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Policy Brief

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The South Sudan's New Land Policy: Contestations and Critical Issues for Considerations in the Constitution Making Process

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Summary

Recently the Council of Ministers of the Republic of South Sudan passed the country's first land policy that says the "land shall belong to the people of South Sudan and shall be regulated by the government." This has created emotional debates among citizens as it goes against the widespread view that the land belongs to the communities, and which is underpinned by the communal historical rights to land. What generates these emotive contentions is that attribution of land ownership to the "people" denotes public or government land ownership. So, communities see it as infringement on their land rights by the government. If this is not resolved, the consequences will be pervasive land tenure insecurity, land use incompatibility, and socio-economic and environmental consequences as witnessed in the last two decades. Therefore, we make the following recommendations:

- **Build consensus first on land ownership:** Focus on resolving land ownership contestations by building consensus through the constitutional making process where the issues such as the land question can be either decided through a constitutional referendum or a constitutional popular consultation, where the outcome can then be incorporated into the new constitution.
- **Eliminate ambiguity over land jurisdictions and establish a strong land governance framework for efficient and sustainable land allocation and management:** The new constitution should incorporate a framework that can govern land use to minimize land use conflicts, land tenure insecurity, land use incompatibility, and corruption. For each communal land, allocate a particular percentage of land from each community for federal and state governments for public purposes. Let each level of government regulate its land through its designated land agencies and designate a special authority to administer communal land for the communities.

- **Pursue data and evidence-based approach in resolving land ownership contestations:** Commission studies on land issues to inform policy formulation and the constitutional making process.

1. Introduction

On Friday, October 27, 2023, South Sudan’s Council of Ministers (CoMs) passed the country’s first land policy, which specifies that “the land shall belong to the people and shall be regulated by the government” as stated in both the Transitional Constitution 2011 (as amended) and Land Act 2009.¹ This is against the long held view that the land belongs to the communities, which is underpinned by historical, communal rights to land. The just announced policy has, therefore, stirred up emotional debates among South Sudanese.

Nonetheless, the problem with landownership in South Sudan has never been lack of clarity on what the law says. Though the laws are clear, there has never been a consensus on whether the land shall belong to “the people” or to “the communities.” If this disagreement is not resolved, development will continue to be held hostage by widespread land tenure insecurity with severe socio-economic and environmental consequences (Tiitmamer, Mayai, & Mai, 2017). To put an end to these contestations and lack of consensus, I argue that the government should reserve the land ownership issue for the new constitutional making process where a consensus can be reached through either a constitutional referendum or a constitutional popular consultation.

Other than this contestation over the land ownership between “the communities” and “the people,” the new policy has several big wins worthy of mentioning. These include recognition of women’s rights, recognition of communal rights,² envisioning an efficient, equitable, sustainable and environment friendly land management,³ and the recognition of ideological and ethnic contests over land ownership, placing them within a historical context. The new policy describes this contest as “contesting visions of development and authority over land,” which dates to the colonial and post independent Sudan’s era.

This Policy Brief analyzes contestations over the new land policy and other critical land tenure issues for possible considerations by the National Legislature, and during the upcoming constitution making process in South Sudan. The Brief draws evidence and

¹ Transitional Constitution of South Sudan (2011) as amended.

² In fact, classifying land as belonging to the people does not negate the fact that communal rights to land are also recognized in the same policy as well as in the laws.

³ In 2021, the National Ministry of Land, Housing, and Urban Development reviewed the old draft National Land Policy and this author was contracted and seconded to the Ministry by IGAD to help provide technical backstopping to the Ministry and therefore this review in part draws from the experience reviewing the both the 2014 version and 2019 version of the draft policy.

insights from my research on land tenure, land tenure literature, and from my 2021 experience as an IGAD seconded land policy consultant with the National Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development.

2. What does the ownership by “the people” and by “the communities” entail?

This question is crucial to answer before analyzing the clash of visions over the land ownership by the people or by the communities. It can almost be assumed that communities are the same as people. Yet there is a clear distinction. On the one hand, the word “people” refers to South Sudanese regardless of their ethnic or social background while the communities comprise people who belong to a specific setting. Therefore, it follows that a land owned by the people is owned by everyone regardless of the background, while the land ownership by a community is exclusive of noncommunity members.

But this is not the only dimension of the word “people” in the mind of the public. The word “people” also means the “public” and therefore, when a policy confers ownership of a property to the people, it is also interpreted as public ownership of that property, which is synonymous with government’s ownership. People’s ownership of land and natural resources stems from the public trust doctrine where anything the people own is held in trust on their behalf by the government (Ryan, 2022). But the public trust doctrine works well in a context where the government is accountable and responsive to the public needs. Otherwise, governments that are not accountable abuse the public trust doctrine through rent seeking behavior. Therefore, there are two dimensions to why the land question has become emotive. First, many citizens are concerned about assigning the ownership of the land to the people because they see it as assigning it to the government, which they see as not responsive and not accountable given the experiences since 2005 on issues of land. The second dimension is that government’s ownership of the land invokes unpleasant memories of the Khartoum’s Government declaring unregistered land in the Sudan as government’s land through the Unregistered Land Act of 1970.

Ownership in the context of land is defined by the Land Act 2009 as “the right within the limits provided by law to possess, occupy and use land in perpetuity [and such] right thereon can be inherited by devise or intestacy, and is subject to lease, sale, mortgage, or other transfers and transmissions within the limits of the law.” Allocation of land on the other hand is “the process by which a right to hold and use land is provided for by government or customary institutions to an individual, group or corporate body.” Both the Transitional Constitution and the Land Act 2009 do not define the word “regulation.” Regulation basically means to control or restrict or direct or manage something.⁴ So, in this case, the government is given the power to control or restrict the use of land or direct the

⁴ See the Cambridge Dictionary: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/regulation>

use of it for public purposes while the people are given the right to “posses, occupy, and use the land in perpetuity.”

But if we go by the definition of the public property as government’s property, the policy has basically given the government the power to own and regulate. However, this is contradicted by other stipulations in both the new policy and the existing laws. For example, in the Land Act 2009, as in the Transitional Constitution as amended, the ownership of the land is not limited to the people only. The Constitution and the Act classify the land into public, communal, and private lands. The public land in this case is the land held by the government in trust on behalf of the people to meet public interest and it is described as a) land owned by the government institution, b) land transferred to the government through reversion or surrender, c) land in which there is no private or communal ownership, d) land without heir, e) land occupied by roads, railways, airports, rivers, lakes, canals, haffirs, wetlands, and other areas under water, and forests and wildlife areas gazetted by the government. The land owned by the community is recognized by both the existing laws and the new policy as “all lands traditionally and historically held or used by local communities or their members.”

Furthermore, the recognition of communal rights to land is not limited only to ownership. It also means communities should have a say in the land related decision-making process. For example, in the event of appropriation of communal land or individual land by the government, both the Constitution, the new policy, and the Land Act 2009 entitle the communities and persons affected to “a prompt and equitable compensation on just terms arising from acquisition or development of land in their areas in the public interest.” The Constitution also stipulates that the expropriation must be carried out after consultation with the concerned communities and persons. The idea of prompt and equitable compensation for communities whose land is taken for public interest is a big win in the current laws. However, this global best practice has rarely been put into use in South Sudan.

3. Contested “visions” over land ownership.

While the current laws acknowledge that the land belongs to the people of South Sudan and should be administered and regulated by the government, the ownership by the people is still contested. This issue is not new. Instead, it has been debated over the years without headways, consequently holding hostage efficient and sustainable management and allocation of land to all users (Badiy, 2013). The ensuing debates have not only centered around land rights, but they have also invoked debates about citizenship rights (Badiy, 2013).

Three visions of land tenure have so far emerged. The first supports the ownership of the land by the government where it must have the power to dispose of the land as it pleases and where no community can play an obstructionist role in access to land by any citizens or businesses. But where this vision can work for the best interest of the people, the

government must be democratically elected, and it must act on behalf of the citizens to their best interest. This vision sees the philosophy of land belonging to communities as undermining the principle of equal citizenship and of belonging to South Sudan. This vision fronts a universalist approach to land where citizens can access land anywhere as opposed to the vision of communal land ownership which excludes citizens who are nonmembers from access to land (Badiy, 2013).

The second vision supports the ownership of land by the communities. This vision stems from the principle of recognition of communities' historical land ownership. Basically, this vision argues that communities are the source of land from which the individual investors, national, state, and local governments are supposed to get the land. The third vision vests the right of ownership of land in the people of South Sudan and the right and power to regulate the ownership and usage in the government of South Sudan. This is based on the principle of social contract where the people are the sovereign and whose power is exercised in its best interest by democratically elected government. The idea of people's ownership is also in line with the public trust doctrine which "creates a set of sovereign rights and responsibilities with regard to certain resource commons, obligating the state to manage them in trust for the public" (Ryan, 2022). In this sense the "public" is also in reference to the people as stated previously. Again, for this to hold, the government must be democratically elected, and it must be responsive and accountable to the citizens. All these clashing visions are enshrined in the new policy and in the existing laws. While the communal rights are recognized, the communities don't want attribution of the land ownership to the people because they fear losing their land to the government. This explains the contestations since 2005.

Two of the three visions were explicitly exhibited during the National Dialogue Process. For example, the Greater Bahr al Ghazal Regional Conference of the National Dialogue, held in Wau in 2019, recommended that the government should be given full ownership and management of the land.⁵ However, the Greater Equatoria and Greater Upper Nile Regional Conferences of the National Dialogue, held in Juba on separate occasions in 2019, rejected the idea for the government to own land as proposed during the Greater Bahr el Ghazal Regional Conference. Instead, the Greater Equatoria Conference recommended the land should be owned by the communities while Greater Upper Nile Conference recommended that the gazetted urban land should be owned by the government while the rural land should fall under the ownership of communities except for protected areas like wildlife parks and forests. The same disagreement over the issue of land ownership could not be resolved during the National Conference of the National Dialogue held later in November 2020. This left the issue without consensus. Therefore, pursuing the same policy position that has been overwhelmingly rejected during more inclusive dialogues, negates the intention of the policy—the resolution of the attendant problems.

⁵ South Sudan National Dialogue "Communique of Bahr al Ghazal Regional Conference"

The ownership and control of the land by either the government or the communities or both in the current context is a recipe that produces the tragedy of the commons (Hardin, 1968). The government is not, in most cases, an efficient manager of a public resource like land or other natural resources due to prevailing rent seeking behaviors among public resources managers (Tietenberg & Lewis, 2012). Holding public resources by the government in trust on behalf of the people can only be effective when there is a governance framework that provides checks and balances which can ensure land tenure is secure, equitable, and exercised in a sustainable manner.

The communities are not any better in managing the common resources (Tietenberg & Lewis, 2012). Without a strong governance framework, powerful individuals can use their influence to manipulate land allocation to meet their own personal interest at the expense of the communities. So far malpractices in land management and allocation with foreign investors acquiring large swathes of land are being blamed on the fact that the land belongs to communities who are manipulated by the elites (Deng, 2011).

The mantra “land belongs to the communities” has never existed in land laws in South Sudan (Deng, 2011). While it is often attributed to the CPA, what the CPA recognized, which was incorporated in the interim regional Constitution of Southern Sudan and later in the current constitution, was recognition of communal rights to land and practices and local heritages. This was groundbreaking given that the previous Sudanese laws denied this right. But recognizing communal rights to land does not mean communities own the land without regards for other entities to have access. Much of the disagreement has been fueled by the fear by the communities, essentially being apprehensive that granting the government power over land would lead to them losing their land. This is not far-fetched, especially if we draw from the experience of the last 18 years.

Undesirably, assigning land ownership to communities appears to encourage tribal citizenship “at the expense of national citizenship” (Boone, 2007). This is in stark contrast with the government’s vision of an inclusive society where citizens belong and can live anywhere (Boone, 2007). While this problem permeates the entire country, this contradiction is more prevalent and nagging in Juba which serves as both the capital of South Sudan and that of Central Equatoria State (Deng, 2021). Between 2005 and 2023, the National Government and Bari Community and Central Equatoria State clashed over the control of land (Badiy, 2013). On the one hand, the National Government of South Sudan has wanted to control the land in Juba as the Transitional Constitution gives the national government the power over the national capital. In particular, the government has wanted the previously gazetted land in Juba to be controlled by the national government. In this way, the Government would then be able to allocate the land to all citizens of South Sudan regardless of their backgrounds. However, the population of Juba has also been increasing and the previously gazetted land could not meet the increasing demand for space for residential areas and other land uses in the capital. The national government proposed expansion of Juba beyond the original limits that include Juba, Munuki, and Kator. It also proposed that Central Equatoria government should relocate to Yei to avoid

jurisdictional conflict over Juba. However, the government of Central Equatoria State sees itself as the custodian of the Bari land and has wanted to negotiate on its behalf and to protect its interest (Badiy, 2013). Perhaps a look at regional contexts may help South Sudan address this crippling contradiction.

4. Consequences of lack of consensus on landownership

Lack of consensus on land ownership has engendered consequences that have complicated land management. We discuss them as follows:

a. Widespread land tenure insecurity

Lack of consensus on land ownership in part has created widespread land tenure insecurity in the country. Land tenure insecurity is lack of legal, social, and institutional recognitions of land rights as well as lack of enforcement of safeguards against any illegal actions that can deprive people of their land rights. Most people do not have title deeds or if they do, they have acquired them through means that are not socially, legally, and institutionally recognized. For example, some of the lands have been acquired without consultation with communities. In other instances, there is contest over available land. Key issues identified as responsible for widespread land tenure insecurity include inadequate capacity of governance institutions to administer the land and lack of consensus on land ownership. This has serious implications for efficient use of the land. It scares investors away as none would want to invest in a land with no clear ownership rules. Factors that strengthen tenure security include land survey, land boundary demarcation, traceable land title deeds, social and legal recognition of land rights, and recognition of season access rights, among others.

b. Land use incompatibility

Lack of consensus over land ownership has crippled efficient land management in South Sudan. For example, mining areas overlap with wildlife protected areas, and oil and gas areas overlap and conflict with agriculture, protected wetlands, and other protected areas. While the new national land policy strives to resolve tensions over conflicting land uses such as the ones between pastoralists and farmers, it still falls short of establishing strong governance mechanisms to resolve land use incompatibilities and tensions between other users of various resources such as minerals and farmers, wildlife and pastoralists, farmers and wildlife and forest and farmers, among others. The new constitution should incorporate a governance framework that can govern movement of cattle within South Sudan by designating specific passages and corridors for cattle grazing and providing market-based approach to issues of grazing to incentivize co-existence between various groups and specifically restrict land uses to avoid natural resources degradation. For example, ecologically and socially sensitive zones should be restricted from mining, oil exploration, and other relevant uses. Moreover, there is need to establish special courts to resolve land use conflicts, enhancing co-existence, and land productivity.

c. Environmental and resource degradation

Due to land use incompatibility as well as due to weak land tenure rights and enforcement engendered by lack of consensus on land ownership, land pollution is ubiquitous in South Sudan. Much of the land pollution mostly happens to communal lands. For instance, in Juba, a lot of waste is dumped on communal land, which degrades the land value. This has something to do with the tenure security which needs strengthening. In Paloch and other oil producing areas, what used to be an agriculture area has now been turned into oil fields and farmers and agro-pastoralists continue to graze their animals in polluted oil fields, exposing animals and people to toxics from the oil industry (Bol, 2014). Pollution is a serious destroyer of land value as well as a major cause of deprivation of land rights. Thus, the issue of environmental degradation and land pollution needs serious consideration in current and future land policies. In other words, combating environmental degradation in all aspects of development should be well emphasized during the constitutional making process.

d. Ambiguity of land jurisdiction

Jurisdictional roles are not specified as there is no specific land allocated to each level of government to administer and regulate. This is in part due to lack of consensus over land ownership. This has made responsibilities for land management overlap, and it creates confusion. In the law, the National Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development is responsible for policy development. State ministries responsible for land also play similar roles. Local governments such as counties and payams also play their roles. Yet, there is no clear jurisdiction where each can regulate a particular area of land as it is the case in other contexts. The State Ministry responsible for land in Central Equatoria, for example, has pulled ropes for several years with the national government. Similarly, the Bari Community has demanded recognition of their ownership of land in Juba and has argued with government over expansion of Juba (Martin & Mosel, 2011). Originally, Juba City was composed of the three Payams of Kator, Juba and Munuki, with a population of 250,000 by the time of the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. This population has tripled over the years, further complicating land management as its demand increases. This rising population requires land. Yet the parties—the national government, Bari Community, and Central Equatoria—do not agree on how to meet their land needs. This has left the City to expand on its own with many people choosing to settle as they wish, essentially leading to widespread land grabbing.⁶

5. How do other regional contexts assign the land ownership?

Here, we take a brief look at other contexts for comparison, beginning with Kenya, one of our neighbors. The Kenyan 2010 Constitution gives the ownership of land to the people of Kenya “collectively as a nation, as communities and as individuals” (Government of Kenya, 2010). While the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan gives land ownership to the

⁶ See Radio Tamazuj: Central Equatoria State legislators raise alarm over land grabbing <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/central-equatoria-state-legislators-raise-alarm-over-land-grabbing>

“people,” it does not emphasize ownership by the various categories of the people of South Sudan “as a nation, as communities and as individuals” as the Kenyan 2010 Constitution does. Kenya has specified the three categories namely nation, communities, and individuals as the owners of the land to avoid the confusion over who owns the land. While the Kenyan Constitution classifies the land based on public, community, and private land and clearly states specific public land each level of government should hold, the South Sudanese Constitution and this policy do not specify the land each level of government should hold. This has created the jurisdictional conflicts that have been stated early (Deng, 2021).

The current constitution of South Sudan only describes the public land as land acquired at various levels to meet public interests, as well as land that is neither owned by a private entity nor a community. This part creates ambiguity as many people are afraid that community land that is not registered may not be recognized and may, therefore, risk falling under the category of public ownership, depriving communities of their historical land rights (Deng, 2021). While the Land Act, 2009 is more elaborate on what constitutes the public land, it does not as well delineate this in terms of jurisdictions as it is the case in Kenya. And the new policy does not resolve this matter either.

While the South Sudanese Constitution gives the ownership of subterranean resources to the government of South Sudan and top surface land to original landowners such as communities, the Kenyan Constitution grants mineral and oil rich lands to the Government. The difference is that the Kenyan government owns the lands under which minerals and oil have been found which is opposed to the case of South Sudan where the government owns the subterranean resources while the communities still own the surface of the same land. This has serious implications in the sense that if you own the resources underneath the land and you don’t own the surface, you are likely to destroy the surface because you don’t own it. And if the owner of the top surface has weak rights, then it is unlikely that the powerful owner of the resources underneath can exploit them in a manner that is environmentally and economically efficient, which can result in the “tragedy of the commons” (Hardin, 1968).

In other contexts, such as the United States, each level of government has a clear area that has been given to it by the law to dispose and to regulate. For example, the Federal Government of the United States owns and manages “about 28% of the 2.27 billion acres of land in the United States” (Congressional Research Service, 2020). This federal public land is owned by the people of the United States and is managed on their behalf by 5 different United States government’s agencies namely Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), National Park Service (NPS), Forest Service (FS) and the Department of Defense. These agencies manage the land for the purpose of preservation, recreation, and development. In the case of South Sudan, the government owns the national parks, wetlands, forests, land that houses government institutions, and gazetted urban land in major urban areas like Juba, Malakal and Wau. However, the

amount of land each level of government holds in South Sudan is not clear, which is indeed a source of confusion and conflicts.

In Ghana, about 80% of the land is owned by communities through customary arrangement, while 18% of the land is owned by the government (Bugri & Yeboah, 2017). The communal land in Ghana is vested in various stools and managed on their behalf by designated government agencies yet in South Sudan there is no designated government agency that manages and administers the communal land. While much of the land is owned by the communities through customary arrangements, the exact amount of land owned by the communities in South Sudan remains unknown.

Table 1: Land tenure in selected countries

	South Sudan	Kenya	Ghana	USA
Who is assigned the ownership of the land?	People of South Sudan	People of Kenya as “a nation, as communities and as individuals.”	President on behalf of the people of Ghana	Federal government State government Individuals Native Americans
Who owns the land rich in subterranean natural resources?	Government of South Sudan only owns the subterranean resources without owning the land.	Government of Kenya owns the subterranean resources together with the land	Government of Ghana owns all minerals under and on land	The owner of the land also owns the subterranean resources
Is the prompt and just compensation integrated?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Is consultation before the takeover of land for public interest integrated?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Are customary land rights recognized?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Are informal settlements formalized?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

6. Conclusion and policy implications

Both the new policy and the constitution recognize communal land rights, and at the same time assign the ownership of land to the people of South Sudan. The ownership of the land by the “people” denotes public or government land ownership. This is, therefore, the main cause of contestations. The disagreement is due, in part, to lack of trust in the government which is compounded by the inability of the institutions to be responsive to the needs and concerns of the communities with regards to land rights. For the communities, attributing land ownership to the people of South Sudan undermines their land right recognition as they fear that people anywhere can come and grab their land under the pretext that the land belongs to the people of South Sudan. The communities also fear that the government can take over their land since the policy gives the ownership to the people which by the virtue of public trust doctrine falls under the government ownership on behalf of the people. This contradiction overshadows other important aspects of the new land policy such as the entitlement of communities to “a prompt and equitable compensation on just terms arising from acquisition or development of land in their areas in the public interest” as well consultation before undertaking any activity that may affect the land.

Perhaps on ownership contestations, we can glean a few lessons from the practices reviewed. On the one hand, the practices reviewed are like South Sudan’s practices in several ways. However, where there is a difference is that some jurisdictions, such as Kenya, assign the land ownership to the people as “a nation, as communities and as individuals” to avoid confusion. This is something that South Sudan can seriously consider and adopt. Other contexts, such as the United States, grant minerals and other natural resource ownerships to the landowner while other contexts, like Kenya, grant the land and land based natural resources, like oil and minerals, to the government. In the former, the natural resource developer leases the land from the landowner to develop and extract the resources and pays rental fees and royalties while in the latter case, the government or the resource developer pays the original landowner a compensation and some share of revenues. South Sudan should seriously review and consider these two cases to come up a model that is equitable and sustainable. Most important, controversial matters such as the land ownership are resolved through a constitutional referendum or a constitutional broad based popular consultation. The case in point is Kenya, whose land matters were part of

the 2010 constitutional referendum. This is a practice South Sudanese leaders should put into serious consideration as part of the ongoing constitutional making process.

Overall, these contestations have grave policy implications. Therefore, the government of South Sudan should seek consensus first before proceeding with any major land policy. Not doing so will continue to cause disagreement, capable of frustrating necessary policy interventions meant to engender efficient and sustainable management and allocation of land to all users. In the absence of consensus, the consequence is pervasive land tenure insecurity, land use incompatibility and environmental degradation.

In conclusion, the question on whether the land should belong to the communities or to the people of South Sudan should be answered through a constitutional referendum or a constitutional popular consultation, whichever the government and the people find more appropriate.

7. Recommendations

We have examined the land ownership question and have identified critical issues for which we make the following recommendations:

- **Build consensus first on land ownership:** Focus on resolving land ownership contestations by building consensus through the constitutional making process where the issues such as the land question can be either decided through a constitutional referendum or a constitutional popular consultation, where the outcome can then be incorporated into the new constitution.
- **Eliminate ambiguity over land jurisdictions and establish a strong land governance framework for efficient and sustainable land allocation and management:** The new constitution should incorporate a framework that can govern land use to minimize land use conflicts, land tenure insecurity, land use incompatibility, and corruption. For each communal land, allocate a particular percentage of land from each community for federal and state government for public purposes. Each level of government can then regulate the area of land allocated to it by the constitution. For example, the federal capital territorial land and other federal lands can then be regulated and administered by Federal land agencies and the state capital territorial land and other lands can then be regulated and administered by the state land agencies. The communal land or land recognized under the customary arrangements should be administered by a special land agency that should be established for this specific purpose and overseen by the national (federal) legislature.
- **Pursue data and evidence-based approach in resolving land ownership contestations:** Commission studies on land issues to inform policy formulation and decisions.

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About Sudd Institute

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accountability of local, national, and international policy- and decision-making in South Sudan to promote a more peaceful, just and prosperous society. The Sudd Institute is premised on the belief that public policy must serve greater public interest and should therefore be informed by reliable data, objective analyses, and thoughtful debates. For six consecutive years, the Sudd Institute has been ranked the number one think tank in South Sudan and among the top 100 think tanks out of over 600 think tanks in the Sub-Saharan Africa region by the Lauder Institute of the University of Pennsylvania. The Sudd Institute has unrivalled capacity given its in-house expertise and over 200 associates where 50% of them are female researchers from across the regions of South Sudan.

About the Author

Nhial Tiitmamer has served as the Director of the Environment and Natural Resources Program at The Sudd Institute where he is currently on leave to work with United Nations in South Sudan (UNMISS). He has served as an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of Juba where he has taught Environmental Economics, Natural Resources Economics and Environmental Sociology. Between November 2021 and November 2022, Nhial worked as Senior Environment Associate with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Juba. Before returning from Canada in 2013, Nhial worked at Arletta Environmental Consulting in Calgary and at University of Alberta's Augustana Campus in Camrose in Alberta, Canada. Nhial's research focusses on natural resources governance, environmental protection, climate change, and sustainable energy. He was awarded in May 2023 by the Board of Directors of The Sudd Institute with Research Impact Award for policy impacts. Nhial holds a B.A. in Environmental Studies with a minor in English Literature from the University of Alberta and an M.Sc. in Sustainable Energy Development from the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada.