



# **UN/AU Transition in Darfur:** **Lessons from Assistance** **on Rule of Law and Human** **Rights through the State** **Liaison Functions**

DECEMBER 2020

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UN State Liaison Functions (SLFs) in North Darfur, in collaboration with El Fasher-based National Organization for Humanitarian Services conduct vocational skills training in carpentry, welding, handicraft and food processing for 200 youths, including 80 females in Tawila Locality, North Darfur State: 12 September 2019.

FOREWORD BY  
UNAMID

After 12 years, the chapter of UNAMID in Darfur is drawing close to an end, and during this period, UNAMID has been part and parcel of Darfuris quest for peace and stability. To ensure a responsible transition and to encourage the scale up of UN Agencies in Darfur, the Security Council mandated the UN in Sudan to engage in a two-pronged transition approach; it included peacebuilding to our peacekeeping mandate by introducing a unique programmatic transition concept and tool: the State Liaison Functions or simply the SLFs.

This concept was and continues to be special on many fronts. As part of programming of over USD 45 million across five distinct phases of learning from January 2019 to December 2020, the SLFs served to support national ownership, UN system-wide coordination, and showcase adaptive management in practice. The SLFs contribute towards addressing conflict triggers of land, resources and IDP and refugee returns. In the first year alone, over 10,000 returnees have been supported in host communities and well over 60,000 women and men trained across a range of issues on human rights, microfinance and preventing violent conflict. In support of rule of law and human rights institutions, 45 new and 17 rehabilitated infrastructure have been provided — from rural courts to police stations and Human Rights Centres. The SLFs aimed to “liaise” functions back to the government with support of the UN Country Team.

Through coordination on the SLFs, multiple barriers to delivery of programmatic rule of law and human rights support were overcome together with the Walis (Governors) of Darfur and State-level representatives. In some cases, the SLFs brought the UN system



to places in Darfur where it had not operated before, triggering critical follow-on funding for essential peacebuilding activities in Darfur’s most complex areas.

After nearly two years of implementation, the SLFs have contributed towards stability in many areas of Darfur. But the concept and its implementation cannot ensure the remaining protection concerns in Darfur’s hotspots disappear. As a peacebuilding tool, the SLFs have their limitations in areas where pockets of violence continue to exist or simmer very close to the surface. In addition, and similar to the rest of the globe, the COVID-19 pandemic levied special costs in providing support to the people of Darfur.

SLFs were an innovation. We were proud first-time testers and users of this innovative concept and we learned every single day through our experiences. We realized very quickly the potential of this concept and the relevance of such flexible peacebuilding tool for other transition contexts and for any UNAMID follow-on mechanism, which is now possible through UNITAMS. To inform new processes, and strengthen our own performance, we were determined to document our experience and capture the lessons for the benefit of the UN in Sudan – and globally as UN operations near a transition moment.

UNAMID is grateful for DCAF’s ISSAT and their capable subject matter experts who championed this important piece of work. ISSAT is a long-term partner of the UN, very experienced in capturing lessons in the framework of UN transitions and guaranteeing the independence and credibility of this important study. We would also like to thank OROLSI, especially the Justice and Corrections Service, the DCO – DPO – DPPA – UNDP Transitions Project and OHCHR for their participation and valued contributions to the project. And finally, let me thank the UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes that continue to implement with UNAMID support via SLFs throughout Darfur.

We hope the findings of this lesson identification help guide others in their own transition endeavours –and most critically, serve the people of Darfur today and in the future.

**Ms. Anita Kiki Gbeho**

Deputy Joint Special Representative  
for the African Union-United Nations  
Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)

Zalingei, 09 November 2020



Collective meeting with UNAMID heads of section, Zalingei, Central Darfur, February 2020 | Photo by ISSAT.

FOREWORD BY  
**DCAF**

As a longstanding partner of the United Nations, DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance has very actively supported the UN’s efforts to operationalize the Sustaining Peace and the SDGs agendas in the last few years by contributing to numerous initiatives related to Security Sector Governance and Reform (SSG/R), rule of law and human rights.

I’m therefore honoured that DCAF’s International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT) was able to respond positively to a request from UNAMID to assist in a lesson identification process focussing on support provided to the rule of law and human rights in the framework of the Mission transition in Darfur, jointly with OROLSI, OHCHR and the UN Transitions Project (DCO-DPO-DPPA-UNDP).

The innovative “State Liaison Functions” (SLFs) Mission mandate implementation modality has built a bridge between the departing DPO Mission and the UNCT, using joint programming in close collaboration with national counterparts. This embodies the integrated UN System response in the continuum from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, where addressing critical drivers of conflict has been central to both conflict resolution and prevention efforts at the core of the sustaining peace agenda.

Recognition is in order for the boldness of the designers and implementors of the SLFs to pioneer an entirely new modus operandi during the challenging period of the transition of the Mission in an extremely dynamic context. The UN Member States should also be lauded for rising to the challenge of investing in peacebuilding in a highly unpredictable setting.

*“If you always do  
what you always did,  
you will always get  
what you always got.”*

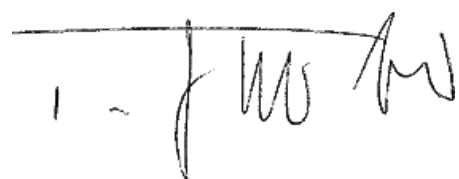
Albert Einstein

The establishment of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) provides an important opportunity to consolidate support to the rule of law and human rights in Darfur. I therefore hope that the recommendations provided in this report will be of use to the UN, the AU, other international partners and indeed the Sudanese Government in ensuring an inclusive, people-centred and democratic approach to safety, security and development in Darfur and in Sudan more broadly.

In continuing our support in this vital area, ISSAT is well positioned to conduct an outcome-based review of the SLFs at a later stage to capture the sustainability of substantive results in the mid-term. This would supplement learning on mission transitions and peacebuilding programming, to which we've already offered contributions through the development of lessons from *UNMIL* and *MINUSTAH*. This is an exciting contribution to enhancing support to SSR and RoL, which I would encourage to be broadened to include missions by additional multilateral and bilateral partners further afield.

DCAF stands ready, through the work of ISSAT, to assist donor countries and multilateral partner organizations more broadly in developing and implementing their policies and programmes to support SSG/R, thus helping them improve their effectiveness as partners for Sudan's peace, security and development goals. Similarly, drawing on DCAF's operational capacity, we stand ready to directly support Sudan's national stakeholders to design and implement locally owned reforms aimed at enhancing the effectiveness and accountability of security and justice provision.

In addition to thanking UNAMID and more broadly the United Nations in Sudan for the productive collaboration, let me close by encouraging all national and international stakeholders to continue to support Sudan in its efforts to overcome the manifold challenges of democratic transition and sustainable development.



**Thomas Guerber**

Director, Ambassador

Geneva, 17 November 2020

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The authors are grateful for the support awarded to this lesson identification project by several individuals and institutions. We would like to thank national stakeholders, current and former UNAMID personnel, and the UN Country Team who met with the lesson identification team and provided invaluable input to this study. Former and current UNHQ personnel from the Secretariat and the AFPs who played a significant role in the design of the SLFs and who have been working on Mission transitions across different settings were also generous with the time dedicated to interactions with the lessons' team.

This work would not have been possible without the leadership and drive of the Deputy Joint Special Representative of UNAMID, Ms Anita Kiki Gbeho, in bringing along her team to collaborate with the authors of this study, and we would like to thank her and the Joint Special Representative of UNAMID, Mr Jeremiah Mamabolo for this initiative and the trust deposited in the lesson identification team.

The authors are especially indebted to the Governments of Germany, Slovakia, Switzerland and the UK who have been supportive of our work on transition settings and provided complementary funding to this project, in addition to the global contribution made by all core members of ISSAT's Governing Board.

This lessons identification study was carried out through a partnership between UNAMID, DCAF's International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT), UN DPO OROLSI's Justice and Corrections Service, OHCHR and the DCO - DPO - DPPA - UNDP Transitions Project. Appreciation goes to the leadership of these institutions for facilitating this collaboration, as well as to all team members who have remained dedicated and resilient throughout a long period of joint remote and in-country data collection and analysis, and multiple iterative discussion and exhaustive reviews of this report. Members of the team included: Anicia Lala (Team lead - ISSAT), Carsten Weber (OROLSI JCSC), Mary Kalemkerian (OHCHR), Isabelle Dutour (ISSAT), Xheni Shehu (OROLSI JCS), Abou Jeng (OHCHR/ UNAMID HRS), Adam Bycroft (ISSAT), and Aryana Urbani (Transitions Project).

There's not enough room to name all the committed individuals in UNAMID and UNCT, who promptly provided key contributions and logistical support to the data collection process in Darfur and Khartoum, and for that we apologize. But we would like to express our deepest appreciation to Françoise Simard (UNAMID Chief Rule of Law Section), Marcel Akpovo (UNAMID Chief Human Rights Section), Sultan Temuri (UNAMID Deputy Police Commissioner) and their respective teams at UNAMID's HQ and across Darfur states. Also, Chikako Kodama (RCO's Office and JTC), Kara Molina (RCO's Office), Noriko Yoshida (UNHCR), Christopher Laker (UNDP), Adjaratou Ndiaye (UN Women), Massimo Diana (UNFPA), Masayuki Yokota (UN Habitat) and Tahani Elmobasher (UNICEF), Lameck Kawiche (UNAMID JTC), Martha Wilhelm (ODJSR UNAMID) and Robert Sancton (UNAMID JTC posted to RCO's office).

The views expressed in the report do not necessarily reflect the UN official policies.



ACRONYMS

ACABQ	United Nations Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions	PBF	United Nations Peacebuilding Fund
AFP	UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes	POC	Protection of Civilians
CPIS	Communication & Public Information Section	QIPs	Quick Impact Projects
CPV	Community Policing Volunteers	RC	Resident Coordinator
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	RCO	Resident Coordinator Office
CSO	Civil Society Organizations	RoL	Rule of Law
DDPD	Doha Document for Peace in Darfur	RSF	Rapid Support Force
DCPSF	Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
DDS	Darfur Development Strategy	SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality	SIHA	Strategic Initiative for Women of the Horn of Africa
DJSR	Deputy Joint Special Representative	SSR	Security Sector Reform
DPET	Division of Policy, Evaluation and Training	SAF	Sudan Armed Forces
DPO	Department of Peace Operations	SAM	Strategic Assessment Mission
FCPU	Family and Child Protection Units	SG	Secretary-General
FGM/C	Female genital mutilation or cutting	SLFs	State Liaison Functions
FPU	UN Formed Police Unit	SLO	State Liaison Offices
GAU	Gender Advisory Unit	SMOH	State Ministry of Health
GFP	Global Focal Point	SPC	Standing Police Capacity
GoS	Government of Sudan	SPM	Special political mission
HQ	Headquarters	SPF	Sudan Police Force
HR	Human Rights	TiP	Transition Implementation Plan
HRDDP	Human Rights Due Diligence Policy	ToC	Theory of Change
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons	ToR	Terms of Reference
ISF	Integrated Strategic Framework	ToT	Training of Trainers
JCC	Justice Confidence Center	UN	United Nations
JCSC	Justice and Corrections Standing Capacity	UNAMID	African Union - United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur
JTAP	UNAMID-UNCT Joint Transition Action Plan	UNCT	United Nations Country Team
JTC	Joint Transition Cell	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
MMT	Mobile Monitoring Team	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
MTT	Mobile Training Team	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation	UNHQ	United Nations Headquarters
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
MPER	Monthly Performance Evaluation Rating	UNITAMS	United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations	UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
NIM	UNDP Support Services to National Implementation	UNPOL	United Nations Police
NISS	Sudanese National Security Intelligence Services	UNSC	United Nations Security Council
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
OROLSI	Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions	WPS	Women Peace and Security
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The improvement of planning and management of UN Peace Operations is key to the current reform of the Peace and Security pillar of the UN System<sup>1</sup>, including the crucial phase of Mission transition, when commitment to resilience and sustainability of the initiatives supported during the lifetime of the Missions should be bolstered. It is also at this juncture that the interface with the reforms of the Development pillar of the UN System, aiming at increased effectiveness for delivery on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>2</sup> becomes more prominent.

To deepen understanding about how these interfaces impact the delivery of substantive agendas and in order to improve these processes, the UN has been accumulating lessons from different transition contexts<sup>3</sup>. The present lesson identification project carried out at the request of the African Union - United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) by a joint DCAF-UN team contributes to this broader endeavor, by offering a practitioners’ understanding of the process currently ongoing in Darfur.

The lessons were therefore captured firsthand, including identification of good practice deriving from implementation of the new whole-of-system transition concept by the AU/UN system to advance peacebuilding in Darfur through the “State Liaison Functions” (SLFs). Whilst this project was ongoing, Sudan’s rapidly evolving political transition prompted the establishment of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS)<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, in addition to contributing to timely learning for upcoming transition processes (for example DRC, Mali, CAR), the opportunity was

also seized to develop recommendations to inform ongoing thinking by the UNITAMS planning team.

Introduced in 2018 as a new mandate implementation modality of UNAMID, the SLFs as a tool aimed to bridge the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and to contribute to preventing relapse into armed conflict in Darfur<sup>5</sup>. This was designed around delivery in four strategic transition priorities, namely rule of law, human rights, durable solutions and service delivery for internal displaced persons (IDPs) across four Darfur states (North, South, West and East). Enabled by financing from the Mission’s assessed programmatic funding and supported through co-location of UNAMID’s personnel with the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), the operationalization of the SLFs was premised on joint analysis, planning and delivery by UNAMID and UNCT in cooperation with national actors<sup>6</sup>.

The SLFs have grown to become widely considered by nationals and internationals alike as a useful initiative to galvanize the transition, despite ownership related challenges at the inception stage, which were overcome during implementation. Implementation varied between the different pillars, but overall for Rule of Law (RoL) and Human Rights (HR), which were the focus of this lesson identification, it was an important tool to consolidate prior investments in these areas. The SLFs also enhanced system-wide synergies and built capacities for UNCT (especially the most under-resourced agencies) and national actors (state authorities and civil society) to sustain their Rule of Law and Human Rights work beyond the closure of UNAMID.

1 The overarching goals of peace and security reform are to: (1) prioritize prevention and sustain peace; (2) enhance the effectiveness and coherence of peacekeeping operations and special political missions; (3) continue moving towards a single, integrated peace and security pillar and (4) align it more closely with the development and human rights pillars to create greater coherence and cross-pillar coordination.

2 For reforms of the Development pillar see for example, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations (A/RES/72/266B) 5 July 2018; Report of the Secretary-General on shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations: Ensuring a better future for all (A/72/492).

3 The UN established the UNDP-DPA-DPKO Transition Project in 2014 (now DPO/DPPA/DOS/UNDP) to ensure that transition processes are planned and managed in a proactive, gradual and integrated manner, to support the sustainability of peacebuilding achievements. One of the project outputs is the integration of transition-related lessons and best practices into guidance. Organizations working closely with the UN, including think tanks have also engaged in this endeavor. For example, DCAF-ISSAT carried-out a *Lesson Identification on UNMIL Transition in Liberia*, focused on support provided to RoL, HR, and SSR.

4 United Nations Security Council Resolution 2524 adopted 03 June 2020, henceforth S/RES/2524 (2020).

5 United Nations Security Council, “Special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the strategic review of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur”, UN Doc. S/2018/530 of 01 June , and UNSC Resolution 2429 (2018).

6 Concept Note ‘UNAMID transitional presence and coordination with the United Nations Country Team in four Darfur States’, United Nations 01/05/2019.

There was widespread acknowledgment that compared to other pillars RoL and HR were able to better capitalize on the SLFs given the accumulated experience from joint Mission/UNCT programming and proactive engagement in transition planning since 2016. Existing assessments, planning, partnership dialogue and coordination between UNAMID and UNCT stemming from the development of the Joint Programme for RoL and Human Rights (2016-2019) were critical, notwithstanding limited results during implementation, mainly due to significant funding gaps.

Funding-wise the SLFs represent the largest ever allocation of programmatic funding from the assessed peacekeeping budget for investment in peacebuilding (*circa USD 45 million for SLFs I-V*<sup>7</sup>), in a comprehensive context of Mission transition and joint work with the UNCT. This enabled the outset of a development-oriented perspective in a recovery context to bridge the prevailing logic of humanitarian assistance in Darfur.

Sequenced in time and thematic effort by a Peacebuilding Fund allocation against a continuum from peacekeeping to peacebuilding (circa USD 20 million over 24 months), the UN Secretariat provided a concerted and sequenced effort towards sustaining peacekeeping gains in Darfur, notwithstanding the significant outstanding funding needs<sup>8</sup>.

The SLFs contributed to addressing critical conflict drivers, through comprehensive programming and support to the various elements of the criminal justice system. Areas deserving special mention include strengthening relationships and confidence amongst these institutions, between them and civil society groups, and with communities. This was done, amongst others, through fostering coordination and promoting gender and child responsive service delivery, including the adoption of violence prevention approaches.

With regards to human rights, appreciation by national interlocutors for the support enabling the physical presence and operations of a National Human Rights Commission branch in North Darfur rated highly. Overall national interlocutors valued the SLFs contributions to sustaining stability and peacekeeping gains through building rule of law and human rights capacities and strengthening community engagement in these areas whilst building awareness of their rights. SLFs programming has also been a catalyst for social cohesion, development and transforming lives; especially with the supported interventions that have brought services closer to communities.

As a tool, the SLFs demonstrated flexibility and adaptability within an ever evolving political, security and operational landscape. Key examples include:

- 1 shifting the central focus from a core institutional to a prevailing community-based engagement approach during and after the revolution; and
- 2 adjusting to contribute financially and programmatically towards a One-UN response in support of the Government plan to address the COVID-19 emergency.

The process of operationalizing the SLFs was not without challenges, and views congregated around several points. The absence of endogenous ownership by UNAMID/UNCT at the concept design phase which was driven by the United Nations Headquarters (UNHQ). The influence stemming from the perception that the SLFs were introduced in response to dynamics of political expediency and financial concerns at the UNSC around transition, rather than to address Darfur's specific needs. The compartmentalization of transition planning leading for example, to initial lack of synergy between the programmatic and the political strands of work.

Other key challenges derived from the lack of a joint Mission/UNCT programmatic-oriented and comprehensive assessment following UNSC Resolution 2429 (2018), and corresponding analysis to inform the operationalisation of the SLFs architecture and implementation stages. Furthermore, the situation was complicated by the introduction of the SLFs at a time of change in leadership (both at the Mission and Resident Coordinator (RC) with the vacuum period characterised by coexistence of varying degrees of understanding of the concept at the beginning. An additional set of issues concerned: the lack of clarity around the process and criteria for composition of partnerships and selection of projects eligible for funding; a lack of guidance and of a functioning coordination mechanism from the start; staffing and financial inter-operability difficulties; top-down Khartoum program design (UNCT), and the unrealistic short timelines for SLFs project implementation associated with curtailed financing cycles.

These observations offer relevant learning for the UN system when designing upcoming Mission transitions along with accompanying mitigation measures. Indeed, several of these shortcomings have been mitigated, and processes improved over time driven by joint Mission/UNCT leadership, growing staff commitment, and enabling problem-solving support provided by UNHQ. In this regard the Justice and Corrections Standing Capacity (JCSC), the Global Focal Point (GFP), and the DPO/DPPA/DOS/UNDP-Transitions Project provided meaningful support, in addition to the posting of a transition officer and an SLFs focal point in the RC office team. Additional measures included a planning exercise drawing on existing information and experience accumulated since 2016 on rule of law transition planning, including amongst others a joint UNAMID/UNCT study on the criminal justice chain in North and West Darfur, carried out in 2017<sup>9</sup>.

The limits of the SLFs modality introduced by the UNSC faced a litmus test regarding a key mandate area: the Protection of Civilians (PoC). Both UNAMID Human Rights' monitoring engagement and early warning capacities were significantly diminished, without putting in place an adequate joint UNCT-Mission equivalent mechanism in "peacebuilding areas".

This was partially mitigated by the creation of a Mobile Monitoring Team (MMT) within UNAMID's Human Rights Service. Despite being a creative work-around, the MMT was insufficiently resourced to deliver on its task, with only four people covering the four Darfur states' hotspots on a roving basis.

Whilst the positive results of promotion and awareness-raising of human rights were generally acknowledged by Darfurian interlocutors, vulnerable groups - including IDP communities and women groups - stressed that they moved from a position of vulnerability to one of threat (including physical), through the removal of Mission uniformed and civilian capacities in deterrence and early warning in the designated peacebuilding areas. Protection concerns prevailed throughout the duration of this study, with major cities in Darfur experiencing civil unrest which caused loss of life and property, with women and children being significantly affected<sup>10</sup>.

On balance, the SLFs were a useful mechanism, around which UN system coordination in certain thematic areas and flexibility on inter-operability issues was achieved. This was especially notable considering that prior to its introduction there was no integration between the hybrid UN-AU peacekeeping mission in one region of the country and the UN AFPs national programming.

7 Over a two-year period starting from 1 January 2019 until 31 December 2020. A total of 44,695,273.43 was disbursed for the SLFs, with 10,809,366.84 allocated to Rule of Law and 5,038,537.98 dedicated to Human Rights. Data provided/updated by UNAMID's Joint Transition Cell on 16 November 2020.

8 Despite the funding allocation from the peacekeeping assessed budget to the SLFs and the PBF allocation, the total amount of the envelope is not considered at par with needs in Darfur, as per determined in the Darfur Development Strategy (DDS). However, only 15% of the projected financing needs to implement the Darfur Development Strategy (DDS) were met during the 2013-2019 period. This comprised a 10% contribution from international partners and 5% from the GoS, which has been insufficient to achieve meaningful impact. For example, from the estimated total of US\$ 845 million needed for the Governance Pillar, only US\$ 146.1 million were met. For Rule of Law and Access to Justice only US\$ 25,009,276 were available from estimated needs of 225 000 million. The UNAMID SLFs contribution was the second largest with US\$9,612,505 after that from Qatar with US\$11,794,075 dedicated to DDR. Trias Consult, Review of the Darfur Development Strategy, P.2, P.5 and P.94 07//2019. For reference, between 2014 and 2018 UNAMID received an average of 5 million USD per year for programmatic activities. In 2019, an additional 32 million USD was allocated from the peacekeeping assessed budget for SLFs programming.

9 UN, Joint assessment of the Rule of Law and security situations in North and West Darfur, 2017.

10 See Timeline in Annex I.



The lessons identified point to several improvements being warranted in case the SLFs is considered for adoption in another country setting where a mission is starting transition. These include: an early fit-for-purpose assessment; a meaningful and equitable participation between the mission, AFPs and national stakeholders in the design, planning, implementation and coordination; and a key focus on timeliness, with a recommendation to consider introducing it at least four years before the envisaged mission closure.

In the context of UNITAMS, it could be worthwhile to maintain the SLFs as one of the peacebuilding mandate implementation modalities in Darfur, and potentially South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The concentration of root causes and drivers of conflict in Darfur, and the need to transform this area from stabilization into a positive peace environment are recognized as an important contribution for the viability of Sudan's current political transition. Hence, a commensurate investment in peacebuilding support through the SLFs would be vital to enhance implementation of the October 2020 peace agreement and early warning and social cohesion building initiatives.

Keeping the SLFs in Darfur would preserve the investment made into operationalizing the mechanism and facilitate continuity of operations. Several enhancements would be required for an upgraded SLFs modality particularly concerning design, meaningful participation by all the critical players, timelines, funding, scope of work and geographical location, in addition to alignment and prioritisation with the Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) of UNITAMS. It would be key for UNITAMS to build on the planned hand-over from UNAMID<sup>11</sup>, and to ensure complementarity of effort and parallel sequencing of the SLFs with other important ongoing UN initiatives such as those of the PBF programme<sup>12</sup>, and the Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund (DCPSF)<sup>13</sup>.

Recommendations of relevance for UNITAMS, but also considering the introduction of the SLFs in new mission transition settings are laid out at the end of each upcoming lesson section. The selective body of lessons derive from evidence collected through fieldwork carried-out at the UN Headquarters in New York (December 2019) and in Sudan (Darfur and Khartoum in February/March 2020)<sup>14</sup>. They fall under the purview of eight key areas, namely: (i) mutually exclusive delimitation between peacekeeping and peacebuilding; (ii) siloed transition; (iii) planning (including staffing and financing); (iv) coordination; (v) adaptability and flexibility; (vi) catalytic effect; (vii) communication and (viii) programming (including responsiveness, progress measurement, risk management, sequencing, gender-responsiveness and capacity building).

# INTRODUCTION

The current reform of the Peace and Security pillar of the UN System calls for an enhancement of the effectiveness and coherence of peacekeeping operations and special political missions<sup>15</sup>. Paramount in this process is the improvement of planning and management of UN Peace Operations, including the crucial phase of Mission transition, when commitment to resilience and sustainability of the initiatives supported during the lifetime of the Missions should be bolstered. It is also at this juncture that the interface with the ongoing reforms of the Development pillar of the UN System, which aims to increase effectiveness for delivery on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) enshrined in the 2030 Agenda<sup>16</sup> becomes more prominent.

In order to deepen understanding about these interfaces and how they impact the delivery of substantive agendas to improve these processes, the UN has been accumulating lessons from different transition contexts<sup>17</sup>. The present lesson identification project carried out at the request of the African Union - United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) by a joint DCAF-UN team contributes to this broader endeavor, by offering a practitioners' understanding of the process currently ongoing in Darfur. The lessons were therefore captured first-hand, including identification of good practice and innovation deriving from implementation of the new whole-of-system transition concept by the AU/UN system to advance peacebuilding in Darfur. Whilst this project was ongoing, Sudan's rapidly evolving political transition prompted the establishment of the upcoming UN Mission in Sudan, namely United

Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS)<sup>18</sup>.

Therefore, in addition to proposals to contribute to timely learning by upcoming transition processes (for example DRC, Mali, CAR), the opportunity was also seized to develop recommendations relevant to inform ongoing planning thinking by UNITAMS.

In the making since 2014, UNAMID's transition concept was consolidated in 2018 by the Special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the strategic review of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur<sup>19</sup> and endorsed by resolution 2429 (2018)



UNAMID HQ, Zalingei, Central Darfur, March 2020 Photo by ISSAT

<sup>11</sup> Options for hand-over from UNAMID to UNITAMS, Concept Note UNAMID ODJSR, 29/08/20.

<sup>12</sup> 'Chapeau for Peacebuilding Fund programming in Darfur, Sudan: Peacebuilding context; rationale for support; and management structure', 01/11/2019.

<sup>13</sup> See [mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/dps00](https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/dps00)

<sup>14</sup> The team interviewed a significant number of current and former representatives and staff of UNAMID, UNCT, UN HQ, development partners, state and non-state institutions in Darfur, as well as at the federal level in Khartoum. Civil society and beneficiary groups such as native administration, women and youth, and IDPs were also interviewed. A list of actors interviewed can be found in the Data Collection Schedules available on ISSAT's webpage dedicated to this study.

<sup>15</sup> The overarching goals of peace and security reform are to: (1) prioritize prevention and sustain peace; (2) enhance the effectiveness and coherence of peacekeeping operations and special political missions; (3) continue moving towards a single, integrated peace and security pillar and (4) align it more closely with the development and human rights pillars to create greater coherence and cross-pillar coordination. For foundational and update documents see for example, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2017: Restructuring of the United Nations peace and security pillar (A/RES/72/199), and Report of the Secretary-General on restructuring of the United Nations peace and security pillar (A/72/525).

<sup>16</sup> For reforms of the Development pillar see for example, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations (A/RES/72/266B) 5 July 2018; Report of the Secretary-General on shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations: Ensuring a better future for all (A/72/492).

<sup>17</sup> The UN established the UNDP-DPA-DPKO Transition Project in 2014 (now DPO/DPPA/DOS/UNDP) to ensure that transition processes are planned and managed in a proactive, gradual and integrated manner, to support the sustainability of peacebuilding achievements. One of the project outputs is the integration of transition-related lessons and best practices into guidance. Organizations working closely with the UN, including think tanks have also engaged in this endeavor. For example, DCAF-ISSAT has carried-out a Lesson Identification on the work of UNMIL on RoL, HR, and SSR. The International Peace Institute has developed a research strand on Peace Operations Transitions, and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs together with over 40 partners from across the globe, established an international network to research more broadly the effectiveness of peace operations.

<sup>18</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 2524 adopted 03 June 2020, henceforth S/RES/2524 (2020).

<sup>19</sup> United Nations Security Council, "Special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the strategic review of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur", UN Doc. S/2018/530, 01 June 2018.

of the United Nations Security Council<sup>20</sup>. Defining a two-pronged approach to peacekeeping and peacebuilding, the resolution proposed a whole-of-system approach to be implemented in collaboration with UNCT through joint “State Liaison Offices” (SLO), later adapted to “State Liaison Functions” (SLFs).

Envisaging to contribute to address the key drivers of conflict, four substantive areas were identified as critical to preventing relapse into conflict and enabling the Government, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), civil society partners and international actors to prepare for UNAMID’s exit. The four substantive areas are: 1) Rule of law: police, justice, corrections; 2) Resilience and livelihoods/ durable solutions for the displaced population and host communities; 3) Immediate service delivery for internally displaced persons; 4) Human rights. In order to preserve and build upon peacekeeping gains, the concept invited UNAMID and the United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes (AFPs) to identify key shared priorities in the four areas and to collaborate, through joint analysis, joint planning and joint delivery towards their achievement.

Whilst the abovementioned four areas formed the core of the SLFs, the scope of this study, is circumscribed to Rule Law (RoL) and Human Rights (HR). These are crucial in the changing political context of Sudan, given the country-wide transition towards democracy, triggered by a peoples’ revolution, which reached its peak in July 2019. A new transitional Government, led by Prime-Minister Abdalla Hamdok, was set up and a draft Constitutional charter was adopted detailing the legal foundations for the country’s transition. In addition, a peace process was set in motion to address inter alia, the conflicts in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan, as well as Darfur, resulting in the Juba Peace Agreement<sup>21</sup>. These events substantially changed the operating environment, making it even more important to understand how the humanitarian-development-peace nexus is being bridged concerning support provided by the UN System on RoL and HR.

The configuration of the UN system in Sudan is also relevant since there was a UNCT with national level programming and a Mission with operations circumscribed to Darfur, inevitably raising challenges of a non-integrated UN setting. In addition, the fact that UNAMID’s leadership was operating from three different locations (UNAMID HQ in Zalingei, UNAMID administrative services in El Fasher, and UNAMID KLO in Khartoum), equally impacted coordination and communication over the transition process.

Against this background this report provides an evidence-based look at the added-value and strengths, as well as at the challenges faced through the adoption and operationalisation of the SLFs in the rule of law and human rights areas. Accordingly, this lesson identification set the following objectives:

- To capture good practice, lessons and innovation from the development of the SLFs approach, and respective joint planning, implementation and coordination modalities by UNAMID and UNCT;
- To provide recommendations for improving implementation of the SLFs in the upcoming phases, including, potentially, in the context of the follow-on Mission (UNITAMS);
- To identify how the operating environment affects the results of the assistance provided on RoL and HR;
- To enquire into the role of key UN entities/initiatives (Transition Project, GFPPBSO, OHCHR, UNDP, etc.) in contributing/enabling service delivery on RoL in Darfur, considering a sequenced approach with that of the SLFs;
- To contribute to timely learning by upcoming transition processes (for example DRC, Mali, CAR) and provide recommendations for improvement.

To meet these objectives the strengths and shortcomings of the SLFs are analyzed against the evolution of the mandate and strategic Mission priorities. They are also examined in relation to how the internal organization, change management and implementation capacities of UNAMID and UNCT, in addition to the operating context have influenced the results of

the support provided by the UNAMID RoL and Human Rights Services (HRS) and their partnering AFPs. These results consider the shared priorities determined by UNAMID/UNCT and Government of Sudan (GoS) for targeted provision of support on Rule of Law and Human Rights, deriving from the UNSC mandate priority areas, including cross-cutting dimensions.

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#### Five intervention areas were identified, namely:

- 1** Re-establishment of the criminal justice chain, including police, justice and corrections, and development of capacities of judicial and law enforcement institutions in areas important for durable solutions for displaced persons, thereby contributing to stabilization and the protection of IDPs and returnees.
- 2** Strengthened capacity of rural courts to address land disputes, land rights, and other conflict drivers, thereby supporting the establishment of a peaceful avenue to address community disputes.
- 3** Strengthened human rights protection by state actors, including for displaced populations, and capacity building to ensure national human rights ownership during and beyond the transition.
- 4** Increased accountability for human rights violations and implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) through support to the Special Court and Special Prosecutor for Darfur Crimes, and compliance of traditional justice mechanisms with national and international human rights standards.
- 5** Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) and Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV), looking at the extent to which support provided to Sudan’s criminal justice chain and informal conflict resolution mechanisms upheld human rights principles and enabled adequate engagement in prevention, investigation, settling and redressal.

The implementation of the SLFs in Darfur started in January 2019, and this report recognizes the limits of what could have been reasonably achieved within such a timeframe, particularly in the context of Mission drawdown.

The analysis and lessons identified therefore consider pressing deadlines, compacted planning, reduced capacities, coordination challenges and short-term budget cycles, against the backdrop of a rapidly changing Sudanese national context and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020 (see Timeline in Annex I). Despite several limitations, on balance, the SLFs galvanized collaboration around transition, navigating institutional culture complexity and resistance to change. It has adapted to ongoing environmental changes filled with process and substantive challenges. Real time learning occurred as consecutive SLFs phases reached completion, and this commitment to incorporate lessons continued as this report was being submitted, nearing the cessation of UNAMID’s mandate on 31 December 2020<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> United Nations Security Council, “Special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the strategic review of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur”, UN Doc. S/2018/530 of 01 June , and UNSC Resolution 2429 (2018).

<sup>21</sup> Juba Peace Agreement, 03/10/2020, signed by the Government of Sudan, the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), and the Sudan Liberation Movement-Minni Minawi.

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<sup>22</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 2525 adopted 03 June 2020, henceforth S/RES/2525 (2020).





Work in progress at a Human Rights Resource Centre in the Nyala University premises, south Darfur. This UN State Liaison Functions (SLFs) supported project will, when completed, be designated as a training center where students can build their capacity in handling human rights issues in an appropriate manner: 17 July 2019. Photo by Kone Mouroulaye, UNAMID.

# METHODOLOGY

In order to identify achievements, strengths, but also missed opportunities and weaknesses of the SLFs as a new mandate implementation modality in the context of transition, this study looked at how the programming on Rule of Law and Human Rights was structured and implemented, considering its ultimate goal of contributing to prevent relapse into armed conflict and disruption of the peace continuum.

The analysis and findings derived from the use of combined methods. From October 2019 until June 2020, desk-based documental review<sup>23</sup> and remote interviews took place, complemented by primary data collection through fieldwork carried-out at the UN Headquarters in New York (December 2019) and in Sudan (Darfur and Khartoum in February/March 2020)<sup>24</sup>. The fieldwork in Darfur comprised

semi-structured interviews, focus groups and direct observation through visits to SLFs projects and UNAMID/UNCT interlocutors in four Darfur states (West, North, South and Central). In total about 90 interviews, including focus groups were held.

The analysis, review and validation of the lessons and good practice identified was accomplished through an iterative process of consultation with a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from OROLSI, OHCHR, and the DCO-DPO-DPPA-UNDP Transitions Project. In addition, UNAMID and UNCT were closely consulted on succeeding drafts. Due to the timing<sup>25</sup> and objectives<sup>26</sup> of this exercise most analysis focused on the inception period (conceptualisation and planning) of the SLFs, as well as on the first and second phases of implementation (SLFs I and II). Information gathered subse-

<sup>23</sup> This included United Nations official documents such as UN policies, Security Council resolutions, Secretary-General Reports, UNAMID RBB and performance reports, End of Assignment reports, SLFs MoU, code cables, as well as internal communication documents provided by the Mission.

<sup>24</sup> The team interviewed a significant number of current and former representatives and staff of UNAMID, UNCT, UN HQ, development partners, state and non-state institutions in Darfur, as well as at the federal level in Khartoum. Civil society and beneficiary groups such as native administration, women and youth, and IDPs were also interviewed. A list of actors interviewed can be found in the Data Collection Schedules available on ISSAT's webpage dedicated to this study.

<sup>25</sup> Learning from a previous similar exercise in Liberia, the field mission in Sudan was planned one year after the beginning of the SLFs implementation in order to balance the presence of the main interlocutors with the benefit of hindsight. The field work was however slightly delayed avoiding overwhelming Mission personnel, which was simultaneously engaged in exercises with external teams deploying during the same period (for example an OIOS evaluation).

<sup>26</sup> One of the objectives of this study was to provide potentially emerging recommendations for improvement of implementation of the SLFs in upcoming phases of UNAMID implementation. Therefore, this lesson team fed into UNAMID's thinking for upcoming work on the SLFs until its closure, and timely contributed to inform the inception work of planning for the future UN presence in Sudan, through dedicated briefings on the preliminary findings and recommendations delivered in April/May 2020.

quently allowed reflection over developments from SLFs III to V, but without the same level of detail. The full methodology adopted can be found on ISSAT's webpage dedicated to this study.

Two main streams of lessons emerged. The first covers the genesis and rationale of the SLFs mechanism, focusing on concept and process design. The second comprises learning specific to implementation. This included looking at structures, capacities, resources, and joint planning, implementation, monitoring, and coordination. The potential for replication and limitations, as well as suggestions for improvements are reflected in the recommendations presented at the end of each section of the report.

The lessons generated are based on the intrinsic worth of the SLFs, and its added value in the specific context of Mission transition in Darfur and of political change in Sudan, considering the country's contemporary peacemaking and peacebuilding challenges. As such, it is beyond the scope of this report to draw on systematic comparison between UN transition modalities experienced elsewhere to offer a panoply of detailed technical planning alternatives. In addition, this exercise comprised neither a comprehensive review of project outcomes<sup>27</sup> of the RoL and HR SLFs, nor an evaluation<sup>28</sup>. It focused instead on the SLFs as a tool and its broad programming achievements, whilst also offering the reconstruction of a Theory of Change (ToC) depicting the rationale of the programme and project level interventions as implemented in Darfur (see Annexes II and III). The ToC is a useful tool to apply in upcoming planning on introduction of the



UN Deputy Secretary General, Ms. Amina J. Mohammed and UNAMID DJSR, Ms Anita Kiki Gbeho (center) inaugurate the Human Rights Center at El Fasher University, north Darfur. Construction of the Center was completed with UN State Liaison Functions (SLFs) programmatic funding from UNAMID under management of UNDP, in partnership with the University of El Fasher. | 28 October 2019 | Photo by Amin Ismail, UNAMID

SLFs as a joint programming modality to advance One-UN peacebuilding work, in new mission transition settings. Therefore, a “template” ToC that can serve as a departing tool to adapt in other settings is also proposed (see Annex IV).

This report presents a selective body of lessons falling under the purview of eight key areas, namely: (i) mutually exclusive delimitation between peacekeeping and peacebuilding; (ii) siloed transition; (iii) planning (including staffing and financing); (iv) coordination; (v) adaptability and flexibility; (vi) catalytic effect; (vii) communication and (viii) programming (including responsiveness, progress measurement, risk management, sequencing, gender-responsiveness and capacity building).

# LESSONS

## 1 MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE DELIMITATION BETWEEN PEACEKEEPING AND PEACEBUILDING

### LESSON

**1** Missions should retain flexibility to deploy the different tools at their disposal to fulfil their mandate without being circumscribed by rigid geographical criteria, ensuring responsiveness to often characteristic volatility and reversals within the continuum of peacekeeping to peacebuilding.

**2** Communication between Mission and Headquarters should be improved during transition to enable common understanding and effectiveness, particularly when new mandate implementation modalities are introduced and tested.

violence and the relative security stabilization in vast areas of Darfur, the SAM called for a peacebuilding response to sustain these gains and inter alia to address the need of durable solutions for internally displaced persons (IDPs)<sup>31</sup>. UNAMID's analysis pointed towards the still ongoing - albeit residual - armed conflict, characterized by the lack of a political negotiated solution, ongoing instances of new displacement, as well as the largely unaddressed status of 1.8 million IDPs and widespread protection concerns<sup>32</sup>.

Acknowledging these coexisting realities, whilst endorsing continuation of Mission drawdown, a ‘two-pronged approach to a new concept of operations that combines peacebuilding and peacekeeping tasks’<sup>33</sup> was introduced. This decision was strongly permeated by an understanding that a catalyst was required to further UNAMID's transition, owing to slow progress since 2014<sup>34</sup>. The institutional lethargy, in confluence with President El-Bashir pressure for UNAMID to leave, and simultaneous peacekeeping budgetary concerns by UNSC members led to serious repercussions for implementation<sup>35</sup>. This was further aggravated by a deficit in communication and what appears to have been a lack of attempt to develop a common understanding between UNHQ and the Mission<sup>36</sup>.

The SLFs emerged in 2018<sup>29</sup> following a critical juncture in the existence of UNAMID, namely the introduction of a peacebuilding mandate in addition to the ongoing peacekeeping responsibilities in 2017<sup>30</sup>. The timing of the introduction of peacebuilding, and by association the appropriateness of the SLFs, was contested because of divergent views around context analysis between the Strategic Assessment Mission (SAM) and UNAMID. Recognising the historical reduction of large-scale

<sup>27</sup> Time and resources available for this exercise were limited.

<sup>28</sup> This was clarified in the ToR, with an option to review results deriving from the SLFs in late 2021, and was further deconflicted with OIOS, which was carrying out an evaluation.

<sup>29</sup> United Nations Security Council, “Special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the strategic review of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur”, UN Doc. S/2018/530 of 01 June, and UNSC Resolution 2429 (2018).

<sup>30</sup> United Nations Security Council, “Special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the strategic review of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur”, UN Doc. S/2017/437 of 18 May.

<sup>31</sup> Idem.

<sup>32</sup> Interviews Darfur, February/March 2020.

<sup>33</sup> In the light of the above, the strategic review team proposes a two-pronged approach to a new concept of operations that combines peacebuilding and peacekeeping tasks. The areas outside Jebel Marra and the affected vicinity, that is, those areas where there has not been any fighting for years, necessitate a more peacebuilding-oriented approach ... The greater Jebel Marra area, by contrast, still requires traditional peacekeeping and emergency attention owing to the insecurity prevailing in the area, which prevents internally displaced persons from returning. The mission should therefore be configured to address those issues in a two-track concept of operations. UN Doc. S/2017/437, 18 May.

<sup>34</sup> For example, the Rule of Law Section had been engaged on transition planning since late 2015, yet this was not across the board within UNAMID. Interviews NY December 2019 and ‘UNAMID Rule of Law Section Operational and Transition Plan, 2015-2016/2017-2018’, UNAMID.

<sup>35</sup> Interviews NY December 2019 and Interviews Darfur February/March 2020. See also Adam Day, “UN Transitions: Improving Security Council Practice in Mission Settings” (United Nations University: New York, 2020) P.15.

<sup>36</sup> Interviews NY December 2019 and Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.



One of the consequences was that the language of a ‘two-track concept of operations’, which envisaged peacekeeping in the greater Jebel Marra area and stabilization and peacebuilding in the remainder of Darfur<sup>37</sup>, led to a mutually exclusive delimitation between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. This was defined by the introduction of geographic criteria and a programmatic understanding of “stabilization”. Despite room for maneuver provided in the ensuing UNSC resolution<sup>38</sup> (RES/2363 (2017)), a legal understanding of the mandate based on the 2017 Special Report prevailed. Further consolidation of this understanding derived from the 2018 Special Report and UNSC resolution (RES/2429(2018)), resulting in the introduction of the SLFs within boundaries that limited responses to potential and often-common reversals in the (non-linear) continuum from peacekeeping to peacebuilding.

Under the influence of this strategic level framing and dynamics, the SLFs became the only mandate implementation modality in the Darfur states delimited as peacebuilding areas. It was premised on providing UN coverage of areas (relying on partnership between civilian components of UNAMID and UNCT) from where UNAMID had already withdrawn the physical presence of force and police patrols, which acted as deterrence mechanisms. This was in line with the ultimate intent of the SLFs, which was to contribute to prevent relapse into conflict and to preserve and build upon peacekeeping gains.

In order to meet this objective in an environment where intercommunal violence was identified as one of the main drivers of conflict, it would have been important to build on existing Mission capacities on conflict analysis and early warning. This was mainly provided through the work of civil affairs and human rights teams, as well as by the integrated analysis of hotspots and protection concerns done by the Joint Mission Analysis Cell (JMAC) at Mission HQ in Zalingei. However, also triggered by the mandate revision the human resources from these components were being cut in the ongoing drawdown. The resulting loss of institutional memory became further compounded by the loss of information-gathering capacity, due to the cessation of field-based monitoring and

engagement. The usefulness of these mechanisms, used to relay information that helped to identify targeted responses and interventions to defuse locally evolving inter-communal conflict and human rights violations, was highlighted by a range of community interlocutors. They deplored their



LI team meetings in Kalma Camp, South Darfur, March 2020  
Photos by ISSAT

cessation and cited diminished protection as a result, whilst claiming their voices were not being heard concerning UNAMID’s scaling down<sup>39</sup>.

Emerging capacity gaps have become a common feature of peacekeeping operations when entering transition accompanied by drawdown, regardless of the type of environment. In the case of UNAMID, the SLFs as the newly introduced peacebuilding tool were only partially able to address these gaps. The SLFs were able to address capacity building and institutional development, but its limits were exposed through shortcomings on protection of civilians, which remained a key constituent of UNAMID’s mandate.

This partially came about as an unintended consequence of the process to operationalize the SLFs, initially proposed as State Liaison Offices (SLO). The original concept was based on two premises. First, the use of programmatic funding through the assessed peacekeeping budget for joint Mission/ UNCT peacebuilding implementation. Second, the co-location of UNAMID staff and UNCT peers in one central location in each Darfur state. However, the logistics associated were unfeasible for UNCT, which proposed instead UNAMID staff co-location in their pre-existing (or ongoing rental) premises<sup>40</sup>. This changed the rationale towards focus on function rather than the location.

UNPOL’s ability to directly co-locate with the Sudan Police Force (SPF), as previously planned, became constrained, since direct mandate implementation by UNAMID was only allowed in the Greater Jebel Marra, where peacekeeping was still ongoing. Joint UNAMID/UNCT implementation through co-location was indispensable in the Darfur peacebuilding states<sup>41</sup>, but this was initially challenging, given the AFPs’ reluctance to embed uniformed police in their teams. They were conscious of the risk associated to the GoS’ perceiving this initiative as an attempt to gather intelligence under the guise of development support<sup>42</sup>. This was in addition to a perception that uniformed staff would alienate civilian constituencies<sup>43</sup>. Eventually this was resolved through setting-up a link to UNCT, but co-locating UNAMID’s Individual Police Officers (IPOs) with the SPF in their premises. Nonetheless, this modality

still prevented the systematic collection of information and channelling to the Mission for early warning purposes (*see also section on Staffing below*)<sup>44</sup>.

Similarly, whilst Human Rights is one of the key pillars of the UNAMID mandate and thereby the SLFs, the monitoring and reporting function of human rights work was rejected by the AFPs due to perceived risk exposure to the then antagonistic and obstructive posture of the Government of President El-Bashir. This limitation was partially mitigated by creating an exception, namely a delinked human rights Mobile Monitoring Team (MMT) within UNAMID’s Human Rights Service (HRS). Despite being a creative work-around, the MMT was clearly insufficiently resourced to deliver on its task, with only four people covering the four Darfur states’ hotspots on a roving basis. Furthermore, surgical mobile monitoring does not allow for iterative visits and trend analysis, sustained advocacy with duty bearers for remedial action, or informing capacity and institution building of duty bearers. In a context where OHCHR’s only presence was the integrated HRS of UNAMID, it was even more crucial to have safeguarded this capacity.

Finally, the remaining UNAMID staff co-located with the AFPs were limited in their ability to gather and transmit local conflict-related dynamic data. This was in part due to the SLFs being designed and implemented around infrastructure development and capacity building, through a programmatic approach focused on improving institutional service delivery, without considering regular monitoring of the local environment as a key function. In addition, some projects were implemented through third party delivery, representing good practice in line with the goals of building national capacities and sustainability<sup>45</sup>, but posing difficulties in terms of access for direct monitoring. The overall result was that capacities and information flows that could have contributed to conflict analysis and early warning were not systematically included into UNAMID’s integrated analysis of hotspots and protection concerns, despite having the right

37 UN Doc. S/2017/437, 18 May and S/RES/2363 (2017).

38 “Underlines the need to keep the situation in all areas of Darfur under review, to conduct regular reviews of the geographic deployment of UNAMID’s force and to maintain the flexibility within UNAMID to respond to developments throughout Darfur as the situation requires”; “Underlines that the reconfiguration of UNAMID has to be effectively mitigated by an improved ability to respond to threats quickly and adequately”, and “...including the progress of reductions to UNAMID’s military and police component and its impact, including on protection needs and violations and abuses of human rights”, (S/RES/2363 (2017), paras 36-4 and reporting specification (iv).

39 Interviews Darfur, February/March 2020.

40 The Strategic Assessment Mission of March 2018 (Report issued in May 2018) identified UNDP as being well positioned to play the role of coordinator and administrator of the SLO. Had UNDP been available to play this role both Mission and AFPs personnel would have relocated to one common premise, likely without the need for UNAMID to conclude MoUs with the implementing AFPs for each of the Darfur states. Remote Interviews and comments received, August-November 2020.

41 This was mandatory according to the analysis of UNAMID’s Office of Legal Affairs. See ‘Request for advice on the possible deployment of UNAMID Police in areas of Darfur in which UNAMID is focused on peacebuilding and stabilization efforts’ UNAMID, 04/02/2019.

42 Interviews Darfur, February/March 2020.

43 Interviews Darfur, February/March 2020.

44 Interviews Darfur, February/March 2020.

45 UNDP utilises both DIM and NIM approaches where direct implementation modality is through third parties or national authorities or LNGOs/INGOs.

staff skill set there. This prevented the provision of early responses by the Mission, whether through direct community engagement and interventions, or via sharing of timely information with Sudanese authorities through good offices. Insofar as a significant shortcoming of the partnership arrangement, this element deserves remedial action in any new iteration of the SLFs. Ensuring that mechanisms are put in place to keep channelling information relevant for early warning through to the Mission's integrated analysis' units will be key to safeguard protection responses.

The violent incidents in El-Geneina (which resulted in the Kerending Camp massacre on 29 December 2019, leaving at least 80 persons killed and 47,000 displaced<sup>46</sup>) epitomize the gap in early warning analysis and protection response by the UN. This was through the SLFs, as well as the Government's incapacity to prevent and to react in time to support local unarmed populations. Darfur continues to experience strife, and at the time of writing the media routinely reports on the eruption of inter-tribal clashes, accompanied by loss of lives and injuries in West, South, Central, and North Darfur<sup>47</sup>.

Whilst the GoS has the primary responsibility to protect its citizens, during this team's fieldwork in Darfur (March 2020), civil society<sup>48</sup> and communities indicated a strong trust deficit. They questioned the assumption that civilian state authorities and uniformed security forces were currently fully capable of meeting their duty to provide protection, noting that UNAMID patrols had kept them safer<sup>49</sup>. There was plausible doubt that the SPF and the SAF would aptly provide civilian protection when confronted by an overpowering paramilitary force such as the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), acting under protection of an influential leader sitting at the Sovereign Council of Sudan. The El-Geneina incidents that degenerated into the Kerending violence - as relayed to this team by members of

the local investigative committee - illustrated this point describing a paralyzed SPF upon receiving information of a high-ranking RSF commander involvement in the attacks. With their own ranks targeted and killed, it further deepened the communities' sense of the unreliability of the police<sup>50</sup>. An independent Khartoum-level committee was set-up under the aegis of the Attorney General to investigate the incidents and a report was produced, although it was not made public, and the criminal processes have not yet reached a conclusion.

The core of the problem partially resides in insufficient analysis about the nature of the conflict and its characterization as inter-communal violence, without looking at layered dimensions related to broader political, security and resource power struggles, in addition to rights deficits and long-standing grievances. Violence erupts cyclically through a mix of both spontaneous and planned criminal acts by armed men and militias, sometimes backed by members of statutory state security forces, namely the RSF. In addition, the illegal activities at the porous borders which continue to offer an opening for arming communities through the supply of weapons further aggravates the problem.

Military governors formerly appointed by the Military Transitional Council remained in post for a long time since the inauguration of the transitional Government. Their impaired legitimacy compounded the situation, providing a powerful symbol that the changes brought about by the Revolution in Khartoum had not materialized in Darfur, especially for the large and vulnerable IDP communities<sup>51</sup>. Whilst interim civilian Governors have since been appointed in July 2020 the situation remains precarious. For example, Kalma Camp continues to be managed without meaningful contact with civilian state authorities, and neither the SPF nor the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) are accepted by the communities. Inhabitants relayed to the LI team

that they feared for their lives with the end of physical protection provided by UNAMID FPU<sup>52</sup>. Women's groups expressed being continuously harassed as they go about their livelihood tasks, denounced the large prevalence of rape across all age groups, and the little to no response or action from state authorities<sup>53</sup>. Overcoming fear and building trust between IDP communities and state/national authorities, as well as creating a safe environment for women to go about their daily business is yet to be achieved in a sustainable manner. This should be factored into ongoing joint UN protection analysis and deserves attention in the context of future work by UNITAMS<sup>54</sup>.

Supporting the involvement of local leadership and religious representatives in the resolution of intercommunal conflict should be continued and strengthened for improved effectiveness and local ownership. However, this task cannot be entirely entrusted to local community mediation leaders, who recognize the limits of their interventions to stave off conflict escalation when parties resort to utilizing weaponry<sup>55</sup>. Interventions to support confidence-building between communities and uniformed forces are a crucial and complementary investment. To this effect, support to the development of the SPF's approach to community policing has been carried out through capacity building under the SLFs and reinforced in the run up to UNAMID's exit, through core programmatic funds for the remainder team site areas<sup>56</sup>.

Security interventions from the federal Transitional Government have visibly grown in Darfur to demonstrate capacity to meet their PoC responsibilities, spurred on by approaching UNSC resolutions connected to the exit of UNAMID on 31 December 2020 and the planning process of UNITAMS. This was accompanied by the development of a national protection plan, and corresponding workplan<sup>57</sup>. In view of this a forward step has been taken as of September 2020, with UNAMID contributing to mitigate insecurity and armed violence, via partner-

ing with the SPF (Joint Protection Task Force) in carrying-out joint police patrols in North, South and Central Darfur<sup>58</sup>.

The required clarification of roles, responsibilities, powers and limitations of the different security entities, as well as capacitation for delivering on their mandate in a democratic rule of law context, requires support, including for the creation or implementation of strong internal oversight mechanisms for statutory uniformed forces. Termination of lawful immunity, and impartial disarmament coupled with prosecution for crimes committed represent important benchmarks for the transition. Finally, asserting control over the myriad of informal security actors (paramilitary, militia, remnants of popular defense forces and popular security forces) which shift alliances between them and along ethnic groups, is key to stave off potential for their instrumentalization by different agendas, and therefore central to stability in Sudan.

The transitional Government is taking important steps to address some of these challenges, and respect for national ownership is paramount. Cumulative international experience of political transitions shows that legitimate ownership, which promotes sustainable political solutions, needs to equitably include the views of the government, civil society, different sub-sets of populations, armed groups and political opposition. Rarely is there a unified voice in transition contexts. Hence, politically sensitive navigation of the different stakeholder interests will be required by UNITAMS and by key international partners of Sudan. This includes supporting the country through looming political and economic pressures, including those related to transitional justice and to Security Sector Reform (SSR).

The assassination attempt of Prime Minister Hamdok on 09 March 2020, the continuing divisions between civilian and uniformed members of the Sovereign Council, and the newly emerging frictions amongst

<sup>46</sup> [unamid.unmissions.org/unamid-deeply-concerned-reports-intercommunal-violence-west-darfur](https://unamid.unmissions.org/unamid-deeply-concerned-reports-intercommunal-violence-west-darfur)

<sup>47</sup> [nypost.com/2020/07/26/some-120-said-to-be-killed-or-wounded-in-attack-in-sudans-darfur-region/www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/gunmen-attack-south-darfur-village-kill-rsf-officer](https://nypost.com/2020/07/26/some-120-said-to-be-killed-or-wounded-in-attack-in-sudans-darfur-region/www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/gunmen-attack-south-darfur-village-kill-rsf-officer)  
[www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/3-000-displaced-by-south-darfur-attacks](https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/3-000-displaced-by-south-darfur-attacks)  
[www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/six-dead-in-jebel-marra-attacks](https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/six-dead-in-jebel-marra-attacks)

<sup>48</sup> On concerns by civil society see also Petition from Sudanese Civil Society Organizations to the Prime Minister of Sudan, His Excellency Abdalla Hamdok May 4, 2020, and [www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/civil-society-orgs-sudanese-gov-must-dismantle-military](https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/civil-society-orgs-sudanese-gov-must-dismantle-military)

<sup>49</sup> Interviews Darfur, February/March 2020.

<sup>50</sup> Interviews Darfur, February/March 2020. At the time of writing demonstrations and sit-ins by civilian populations denouncing insecurity and lack of protection across different Darfur states were still taking place, despite deployment of joint state security forces to clamp violence maintain order. See for example [www.darfur24.com/en/2020/10/09/west-darfur-citizens-stage-a-sit-in-as-gunmen-kill-a-man-in-tandalti/www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/police-kill-two-protestors-in-central-darfur](https://www.darfur24.com/en/2020/10/09/west-darfur-citizens-stage-a-sit-in-as-gunmen-kill-a-man-in-tandalti/www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/police-kill-two-protestors-in-central-darfur)

<sup>51</sup> The new Governors were appointed given progress in negotiations between the GoS and the FFC, yet the Governors of some states were contested for their association with specific interest or power groups in Khartoum.

<sup>52</sup> Collective Meeting with IDPs at Kalma Camp.

<sup>53</sup> Focus group with Women's Protection Network, Darfur, February/March 2020.

<sup>54</sup> UNCT has produced a Strategy for Protection, which included collaboration with UNAMID, including reference to the Integrated Strategic Framework. The Humanitarian Country Team Strategy for Protection in Sudan 2019-2021.

<sup>55</sup> Interviews Darfur, February/March 2020.

<sup>56</sup> Matrix for Rule of Law Activities, GOS-UNAMID Joint Task Force on the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians, SD.

<sup>57</sup> Government of Sudan, "The national plan of the Sudan for protecting civilians after the exit of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)", 21 May 2020; Workplan of the Transitional Government for the Protection of Civilian, 08 October 2020.

<sup>58</sup> Matrix for Rule of Law Activities, GOS-UNAMID Joint Task Force on the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians, SD. It is significant that for the first time in Darfur's 17 years of conflict UNAMID and the SPF agreed to engage in joint police patrols. Nonetheless, the fact that this is only occurring when the Mission is bound to close within three months is unsettling for the prospect of provision of safety and security by Sudanese security forces. [peacekeeping.un.org/en/unamid-and-sudan-police-forces-commence-joint-patrols-central-darfur](https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/unamid-and-sudan-police-forces-commence-joint-patrols-central-darfur);



civilian political forces such as the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) and the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA) expose the fragility of the transition period until foreseen elections in 2022. An important and historical political step has been achieved through the signature of the Juba Peace Agreement between the GoS and the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) in October 2020, addressing the conflict in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile. However, implementation is likely to be contested, not least because the agreement excluded two key rebel groups, namely the Darfur-based Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) faction led by Abdel Wahid Mohamed al-Nour and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu. The latter agreed to a truce pending the inclusion of state secularity provisions into the Constitution, the disbandment of militias and military reform.

The coexistence of these factors alongside a fragile economic situation worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic, suggests the need of preparedness for continuous eruption of violence, safeguarding the safety and security of vulnerable populations. The disruptions may comprise significant disturbances to public security as the gap between expectations and capacity to deliver widens in the short-term. Therefore, supporting state institutions to fully and appropriately deliver on their protection and rule of law duties, including through a functional criminal justice system, will be key to the mandate of UNITAMS and of UNCT going forward. Complementing this with reinforcement of native administration capacities for inter-communal conflict resolution and social cohesion and enhancing state and civil society capacities to safeguard human rights and address SGBV will be equally important. These are prerequisites to ensuring a multiplier effect of the peacebuilding investment carried out through the SLFs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### For UNITAMS

- 1 Continue an inclusive and transparent planning process for the upcoming Mission, comprising iterative consultations and discussions with UNAMID and UNCT at Khartoum and Darfur levels. Include a broad spectrum of national stakeholders as well, in addition to international partners, to design an effective, legitimate and collectively owned Mission and UN configuration in the country.
- 2 Should the SLFs be adopted as one of the peacebuilding mandate implementation modalities in Darfur (and potentially South Kordofan and Blue Nile), ensure the inclusion of monitoring and analytical capacity contributing to early warning through meaningful participation and engagement of personnel, and through mainstreaming upfront these requirements into programming.
- 3 Within the limits of its mandate, respond to rapidly deteriorating security incidents, and effectively provide protection to groups at risk in case of state inoperancy. Capacity to respond in hotspot areas should be in-built, alongside an instrument to support the civilian GoS authorities and its uniformed security forces in strengthening institutional crisis management and decision-making, as well as operational response capacity to protect civilians and safeguard democratic rule of law. Simultaneous effort should be dedicated to enhancing inclusive community-based conflict resolution mechanisms, which can help prevent, resolve and de-escalate tensions, as well as alert to spiralling clashes. Not doing this entails perils to the ongoing and fragile transition in Sudan, and carries reputational risks given the entrusted UN responsibility for safeguarding peace and security whilst advancing human rights.

### To consider in new Mission transition settings

- 1 Inclusive, comprehensive and timely assessments, anchored in robust and accurate conflict analysis, should provide a foundation to sensitise UNSC members towards the need to prevent external political and financial expediency from undermining the fostering of peace and security.
- 2 Partnership and close communication between UN HQ, Mission and UNCT is fundamental to design jointly owned processes that mutually reinforce respective mandates and allow flexible responses to the rapidly evolving safety and security needs in transition contexts.
- 3 Avoid replacing substantive analytical criteria with geographical delimitation of mandate implementation modalities, as this “one size fits all” approach ignores context-specific and evolving causes of conflict, hindering flexibility and effectiveness of UN responses along the continuum from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. On the one hand volatility can develop, warranting initially unforeseen robust interventions targeted to stabilize the environment and protect civilians in areas previously deemed stable. On the other hand, there should be room to use the various instruments at the disposal of the missions, including advancing peacebuilding within sequenced processes in select areas where peacekeeping may still be evolving.
- 4 Ensure the inclusion or safeguard existing conflict analysis capacity as well as human rights monitoring/reporting contribution to early warning through mainstreaming upfront this requirement into SLFs program design, and through certifying that information flows are duly institutionalized and channelled for effective and timely Mission/ UNCT responses.

## 2 SILOED TRANSITION

### LESSON

The introduction of clear joint action plans for transition at an early stage provides a necessary roadmap but requires complementing with adequate coordination capacity and committed leadership to steer the process in an integrated manner.

Developed to support the operationalization of the UNSG Planning Directive for Transition in Darfur,<sup>59</sup> the UNAMID-UNCT Joint Transition Action Plan (JTAP) was the only document that envisioned the transition as a single integrated process, comprising different areas due to advance simultaneously. The development of this tool represents good practice, considering as well that the JTAP was designed within two months of release of the Directive, with support rendered by the UN Transitions Project (DCO-DPO-DPPA-UNDP). Intended as a living document, the JTAP provided a depiction of the transition workstreams, and envisaged steps for its accomplishment. Four main workstreams were laid out - Political, Mission, Integrated, Programmatic - underpinned by two cross-cutting streams, namely, Operational and Communications.<sup>60</sup>

In retrospect, the adoption of more accurate terminology would have been helpful, since the artificial distinction between certain areas resulted in misconceptions and disconnectedness. These could have been clarified shortly after HQ enactment, if a detailed content discussion of the Plan had taken place with all UN constituent parts in Sudan, or if it had been regularly revisited with a probing approach, rather than mostly as an implementation checklist<sup>61</sup>. Still, the introduction of the JTAP contributed to help overcome the initial understanding prevailing in many quarters, of the transition as being limited to the SLFs.

On terminology and subsumed concepts, the SLFs correspond to the JTAP workstream designated Integrated. Yet, other areas also merited this notion of integration, and for some time this was not fully captured by those in charge of implementation. For example, under the Mission workstream also fell areas of cross over and joint responsibilities between the Mission and UNCT, as was the case on Protection of Civilians or on Gender, amongst others. Arguably, for clarity and ease of understanding there could have been three workstreams, namely: Security, Programmatic (including the SLFs) and Political (which existed and more clearly outlined the joint responsibilities).

The adopted formulation inadvertently contributed to the SLFs being effectively adopted as a stand-alone programming approach, without consideration of how the SLFs could be utilized to complement and inform the work of the other streams and vice-versa. It was the case concerning the Political workstream, particularly with regards to the peace process, whereby, in hindsight, an opportunity elapsed to showcase the work of the SLFs as a peace dividend, incentivizing progress in peace negotiations; and inversely information from the political dynamics could have been used to further shore-up conflict sensitivity in project implementation. Regarding the Programmatic workstream (referred only to UNCT work) and given that the SLFs is also a programming initiative, the linkages with pre-existing UNCT work plans and programmes could in retrospect have been better articulated<sup>62</sup>. Limitations also derived with respect to linkages to the military transition concept placed under the Mission workstream. The demarcation of peacekeeping and of peacebuilding areas through geographical criteria (*see section on mutually exclusive delimitation between peacekeeping and peacebuilding*) initially foreclosed a discussion on sequencing of exit of the Force from a given locality, and corresponding repercussions for the subsequent implantation of SLFs projects.

An important contribution to overcoming these challenges would have been the existence of a fully-fledged coordination mechanism. This was foreseen in the UNSG Planning Directive for Transition in Darfur<sup>63</sup>, and should have been established at the start of planning rather than nine months into implementation, in September 2019. Meanwhile ad-hoc coordination was carried-out as a mitigation measure (*further detail in the section on Coordination*).

However, neither this team nor the Joint Transition Cell (JTC) after its creation, could totally fill the gap generated by the lack of permanent focal points for the workstreams, as was the case for the political stream<sup>64</sup>. On the one hand, this resulted in weak coordination within different components of each workstream. On the other hand, it hampered coordination across workstreams. This too contributed to the notion that the transition was just about the SLFs and led the JTC to chiefly focus on this workstream, rather than to adopt a more active role in coordinating substantively across workstreams. In hindsight, a more proactive role in informing the agenda of the by-monthly UNAMID/UNCT strategic level meeting on management of transition, could have better supported reflection and decision-making.

At a later stage, and benefiting from the lessons derived from the challenges of coordination across-workstreams, a conscious planning effort was made to overcome the disconnect between the SLFs and security transition, when preparing the gradual expansion of the SLFs into the Greater Jebel Marra area (GJM)<sup>65</sup>.

In practice this led to the introduction of the SLFs in areas of relative stability within the GJM, before the closure of team sites. This contrasted with the interpretation of the original concept, which only foresaw the use of the SLFs after closure of team sites in the designated peacebuilding areas. In this instance, the SLFs projects were used to advance

the security transition and help mitigate protection risks. This was done through implementation in the vicinity of areas classified as protection hotspots, to assist in the creation of security conditions for voluntary return.

Projects comprised confidence building measures, support to early warning structures and mechanisms such as community-based protection networks, including those focused on sexual and gender-based violence. They also focused on support to the re-establishment of the criminal justice chain through infrastructure upgrades of rule of law institutions, in conjunction with trainings on prosecution of criminal offences to enhance operations and coordination in the delivery of justice services. Assistance to the provision of essential services including sexual productive health services and the clinical management of rape was provided. Prevention and response to gender-based violence, continued monitoring of grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict, in coordination with the UNCT on the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM)<sup>66</sup>, and livelihoods were also included. Complementary areas encompassed addressing intercommunal and land conflicts, as well as rule of law and human rights' issues in a new political environment<sup>67</sup>.

The planning phase comprised wide consultation between UNAMID and AFPs and represented progress insofar as the selection of partner AFPs, since priority was awarded to those that already had a presence in the area, easing implementation. Moreover, this exemplifies flexibility in the use of different mandate implementation instruments in the same geographical area. It further creates an opportunity to test if different sequencing of the use of these instruments would result in an effective contribution to Protection of Civilians, upon closure of team sites (further information in the section on Flexibility and Adaptability).

59 UNSG Planning Directive for Transition in Darfur, 04 February 2019.

60 Sudan Transition Planning in Darfur, Joint Transition Action Plan, April 2019.

61 Interviews Darfur, February/March 2020 and remote December 2019-August 2020.

62 For example, UNCT strategic documents did not recognize the contribution of the SLFs, despite important contributions at the level of coordination with the GoS, and the investments in Rule of Law and Human Rights. For instance, the Draft Outcome Document UN Visioning Exercise, 7-9 September 2019, whilst mentioning other sources of funding (including the PBF) omits reference to the peacekeeping assessed budget through the SLFs, which was actually a key enabler of the joint activities listed in the adjoint work plan, with components on Governance and RoL, and Gender Equality, and Women, and Youth empowerment to which the SLFs significantly contributed in Darfur.

63 UNSG Planning Directive for Transition in Darfur, 04 February 2019.

64 Whilst the concept note of the JTC foresaw the existence of these focal points, and on the most they were appointed, in practice it was difficult to ensure their regular and fully committed participation given the many competing work priorities, worsened by the shortage of staff as a consequence of drawdown, Interviews Darfur February/March and remote December 2019-August 2020.

65 This expansion aimed at implementing UNSCR 2479 (2019), which followed the Special Report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on UNAMID (S/2019/816).

66 The SLFs contributed significantly to an effective implementation of the MRM in the peacebuilding areas of Darfur, through embedding of UNAMID national and international MRM officers into UNICEF, helping it expand presence where this was previously limited. The SLFs MRM monitors made an essential contribution to the production of monthly, annual and Global Horizontal Notes (GHN). A smaller scale contribution has also been made to the Monitoring Analysis and Reporting Arrangements (MARA) mechanism, through SLFs staff embedded into UNHCR and UNFPA. In addition, recent MARA deliberations have become inclusive and holistic broadening the opportunity for information sharing of practices in Darfur.

67 UN, Concept Note Expansion of State Liaison Functions into the Greater Jebel Marra, 14 December 2019. Planning Matrix for Implementation of SLFs IV, *Rule Of Law Pillar Transition Activities In The State Liaison Functions Areas From April - June 2020*, 25/04/ 2020.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### To be considered by UNAMID/UNCT in case of mandate renewal

- 1 UNAMID/UNCT leadership should accompany closely the process of expansion of the SLFs to Jebel Marra and provide timely guidance to emerging challenges. UNAMID withdrawal from team sites and hotspots without substitute patrolling and deterrence capacity in place seems premature at a time of political fragility in Sudan, and systematically ongoing inter-communal violence and impunity in Darfur. Efforts are required to effectively mitigate emerging protection gaps, and in order to do this strong field-based conflict analysis is imperative, alongside preservation of early warning mechanisms in place. This work should be factored into the responsibilities of SLFs project staff, in addition to ensuring a well-resourced human rights mobile monitoring capacity, networked with community-based protection mechanisms.
- 2 Support the creation and maintenance of effective monitoring and communication mechanisms between community-based networks in potential hotspots and government security hubs at state level, to ensure conveying of timely information for rapid intervention and de-escalation of tensions. Complement this with investment in strengthening the capacity of the security hub at the state level and subsidiary branches in critical locations, alongside initiatives for confidence-building among civilians.
- 3 Enable the presence and strengthen the functioning of National Human Rights Commission liaison offices in Jebel Marra, as an essential priority towards sustainability. In addition, enhancing the criminal justice chain is important, requiring continued institution building, as well as strong political advocacy by the Mission and good offices of the UN agencies present in those areas.
- 4 Focus SLFs programmatic interventions on advancing ROL/HR protection-related objectives in geographical areas UNITAMS is most likely to deploy and engage in order to guarantee a seamless transition in Darfur's conflict-prone areas.

### For UNITAMS

- 5 During the planning phase, investigate the possibility of continuing the positive engagements generated by SLFs through its achievements in Darfur. UNAMID's transition, which effectively lasted only two years, in a country context where political transition is itself concurrent may warrant different solutions than elsewhere. Adopting the SLFs as one of the peacebuilding modalities in Darfur, and possibly South Kordofan and Blue Nile, in addition to other eventual tools, could provide the UNCT with more time and resources to consolidate its presence in Darfur, and establish solid ground on work in rule of law and human rights in the two conflict areas. This could also create a similar opportunity for the GoS to use the upcoming period to mobilize adequate donor contributions for the implementation of the Darfur Development Strategy. Importantly, continuity of SLFs programmatic interventions in RoL and HR could provide an adequate window to sequence support with other multilateral partners going forward (AU, IGAD, EU, IFIs), and indeed with bilateral donors, which may be hesitant to deliver immediately on their pledges, and not least until US sanctions are lifted.

### To consider in new Mission transition settings

- 6 Produce UNSG directives and accompanying planning tools to support comprehensive implementation of transition, including through coordinated workstreams. Prioritize the set-up of these plans and coordination mechanisms at the very onset of transition, rather than when the process has already started.
- 7 Ensure balance and mutual reinforcement between the roles that HQ, Mission and UNCT must play in galvanizing transition processes and ensure planning for adequate surge capacity of the Mission/UNCT at critical junctures in the planning process.
- 8 Ensure that programmatic components of the transition support the advancement of political, security, and protection aims, in addition to technical peacebuilding goals, in order to avoid a fragmented transition.

## 3 OWNING THE PLANNING

### LESSONS

- 1 Key to new mandate implementation initiatives is the planning phase in which joint leadership is central to shaping vision and fostering an inclusive process, further developing ownership and increasing chances of robust implementation.
- 2 Support from UNHQ entities with mandates on transition, rule of law and human rights is essential to assist the operationalization of new mandate implementation modalities and to bridge gaps opening in human resources of Missions during drawdown.

The Mission and UNCT leadership were presented with the opportunity to build buy-in for the SLFs concept through developing its operationalization mechanisms. The new structure of delegation of authority to heads of entity within the context of UN reforms was enacted around the period of introduction of the SLFs, providing additional space for processes to be shaped locally as required.

However, this was hindered by an inadequate period for thorough planning and analysis to inform the implementation stage. Beyond the generic guidance provided in the DPKO/DFS Guidelines for Mandated Programmatic Activities funded through Peacekeeping Assessed Budgets (2017)<sup>68</sup>, little specific advice was provided from UNHQ at the initial planning stage, considering the novelty of the SLFs as a mandate implementation modality.

In hindsight, a planning period of six months – from July (UNSC Res 2429) to December 2018 – was too short to develop buy-in and mature an untested concept, as well as to plan its operationalization, considering the need to accommodate the different

management, financial and administrative system requisites of the Mission and UNCT. For example, supporting guidance on human resource related questions only came from UNHQ in January 2019, after the SLFs implementation ought to have started. In addition, the introduction of the SLFs at a time of change in leadership<sup>69</sup> brought opportunities, but also disadvantages concerning the lack of institutional memory around the country's UN system dynamics, and the design of the SLFs concept by UNHQ.

Beyond general understanding that it was a programmatic modality to drive an integrated transition, the lack of clarity around the SLFs at the very beginning beleaguered the process. The lack of a coordination mechanism to effectively bring Mission and UNCT together from the start to mature discussions further compounded the inception of the planning period. Retrospectively, workshops co-facilitated between Mission/UNCT/UNHQ for this purpose could have been useful.

At the onset miscommunication on the roles and responsibilities of UNAMID and of the AFPs resulted in confusion around partnerships and project design criteria in relation to mandate benchmarks, as well as staffing and funding arrangements. Subsequently, given time pressure for roll-out of implementation, efforts were devoted to crafting essential operative detail on MoU, but without dedicating enough attention to building and communicating a joint vision and a positive narrative.

Simultaneously, the Mission and UNCT had to spend an unavoidable period discussing within their internal leadership structures in order to coalesce around what was perceived as an externally introduced concept, before being able to move forward<sup>70</sup>. Inherent to this viewpoint and associated resistance was the notion that the SLFs was introduced in response to political expediency by the GoS, which envisaged UNAMID's exit as soon as possible, and financial concerns at the UNSC around transitions,

68 2017.25 Mandated Programmatic Activities funded through PK Assessed Budgets (Guidelines), UN. Department of Peacekeeping Operations - UN. Department for Field Support - DPKO-DFS/DPET/Policy and Best Practice Service, 2017-11-01

69 The new DJSR was appointed in March 2018 and the incoming Resident Coordinator in August 2018. In addition, the post of head of the RCO office was vacant for a long period.

70 Interviews Khartoum and Darfur, February/March 2020.

rather than to address Darfur's specific needs<sup>71</sup>. In turn these factors were aggravated by challenges linked to the geographical spread of UNAMID's senior leadership across different locations, further compounding problems around communication and logistics<sup>72</sup>.

As regards partnerships with AFPs and project selection criteria UNAMID leadership ultimately decided that widespread inclusivity should be observed. Whilst well-intentioned, this decision was not informed by required detailed analysis concerning: 1) project rationale vis-à-vis key mandate implementation benchmarks<sup>73</sup>, 2) capacity for combined thematic-geographic delivery, and 3) driving interest from AFPs to partake in the SLFs.

In hindsight a comprehensive capacity mapping of the UNCT at that stage would have been helpful to refine the analysis on comparative advantage of each AFP for the implementation of the SLFs and maximize planning and meaningful participation<sup>74</sup>. The three aspects were extensively discussed in the second half of 2018, and refined over time, yet the lack of adequate upfront understanding and planning resulted in considerable project fragmentation, at least during SLFs I. Improvements and iterative learning and planning were nonetheless achieved from SLFs I to SLFs II and III, aided by the creation of a Joint Transition Cell in September 2019, with functions around coordination, monitoring and reporting (*further information available in the section on Coordination*). Until then a key enabler of the partnership, namely the flow of information remained problematic, since it was carried-out in an ad-hoc manner, leading for example to slower progress in transfer of data and assets from the Mission to UNCT<sup>75</sup>. Moreover, challenges existed regarding the exchange of information on

substantive matters for programming purposes and on sharing analysis related to evolving security developments in the field, on the grounds of confidentiality.

An important aspect of the planning phase concerns participation of key stakeholders, and it was felt by interviewees that an unbalanced process occurred on several counts. First in terms of the gaps deriving from an ad hoc participation of the AFPs in the design and formulation stage<sup>76</sup>. Second, in terms of insufficient bottom-up approach to programming, with staff based at the state-level lacking timely information and providing little input into the UN planning processes in Khartoum, bar a few exceptions<sup>77</sup>. Third, in terms of aligning the SLFs with ongoing UNCT programming and existing signed plans with the GoS<sup>78</sup>. And fourth, on starting discussions with the GoS at the central level at a time when the financial allocation and priorities for SLFs I had already been decided. These factors were compounded by the compressed planning period. Furthermore, the course of action could hardly have been different concerning the GoS, for example, given the absence of a coordination mechanism between the collective UN system and the federal Government at the time. The creation of such mechanism through the SLFs initiative (*see also section on Coordination*) led to the effective incorporation of the GoS position, namely through privileging the Livelihoods Pillar which ended up receiving more funding than the Rule of Law and Human Rights Pillars<sup>79</sup>. Overall, however, the combination of these factors contributed to insufficient ownership of the SLFs at the beginning, both by the Mission and UNCT leadership and staff, and by the GoS. On a positive note corrective measures were adopted subsequently, helping to overcome these challenges as analysed in the upcoming sections of the report.

The planning phase epitomised the challenge of shifting the mindset of the Mission from a logic of peacekeeping into one of peacebuilding, and programmatically moving beyond the logic of QIPs into a more transitional and development-oriented project rationale.

At the time of writing, significant improvements had been achieved through Mission/UNCT negotiation and problem-solving with key support from the JCSC, the GFP and the DPO/DPPA/DOS/UNDP Transitions Project at critical junctures. Improved mutual understanding of the different institutional mandates, cultures and specific process limitations, as well as greater ownership of the SLFs had also been achieved.



UNAMID Police in the State Liaison Functions (SLFs), in partnership with the Government of Sudan (GoS) Police, conduct a ten-day Training of Trainers (ToT) course for 38 GoS police officers in El Geneina, west Darfur. The course was part of SLFs' efforts aimed at enhancing the capacity and skills of local police in human rights and child protection fields: 30 July 2019. UNAMID photo.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### For UNITAMS

- 1 Utilise the planning phase of the Mission to continue a comprehensive and inclusive consultation process for all stakeholders in Sudan, so as to understand the viability of taking forward the SLFs in stabilisation areas, as well as to establish an appropriate model and capacity for this within the limits of the mandate and respective resources.

### To consider in new Mission transition settings

- 2 Accompany the introduction of new concepts for Mission/UNCT implementation with start-up workshops co-facilitated by UNHQ/Mission/UNCT to jointly develop understanding around institutional processes. This includes scope and limitation on mandates, maturation and explanation of concepts, processes and procedures, exploration of different implementation options and comparative experiences, and facilitation of tailoring of mutually agreed specific guidance.

- 3 During the planning phase award enough time and opportunity to the Mission/UNCT leadership for joint development of a vision and narrative to anchor new transition initiatives, as well as to ensure widespread communication targeting different internal and external institutional stakeholders to safeguard buy-in.
- 4 As per good practice a capacity mapping of UNCT (as for e.g. carried out in Liberia during UNMIL's transition planning) should be carried out earlier on in mission transition settings, in order to inform design and tailoring of mechanisms contributing to operationalise transition, such as the SLFs.

71 Interviews NY, Darfur and remote December 2019-August 2020.

72 UNAMID is operating from three locations, namely UNAMID HQ in Zalingei, UNAMID administrative services in El Fasher, and the Liaison Office in Khartoum. The JSR and his team are based at the Khartoum's Liaison Office (KLO) and the DJSR and the substantive civilian component' teams in Zalingei. Several Mission and non-Mission interviewees spoke of the communication and coordination challenges deriving from the introduction of this configuration.

73 To be noted that benchmarks used for reporting were only jointly developed in February/March 2019, when project implementation ought to have started.

74 The process was mitigated by drawing on a comparative analysis undertaken in the framework of the previous Joint Programme for RoL and Human Rights (2016-2019) and contemporary discussions. Nonetheless, the systematic capacity mapping of UNCT would have been useful not only for the purpose of the SLFs, but also to inform broader division of labour, specialisation and leads between AFPs in the different programming areas, in the context of transition and subsequent periods. Interviews Khartoum and Darfur, February/March 2020.

75 Remote interviews December 2019-August 2020.

76 For example in the initial stages the AFPs had different staff participating in consecutive meetings making it difficult for continued development of understanding about what was a new initiative. Interviews NY, Darfur and Khartoum, December 2019-March 2020.

77 Both AFPs and Mission staff presented this view concerning the planning phase from July-December 2018, and throughout SLFs I. UNAMID staff posted to SLFs projects subsequently benefited from regular workshops involving Mission leadership with a view to share experiences and discuss challenges. The first of these workshops took place on 23/06/2019. Interviews Darfur February/March 2020 and 'Report on UNAMID SLF Staff Workshop and Action Points', 23 June 2019, El Fasher Log Base; Office of DJSR, UNAMID.

78 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

79 UNAMID-UNCT-GoS Meeting on joint stabilisation efforts in Darfur', held in Khartoum on 18 December 2018. Doc ELF-717, ODJSR/OJSR, 19/12/2018.



## 4 STAFFING

### LESSONS

- 1 Investment of time and effort by the Mission/UNCT leadership in communicating to staff a jointly articulated vision of transition anchored in new mandate implementation modalities is likely to increase buy-in and commitment during Mission drawdown.
- 2 Induction and orientation of Mission staff entering co-location with AFPs is key to ensuring integration in the new organizational setting. Complementing this with regular and iterative Mission-led discussion of achievements and challenges enables effective problem-solving.
- 3 Whilst co-location as a key premise of the SLFs should as much as possible be observed, flexibility should be retained to develop effective alternative solutions in case this peacebuilding modality fore-stalls the implementation of key mandate priorities, in areas UNCT is unable to accommodate.

The co-location of UNAMID staff with UNCT peers for SLFs program implementation purposes and technical support required overcoming several challenges. Staffing agreements were part and parcel of the process of development of the MoUs,

perceived as lengthy in view of the short timelines for planning and implementation. However, in comparison to other Mission/UNCT collaboration contexts, the conclusion of these MoU within five months was the fastest ever done<sup>80</sup>. The Inter-Organization Agreement (IOA) providing the staffing arrangements feature as annexes to the MoU, and included the terms, obligations and responsibilities of the staff to be co-located.

The first area which required accommodation is that of recruitment and selection of staff.

The SLFs model, based on the premise of joint work as opposed to sub-contracting of UNCT for implementation purposes, put forward the assignment of existing Mission staff to work on this peacebuilding programme. The UNCT initially had expectations of receiving the funding and recruiting, with a view to ensure cost-effectiveness and sustainability, namely the ability to keep the staff beyond the end of the SLFs<sup>81</sup>.

The need to follow organizational policy requirements prevailed, and the selection and management of UNAMID staff assigned to the SLFs followed UN Secretariat policies. Whilst providing for participation of partnering Agencies in interview panels, the provisions stipulated that the selection decision remained the purview of the Head of Mission<sup>82</sup>. In addition, a full recruitment process was considered unfeasible on two counts. The first is that most staff available was at the time performing similar functions to those they would be assigned under the

SLFs. The second was that the timeframe to allocate staff to duty stations in time for the start of implementation in January 2019 was extremely short<sup>83</sup>. To mitigate the process, the Mission shared PHPs of the international and national staff to be assigned under the AFPs with the respective UNCT Head of Offices<sup>84</sup>. In some cases, AFPs provided comments and recommendations, which led to adjustments to proposals<sup>85</sup>. However, for national staff subjected to movement of duty station/change of functions a recruitment process was indispensable. This was carried out observing policy stipulations, including opening for AFP representatives to integrate interview panels<sup>86</sup>. However, this resulted in UNCT's ownership of the process being hampered and questioning the extent to which they would see their capacity strengthened<sup>87</sup>.

The second area which required compromise concerned the embedment of uniformed police, and of human rights staff with monitoring and reporting functions (*see also section on mutually exclusive delimitation between peacekeeping and peacebuilding*). This was problematic and in certain cases upfront dismissal prevailed. AFPs considered these functions to be “liabilities” due to their own hesitance to be associated with these mandates and eventually blocked their implementation. Therefore, only three (UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women) of the six AFPs working on RoL accepted police officers, through the solution found for their physical co-location with the SPF. In the view of the AFPs it was also necessary to ensure that the police officer being embedded had specific knowledge of the subject-matter, for example specialized skills on children and juvenile justice systems, which is quite distinct from an understanding of general police functions<sup>88</sup>. Additionally, only three AFPs (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF) accepted UNAMID Human Rights officers with limited functions of human rights capacity building. UNICEF exceptionally accepted two officers for the purposes of monitoring and reporting

on human rights but limited within its mandate to grave violations committed against children in the context of armed conflict.

At a later stage and through practical experience, some AFPs realized and highlighted the benefit of the partnership through UN Police co-location, which allowed them institutional access to the SPF that otherwise would not have materialized<sup>89</sup>. Overall, the arrangement succeeded with close collaboration leading to high levels of trust between the SPF and UNPOL<sup>90</sup>. This was verifiable through the request made by the Darfur state authorities to increase the number of UNPOL co-locations with the SPF during SLFs III. One difficulty persisted which affected project implementation, namely short rotation cycles of UNAMID personnel, especially the Police. Yet, this was unsurprising given the context of Mission drawdown.

### “UN Women owe its survival in Sudan to UNAMID”

UN Women

Unable to mobilize funding in a country under embargo, UN Women Sudan was going through a difficult time at the beginning of the transition. The SLFs mechanism provided an opportunity to overcome the financial challenges as well as to reposition UN Women in the Sudanese landscape and the donors' agenda. From a single presence in El-Fasher, UN Women is currently represented in each of the Darfur States implementing several programs. UN Women was amongst the first AFPs to accept UNPOL uniformed personnel embedment, benefiting greatly from access to the SPF, and earning trust from supporting training and sensitization workshops on gender and on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)- in a context severely affected by SGBV and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).



LI team meeting with the AFPs staff in El Geneina, West Darfur, February 2020  
Photo by ISSAT



LI team meeting with the SLFs staff in Nyala, South Darfur, March 2020  
Photo by ISSAT



LI team meeting with the SLFs staff in El-Fasher, North Darfur, March 2020  
Photo by ISSAT

<sup>80</sup> Interviews New York December 2019 and Darfur February/March 2020.

<sup>81</sup> Interviews Darfur February/March 2020

<sup>82</sup> Inter-Organisation Agreement between the AFRICAN UNION-UNITED NATIONS HYBRID OPERATION IN DARFUR And XXX [Agency] with respect to UNAMID staff assigned to State Liaison Functions [SLFs], Draft Ver3 03/03/2018 (final, standardized and adopted for MoU).

<sup>83</sup> Interviews Darfur February/March 2020, Internal communication exchange, UNAMID.

<sup>84</sup> Internal communication exchanges, UNAMID, 18-23 december 2018.

<sup>85</sup> Idem.

<sup>86</sup> Ibidem. As a mitigation measure, considering the need to have the SLFs operational in January 2019, UNAMID decided exceptionally to allocate individuals to the nine posts in question, pending finalization of recruitment. For example UNAMID section responsible for Protection of Civilians had AFPs participating to their recruitment-led processes, and UNDP participated as an observer to recruitments run by the Rule of Law Section.

<sup>87</sup> Remote Interviews and comments received, August 2020.

<sup>88</sup> Interview Darfur February/March 2020; comments received August 2020.

<sup>89</sup> Memo on Embedment of 32 Individual Police Officers (IPOs) of Police SLFs with AFPs, 7 June 2019; Interviews Darfur February/March 2020; Remote Interviews and comments received, August 2020.

<sup>90</sup> The SLFs played a key enabling role towards confidence building between UNAMID Police and the SPF around concrete projects. For example, between 2009-2011 co-location was attempted, but given existing friction, the SPF would unilaterally discontinue the arrangement for long periods. However, this should also be seen in light of the broader political context change in Sudan and the resulting appeasement towards the presence of the Mission in Darfur. Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

Against the background of this context, controversy also developed around co-location, owing to UNAMID's staff concerns over job security. Upon co-location, little guidance was provided to the process of staff embedment into the AFPs<sup>91</sup>. This was partly a result of the ongoing closure of UNAMID team sites, and respective loss of coordinators in the designated peacebuilding states. Under the co-location arrangement the UNAMID SLFs staff had a dual reporting line, subject to substantive and daily administrative supervision of the AFP in which it was embedded<sup>92</sup>, but with performance reviews conducted jointly by both the AFP and the UNAMID manager from the substantive parent section<sup>93</sup>. The absence of clear communication on this arrangement to the staff eroded adequate cooperation and team building in the initial stages of operationalization of the SLFs<sup>94</sup>. Remedial workshops were held by the Mission leadership to address the situation<sup>95</sup> and emerging duty of care issues were attended to following recommendations from an OIOS team visit<sup>96</sup>. This highlights the importance of devising a joint communication strategy with an internal oriented component, focusing on change management in order to help Mission and AFP staff better understand what is going to change, why, and how it will impact their roles and responsibilities.

When implementing co-location UNDP, UNHCR and UNICEF followed good practice by offering orientation sessions to UNAMID staff explaining their institutional mandates, processes, mechanisms, tools and administrative and financial procedures, easing the process. However, not all AFPs adopted this course of action, which should have been foreseen as part of the guidance for orientation of SLFs staff. Hence, adopting this practice as mandatory would be beneficial for potentially upcoming SLFs initiatives in other Mission settings.

Whilst the premise was that AFPs staff would contribute with program cycle knowledge and skills, complemented by thematic and technical skills of UNAMID's staff, experience from the SLFs points towards the need to provide, at least, entry

level training on program management to Mission staff. Apart from gaining efficiencies, this would help bridge the logic of short-notice, immediate repair and non-recurrent activities inherent to Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) with development-oriented programming, typically utilized by development agencies.

Focus groups with SLFs project staff (from UNAMID and AFPs) based in West, North and South Darfur states, denoted progress in overcoming resistance to co-location given the manifest sense of teamwork and common understanding and purpose around projects. A description of the intended goals around avoiding conflict relapse, addressing the root causes of conflict and sustaining the gains of UNAMID's long presence in Darfur were clearly articulated in relation to projects being implemented. State-level SLFs staff voiced the need for inclusion of their substantive contributions into the different stages of the project cycle (planning, monitoring and reporting), beyond their implementation role<sup>97</sup>. The joint work approach was praised for complementarity of skills and knowledge sharing. Aspects referred comprised the institutional networks, community engagement, and conflict-oriented analysis by UNAMID staff and the program management and community delivery approach by the AFPs' staff<sup>98</sup>. The monthly meetings organized by the SLFs state coordinators were also highlighted as useful, as the key platform for sharing of information and of mutual learning across different pillar projects, including participation of all AFPs involved in delivery.

Ultimately, the protracted process of introduction of the SLFs produced trust-building and operational results at the working level of the UNAMID/AFP. Furthermore, some AFPs voiced willingness to retain UNAMID staff beyond the end of the SLFs and were considering financial solutions that would allow them to keep the technical skills and knowledge acquired<sup>99</sup>.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### For UNITAMS

**1** Should the SLFs be kept as one of the mandate implementation modalities for peacebuilding, the system of co-location for joint implementation between Mission and AFPs should be considered as an option. This could help ensure continuity of operations through: 1) the new Mission taking over UNAMID SLFs staff, safeguarding relevant capacity and competency to deliver on mandate; this should be based on prior performance appraisals and in agreement with UNCT; 2) embedding newly recruited staff by the Mission onto AFPs.

**2** Whilst UNITAMS will be an integrated Mission with a triple hatted DSRSG/RC/HC, it may have to retain protection responsibilities in hotspot areas, where RoL and HR programming can contribute to this goal. In this case it would be advantageous to use the SLFs modality, given that it represents integrated transitional support with acquired legitimacy before the national authorities. Secondly, a specific SLFs funding stream deriving from the new Mission budget would have to retain accountability before the UNSC on mandate implementation. The co-location modality has proven to safeguard this requirement through effective benchmark monitoring within the mandatory reporting cycles and deadlines of a Mission.

### To consider in new Mission transition settings

**3** Maintain co-location in upcoming Mission transition settings, given the mutual operational benefits of joint and complementary work with UNCT. Co-location allows drawing on institutional memory and networks developed by the Mission, knowledge sharing and complementarity of skills, and strengthening of UNCT delivery capacity through provision of resources, in addition to safeguarding accountability for Mission mandate implementation. However, the following should be considered:

- Clarify the intended goals of co-location beyond generics (which may vary according to context) and develop a strategy to monitor progress and challenges.
- Formulate guidance to improve the system of co-location<sup>100</sup>, and introduce it in the early stages of planning, therefore facilitating discussion in the context of development of specific administrative MoU arrangements.
- Devote leadership efforts to communicating clearly on the new initiative and corresponding administrative arrangements to the engaged staff of the Mission and of the AFPs, and accompany them through the process, by amongst others, holding regular workshops.
- Provide project management training to Mission staff being co-located and introduce mandatory orientation and induction workshops on the organizational systems of the AFPs in which staff is going to be embedded.
- When co-location impairs delivery of a key function of the Mission mandate being implemented, alternative solutions should be devised which effectively address the gap created. Such bottlenecks, like in the case of human rights monitoring by the UN system in Darfur, can be identified beforehand by adopting the good practice of carrying-out an assessment to inform the tailoring of the SLFs modality. Such assessment should include looking at the viability of accommodation and resilience capacity of UNCT for engagement in vital areas of the mandate.
- 4** Develop a joint communication strategy as a change management tool, specifically including an internal oriented component targeting staff likely to be affected during Mission drawdown and transition, in order to reduce fear and uncertainty.

91 Remote Interview, Khartoum.

92 Concept Note – UNAMID transitional presence and coordination with UNCT in four Darfur States, May 2019.

93 E-performance form developed by HR for UNAMID SLFs staff.

94 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

95 UNAMID SLFs Staff workshop, June 2019.

96 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

97 Focus groups SLFs staff Darfur February/March 2020.

98 Focus groups SLFs staff Darfur and focus group UNCT February/March 2020.

99 Interview Khartoum, March 2020.

100 Guidance could be produced drawing on cumulative knowledge about the achievements and challenges of co-location, drawing on data collected across different Missions where this modus operandi has been adopted, and enquiring on goals, added-value and problem-solving instruments/modalities utilized effectively to overcome hurdles.



## 5 FINANCING

### LESSONS

- 1 Utilizing programmatic funding from the peacekeeping assessed budget to introduce or strengthen joint programming between Mission and UNCT in priority peacebuilding areas during transition reinforces a One-UN whole-of system integrated delivery.
- 2 Greater interoperability between Mission and UNCT systems requires improvement of technical procedures and administrative funding mechanisms as an essential step preceding the introduction of joint programs, which typically require prompt troubleshooting support during planning and initial implementation phases.

The use of programmatic funding through the Mission assessed budget for the operationalization of the integrated stream of the transition work, was a major incentive for joint Mission/UNCT delivery on common goals of the UN system in Sudan<sup>101</sup>. The funds made available for peacebuilding in Darfur, particularly for rendering assistance on RoL and HR were pivotal, as otherwise these areas would have continued to endure a dearth of resources, similarly to the experience of the preceding Joint Programme for Rule of Law and Human Rights<sup>102</sup> (*see section on context for further detail*). The support provided was appreciated by national authorities and beneficiaries alike<sup>103</sup>. In addition, it resulted in enhancing expansion and consolidation of the AFPs capacity to deliver in the different Darfur states, improving their stance for programming continuity and fundraising

beyond UNAMID's exit<sup>104</sup>.

Notwithstanding achievements, the arrangement also exposed the practical difficulties of operationalizing funding and administrative processes during drawdown and showed how the disparity of administrative and financial systems between the Mission and the AFPs (and amongst these) complicated the collaborative endeavor.

Several challenges were noted around interoperability. The expansion or consolidation of the AFPs' delivery in different Darfur states required support costs, including for embedding UNAMID staff, since some entities were operating with limited office space, equipment, and transport. The creation of an additional budget line for these costs was contentious given that the Mission already charged indirect costs against its budget (7%, as per established policy of the Controller's Office, and which goes to HQ and other services), as well as direct costs (related to program/project implementation such as administrative, logistical, and programmatic).

A solution was eventually reached through the creation of General Operating Expenses (GoE), which were provided to the partner AFP only in case it accepted to take-in UNAMID staff. The GoE included, amongst others, costs associated with information, communications and technology assets, travel, fuel, daily subsistence allowances, maintenance of equipment, stationery, minimum operating residential security standards compliance for accommodations, medical support, and any additional office space required to accommodate co-located SLFs UNAMID personnel<sup>105</sup>.

The suitability of the funding disbursement arrangements has also been questioned. These have been characterized by short-term budget cycles of six and three months during the transition due to short-

term mandate renewals, and late disbursement<sup>106</sup>, resulting in reduced timeframes for UNCT implementation. In addition, in certain cases funding allocation changed mid-way through implementation, making it difficult for the AFPs to operate within these financial conditions, especially concerning infrastructure building projects, but overall, also incurring reputational risk for lack of delivery. AFPs found these conditions unfit considering Sudan and Darfur's difficult economic context, including exchange rate fluctuations and climbing inflation, fuel restrictions, and cash flow shortages. This was worsened by time spent in difficult selection and induction of local implementing partners onto process goals and procedural matters, poor accessibility of some project areas - especially during the rainy season - and problematic planning timelines with government counterparts<sup>107</sup>.

Funding delays were also caused by the procedures for MoU signatures. To be viable MoU require certified financial reports, which the AFPs cannot provide unless they have delegated responsibility. In most cases the country AFPs depend on the bureaucratic speed of respective HQs which are officially responsible for certification, and usually this takes time.

Both sides rose to some of these challenges with adjustments. AFPs with financial capacity (not all were in this situation) used their resources and procedural room for manoeuvre to advance own funds to temporarily cover for SLFs projects<sup>108</sup>, while the Mission was able to accept no-cost extensions for any delayed implementation. Yet, in general the results were overall execution rates of 74% for SLFs I, although much higher expected for SLFs II and III given the no cost-extensions<sup>109</sup>. The capacity for absorption of funds was also different between AFPs, and those with more robust administrative and financial systems performed better from an organizational point of view.

Execution rates, including submission of financial end reports, were important for performance reporting of the Mission, and consequential in determining funding eligibility of the AFPs for the upcoming cycle. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic further impacted execution rates. The restrictive measures adopted affected movement and public gatherings, among other things, delaying project implementation. Yet, the extension of UNAMID's mandate until 31 December 2020, enabled the creation of an additional phase, namely SLFs V, ranging from September to November, in order to mitigate the negative impact<sup>110</sup>.

Reinforcing the point around the loss of UNAMID human resources in tandem with the introduction of new initiatives, Mission Support Services argued that whilst the strategic intent of the SLFs was key to the transition, it caused additional administrative burden given requirement to engage in development and implementation of new procedures around a demanding mandate implementation modality. Hence, the introduction of the SLFs was perceived to be in 'counter cycle' since the Mission was already in liquidation and closure mode<sup>111</sup>. This reiterates the importance of a phased approach to planning and implementation of transition over a longer time span.



LI team meeting with Mr. Kamil Bahi, Chief Justice, Zalingei, Central Darfur, 8 March 2020, Photo by ISSAT.

101 Interviews NY, Sudan December 2019/April 2020.

102 Only 15% of the projected financing needs to implement the Darfur Development Strategy (DDS) were met during the 2013-2019 period. For Rule of Law and Access to Justice only US\$ 25,009,276 were available from estimated needs of 225 000 million. The UNAMID SLFs contribution was the second biggest with US\$9,612,505 after that from Qatar with US\$11,794,075 dedicated to DDR. *Trias Consult, Review of the Darfur Development Strategy, P.2, P.5 and P.94 07/ /2019*. For reference, between 2014 and 2018 UNAMID received an average of 5 million USD per year for all programmatic activities. In 2019, an additional 32 million USD was allocated from the peacekeeping assessed budget for SLFs peacebuilding programming.

103 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

104 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

105 The GoE amounted to one million USD for the 2018/19 period. The rationale was that within the context of UNAMID' withdrawal from its sector headquarters, the Mission didn't have physical means to provide logistical support to its staff co-located with the UNCT through the SLFs. The GoE is computed per staff, currently at \$8,817 for 6-month periods.

106 An example is that for SLFs II the MoU signed with UNDP in July 2019 resulted in funding disbursement in September. SLFs III officially started in January 2020, but delays were already foreseen since MoU were still being signed as of late February.

107 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

108 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

109 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020. Status financial report of SLFs provided by Mission support.

110 Concept Note for Implementation of Core and SLFs Programmatic Activities from July-December 2020; UNAMID's Note to File - 5+5 Joint Technical Committee Meeting on 18 August 2020.

111 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### For UNITAMS:

- 1 Utilize the planning phase to assess the viability of maintaining the SLFs funding modality alongside others, and if positive, investigate how to improve funding mechanisms. As it stands, the mechanisms, both on the side of the Mission and of the AFPs, create hurdles to accomplish the One UN whole-of-system strategic goals. Engagement with the Secretariat finance division and the Office of the controller, as well as with AFPs HQs in search of innovative solutions would be advisable, alongside sensitisation of Member States to support more enabling and flexible funding solutions.

### To consider in new Mission transition settings:

- 2 Dedicate time and effort to discussion and refinement of financing mechanisms during the phase preceding the introduction of a new mandate implementation modality requiring joint Mission/UNCT planning and implementation. Improving technical and administrative funding mechanisms and processes for greater interoperability is a sine qua non for the success of these initiatives.
- 3 Consider introducing the SLFs at the earlier stages of Mission transition. Four years before the envisaged Mission closure could allow conceptual tailoring based on contextual iterative assessment analysis and planning, running a pilot phase and incorporating learning before broadening thematic/geographical implementation, as well as ensuring resources for adequate substantive and support component<sup>7</sup> posts. In addition, Member States should be sensitised to support more enabling financial cycles, accommodating as much as possible adequate organizational and substantive planning, implementation and reporting timelines.



UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative (DJSR), Ms. Anita Kiki Gbeho, visited El Daien, east Darfur where she met UNAMID staff attached to the Sate Liaison Functions (SLFs) projects in the area. During the meeting, they discussed the implementation of the SLFs projects during the rainy season: 12 September 2019, Photo by Amin Ismail, UNAMID.

## 6 COORDINATION

### LESSONS

- 1 The introduction of complex mandate implementation modalities for joint operationalization by the Mission and UNCT during transition warrants appropriate resource allocation and proportional effort by both parties to coordination capacities from the onset.
- 2 Coordination with national authorities during the assessment, design and planning stages is essential to secure ownership both at the federal and state levels, ensuring relevance, effectiveness and sustainability.

Setting in motion the SLFs required several layers of coordination, crucial for strategic guidance, concept operationalization and development of working mechanisms, whilst importantly generating ownership of the process.

At the strategic level, the SLFs enabled a One UN approach to engagement and coordination with the federal government around peacebuilding in Darfur, whilst at the same time facilitating exchanges

between the latter and the Darfur state-level authorities. A high-level meeting took place between the UN (UNAMID and UNCT) and the Government (MOFA) leadership in December 2018 to obtain buy-in and GoS involvement on the SLFs. The GoS provided prioritization input, resulting in the creation of the service delivery pillar during SLFs II, in addition to the original HR, RoL and Livelihoods. Funding allocation between pillars were adjusted during SLFs I based on feedback that favored livelihoods support. This dialogue around the SLFs enabled political engagement with high-level federal authorities around peacebuilding priorities in Darfur, at a time of the previous political regime, when limited avenues of discussion existed, and interactions were confined to Director level within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This generated an enabling context for deployment of good offices by the UN system leadership starting with shared ground and moving to the “harder” issues.

As a result of this engagement, a technical committee labelled 5+5 was created, including UN representatives<sup>112</sup> and five Government appointees at the ministerial director level. This platform continued regular discussions and contributed to planning, problem-solving and oversight of SLFs implementation, resolving issues arising from the implementation of the SLFs I. It further played an



important role in the planning of the SLFs II-IV, and in the decision-making for creating the SLFs V, upon UNAMID mandate extension until December 2020, and in the context of the implementation delays created by COVID-19<sup>113</sup>.

One important aspect to note is that with the reorganization of the GoS and the leadership changes after the Revolution, for a few months it was difficult to follow-up engagement on peace-building at the highest level, since the GoS had not appointed a lead interlocutor. This mirrors the case of the Darfur Development Strategy (DDS) refresher process. Hence, the existence of a technical level committee was important to keep progress in implementation, following-on on previous commitments during a leadership vacuum.

Within the Darfur states, longstanding exchanges existed with the lead authorities of institutions partaking in the SLFs, and close coordination had been also established with local government. For example, beneficiary institutions such as the Prosecution and the Police confirmed regular consultation, involvement in decision-making and specifics of activity design<sup>114</sup>. The Judiciary, whilst overall happy with support, especially for rural courts, indicated that there was room for improvement in terms of local-level collaboration during planning, since activity design had been done chiefly through cooperation with the training department of the Judiciary in Khartoum<sup>115</sup>. Overall, the beneficiary institutions of the SLFs, including civil society groups and women protection networks, transmitted a sense of ownership of the projects at stake<sup>116</sup>. In hindsight, in order to further shore-up consultation and coordination, a replica mechanism of the 5+5 technical committee would have been useful for joint planning, monitoring, and trouble-shooting at the state level.

Painstaking coordination efforts were carried out by UNAMID and UNCT through central level meetings which achieved common ground and systems' inter-operability around the SLFs challenges. UNAMID envisaged the need for a coordination capacity from the start, but the corresponding budget proposal for a dedicated post was rejected, generating an important shortcoming. Responding to the challenge the Mission designated the Chief RoL and a planning officer (at 50%) to carry out this task in Khartoum, in addition to all their remaining responsibilities. They did so until the start of mass demonstrations in Khartoum in April 2019, which resulted in the relocation of the team to Darfur. However, they didn't have adequate Mission or UNCT support structure<sup>117</sup>. This "interim transition team" had as a key interlocutor one transition officer recently posted into the RC's office, which assisted with coordination of the AFPs input into the process<sup>118</sup>. Together they galvanized and concluded the important process of establishing joint benchmarks to monitor SLFs program implementation and develop substantive and financial report formats, representing the start of design of a monitoring framework (*see also section on programming/progress measurement*).

A more appropriate response developed later through the creation of the Joint Transition Cell (JTC)<sup>119</sup>, which only became fully operational in September 2019. Several interviewees acknowledged in retrospect that the existence of a coordination structure from the start, engendered through proportional effort from both the Mission and UNCT sides, could have better assisted during the challenging planning stage<sup>120</sup>. In addition, different opinions were put forward concerning the added value of posting the transition officer in the RC office, as opposed to co-located with the JTC at the Mission's HQ. The logic of this argument was that it would have been useful to have a specialist knowledgeable of UNCT and its processes posted with the Mission, and vice-versa<sup>121</sup>. The inverse was done, i.e. UNAMID posted a liaison

officer in the RC office. This discussion epitomises key coordination aspects prevailing in the context of non-integrated Missions.

The JTC currently supports UNAMID and UNCT senior management with coordination, monitoring and reporting on progress against the Joint Transition Action Plan deliverables. It plays a specific role in coordinating implementation, reporting and overseeing work carried out under the SLFs. Quarterly SLFs staff meetings were instituted to share experiences and challenges, and jointly develop solutions. The field staff working on SLFs RoL and HR also participated in periodic section meetings and staff retreats including UNAMID RoL, Police and partner AFPs<sup>122</sup>.

At the level of implementation within states, coordinators were informally chosen amongst staff to ensure regular exchanges between the different teams working across the four pillars. However, this development emerged mainly from the need to coordinate administrative matters related to duty of care. Hence, further adjustments seemed pertinent to officially appoint them to play a coordination role on substance. As such, room for improvement existed concerning vertical coordination between state level implementation and Khartoum (central) level planning and decision-making<sup>123</sup>.

Despite improvements, and what could be considered a well-staffed JTC with a clear ToR, including participation from the different constituents of the Mission/UNCT, challenges persisted. For example, state-level staff conveyed 'reporting fatigue' as a result of multiple information requests on implementation of similar subject matters stemming from different UNAMID sections. Channels of communication and flow of information to AFP were unclear, as they didn't clearly distinguish between technical focal points and senior management<sup>124</sup>. An important gap concerned observance of deadlines and effectiveness in troubleshooting. The Mission required short-term deployment reinforcement on a recurrent basis, and beyond plausible critical junctures, in order to cope with some of these challenges<sup>125</sup>.

Irrespective of time constraints beyond control of the Mission/UNCT, this points to the need to examine the staffing profiles to integrate and lead this type of coordination mechanisms. Specifically, staff should possess strong analytical and substantive matter skills, combined with robust program management, knowledge management and process facilitation abilities, besides organizational and administrative capacity. The role also requires strong cross-cutting and crisis management capacity within the central coordination nucleus of the cell, in order to adequately filter information and develop problem-solving options to be submitted to the Mission leadership and Heads of Section/Component. Indeed, where this capacity is limited, Heads of Section/Component need to play a much more hands-on role in driving and handling transversal management matters, beyond coordinating their own thematic portfolios. Importantly, teams entrusted with coordination of transition should comprise a proportional and improved contribution from UNCT human resources, not only for stronger joint ownership, but also because, in the case of the SLFs, their contribution to the program cycle design and management is crucial, within a logic of comparative advantage. It would therefore be important that the implementation of transition becomes a deliverable for UNCT in a similar way that Missions are accountable to the UNSC, not least because continuation of support to national authorities across several areas will be ensured in the long-term by the AFPs.

In hindsight, an important gap in this structure was the lack of capacity to register learning from the transition. For example, lessons from the SLFs were apprehended and lead to real-time adaptation, but after-action-reviews were not common practice, and neither was a systematic record of the process created. The engagement of a Mission' best practices officer would have been important to prevent this gap from opening, ensuring that lessons fed through to decision-making at the level of the Mission/UNCT, but also to the UN HQ central learning mechanisms on planning, management and effectiveness of peace operations.

113 The work experience developed during the COVID-19 pandemic led to a decision in August 2020, to include the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development and Labour, Ministry of Finance and the Federal Chamber in this Committee. Note to File – 5+5 Joint Technical Committee Meeting, UNAMID/United Nations Sudan, 18/08/ 2020.

114 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

115 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

116 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

117 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

118 The transition officer was posted by the DPO/DPPA/DOS/UNDP-Transitions Project, as a way of shoring-up the coordination capacity of the RC's office, insofar as a new structure deriving from central UN reforms of the Development Pillar.

119 See Terms of Reference for UNAMID-UNCT Joint Transition Cell (August 2019).

120 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

121 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020, and remote interviews August/September 2020.

122 Report on UNAMID SLFs Staff Workshop and Action Points, UNAMID, 23/06/2019; Action Points from the SLFs Staff Workshop held on 04 August 2019.

123 Report on UNAMID SLFs Staff Workshop and Action Points, UNAMID, 23/06/2019; Action Points from the SLFs Staff Workshop held on 04 August 2019.

124 Interview Darfur February/March 2020, and comments received August 2020.

125 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### To be considered by UNAMID/UNCT in case of mandate renewal:

- 1 Officially empower SLFs state level coordinators to channel substantive recommendations to the JTC for short and medium-term improvement of SLFs implementation. As UNAMID closure approaches, developing an important repository of pillar specific as well as transversal lessons from SLFs implementation in each of the Darfur states would be advisable. State-level coordinators could channel these to the JTC and to the Mission best practice officer (one was being recruited at the time of writing), in order to feed into comprehensive lessons from transition in Darfur. In addition, those granular lessons could be shared further afield to feed into the iterative learning processes from implementation within the PBF program.
- 2 Entrust the JTC with responsibility to ensure a smooth and meaningful transition of programmatic work from UNAMID to UNITAMS, preempting gaps in information and understanding.

### For UNITAMS:

- 1 Capitalize on good practice around ownership of the established high-level exchange forum and technical coordination mechanism (5+5) with the GoS at the federal level. Utilize this as a viable platform to jointly discuss, plan and review peacebuilding assistance, ensuring complementary inputs by the GoS towards sustainability. Consider also advising the federal level authorities on:
  - the creation of additional technical committees focused on other geographical conflict recovery areas under mandate coverage of the new UN configuration;
  - the inclusion of the relevant state level representatives' participation to the high-level and technical meetings, facilitating central and local coherence through developing shared vision, strategy and planning;
  - the creation of a state level coordination mechanism working in subsidiarity to the federal-level technical coordination mechanism and the high-level exchange meetings.

- 2 Capitalize on handover planning by UNAMID to ensure a smooth continuity of peacebuilding work via the SLFs prioritizing protection of civilians through assistance on rule of law and human rights, community engagement and peaceful co-existence in hotspot locations, in support of the Transitional Government Protection Plan.

### To consider in new Mission transition settings:

- 1 Establish key joint coordination mechanisms between mission/UNCT, and UN/Government at the federal and state levels at the start of the mission transition period, especially seizing an opportunity when new mandate implementation modalities are introduced for joint management and delivery.
- 2 Adhere to good practice of early posting of a transition officer in-country who is empowered as a key member of the aforesaid coordination mechanisms. In the case of non-integrated Missions consider carefully the value-added of the location of this post during the assessment phase.
- 3 Duly attend to profile requirements concerning staffing of joint coordination mechanisms for transition and ensure equitable representation and adequate human resource contribution from both Mission/UNCT, observing a comparative advantage and complementary logic in the staffing profiles.
- 4 Develop a plan for short-notice deployable support from HQ (Transition Project, JCSC, SPC, GFP) at critical junctures to assist mission/UNCT with problem-solving, development of new operational tools, and sharing of relevant and selected good practice from elsewhere.
- 5 Ensure that the post of best practices officer is adequately filled and prioritized in the context of drawdown personnel cuts and certify its active engagement in capturing and recording of lessons from the SLFs to feed into real time programming adjustment.

## 7 ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY

### LESSON

Flexible peacebuilding programming tools such as the SLFs enable timely, responsive and effective responses to rapidly shifting contexts requiring immediate stabilization responses to unexpected challenges related to rule of law and human rights during Mission transitions.

As a mandate implementation modality, the SLFs displayed flexibility concerning adaptation to a rapidly changing context, both at the political and at the programmatic levels. The major political changes brought about by the popular uprising in Sudan (since December 2018) leading to a contested period of regime survival, and subsequently to its fall (April 2019), were endured through shifting the SLFs programming from an institution-centered to a prevailing community-based engagement approach. This allowed implementation to continue despite challenges related to absent or de-legitimized government post-holders, bringing support to communities at a time of crucial need.

The recalibration of projects was carried out after the declaration of the state of emergency, focusing infrastructure development and capacity building on the communities as primary beneficiaries. For example, the establishment of Justice Confidence Centres (JCC) was increased from two to six, accompanied by an increase in the number of paralegals to be trained, to support the IDPs on access to justice and resolution of minor conflicts. Capacity building on trial monitoring for CSOs – enabling them to hold rule of law institutions accountable – were also increased, and two additional rural courts were constructed in West and South Darfur, accompanied by trainings for rural court judges and TOT for District Court Judges. Workshops targeting Native Administration were conducted aiming to integrate gender perspectives into the informal justice sector. Conversely, the number of planned TOT for the SPF were reduced by half, and funds were channeled for

training of CSOs and protection networks working with the FCPU in SPF. Infrastructure building for the SPF (police stations and police posts) was recalibrated to rather increase support for the establishment and furnishing of forty Gender Desks in existing SPF stations, accompanied by training of two hundred gender desk officers on SGBV, and by workshops for protection groups working on family and child protection.

From a programming perspective the SLFs have displayed resilience in a difficult operational environment within the context of challenges linked to rising inflation, fuel shortages, riots, and difficult accessibility to project locations. As important has been the ability to accommodate change of location of infrastructure development at times when established conditions did not correspond to those previously agreed with counterparts, and to carry out complementary interventions in the face of budget cuts.

Whilst UNAMID's mandate is circumscribed to Darfur, to operate in these states relations with respective central national institutions had to be maintained, including coordination of Darfur programming and provision of some token capacity building for improved understanding of the institutional support rendered in Darfur. The SLFs have been able to accommodate this in complementarity with other UNAMID transition activities, as demonstrated by prison advisory, police and human rights initiatives within the realm of respective section transition plans. In this regard the discontinuity of a human rights focal point in the Khartoum Liaison Office represented an important gap, preventing a more systematic engagement with national authorities around this area of work.

### Response to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on UNAMID, resulting, amongst others, in a mandate extension by the UNSC until 31 December 2020 to enable proper drawdown and transition<sup>126</sup>. The changing environment<sup>127</sup> had a negative influence

<sup>126</sup> S/RES/2525 of 03/06/2020.

<sup>127</sup> At the end of March 2020, the GoS started adopting measures such as the lockdown, prohibition of large gatherings, social distancing, etc.



on implementation of carry over activities under SLFs II, interrupted implementation of SLFs III and delayed the start of SLFs IV, for which planning had been completed. Implementation of capacity building and infrastructure development projects was paused<sup>128</sup>, with adaptation through UNAMID/UNCT agreement to repurpose funding. This resulted in 50% of the total budget of SLFs IV being redirected to support implementation in Darfur of the National Preparedness and Response Plan to COVID-19<sup>129</sup>.

Flexibility in program management was paramount, in the form of room for manoeuvre to enact a previously unforeseen SLFs V in August, which although short in timeframe – from September to end November – envisaged the absorption of funding surplus for capacity building activities, whilst sensibly excluding new infrastructure development projects<sup>130</sup>.

Between March and August, a review and reprogramming of the workplans of the four pillars of the SLFs were carried-out<sup>131</sup>, upholding alignment to UNAMID's mandate implementation priority on protection of civilians with a focus on hotspots in Darfur, whilst adhering to the UN-wide COVID-19 policy instructions<sup>132</sup>. This enabled complementary actions to those of large-scale UN health and humanitarian assistance, with attention shift to

more immediate priority needs by both the Mission, AFPs and beneficiaries. Included were for example the distribution of Infection, Prevention and Control supplies (sanitizers and handwashing facilities) to courts, prisons, reformatory, Family and Child Protection Units, police cells and other rule of law institutions<sup>133</sup>. Subsidiary coordination meetings to those already existing at the level of States Higher Health Emergency Committees were foreseen to follow on the implementation of the SLFs Response Plan with participation of Governors, SMOH, UNAMID/AFP, national and international NGOs and community representatives and CSOs<sup>134</sup>.

Responsiveness to protection concerns denoted learning from previous SLFs iterations and was ensured through prioritisation of activities aimed at improving early warning and social cohesion, including through confidence building measures between different community groups, and between communities and state authorities. For example, a prevention campaign on COVID-19 also doubled as an awareness raising campaign on peaceful co-existence, targeting six villages in rural areas in Zalingei, Central Darfur<sup>135</sup>.

Like observed elsewhere, an increase in domestic violence and SGBV was also reported in Darfur under the COVID-19 lockdown, with an increase of

50% in the cases of rape and sexual assaults<sup>136</sup>. One of the contributions of the UN System assistance was rendered through the SLFs<sup>137</sup>, for instance through the organization of training of trainers (ToT) sensitization sessions on COVID-19, focusing on the social consequences of the lockdown on women, including the threat of domestic violence<sup>138</sup>. (*For structured SLFs support around responses on SGBV and CRSV see section on Sequencing*).

In the area of prison and detention centre management, engagement through advocacy, advisory and material support to national authorities was prominent<sup>139</sup>. Through close accompaniment it was possible to ascertain that state authorities at the local level were supportive of measures to decongest prisons by releasing inmates detained illegally by State Security Committees under the emergency laws, payment of Diya, and payment of fines by the Zakat, on compassionate grounds<sup>140</sup>. Noting that the national Directorate of Prisons and Reform had since May directed the release of low risk inmates in North and East Darfur prisons, as part of the measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19<sup>141</sup> the SLFs reinforced this initiative. For example, in early June three forums were organised with state prison authorities in South, West and North Darfur states, further encouraging the adoption of decongestion measures in prisons to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. This was complemented by a joint action between the SLFs and the Ministry of Health aimed at improving hygiene conditions in the prison through distribution of toiletries, soaps, PPEs, and hand sanitizers for 907 inmates in Nyala prison, South Darfur. In North Darfur UNAMID collaborated with the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) in an awareness-raising campaign on COVID-19 preventive measures for 615 inmates



UNAMID Police in the UN State Liaison Functions (SLFs), in partnership with the Government of Sudan (GOS) Police, conduct Training of Trainers (ToT) course for 38 GOS police officers in El Geneina, West Darfur: 30 July 2019. Photo by Mohammed Idriss, UNAMID.

and 40 prison officers at the Shallah federal prison. In Central Darfur the SLFs contributed hygiene materials, including dignity kits, specifically supporting the female prisoner population at Zalingei Prison<sup>142</sup>.

At the same time UNAMID's RoL Section advocated with the Darfur judicial authorities for special measures to be adopted for handling cases of pretrial prisoners (46% of the current inmate population) whose rights to a fair and expeditious trial would be infringed by the lockdown and partial or total suspension of court hearings due to COVID-19<sup>143</sup>.

The Police component work, and in particular co-location with the SPF via the SLFs was affected, but adjustment was possible through regular telephone and WhatsApp communications. Work on capacity building continued with the creation of a Mobile Training Team (MTT) which worked on design and delivery of thematic modules to the SPF through online video scripts and continuous assessment, and as restrictions eased the ToT on Protection

128 An attempt to adapt training methodologies for online delivery to the Judiciary was made but didn't succeed given the lack of computer infrastructure and internet access by these organs.

129 UNAMID/UNCT Response Plan to COVID-19, 02/06/2020, Remote interview August 2020. Concerning provision of logistic support to the national authorities, coordination at the start-up of the project was swift between these and the UN agencies, facilitating collaboration in defining the list of products, preparation of specification, quantification, etc, allowing UNDP to place on time an order to procure goods in May. However, the slow turnaround from the Global Procurement Unit (GPU) in providing offers, led to frustration in view of the need and the local perceived availability - which in fact was in limited quantities and of a low standard quality. The global products shortage because of the worldwide spread of the disease and the lack of capacity of the supply system to meet demand (quota system, rationing of critical items to countries), difficulties to get freight forwarding services and the surge in the transportation costs both air and sea compounded by the long approval time by the end users for complicated items hindered delivery. A significant proportion of the goods didn't therefore reach beneficiaries until October 2020.

130 Remote interview August 2020; Concept Note for Implementation of Core and SLFs Programmatic Activities from July-December 2020, UNAMID, 14/07/2020; Note to File – 5+5 Joint Technical Committee Meeting, UNAMID/United Nations Sudan, 18/08/ 2020.

131 The specific objectives of the adjusted support prioritise the Service Delivery Pillar within the SLFs:  
1. Containing the spread of COVID-19 pandemic and decrease morbidity and mortality through establishment of equipped isolation centres;  
2. Enhancing capacities of local health and community systems in adopting Infection Control and Prevention (IPC) measures through provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs); sanitizers and handwashing facilities; medical waste management/disposal equipment; supplies and consumables;  
3. Strengthening the capacities of Points of Entries (PoE) to detect and refer suspected cases through provision of thermal detectors and IPC equipment.  
The procurement of goods was led and carried-out by UNDP. Implementation Plan of SLFs Response Plan to COVID-19, 06/2020.

132 Concept Note for Implementation of Core and SLFs Programmatic Activities from July-December 2020, 14/07/2020.; S/RES/2525 (2020).

133 For example, UNAMID handed over Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and hygiene items to the Prison, Prosecution and Judiciary administration in EL Daein, East Darfur in August 2020. See 'COVID-19: Human rights concerns and UNAMID/OHCHR's action in the field, Biweekly report, 13 August -09 September 2020, Sudan'.

134 Implementation Plan of SLFs Response Plan to COVID-19, 06/2020.

135 In collaboration with the Sudan Social Development Organization the campaign reached over 6,600 residents, including 1,045 members of the nomadic community residing in Damras and Farigs (Arab settlements) and up to 170 returnee households. Besides prevention and mitigation of COVID-19, messaging focused on the need to jointly address concerns and challenges of the nomadic and local communities (in evidence also given the farming season) in order to promote peaceful co-existence. See COVID-19: Human rights concerns and UNAMID/OHCHR's action in the field, Biweekly report, 01-14 July 2020, Sudan.

136 The Kampala-based Strategic Initiative for Women of the Horn of Africa (SIHA) based its assessment on data from a hospital in El Fasher, revealing a 50% increase in rape and a significant increase in the incidence of urinary fistula among women and girls due to gang rape and sexual violence. In a statement released on 20 June 2020, the regional body further denounced security forces and government militias for using anti-COVID-19 health measures to legitimize coercive and violent law enforcement actions around IDPs camps in North Darfur state. The organization urged the GoS to develop strong justice and law enforcement capacities, including for prosecution of rapists and protection of Darfuri women, and to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and similar regional instruments.

137 Other interventions comprised for example the distribution of hygiene materials to vulnerable groups such as IDPs, women, girls, children (Sortony, Rokero, Koron, Sadal Ali and Souk districts in Golo), as part of a rights-based approach to addressing COVID-19 related needs and vulnerabilities especially for IDP women and girls. See COVID-19: Human rights concerns and UNAMID/OHCHR's action in the field, Biweekly report, 01-14 July 2020, Sudan.

138 These workshops and sessions were organized in collaboration with the ministries of health and social development in Darfur's five states from 23 June to 7 July 2020. For example, a session on COVID-19 with focus on gender-based violence and domestic violence for thirty women at El Neem IDP camp in El Daein, East Darfur. To optimize impact, UNAMID allocated an extra 20,000 USD to expand the initiative to ten other localities in Darfur considered high risk for COVID-19. Over one hundred community leaders, women and youth participated in the project. See COVID-19: Human rights concerns and UNAMID/OHCHR's action in the field, Biweekly report, 01-14 July 2020, Sudan.

139 Specific targeting was important in view of the imbalance in distribution of the inmate population across different prisons throughout the Darfur states, with overcrowding prevailing in urban-based prisons located in state capitals.

140 Remote interview August 2020.

141 www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/coronavirus-prisoners-released-in-darfur

142 COVID-19: Human rights concerns and UNAMID/OHCHR's action in the field, Biweekly report, 17 June -1 July 2020, Sudan.

143 Notwithstanding, challenges were significant and the number of detainees in detention facilities remained high Remote interview August 2020.

of civilians, and crime investigation management re-started<sup>144</sup>. An important initiative was training on stress management for SPF personnel, which whilst at a high risk, kept carrying out their duties, especially considering the continued precarious situation in Darfur concerning intercommunal violence<sup>145</sup>. Collaboration with the SPF through the SLFs also involved engagement in sensitizations to prevent the spread of COVID-19, targeting police stations, IDP camps, marketplaces, and public gatherings<sup>146</sup>. The June campaign reached approximately 5,000 community members and 250 SPF officers in North Darfur<sup>147</sup>.

In addition to projects run through the SLFs UNAMID also dedicated core funding to support complementary COVID-19 initiatives in both peacebuilding and peacekeeping areas<sup>148</sup>. Adding to human rights, protection and rule of law efforts, a 'COVID RIGHTS WATCH' initiative was established by UNAMID's Human Rights Service (and affiliated entities)<sup>149</sup> and was implemented jointly with the OHCHR start-up country office in Sudan. The initiative provided a monitoring capacity to developments from the implementation of emergency measures and its effect over protection obligations. It has highlighted concerns of vulnerable groups, state and partner responses, as well as provided a basis from which to adapt UN System responses and potentially mitigate against breaches to human rights and rule of law<sup>150</sup>.

Going forward other areas for adaptation of SLFs work on RoL and HR may comprise provision of advice on specific measures to strengthen community-police relations during the pandemic,

for example through joint regular briefs/information sharing. Also, support to the SPF in organizing internal awareness raising to their power limitations under Executive Emergency orders, as well as eventual assistance to review or develop standard operating procedures, regulations and legal frameworks, in line with international best practice. Capitalizing on the pandemic opportunity to support the clarification and redefinition of the security actors' roles in crisis would be important. Particularly since they may be required to continue to perform functions outside of their traditional remit, whilst being at high risk of contracting the virus, and placing them under additional stress potentially leading to disproportionate use of force. It could also be an opportunity for engaging and advising collective decision-making within decentralized security provision structures at the local levels, such as the state, district and local security committees, assisting with mitigation of excessive securitization of responses. Simultaneous assistance to SPF internal oversight and complaints mechanisms may also be warranted given the need to retain functionality and step-up responsiveness during times of extraordinary challenges. These are pertinent support areas to be considered by UNITAMS, within the remit of its mandate, and of available resources. From the perspective of oversight and accountability strengthening the capacities of national, state and local institutions, including CSOs and community networks to monitor security forces' abusive behaviors and human rights violations, including excessive media control, would also be important contributions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### For UNITAMS

- 1 In case the SLFs are adopted as one of the peacebuilding implementation tools, ensure that it remains adaptive and responsive program-wise, whilst observing the limits of the mandate. This is likely to include content readjustment to respond to specific RoL and HR challenges during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and other stress-test periods, through ensuring adoption of adequate methodologies and delivery, beyond re-allocation of funding for short-term needs.

### To consider in new Mission transition settings

- 2 Safeguard flexibility in the tailored design and planning of the SLFs, through ensuring that mechanisms and processes for rapid convening of the Mission/UNCT/Government are in place for adaptive decision-making and problem-solving. This entity, in the form of a steering committee or alternative structure, should retain flexibility for adaptation of programming and re-allocation of funding, whilst preserving accountability in line with the mandate of the Mission. Importantly, senior management from both Mission and UNCT should have access to the same level of information concerning the latest contextual political, security and conflict analysis to swiftly decide on potentially required politically sensitive adjustments to programming.

144 UNAMID mandate implementation during COVID-19 PANDEMIC', UNAMID Police Component, 10/10/20.

145 Concept Note for Implementation of Core and SLFs Programmatic Activities from July-December 2020, 14/07/2020.

146 The Police personnel working through the SLFs also integrated broader campaign teams including representatives from the World Health Organization, Ministry of Health, SPF, Rule of Law officers and the. Support was provided to police stations, IDP communities, SPF Police officers, UNAMID national staff, local community leaders, marketplaces, Prisons, Sudan Military and Civil Society Representatives in El- Fasher, Zalingei, El-Daein, and Nyala, including Kalma Camp

147 COVID-19: Human rights concerns and UNAMID/OHCHR's action in the field, Biweekly report, 17 June -1 July 2020, Sudan.

148 A good example of complementarity beyond RoL and HR was UNAMID's Communication and Public Information Section Month-long Street Publicity Awareness Campaign on the fight against COVID-19 carried out in collaboration with state health authorities in the western region of Sudan in June-July. More than one million residents from five Darfur states (north, south, east, central, west) are estimated to have directly benefitted from the exercise. The awareness campaign, led by local health experts from State Ministries of Health and Social Development, comprised the use of megaphones mounted on open vehicles and vans adorned with posters and banners with slogans on the measures to mitigate and fight against COVID-19. The campaign was conducted in towns, neighborhoods and outskirts, districts, markets and in 10 internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps across Darfur. Towns covered include El Fasher (North Darfur), Zalingei (Central Darfur), El Geneina (West Darfur), Nyala (South Darfur) and El Daien (East Darfur). The IDP Camps covered comprise Abou Shouk and Al Salaam (North Darfur), Hamadiya, Khamsadagaig, Al Salaam, Hassahissa and Tayba (Central Darfur), Dereig and Al Salaam (South Darfur) and Naeem (East Darfur). See COVID-19: Human rights concerns and UNAMID/OHCHR's action in the field, Biweekly report, 17 June -1 July 2020, Sudan.

149 The affiliated entities included UNAMID Protection of Civilians Section and the UNAMID Child Protection Section, which operated under the oversight of the UNAMID Human Rights Service Chief. See 'Covid Rights Watch Concept Note/Terms of reference', UNAMID Human Rights Service, June 2020.

150 The initiative is informed by OHCHR COVID 19 guidance framework. See 'Covid Rights Watch Concept Note/Terms of Reference', UNAMID Human Rights Service, June 2020.



## 8 CATALYTIC EFFECT

### LESSON

- 1 Funding from the assessed peacekeeping budget for joint implementation of peacebuilding priorities by Mission/UNCT provides impetus to programming in key areas such as rule of law and human rights, which otherwise may remain/become secondary during transitions.
- 2 Purposeful sequencing of different UN funding stream allocations is worthwhile to ensure support of programming initiated during Mission transition on peacebuilding priorities, ensuring continuity in the short to medium term.
- 3 The catalytic effect of the SLFs is best symbolized through the opportunity availed to select AFPs to engage or reinforce programming in cross-cutting peacebuilding thematic areas, or dimensions beyond their traditional engagement, resulting in intent and planning towards programming continuity to sustain gains and achieve durable solutions.

As a mechanism introduced to stimulate joint planning and implementation of the transition, the SLFs succeeded in fostering collaboration between UNAMID and the AFPs on RoL and HR programming, in achieving collective results in Darfur and supporting the emergence of a One UN voice and advocacy. They have also been catalytic concerning incremental sensitivity to rule of law and human rights policy agendas by AFPs that traditionally do not have these at the core of their programming, and therefore potentially making Sudan a pioneer example in this regard.

By enabling funding and joint implementation via co-location, the SLFs helped strengthen or expand the presence of the AFPs into different

Darfur states, as acknowledged for example by UN Women, UN-Habitat and UNDP. It has also provided an opportunity for AFPs to reinforce, or to engage in programming on RoL and HR that otherwise would not have been possible. Illustrative are the cases of UN-Habitat which leveraged the SLFs training delivered to rural court judges to mainstream land management into dispute resolution, and of UNFPA, which capitalized on the SLFs to implement interventions on sexual and gender-based violence related protection. Across the board a contribution towards institution building was enabled through infrastructure development aimed at increasing access/extension of services to the communities and the most vulnerable<sup>151</sup>.

Whilst the extent to which the different AFPs benefited varied, considering also the relative proportion of the SLFs funding contribution to their overall budget (lower for those with humanitarian funding), thematic-wise there was agreement on the advantages of the joint work. In this regard the catalytic effect of SLFs is indicated in the AFPs intent and planning towards program continuity with clear objectives to sustain stability gains and usher more robust peacebuilding interventions. UNICEF shared that outreach to justice institutions and expansion of capacity support to duty-bearers and awareness and children and community-empowerment programming will be continued to enhance transparent and accountable delivery of justice services and human rights protection. UNHCR confirmed that protection related programming anchored to jointly identified hotspot and priority areas will continue to be a critical element of support, with a focus on vulnerable groups such as women, children, youth and IDPs. UNDP articulated that interventions related to mitigation and resolution of inter-communal and land-related conflicts through support to community-based mechanisms and rural courts will continue, through linking SLFs achievements to future work plans and programming<sup>152</sup>.

An important element of this continuity has been enabled by the PBF program, which was envisaged

as a follow-on step to the SLFs since its genesis<sup>153</sup>, recognizing that underlying conflict drivers would not be fully addressed in the foreseen timelines of drawdown and exit of UNAMID. Although more limited in scope and geographical locations, the PBF was perceived as a critical enabler of the transition in Darfur through tailored interventions aimed at tackling the root causes of conflict, and importantly as a mitigating measure pre-empting the steep decline in external funding for peace consolidation that typically follows the exit of a peacekeeping mission<sup>154</sup>.

The twenty three million USD allocation is the largest ever made by the PBF in a context of whole-of-system transition, denoting the UN's commitment to sequencing investment towards sustaining peace from an early phase, and in response to a request made by the Sudanese Government already in 2017, and reiterated in 2019<sup>155</sup>. The three priority areas endorsed by the GoS are durable solutions, rule of law and peacebuilding for human security, providing a platform for building on the gains of the SLFs, not least because three of the key lead agencies were also strong SLFs partners<sup>156</sup>. Importantly, the inter-agency planning discussions on SLFs programming on Rule of Law and Human rights and interoperability, eased the process in the context of AFPs planning for the PBF<sup>157</sup>. PBSO, UNCT and UNAMID collaborated on this process, including through a dedicated SLFs/PBF workshop held in Zalingei in September 2019, to factor-in the existing SLFs support and accomplishments given the linkage between the two programmes regarding the same strategic objective and similar topics<sup>158</sup>.

Process-related lessons from the planning of the SLFs were also factored-into the design stage of the PBF programme, insofar as carrying-out wide consultations at the state level, and including the GoS, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the Steering Committee of the Project. However, UNAMID's staff participation on specific project

design to feed-in lessons from the SLFs implementation was not systematic<sup>159</sup>. Hence, it remains unclear to what extent learning from the project implementation of the SLFs was incorporated into the design of specific PBF projects by each of the selected (and overlapping) implementing agencies.

*'The SLFs gave us the ability to expand in terms of working on Rule of Law to address issues relating to and supporting the judiciary in the resolution of land conflict.'*

UN Habitat

Involved in both durable solutions and – more surprisingly – rule of law, UN-Habitat, while staying true to its mandate, has been given the opportunity to adopt an integrated response to one of the key conflict drivers in Sudan, namely land dispute. With its involvement in the Rule of Law thematic, UN-Habitat expanded and complemented its support to address land-related conflict through promoting community-based land management system via the rural courts. The project adopted an integrated approach including infrastructure, training, as well as development and dissemination of handbooks, positioning UN-Habitat to benefit from subsequent PBF financing.

Concerning connections between the SLFs priority interventions and broader pre-existing support frameworks, anchors exist to the Darfur Development Strategy (DDS), through continuum of the Joint Program on Rule of Law and Human Rights (2016-2019). However, its proceeding linkage to the implementation of the “refreshed” DDS, or other eventual future development cooperation frameworks is less evident at the time of writing. Should there be a concerted effort in the nearer term to develop a peacebuilding strategy or implement the updated DDS, achievements, challenges and priorities deriving from the SLFs should be factored in

151 Interviews Darfur and Khartoum February/March 2020.

152 Interviews Darfur and Khartoum February/March 2020.

153 See Special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the strategic review of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, S/2018/530, 1 June 2018, §57-59.

154 Interviews Darfur, Khartoum and remotely, December 2019-August 2020.

155 Prime Minister Hamdok officially requested support from the PBF in January 2019 and resubmitted an eligibility request in September of the same year. 'Chapeau for Peacebuilding Fund programming in Darfur, Sudan: Peacebuilding context; rationale for support; and management structure', 10 November 2019, p.2.

156 UNDP leads the PBF rule of law thematic and project implementation in North and South Darfur, UNICEF leads on human security and project implementation in Central and South Darfur, and UNHCR leads on durable solutions and project implementation in West Darfur.

157 For example whilst UNCT has different coordination platforms on RoL and HR, these were not convened regularly prior to the SLFs. Interviews Darfur, Khartoum and remotely, December 2019-August 2020.

158 Interviews carried out in Darfur and remotely from December 2019-August 2020. Also 'Chapeau for Peacebuilding Fund programming in Darfur, Sudan: Peacebuilding context; rationale for support; and management structure', 10 November 2019, p.14

159 Interviews Darfur, Khartoum and remotely, December 2019-August 2020.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### For UNITAMS

**1** Consider creating a regular exchange platform to coordinate ongoing and upcoming peacebuilding programming, including the SLFs (should it be maintained as a peacebuilding implementation modality), the PBF and the DCPSF. This would enable timely sharing of information and experiences, and alignment of programming through possible de-confliction and establishment of complementarities. Clearer understanding of the thematic and geographical coverage of peacebuilding activities, including existing resources and priorities, would allow identification of gaps and prevention of duplication, improving subsequent cycles of programming and resource mobilization.

### To consider in new Mission transition settings

**2** Utilize funding from the programmatic assessed budget of peacekeeping Missions as an effective catalyst towards transition, leveraging collaboration between Mission, UNCT and government on peacebuilding priorities. Prioritize the allocation of this funding to key mandate provisions, considering areas neglected over time in the specific country/Mission context. These often include human rights and rule of law challenges, which typically represent important vulnerabilities for peace consolidation.

**3** Leverage catalytic effects of Mission funding allocations towards peacebuilding in a continuum, namely through building coherence with both preceding and forward-looking national peacebuilding and development frameworks, and respective funding instruments.

## 9 COMMUNICATIONS

### LESSON

The adoption of communication as a strategic management tool of transition is key and requires initial and continuous investment in time and resources to ensure the implementation of a joint and comprehensive One UN communication strategy.

Communication is critical in the context of transition, and although this element is not formally part of the framework “Delivering as One”, it is commonly recognized that the UN should speak with one voice<sup>160</sup>.

Acknowledging this requirement, communication is identified in the SG’s Planning Directive as constituting good practice and paving the way for capitalising on messaging around the SLFs as a key peacebuilding transition tool. The Directive requests “UNAMID and UNCT [to] design a joint communications strategy, focusing on Mission drawdown, as well as how remaining UN actors reposition themselves to consolidate peacebuilding gains in Darfur”<sup>161</sup>. As a result, the “UN Communications Strategy to inform on UNAMID’s Exit and repositioning of the UN in Darfur” was designed and approved by the Mission leadership in March 2019. It includes a position paper, as well as key messages and an implementation plan.

The Joint Transition Action Plan (April 2019) subsequently established communication as one of the two cross-cutting workstreams, considering it a key enabler of the overall transition. The responsibility to “coordinate and support [the] implementation of the joint communication strategy, develop visibility and external communication products on the transitions in close coordination with UN Communication Group” was awarded to the Joint Transition Cell<sup>162</sup>.

Notwithstanding an integrated approach reflected in the communication strategy and the nomination of the JTC as the mechanism in charge, the absence of harmonized communication tools for SLFs projects highlighting joint UNAMID/AFP work (apart from project banners and inauguration plaque for infrastructure projects) was noticeable. In general, beneficiaries were aware of the SLFs projects, but many associated these either with UNAMID, or the respective AFP partner. Fewer articulated the SLFs as being a joint Mission/UNCT initiative, accompanied by the notion of a progressive decrease of UNAMID’s presence, whilst strengthening the support being rendered by the AFPs. Whilst this perception was stronger amongst high-level state institutions who were also assertive about taking on a greater role, vulnerable communities and CSOs displayed lesser clarity<sup>163</sup>.

Joint communication activities were rarely mentioned by the SLFs staff. Good examples of tools were the flyer featuring work related to the rural court system and land dispute resolution, which was developed in collaboration between UN-Habitat/UNAMID, and the UN Women/UNAMID t-shirts highlighting work on SGBV. However, the absence of systematic strategic level communication around the SLFs seemed to be the rule. This could be tentatively explained by the limited capacities allocated to the communication portfolio, staffing and funding included. Advocacy around posting one communication officer in each Darfur state as part of the SLFs to ensure faster and more professional communication from the inception of projects did not succeed<sup>164</sup>.

The JTC structure foresaw the existence of one communication officer (dedicated to all work around transition) based in the Mission premises in Zalingei. However, the post was never filled. In a mitigation attempt, UNAMID Communication & Public Information Section (CPIS), collaborated closely with the

<sup>160</sup> See The independent evaluation of lessons learned from “Delivering as one” conducted in 2011-2012 in accordance with the request of the General Assembly, contained in paragraph 139 of its resolution 62/208 and paragraph 21 of its resolution 64/289. [www.un.org/en/ga/deliveringasone/pdf/mainreport.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/ga/deliveringasone/pdf/mainreport.pdf)

<sup>161</sup> Secretary-General’s Planning Directive for the planning and preparation of the United Nations transition in Darfur, involving drawdown/withdrawal/liquidation of the African Union - United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the repositioning of the UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes to sustain peace in Darfur, 4 February 2019, 4 h.

<sup>162</sup> Cf ToR for UNAMID-UNCT Joint Transition Cell, August 2019.

<sup>163</sup> Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

<sup>164</sup> Remote interviews April-August 2020.



JTC, but through appointing three staff focusing on SLFs, under the strategic supervision of the CPIS Chief<sup>165</sup>. This includes two staff working on content generation - one staff in El-Fasher to cover North, South and East Darfur and one staff in Zalingei to cover West and Central Darfur - as well as one staff in charge of dissemination of the information<sup>166</sup>. Showcasing flexibility and adaptability when facing the inability to manage all SLFs related events, the section developed a “CPIS Brief guidance on Events Reporting Format” (July 2019), and shared it with all SLFs staff to facilitate their reporting and allow CPIS to obtain essential elements from their submissions. This tool has proven, a fortiori, useful in the current COVID-19 travel restriction environment and represents good practice.

Despite UNAMID efforts, the absence of a communication officer in each Darfur state, as well as the lack of resources specifically allocated within the AFPs in Khartoum, ultimately hindered a strategic communication approach in favour of a limited and reactive response. Hence, low importance awarded to communications resulted in de-prioritisation<sup>167</sup>. The task became contingent on the means, will and institutional culture of each of the AFPs concerning communications’ management, and, to a certain extent, reliant on the individual tasked with delivery<sup>168</sup>.

Similarly to the need of availing adequate time and resources for planning, investment in communications is key (initially and continuously), especially if the objective is the development of a communication strategy jointly owned by Mission and the AFPs. This requires consultations, feedback exchanges and commitment going beyond the buy-in rhetoric.

During Mission drawdown it is likely that communications require staffing and commitment of resources that are not always available<sup>169</sup>. Joining efforts with the AFPs should in principle have acted as a mitigation measure. It is important that this area is not perceived as an add-on but understood as a strategic tool for the advancement of the organization’s goal, in this case the UN transition in Darfur.

The 2019 communication strategy has never been formerly updated<sup>170</sup>. A revision of key transition messages for the public would be warranted with reinforcement of the joint nature of the process, and actively including preparation and expectation management around the future UN Mission configuration. Reinforcing messaging on the One UN approach with a common objective, underlined by complementarity of what may become a tripartite support (DPO mission, SPM and UNCT), is crucial as complexity mounts. The recent inter-communal clashes and concerns expressed by IDPs regarding safety and security in Darfur, and by Sudanese civil society in-country and in the diaspora demands clear messaging and outreach targeting them specifically, around the limits of the different UN mandates concerning protection of civilians, and the full responsibility of the Sudanese state. The ongoing development of a follow up communication strategy focusing on drawdown as well as the Mission’s involvement in UNITAMS’ communication strategy is reassuring.

Concerning implementation of the SLFs in Jebel Marra this could profit from adequate messaging to the beneficiaries and the general public on the benefits of peace dividend through the expansion of service delivery on RoL and HR, and commitments under the Constitutional Declaration. Active messaging about the SLFs to bilateral donors in Sudan strengthening information about the joint process and implementation could also merit further attention, given the potential for follow-on peacebuilding investments in Darfur, and for replication of the SLFs as a mandate implementation modality in other Mission transition settings. In general, it might be worthwhile to investigate the strategic elements of communication carried out in Liberia as part of UNMIL’s exit plan for inspiration - including the successful Townhall meetings - taking into consideration current limitations on movement and large gatherings imposed by COVID-19.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### To be considered by UNAMID/UNCT and by UNITAMS

- 1 Revise key transition messages targeting the public and highlighting the One UN approach underlying the implementation of the SLFs, and underscore complementarity and sequencing of support by the simultaneously present UN actors/instruments in Darfur.
- 2 Develop specific messaging aimed at expectation management of the public, and in specific of IDPs and CSOs, clarifying the difference in mandate limits of UNAMID, UNITAMS, and UNCT concerning protection of civilians.
- 3 Seize the opportunity to develop and implement active messaging around the benefits of peace dividend through the expansion of service delivery on RoL and HR in the Jebel Marra area.

### To consider in new Mission transition settings

- 4 Develop a joint Mission/UNCT communications strategy during the planning phase of the SLFs as a mandate implementation modality, and ensure agreed messaging, key achievement targets, adequate resourcing, and regular joint reviews at the leadership level for continued commitment.
- 5 Establish “inclusivity in visibility” as a principle, and capitalize on existing resources, through establishment of a joint Mission/UNCT dedicated human resource capacity to implement the communication strategy and report on developments.
- 6 Allocate time initially and continuously to guarantee joint ownership of the communication strategy, as well as set-up a regular mechanism to update messaging and content and in a rapidly shifting environment.

<sup>165</sup> Remote interview August 2020.

<sup>166</sup> Using mainly, the mission website, the social media - Twitter and Facebook, photo of the day and the publication ‘Voice of Darfur’.

<sup>167</sup> Remote interview April-August 2020

<sup>168</sup> Manageable tools could be introduced such as human-interest stories (from staff and beneficiaries) and joint statements

<sup>169</sup> From 58 staff at the end of 2018, UNAMID CPIS was reduced to 17 staff with the drawdown.

<sup>170</sup> Remote interviews May-August 2020. Important to note however that the UN Communication Working group, pre-existent to the transition, has maintained regular meetings.

# 10 PROGRAMMING

## Responsiveness

### LESSONS

- 1 Robust technical assessments are key to maximising responsiveness of new joint Mission/AFP programming initiatives through provision of evidence-based understanding of existing capacities and comparative advantage, and updated contextual and conflict sensitivity analysis, enabled through inclusive consultation processes.
- 2 Building on experience of thematic collaboration between Mission and AFPs prior to the introduction of new mandate implementation modalities requiring joint planning and implementation during Mission transition, facilitates common understanding and expedites results.
- 3 Iterative joint analysis around key macro contextual changes complemented by learning on trends from project implementation contributes to mitigation of unintended harmful impact over beneficiaries, if coupled with prompt and united decision-making by the Mission and UNCT leadership.

Programming responsiveness is essential for meeting the needs of the beneficiaries, protecting previously achieved gains, ensuring an adaptive posture to rapidly evolving contexts, and ultimately making sound and cost-effective interventions. Key premises for achieving this lie in thorough planning and tailored assessments feeding into program design, as well as mainstreaming conflict-sensitivity, including a “do no harm” approach, both at the

program and project levels.

The SLFs program falls within an intermediate category between quick impact projects (QIPs) and full-fledged development projects. However, it lacked an adequate planning phase, which was key given that at stake was the first ever significant investment in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus through joint UN delivery in Darfur, with a focus on RoL and HR. The reduced timeframes between the introduction of the SLFs as new mandate implementation modality, and the tight implementation timings set by deadlines of ACABQ financial reporting requirements were the main reason for this gap.<sup>171</sup> Therefore, a dedicated technical assessment at the meso level of programming<sup>172</sup> offering options for shaping the design of the structures and processes to operationalise the SLFs through systematic analysis of existing capacities did not take place. This assessment would also have looked systematically at the comparative advantage for thematic lead and geographical implementation and assisted with prioritisation of interventions through further refining the specificity and complementarity of projects<sup>173</sup>.

To mitigate the absence of such technical assessment UNAMID/UNCT resorted mainly to using previously existing contextual analysis generated from processes such as the DDS, the ISF, and humanitarian assessments<sup>174</sup>. Concerning RoL and HR, the existence of data and analysis from earlier assessments undertaken in the lead up to the RoL transition plan and the Joint programme for Rule of Law and Human Rights in Darfur (2016-2019), was essential to operationalise the SLFs programming. Whilst the Joint Programme saw its implementation hindered due to insufficient financial resources, its design was quite comprehensive<sup>175</sup>. It focused on three areas, namely delivery of justice in Darfur,

access to justice, human rights and gender, and competition over land resources. Joint assessments were carried out informing programming under each of these areas, and in this context, civil society was consulted<sup>176</sup>. This precedent of collaboration between UNAMID and UNCT around the design of the Joint Programme was a central enabler to the achievements of the SLFs in the area of RoL, and to a lesser extent of HR (*see section on Staffing for limitations faced concerning HR monitoring*).

Importantly, the programming intervention under the SLFs was also integrated within the UNCT signed Action Plan which included situational analysis. However, good practice would have required that this analysis and findings emerged from a timely updated and systematized joint UNAMID/UNCT assessment. This assessment would have allowed, for example, planning around contingencies to avoid thematic/geographic duplication of similar initiatives by the different SLFs pillars, identify cross-pillar synergies, as well as complementarities between the SLFs interventions and those already existing from the UNCT/other partners in the same or similar thematic areas. To make up for the absence of such process, however, UNAMID/UNCT were able to adapt through engaging in extensive planning discussions concerning rule of law programming to shape the intervention using the information available.

The absence of a meso-level technical assessment owing to compliance with timing/budget cycle pressures, also resulted in consultations with key beneficiaries such as the GoS at the federal level, and at the Darfur state level, taking place only after the allocation for SLFs I projects had already been set<sup>177</sup>. Some measure of accommodation was possible (*see reference to introduction of the service delivery pillar in the section on coordination*), yet different views between the federal and the state level were difficult to reconcile without the possibility of an iterative process involving both.

Also, given the systemic nature of key human rights and rule of law challenges, the program-level assessment would have been able to identify and analyze the opportunities, but also limits of programming impact at the Darfur state level, without addressing structural constraints that derived from federal level decision-making, which operated through a highly centralized system<sup>178</sup>.

In hindsight, it would have been important to also consult with key target communities such as IDPs and returnees, as well as civil society groups as part of the assessment/design phase, and involve closely state level project staff from both the AFPs and UNAMID insofar as holders of in-depth knowledge about local dynamics. For example, this could have resulted in broader considerations of whether the introduction of infrastructure development and training assistance could create competition between different beneficiary groups or reinforce patterns of domination and exclusion along gender and ethnic lines, helping to devise risk mitigation measures<sup>179</sup> (*see also section on Risk Management*).

More broadly, timely program assessments factoring-in societal, political and institutional fracture analysis to identify opportunities towards supporting social cohesion, help to improve balance when reconciling requests by powerful stakeholders, including state institutions, with the needs of different societal groups, including vulnerable communities. This is crucial during contested political transitions, and where the absence or fragility of national institutional strategies and plans can be a further hindrance to resilient and locally owned programming.

In retrospect, therefore, the assessment could have provided for a more inclusive and comprehensive design process, which in this case ended-up being mostly restricted to intensive planning efforts through coordination meetings between UNAMID-UNCT senior leadership at Khartoum level (*see also section on coordination*).

171 Interviews Darfur and Khartoum February/March 2020. It is also important to note that the final Concept Note orientating the SLFs was only finalized in 01 May 2019, five months into implementation. ‘UNAMID transitional presence and coordination with the United Nations Country Team in four Darfur States (North, South, West and East Darfur).

172 The macro-level being a policy level assessment tantamount to the core business of strategic assessment reviews, and the micro-level corresponding to a study of localized thematic and area needs and requirements.

173 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020, remote interview.

174 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

175 ‘Joint Programme for Rule of Law and Human Rights in Darfur, November 2016-November 2019’, United Nations Development Programme, Sudan Country Office, 2016.

176 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020, remote interview.

177 Interviews Darfur and remote interview February-August 2020.

178 Programming under the SLFs would still have to comply with the geographical boundaries of the Mission mandate, which was limited to Darfur. However, the assessment could have enabled an earlier and more structured approach to engagement of the federal level institutions on specific portfolios. Despite this shortcoming UNAMID HRS and RoL (including UNPOL) developed more open communication lines to federal institutions in Khartoum in the last two years of the transition.

179 Staff and leadership of the justice and security sectors may derive/be associated with specific powerful identity groups, which can act in a discriminatory manner. Hence, enhancing capacity without factoring-in the need for improved inclusivity and representation of different groups, could result inadvertently in the UN being perceived as reinforcing patterns of exclusion (see also section on Risk management).



Notwithstanding these process limitations, the capacity to adapt shortly after implementation began represented a major achievement of the SLFs, especially concerning the ability to successfully move from an institution-centred to a community-focused programming approach during the Revolution period<sup>180</sup>. This resulted in good practice namely through the adoption of a pre-emptive response to a potential perception by the GoS that the SLFs could be contributing to challenge power

and vested interests. Ultimately it prevented a possible backlash over the participating institutions and beneficiary communities of the SLFs (*see also preceding section on flexibility and adaptability*). Undoubtedly this achievement came about through joint UNAMID/UNCT leadership capacity to rapidly process, unite and decide upon incoming information about a fluid situation whereby the outcome remained unpredictable.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

### To be considered by UNAMID/UNCT in case of mandate renewal

- 1 Mainstream conflict-sensitivity and a do-no-harm approach to ongoing SLFs programming. This could be done by systematically leveraging the Mission staff to maintain and reinforce early warning capacities through regular mapping, monitoring and reporting of local conflict dynamics, as well as through implementing regular iterative Pillar project reviews based on substance, and not only on execution rates.
- 2 Strengthen the involvement of state level SLFs staff during project design and regular implementation reviews to ensure linkages with immediate and changing needs and priorities identified through continuous local-level data collection and risk analysis. This will help to enhance program flexibility, in addition to increasing staff ownership and commitment to SLFs project implementation.

### To consider in new Mission transition settings

- 3 Adopt as mandatory practice the requirement to carry out a comprehensive joint technical assessment by the Mission/UNCT, following recommendation by a SAM to introduce the SLFs as a mandate implementation modality during Mission transition. Robustness, cost-effectiveness and responsiveness will be enhanced through joint design and planning anchored to an updated, systematic and common understanding of the situation analysis, conflict sensitivity, stakeholder mapping and risk analysis.

## Progress Measurement

### LESSON

The development of a measurement system which effectively accounts to the UNSC mandate and benchmarks, should entail the design of solid monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, enabling the Mission/UNCT joint verification of outcomes in a continuum with past and subsequent peacebuilding programming.

The absence of a joint technical assessment including recommendations for program design (*see section on responsiveness*), was coupled with the lack of dedicated resources to develop a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. The repercussions were felt further afield, namely in the absence of a collectively adopted results framework enabling consistency in outcome progress measurement across the board of the SLFs projects<sup>181</sup>.

An important contribution would have been the development of a Theory of Change (ToC) outlining the rationale of the program, including context related assumptions, and supporting a swift adaptation of programming in a rapidly evolving political, security and economic context. This report proposes a reconstructed ToC in *Annex II*. In addition, time considerations and financial reporting deadlines excluded the possibility of carrying out baseline studies, key for monitoring and outcome measurement of the SLFs intervention, considering the substantive investment made.

Part of the data which would have featured in a baseline study existed at Mission level, and useful information was also held by some of the AFPs, ensuring the relevance of the projects implemented under the RoL and HR SLFs pillars. Knowledge of the actors at stake and the institutional needs was also present given UNAMID's previous work with

these over a few years<sup>182</sup>. However, an encompassing stocktaking and analysis exercise, including updated consultations with potential beneficiaries could not take place, and neither were institution and/or community perception surveys carried out for example, making it difficult to measure, down the line, substantive improvement beyond an output level.

Joint systematised baseline studies would have been useful to help substantiate the contribution of the SLFs programming to improvement of rule of law and human rights observance in a longer peacebuilding timeframe. This is important considering the volume of the SLFs funding and the contribution made in the continuum formed between previous UNAMID and AFPs stabilization interventions<sup>183</sup>, and the current and future peacebuilding initiatives. Amongst the latter are the PBF funded programme, potential DDS refresher' based projects, and other planned and potential interventions by AFPs and bilateral donors.

Against this backdrop, a key mitigating achievement was the set-up of an essential SLFs monitoring and reporting system, put in practice for the main purpose of progress review and accountability towards the UNSC and mandate benchmarks. This was developed in February/March 2019 by the interim transition team, through UNAMID/UNCT discussion and joint establishment of benchmarks to monitor program implementation, and development of substantive and financial report formats (*see also preceding section on Coordination*)<sup>184</sup>.

Following good practice, UNPOL went a step forward and carried out a capacity building needs assessment jointly with the SPF in October/November 2018, leading to greater national ownership of the subsequent SLFs projects<sup>185</sup>. The results of the assessment fed into a subsequent Transition Implementation Plan (TiP), comprising a subsidiary

<sup>180</sup> Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

<sup>181</sup> At the project level progress measurement was carried-out according to each agency' internal M&E and reporting system and measured against their institutional workplans. This was problematic in terms of consistency of the SLFs as a programmatic intervention but allowed each agency to keep using their known system, plus ascertain contribution to its broader programming goals.

<sup>182</sup> For example, the numbers of human rights violations committed and addressed appropriately by authorities were regularly collected, and previous projects on capacity building of community paralegals and the Bar Association had been carried out prior to the SLFs, which allowed scaling-up. Additional examples comprise conflict analysis carried-out on the different Darfur states in 2016, as well as analysis and Matrixes prepared for projects targeting the re-establishment of the criminal justice chain in North, South and West Darfur in 2018, supplemented by analysis presented in the SLFs Concept Note (dated May 2019). However, the different pieces of analysis and information remained scattered.

<sup>183</sup> Namely QIPs, Joint Programme for RoL and Human Rights (2016-2019), and any projects accounted under the Darfur Development Strategy Framework.

<sup>184</sup> For example, UNAMID-UNCT Communication exchanges and meeting minutes dated 26/02/2019, 21/03/2019, 01/04/2019.

<sup>185</sup> Joint Capacity Building Needs Assessment for the Sudanese Police Force, November 2018.

internal monitoring system, namely the police transition monitoring system (PTMS)<sup>186</sup>. It was based on eight police-specific benchmarks related to Protection of Civilians, Community Policing, SGBV, Training, Integrity, Investigation, Human Resources and Enabling Services. The implementation of the SLFs fell under the TiP, and monitoring was carried out through monthly performance indicator reports. These were subsequently discussed in meetings led by the Deputy Police Commissioner (DiC) to review implementation progress, provide strategic guidance and direction to UNPOL SLFs personnel, and amend the TiP as required<sup>187</sup>.

A Monthly Performance Evaluation Rating (MPER) was designed to support reporting on TiP benchmarks, through data collection and analysis of activity achievements. The MPER was organised around:

1. number of activities and its contribution to relevant benchmarks;
2. rating of the 45 factors disaggregated as part of the performance indicators;
3. Survey forms: surveys composed of closed-ended questions to measure the opinion of the Sudanese community on the services rendered by the SPF. These include:
  - community-oriented/community vision surveys, with questions about SPF services delivered, and gathering opinion about the security situation, and
  - SPF vision surveys, with questions mirrored in the community's vision for response verification and result comparison.
4. Innovation: documenting of new ideas or skills designed to build the capacity of Darfur' IDPs, SPF, CPV, children, women or communities, whilst assuming a conscious posture towards preventing reputational damage to the Mission<sup>188</sup>.

The design of a solid monitoring sub-system has therefore been welcome, not least because of direct UNPOL co-location with the SPF, rather than with UNCT, which also plays an active role in reporting in the context of SLFs RoL and HR projects. Proof of concept through systematic implementation will be key to test and validate the MPER as a viable framework which could be adopted across the board of SLFs RoL and HR, provided equitable human resources exist across the board to develop and implement such systems<sup>189</sup>. It would be important for the Police component of the Mission, UNPD and DPET to collect those emerging lessons and employ them to inform the design of potential SLFs in the context of upcoming Mission transition in other settings.

Finally, albeit late, investment has been made in the *mapping of data* from the SLFs. The information has been captured for SLFs I and II and publicly released in September of 2020. Through this data visualization and online monitoring system, a range of insights come into view. The platform shows over 10,000 returnees were supported in host communities and over 60,000 Darfuris (women, men and youth) trained across a range of human rights, rule of law, and violence prevention issues. Additionally, 29 courts, 46 resource and youth centres, and 15 police stations and community policing centres, have been constructed or refurbished in areas of potential conflict in Darfur.

As this report was being finalized an M&E framework was under development to track implementation of the on-going SLFs III-V and should the SLFs be taken forward by UNITAMS it could be a potentially useful reference point.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### For UNITAMS

Should the SLFs be adopted as one amongst the peacebuilding implementation modalities, and within the limits of the mandate and resources available:

- 1 Invest effort to reconstruct the Theory of Change of the SLFs to improve program and project monitoring and adaptation going forward. The initiative should be inclusive of Mission/UNCT/national stakeholders (regardless of who retains responsibility for program management, implementation and reporting), given that the joint analysis generated is likely to be central to shaping political and security engagements, beyond programmatic interventions. The Lesson Identification team provides a draft reconstructed TOC in *Annexes II and III* which could be used as a basis for such exercise.
- 2 Draw on the measurement framework being designed for the SLFs as UNAMID comes to closure, and consider the lessons identified from the implementation of the monitoring sub-system of UNPOL, when laying out the M&E of the revamped and tailored SLFs.

### To consider in new Mission transition settings

- 3 In contexts where the SLFs might be introduced as a new mandate implementation modality, both UN Member States and UNHQ Secretariat must strive for ensuring enough support' resources and realistic timeframes needed to safeguard good practice in programming and an improved return on investment, in addition to the key goal of meeting UNSC mandate benchmarks.
- 4 Peacekeeping Missions lack the planning cycles and methods of standard development programming, whilst UNCT can have long-drawn development programming cycles preventing timely sensitive interventions required by UNSC mandates. A middle ground negotiated solution in terms of program cycle steps, methodologies and timelines should be developed upfront, including guidelines to help bridge the two institutional cultures and mandates.
- 5 When designing SLFs initiatives as part of transition processes, include the development of an M&E system, including a ToC and baselines, to ensure a reliable measurement of programming results over time, including in a continuum with other peacebuilding interventions. The LI team provides a draft ToC in *Annex IV* that could serve as a basis for adaptation.
- 6 Apart from foreseeing a final evaluation, incorporate the good practice of carrying-out a mid-term review of the SLFs, in order to assess contribution to intermediate outcomes and obtain recommendations for adjustment of programming.

<sup>186</sup> UNAMID Police Transition Plan FY 2019-2020, UNPOL Presentation on the Transition Implementation Plan, SPF benchmarks from Peacekeeping to Peacebuilding.

<sup>187</sup> Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

<sup>188</sup> UNAMID Police Transition Plan FY 2019-2020.

<sup>189</sup> The Lesson identification team had access to one example of a monthly performance monitoring report (PTMS, 08/03/2020), but it would be important to look through viability of systematic implementation, and understand how the aggregated analysis informed the adaptation of the program support provided to the SPF, or to shaping messaging around key issues.



## Risk Management

### LESSON

Vulnerability to instrumentalization of programs and projects is notable during volatile political and security transitions likely resulting in reputational damage to Missions. This is especially the case where negative repercussions are bore by communities and exposed groups, making it essential to design and strictly implement robust risk management strategies and procedures.

Working in sensitive areas towards change in rule of law and human rights, comprising interaction with justice and security institutions has the potential to trigger conflict.

This is particularly prominent where a legacy of violent transformation of the system, poor administration of justice, and faltering provision of safety and security is widespread, as is the case in Sudan. For example, improving the operational capacity of security forces can unintentionally result in greater opportunities for these to prey on the communities they are meant to serve, either upon political instrumentalization or by institutional culture default. When in turn this is accompanied by the withdrawal of UN civilian and uniformed protective capacities from volatile locations, at-risk communities can end-up attributing responsibility for increased human rights violations to the UN. Reviewing lessons from past donor support to the security and justice sectors in Sudan (including the SPF), and from the UN in other similar contexts could be better factored into UN programming going forward in order to strengthen risk management and prevent and mitigate reputational damage.

A strong stakeholder mapping underpinned by contextual conflict analysis and complemented

by systematic and accurate risk assessments on SLFs projects through implementation of the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN support to non-UN security forces (HRDDP) (where applicable), should result in the adoption and monitoring of robust risk mitigation measures. Whilst the RSF and the NISS<sup>190</sup> have been notorious for their abusive human rights' record and predatory behaviour, fewer committed human rights violations have been generally attributed to the SPF<sup>191</sup>. However, the legacy of joint operations (oftentimes making it difficult to clearly establish distinctions) should not be underestimated, including the tainted reputation earned by the Central Reserve Forces of the SPF for their part in the 'counter-insurgency' operations in Darfur.

More broadly, and historically, the nature of policing in Sudan fluctuated between a militaristic authoritarian paradigm and a civilian law enforcement protective approach, and between a centralized and decentralized model, depending on what was allowed by the political regime of the day<sup>192</sup>. Hence, it would be advisable to – at this early juncture of Sudan's political and security transition – avoid overstating the notion that the SPF is closer to a service rather than a force. Not least because its chronic and systemic organizational problems result in poor reputation in service delivery and protection in Darfur, as attested by CSOs representatives, Women protection networks' members, human rights institutions, IDPs, and community representatives interviewed by the LI team<sup>193</sup>. Supporting the national authorities' development of the SPF into a fully-fledged service is key and needs to be carefully managed, starting with thorough vetting of the SLFs proposed assistance. For example, projects innocuous in other contexts, such as capacitating the Police with the ability to carry out media monitoring<sup>194</sup>, could pose a risk if understood as enabling collection of intelligence for

the benefit of certain power groups, or if instrumentalized for reversal of Revolution gains, through monitoring and suppression of political opposition.

The support awarded to the SPF through the SLFs has been anchored in the premise that infrastructure projects work as crucial enablers for meaningful and sustainable police support and are essential to bring the concept of fair policing (closer) to the citizens. However, it is not automatic that even sequenced with training interventions, this type of support results in enhanced police delivery performance or addresses structural challenges. Furthermore, in this case, the absence of UN human rights monitoring capacity in the SLFs project locations makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of UN support to the SPF. Yet, it could be the only realistic support within a two-year Mission transition phase. This underscores the importance of development of baselines, which could be of future utility beyond support rendered through the SLFs. Also, close monitoring of the community perception surveys which are part of the MPER appeared to offer a sensible means of verification, provided this was effectively observed.

Going forward and concerning infrastructure, an important element would be to agree with beneficiary institutions the possibility for SLFs/AFP staff to extend accompaniment/monitoring over a period beyond the handover<sup>195</sup>. This would enable enquiry into whether the output is being used by the intended beneficiaries for the agreed purpose, as well as deriving results. Non-conformity should be timely communicated to the leadership for further information/clarification seeking at the appropriate level, including continued advocacy and risk mitigation measures if warranted.

In this regard, integration of cross-learning from other areas of UNAMID's transition experience could have been better factored-in by the management structures of the SLFs.

A useful example from which to draw upon was that of the hand-over of Mission premises to national authorities. Sudan state authorities' commitment to using former UNAMID infrastructure solely for civilian purposes was overridden when the Transitional

Military Council was established in April 2019 and issued a decree stating that UNAMID sites in Darfur should be handed over to the RSF<sup>196</sup>. Thereafter sites handed over as part of UNAMID's drawdown from July 2018 to April 2019 were occupied by the RSF<sup>197</sup>. The process was halted by the Mission following vandalism and looting (including by Sudanese uniformed forces) of the El-Geneina and Nyala former UNAMID camps, respectively in May and December 2019. Supported by the UNSC, UNAMID leadership subsequently addressed the issue with the current transitional Government, requesting an investigation, and reiterating the premise of former Mission assets being dedicated solely to civilian purposes. This incident highlighted the significant risk associated to civilian human rights' abuses around those premises, in addition to reputational risks for the Mission, and the UN and AU in general. The application of an HRDDP risk assessment concerning the Decree in question led to UNAMID's advocacy with the international community members represented in Sudan, as well as Geneva and New York to engage with the national authorities towards redressing their position<sup>198</sup>.

The risks associated with 'capture of infrastructure' could therefore be mitigated through application of the HRDDP policy. The latter was also applied through initial checks on SLFs projects, but the capacity for continuous monitoring appeared uneven. A concrete example of similar risks to projects around infrastructure established in remote areas of difficult access was experienced by the lesson identification team, through the visit carried out to a rural court built through the SLFs in Makada, West Darfur. Whilst the rural court was supposedly operational, the respective judge was absent and beyond reach, and the premises were occupied by heavily armed RSF, allegedly for security protection of the infrastructure. The Police station quarters opposite the rural court (built by different project funding) was closed, and the SPF was absent from the vicinity. Insecurity meriting RSF militarised presence in the area was likely a plausible argument given closeness to a problematic border area with Tchad. Yet, this example encapsulates the dilemma and risk associated with infrastructure building in volatile environments,

<sup>190</sup> The Transitional Military Council changed the designation of the National Intelligence Security Services into General Intelligence Service in July 2019, allegedly with the intention to limit its powers to information gathering and analysis. However, recent media reports vehiculate this is not legally the case and those powers are still in force given that the National Security Act of 2010 has not been amended. *'Intelligence agency still can detain and interrogate: statement'*, Sudan Tribune 19/05/2020.

<sup>191</sup> For example, *'The RSF and the escalation of Violence in Sudan; Remote-control breakdown Sudanese paramilitary forces and pro-government militias'*, HSBA for Sudan and South Sudan, Issue brief 27, April 2017; *'Multilateral Damage: The impact of EU migration policies on central Saharan routes'* Clingendael, September 2018.

<sup>192</sup> Ibrahim, Ammar 'Police professional doctrine in Sudan: Establishment and development' International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice, 01/06/2020; Ibrahim, Ammar 'The police of the Sudan: Challenges of centralisation and militarisation', The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles, 04/09/2017.

<sup>193</sup> Interviews Darfur and Khartoum February/March 2020.

<sup>194</sup> Other projects carried-out by the UNAMID Police Component in support of the SPF comprised, for example, development of Emergency Response Centers, Digital Control Rooms, and provision of equipment to the Forensic Science Laboratory.

<sup>195</sup> During consultations and engagement with partners for project approvals, partners commit to ensure deployment of relevant staff into the constructed institutional buildings as part of ensuring functionality and service provision or ensuring retention of services (benefiting both communities and institutions) rendered by trained officers in the case of capacity building interventions.

<sup>196</sup> Decree 102, 2019, signed by Lt. General Abdulfattah AL Burhan on 13/05/2019.

<sup>197</sup> Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

<sup>198</sup> Complementary information received from UNAMID in November 2020.

despite the fact that the location was jointly selected by the UN and the state authorities following UNAMID's mandate prioritisation of supporting local conflict resolution institutions in areas of re-settlement of returnees. It further highlights the importance of capacity for regular project monitoring to verify whether the intended purpose and target beneficiaries are safeguarded, and to communicate appropriately should challenges emerge.

The lesson identification team only visited a selected number of SLFs projects, therefore limiting generalisations. However, this illustration underscores that peacebuilding projects, which may be vulnerable to capture by security forces with proven human rights' abusive records requires improved risk management and strong mitigation measures to cope with unintended consequences, especially in areas of prominent security volatility and during Sudan's transition period.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**To be considered by UNAMID/UNCT in case of mandate renewal/ UNITAMS/new Mission transition settings**

- 1 Strengthen risk management by mainstreaming conflict-sensitivity and a do-no-harm approach, in association with in-depth stakeholder mapping and continuous monitoring of local conflict, political and security dynamics.
- 2 Ensure an attentive peer review of high-risk projects by political affairs, rule of law, and human rights' chiefs, as well as mission leadership, to safeguard robust checks. This is pertinent not only due to the characteristic fragility of the security, rule of law and human rights context, but also given the extensive reputational risks associated to (required) engagement with security forces during transition periods. Drawing on the *experience of Liberia*, consider the pertinence of the Mission working closely with UNCT to strengthen implementation of the HRDDP, and of creating mutually reinforcing links between RoL, HR and POC.

## Sequencing

### LESSON

Complementarity of interventions within and across thematic areas and careful sequencing enabling a multiplier effect are indispensable for coherence of multi-pronged programming such as the SLFs.

From the point of view of sequencing, successful examples of iterative learning on programming between phases of the SLFs, resulted in comprehensive planning to extend the intervention into the Jebel Marra area in Central Darfur during SLFs III (further information in the section on *Siloed Transition*). In addition, planning also evolved leading to purposeful design of flows between infrastructure development and capacity building projects where appropriate. For example, under the SLFs II, the RoL Pillar established six JCCs across Darfur, which were followed by training of paralegals to work in these centres. Also, construction of prison facilities was coupled with provision of technical support to develop SOPs on prisons management and was implemented alongside training of prison officers to apply international standards, whilst working in those facilities and utilizing the SOPs as guidance.

Within a particular thematic area, accomplishment in sequencing revealed good practice on programming on child and women protection, which derived from learning and adopting a project building block approach from SLFs I to II, as highlighted by both beneficiaries and UNCT<sup>199</sup>. Across RoL and HR projects, child courts and child prosecution offices were built, specialized training of trainers was delivered to criminal justice institutions' officials in this field (including SGBV), child friendly remand homes were constructed and equipped, and women and child protection centres were built. A resource book was published on child rights, capacity building and awareness campaigns on SGBV, domestic violence, and child rights and protection (including alternative detention measures) were delivered to child practitioners, community protection networks and GoS officials. This was complemented by sensitization sessions held with target communities on

laws governing SGBV cases and referral mechanisms. The establishment of child rights clubs and the participation of children in a filmmaking initiative addressing harmful traditions including FGM/C and child marriage, were important achievements as well as the breakthrough with the security forces including the RSF on issues of child recruitment and establishment of complaint mechanisms. Accompanying these interventions, training was offered to media personnel on human rights and SGBV basic concepts, as well as principles of journalism and communication skills in order to improve reporting, and promotional materials were produced and disseminated in four Darfur states<sup>200</sup>.

*“The SLFs created an opportunity for an increasingly integrated support to address the drivers of conflict.”*

UNFPA

‘Even if not linked by design, the SLFs resulted in an increasingly integrated approach to address conflict drivers, by expanding continuity and efficiency.’ For example, the same agency is addressing SGBV from the point of view of health within the Service Delivery pillar, but also from human rights and rule of law perspectives, drawing on these pillars’ in a complementary manner. A similar logic applies for instance to the linkages between irrigation and conflict resolution, enabled through applying the RoL and HR perspectives.

UNFPA expanded its activities in Darfur on three main areas of intervention, namely gender-based violence, protection and SGBV through the SLFs programming. Without it, UNFPA would not have had capacity to deliver in Darfur support on gender-based violence, which they regularly provide under its standard programming umbrella on human rights and gender equality. The SLFs also provided invaluable access to the leadership of the SPF through work on the set-up of gender desks in police stations. In turn UNFPA has been able to link this strand of work to the rehabilitation and support to GBV confidential corners at health facilities, therefore connecting a referral mechanism within human rights and rule of law work.

Replication of this sequencing practice between different areas of intervention is critical to respond to the needs of different beneficiaries, contributing to prevent relapse into conflict and to achieve social peace. Systematic design of complementarity between community-level confidence building and trust enhancement initiatives and projects to support capacity development of duty-bearers will be critical, especially in IDP camps and areas and localities where mistrust and lack of legitimacy by state institutions prevails.

For instance, while establishing a state-run police station in an IDP camp may not be immediately feasible, facilitating SPF support for livelihood activities could be considered. This could be done through jointly escorting women who may be harassed or assaulted while collecting firewood or water and offering similar protection to men travelling to town for trade activity to ensure they are not illegally detained<sup>201</sup>. Capitalizing on the infrastructure built, for example the Justice Confidence Centers, by timely sequencing with training and empowering support for paralegal networks’ performance, as well as facilitating civil-society to civil-society mechanisms that enable access to justice support from state institutions also merits systematic design attention. Bringing state security forces’ health units to provide health care in IDP camps alongside civilian service authorities, may be worthwhile as confidence building entry-points.

Another dimension of sequencing to consider given the nature of the SLFs as a multiyear transition initiative (even if funding is only to be secured on annual or semester basis) is an investment in creating stronger foundations for upcoming RoL and HR programming assistance, within the longer peacebuilding continuum. This would entail factoring into the initial discussion with beneficiary institutions the collection of statistic data which can subsequently be used to support evidence of progress, even if the project focuses on training and infrastructure improvement/development. Should the beneficiary institution lack adequate systems and capacity, this dimension of support could be incorporated into project design, for example within the context of upcoming case management database support. A worthwhile contribution towards sustainability, such support could be

199 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

200 Various interviews in Darfur and remotely, February/August 2020. Planning matrices RoL and HRs for SLFs I and II.

201 Joint Patrolling between UNAMID and the SPF, including of IDP camps, only started in September 2020, as this report was being finalised. See footnote 57.



offered without necessarily needing to opt for expensive technological solutions - at least at an initial phase - and would be mutually beneficial from a results-based management perspective.

There appears to be room for SLFs projects to factor-in this dimension systematically, should this modality continue to be used in Darfur, within the limits and resources of UNITAMS. Not underestimating the difficulty in obtaining agreement from judicial and security institutions to share caseload information, it was encouraging to find two positive examples. The first concerns SLFs project strengthening of administrative data collection and record

systems of the Family and Child Protection Units in the four targeted states. This resulted in sharing regular monthly data through the national mechanism for family and child protection units disaggregated by sex, age, and type of physical and sexual violence committed by and against children<sup>202</sup>. The second refers to the initiative of one partner which has begun gathering data regularly in the context of SLFs' support. In El-Fasher, in the context of discussion around the training delivered to rural courts, the coordinator of the North Darfur rural court judges, was able to share concrete figures of cases submitted to the rural courts in 2019<sup>203</sup>.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### To be considered by UNAMID/UNCT in case of mandate renewal

- 1 Invest in confidence-building interventions between communities and state institutions in priority thematic and geographical areas where state legitimacy is problematic and strengthen project complementarity and sequencing through mutually reinforcing types of intervention such as infrastructure building, awareness-raising, training and mentoring.

### To be considered by UNITAMS, and in new Mission transition settings

- 2 Enhance planning around building block (between phases) and consecutive (multi-year) approaches, in order to deliver a relevant time-bound contribution. This would enable the establishment of roots during transition, to sustain the gains of rule of law and human rights assistance' in the continuum to medium and longer term.
- 3 Adopt a systematic approach to building project complementarity within a specific thematic through implementing mutually reinforcing types of intervention (infrastructure, training, awareness-raising, mentoring) targeting duty bearers and rights' holders in parallel.

202 Complementary project information received from UNCT in August 2020. See also State Liaison Functions Data Mapping, comprising trainings on 'data entry and importance of data in planning and policy development' run by UNICEF under the SLFs Human Rights Pillar work.

203 7,744 criminal cases of which 5,708 were dealt with, with remaining awaiting trial; 15,488 civil cases, mostly land disputes, of which 8,832 had been solved.

## Gender-responsiveness

### LESSON

Factoring-in gender as part of an integrated approach to transition planning and implementation maximises responsiveness, if built on previous initiatives and supported by committed and engaged leadership.

Pursuing UNAMID long-standing engagement on its mandate provisions related to the Women, Peace and Security agenda, the Joint Transition Action Plan makes gender mainstreaming a transition principle, highlighting its critical and cross-cutting nature<sup>204</sup>. On a positive note however, collaboration between Mission and UNCT in the framework of transition started in 2014<sup>205</sup>, well before the introduction of the SLFs. UNAMID's Gender Advisory Unit (GAU) began work with UNCT, especially UNWOMEN, UNFPA and UNDP through transfer of activities to those agencies and the Government, transforming the unit's role mainly into one of support. Building on this, and to ensure a smoother end-phase of the transition, including the benefit of full knowledge transfer, five staff of the GAU were collocated with UNWOMEN, in the context of joint SLFs implementation<sup>206</sup>.

Capitalising on UNAMID's existing structures (UNAMID Gender Task Force, gender Focal point system) and in-mission trainings<sup>207</sup> as well as advice provided by the GAU, gender mainstreaming efforts across SLFs programming were carried out to, at a minimum, apply a gender marker to the projects<sup>208</sup>. The GAU, later joined by UN WOMEN in this role, was involved from the beginning in order to ensure a gender responsive approach from the planning to the implementation phase<sup>209</sup>. The Unit assigned a representative to the JTC as foreseen

in planning; however due to the drawdown<sup>210</sup> this staff was unable to dedicate full-time support to this entity.

Importantly, the SLFs project reporting template includes a specific section on gender, enabling relevant information for consolidated gender reporting from across projects<sup>211</sup>. During SLFs I, UN WOMEN staff joined workshops and seminars delivered by the other AFPs purposefully injecting this dimension into their dialogues. Efforts were reinforced and formalized through a gender strategy developed in consultation between the GAU, the JTC, UN Women and UNAMID substantive sections during SLFs II. Specialised training on gender mainstreaming and on Women, Peace and Security topics was delivered to all SLFs staff through joint UN WOMEN/GAU support<sup>212</sup>. These steps would require building upon for improved gender responsiveness across projects of all SLFs pillars going forward.

A good example of responsiveness to gender-based programming has been protection of women and children centred activities, including a strong component around SGBV. For example, support provided by UNPOL/UNCT to the SPF has been visible through gender workshops, training, the construction or rehabilitation of seventeen Family and Child Protection Units (FCPU), and the establishment of forty gender desks across FCPU in several stations across Darfur<sup>213</sup>. Assistance has been provided towards the development of an SPF recruitment strategy that promotes gender balance, and advocacy carried out concerning the role of police and the greater emphasis required by the SPF in responding to the needs of women and vulnerable groups. Support to the SPF for the development and implementation of an SGBV action plan has been foreseen<sup>214</sup>. These efforts

204 "Given women's central role in preventing relapse of conflict and ensuring transformative change the remaining UN presence must pay adequate attention and have expertise on gender and women peace and security (WPS)". Sudan Transition Planning in Darfur, Joint Transition Action Plan, April 2019.

205 Code Cable 1356, 1 June 2014.

206 Remote interview, May/August 2020.

207 Capacity building on gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, gender budgeting, SGBV prevention and response.

208 During the Mission Programmatic Activities Approval Committee (MPAAC), the GAU introduced a gender marker score card to argue for activities promoting gender equality (from 3 to = being gender blind). The overall objective was to maintain a budget allocation for those activities above the 15% mark.

209 Remote interview, May/August 2020.

210 In August 2020, the GAU was composed by twelve staff, including the five embedded in UNCT and the vacant post of chief GAU.

211 The LI team could not ascertain whether this type of aggregated reporting was being regularly produced.

212 Remote interview, May/August 2020.

213 UNAMID Police Transition Plan and Impact Assessment Report of UNAMID Police projects and activities.

214 Idem.

should merit a renewed focus through side-by-side mentoring and individual development of selected SPF officers in relation to vulnerable persons protection and the investigation of rape and SGBV related crimes, complemented by a strengthened emphasis on police/community relations through structured reconciliation/dialogue events.

Progress achieved thus far is undoubtedly result of active leadership<sup>215</sup>, but prioritization of gender-responsive programming<sup>216</sup> across SLFs interventions should be considered in upcoming iterations, with an enhanced focus in the Jebel Marra area’ projects. This concern is as relevant at the level of community-based mechanisms, including by helping authorities identify and institute concrete measures in enhancing participation of women in native administrations, rural courts and reconciliation processes, as it is in ensuring equitable participation of women in training initiatives benefiting the criminal justice system or CSOs. The absence of UN WOMEN in the overall implementation of SLFs IV is a potential missed opportunity to sustain the progress made, or in the case of Jebel Marra, to continue work beyond the exit of UNAMID.

Improved integration of initiatives across different pillars of transition (political and peacebuilding) could be beneficial regarding gender programming. For example, UN WOMEN/UNAMID collaboration supporting implementation of Res. 1325 through facilitation of participation of women in the Juba peace talks, could have been linked to joint SLFs initiatives involving women protection networks<sup>217</sup> and identifying entry-points for follow-up on messaging and action required around SGBV and access to justice, amongst others.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### To be considered by UNAMID/UNCT in case of mandate renewal and by UNITAMS

- 1 Continue to strengthen thematic gender-based programming and extract/promote cross-pillar learning to feed into upcoming SLFs iterative project adjustments, including projects in the Jebel Marra area, as well as to feed into the planning work of UNITAMS.
- 2 Revise or align ongoing and upcoming projects in accordance with the Sudanese National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security (NAP 1325), adopted on June 10, 2020.
- 3 UNAMID, UNCT and UNITAMS leadership should deploy political advocacy in support of gender programming, capitalizing on the current public commitment of the GoS towards tackling women inequality, and the recently adopted Sudanese National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security (NAP 1325).

### To consider in new Mission transition settings

- 4 In contexts where the SLFs might be introduced as a new mandate implementation modality prioritize gender at the inception of the planning and project design phase. This includes mainstreaming gender at the assessment stage, developing baseline data on gender indicators, and identifying gender champions amongst the leadership. As a complement training on gender and inclusive security should be provided to the leadership, members of the coordination mechanism and all SLFs staff.

## Capacity Building

### LESSONS

Potential duplication of training on complementary thematics requires de-confliction at the level of strategic planning of the Mission/UNCT, whilst the provision of training assistance is maximized through joint assessment, tailoring and delivery with the targeted national institution.

Careful analysis leading to support through tailored and sustainable entry-level, follow-on, specialized or refresher trainings, should be complemented by a clearly articulated behavioural change goal.

Capacity building formed a key component of the SLFs project portfolio, allowing to expand training delivery on diverse topics by targeting broader constituencies across a large geographical area. Beneficiaries from the different criminal justice system institutions regarded training very highly, underscoring its usefulness for improved knowledge and skills, experience sharing and networking<sup>218</sup>. The opportunity created for joint multi-stakeholder learning, including non-state actors like academics and CSOs, was highlighted as an added value newly introduced by the SLFs. Where the audience remained limited to a target group from the same institution, it was still appreciated given shortage of opportunities to come together to share experience and reflect on challenges and potential solutions among peers. An example of a highly valued training for its contribution to local dispute resolution around land ownership was that carried out for rural court judges. Implemented by UN-Habitat/UNAMID in collaboration with the Judiciary Training Department, good practice comprised making use of a nationally produced handbook on rural court procedures, previously developed by the Judiciary with UNAMID’s support<sup>219</sup>.

In general, beneficiaries recognized a valuable partnership through close consultations, including participation in the selection of relevant trainings,

as well as in the design and tailoring of some curricula<sup>220</sup>. The replication of training across the different Darfur states was considered a useful capacity multiplier, and the “training of trainers” approach (for example with regards to family and child protection and criminal investigations) valued for enabling endogenous capacity to sustain the effort.

One area for improvement resided around the need to better integrate and articulate training delivered across the board by HR and RoL SLFs Pillars. The key difference identified by the beneficiaries was the approach, either from a rights’ holders or from a duty bearers’ perspective, with potential for improved complementarity and sequencing<sup>221</sup>. This points out the fact that adopting a systematic approach to avoid duplication would be worthwhile, especially considering that the demand for training may increase alongside ongoing changes in the justice and security institutions, and rotation of state officials in the different Darfur states.

The level of training offered merits reconsideration, given acknowledgement that an elementary level of knowledge existed in subject matters covered such as fair trial and basic human rights, due to the cumulative courses delivered by UNAMID over the years, as well as existing national training<sup>222</sup>. Specialized training was in demand concerning complex emerging topics such as transnational organized crime, migration, cybersecurity, as well as areas lagging behind such as crime scene management, specialized forensics and SGBV (well received and more required). International human rights law and international humanitarian law, as well as domestication of covenants and treaties into national legislation were also highlighted<sup>223</sup>. However, an important element to consider is that whilst most end users across the criminal justice chain reported the relevance of training for their individual professional improvement it remains to be seen how this translates into enhanced institutional performance.

215 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020

216 See: DCAF’s Gender and security Toolkit: [www.dcaf.ch/gender-and-security-toolkit](http://www.dcaf.ch/gender-and-security-toolkit)

217 At the time of writing management support already under UNWOMEN after transfer by UNAMID GAU.

218 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

219 See UN-Habitat/UNAMID flyer on Strengthening Rural Court System and Community Based Management to Mediate Land Dispute in Darfur.

220 The capacity building activities were often implemented utilizing specialized training manuals developed or adapted jointly. For e.g. on promotion and protection of human rights within the police forces, training curricula for Police and non – commissioned police on justice for children, treatment of victims of trafficking for police officers, training manual on justice for children for prosecutors and judges.

221 Interviews Darfur February/March 2020.

222 Idem.

223 Ibidem.



From the perspective of UNAMID/UNCT, trainings enabled access to information concerning institutional priorities and strategies that otherwise might not be available and fed into shaping some complementary interventions at the Darfur state level. However, it is unclear if this information was systematically analysed at an aggregated level and

iteratively factored back into strategic planning and prioritization by UNAMID/UNCT. Furthermore, with the COVID-19 pandemic, capacity building activities have suffered significant delays in implementation, which will be difficult to recover from until the end of the SLFs (*see also lesson on adaptability and flexibility and the impact of COVID-19*).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### To be considered by UNAMID/UNCT in case of mandate renewal

- 1 Human Rights and RoL SLFs pillars should carry out an iterative review of the current training offer aiming to reduce duplication, increase complementarity, and ensure responsiveness to developments on the ground, including changing typology of disputes and criminality being brought before the justice system in Darfur.
- 2 On the one hand, tailoring of curricula for upcoming trainings should be preceded by an effort to analyze training previously offered by the UN, other partners, and the federal/national training system of the security and justice institutions. On the other hand, it should factor-in the needs articulated by the specific interlocutors, considering whether these are entry-level, refresher courses or specialized trainings.

### For UNITAMS and to consider in new Mission transition settings

- 3 A comprehensive review of training offered to date coupled with a forward-looking assessment considering the needs of local communities, CSOs, and women protection networks amongst others, would be desirable before proceeding investment in this field, either through SLFs or another modality adopted during Mission transition.
- 4 Training for security and justice actors should be advanced towards balance between leadership and professional development competencies, complementing skills development with desired behavioural change (linking aptitude and attitude). Improvement in professional capability and individual confidence should supersede awareness-raising, aiming towards reinforced integrity and improved decision-making. For such impact to fully materialize, this type of training would have to be part of a broader package of institutional development support comprising a review of rules and regulations, human resource management, integrity mechanisms and incentives/disincentives alongside career paths.

# ANNEXES

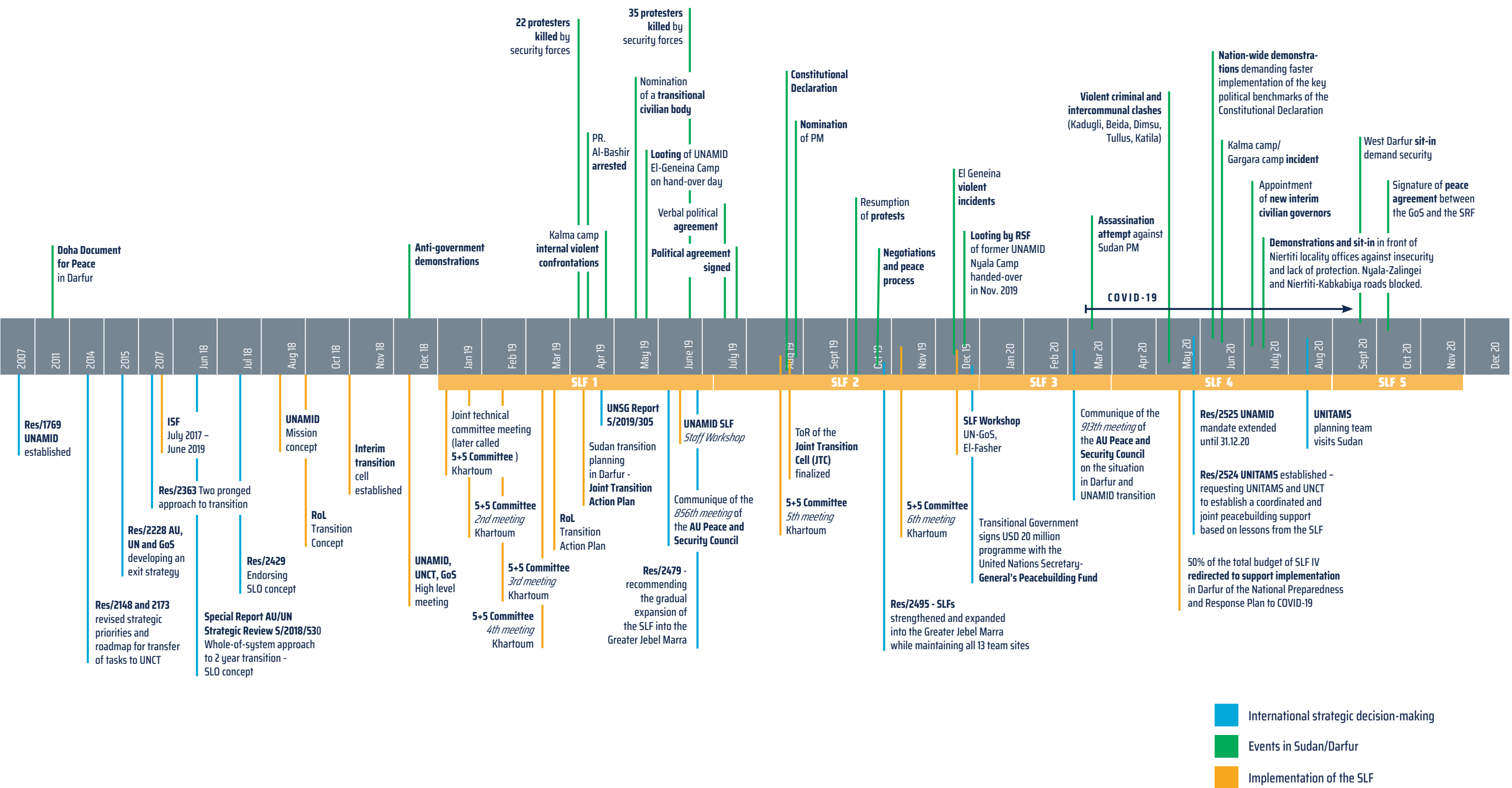
## Timeline

## Theory of Change 1

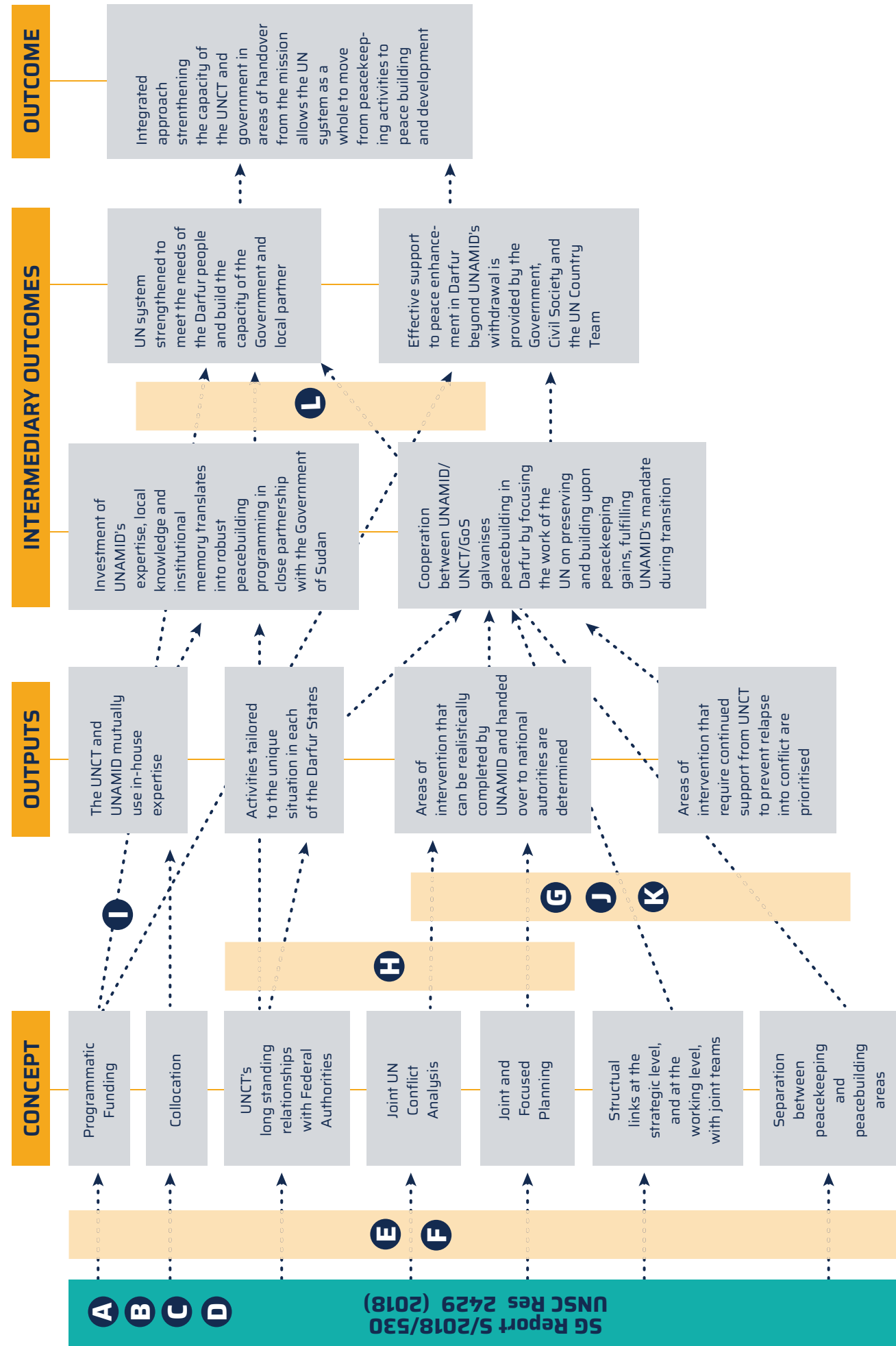
## Theory of Change 2

## Theory of Change 3

UN/AU Darfur Transition | Timeline of Events







## ASSUMPTIONS

A

Sufficient shared political and situational analysis gained through an inclusive strategic review mission constitutes a key step towards ownership of the new SLF concept by UN headquarters (HQ) entities.

B

To accelerate UNAMID transition, the development of an operational tool (SLF) through division of labour, namely concept and principles developed by HQ and operationalization mechanisms by UNAMID/UNCT Sudan, leads to collective ownership and to tailor-made programming.

C

Endorsement by the UNSC MS through funding allocation by the 5th Committee/ACABQ develops from understanding the value for money of UNCT as an implementing partner of UNAMID during transition, to sustain peacekeeping gains and prevent relapse into conflict.

D

UNAMID programmatic funding from the assessed budget provides a kick start to peacebuilding through the SLF, but a successful transition towards sustaining peace in Darfur requires sequenced and complementary UN funding arrangements (PBF), and further contribution by donors.

E

UNAMID and UNCT are provided with the means (proper understanding, staffing, funding from the programmatic assessed budget of peacekeeping) and tools (policies, processes and procedures) to operationalize the SLF concept.

F

Partnership between UNAMID and UNCT based on comparative advantage increases efficiency of the SLF support provided towards sustainable solutions to the critical drivers of conflict.

G

An effective integrated workstream linking the programmatic tool (SLF) with the remainder components of the Transition is operational.

H

The development of shared priorities and analysis between UNAMID, UNCT, and the Government of Sudan grounded on existing strategic frameworks (Integrated Strategic Framework, the Darfur Development Strategy, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the Multi-Year Humanitarian Strategy 2017-2019) to inform the planning process, is a key step towards joint ownership and implementation of the SLF in Darfur.

I

Effective SLF programming requires joint analysis, planning, implementation and reporting of projects, in addition to an instrumental coordination capacity.

J

Collocation reinforces knowledge transfer, allowing the intervention to be based on complementarity - whereby UNAMID transfers operational and local contextual expertise and networks, and UNCT transfers knowledge of programmatic approaches.

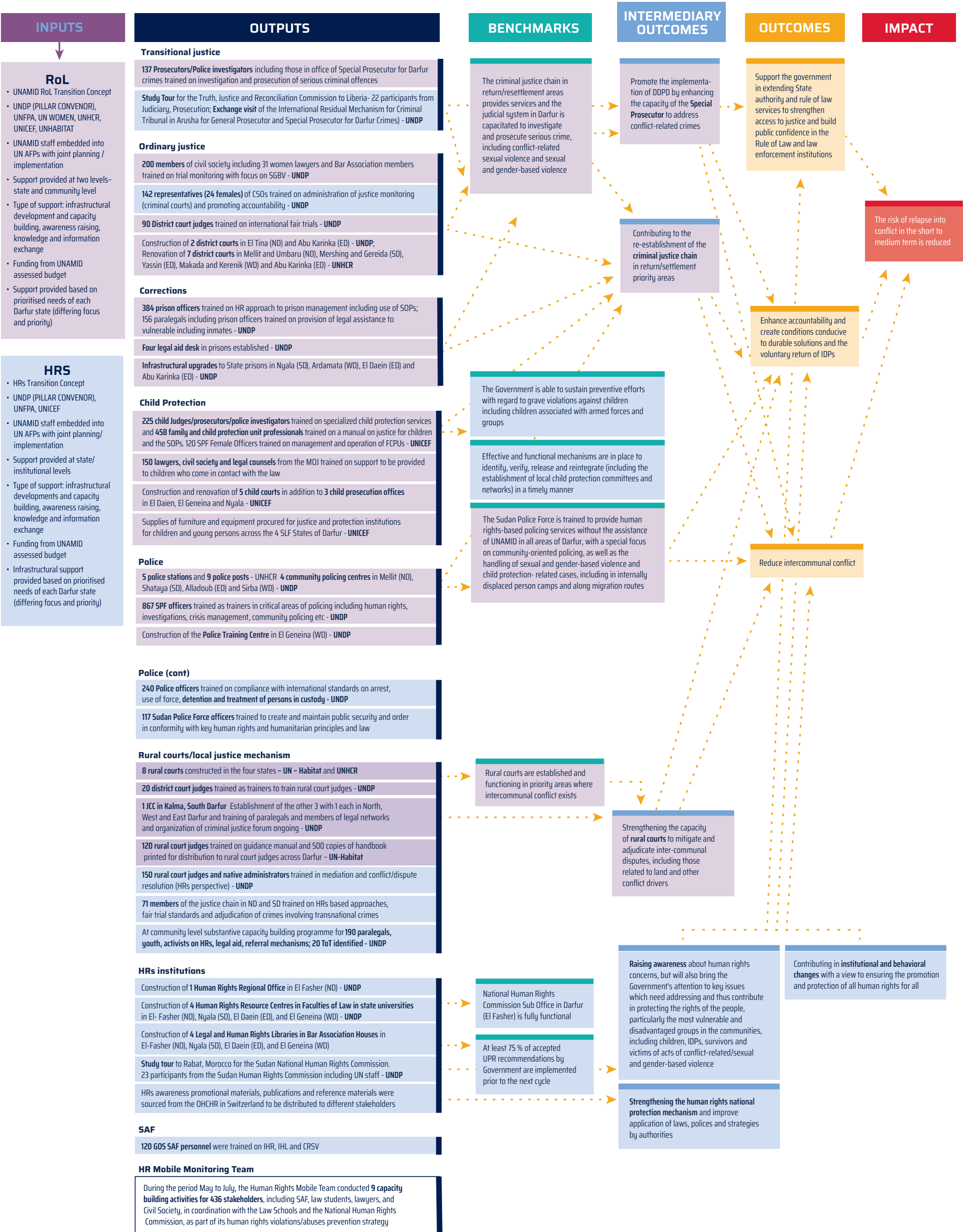
K

Dialogue and communication between the federal (Sudan) and the state (Darfur) level is in place to ensure bottom-up and top-down communication on the SLF initiative.

L

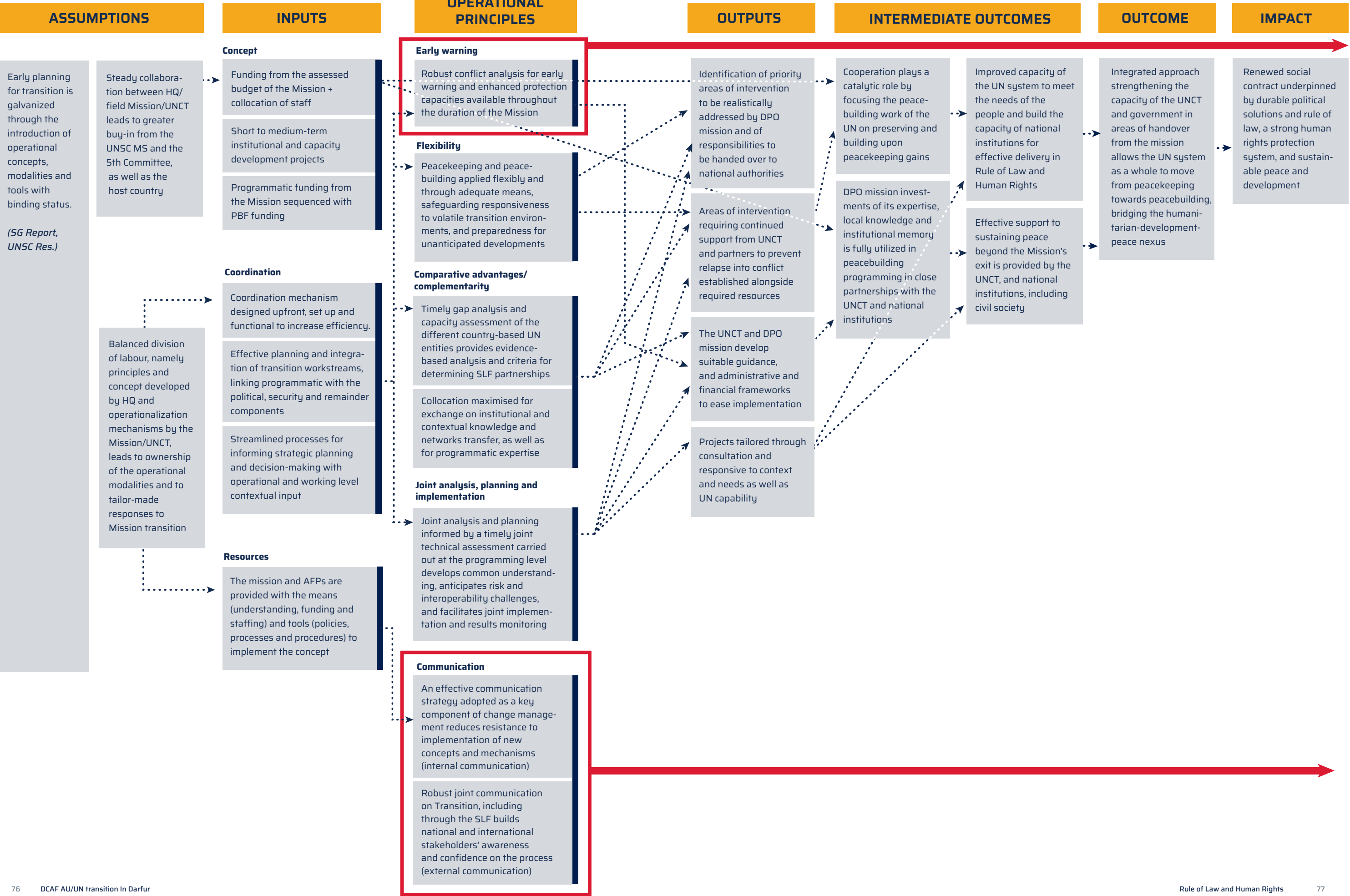
Suitable NGOs exist in Darfur to partner on project implementation, and their progressive capacity strengthening through the SLF will enable transfer of support capacity and sustainability of work in rule of law and human rights.

Theory of Change of the SLFs | ROL & HRS Implementation





Theory of Change of the SLFs | Baseline concept for replication





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