Consultations on Options for the Sequencing and Linkages of Political Processes during the Transitional Period in Sudan

Report on Outcomes of Consultations (April – July 2020)

AUGUST 2020

CONFLICT DYNAMICS® INTERNATIONAL

Mission Statement

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Acknowledgements

This report would not be possible without the perspectives of the many Sudanese who graciously shared their knowledge, experiences, and time with Conflict Dynamics' Sudan Team. Conflict Dynamics acknowledges with gratitude the following colleagues for their valuable contributions to this publication: Mai Tarig Amir Taha for managing the project and for developing the options, conducting many consultations, analysis, and drafting; Mohammed Aljack for conducting many consultations and providing analytical inputs; Elizabeth Wright for analytical inputs, drafting, and review; and Kamal Mohamed Altayib for his excellent translations.

Conflict Dynamics wishes to express its gratitude to Government of the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and DT Global for their generous support of the work under which the consultations were conducted and this report was produced. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this report are those of the authors and the actors consulted and do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of the FCO or DT Global.

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1. Summary

Sudan's transitional period is ambitious. It aims to transform a previously autocratic State into a pluralistic democracy, and in doing so calls for a number of political, reform-oriented, and procedural processes to manage the changes. Yet one year in, while progress has been made in several areas, implementation has not been coordinated, comprehensive, or transparent. There is a need and opportunity for the Transitional Government and other actors to develop and build consensus around a coherent plan for the transition period.

In April 2020, Conflict Dynamics developed and disseminated a product with three draft options for discussion on how various transitional dialogue processes can be sequenced and linked effectively to inform a comprehensive plan for the transitional period. From April to July 2020, Conflict Dynamics conducted virtual consultations with 94 Sudanese actors from the transitional government, political parties, non-State armed movements, academia, resistance committees, and civil society to gather their perspectives and ideas on the options. The consultations aimed to support actors to think about how to reconcile the different agreements resulting from the peace talks, include other actors in any follow-up processes, and consider how the outcomes of the peace talks should coordinate with other transitional processes.

The main findings of the consultations (which are described in detail below) are the following:

- The vast majority of those consulted agreed that one of the main obstacles to the success of the transition period is the **absence of a comprehensive, integrated, and common vision** for the period among the parties that are – and can be engaged in – shaping the transition. They praised the idea a dialogue to develop a strategy for the rest of the transition period.
- Option 1, which includes a process to compile the peace agreements into a single agreement, was ***not accepted*** as respondents agreed that such a process would be impossible to complete due to the huge variation between the non-State armed movements' positions which they are unlikely to be willing to re-negotiate.
- ***Most respondents accepted*** Option 2 (Peace process → Way forward dialogue → Electoral process → Constitution process) as it provides flexibility to bring each non-State armed movement in separately and leaves the door open for them to join whenever they are ready.
- Some viewed Option 3 (Peace process → Constitution process → Electoral process) as the ***most realistic***, since it is the simplest and most likely to be implemented smoothly.
- A majority of respondents agreed that the **current peace process is not sufficiently inclusive**, has not been implemented transparently, lacks public engagement, and does not coherently feed into the constitutional process.
- Most respondents supported **increasing women's participation** during the transitional period (and beyond) and agreed with the 40% quota for women in the Legislative Council, as per the Constitutional Declaration. However, multiple people underscored that the question of how to effectively select a diverse group of women representatives is a challenge.
- Many respondents noted that **youth have played pivotal roles** in bringing about the transition period, and the transition will not succeed if youth are not able to participate.

2. Introduction

The Constitutional Declaration of August 2019 calls for a number of processes to occur during the transitional period.[1] These include political processes, such as the peace process, constitutional process, and elections; reform processes that cover civil services reform, judicial system reform, and economic reforms; and procedural processes such as conducting a national census. Many of the political, reform, and procedural processes complement each other and are linked; for example, transitional justice is contingent on the successful outcomes of the peace process. The existing peace process in Sudan consists of a number of negotiations between the Transitional Government of Sudan and leadership of various non-State armed movements conducted through separate 'tracks.' Currently, there is no plan for how to reconcile the different agreements that result from these negotiations, how to include non-State armed movements not party to the process, or how the outcomes of the peace process will work in coordination with other transition processes.

What is needed is a comprehensive strategic vision and plan for how to integrate the various political processes and sub-processes that are essential for successful democratic transformation. Through providing methodological frameworks, comparative examples, and technical expertise, Conflict Dynamics has worked to support the exploration of options for the peace process and how it relates to other political processes during the transitional period. It developed a set of options for the sequencing and linkages of the transitional period processes for a successful transition, and then held a series of consultations with Sudanese actors to gather their perspectives and ideas on the options. The consultations aimed to support actors to think beyond the peace talks to how the outcomes of those talks could be reconciled and how they relate to the other transitional processes. This report describes the results of those consultations. This work was supported through grant contributions from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and DT Global, as well as Conflict Dynamics' internal financial resources.

3. Methodology

In April 2020, Conflict Dynamics completed development of and disseminated a product with three draft options for discussion on how the transitional dialogue processes – including the peace process – can be sequenced and linked effectively to inform a comprehensive plan for the transitional period.[2] Conflict Dynamics' previous analysis and engagements with Sudanese actors informed the design of the options.[3] To date, the presentation has been shared with more than 229 individuals (Sudanese and regional/international actors).[4]

[1] "Sudan Constitutional Declaration," August 2019, http://constitutionnet.org/vl/item/sudan-constitutional-declaration-august-2019.

[2] Conflict Dynamics International, "Options for Transition Period Processes: Linkages and Sequencing of Political Dialogue Processes in the Sudan," April 2020, https://cdi.docsend.com/view/s/ 7bnba6fn27.

[3] Conflict Dynamics developed the options using a three-step iterative approach to developing options for political dialogue processes or governance arrangements that it has refined over many years of experience. This includes 1) Analysis (of context, existing processes/arrangements, political interests, opportunity areas, considerations); 2) Design (draft options, test/refine options); 3) Consensus: *within* and *across* constituencies.

[4] This includes 162 individuals with whom Conflict Dynamics shared the presentation directly, and at least 67 individuals that Conflict Dynamics is aware of who received the presentation through their networks.

Using this product as a basis for discussion, from April to July 2020 Conflict Dynamics conducted bilateral consultations over the phone/Skype with 94 different Sudanese actors (27 women and 67 men, 29 of whom were youth) to gather their ideas and feedback on the next steps for the peace process and how it relates to the other transitional processes. This included 30 political actors from the transitional government, political parties, non-State armed movements, and academia, and 64 members of resistance committees, women's groups, and other civil society groups. These actors represented 10 different states or areas: Aljazeera, Blue Nile, Kassala, Khartoum, North Darfur, Nuba Mountains, Red Sea, South Darfur, West Kordofan, and White Nile.

Objectives of the consultations

The consultations aimed to support actors to think beyond the peace talks to how the outcomes of those talks can be reconciled and how they relate to the other transitional processes. The following are the consultations' specific objectives:

a. To inspire comprehensive thinking on the transition period processes.
b. To facilitate discussion around what people view as the best options for concluding a comprehensive and inclusive peace process.
c. To gain perspectives on the best option for linkages and sequencing of the peace process with the other transition period processes.
d. To explore ways to reach agreement among political actors on synchronizing the peace process outcomes with the transitional Constitutional Declaration and on the priorities of the transition period.
e. To explore the best ways to increase participation of youth and women.

Structure and questions of the consultations

Each consultation began with a presentation of the options laid out in the product *"Options for Transition Period Processes: Linkages and Sequencing of Political Dialogue Processes in the Sudan"* and addressing any questions that the consulted person may have had. It then proceeded to a structured conversation based on guiding questions.

Below is the full list of questions for the consultations that were designed to achieve the objectives above. However, each consultation was tailored to the individual being consulted, and depending on the person's experience and knowledge, as well as the flow of the conversation, each question may not have been asked. Due to developments in the context, a few questions were added during the consultation period and thus were not asked of everyone, but this addition was made to ensure the questions remained relevant and to support the overall approach.

a. Which is the most preferable option to you, and why?
b. Which option is most likely to bring peace and stability in Sudan?
c. What is the most interesting part of your preferred option?
d. Which option is the least preferable to you?
e. What part(s) in it can you not live with?
f. What is your opinion of the ongoing peace process?
g. What are the causes of conflicts in some states? How can peace and stability be ensured in these states?

h. What kind of process/mechanism can be added to the current process make the peace process more inclusive?
i. Do you think the proposed dialogue among the political actors can help in developing a shared vision for the transition period?
j. What part of the transitional government should be responsible for such a dialogue?
k. How can the participation of women and youth groups be strengthened across all transition period processes?
l. What do you think of the ongoing debate over the appointment of governors of the states and the formation of the Legislative Council?
m. How will these debates influence the success and stability of the transitional period?

The following sections compile the outcomes of the consultations, starting with their responses to the draft options. They are categorized according to thematic topic.

4. Results: Options for sequencing and linkages of the transitional period processes

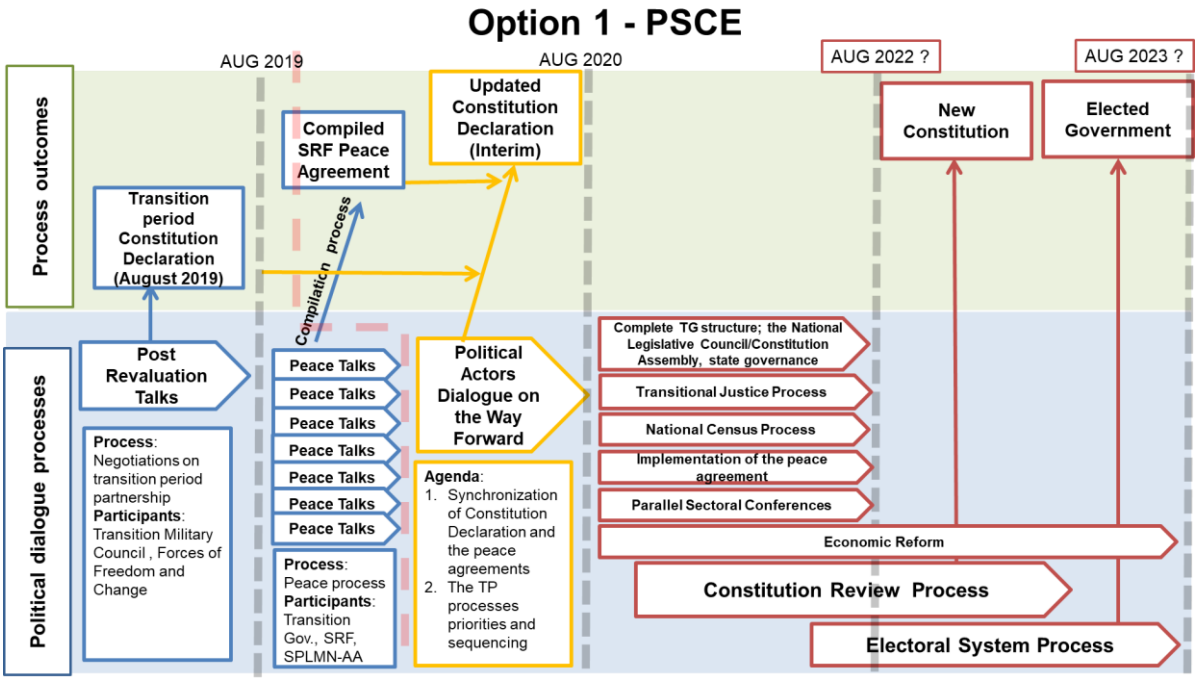
Respondents generally agreed that the three options were logical and that it should be possible to implement them provided that there is political will to reach consensus. Almost all respondents agreed that a vision is needed for how to exit the current (as of July 2020) political instability accompanying the transitional period since its beginning. Overall, they suggested that dialogue should form the starting point for the next step(s) (whether it be a peace conference, way forward dialogue, or constitutional conference). Additionally, a few respondents provided insights applicable across the options:

- Civic and political education is essential for all possible scenarios and options,
- The political will and current level of coherence on the transitional period objectives among the Transitional Government and Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) is fragile and might not be sufficient to implement the options.
- Economic reform is a crucial and controversial issue, and if reforms cannot be implemented effectively, it could threaten the success of the transitional period.

Perspectives expressed on each of the three options are provided below.

Option One

(Peace process → Compiled agreement → Way forward dialogue → Constitution process → Elections)



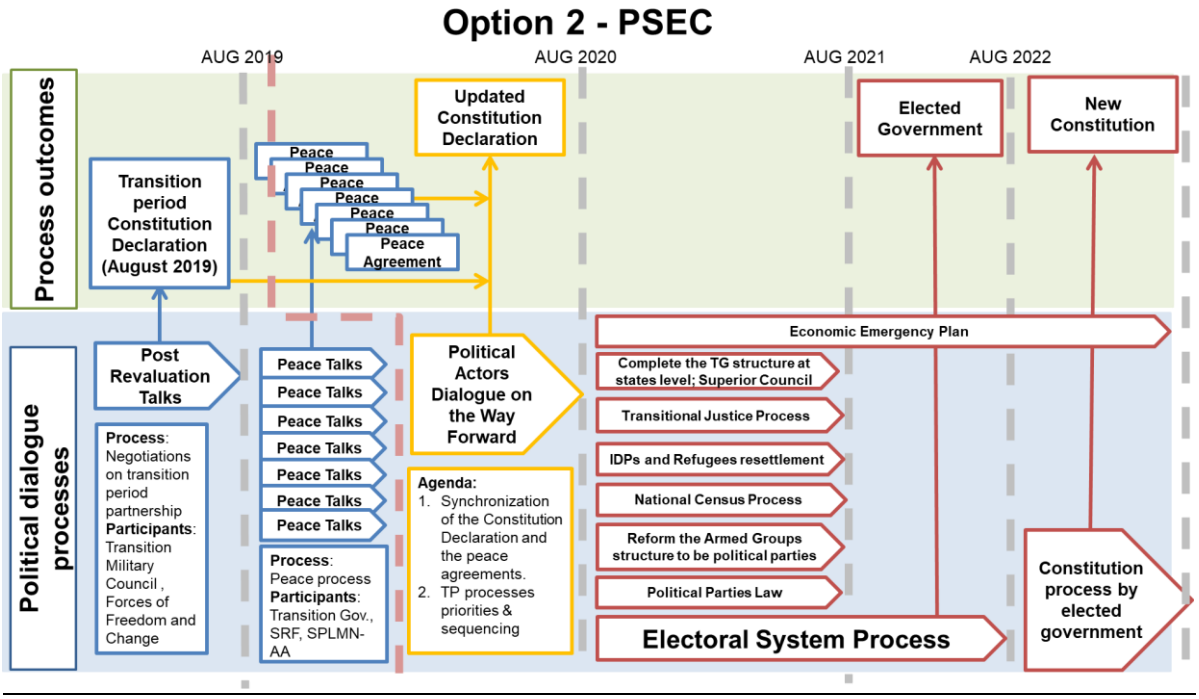
a. This option was ***not accepted*** by almost all respondents, as they agreed that it was impossible to compile the disparate peace agreements into a single agreement even if a comprehensive peace process occurs. This is because of the huge variation between the non-State armed movements' positions which they are likely to continue to maintain and refuse to re-negotiate, particularly as confidence in and among political actors is lacking.
b. Most respondents expressed that it is impossible to have a process that can bring all political actors together as there is a rampant loss of confidence among political actors and in the public's confidence of political actors' ability to reach consensus. Youth, women, and civil society have routinely been excluded, which also adversely affects the consensus process.
c. Confidence between the different governmental bodies is low, which decreases coordination among the bodies, which then contributes to the public's lack of confidence in the current government's ability to make progress on reforms and procedural matters.
d. This option was seen as trying to achieve too many things due to the relatively short length of the transitional period and the fact that the main actors lack coherence.
e. Many noted that the Prime Minister has an opportunity to take the initiative because of the consensus he has from different influential groups.
f. Many respondents – particularly those involved in the peace process, from conflict-affected areas, and some youth group members – suggested that reopening and developing the constitutional document would ensure sustainability of the transitional period and act as a guarantee to bring peace and political stability.
g. Respondents noted the option raises the question of how the transitional period would move forward without the agreed participation of Abdelaziz al Hilu and Abdel Wahid al Nur. How would they be brought on board before the elections? What would the agreement reached with both of them look like?

h. Some respondents observed that the option requires amending the duration of the transitional period, which is a controversial issue between political parties and non-State armed movements and could itself require significant negotiation.

i. Some respondents also commented that conducting a census, separate sectoral conferences, and a process for a compiled peace agreement would require significant financial resources.

Option Two

(Peace process → Synchronization/Way forward dialogue → Electoral process → Constitution process)



a. ***Most respondents accepted*** this option as it provides flexibility to bring each non-State armed movement in to discussions separately and leaves the door open for them to engage in transitional processes whenever they are ready.

b. Respondents thought it a positive that the transitional government would focus on conducting the elections and that there would be additional time for planning the constitutional process and it would be overseen by an elected government.

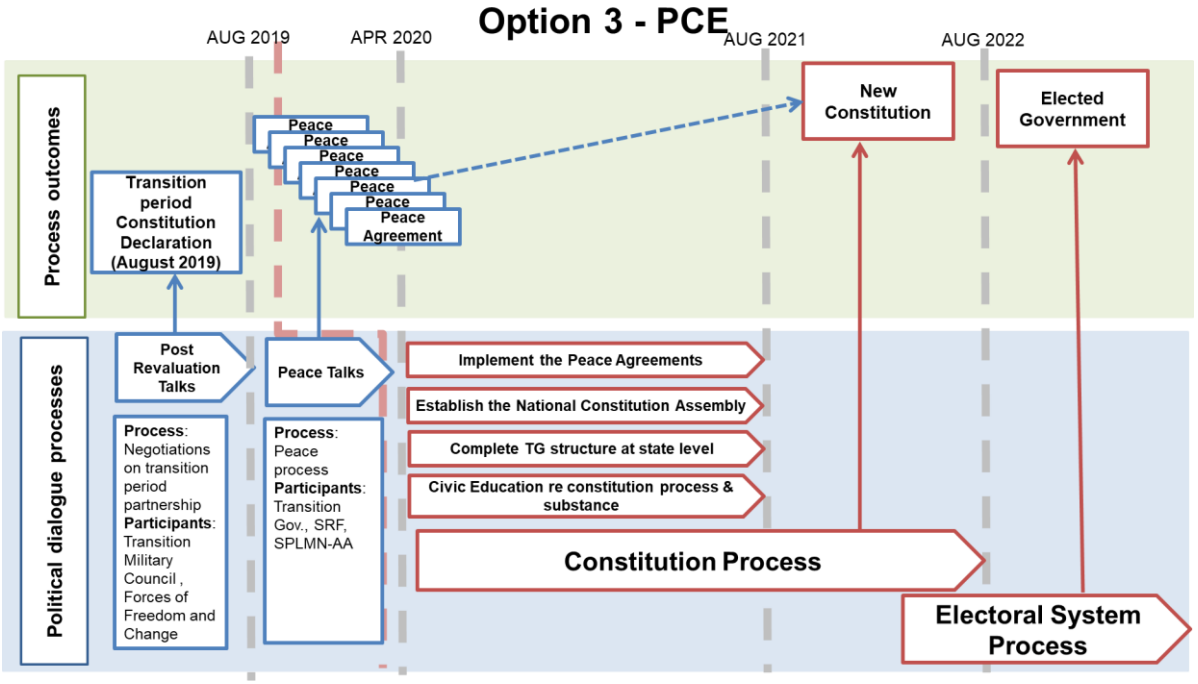
c. Even so, the relatively short amount of time that would be allocated to preparing for the elections due to the length of the transitional period was widely criticized as it was seen as a risk to properly conducting free and fair elections.

d. Multiple respondents suggested that an initial constitutional conference to agree on the principles, code of conduct between parties, and phases of the constitution process should occur before the election, while the rest of the process including drafting and review of the constitution would occur after the elected government took office. A few consultees noted that many political parties have not contested elections in a very long time (and some never), so they will need time to (re)build, engage their constituencies, plan their campaigns, and prepare to govern.

e. Respondents noted one of the weaknesses of the option was the lack of clearly-defined, formal channels or organized bodies in which youth could participate. A few respondents noted this as an issue particularly because they said the government has not demonstrated the political will to genuinely promote youth participation.
f. Participants commented that though the proposal for a state-based sovereign council may address issues of civilian-military confidence and partnership, it will increase the already large administrative structures of the transitional government, putting further pressure on the resources available and complicating decision-making processes at the state level.

Option Three

(Peace process → Constitution process → Electoral process)



a. Some respondents viewed this option as the ***most realistic***, since it is the simplest option and the one most likely to be implemented smoothly.
b. Respondents praised the emphasis on civic education efforts, especially for sensitive issues, ahead of the constitution process.
c. A slim majority of respondents accepted linking the outcomes of the peace process with the constitutional process, as it would allow more space for accommodating non-State armed movements.
d. Some respondents observed that this option is not far from the current state of affairs and is likely to happen, especially with the National Umma Party's decision in April 2020 to freeze their membership in the FFC central council, delaying the signing of the peace deal and formation of transitional government bodies. Some respondents noted that such divisions provide elements of the former regime an opportunity to re-emerge as they are more organized and experienced. Failure of the transitional government will give them an excellent entry point.

e. The public, especially the youth, are not satisfied with the progress made by the transitional government and pressure is mounting, which may lead to its sudden collapse. Respondents noted this option requires the fewest number of agreements for a coherent plan for the transitional period.
f. A large group of respondents representing a diverse mix of constituencies objected to the separate tracks used for negotiating the peace process, suggesting that if the resulting peace agreements superseded the Constitutional Declaration, political instability would renew.
g. However, respondents also noted that this option accommodates the existing contradictions between different peace agreements and allows signing of bilateral peace agreements that could pave the way for a comprehensive deal.
h. Respondents commented that the peace process has provided non-State armed movements with an opportunity to negotiate representation in the transitional government. A synchronization process or way forward dialogue as proposed in Options One and Two would provide other actors a similar opportunity. However, some respondents noted that the fact that this option moves directly to the constitution process risks many of the non-State armed movements entering the process with disproportionate influence compared to many other actors.

5. Results: Current peace process and achieving a comprehensive, inclusive peace

Respondents' analysis of the current peace process

In general, a majority of respondents agreed that the current (as of July 2020) peace process is not sufficiently inclusive, has not been implemented transparently, lacks public engagement (not all groups affiliated with the non-State armed movements participated/were consulted), and does not coherently feed into the planned constitutional process. The following analysis represents consultees' perspectives on the process, though a point does not necessarily represent a majority of views unless indicated as such:

a. Provisions in the Constitutional Declaration governing the peace question are scattered across different parts of the document, and no clear reference is made to these provisions and how they should be linked to the peace process. Respondents expressed that most likely these articles were supposed to inform the peace commission's efforts in designing a definitive strategy for the peace process.
b. Not involving all non-State armed movements in the talks, particularly SLA-Wahid, may result in serious problems in the post-agreement period. This is the case since the process became track-driven, the question of how to handle Abdul Wahid within the Darfur track is an issue. The same applies in the case of the two areas in Blue Nile and South Kordofan where Abdelaziz al Hilu and Malik Agar operate within the same/overlapping areas and the latter is involved in the peace talks while the former is not. Some sort of high-level coordination mechanism will thus be required.
c. The peace talks did not engage the local community, whether IDPs, refugees, native administrations, youth and students, or women leaders. The talks have ignored youth participation despite their significant roles in organizing to overthrow the former regime of Omar Al-Bashir. And while the Constitutional Declaration provides for women's participation

in the current peace talks, these provisions have not as of July 2020 been realized. Some respondents noted that the exclusion of youth, women, and local communities from the process is not likely to lead to sustainable peace agreements.

d. Early on in the transition period, the Prime Minister had support and legitimacy from a large number of political parties and much of the public, and he could have used that political capital to build a coalition of diverse actors and work with them to develop a cohesive plan for the transition period and make substantive change.
e. The absence of a coherent strategy has produced many issues, including failure to identify the main parties to the negotiations and certain tracks being created without clear association with peace process geographical groupings, such as the "Central" and "Northern" tracks. One respondent had understood that negotiations were primarily supposed to occur with the non-State armed movements in Darfur, Blue Nile, and South Kordofan and saw the additional tracks as complicating the process.
f. The lack of strategy also resulted in confusion between issues to be covered in the peace process and constitutional questions – such as the role of religion in the State – that affect the entire country and should be covered in the constitutional conference.
g. Not having a strategy also adversely affected public communication on and the public's perception of the peace process, as conflict-affected groups, such as IDPs, civil society, and youth groups in conflict zones, as well as protesters who brought about the revolution have seen this peace process as exclusionary and secretive.
h. According to the Constitutional Declaration, the Sovereign Council was supposed to form a Peace Commission in consultation with the Council of Ministers prior to the beginning of the peace process. The Commission was tasked with preparing a strategy for the peace process according to the clauses in the Constitutional Declaration. However, negotiations were driven by members of the Sovereign Council while the Council of Ministers and the FFC were not involved, and this adversely affected the Commission's role and the peace process. This should be understood in the context of ongoing competition and lack of coordination between the two councils.
i. The six-month timeframe set for the peace process in the Constitutional Declaration was insufficient and relevant provisions were not binding upon all parties of the agreement.
j. Disputes between the FFC and non-State armed movements in September 2019 eroded trust between various parties, and as of August 2020 they have not been resolved.
k. The absence of a comprehensive vision for peace in Sudan, exclusive focus on a peace process with non-State armed movements, and a vacuum of local administration left space for new tribal or communal conflicts to break out in Darfur and East Sudan, which also had a negative impact on the peace process in Juba.
l. The peace process lacks consensus of parties involved, which renders attempts to stop the war and prevent their renewal almost impossible.
m. Various regional and international countries (e.g. Egypt, UAE, Ethiopia, Chad, and South Sudan) sought to support the peace process to protect their security, financial, and political interests, and the process of deciding the location and management of the peace process negatively affected its timing and structure.
n. The issues covered and participants involved in the peace process, and the division into tracks was exploited to fuel tribal conflicts in some areas.

o. The Constitutional Declaration should take precedence over the agreements resulting from the peace process because the peace talks were not inclusive. However, if the peace agreements replace it, that will threaten the entire transition period.

Respondents' suggestions to improve the current peace process

Participants also had a range of ideas on how to reform the peace process:

a. Create a technical commission for peace, where the diversity of the nation is fully represented, and its tasks and competencies are clearly defined.
b. Conduct a bottom-up process, with community-based conferences attended by youth, women, civil society, native administrations, and Sufi sects to discuss the peace agenda that should be included in the agreement.
c. Hold community-based conferences with members of non-State armed movements to gather and reflect their interests in the peace talks. Continuous consultation with communities during the peace process should occur.
d. Hold a dialogue between political actors to address the root causes of conflict in Sudan.
e. Conduct a comprehensive process to restore confidence among political actors, especially among transitional government members.
f. Reform the transitional government and develop a strategic vision to build peace.
g. Develop the basic principles for the peace process along with a clear plan of action in consultation with all concerned parties.
h. The spirit of the talks should be negotiations between partners, not negotiations between hostile parties. This requires a fundamental shift in how negotiations have been approached in Sudan in the past.
i. Establish mechanisms to broaden participation of all major stakeholders, including IDPs and refugees, in the implementation of the peace agreement and to clearly allocate their participation share.
j. Women and youth should be at least 30% of participants, whether through a quota system, affirmative action, or other measures.
k. Participation of local communities is important as they are the guarantors of the peace process.
l. During the past regime, peace and war issues were highly sensitive, and very few people participated directly in such questions. Significant public participation and engagement on war and peace issues is critical for a successful transition, but such a change is not easy and requires detailed attention and planning.
m. Except for a single provision on the duties of the transitional period, the Constitutional Declaration overlooked youth participation in the peace process. And while reference was made to women's participation based on UN Security Council Resolution 1325, women have not been included significantly in the ongoing peace process.

Assessment of recent conflicts at the state level

Some respondents also provided comments on the conflicts that broke out in some states in the second week of May 2020 and thereafter:

a. The transitional government is not filling the administrative vacuum at the state level.
b. There is also an absence of the FFC role at the state level.
c. The conflicts result from historical and accumulated grievances between social elements.
d. There is a proliferation of arms making access to deadly weapons easy.
e. Native administrations in these areas are either weak or non-existent.

Proposed solutions:

a. Include resistance committees in local administrative structures so they can help identify latent/emerging conflicts and coordinate early response.
b. Activate police forces and train them to respond to communal conflicts.
c. Form committees to monitor the success of reconciliation conferences and to prevent conflicts from reemerging.
d. Establish a commission for collecting arms that coordinates with relevant authorities.
e. Launch social peace awareness programs.
f. Control and hold accountable groups that escalate conflicts.

6. Results: Women's participation in the transitional processes

Most respondents expressed that increasing women's participation during the transitional period (and beyond) is important. The political actors agreed with the 40% quota for women in the Legislative Council, as per Chapter 7 of the Constitutional Declaration. However, multiple people underscored that the question of how to select a diverse group of women representatives – including from civil society organizations that do not have clear leadership and processes like political parties do – would be a major challenge.

a. Some members of women's groups asserted that a fully civilian government would ensure greater opportunities for women's participation as it would be more likely to require mechanisms for effective participation.
b. Respondents noted that women's groups are advocating for a 50% quota in all the TG bodies, including those related to the constitution process.
c. Respondents noted that adhering to the quota in the Constitutional Declaration and addressing issues associated with the appointment of state governors was important.

Aside from suggestions made on how to improve the peace process (under Section 5), this topic did not result in detailed suggestions from the political actors or other women consulted on how to increase women's participation in transitional processes or governance arrangements.

Interestingly, while many of the women consulted focused on the need to increase women's participation, most of them did not significantly discuss ideas for the linkages and sequencing of processes or analysis of the peace process.

7. Results: Youth participation in the transitional processes

Many of the 29 youths consulted shared specific ideas relating to youth participation in the peace process, the transitional period as a whole, and the Legislative Council.

Vision for youth participation in the ongoing peace talks and other processes

a. Youth organizations play pioneering roles in contributing to peace and should have a louder voice especially in conflict zones. There is an increasing need to build the capacities of youth organizations on conflict resolution and peacebuilding to identify their potential roles.
b. While the Constitutional Declaration calls for women's participation in the peace process and in peacebuilding and refers to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 as the rationale for participation, it fails to call for youth participation and no reference was made to UNSC Resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018) regarding youth participation in peace and security. UNSCR 2250 identifies five pillars for action based on youth potential to contribute significantly to conflict resolution and peacebuilding: participation, protection, prevention, partnerships, and disengagement and reintegration.
c. Determining the best way to ensure youth participation in negotiation processes is a big challenge and should be done through direct consultation with a diverse range of youth. Ultimately this will help in other process design questions including how to design an overall strategy for the process so that it produces comprehensive peace, identifying actors and issues, separating topics for negotiation from those to be discussed during the constitutional conference, and how to link the various processes together.
d. Broadening youth participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding generally requires removing hindrances that prevent them from public participation in decision making mechanisms, which coincide with obstacles that prevent their participation in public life.
e. Despite the importance of youth's direct representation in the peace process, there are a number of issues that pose a challenge for practical implementation, including the lack of a common agenda and the absence of leadership/institutional structures within and across youth groups to make decisions on representation. Instead, youth initiatives are disparate, decentralized, and have a wide range of goals beyond ending war and building peace.
f. Sudan is currently undergoing a major transition. During the previous regime, war and peace were highly sensitive topics. Thus many organizations were forced to focus on activities and programs that tackled these issues indirectly. The question now is how to utilize the present climate to ensure maximum youth participation in war and peace issues.
g. Youth participation during different stages of war and peace varies greatly and may take numerous forms including working within institutions and outside of them. Youth can participate in conflict resolution and peacebuilding through national and local governments as well as through volunteerism.
h. There is a need to build upon youth's actual experiences in conflict resolution and peacebuilding especially in conflict areas.

Vision for youth participation during the transitional period

a. Convene meetings with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and support the Ministry to build its vision, bring different actors together, and activate structures at the state level.
b. Build grassroots dialogue forums to increase awareness, form a cohesive vision, and strengthen youth participation at the local level. These could become periodic forums for discussing youth issues.

c. Organize a forum for Sudanese youth that operates across the country. This could allow young people from different parts of the country to share their opinions and discuss numerous issues and proposals together. It may result in recommendations that could help move the current peace process forward with the other transitional processes.
d. Establish youth parliaments at the state level.
e. Establish a youth council, which could be composed of members of resistance committees, represent youth at various levels of governance.
f. The Transitional Government should support the existing model of the resistance and neighborhood committees and further strengthen the capacities of its members.
g. There is a need to build upon real experiences of youth participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, especially for youth in conflict areas. The best example is a forum formed by Nuba youth in South Kordofan in 2017 to facilitate youth participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.
h. Increasing youth participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding must be in parallel with the removal of obstacles that prevent them from taking part in public life. Build a national strategy for developing youth skills, which could include organizing regular forums for youth to express their opinions and participate in the transitional period.

Vision for youth participation in the Legislative Council

a. Youth participation in the Legislative Council is of crucial importance especially as Sudan is currently in a transitional period where the Legislative Council is tasked with enacting laws, making public policies, and monitoring the executive. Youth should play a substantial role in overseeing government performance and enacting laws.
b. A parliamentary committee within the Council should be allocated to youth issues.
c. "Youth" comprise a diverse range of interests and the youth who participate in the Council should reflect this diversity, including youth representatives of non-State armed movements.
d. Youth participation in the Legislative Council will help bring government attention to their issues. However, capacity building is highly needed to support youth representatives.
e. Youth participation in the legislative assembly ensures presence of groups that monitor performance of the executive and passage of legislations that will enhance oversight on the government.
f. Direct participation in the Legislative Council is still contentious among resistance committee members and may increase polarization between/within the committees.

8. Result: An overall vision for the transitional period and the way forward

The vast majority of those consulted agreed that one of the main obstacles to the success of the transition period is the absence of a comprehensive, integrated, and common vision for the period among active parties. They praised the idea of some form of dialogue for developing a strategy for the rest of the transition period as an excellent proposal that could help address the challenges of the peace process and the remaining transitional processes. When responding to a question on which option was most likely to be successful, one respondent answered that, "*What was most*

*important was that the political forces **reach an agreement** on how to move forward rather than what specific option they choose*."

Most of those consulted also stated that **going forward any dialogue must be inclusive** of all elements of society (political parties, non-State armed movements, civil society, women, youth groups, and the native administration).

On the question of which government body would oversee a "way forward" dialogue, many chose the Council of Ministers. However, some opted to have a neutral body supervise the dialogue and proposed the University of Khartoum. While some may argue it is not completely neutral, the respondents maintained that the fact that it is a professional institution places it a better position.

Respondents varied in their responses on the nature of the dialogue that would pave the road to peace and stability.

The following is a compilation of their different suggestions:

a. Reach an overarching agreement on the sequencing of the transitional period elements, then each body responsible will be expected to proceed with the elements on their own.
b. Hold a conference to discuss the basis of the Sudanese state and how to address the root causes of conflict in Sudan.
c. Hold a comprehensive peace conference.
d. The constitutional conference should address these issues.
e. The process should focus on dialogue among actors to identify the objectives of the transition period, such as institutional issues, peace, resettlement of refugees, reforming the economy, completion of power structures, building legislative institutions that guarantee justice and fairness, and overseeing general elections monitored by a national election commission.
f. Agreeing on the participants, major issues for agendas, and dialogue procedures for the election or other processes in an inclusive manner will enhance participation and allow youth, women and local communities to genuinely participate.
g. However, there are also difficulties in identifying participants for dialogue processes comprehensively due to weak political representation of the FFC and absence of platforms agreed upon for non-represented groups.
h. Many initiatives have already been presented. FFC acceptance of the NUP's proposal "Social Contract" (May 2020) for a conference to address issues of the transitional period may pose a new beginning of dialogue between political actors.
i. However, existing initiatives from different Sudanese groups (such as the SPA, Khartoum University, FFC, and civil society groups) lack detail, especially on questions of process design and public participation, which weaken them.
j. Prior agreement on clear agendas for the governance and administration conferences would help resolve some of the differences on governance issues.
k. Identifying and agreeing on entities in charge of the election process will reduce involvement of the military in the process and help guarantee fair elections.
l. Reopening the Constitutional Declaration in light of the present political polarization is detrimental to the transitional period.

9. Conflict Dynamics' Assessment of the Way Forward

The spectacular success of the December 2018 revolution in Sudan was greeted by regional and international communities with considerable caution. The challenges facing Sudan for it to transform into a democratic State seemed enormous.

The Constitutional Declaration is ambitious: it calls for a number of political, reform-oriented, and procedural processes to occur during the transitional period. Many of the processes complement each other and are linked, yet currently, there is no comprehensive, strategic plan for how the various transitional processes will work in coordination with each other.

The first year of transition confirmed many initial fears and gloomy predictions. The period has suffered from mistrust and a lack of coordination among the transitional government bodies, a peace process that has not been sufficiently inclusive, a lack of transparency, the exclusion of women and youth groups, communal conflicts that became symbols of the danger inherent in dismantling the former regime, and a severe economic recession and dramatic drop in the SDG to US dollar exchange rate. The COVID-19 pandemic spread to Sudan and has negatively affected both government actors' ability to implement transition period requirements and the economic situation.

Despite all this, a new transitional State has emerged as a result of nonviolent protests, highlighting the passion, accomplishments, contrasting views, and manifold abilities of many young people, who many would argue have been the most successful at moving the transition forward. While progress has been slower and more inconsistent with the political actors, new modes of operating have also been observed. However a number of issues need to be addressed to capitalize on these positive changes and ensure a successful transition.

First, effective transitional processes need a high level of **trust and coordination** between different political actors. Thus, there is need for a wide-ranging program for building confidence among political actors and between them and women, youth groups, and other civil society groups.

Second, a successful transition needs a **detailed, multi-layered strategy** throughout the transition period. A comprehensive plan for the transition period will guide implementation of the political processes and encourage a cultural and political attitude toward a national mission.

Third, **civil society, women, and youth groups need to be more extensively engaged and more opportunities for genuine participation** in transitional government institutions. Inclusion of their interests is critical to a successful transition, and the knowledge and skills they have can play a major role in designing and implementing transition strategies and in shaping institutional change.

Fourth, **political parties** that were excluded from government and political work for 30 years and the **non-State armed movements** that will need to transform into political parties need to **(re-)build their platforms, public outreach, internal structures, campaign planning, and legislative strategy**. New political actors who pushed for the transition are committed to change but may lack the practical experience of developing party processes and governing.

Finally, there is a need for **comprehensive subnational development reforms**, and they should be introduced earlier rather than later in the transition process, so that state-level approaches can be

conducted in coordination with national strategies, inclusive of all groups, and employ a robust public engagement plan.