Beyond the Conflict: Charting a Path to Sustainable Growth and Development in Sudan

Methodology

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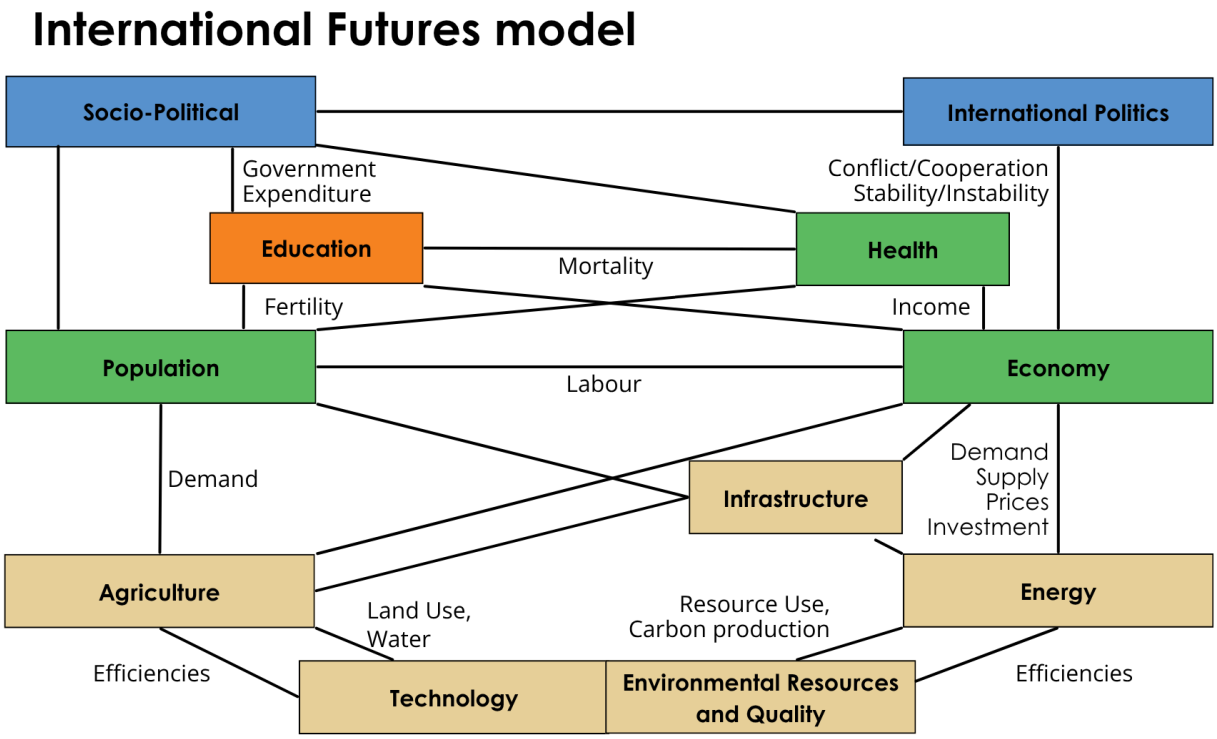
This report relies on the International Futures (IFs) modelling platform, developed at the Frederick S. Pardee Institute for International Futures at the University of Denver, United States. IFs is a global, long-term forecasting system that integrates country-specific, regional and global projections across multiple sectors, including demographics, economics, health, education, infrastructure, agriculture, energy, technology, governance, international politics, socio-political issues and the environment.

IFs is an integrated assessment model designed to explore 'what-if' questions about how alternative development pathways could influence outcomes across interacting systems over time. A key strength of IFs is its dynamic behaviour and interconnected structure, allowing for simulations that demonstrate how changes in one system lead to shifts across others. This enables a more comprehensive understanding of how policies or external shocks influence development outcomes over time. The scenario analysis capabilities of IFs enable users to explore the potential impact of policy interventions that shape development trajectories.

IFs models development for 188 countries and their interactions, including 55 countries and territories in Africa, that can be combined to analyse and projections about the future of any group of countries. It blends different modelling techniques and models to form a series of relationships (Chart 2) based on academic literature, which it uses to generate its forecasts. IFs uses historical data from 1960 (where available) to identify trends and relationships and to produce a Current Path scenario from 2020 (the base year). The Current Path is a dynamic scenario representing a continuation of current policy choices and technological advancements and assumes no significant shocks or catastrophes. It moves beyond linear extrapolation of past and current trends by leveraging the available knowledge of how systems interact to produce a dynamic forecast.

Chart 2: Visual representation of the International Futures (IFs) modelling platform



Currently, IFs is one of the few global modelling platforms capable of projecting Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) achievements across many of the SDGs at the country level, and has been widely used in the analysis of African development, including on the African Futures website.

By applying this macro-level, scenario-based approach, the analysis provides policymakers with a strategic decision-making tool, helping them visualise the long-term impact of different policy choices and assess realistic pathways for inclusive development.

This report uses Africa's low-income countries as a benchmark for gauging Sudan's historical and future progress.

Data sources

Data availability remains a significant challenge in Africa, impacting the accuracy of forecasts and development planning. The International Futures (IFs) model integrates over 5 500 data series from African and internationally recognised sources. To overcome incomplete historical data (a common occurrence in many datasets), IFs includes a set of data pre-processing algorithms that:

- Estimate missing or outdated data points to create a more complete dataset.
- Initialise forecasts from the best available data, ensuring that gaps do not undermine long-term projections.
- Move beyond simple trend extrapolation, while providing interfaces to compare IFs projections to historical data that international organisations and national governments continually release.

Where possible and when data is available and comparable, IFs allows updating global data series with national statistics

sourced directly from national data providers.

By integrating internationally harmonised datasets while allowing for context-specific updates, IFs ensures that its forecasts remain both globally comparable and regionally relevant. For a detailed understanding of the IFs model and methodology used in this report, consult the Technical page on the African Futures website or the Pardee Institute website .

The data series within IFs come from a range of well-known sources, such as the World Bank, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and various United Nations (UN) bodies like the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF). These organisations collect and standardise data, which is essential for cross-country comparisons.

This report uses an additional project data file that includes updated key data series as available from international sources and supplied by the UNDP Sudan team. The names of data series adjusted for this study are presented in Table 1 in the Annexe to this report.

Limitations should be noted. IFs is a long-term, macro-structural forecasting platform that supports scenario exploration rather than precise prediction. Results should therefore be interpreted as indicative of directional impacts and relative leverage across sectors, contingent on assumptions and data availability.

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Cite this research

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About the authors

Mr Enoch Randy Aikins joined the AFI in May 2021 as a Researcher. Before that, Enoch was a research and programmes officer at the Institute for Democratic Governance in Accra in charge of local governance reforms, poverty and inequality and public sector reforms. He also worked as a research assistant (economic division) with the Institute for Statistical Social and Economic Research at the University of Ghana. Enoch's interests include African politics and governance, economic development, public sector reform, poverty and inequality. Enoch is a Young African Fellow at the School of Transnational Governance, European University Institute in Florence and has an MPhil in economics from the University of Ghana, Legon.

About African Futures & Innovation

Scenarios and forecasting can help Africa identify and respond to opportunities and threats. The work of the African Futures & Innovation (AFI) program at the Institute for Security Studies aims to understand and address a widening gap between indices of wellbeing in Africa and elsewhere in the world. The AFI helps stakeholders understand likely future developments. Research findings and their policy implications are widely disseminated, often in collaboration with in-country partners. Forecasting tools inspire debate and provide insights into possible trajectories that inform planning, prioritisation and effective resource allocation. Africa's future depends on today's choices and actions by governments and their non-governmental and international partners. The AFI provides empirical data that informs short- and medium-term decisions with long-term implications. The AFI enhances Africa's capacity to prepare for and respond to future challenges. The program is headed by Dr Jakkie Cilliers.