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Conflict and Recovery in Sudan: Socio-Economic Impacts and Resilience Pathways

Introduction and Objectives

Sudan faces an unparalleled crisis where prolonged conflict, economic instability, and climate shocks have converged to deepen its socio-economic challenges. The ongoing civil conflict, including the April 2023 clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF), has compounded a history of instability marked by Africa's longest civil war (1983–2005) and the Darfur crisis (2003). Amidst hyperinflation, fractured markets, and extreme weather events, Sudan's resilience is being tested as millions grapple with poverty, displacement, and food insecurity.

This research delves into the intertwined impacts of conflict and climate on Sudan's economy and explores actionable recovery strategies that prioritize development and resilience.

More specifically, this study aims to:

1. Assess the direct and indirect socio-economic impacts of Sudan's ongoing conflict on GDP, poverty, and food security.
2. Examine the interaction between conflict-induced disruptions and climate variability in shaping economic outcomes.
3. Evaluate recovery strategies focusing on agricultural productivity, infrastructure development, and social protection.

Methodology and Analysis

This analysis integrates advanced modeling tools, employing the Rural Investment and Policy Analysis (RIAPA) system, a computable general equilibrium (CGE) model, augmented with a microsimulation module. The model is anchored on Sudan's 2021 Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) and household survey data, enabling nuanced insights into national, sectoral, and household-level impacts.

The following simulations are implemented:

1. Baseline Scenarios: Five climate-driven projections based on Shared Socioeconomic Pathways (SSP) and IMF forecasts (April 2023), depicting hypothetical scenarios in the absence of conflict.
2. Conflict Scenarios: Five overlays on baseline scenarios that model the disruptions caused by conflict using data from Sudan's Central Bureau of Statistics and the IMF.
3. Recovery Scenarios: Fifteen targeted interventions, modeled atop the conflict scenarios, include:
    a. Agricultural Recovery: Restoring agricultural yields to pre-conflict levels by 2027.
    b. Infrastructure Investment: Phased allocation of $1 billion, strategically deployed from 2025 to 2027.
    c. Social Protection: Disbursing $1 billion in cash transfers (80% in 2025, 20% in 2026) to vulnerable households.

Preliminary Findings and Implications

Initial findings reveal substantial variations in economic outcomes across baseline scenarios. GDP growth under the optimistic SSP1 scenario averages 6.4% annually, compared to 5.4% under the pessimistic SSP5. Correspondingly, poverty rates are projected to decline by 10.5 and 9.3 percentage points, respectively, while undernourishment improves by 8.8 and 7.1 percentage points. The addition of conflict scenarios underscores the severe economic toll, amplifying the urgency for robust recovery strategies.

This study is expected to provide granular insights into how conflicts dynamics exacerbate economic vulnerabilities, quantify the efficacy of targeted recovery interventions in mitigating poverty and food insecurity, and guide policymakers, development agencies, and humanitarian actors to design adaptive, resilient recovery frameworks. It seeks articulating a roadmap for Sudan's recovery, emphasizing transformative investments in agriculture, infrastructure, and social safety nets.

JEL Classification: Q18, O55, D74, I32, O13, F35