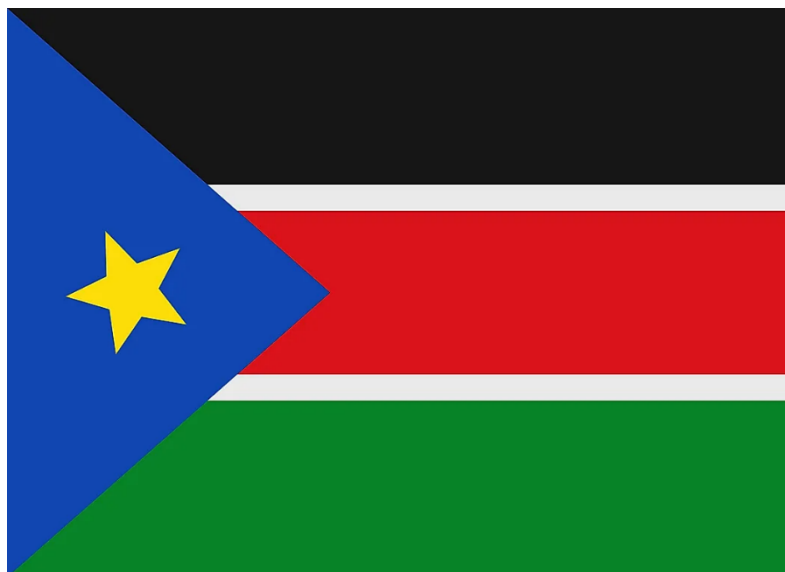




CASSANDRA

CASSANDRA LOCAL CLIMATE FORUM FACTSHEET

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN





CASSANDRA TOPICS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN: HEALTH, GENDER, MIGRATION AND CONFLICT

The Republic of South Sudan is a landlocked country in East Africa which became the world's youngest nation and Africa's 54th country on July 9, 2011, following a referendum held in January 2011. South Sudan lies between latitudes 3° and 13°N, and longitudes 24° and 36°E. It is covered in tropical forest, swamps, and grassland. South Sudan is made up of 10 states and three administrative areas. Since Independence, South Sudan is engulfed in series of challenges including a dwindling economy, widespread poverty and political instability, with civil wars erupting in 2013 and 2016 which worsened humanitarian needs.

Besides conflict and insecurity, climate change is expected to be the country's single most important contributor to food insecurity as most of its populations rely on rain-fed subsistence farming with the use of traditional tools for their livelihoods with most of them dwelling in rural areas. The country is negatively impacted by climate change in nearly all its key economic sectors, such as agriculture, transport and forestry. Developing and implementing sustainable development initiatives can promote strong, clean and climate resilient economic growth in South Sudan. The country is endowed with adequate natural resources that make a low-carbon climate-resilient development path possible. At present, insecurity and insufficient funding are limiting its opportunities to address climate adaptation and mitigation.

HEALTH

The health system in South Sudan is structured in three tiers which includes Primary Health Care Units (PHCU), Primary Health Care Centres (PHCC) and hospitals (which exist as either state, county, police or military). The structures in health services delivery are in the order of community, primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Community services are located at Boma level and draw upon members of the community. The primary level includes Primary Health Care Units and Primary Health Care Centres which provide the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS). The BPHS covers preventive, curative, health promotion and managerial activities. However, the health system is faced with major bottlenecks such as crippled health infrastructures, a lack of equipment, frequent shortages of drugs and medical supplies and the lack of qualified staff. The health sector is underfunded with little support from the Government or Humanitarian partners.

South Sudan is one of the tropical countries that experiences adverse effects of climate change through rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns which worsens the already fragile health system and greatly contributes to widespread Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) such as yellow fever, sleeping sickness, Dengue fever, chronic ulcers and other skin infections. Some of the endemic Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in South Sudan include river blindness, elephantiasis, bilharzia, trachoma and soil-transmitted worms such as roundworms, hookworms. Climate change may influence the emergence and re-emergence of multiple NTDs, particularly those that involve a vector or intermediate host for transmission. Most of South Sudan's population is susceptible to pathological, infectious disease whose life cycles are sensitive to environmental factors across different



physical phases including air, water and soil. The most common health problems for all age groups in South Sudan include malaria, typhoid, pneumonia, chronic cough and gastrointestinal illnesses such as diarrhoea.



South Sudan is ranked number 7 worldwide in children's exposure to climate change and environmental shocks. Young people living in South Sudan are among those most at risk of the impacts of climate change, threatening their health resulting in cases such as malnutrition. South Sudan, one of the world's youngest nations, is particularly vulnerable to the climate crisis with heatwaves common but rarely exceeding 40C (104F). In 2024, during the heatwave, the country registered temperatures up to 45 degrees Celsius (113 Fahrenheit). This obliged the government to take the unprecedented step of shutting down all schools across the country as incidents of death due to excessive heat were reported.

Due to the compounding effects of climate change such as flooding, families are displaced, whilst life-saving services are often cut off or inaccessible. Families lack access to clean water and proper health care. This has hindered the country's ability to provide quality healthcare services to communities and rapidly respond to disease outbreaks such as River Blindness, High maternal and Mortality rates.

Most waste in South Sudan is dumped in open landfills, stored on-site, burned, or discharged into surface waters with no treatment. Dumpsite is prone to open burning, which releases harmful gases and poses serious health risks for nearby communities. Contamination of the air, water, and soil with hazardous wastes can frequently lead to serious health problems as well as degenerative diseases, mental illness, birth defects, and chromosomal changes



Additionally, snakebite burdens the health systems across regions in South Sudan. Climate change exacerbates the issue by affecting where, when, and how snakes share space with people. This is because snakes will shift their distributions as temperatures rise and extreme events become more common. Many victims resort to traditional and ineffective remedies to treat venomous snake bites. Snake bites in South Sudan is a neglected public health disease, yet numerous people are bitten by snakes every year, with some dying while others are left permanently disabled.

MIGRATION

The increasing variability and intensity of climate change impacts in South Sudan pose a real risk to lives and livelihoods. More extreme weather conditions are resulting in prolonged droughts, floods and pest infestations. These shocks are exacerbated by conflicts and governance challenges, which often lead to the migration of people to IDP sites looking for a safe haven and the migration of pastoralists. The migration of pastoralists further results in conflicts with farmers as the cattle destroy farmlands.



The interplay of multiple factors often threatens human security. Internal migration within South Sudan is primarily driven by conflict, climate change, and economic factors.

Since gaining independence in 2011, South Sudan has endured cycles of violence, most notably the civil war that erupted in 2013. These conflicts have displaced millions of people within the country, with many seeking refuge in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps managed by the United Nations and humanitarian organizations. Even after the 2018 peace agreement, localised violence continues to force people to move.



South Sudan is highly vulnerable to climate change, experiencing recurrent floods and droughts that destroy homes, agricultural lands, and livelihoods. In recent years, flooding has displaced hundreds of thousands of people, particularly in the states of Jonglei, Unity, and Upper Nile, pushing many into urban areas or humanitarian camps.

Many South Sudanese move from rural areas to cities such as Juba, Malakal, and Wau in search of better economic opportunities. Urban centres offer more access to education, healthcare, and employment. However, rapid urbanisation has led to overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure, and increased competition for resources.

A significant number of South Sudanese have sought refuge in neighbouring countries or migrated further abroad due to conflict, insecurity, and lack of economic prospects. South Sudan has one of the largest refugee populations in Africa. Millions of South Sudanese have fled to countries such as Uganda (over 900,000 refugees), Sudan (over 800,000 refugees), Ethiopia (about 400,000 refugees), Kenya (over 100,000 refugees) the Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic (smaller but significant numbers). Uganda hosts the largest number of South Sudanese refugees, providing them with settlement areas where they can farm and access basic services. However, despite the relative safety, refugees often face food shortages, healthcare challenges, and limited opportunities for education and work.

Some South Sudanese, particularly young men and women, migrate to Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar in search of jobs in domestic work, construction, and security services. While these opportunities provide income for families back home, many migrants experience exploitation, harsh working conditions, and legal uncertainties. A smaller number of South Sudanese have migrated to the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe, often through refugee resettlement programmes. These migrants have contributed to diaspora communities, sending remittances that support their families and investing in South Sudan's economy.

South Sudanese migrants, whether internally displaced or living abroad, face numerous hardships. Refugees and migrants often struggle with legal status, work permits, and residency rights in host countries. Some face deportation or restrictions on movement. Many migrants and refugees lack employment opportunities, relying on humanitarian aid or informal jobs that offer low wages and poor working conditions. Integration into host communities can be challenging due to language barriers, discrimination, and cultural differences. South Sudanese migrants abroad often face xenophobia and marginalisation. Women and children are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, including human trafficking, forced labour, and gender-based violence in host countries.

Remittances from the diaspora help sustain families, fund education, and support local businesses. However, the brain drain reduces the availability of skilled professionals in crucial sectors such as healthcare and education. The displacement of millions has weakened social structures, leading to land disputes and ethnic tensions. The return of refugees and internally displaced persons requires proper reintegration policies and infrastructure development.

The presence of South Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries affects diplomatic relations, as host nations bear the burden of providing resources. Cross-border migration



has sometimes led to tensions, particularly with Sudan, where political and historical factors complicate refugee issues.

GENDER EQUALITY

Women play an important role in their families and communities by providing resources and adapting to changes. They are effective actors, leaders, and adaptors. However, South Sudan is embedded in a patriarchal culture that perpetuates inequality. Women are often confined to family caregiving roles. Combined with economic difficulties, the obstacles women face in obtaining leadership or respectful roles increase. This perpetuates a social framework in which the female perspective remains consistently undervalued and gender inequality persists. Many local laws in different states still view girls and women as commodities. Women and girls' low societal status in relation to men means decisions are often made on their behalf.

Women and young female graduates seeking for jobs, also face pressure from potential employers demanding for sex in exchange for employment. Despite a ban on sexual relationships with aid beneficiaries especially women, sexual relationships persist because of the stark power imbalances between aid workers and aid beneficiaries. This is because aid workers control vital resources, power and influence and women with their vulnerability become victims of sextortion. This often results in the stigmatisation of vulnerable women in South Sudan.



The gender gap in South Sudan has become only worse due to climate change. Women are more vulnerable to climate change than men for a variety of reasons, including high rates of illiteracy, low socioeconomic skills and an extremely low access to professional employment. Women and girls continue to be exposed to climate risks when carrying out their routine activities to access their basic needs, which are further exacerbated by flooding that limit livelihood opportunities such as the collection of firewood and water over



long distances. This has resulted in a notable increase of cases of sexual violence and harassment as well as documented risks of abduction and killings.

In South Sudan, the coping mechanism employed by both women and men in relation to climate shocks vary hugely. The key coping strategies for women include drying and smoking meat and fish, drying vegetables and nuts, and reduced food intake by mothers to provide more food for children, whereas men rely on migration, cattle raiding and the temporary transfer or sale of livestock and animal products. Men's top coping strategies such as migration and livestock sales have potential negative effects on women. For example, migration of men often results in women and children being left behind to fend for themselves. Furthermore, sales of livestock and products are mainly in the domain of the men who already have greater social capital and thus the income accrued does not necessarily enhance women's livelihoods.

Despite South Sudan's effort to catch up with the rest of the world by ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment, it is still lagging on many indicators concerning women's empowerment. Understanding the gender-related impacts of climate shocks, and how communities can navigate them and become resilient, is central to generating meaningful interventions in South Sudan.

CONFLICT

Political violence and instability have persisted between government forces and opposition factions in South Sudan. This is despite the repeated attempts at peace agreements and cease-fires in 2015, 2017, and 2018. With the signing of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, the peace deal led to a cease-fire and the formation of a unity government, but implementation of the agreement has been slow, and conflict has persisted.

Tensions among the various political parties in South Sudan such as the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Government (SPLM – IG), the Sudan People's Liberation Movement -In Opposition (SPLM – IO), South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA) and over twenty other political parties over access to resources and political appointments have led to violent clashes and serious human rights violations.

Despite the cease-fire at the national level, the state's control over the use of force is being challenged by various smaller armed groups, including militias and self-defence groups affiliated with clans or villages. These groups, for the most part, were not participants in the civil war at the national level. They do however, frequently become involved in local disputes and perpetrate, for example, road ambushes on travellers.

South Sudan is under an arms embargo. This sanction prohibits the direct or indirect supply, selling or transfer of arms and related material, including ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment or related spare parts from the EU to South Sudan. Despite that, the possession of small arms is widespread in South Sudan with civilians having many of them. This has contributed towards instability and violence.



In South Sudan, Children continue to be at risk of recruitment into local defence groups and other forms of abuse, including abduction. Not all children in armed groups carry weapons, some are also used as cleaners, porters, cooks and watchmen. Girls used by armed groups are disproportionately subjected to sexual and gender- based violence.

Cattle raiding has a long history in South Sudan, and it is intimately linked with men's needs to pay a good dowry for a young bride. This factor coupled with the vast supply of small arms in civilian hands has led to raids becoming more violent in recent years. Cattle are an important indicator of wealth and status across many communities in South Sudan. This belief has made cattle raiding a brutal reality across South Sudan, a young nation grappling with the scars of civil war.



Droughts and floods have increased competition between pastoralists and farmers over existing limited resources such as land and water. Climate-related livestock losses, combined with existing rivalries, increase the risk of cattle raiding leading to retaliation, communal conflict, displacement, deepening intercommunal rivalry and the formation of armed groups resulting in deaths, injuries, and the displacement of thousands of civilians.

CASSANDRA PILOT LOCAL CLIMATE FORUMS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

GREATER MUNDRI

Greater Mundri is made up of three counties which includes Mvolo County, Mundri West County, and Mundri East County located in Western Equatoria State of South Sudan. This region lies in the Greenbelt agroecological zone of South Sudan. Most of the communities in this region practice rain-fed farming with a few engaged in animal rearing.

Greater Mundri has lost a significant amount of its natural forest. These forest resources have suffered irrational exploitation with the corresponding environmental deterioration. The main causes are excessive logging, excessive consumption of firewood and charcoal,



the expansion of agricultural and livestock activities with excessive grazing, the burning of forests especially during the dry season, as well as accelerated population growth due to the arrival of refugees. The escalating issues of deforestation and land degradation have become increasingly alarming, exacerbating problems such as soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, and climate variability. These environmental challenges significantly jeopardise food security and economic stability for local communities resulting in more pressure on existing natural resources.

The Oyee Green Foundation (OGF) has established a holistic approach to address these pressing challenges by fostering community ownership and promoting sustainable practices. By actively engaging local communities especially women in decision-making and implementation processes, the Oyee Green Foundation aims to revive degraded ecosystems, enhance biodiversity, and promote sustainable agricultural practices that protect food security. Focused on sustainable land management, the Oyee Green Foundation aims to build community resilience and capacity to adapt to climate variability while re-establishing the natural balance of local ecosystems.

CASSANDRA LEADERS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

The South Sudan Cassandra Local Climate Forum is led by:

SALAH SILVANO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE OYEE GREEN FOUNDATION

oyeegreenfoundation@gmail.com

TEL: +211922945778

IF YOU WANT TO BECOME INVOLVED IN CASSANDRA

- 1: Cassandra extends an invitation to all interested parties, be they governmental agencies, NGOs, research entities, cultural actors, interest groups or concerned members of the public to participate in the establishment of Local Climate Forums and /or become involved in the initial observation and monitoring of the progress of the actions of the programme.
2. Cassandra invites any interested stakeholder to attend and actively participate in the online forums organised by Eurecat which will take place in January, June and December 2025.
3. Cassandra invites participation in the third Cassandra Conference coordinated by Eurecat which will be held in February 2026.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For a detailed explanation of CASSANDRA see:

https://cdn.eurecat.org/PDF/Cassandra2023/Cassandra_conclusions.pdf



All sessions of the Cassandra Conference 2021 and 2023 are available on YOUTUBE and can be accessed together with an ample range of resources at the CASSANDRA website: <https://cassandraconference.org/>

Follow CASSANDRA on LinkedIn at: <https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/cassandra-conference>

For any further information, suggestions or enquiries please contact: Dr Richard Elelman richard.elelman@eurecat.org

THE CASSANDRA PROGRAMME IS AN INITIATIVE COORDINATED BY EURECAT, THE TECHNOLOGY CENTRE OF CATALONIA



WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF



THE CASSANDRA CONFERENCE IS A BI-ANNUAL EVENT ORGANISED WITH THE SUPPORT OF

