



# Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with South Sudan 2018–2022



**Government Offices of Sweden**  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# 1. Focus

The objective of Sweden's international development cooperation is to create opportunities for people who live in poverty and oppression to improve their living conditions. Development cooperation will be based on the principles of aid and development effectiveness, and the new agreements reached by the international community in 2015: the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

Within the framework of this strategy, Sweden's development cooperation with South Sudan will contribute to a peaceful and inclusive society, improved access to equitable and gender-equal health and education services, and improved living conditions for people living in poverty. The strategy will apply for the period 2018–2022 and provide a total of SEK 1 500 million.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This strategy governs the use of funds under appropriation item 9 'Africa' in the appropriation directions for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for each budget year.

Activities will contribute to the following objectives:

### **Peaceful and inclusive societies**

- More inclusive processes for peace, community building and accountability.
- Improved conditions for the empowerment of women and girls.

### **Basic public services and livelihood opportunities**

- Improved conditions for health, focusing on sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Improved access to good quality education.
- Improved opportunities for sustainable livelihoods.

## 2. Country context

South Sudan is one of the world's poorest and most fragile countries. Both before and after South Sudan gained independence in 2011, society was marked by protracted armed conflicts at different levels, extensive violations and abuses of human rights, and a lack of national unity. The armed conflict that has been under way since 2013 has had a devastating effect on the civilian population. More than half the country's 13 million inhabitants need humanitarian aid or protection. Food insecurity affects large parts of the population. Many women and girls lack access to basic public services and have no opportunity to enjoy or assert their human rights.

The armed conflict is the biggest obstacle to sustainable development in South Sudan. The conflict has caused great suffering, increased the population's vulnerability and undermined society's resilience. South Sudan's leaders, both in government and opposition, bear primary responsibility for the outbreak of the conflict and continued acts of violence. The parties have deliberately ignored

the population's needs and been unwilling to tackle the root causes of the conflict. Women and girls have been hit particularly hard by the conflict, which has been marked by the systematic use of sexual and gender-based violence. Women have also had difficulty making their voices heard in peace negotiations.

South Sudan's weak institutions, its economic collapse during the conflict, and the government's unwillingness to prioritise social issues have resulted in a general inability to deliver basic public services. This lack of public services is weakening the population's resilience to conflict, crises and disasters, as well as conditions for sustainable development and peace. There is no effective national system for delivering health care or education. A deeply patriarchal society and high incidence of child marriage impair access to health and education services, particularly for women and girls. Education levels among children, young people and adults are among the lowest in the world. Opportunities to work and make a living are extremely

limited, impacting the situation of young people, and women's economic empowerment and access to economic resources. Child labour and forced labour are common.

South Sudan is affected by tensions in the surrounding region and ongoing conflicts in several neighbouring countries. The instability in the region is partly due to transnational causes, such as competition for natural resources, easy access to weapons and vulnerability to climate change. Major population movements have occurred in the region over time. The conflict in South Sudan has forced 4.3 million people to flee their homes; 2.4 million of these have sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

### 3. Activities

Sweden's development cooperation with South Sudan will be based on and characterised by a rights perspective and the perspectives of poor people on development. The rights perspective means that human rights and democracy are regarded as fundamental to development. Such an approach involves giving visibility, ahead of each contribution, to individuals and groups who are discriminated against, excluded or marginalised so that all people, regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religion or other belief, sexual orientation, or transgender identity or expression, can enjoy their rights. The perspectives of poor people on development means that the situation, needs, circumstances and priorities of poor women, men and children must be the starting point for poverty reduction and the promotion of equitable and sustainable development.

Sweden's development cooperation must be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, and gender-equal. Development cooperation is based on a holistic approach to the challenges, needs and

circumstances of people and societies. The guiding principle is that economic, social, and environmental conditions and processes are to be understood and managed in an integrated context. Gender equality and the empowerment and rights of women and girls are both goals in themselves and a prerequisite and a means for achieving sustainable global development. Violence and armed conflict are among the greatest obstacles to economic and social development, and development cooperation is an important part of conflict prevention. For this reason, an environmental and climate perspective, a gender perspective, and a conflict perspective will be systematically integrated into Sweden's development cooperation with South Sudan.

The internationally agreed principles on development effectiveness are to be applied in Sweden's development cooperation with South Sudan and adapted to the local context.

Ownership should be understood in a broad, inclusive perspective which, in addition to state actors, includes relevant parts of civil society. Primary

responsibility for a country's development lies with its government and other national actors. However, South Sudan's current regime cannot claim to represent the population, which is why it should only to a limited extent be considered a legitimate counterpart in development cooperation.

Sweden's development cooperation with South Sudan will help create peaceful and inclusive societies at local and national level. Activities will contribute to improving the situation for people subjected to violence and to strengthening the protection of women and children. Experience shows that preventive and peacebuilding activities in local communities can help reduce inequalities, social exclusion and other causes of conflict, and counter the escalation of violence at national level. Development cooperation will strengthen civil society and support free and independent media, not least to promote inclusive peace processes, community building and accountability. Sweden will give special priority to providing women and young people

with further opportunities to contribute to sustainable peace and more inclusive societies, based on Security Council resolutions 1325 and 2250 and subsequent resolutions. Activities will combat discrimination and violence against women and girls, as well as destructive gender norms and values that fuel the conflict.

To strengthen the population's resilience against conflict, crises and disasters, Sweden will contribute to increasing access to basic public services, focusing on health care and education. Development cooperation can also support multi-sectoral initiatives, not least in situations where there are links to humanitarian aid. The focus of activities should be at local level to directly address the needs of vulnerable people. Through increasing access to basic public services, development cooperation can contribute over time to strengthening cohesion in society, thus improving the conditions for sustainable peace. Sweden will particularly prioritise sexual and reproductive health and rights efforts, not least to combat the

high rate of maternal mortality and widespread sexual and gender-based violence. Sweden will contribute to equitable, inclusive, high-quality education for girls and boys, women and men, paying particular attention to marginalised and vulnerable groups. Activities should emphasise lifelong learning to enhance the ability of children, young people and adults to support themselves, and strengthen their resilience and confidence in society. Development cooperation will strengthen the conditions for sustainable livelihoods and meaningful employment for women and men living in insecurity, including internally displaced persons. Activities should help strengthen agriculture to improve food security and create employment. It is important that agriculture is sustainable in the long term. Including environmental and climate change measures in activities will improve conditions for sustainable livelihoods.

The focus of activities and the specific context will govern the choice of partners and forms of cooperation. The main partners for Sweden's

development cooperation with South Sudan should be international and multilateral organisations, and civil society organisations. Cooperation with public administration may be carried out to a limited extent as a complement to work with other actors. The chances of success are greatest when change agents at national and local level are included and strengthened.

Development cooperation will support reform-oriented forces that seek peaceful and sustainable social solutions, promote greater respect for, and protection of, human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and support increased gender equality.

Great importance should be attached to following developments in South Sudan and the surrounding region. Because the situation in South Sudan is changeable and complex, a level of preparedness must be maintained to flexibly and appropriately adapt activities based on new conditions.

Preparedness must also be maintained to be able to carry out strategic activities in critical phases.



Sweden will promote coherent and effective development and donor coordination in South Sudan, including by leading or taking part in relevant coordination groups. Sweden should also play an active role in EU aid coordination and possible joint programming. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) will help ensure improved collaboration between actors in long-term development cooperation and humanitarian actors, in line with the New Way of Working adopted by the UN and the donor community, and examine the possibility of collaborating with peacebuilding operations.

Synergies must be harnessed between the different areas of the strategy and with activities within the framework of other strategies, such as relevant bilateral strategies for South Sudan's neighbouring countries, the strategy for sustainable peace, the regional strategy for sub-Saharan Africa, the regional strategy for sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the strategy for humanitarian aid, including the

humanitarian aid to South Sudanese refugees in the region. Support via multilateral organisations should be compatible with Sweden's overarching priorities and approaches in cooperation with multilateral organisations. Sweden's support, including through multilateral organisations, should form a basis for dialogue. Sida will ensure that an integrated approach is taken to Sweden's overall support to South Sudan and to the surrounding region.

This strategy will be followed up according to the principles and processes set out in the Government's guidelines for strategies in Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian aid.



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