



The Youth Agricultural Farm (YAF) – 2021 “ Tomato Revolution”

The Tomato Revolution is a new interpretation of our liberation struggle's concept of “peace through development”. It is the contention of the national Conversation South Sudan that the only way to commit our civil population to development, is through agri-business and this requires the modernization of the agricultural sector. The Tomato Revolution is not an armed revolution, but revolution within the context of a South Sudanese renaissance. This will be achieved through a three-pronged approach of;

- I. The establishment of Youth Agricultural Farms as indigenous Cooperative Societies owned by the youth in the country side,*
- II. The National Conversation- South Sudan (and affiliates) as a consultancy and capacity building network, and*
- III. The Boma, Payam, County and State Administration as the main stake holders.*

The NCSS shall advocate bridging the gap between the community and the state and national institutions. This mission springs from our belief that South Sudanese communities, in their various villages, had their historical and national socio-economic development halted. However, with the end of armed conflict and the current peace process, we believe it is possible to contribute once more to the socio-historical development of our people.

Introduction

In most African countries, since the political independence of the late 1950's and early 1960's, ending with Zimbabwe in 1980, Namibia in 1990, and the end of apartheid in South Africa in 1994, the model for development has been characterized by our colonial past – what some scholars call *coloniality*. In most African countries, the colonialist departed but the colonial system remains intact. As such, our civil population across the continent continue to live in abject poverty. In the Republic of South Sudan, for instance, the lack of domestic production means that everything is imported, including *tomatoes*.

The consequences of this model of development have been far-reaching, seen in, but not limited to, socio-economic and political crises, intercommunal violence, growing foreign debts, deficit in balance of payments, brain drain, deepening inequalities, environmental degradation and migration from the countryside to the towns, among numerous other problems. This is a matter of great concern in an uncertain world, where economic mercenaries use countries with unstable economies to enrich themselves.

The National Conversation – South Sudan (NCSS) believes that rural development through the promotion of sustainable agri-business as an income generating activity for Women and Youth Groups (who constitute the bulk of the population), should be the initial strategy for economic growth. The Youth Agricultural Farm (YAF) has therefore been designed as a model for (grassroots) community development in a post conflict situation. This has been made possible by over twenty (20) years of research in various communities in the Republic of South Sudan, dating back to the time of the old Sudan civil war which ended in the independence of our country . The reality of the South Sudanese societies is such that the majority of the population lives in the country side. Thus, the practical solution is to rescue the economic decay of the countryside from its present state of collapse.

Vision Statement

The vision of the Youth Agricultural Farm (YAF) is to create a model for grassroots, socio-economic development in The Republic of South Sudan, through the introduction of agri-business as a venture by the civil population, as part of an overall strategy to fight hunger and poverty. This will be achieved through a three-pronged approach of

- I. The establishment of Youth Agricultural Farms as indigenous Cooperative Societies owned by the youth in the country side,
- II. The National Conversation- South Sudan (and affiliates) as a consultancy and capacity building network, and;
- III. The Boma, Payam, County and State Administration as the main stakeholders.

The NCSS shall advocate *bridging the gap* between the community, the state and national institutions. This mission springs from our belief that South Sudanese communities, in their various villages, had their historical and national, socio-economic development halted. However, with the end of armed conflict and the current peace process, we believe it is possible to contribute once more to the socio-historical development of our people.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The effect of past governments' policies in the old Sudan and the civil war which erupted shortly after independence, has ensured the continuation of an unbearable *status quo* which dates back to the *days of slavery*, especially with rural communities in our nascent Republic. Services and amenities have never reached our civil population. The issues that have affected the full realization of self-determination in rural areas stem from the tragic loss of indigenous knowledge systems after centuries of resistance to foreign occupation. Rampant insecurity in the country has frightened away many skilled professionals who could implement any durable projects or programs. These factors have led and continue to lead to the difficulties in all sectors of development in the Republic of South Sudan. Through the combination of knowledge of our past and contemporary realities and inspired by the historic SPLM's slogan of, *taking the towns to the people*, the NCSS is confident that we can achieve our principle objective of modernizing our societies.

Agro-based Industries: This sector is still in its developing stages. Since independence, the model for development our country adopted has had limited focus on the agricultural sector and food security. Waves of civil wars have displaced individuals and communities, damaged basic infrastructure and shattered the socio-economic base in general. Our civil population, those displaced and those in their cattle camps and villages, have become almost completely dependent on *International Development Partners*.

Some of the challenges the YAF hopes to address are:

- 1) The lack of involvement of local communities in socio-economic development project planning
- 2) The import of majority of basic foods from neighboring countries.
- 3) Lack of co-operative societies or associations.
- 4) Lack of food Storage.
- 5) Lack of Seed multiplication and seed banks.
- 6) Government contracts being beneficial to traders and farmers in neighboring countries, with minimum to no capacity building for local traders, farmers and farming associations.

The YAF Initiative:

The effects of war in South Sudan – as mentioned – have had a negative impact on food security, which has led to the monopolization of the food markets by foreign economies. In order to arrest this situation, the NCSS has introduced this agricultural scheme (YAF) as the backbone of the NCSS. This project intends to restore and strengthen the agricultural sector for production of food

crops in the Republic South Sudan and promote commercial farming as a business venture through cooperative societies we have dubbed the **Youth Agricultural Farms (YAF)**. Furthermore, the scheme intends to expand the production base and to introduce many varieties of crops (e.g. Flava beans have been proposed). This will in turn allow the Youth to exercise their responsibility as citizens, to plan and develop sustainable agricultural schemes as a method of wealth creation.

The Youth Agricultural Farm is where the youth will engage in *national conversations* for reconciliation and healing, which will be supported by commercial farming activities. The YAF will also be in part an agricultural training and research institute, as the youth will learn the benefits and importance of agriculture in civilization and in the South Sudanese renaissance. This farm project will be the breadbasket of the whole YAF project in its initial phase. We will try to produce everything at the YAF, while minimizing and eventually eliminating food supplies from outside. Surpluses from the Youth Agricultural Farm beyond consumption will be marketed to generate income for reinvestment on the Farm and for development of any project which may evolve out of the national discourse. In general, and as part of the NCSS vision, full self-determination is the ultimate goal (*self-reliance as it were*). In light of continuing insecurity in the country, the YAF project shall initially be launched within the displaced people's camps around the country but shall not be limited to these areas.

These are some of the main programs of the Agricultural Scheme:

- 1) Horticulture
- 2) Vegetable Gardening
- 3) Livestock Rearing
- 4) Poultry Management
- 5) Fish Farming (Aquaculture)
- 6) Seed Multiplication
- 7) Seed Exchange

With time and further development of the YAF, we shall also see the beginnings of industrial production, starting with small scale food processing to agro-based light industries, with plans and room for further industrial development. The YAF Territory itself will be an attraction to Africans and friends of Africa because it will be a model of how a post-conflict society can be transformed into a self-sustaining community that can contribute its experience and potential to Africa and the world.

The Republic of South Sudan is envisioned as the base of the YAF and is a model proposed by the Moderators of the NCSS for self-determination.

How can this be done?

Internal Funds

For YAF projects to be truly independent and in the spirit of the principle of self-determination, it should be clear that the Youth themselves must be the starting point of the initial projects. We, the Moderators of the NCSS, shall therefore appeal to the youth of South Sudan to contribute whatever they can, in order to sufficiently mobilize resources to implement the NCSS first project, **The Youth Agricultural Farm.**

As a model farm, the establishment of the YAF can become a viable income-generating activity that will allow the full realization of our self-determination. The YAF shall mobilize Youths in the Republic of South Sudan in their cattle camps and villages to establish agri-based industries. This project is to be done in partnership with local investors and local communities. The initial project shall be to introduce value addition, with the introduction of tomato powder and other projects we plan to unveil in the near future.

With the continued support from the youth of South Sudan, the government, donors and private individuals contributing on an annual basis, the economy of The YAF would grow rapidly and in the not very distant future, the YAF could begin to industrialize and grow on its own trajectory. The YAF could become a viable model of development *from within* rather than the mal-development *from without* which we see in many African countries today. If in future more land is required, the local authorities may be approached to allocate and add more land to the initial YAF Territories. Though we intend to start in the displaced people's camps, the YAF program itself could be replicated in other areas of the country through land allocation by the relevant authorities.

External Funds

The Moderators of the NCSS shall also appeal to the South Sudanese Diaspora and all concerned friends of South Sudan in the world to participate by joining our fundraising initiative. The proceeds from this campaign shall go towards the establishment and evolution of the YAF proposed development model. The information about this campaign shall be made available soon on our website.

The major contributor to the projects of the NCSS has been its NCSS Moderators, who have a great deal of experience in volunteerism and community development, and have. Their undying support has been invaluable to the sustainability of the NCSS. There are also local business entities that in the fulfillment of their social corporate responsibility, have donated funds and facilitated in other ways to the NCSS projects. The Moderators shall continue to source for donations from more business entities that also share in the vision of *self-determination*.

Volunteerism and Internship:

The effects of war, as previously mentioned, have also had a negative impact on the development of skills amongst the majority of our adult population. The major challenge that has faced the

establishment of The NCSS projects has been lack of administrative and management skills. Therefore, as part of our initiative to promote professionalism, agricultural development and scientific training, The NCSS shall incorporate a *volunteerism and internship program* (specially) with college and university students. Through this program we shall recruit interns and volunteers to be placed within the programs of the YAF. These interns and volunteers shall be tasked with building the capacity of the Youths in the countryside through modern skills.

The following are the major points of the program:

- 1) Volunteerism and Internship shall allow students in colleges and universities to get firsthand experience in practical project management and development tactics.
- 2) Voluntary and Interning students shall make use of their past and current educational knowledge, and apply it in the YAF projects.
- 3) Volunteers and Interns shall be selected through programs designed by The NCSS and partners, based on a networking policy with local and regional colleges, universities, progressive organizations and businesses.

The institutions that The NCSS makes alliances with will determine which students get the privilege of volunteering in the YAF program. The term and duration of the volunteering or internship will depend on the program that the YAF will undertake. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) will be made between The NCSS and any institution interested in participating.

It is the contention of the Moderators of the NCSS that college-age students are the future socio-economic drivers of any society, and for the South Sudanese Renaissance to be actual, their participation is vital in community and nation building. The volunteerism and internship program shall serve as a means of establishing a research institute, which shall invite scholars from various fields of study to conduct research in to how we can more categorically – inspired by the vision of new Sudan – evolve into a *new society*, and ensure its sustainability by achieving our *principal objectives*.

Principal Objectives:

The principle objectives of the Youth Agricultural Farm (YAF) shall be the following:

- 1) The acquisition of land to build the YAF (initially) in the territory of the Republic of South Sudan.
- 2) The establishment of a Volunteerism and Internship Program to be administered through the Moderators of the NCSS.
- 3) The establishment of a culture of Agro business as a means of wealth creation for Youth and Women groups.

- 4) To build the capacity of any existing co-operative societies that have been ravaged by civil conflict.

- 5) To assist in improving the challenging living conditions and meeting the basic requirements by adopting programs that are based on self-reliance, accompanied by a grassroots development approach.

- 6) The establishment of a *new society* that shall be built on a free, just, equitable, democratic and secular system of administration and popular participation of all of its beloved members.

- 7) The achievement and education on the right to *self-determination* by and for the members of YAF in fulfillment of their aspiration.

- 8) Building of a national consciousness and common purpose within the Republic of South Sudan (as an example to Africa and the World) through the liberation of the individual and society from all forms of political, economic, social or any other constraints.

- 9) The restoration of the greatness of our people and the modernization of our societies.

Initial Strategy

The primary strategy that has been adopted by The NCSS is one of ‘sensitization’. This is necessary due to the diverse communities in which the National Conversation shall take place. The NCSS shall strive to gain the confidence of the local administration to ensure sustainability of our projects. The NCSS regards its strategies as a *new* approach to conflict resolution. For this reason, we appreciate the time and patience that it requires for this sensitization. This is why the initial entry strategy employed is one of dialogue, in order to raise the awareness of those in positions of responsibility within the communities in which we intend to operate.

The YAF has developed proposals based on the immediate challenges facing communities in the Republic of South Sudan, as some of these challenges are basic and obvious, like food *insecurity*. The fact that over half of our civil population is displaced in refugee camps outside the country and internally displaced in Protection of Civilian Camps (PoCs), means that we must start there.

Justification

The effects of war, as established in this document, have had an undeniably negative effect on the full realization of the principle of Self-Determination by the peoples of South Sudan. In most

instances, the signing of an Agreement is not equivalent to the end of conflict. In the case of the Republic of South Sudan, inter-communal violence appears to be pervasive. Our conflicts spring – like most conflicts – over the organization and distribution of resources. In the South Sudanese situation, these conflicts have led to the destruction of the indigenous knowledge systems, which has had an adverse impact on food security further exacerbating the problem. The resolution of conflict can only be achieved through dialogue, which is the only way to find the appropriate solutions to our problems.

The NCSS seeks to coordinate with local, regional, and national institutions to preserve our program's initiatives (with the government in the day). This project is to be conducted as a community based development program and will be committed to maintaining a constant dialogue with communities to make sure that their actions represent positive growth. A Technical Consultant and Advisory Board shall be established by the Moderators, to begin coordinating the capacity building projects.

The following NCSS principles shall help to justify this project;

Participatory Approach: The NCSS will be guided by a participatory approach where the community will be central in all its operations, programs, structure, and decision making processes. This is because it is when the community feels ownership of its programs that they shall be able to meaningfully contribute to its development.

Executive Approach: The NCSS shall enforce its decision-making processes through the basic documents of the NCSS, while giving autonomy to local offices to formulate their own by-laws within the framework of the NCSS basic documents.

Transparency and Accountability: The NCSS will be guided by its principle of transparency and accountability, to ensure sustainable relations with communities, and to make sure resources are managed effectively and efficiently.

Teamwork: The New Society will promote teamwork at all levels of its operations and programs, and will adopt the principle of collective authority with individual responsibilities.

Revolutionary Correction : The NCSS will promote self-criticism, so as to learn from its own internal experiences and through advisory and consultancy from partners. The Moderators at all levels will be the first to enroll in capacity building programs so as to build confidence among the junior members of the organization.

Justice and fairness: The NCSS will strive to eliminate bias behavior in all its operations, programs, and decision-making processes, to ensure justice and fairness by having zero tolerance towards sectarianism and establishing disciplinary bodies at all levels.

Local Resources: The NCSS will heavily rely on the locally available resources within the community to ensure sustainability of the planned programs and projects as *Self-Determination* is our motto.

Targeted Beneficiaries:

- 1) The civil population in the refugee camps, POCs and in the cattle camps and villages of South Sudan.
- 2) Skilled Professionals in each community
- 3) The vulnerable and dependent (widow, orphan, disabled) population
- 4) Primary and Secondary School Leavers
- 5) College and University Students
- 6) Local Authorities
- 7) Unskilled and Unemployed population
- 8) Women and Youth Population
- 9) The peoples of South Sudan and Humanity in general

Management Plan:

The recurring theme in the work of the NCSS has been *the effects of civil conflict* and the effects that wars have had on the communities that have experienced it. In the case of the Republic of South Sudan, this conflict has been with us since the Persian invasion of the Nile Valley in 525 BCE, and the subsequent waves of invasions (with little interruption) down to the colonial and neo-colonial eras. This has destroyed indigenous knowledge systems to the extent that some communities have lost the knowledge of crafting spears – let alone needles – from a community which gave iron smelting to the African continent. This is regrettably true for most matters including systems of administration, which are weak or outdated.

This is the reason The NCSS has proposed an *amorphous* administrative strategy, in order that an organic administrative system is evolved for the YAF. The first offices that shall be established are for focal people who shall launch the projects in any area of operation. This shall be followed by the office of the Farm Manager, recruited from the community. The Farm Manager shall have Deputies and Secretaries for the different areas of administration, starting with *accounting and finance*. These initial managers shall be charged with the responsibility of evolving a system of administration that shall reflect not only the character of their communities, but also be relevant to work carried out in the field. The strategy of “cutting and pasting” systems of administration creates organizational structures that are irrelevant to the realities of the societies in which they are found, and don’t correspond to field work. This *job* mentality usually translates to squandering of resources and the consequent corruption of the system.

The Farm Manager of the Youth Agricultural Farm is required to be an agronomist by profession or have enough experience, and shall have a local apprentice selected from the community. The NCSS is aware of the decline of the educational system globally over the years, which has created a situation where Colleges and Universities are passing out students who have no knowledge in their fields of study. This has been demonstrated to us through the appointment in the past of Managers to the YAF project and their subsequent failure to develop programs, their training usually being for established systems.

In light of these circumstances, the NCSS has resolved that although credentials are important and shall be the primary criteria for selection of the Officers, we shall also consider those who can demonstrate their skills even without credentials. While the Farm Manager shall have full creative control of the YAF projects, they shall be required to liaise with the Moderators of the NCSS.

The YAF shall be established (initially in the PoC) at the Boma level (the smallest unit of administration in the Government of Southern Sudan) in order to expedite the practical implementation of the project. This shall be done in tandem with building the capacity of Community Based Organizations (CBO) so as to evolve systems of administration that shall reflect the character of the communities within which we operate.

The Farm Manager

The Farm Manager will be the team leader for a particular YAF program. They shall facilitate the YAF programs in the different areas and will be the one to officially launch the YAF program in the communities. They will take direction from the Moderators on any issues regarding changes, initiatives, or any structural matters of the **YAF** program. The Farm Manager shall also be responsible for establishing meeting times and venues for monthly, quarterly, or annual Meetings. The overall duty of The Farm Manager will be to liaise between the Moderators, the government of the day and the local community; largely to make sure that the vision is being implemented at all levels.

The Deputies.

The Deputies shall be the heads of the various committees which shall be established, starting with the Accounting and Finance Committee. All Office holders shall be identified from amongst the members of the YAF in any location where the project will be established. The Farm Manager shall be responsible for the successful transfer of directives to the Deputies who will be selected by the members. The Deputies shall then roll out the Youth Agricultural Farm projects.

The Deputy for Admin and Finance

The Deputy for Accounting and Finance shall be the foundation of all the Deputies and will be responsible for recording and tracking all financial transactions and issues related to administration and human resource management. The Deputy of this committee shall report to the Farm Manager's Office on a quarterly basis, and to the general membership annually. Any financial transactions between the YAF Society and external groups and individuals will have to be approved by members and the Moderators of the NCSS.

Closing Appeal:

We end this initial communication with an appeal to the youth of the Republic of South Sudan, the African continent, and the World to take up the challenge of African Renaissance and to own it. Youth of the New Sudan! Youth of Africa! Youth of the African Diaspora! ***Organize, do not agonize!*** Come let us fulfil the promise of a *new society* that shall be our new home and the future of our nascent Republic, Africa and the World. A New Humanity.

You shall hear from us!

Moderators