



Sudan Development Program Press Conference Q & As

Q. What is the Sudan Development Program?

A. The Sudan Development Program is a joint venture set up under the Development Program umbrella and endorsed by the Government of Sudan to raise the profile of the country as an economic force, highlighting Sudan's enormous potential as a trade and investment destination and demonstrating that it is now "open for business".

Q. What are the main aims of the Sudan Development Program?

A. The Sudan Development Program's main aims are to attract foreign investment into Sudan to facilitate the country's development, to promote bilateral relations, to provide the international business community with direct access to ministers and government officials and to give the Sudanese private sector a direct business channel to the global community.

Q. What commercial opportunities within Sudan are you referring to?

A. Sudan is the largest and one of the most diverse countries in Africa, with a mixed economy and plentiful natural resources providing the platform for commercial investment across all industry sectors.

Q. When you say natural resources are you referring to oil?

A. Sudan is blessed with abundant natural oil reserves, reserves that could put it into the league of the Gulf States, with a proven two billion barrels of recoverable oil and estimates that go far beyond that. Current production rates are set at around 450,000 barrels per day, with aims to increase productivity to 800,000 barrels per day by 2007.

However, Sudan's natural resources do not begin and end with oil. Sudan is one of the few remaining countries in the world to possess a huge wealth of undiscovered natural minerals. In a geological study of Sudan, the Arab Mineral Organisation identified 36 natural minerals found in around 245 locations. These included gold, silver, chromite, iron, magnesium, copper, zinc, nickel, lead, tungsten, asbestos, talc, kaolinite, phosphate, quartz, uranium, granite, feldspar and sulphate minerals.

Agriculture also plays a key role in the Sudanese economy. Cotton and gum arabic remain Sudan's major agricultural exports, while grain sorghum (dura) represents the principal food crop and wheat is grown for domestic consumption. Other products include sesame seeds and peanuts, which are cultivated both for export and domestically. Livestock production is also an area of vast potential, with animals such as camels and sheep exported to Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other countries in the Arab region. However, there are still many problems for Sudan's agricultural sector to overcome in order to meet its full potential, the biggest being irrigation and transportation.



Q. What other opportunities does Sudan provide?

A. Key infrastructure projects such as improved roads, public services and transport also provide tremendous business opportunities. One of the major impediments to Sudan is its dilapidated transportation infrastructure – with a land mass of over 2.5 million square kilometres and with limited finances, it has struggled to implement the changes required for the necessary development, with the road network mainly concentrated in the north and east of the country, the main highway linking Khartoum with Port Sudan.

Port Sudan is the only seaport of Sudan, handling a large percentage of the country's trade. Founded in 1906 as a modern harbour, it provides the commercial and shipping centre for the wealthy cotton-growing region of the valley of the Nile River, along with many other agriculture products.

Another key sector in Sudan is healthcare, where levels are well below those attained in other Arabic countries. Life expectancy in Sudan is 55 years, while for many of its neighbours it is somewhere between 60 and 70. Sudan has one of the lowest rates of pharmaceutical usage and is vastly inferior to the minimum five dollars per capita set by the World Health Organisation. The industry is in serious need of redevelopment and is dependent on hard currency to enable the import of raw materials, packaging and spare parts. Certain essentials are required to enable it to conform to global specifics.

Sudan has a healthy tourism sector, mainly due to its abundance of natural resources and varied climate. It is one of the richest African countries in terms of wildlife, birds and the natural scenery of the River Nile, all of which provide incentives for investment. Tourism is an important sector both in promoting its rich cultural heritage and in strengthening its ties with the rest of the world.

These are only some of the limitless opportunities offered by Sudan for commercial investment, the country also benefiting from a well-established banking infrastructure, incorporating both state-owned and private sector institutions.

Q. What level of financial support has been pledged by international donors?

A. International donors pledged \$4.5 billion for the funding of projects in southern Sudan at a donors meeting in Oslo in April 2005. Funds from the meeting have already been put to good use in projects such as the Lokichoggio-Kapoeta-Juba-Road and the planned railway connecting Sudan with the Kenyan port of Mombasa.

Q. What is the next step for the program following this event?

A. Today serves primarily as a precursor, a launching pad for the inaugural Sudan Development Program Summit, which will take place in Dubai on 12-14 February 2006. However, the Sudan Development Program is much more than just a series of summits, it is a 365 days-a-year project



that will promote the public affairs of Sudan, provide the country's key officials with access to the principal decision makers in the UK, US, the European Union and the United Nations and bring international companies and investors to the country on an ongoing basis.

Q. Why is this event taking place in Khartoum yet the summit taking place in Dubai?

A. This is one of the clearest examples of why there is such a need for Sudan to develop all aspects of its infrastructure. The summit is expected to pay host to over 500 delegates, including ministers, high ranking government officials, ambassadors and senior level corporate executives.

At the moment, Sudan's hotel and hospitality sector is not equipped to accommodate them, though much construction is taking place. A smaller one-day event such as this poses less of a problem, but for a large-scale three-day summit Dubai provides a venue and level of hospitality that is quite simply second to none. However, in light of the construction being undertaken the intention is for the 2007 annual summit to take place in Khartoum.

Q. What of Sudan's relationship with the US?

A. Though obviously there is still a lot more to be achieved in terms of diplomatic relations, positive steps are being taken. The recent visit of first vice president and SPLM leader Salva Kiir Mayardit to Washington, where he met with US Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice - a regular visitor to Sudan - shows the ongoing dialogue between the two countries. A keen advocate of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and of the role to be played by Sudan's new unity government, the US has also engaged in communications with Ali Osman Taha, vice-presidential representative of the northern part of the unity government.

Q. What is the background of those behind the Sudan Development Program?

A. The team behind the Sudan Development Program are specialists in long term strategic trade initiatives within emerging global markets. The directors have vast experience in government relations, event and conference management and promoting bilateral relations.

Having forged strong relationships with governments, trade organisations and commercial attaches across the globe, its primary objectives are to promote and facilitate commercial development, generate investment and improve ties between local business and global commerce. The Sudan Development Program will look to accomplish these objectives and provide the ideal platform for bringing Sudan into the 21st century.

Q. How is the Sudan Development Program funded?

The Sudan Development Program is wholly funded through corporate sponsorship and delegate fees. All revenues from the Dubai summit will be reinvested into the Sudan Development Program.