

Environmental sustainability south sudan

However, despite the challenges posed by the conflict, the landlocked eastern-central Africa country has been working with UN Environment, and other international partners, to address decades of environmental degradation.

On World Environment Day, First Vice-President Taban Deng Gai presided over the launch of the country's State of Environment and Outlook Report, a first for the country. The publication is the result of a joint study by UN Environment and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry.

The report acknowledges that the ongoing strife in the country "is the major impediment to good governance, the productive use of natural resources and the protection of the country's environmental assets".

It highlights the lack of effective institutions to resolve disputes over ownership of natural resources peacefully and the challenges of millions of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons. It also notes that climate change and natural hazards have further complicated the environmental situation facing the country.

In South Sudan 80 per cent of the population relies on subsistence agriculture for their livelihoods. Their heavy dependence on fuelwood and charcoal is estimated to contribute to an annual deforestation rate of between 1.5 and 2.0 per cent.

It adds that "a flourishing agriculture sector, which depends on the viability of land and water resources, is crucial to long-term peace and development". It also recommends that "disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation measures need to be implemented to build a climate resilient society".

Unknown to many, the country's Boma-Jonglei-Equatoria Landscape, which covers about 200,000 square kilometers, witnesses the remarkable seasonal migration of the white-eared kob, tiang and Mongalla gazelle. This migration is the one of the three largest animal migrations in the world after that of the wildebeest in East Africa and the caribou in Alaska.

The country also faces numerous threats from bushmeat, ivory poaching and trafficking. The rapidly expanding charcoal production and climate change are other environmental challenges.

The challenges facing South Sudan not only deplete wildlife and degrade the environment but also jeopardize the potential for livelihood opportunities from ecotourism.

"It is worth mentioning that this first-ever State of the Environment and Outlook report for South Sudan will form the basis and the benchmark for assessments, inventories and mapping of our vast natural resources. The



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information generated will be used for future planning and management of natural resources and environmental protection," said President Mayardit.

UN Environment has been active in South Sudan since 2009 and has been engaged in creating and developing environmental awareness on a national scale to support the government and the people of South Sudan.

"The war in South Sudan has been absolutely horrific and brings an extraordinarily high cost to civilians," said Erik Solheim, Head of UN Environment. "This report shows how important it is to ensure South Sudan's resources are managed well and paves the way to put the country back on the road to peace."

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