



**EUROPEAN UNION**

DELEGATION TO THE REPUBLIC OF SUDAN

## European Union celebrates Water Diplomacy Week in Sudan



*A Darfuri Girl is collecting clean drinking water at Kalma Camp one of the biggest IDP camps in Darfur. The drinking water station was funded by the European Union's ECHO project. Water located in the camps reduces the burden of walking long hours in unsafety to bring water*

Water is life and availability of water is increasingly being affected by global climate change. Last December, 195 countries gathered in Paris to negotiate a new global climate agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The result – the first-ever climate deal – sets out an action plan to put the world on track to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2oC. To further underline their determination, participating countries also agreed to pursue efforts to limit temperature increase to 1,5oC. Now, ten months on from that historic outcome, the European Union remains committed to the Paris Agreement and Sudan should be too. In particular, we have appreciated the efficient and constructive role of Sudan as coordinator of the pan-African position in Paris. However, there is no room for complacency after the success of the Paris Conference; for the vision of a global low emissions future to materialise, our attention needs to turn to putting our words into action.

Already in 2016, we have seen encouraging signs that our partners around the world are keen to maintain the unprecedented political momentum in support of climate action. More than 180 countries have now signed the Paris Agreement and 22 have completed their domestic ratification procedures and become Parties to the Agreement. We are further encouraged to learn that Sudan is currently well on its way to ratifying the Paris Agreement.

Ratifying the agreement on its own, however, will not deliver the necessary greenhouse gas reductions, adaptation action and financing. Equally important are the steps countries will take to meet the commitments made in Paris, starting with the policy and legislative frameworks required to develop robust national climate plans and international approaches.

The European Union and its Member States are taking concrete implementation very seriously. We are moving forward with our ambitious domestic climate policies, with new proposals that will help us meet our emissions reduction target of at least 40% by 2030 and further drive the transition to a low-carbon economy. We have heard concerns that taking action against climate change could affect economic growth. But indeed the opposite is true: our emissions have decreased by 23% since 1990, while GDP has grown by 46% in the same period. During these years, we have created new jobs, businesses, technologies and competitive advantages that prepare us better for the new climate compatible economy.

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In Sudan, the EU has long supported the development of national adaptive capacities to combat climate change. For example, the Wadi El Ku (WEK) Catchment Management project in North Darfur showcases a unique platform whereby institutions and communities to establish well-informed decisions regarding high risk natural resources, such as water. The project also prioritises the role of women at the heart of enhanced livelihoods resilience, while sustaining the environment.

The European Union has more than two decades of experience in developing and implementing ambitious climate policy, but we know that many of our partners are doing so for the first time. We stand ready to share our experience and lessons-learned for the benefit of others – we already have extensive climate policy co-operation with some of our key partners; most notably through our flagship operation the EU Global Climate Change Alliance. Erratic weather has demonstrated devastating consequences in Sudan. This year's El Niño drought directly affected 1.2 million people and was followed by heavy flooding in some of the same regions. Since December 2015, the EU has made available EUR 539 million to support population in countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America most affected by the food security crisis brought on by El Niño. EUR 30 million went to the EU's humanitarian aid department ECHO in Sudan to provide the most affected people with food assistance, nutrition support and protection of livelihoods. The EU is committed to supporting Sudan and other climate-vulnerable nations to develop national climate plans and make the transition to low-carbon climate-resilient economies. The European Union has allocated EUR 8.5 million for initiatives that strengthen the local communities' resilience to climate change shocks as well as improve the capacity of local authorities and stakeholders to prevent and address climate change in a sustainable way. The beneficiaries are rural communities and remote areas characterised by high rate of environmental degradation (including desertification, land degradation and drought), coupled with low human development. The areas will include North Darfur, Kassala, River Nile and Northern States where rising temperatures, decreasing rainfall, fluctuations in the River Nile, and increased wind speeds have resulted in lower crop yields, reduced livestock production, increased river bank erosion and land degradation.

Sudan's participation in climate negotiations, which was actively supported by the EU and members of the delegation, has contributed to finalising Sudan's Individual Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) to low carbon policy already. Many European Union Member states also support Sudan. **France**, which has developed a very close relationship with all the stakeholders in Sudan during the preparation of the COP21, is considering to further strengthen its climate change focus in development aid. France is already contributing to the project "Implementing Climate Change Adaptation Measures to Build Resilience of rain fed farmer and pastoral communities" implemented by UNDP in Gedaref State.

In addition, the **United Kingdom** allocated GBP 10 million to support Sudan to better understand and integrate climate and environment issues into programmes, plans and policies. This recognises the importance of the environment and natural resources to people's livelihoods and to the economy, and the risks due to a changing climate in Sudan. The UK has also allocated GBP 27 million to support rural communities in the east and west of Sudan to better adapt to climate risks by improving their access to and management of water resources.

As part of a trilateral project between Sudan, IGAD and the **German** Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, GIZ is about to reduce land degradation in selected locations in Kassala and Gedaref by constructing water terraces. Working with local communities, the project aims at improving the management of the scarce water resources.

Whereas the **Netherlands** is traditionally known for its fight to reclaim land from the seas, in Sudan it is supporting initiatives to make more efficient use of the limited water supplies in Eastern Sudan. Innovative water harvesting and small-scale irrigation schemes increase the amount of arable land for local farmers and boost rural development. In March 2016, the Netherlands hosted a workshop for EU diplomats working on water diplomacy for the Eastern Nile region. The workshop focused on the Blue Nile and finding ways to connect EU activities in this area, and to explore the possibility for third parties to play a role. Participating diplomats presented possible activities to a panel including the Egyptian and Ethiopian Ambassadors and representatives of the Sudanese Government.

The European Union recognises the opportunities as well as the challenges of transboundary water diplomacy, a particular issue for Sudan with the River Nile. The EU and many of its member states support the Nile Basin Initiative, the regional partnership which aims to achieve sustainable socio-economic development through the equitable utilisation and benefit from the common water resources. We welcome Sudan's role in encouraging other riparian countries to ensure the opportunities of clean

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hydropower are managed cooperatively, noting the ongoing discussions on the filling and operations of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

As well as developing long-term climate strategies, there are actions we all need to take now. In just a few months, countries will gather in Marrakesh to translate into action the political agreement that was reached in Paris. Building capacity to act, addressing loss and damage associated with climate change and setting out a roadmap to reach climate finance targets are just some of the issues on the table. Before then, countries will also aim to reach multilateral agreements on limiting aviation emissions and phasing out highly climate warming gasses used in refrigeration and air conditioning.

And it is not just governments taking action. Businesses, cities and civil society all have a crucial role to play in delivering the action on the ground that will really make a difference. The Sudanese private sector, like the civil society organizations, is vigorously engaged in the advocacy concerning climate change issues, and was present during the discussions of the Paris conference.

Paris was a defining moment in the safeguarding of the planet for future generations. We must maintain that momentum in the months and years ahead, because the prize is worth it: lower emissions, greater energy security and energy efficiency, innovation-driven growth will all benefit people's livelihoods, environment and economy. There is a lot of work to do, and the European Union looks forward to a continued partnership with the Sudan.

\*This article was signed by Jean-Michel Dumond, the Ambassador-Designate of the EU in Sudan, on behalf of the resident European Union Heads of Mission