechanisms and personnel for dealing with women's issues at all levels in the centre, the states and civil society organizations;
5. The activation of women's literacy programmes, with a focus on rural women;
6. The employment of women in the informal sector, which means that they are denied social security and compensation for work injuries;
7. Women's poor legal awareness.

Abduction of women and children

110. The Government of the Sudan would like to emphasize that cases of abduction and forced labour have ceased. Such cases were an unforeseen consequence directly linked to ancient tribal practices and the civil war between pastoral tribes in south-western Sudan in their struggle for control over water and pasture resources.

111. These facts were confirmed by a working group formed by the Minister of Justice, Chairperson of the Advisory Council on Human Rights. The group made contact with the previous civilian administration, which confirmed that there had been no cases of abduction in those areas since 19 April 2012, when, owing to the proclamation of the new State, the citizens of South Sudan began to move back to their home country.

112. Taking place under the programme for the voluntary return sparked by the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in January 2005 and continuing during the referendum, in January 2011, with the good wishes, support and encouragement of the Government of the South, this movement involved the transfer of over 1.5 million southerners from where they were living in the north back to their home areas in South Sudan, according to a statement by the South Sudan Commissioner for Voluntary Repatriation in Khartoum, Kurmaj Shoul. Any national of South Sudan may also register at the South Sudan Embassy.

VIII. Articles of the Convention

Article 1

Definition of racial discrimination

113. In its earlier concluding observations, the Committee requested information on the general legal framework for preventing racial discrimination and establishing equality, in addition to a description of the ethnic characteristics of the population in the Sudan. We therefore present the points below.

Ethnic characteristics of the population

114. The Sudan has one of the largest geographical areas of all African countries and its vastness is therefore such that its inhabitants have different ethnic characteristics and differing customs, origins and colours. Bearing in mind that these characteristics assume a particular importance in relation to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the arrangements for conducting the population census were made in keeping with its provisions. Article 214 of the Interim Constitution of the Sudan of 2005 provides for the establishment of a population census council by the President of the Republic, after consultation within the Presidency, for the purpose of drawing up census plans and setting rules and standards for the Central Bureau of Statistics. The current ethnic mix in the Sudan came about through the intermarriage of different ethnic groups and what we have is a matter of tribes and not racial ethnicities.

115. The Statistics Act of 2004 confers upon the Central Bureau of Statistics the authority to conduct a full population census, within a set time frame, by recording information on the country's demographic, social and economic features, using forms containing no explanatory notes liable to draw attention to factors that might lead to division, such as race, colour and so on.

116. The primary purpose of conducting a census is to provide an essential information base for use in development planning, administrative decision-making and the distribution of national resources and key services, such as health, water, education and roads, for the benefit of citizens at the state and local levels, in addition to enabling access to independent information for study purposes, identifying gender gaps and furnishing information for scientific research.

117. As to the social surveys, their purpose was to produce gender- and age-disaggregated information on inhabitants of school age, working age, retirement age, voting age, conscription age, etc. The explanatory notes on the form all related to accommodation type, access to services, such as water and electricity, type of cooking fuel and so on. A further purpose was to produce demographic information concerning fertility, mortality, migration and social status, i.e., married, divorced or widowed. The dedicated form mentioned nothing that might give rise to ethnic distinctions, such as maternal language and ethnic characteristics associated with religious belief, culture and racial origin, which therefore points to harmony, tolerance and the exercise of freedoms and rights.

118. The Peace Agreement guarantees the right to self-determination for the citizens of Southern Sudan, as affirmed in article 219 of the Constitution. The referendum to be conducted at the end of the interim phase on the exercise of that right is dependent on the census results for determining who has the right to participate. This requires monitoring on the basis of ethnic origin, as stated in all of the explanations on the census form concerning who are southerners and northerners. The purpose is evidently to determine who is entitled to take part in the referendum on self-determination for the citizens of Southern Sudan.

Maternal languages

119. With respect to maternal languages, there is no indicator of ethnic differences in terms of considering a particular language to be the official language. Although the Constitution specifies that Arabic, being the most widely spoken language in the Sudan, and English are the two official working languages of the national Government and the languages of instruction for higher education, article 8 (1) of the Constitution provides that all Sudanese languages must be respected, developed and promoted.

120. Furthermore, any subnational legislature is permitted under the Constitution to adopt any other national language as an official working language in its area of jurisdiction, in addition to Arabic and English. The article also states that no discrimination is permitted against the use of either Arabic or English at any level of government or stage of education.

Information relating to articles 2 to 7 of the Convention

Articles 2 and 3

Prevention of racial discrimination, segregation and apartheid

121. Measures taken by the Sudanese legislature reflect the undertaking to engage in no act or practice of racial discrimination against persons, groups of persons or institutions, as provided for in part two of the Sudan's Interim Constitution of 2005, known as the Bill of Rights. Article 7 of the Constitution provides that: "Citizenship is the basis of equal rights and duties of all Sudanese." Article 31 also affirms: "All persons are equal before the law and are entitled, without discrimination as to race, colour, sex, language, religious belief, political opinion or ethnic origin, to protection of the law."

122. Article 27 (1) of the Bill of Rights provides that it is a covenant among the Sudanese people and between them and their governments at every level, a commitment to respect and promote the human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Constitution, and the cornerstone of social justice, equality and democracy in the Sudan.

123. In accordance with article 27 (2), the State must protect, promote, guarantee and implement the Bill of Rights. It must also protect all rights and freedoms enshrined in international human rights treaties, covenants and instruments ratified by the Republic of the Sudan, which are considered an integral part of the Bill, pursuant to article 27 (3).

124. The State recognized and adopted the principle of social justice, as provided in article 12 of the Constitution, and is required to develop policies and strategies guaranteeing social justice among all people of the Sudan through ensuring means of livelihood and job opportunities and encouraging mutual assistance, self-help, cooperation and charitable work.

125. Under article 64 of the Criminal Code of 1991, sedition or incitement to hatred among or against communities is an offence punishable by law. This provision applies to anyone who seeks to incite hatred, contempt or hostility against or among any community owing to differences of race, colour or language or in such a manner as to endanger public peace.

126. Article 65 of the Sudanese Criminal Code of 1991 provides for the punishment of criminal and terrorist organizations, including within its ambit anyone who establishes or runs or intentionally participates in or assists an organization intended to commit crime, whether operating inside or outside the Sudan.

127. The State took a series of measures to review governmental and national policies and to amend, rescind or nullify any laws and regulations that have the effect of

perpetuating racial discrimination wherever it exists. Article 211 restricts the powers of the President of the Republic in a state of emergency to take measures, pursuant to the law or an exceptional order, to suspend part of the Bill of Rights by excluding from such measures the right to life, protection from slavery, protection from torture, the right not to be discriminated against on grounds of race, sex or religious belief, the right to legal recourse and the right to a fair trial.

128. In order to encourage multiracial organizations and movements and other means of eliminating interracial barriers and to discourage anything likely to fuel racial division, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement made provision, in the Protocol on security arrangements (subsections 24.3, 25.4.2 and 28.12), for demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programmes. It also provided for national reconciliation and confidence-building programmes, taking into account vulnerable groups and those at most risk, such as children, women, persons with disabilities and older persons.

129. Primarily a time-bound social and economic process, reintegration is part of the country's overall development and empowers segments of the population to obtain their rights, including family reunification, a decent livelihood and safety from harm. It also ensures that the principle of justice and equality is applied to former combatants in all areas of the Sudan throughout all stages of the process and that there is no discrimination on grounds of race, colour or sex.

130. In order to ensure adequate protection for certain racial groups and thereby guarantee their full enjoyment, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms, article 136 of the Constitution sets out guidelines for inclusiveness in the national civil service. Included in paragraph (c) of the article is the principle that at no level of government must any discrimination be practised against any qualified Sudanese national on the basis of religion, race, region or gender.

131. Recognizing the ethnic and religious diversity in the Sudan, the Sudanese Criminal Code of 1991 exempts certain groups and individuals from punishment. Accordingly, article 78 provides that the consumption of alcohol is not deemed to be an offence if the person concerned is non-Muslim.

Article 4

Prohibition of propaganda and organizations based on ideas of superiority of one race over another

132. Administrative measures giving effect to the provisions of the Convention include those taken to eradicate all incitement to, or acts of, racial discrimination. As already mentioned, article 1 of the Constitution defines the Sudan as an independent and sovereign State and a democratic, decentralized, multicultural, multilingual, multiracial, multi-ethnic and multireligious country in which diverse groups, races and religions coexist. It is also committed to respecting and promoting human dignity, is founded on justice and equality in the interest of advancing human rights and freedoms, and allows for a multiparty system. All of this, in accordance with the Constitution, is a recognition of the fact that the Sudan is an all-embracing country, with different religions and cultures that are a source of strength, harmony and inspiration.

133. Under article 64 of the Criminal Code of 1991, sedition or incitement to hatred among or against communities is an offence punishable by law. This provision applies to anyone who seeks to incite hatred, contempt or hostility against or among any community owing to differences of race, colour or language or in such a manner as to endanger public peace.

134. Article 65 of the Sudanese Criminal Code of 1991 also provides for the punishment of criminal and terrorist organizations, including within its ambit anyone who establishes or runs or intentionally participates in or assists an organization intended to commit crime, whether operating inside or outside the Sudan.

Article 5

Equal enjoyment of civil and political rights

135. The Constitution contains numerous provisions enshrining the principle of equality. Article 1 (2) provides that the State is committed to respecting and promoting human dignity and is founded on justice, equality and the advancement of human rights. Article 31 also provides for equality before the law, stating that all persons are equal before the law and are entitled, without discrimination as to race, colour, sex, language, religious belief, political opinion or ethnic origin, to protection of the law.

136. Article 30 of the Constitution furthermore prohibits slavery, forced labour and all forms of slave trade. Nor may any person be forced to perform work except as a punishment resulting from a conviction by a competent court.

137. The Criminal Code of 1991 likewise prohibits slavery, for which a deterrent punishment is imposed under article 163, which provides that: "Anyone who unlawfully compels a person to work against his will is liable to a term of imprisonment of up to one year or a fine, or both penalties."

138. The laws relating to political rights afford equal rights of participation in political organizations. Pursuant to article 12 of the Political Parties Act of 2007, any Sudanese person having attained 18 years of age is entitled to participate in founding political parties and in their membership. The right of political participation is thus guaranteed to all individuals.

139. Under the Constitution, the above-mentioned right was incorporated into the Elections Act of 2008, article 4 of which provides for the establishment of a National Elections Commission as an independent and impartial body. Article 5 provides for its functions and powers, to be exercised in accordance with article 10, which are to ensure that all citizens, without discrimination, enjoy their political rights to stand as candidates and express a free opinion. The second section of article 21 covers the conditions for eligibility to vote, which are such as to enable everyone to exercise that right. Article 22 states that inclusion in the electoral register is a fundamental right for all citizens, in accordance with the legal regulations, and article 41 sets out the conditions for eligibility to stand for President of the Republic and Head of Government, which are that the candidate must be Sudanese, of sound mind, no younger than 40 years of age and literate, with no convictions for any offence involving dishonesty or moral turpitude.

140. The Elections Act of 2008 set the basis legal framework for the conduct of elections in the states of the Sudan from 11 to 15 April 2010. Multiparty elections were held at the national, state and local levels for the office of President of the Republic, for state governor positions and for seats in the National Legislature and state legislatures, drawing a high turnout from all sectors of society, including women. Others also participating in the voting included displaced persons, refugees, prisoners and hospital in-patients. The elections were conducted in the presence of a significant number of international and national observers, in a peaceful and secure atmosphere, and the results were internationally and regionally recognized.

141. Free and fair elections were held in Darfur, in 2010, in the wake of positive changes that normalized the situation and restored the vitality so affected in recent years by the war

and tribal conflicts fuelled by the proliferation of arms and competition for limited resources. The Sudanese Government made several efforts to achieve peace and stability in the region through various initiatives and agreements, including the first and second Abeche agreements and the N'Djamena Agreement, culminating in the Darfur Peace Agreement of 2006, signed in Abuja with the principal armed movements in Darfur. Given that a number of movements had not signed the Abuja agreement and still had a presence, the Government worked to set up a forum for bringing together and negotiating with those movements and other remaining splinter groups. The agreement reached with the Joint African Union-United Nations Chief Mediator was that Doha should serve as the venue for such a forum. The Doha Peace Agreement was consequently finalized between the Government of the Sudan and the Liberation and Justice Movement and the machinery of the Transitional Regional Darfur Authority was formed under that Agreement. Several field agreements were also signed with various combatants and likewise played their part in restoring peace and security to Darfur.

142. Elected institutions were established and the new situation on the ground encouraged the Government to formulate a new strategy for Darfur, which was widely discussed among individuals, groups and institutions from Darfur and with all national political forces. The Government also held consultations on the strategy with its partners in the peace process, primarily the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the high-level African Union Panel on Darfur. The strategy was greatly supported and encouraged by many of the peace partners from the international community.

143. The new strategy is based on five key elements: achievement of security; consolidation of development; resettlement of displaced and war-affected persons; creation of decent livelihoods; and internal reconciliation to promote community-based peace.

144. No one in the Sudan is politically isolated or denied civil rights on account of political views or bankruptcy.

145. The Constitution underlines the inherent right of every human being to life, dignity and personal integrity. This right is protected by law and no one may be arbitrarily deprived of life (art. 27 of the Constitution).

146. The Interim Constitution of the Sudan of 2005 provides for the right of every person to liberty and security, stipulating that no one may be arrested, detained, deprived of his liberty or have his liberty restricted except in accordance with procedures prescribed by law. In keeping with this constitutional principle, the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1991 sets periods of detention to a minimum and guarantees release or release on bail if the charge is not established. The Constitution and the Criminal Code also lay down a set of principles and safeguards relating to liberty.

147. Pursuant to a circular issued by the Minister of Justice, prosecutors are also required to place custodial facilities under 24-hour inspection in order to prevent any potential abuse of the detainees in those facilities and preserve their human dignity.

148. The Constitution further guarantees to every citizen and alien the right to freedom of movement and residence in the country and the right to leave and enter the country. This freedom may not be restricted except as regulated by law (art. 42). There are no restrictions on the entry of aliens to the Sudan other than the requirement to have an internationally recognized entrance visa. Nor are there any restrictions after entry other than the requirement for anyone staying longer than one month to obtain a residence permit.

149. Article 37 of the Constitution provides that the privacy of all persons is inviolable and that there can be no interference with a person's home, private life, family or correspondence, except in accordance with the law. Violation of privacy is also an offence punishable by law. Any person whose right to privacy is violated may file a complaint with

the executive and administrative authorities and additionally has right of recourse to the Constitutional Court.

150. The Sudan is a multicultural and multireligious country where Muslims constitute the majority of inhabitants and where Christianity and customary beliefs have a substantial number of followers. This fact is affirmed in the Constitution, which states that citizenship — not religion, ethnicity or colour — is the basis for rights and duties in the Sudan.

151. The de facto religious tolerance in the Sudan is evidenced by the presence of churches and socio-educational institutions for at least 10 Christian communities. In the context of voluntary work, a religious coexistence council was formed, pursuant to the Voluntary Work Act of 2006, as an independent voluntary organization aiming to promote and build trust among religious leaderships and to protect religious freedom.

152. Freedom of opinion and expression is one of the most fundamental freedoms and essentially forms the basis for other freedoms. It is a tool for communication and dialogue involving free discussion within society through which individuals can create some kind of influence and control over the machinery of government. This freedom is also the true underpinning of rational governance in that the exchange of opinions and ideas promotes sound decision-making. Expression of opinion means the right of the individual to express his ideas and convey his principles and beliefs in the manner of his choosing, within the limits prescribed by law.

153. There are six Internet service providers operating throughout the Sudan and 4.8 million individuals with Internet access. The Sudan is the fifth African country to have afforded its citizens the right to Internet access. There are also 8 state television broadcasting stations and 17 state radio broadcasting stations. The Communications Act of 2001 furthermore permits satellite-delivered Internet access, a method utilized by a great many commercial companies and enterprises.

154. In compliance with and implementation of the right of peaceful assembly, the Sudan takes this right into special account in legislation and in practice, affirming it as a human right that must be enjoyed by all, as enshrined in article 40 of the Interim Constitution of the Sudan of 2005. Article 23 of the Constitution also provides that violence must be forsworn and efforts made to create harmony, fraternity and tolerance among all people of the Sudan. As to laws, the Political Parties Act of 2007 provides in article 26 (2) that political parties have the right to organize peaceful processions, hold internal meetings and run social and cultural activities insofar as such actions are vital and essential to exercising the right of peaceful assembly.

155. The family being the microcosm of society, its well-being and protection are a strong guarantee of the construction of a sound and healthy society, as affirmed by the Constitution, which requires the State to cater to families, facilitate marriage, devote attention to children's education, care for pregnant women and children, liberate women from injustice in any of the situations or purposes in life, and promote the role of women in the family and in public life.

Equal enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights

156. The Constitution guarantees the right to work and the National Civil Service Act of 2007, the Regulation thereto and the National Civil Servants (Accountability) Act of 2007 establish principles applicable to all those working for the Government and for public State-owned institutions. The Labour Code of 1997 lays the foundation for individual work relations in the private sector, without discrimination between males and females.

157. Article 32 of the Constitution provides for the right of men and women to assume public office, without discrimination, as affirmed in the Civil Service Act of 2007, article

22 of which provides for equal pay for equal work on the basis of the type of work covered in article 128. Article 61 of the Civil Service Regulation of 2007 also provides that candidates for promotion are to be selected and evaluated on the basis of merit.

158. The following is a list of laws relating to labour and public service:

- The Labour Code of 1997;
- The National Civil Service Act of 2007 and the Regulation thereto;
- The Minimum Wages Act of 1974;
- The Work Injuries Compensation Act of 1981;
- The Social Insurance Act of 1990;
- The National Pensions Fund Act of 1991;
- The National Training Act of 1976;
- The Public Service Pensions Act of 1994;
- The National Civil Servants (Accountability) Act of 2007;
- The Legal Profession Act of 1983;
- The Judiciary Act of 1986.

159. The National Civil Service Commission was established pursuant to article 137 of the Constitution. One of its interim functions, as provided for in article 138 of the Constitution, is to ensure that not less than 20 per cent of middle and senior positions in the national civil service, including undersecretary positions, are occupied by qualified persons from Southern Sudan during the first three years of the interim period.

160. In accordance with article 19 of the Constitution, the State guarantees primary health care, free of charge, for all citizens. It also provides primary health care and emergency services for all citizens, pursuant to article 46 (government measures aimed at guaranteeing the provision of such services on an equal basis).

161. The right to education is guaranteed under article 13 of the Constitution, which provides that the State must promote education at all levels and ensure free and compulsory education at the basic level and in the case of literacy programmes. Article 44 provides that education is a right of every citizen and that the State must guarantee access to education, without discrimination as to religion, race, ethnicity, gender or disability.

162. The Interim Constitution of the Sudan of 2005 recognizes the cultural diversity of the Sudanese people in article 4 (b), which provides that religions, beliefs, traditions and customs are a source of moral strength and inspiration for the Sudanese people, and in article 4 (c), which states that the cultural and social diversity of the Sudanese people is the basis of national cohesion and may not be exploited to cause division. Article 13 (4) of the Constitution also provides that the State shall recognize the cultural diversity in the Sudan and encourage the diverse cultures to flourish harmoniously and express themselves through the media and education. Article 13 (5) further provides that the State is under obligation to protect the Sudanese heritage, monuments and places of national, historical or religious significance from destruction, desecration, unlawful removal or illegal export.

163. The recognition of cultural diversity in the Constitution is further expressed in that participation in cultural life is an equal right of men and women, pursuant to article 32 (1), referred to earlier, which provides that the State shall guarantee the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights. Article 47 of the Constitution, which deals with ethnic and cultural communities, also prescribes the right of those communities freely to enjoy and develop their own cultures, in addition to

the right of community members to practice their beliefs, use their languages, observe their religions and customs, and raise their children within the framework of those cultures and customs.

164. Under article 14 of the Constitution, which deals with youth and sports, the State is required to develop youth policies, provide youth facilities, ensure that young persons have a good physical and moral upbringing, and protect them from exploitation and from physical and emotional neglect. It is also required to promote sports and empower young persons to develop their talents, with an emphasis on protecting and supporting community sports institutions and guaranteeing their independence.

IX. National protection mechanisms

The Public Grievances and Corrections Board

165. The Public Grievances and Corrections Board was established pursuant to article 130 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Sudan of 1998 and its functions are set out in article 7 of the Public Grievances and Corrections Board Act of 1998. Article 143 of the Constitution also provides for the establishment of an independent body [the Public Grievances Chamber] to consider complaints relating to grievances of citizens concerning State institutions, without prejudice to the finality of judicial decisions. This body may, on its own motion, recommend to the Presidency of the Republic or to the National Assembly such measures as it deems fit for ensuring efficiency, justice and probity in the performance of government institutions. The Board also has branches in a number of other states, including Gezira and Sennar.

166. In accordance with the Public Grievances and Corrections Board Act, the Board's jurisdiction is limited to the following:

1. Considering grievances relating to State organs;
2. Considering evident damage arising out of or overlooked by final judicial decisions, without prejudice to the finality of those decisions;
3. Considering damage arising out of the actions of ministers, governors and high-level State officials over which the judiciary has no jurisdiction;
4. Examining laws that result in an evident grievance when applied and raising the matter with the competent authorities;
5. Ensuring efficiency and probity in the performance of State organs;
6. Ascertaining that State organs operate with the effectiveness needed to carry out the State's general policies in line with the strategies in place;
7. Monitoring and evaluating the performance of the various organs in order to highlight successes and failures;
8. Ensuring that State organs are working to their full potential (financial and human);
9. Checking that the laws and regulations governing administrative activity and work relations are effectively and fairly applied;
10. Examining individual complaints disseminated in the media if they collectively amount to a general failing in the performance of any State organ.

167. Grievances filed with the Board concern matters with social and economic consequences. The Board has settled all of the grievances presented to it and restored many

rights to claimants. With respect to involvement in alleviating the effects of conflict and war, the Board has received a large number of grievances filed by war-affected persons and redressed the damage, where possible. With its open-door policy, the Grievances Department has also heard a number of verbal grievances and explained to the aggrieved parties the legal avenues that can be pursued.

168. The Board is actively engaged in combating corruption and censorship in the Sudan, in African States and worldwide, and participates in the activities of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) and the African Ombudsman Association (AOMA). The Sudan held the AOMA vice-presidency for two terms, amounting to eight years, after which it was appointed as an honorary member of the AOMA board of directors. It is also a member of the board of directors and treasurer of the Arab Organization for Ombudsman Offices, which is headquartered in Cairo, has held the chairmanship of the board of directors of IOI (headquartered in Austria), and was one of three directors representing Africa for a five-year term. Recently, in October 2011, the Sudan was chosen to serve as the AOMA permanent representative and ambassador to the African Union.

169. A number of doctors from the accident unit at Khartoum Bahri Teaching Hospital also filed a complaint with the Board against a decision of the Federal Under-Secretary for Health to transfer them to the states, arguing that the transfer was punishment for their failure to comply with the instructions of the hospital's medical director. The decision reached by the Board was that:

1. Procedures for the transfer of doctors that are unsupported by law must be halted and the doctors' salaries must be paid from the date of their suspension;
2. Personnel must be held to account under the Workers' Accountability Act.

The National Human Rights Commission

170. As provided in article 142 of the Constitution, the Commission is composed of 15 members who are independent, competent, non-partisan and impartial. Its function is to monitor the application of the rights and freedoms set forth in the Bill of Rights contained in the Constitution and to receive complaints concerning alleged violations of those rights and freedoms. A law governing the Commission's work was promulgated in 2009 and the members of the Commission were designated in January 2012. Important issues relating to freedom of opinion and expression and the closure of newspapers are considered by the Commission. Great reliance is also placed on it in connection with the promotion and protection of human rights in the Sudan.

The Advisory Council for Human Rights

171. The Advisory Council for Human Rights started in 1992 as a coordinating committee for the State's human rights machinery. It was then upgraded in 1994, pursuant to a republican decree, to an advisory council for human rights presided over by the Minister of Justice and with a membership comprising official and unofficial entities.

172. The Advisory Council for Human Rights is competent to: provide advice and counsel to the State on human rights matters; prepare research and studies and disseminate the human rights culture through the media; train persons working for the State and for civil society organizations in human rights standards and principles; review national legislation in order to harmonize it with the international and regional human rights instruments to which the Sudan has acceded; and carry out studies on the conventions to which the Sudan has not acceded and make recommendations accordingly. By way of a complaints committee, the Council also receives complaints from individuals and organizations about human rights violations at the domestic and international levels. It prepares and submits the Sudan's periodic reports to international and regional human rights treaty mechanisms and

is the national organ responsible for human rights coordination with UNMIS and UNAMID. It likewise plays a major role in training and capacity-building, in preparing studies on international and regional conventions, in leading amendments to domestic laws and in harmonizing the latter with international and regional laws. The Council has a number of divisions responsible for thematic areas of work, in addition to a complaints committee that continues, as ever, to be principally involved in handling complaints relating to economic, social and cultural rights. It has dealt, for instance, with various land-related complaints in the Jakhis areas, where the Director-General of Lands had 508 cases to handle, and in the Shegla area. A total of 380 families were transferred to the relocation areas in Eid Babiker and al-Fath in order to remove encroachments from field sites.

173. The complaints committee also intervened in a case involving persons with disabilities who were dismissed by Khartoum State Water Board because of their disabilities and who have now been reinstated.

The Ministry of Welfare and Social Security

174. The Ministry of Welfare and Social Security is the key ministry for women's affairs at the national level. One of its main priorities is to draw up policies and strategies for the advancement of women. It therefore plays a cutting-edge role in various portfolios relating specifically to women's economic, social and cultural rights. In this context, the Ministry elaborated a national strategy for women's empowerment, in March 2007, as practical support for the guarantees provided in the Constitution of the Sudan, domestic laws and international conventions. The strategy is based on a number of core components: health and environment; education; economic empowerment; human rights and law; political participation and decision-making; and lastly, peace and conflict resolution.

175. In the context of carrying out these policies, the Ministry has implemented a number of projects for putting the strategy into practice. In 2009, it also adopted a national policy for addressing the situation of child homelessness, the strategic aim being to improve the health, economic and mental status of children in that situation. Community-based protection mechanisms were set up and staffed with personnel trained in monitoring all forms of exploitation, and street children were registered in the accelerated education and vocational training programme, both before and after their integration. Support for accelerated education centres was provided by the United Nations Children's Fund, together with the Ministry of Education, which accordingly came to own 1,126 centres in South Kordofan.

176. As part of preserving the family entity and applying the alternative family system, several homes have been established: Dar al-Mygoma; Dar al-Mustaqbal for Girls; Dar al-Himayah for Girls; Rashad Rehabilitation Centre for Homeless Children; and al-Basha'ir Centre for Homeless Girls. These homes provide shelter for 339 boys and girls.

The National Council for Child Welfare

177. The National Council for Child Welfare was established by republican decree in 1991 under the chairpersonship of the President of the Republic and with a membership comprising state governors and federal ministers involved in children's issues. It is competent to elaborate policies, plans and programmes relating to children as part of the State's overall policy, in collaboration with the other levels of government in the field of child welfare. It also works with governmental and voluntary entities, gathers statistics, organizes seminars, trains personnel and prepares periodic reports for submission to regional and international organizations. It was actively involved in addition in drafting the Children's Act of 2010 and it plays a key role in protecting children's rights through various programmes and projects, including a programme for the eradication of female genital mutilation and a programme for the return of children separated from their families.

In 2010, a total of 982 children in Khartoum state were returned and 96 from the northern states. Other successful projects include a project for promoting birth registration in the Sudan. The Council carries out child-related training and capacity-building programmes in Khartoum and in the various states, with valuable support from UNICEF. The Children's Act of 2010 is one of the main achievements of the Council, which is working on a plan for its implementation. The Council has a number of child welfare councils at the state level.

178. On the initiative of the Council and the Ministry of the Interior, family protection units attached to the police force were established with the aim of protecting children, creating a healthy society and achieving calm.

Civil society organizations

179. There are over 4,000 civil society organizations, all of which are working to promote and protect human rights through awareness activities, the provision of legal aid and monitoring of the human rights situation in the Sudan with the various State organs. Over 15 Sudanese organizations have consultative status with the United Nations Human Rights Council and are intent on monitoring human rights issues across the world generally and in the Sudan particularly. Civil society organizations undertake a valuable role in the amendment of laws and the preparation of reports on human rights violations, including detentions, and other matters such as legal aid.

X. Conclusion

180. In the Sudan, the issue of promoting and protecting human rights, whether civil and political rights or economic, social and cultural rights, is an utmost priority, particularly in the coming period and notwithstanding the host of unprecedented challenges that have been reflected in this report. The national will remains firmly set on exerting more effort to meet these challenges and on moving forward in achieving the lofty goals of human rights principles stemming from our Islamic faith and cherished beliefs.

182. The Sudanese Government has endeavoured through the submission of this report to reflect its efforts to fulfil the undertakings it has repeatedly affirmed to improve the situation of civil and political rights in the Sudan. Through realizing these goals, it hopes to drive the national efforts to promote and protect human rights on the ground by assessing developments and challenges, exchanging best practices and opening up areas for cooperation with the Committee. It also looks forward to constructive recommendations and also to eventual undertakings that might have a positive bearing on the development of the human rights situation in the Sudan so as to accomplish the goal to which we all aspired when the Committee was established as an effective mechanism for the development of human rights situations in all countries worldwide.

182. We appeal to the international community to avoid the policy of double standards, selectivity and politicization of human rights issues and to strive for neutrality and transparency in its dealings with States in the interest of concerted and constructive efforts between the various committees and States for the promotion and protection of human rights.

183. We look forward to the continuation of joint cooperation and of constructive and objective dialogue with the Committee for the sake of Sudanese citizens.