Cultural policy
in the Sudan

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The purpose of this series is to show how cultural policies are planned and implemented in various Member States.

As cultures differ, so does the approach to them: it is for each Member State to determine its cultural policy and methods according to its own conception of culture, its socio-economic system, political ideology and technical development. However, the methods of cultural policy (like those of general development policy) have certain common problems; these are largely institutional, administrative and financial in nature, and the need has increasingly been stressed for exchanging experiences and information about them. This series, each issue of which follows as far as possible a similar pattern so as to make comparison easier, is mainly concerned with these technical aspects of cultural policy.

In general, the studies deal with the principles and methods of cultural policy, the evaluation of cultural needs, administrative structures and management, planning and financing, the organization of resources, legislation, budgeting, public and private institutions, cultural content in education, cultural autonomy and decentralization, the training of personnel, institutional infrastructures for meeting specific cultural needs, the safeguarding of the cultural heritage, institutions for the dissemination of the arts, international cultural co-operation and other related subjects.

The studies, which cover countries belonging to differing social and economic systems, geographical areas and levels of development, present, therefore, a wide variety of approaches and methods in cultural policy. Taken as a whole, they can provide guidelines to countries which have yet to establish cultural policies, while all countries, especially those seeking new formulations of such policies, can profit by the experience already gained.

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The author is responsible for the choice and the presentation of the facts contained in this book and for the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of Unesco and do not commit the Organization.
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Introduction: the nature of the culture

Perhaps the first thing to strike anyone studying a map of the Sudan is the variety of geographical features and the way they link up to produce a sequence of varied cultural types possessing both unity and distinctive individuality. The Democratic Republic of the Sudan is an enormous country, with an area of nearly a million square miles and bordering nine countries: to the north and north-west it marches with Egypt and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, to the west and south-west with Chad and the Central African Republic, to the south with Zaire, Uganda and Kenya and to the east with Ethiopia, while across the Red Sea it faces Saudi Arabia.

Thus it would be no exaggeration to say that the Sudan has from the earliest times been a 'cultural melting-pot' to which have come and mingled the cultures of the Middle East, the Mediterranean and Africa—as we shall explain later.

In the north-east, there is the coast of the Sudan, with mountains coming down on the west to uninhabited desert linked to the Sahara, which covers the north of the country. This is divided into two by the River Nile in its mighty course from south to north. The extensive plains that stretch from the extreme east of the country to the extreme west are mainly a belt of savannah, relying on seasonal rains and sources of underground water in the west and in the east on the tributaries of the Nile that come down from the mountains of Ethiopia, the most important being the Blue Nile. This savannah gets richer and more varied as we go southwards, until we come to tropical forest. The Sudan has sea and mountain, plain and river, forest and desert.

The traditional cultural ways of life of the inhabitants have evolved according to each community's ability to adapt to its environment. Thus there are fishermen on the coast, Bedouin with camels in the east and on the edges of the desert and the savannah in the north-west, nomad cattle herders following the rainfall and sources of water between the north and
south of the savannah region in the west, farmers on the rain-watered plains in the centre of the country, Nile farmers, and the tribes in the southern area with their lives traditionally tied to the forest.

As we have already said, the Sudan’s contacts with the cultures of the Middle East, the Mediterranean and Africa are one of the most important factors in its cultural make-up.

A look at the Sudan’s cultural history from the standpoint of this creative living cultural interaction will afford a comprehensive picture of the cultural bases from which cultural policy in the present-day Sudan has stemmed.

Ancient Sudan in the days of King Taharqa (663–68 B.C.) stretched to the borders of Palestine, and had contacts with the Assyrian, Pharaonic, Greek and Roman cultures, as shown by archaeological discoveries and the writings of Herodotus, Strabo and other classical historians and geographers. During the Christian period, which lasted nearly ten centuries, Sudanese Christian kingdoms, as is clear from the church art revealed by archaeological excavations during the last twenty years, developed a Christian culture closely akin to Byzantine civilization, and also to Alexandria, Rome and the Ethiopian church. From another point of view, the Christian culture took on features from the original culture of the country and blended its customs with the ancient ones, while Christian art adapted itself to the local art.

The influx of the Arabs had a decisive influence in shaping contemporary Sudanese culture. Regular migration continued for many centuries, during which time they introduced a new Muslim Arab culture that soon became predominant in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Muslim Arab culture entered the Sudan peacefully, and through mingling and intermarriage penetrated slowly and with trust into the social life of the people of the country. This was due to Islam’s ability to absorb the original cultures and on occasion express through them its values and religious outlook, and also to assume concrete forms. Arabic spread and became the language of the majority of the people, without eradicating the tribal languages; while Islam penetrated, without eliminating the popular cultures, in a slow process of ‘cultural moulding’, that gave Sudanese culture its present characteristics. These characteristics include rich variety and also cultural cross-fertilization, which enriches the nation’s cultural unity and gives it its distinctive national peculiarities. Well has it been said:

The people of the Sudan are indeed a product of Islam and its civilization at the human level, resulting in a blend of the Arab and the African, as exemplified by the human stock in most parts of the Sudan. They are a product of Islam and its civilization at the cultural level also, resulting in absorption of all the local cultural elements by Muslim Arab culture, which has digested them and become acclimatized in the Sudanese environment. All this human intermingling and cultural acclimatization has produced the Sudanese Muslim; he is a blend of the
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African and the Arab, a new human stock in which Muslim Arab culture interacts with the heritage of the local civilization to produce a cultural blend; he does not stem from Islam as a whole but has a conspicuous local flavour.¹

Complete acceptance of this analysis as a basis and general framework for policy was shown in the President of the Republic's speech to the Law Revision Commission on 16 August 1977. The following excerpt is a clear, direct expression of this:

The Sudan is by any criterion an absolute continent in terms of the extent and variety of its land and peoples, the multiplicity of spheres and levels of economic activity and the resulting differences of social organization, psychological type and cultural level. Since law is a unifying tool through which homogeneity is achieved, and since we refer to the Sharia (Islamic law) as the source of all laws, we must seek its essence in Islam and its truth in the distinctive reality of the Sudan, so that in the end the unity of Islam and its setting may be achieved.

The Sudan's distinctive cultural identity is apparent in the local cultures' loud assertion of their identities within the framework of this cultural unity, founded as it is on the blending of Muslim Arab and African. They assert themselves to a varying degree from one region to another. The Nubians in the northern Sudan, the Beja in the east and the Fur in the far west, for example, are Muslims but their language is not Arabic; they have their own languages, though they also speak Arabic. The point becomes clear when we realize that northern and southern Sudan (the influence of Islam being relatively less in the latter) include in their vast expanse, peoples speaking more than a hundred mother-tongues, all the main African linguistic groups being represented in their number. This does not conflict with the spread of Arabic as a main language. It is spoken by most of the people of the northern Sudan as their mother-tongue, and by much of the remainder of the population as a second language or lingua franca whose cultural importance is increasing day by day.

This cultural diversity in the Sudan is not static but in continual dynamic motion, through interaction and racial and cultural fusion, towards a greater affirmation of unity. The more active local cultures are within this framework, the more the interaction increases and enriches the integrated national identity.

This activity and interaction between the principles of unity and diversity cannot, naturally, be separated from movement towards economic and social development. There are two ways of looking at this. On the one hand economic and social development means urbanization and change, with the concomitant disappearance of traditional forms of culture; the growth of towns, and modern education directed towards the acquisition

of technology and modern science; close links with world cultures, and the weakening of local cultures in the countryside because of the modernization of the means, objectives and conditions of production; and a transition from a traditional small-scale local economy to a planned national economy linked to the trends of the world economy.

On the other hand the creation of a national cultural identity calls for a deliberate move to ‘put down roots’ by reviving the heritage and building links between popular and modern culture. It means declaring political independence through a declaration of cultural distinctiveness, as a counter to oppressive cultural imperialism and to deal with the state of dependency generated by the modernization of rural life and changes in its traditional cultural and economic systems. The important thing is to achieve a balance between change and traditionalism; indeed, change itself becomes an essential factor in the process of building the nation and defining its national identity.

The situation in the Sudan becomes more complex when we appreciate that its cultural diversity and extensive area also include the special cultural situation of the southern province, where many tribes still to a great extent retain their traditional African religious cultures. There are also Christian communities resulting from the evangelization begun at the start of the century by Christian missionaries; and Arabic is slowly infiltrating as a language of communication and trade.

Reflection on the nature of Sudanese culture has gradually led, through a general intellectual movement which has continued over the years since the eve of independence in 1956, to a clear definition of the essential foundations for cultural policy and planning in the Sudan. They may be summarized in the following three points:

1. The need to accept cultural diversity as a means of enriching the national culture and solving regional politico-cultural problems.
2. A country the size of the Sudan needs to develop a decentralized administrative system in order to express the vitality of this cultural diversity and the interaction between its constituent parts, and also to achieve parallel regional development such as will lead to complete cultural and social vitality.
3. Acceptance of cultural diversity and development of a decentralized system will not only help to enrich the country’s cultural identity and lay the proper foundations for comprehensive development, but also provide an ideal approach to the problems that arise from social and economic development in this context, by contributing to a dynamic equilibrium between conservatism and change.

In the following chapters we shall examine in greater detail the way in which cultural policy in the Sudan has come to be based on these three points.
Centre and periphery: cultural diversity, national unity and administrative decentralization

Cultural planning did not receive the serious comprehensive consideration needed in the early days of independence, being limited to the relative development of the media and the widening of the education base. Nevertheless it was clear that the pressing problem requiring deep thought as a starting-point for a sound, clearly defined cultural policy was that of building a new nation, as an administrative, political and cultural entity, out of environmental and cultural diversity.

This has been the subject of many modern Sudanese studies, mostly in the fields of history, administrative and political sciences, anthropology, ethnography, linguistics, art, literature, etc., which have led to a clear intellectual understanding of the problem of diversity, interaction and unity and of the consequential solutions to problems of cultural, administrative and political planning.

This relationship has been summed up as follows by a Sudanese academic:

Freedom and development are goals which can only be achieved by accepting diversity. The urgent need now is to frame new concepts about national unity and its evolution, to replace the old worn-out concepts; there is also a need to evolve a new concept to replace the outworn view of diversity as a dispersion of energy rather than a means of enrichment. Cultural diversity, given correct policies, may be a balancing factor serving the cause of national integration, economic development and freedom.¹

There is a deep conviction nowadays that (as stated by the Minister of Culture and Information in a speech in 1975):

Cultural diversity is acceptable as a basis for national unity because it is consonant with mutual respect for the specific cultural ideas of all groups, these

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ideas being regarded as an enrichment of national life. This is in addition to giving everyone an equal share in the economic, social, political and material life of the nation.¹

The matter may be summed up in these words: 'Cultural diversity guarantees strong national unity. It does not obstruct it.'²

One of the early results of this conviction was the solution of what used to be called 'the problem of the southern Sudan', which for sixteen years had taken the form of a fierce struggle. If we limit ourselves to our present concerns, leaving aside the political, legal and administrative aspects (important though they are) we find that the 'Addis Ababa Agreement' concluded in 1977, which ended that bloody struggle, had a direct and profound effect on national cultural policy in the Sudan. Under it the intellectual conviction that cultural diversity was a basis for national unity took legal and administrative shape with the setting up of a regional government for the southern Sudan. This agreement had a direct effect on national cultural policy, for Article 6 prescribed Arabic as the official language of the Sudan and English as a principal language of the southern province; while the local languages were recognized as among the 'national languages' of the country, to be developed if need arose. Indeed, Article 11 of the agreement made the development of local languages and cultures one of the main duties of the regional government.

On 3 March 1972 the President of the Republic promulgated the Southern Provinces Regional Self-Government Act, 1972, this being the precise legal version of the agreement. Article 5 of Section 2 (Regional Self-Government and Language) provided that:

The official language of the Sudan shall be Arabic; English shall be considered a principal language of southern Sudan, though without affecting the use of any other language or languages which may serve a practical need or help in the efficient performance of executive and administrative duties.

Clauses of Article 10 about the legislative powers of the Regional People's Assembly, in so far as they relate to cultural policy, cover:

(b) The organization of local and regional administrative authorities;
(c) Legislation relating to custom and tradition in the national laws; . . .
(e) The establishment of state schools at all levels and their maintenance and administration in accordance with national plans for education and economic and social development;
(f) The development of local cultures and languages; . . .
(m) The setting up of zoological gardens and museums, and the organization of cultural and trade exhibitions.

2. Ibid.
Rock carvings on the east bank of the Second Cataract, showing giraffes; probably prehistoric. [Photo: Unesco/R. Keating.]
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These measures assumed their 'national' constitutional form in April 1973, when the country's constitution was promulgated. It is really no exaggeration to say that the concept of cultural diversity and national unity, together with the concepts derived therefrom of political people's democracy, economic democracy and the vital link between centralization and decentralization in administration and systems of government, furnished the intellectual basis of this constitution.

The most important clauses about state cultural policy come in the first and second parts:

1. Article 1 laid down that 'The Democratic Republic of the Sudan is a democratic socialist unitary sovereign republic and part of both the Arab and African entities' and so established the broad national framework for the identity of the nation's cultural diversity.

2. Article 6 laid down that the country 'shall be administered in accordance with a decentralized system to be defined by law', so establishing the administrative framework to give expression to the desired diversity. This was dealt with in greater detail in Article 7: 'For the purpose of achieving popular participation in the government, and applied decentralization, the Democratic Republic of the Sudan shall be divided into administrative units whose number, extent and designation shall be prescribed by law.'

3. Under Article 8 the southern provinces were given constitutionally protected cultural dispensation, coupled with an acknowledgement that cultural differences are not at variance with the country's national unity. The article laid down that 'a regional self-government shall be established in the southern region, on the basis of a united Sudan, in accordance with the Southern Provinces Regional Self-Government Act, 1972, which shall be an organic law and shall not be amended except in accordance with the provisions thereof', thus admitting the possibility of a separate regional cultural organization being set up in the south.

4. Article 9 laid down that 'Islamic law and custom shall be the main sources of legislation. Personal matters affecting non-Muslims shall be governed by their own laws'. This matter was dealt with in greater detail in Article 16, which sets out the principles of diversity and unity, under which every religious grouping from the Muslim majority and the Christian community to those professing traditional African religions may express their values with a freedom protected by the state and without discrimination, as set out in the following paragraph.

5. Article 16 laid down the following:

(a) In the Democratic Republic of the Sudan Islam is the religion, and society shall be guided in the way of Islam, the religion of the majority; and the State shall endeavour to express its values.

(b) Christianity in the Democratic Republic of the Sudan is the religion of
many citizens, who are guided in the way of Christianity; and the state shall endeavour to express its values.

(c) Revealed religions and the noble aspects of the citizens’ spiritual beliefs shall not be insulted or held in contempt.

(d) The state shall treat followers of religions and holders of noble spiritual beliefs without discrimination as to the rights and freedoms granted to them as citizens under this constitution. The state shall not be entitled to impose any restrictions on citizens or communities on grounds of religious faith.

(e) The abuse of religions and noble spiritual beliefs for political exploitation is forbidden.

6. In addition to articles laying down that education should be democratic and free of charge, Article 18 set out the state’s responsibility for scientific research and academic and applied studies; whilst Article 19 guaranteed state protection for ‘the academic independence of the universities and freedom of thought and scientific research therein’ and ‘the directing of academic education and scientific research towards the service of society and the requirements of development’. Article 25 set out the state’s concern for ‘the national heritage’, and its task of ‘promoting and disseminating culture, literature and the arts’, whilst Article 29 stated that ‘adult education and the eradication of illiteracy shall be a national duty, for the accomplishment of which official and popular energies shall be mobilized’.

We have already mentioned that the administrative expression of the concept ‘diversity and unity’ showed itself in adoption of decentralization, which relies on a system of popular local government for the running of the country. The country has now been divided—since March 1976—into eighteen provinces, six of which make up the southern region.

The aim of this subdivision may be summarized as an attempt to create suitable administrative units for planning and administration at a level which will strengthen the administration’s grip on the province and make it a tool of regional development. This follows the transfer of most local and regional powers to the People’s Executive Councils.¹

The point of the subdivision is the conviction that a country like the Democratic Republic of the Sudan cannot be administered effectively from the centre, but needs a decentralized system of government co-ordinated by central planning. This vital interaction between centralization and decentralization has begun to take shape, despite all the difficulties usually faced by new experiments, during the last five years.

The national political and administrative bodies and the specialized technical organs are now debating strengthening this decentralized system

by giving the whole of the Sudan a system of regional government, under which each region would be administered by a regional government directly responsible for economic, social and cultural development. Thus the concept of plurality and unity, initially a cultural concept, will take on its final administrative form in the Sudan.

The importance of decentralization in the cultural field is that it leads to equal cultural development for the diverse voices which in their unity and their feeling of belonging to one nation make up the swelling choir of Sudanese culture. Despite their diversity they all draw on the inherent wealth of their cultural history and their affiliation to both the Arab world and Africa. The vital interplay between decentralization, the expression of diversity, and centralization in fixing major objectives and building one nation is the correct basis for cultural democracy; it is a safeguard against impoverishment of our cultural life through a one-sided view which could open the door to the domination of one group by another. Thus cultural life is organically linked to the concept of popular democracy based on decentralized administration, and to that of economic democracy such as will harmonize local and national development and ensure the development of the regional economies within the framework of an overall development plan. This will also keep a balance between heritage and modernization and between country and town and strengthen the people’s links with their history and heritage, so helping to banish the spectre of ‘cultural alienation’. The latter always goes with development and social change because of the growth of towns influenced by life-styles in industrialized European countries, which under strictly centralized systems affect the forms of the indigenous cultures.

Decentralization prevents the rise of the ‘single centre’ which dominates the national cultural scene. On the contrary, it makes for a number of focal points of dissemination and influence, and strengthens the link between the centre and the periphery. The President of the Republic gave a clear account of this in his speech to the ‘Second Festival of Education’ in February 1972. After explaining the cultural change desired, he said that ‘the organizational framework’ for this change ‘will take . . . the form of national, regional and local councils, responsibility resting with the apparatus of political control and the mass and sectoral organizations . . . whilst the local communities in the villages, urban districts and cities will become schools for the reshaping of life’.

The ‘educational strategy’ finally drawn up by the Ministry of Education in 1977 on the strength of many specialized conferences, field and theoretical trials and detailed statistics, all with the help of Unesco, gives a full picture of a type of planning based on the concept of cultural diversity and national direction, on decentralized administration and on facing the challenges and demands of modernization. These range from the need to put down cultural roots in order to deepen awareness of nationhood to the trend to cultural change which results from the process of economic
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development. The Minister of Education summarized the principles of this strategy as follows:

as regards national changes, we are living in the age of the knowledge explosion, the age of great technical progress, the age of the communications revolution which has made the world a single unit. Then there is the regional (or if you prefer the national) context, i.e. Sudan’s membership of the Arab nation and the Islamic community. Then there is the Sudan’s geographical position as one of the countries of Africa, and its close links with all the others. There is the special position of the Sudan because of its vast area, stretching as it does from the Red Sea to the depths of Africa, with its multiplicity of dialects, tribes, cultures and climates. This led us to consider this precise aspect, and to frame our strategy within this context, i.e. that education should be directed towards inculcating and reinforcing national unity.

Then we took into consideration the consequences of the trend to development, and the changes that will flow from it; viz. that whole communities will change from pastoral to sedentary agricultural, whilst agricultural societies will begin to acquire some of the characteristics of industrial society.¹

These are not merely the principles for an educational strategy alone. They also concern the essence of the problems that any planning of cultural policy in the Sudan must face, and to which it must devise suitable solutions.

¹. Abdullah Hāmid al-Abādi, press interview with the Minister of Education, the *Sahafa* newspaper, Khartoum, 24 May 1978.
Tradition and change: cultural policy and national development

It is noteworthy that the detailed practical features of cultural policy took shape gradually during a series of national conferences attended by large groups of administrators, specialists and politicians. We shall limit ourselves here, in tracing the main features of cultural policy and its evolution, to the three most important of these conferences, since they were comprehensively national.

Perhaps the first of these conferences was the National Cultural Revolution Conference held from 17 to 22 June 1976. This conference was very well organized, being divided into a number of specialist committees which discussed:

- Aims of cultural policy.
- Groups for whom cultural policy is intended.
- Content of cultural policy.
- Overall planning.
- Organization, training and finance.
- Means of communication, information and mobilization.
- Research, statistics, follow-up and appraisal.

It will be clear from this that at this conference there was a comprehensive and well-organized discussion of the problems of defining cultural policy. It made the connection between cultural and political change in their socio-economic aspects, and dealt with the administrative system and the production and service sectors in order to demonstrate the organic unity in the trend of society as a whole. We are thus enabled to discern a direct

1. In writing this chapter, reference was made to the set of official reports containing the recommendations of these cultural conferences and committees. We quote only the most important here: Proceedings of the National Cultural Revolution Conference, People's Hall, Khartoum, 17-22 June 1973; Proceedings of the General Conference of Sudanese Intellectuals, 29 September to 3 October 1977; Proceedings of the National Conference for Comprehensive Cultural Planning, 3-10 February 1979.
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connection with the cultural aspect in its specialized form, and to link ends and means.

As regards 'ends', the conference made the following recommendations:
Education to be given a democratic direction, so as to afford all members of the Sudanese people equal opportunities.
Adult education for those who have missed the opportunity of functional education linked to their work or their social role, so as to increase their productive capacity and social efficiency. This to take place within a six-year time scale.
Elementary education to be made compulsory.
A scientific, planning-conscious, industrial mentality to be created among the members of the Sudanese people, so as to permit the comprehensive development of society.
The countryside to be developed with the object of making the whole of Sudanese society sedentary rather than nomadic.
The capacity to innovate, create and invent to be developed in everybody; and arrangements to be made to give inventors and innovators in various categories patent protection and a decent chance of life and progress, and to allow their inventions to move towards application for the benefit of society.
Intelligent, conscious receptiveness to the world, so as to benefit from human expertise in all times and places without fear, prejudice or illusion.
Literature and the arts to be sponsored and made accessible so as to contribute to the development of society.
A concern for sports training and the good use of leisure; the development of hobbies and the encouragement of self-education.

As the ideal way of achieving these aims the conference recommended the setting up of a pyramidal organization for planning, follow-up and implementation, consisting of: (a) Higher National Council; (b) Higher Technical Committee (central); (c) regional councils in the provinces; (d) local councils at area, district and village level.

This conference was followed by the General Conference of Sudanese Intellectuals (29 September to 3 October 1976), whose most important recommendations may be summarized as follows:
Efforts to be intensified to revive the original Sudanese cultural heritage, whose roots stretch back to Arab, Islamic and African origins, so that the contribution of modern science may be employed on a solid foundation of original roots.
Efforts to be made to enrich the various areas of literary and artistic life, support its existing institutions and set up bodies to develop and support it.
Publishing and translating to be encouraged.
Efforts to be made to make available cultural aids such as books, magazines, equipment and cultural apparatus so as to bring it within the reach of all at very low prices.
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Special attention to be given to education, as the prime instrument of culture and the success of development plans.

Efforts to be made to hold regional conferences based on local efforts and studies.

The gist of these conferences was emphasis on cultural democracy and its links with educational democracy, plus continual emphasis on the vital connection between the centre and the periphery and between tradition and change.

Perhaps the most important of these conferences was the National Conference for Comprehensive Cultural Planning (3-10 February 1979). This sought to give clear, ordered expression to the plurality and unity of Sudanese culture, to the decentralization needed in the administration of cultural work, and to the problems of the traditionalism—change relationship in the relationship between culture and economic and social development. These are the three pillars on which cultural policy in the Sudan rests. As stated in the introduction to its list of recommendations, the conference was inspired by: '... the nature of Sudanese culture, with its African-Arab-Islamic affiliations and specificity and its genius for inventing political, social and artistic forms to represent its powerful individuality in its richly varied unity'.

This understanding of what the conference called 'the intermingling of civilizations and cultures' in the Sudan gave rise to three recommendations conveying the essence of cultural policy in practice:

1. To design a modern cultural apparatus such as will give vital expression to the complex structure of Sudanese culture; to study the forms of decentralization spontaneously produced in the past by popular ingenuity; to introduce comprehensive national cultural planning into the apparatus of local people's government; and to support the regional cultural apparatus.

2. To take steps to study the local languages and unleash their innovatory potential for the enrichment of the national heritage, while reaffirming the position that Arabic has acquired through its history in the Sudan as a general national language.

3. To reaffirm the role of economic and social development as a way of deepening the concept of national integration.

These basic recommendations represent the gist of the specific detailed recommendations about cultural policy put forward by the conference under various headings, such as 'Heritage and History', 'Education', 'Mass Culture' and 'Culture for Children'. In the first group of recommendations ('Attitude Towards our Heritage') the conference recommended 'special regard for our Muslim Arab heritage, together with full concern for the heritage of the non-Muslim non-Arab tribes'. This recommendation is linked with a statement under the second heading ('The Re-writing of Sudanese History') about the need for 'concern for the study of the history of popular culture and the general cohesive tendency of society, and the
advantages in this connection of both oral and written popular culture'.
This fundamental intellectual position was continued in the third group of
recommendations ("The Intermingling of Cultures and Civilizations"),
whose fourth recommendation ran: 'to reaffirm mutual respect and equality
between various tribes and regions and diverse religious and cultural
backgrounds within the framework of a staunchly united Sudan'. Under
the fourth heading ("Educational Programmes") the wording was: 'to
reaffirm the democracy of education and the widening of its base' and 'to
Arabize higher education while not neglecting foreign languages, our
window on to the outside world and other cultures'. In the field of 'Mass
Culture' (this being the fifth heading), the recommendations linked 'the
stimulation of cultural activities as an interrelated whole, taking an
overall view of the various spheres of literary and artistic innovation
(in the broad sense) in which vital, positive features of our national heritage
are intermingled and blended' with the need 'for Sudanese culture to be
receptive to world culture in a healthy way, so as to gain enrichment and
improvement from foreign cultural influence'. So to the heading 'Culture
for Children', in which this fundamental intellectual position was exemplified
in recommendations such as: 'to seek to establish educational institutions
for children combining the systems of the Khalwa (Koran School) and the
modern kindergarten, and to distribute them in places where women work';
and 'to increase children's feeling of membership of the Sudanese nation';
and 'to use local cultures and games to develop children's inventiveness'.
Special concern for the modern arts seems quite natural here; for concern
with our heritage does not mean being obsessed with it. The conference
therefore advocated understanding our heritage and seeking inspiration
in it rather than mummifying it. 'Vigorous interaction with our heritage',
as the text put it, is the starting-point that 'opens the door wide to all
talents and abilities, so that they may help enrich the cultural scene', and
'to receptiveness . . . to world culture'. The recommendations in the section
'Literature and the Arts' pointed to the need to lay the foundations of
'social security, leisure and patronage for writers and artists'; 'to make
exhibition rooms available for traditional and contemporary fine arts';
to support the Record Office for Scientific, Literary and Artistic Works, and
safeguard authors' copyright' (the Authors' Copyright Law was promul-
gated in 1974); 'to set up studios for visual artists'; 'to support the national
folk instrument orchestra'; and 'to call on the Local People's Councils to
set up local music groups'. Under the heading 'Culture for Children' the
conference called for 'the use of the theatre, cinema, puppet theatre,
cartoons, books and magazines to enrich children's lives'; and for 'edu-
cational clubs to be made generally available for children'.
The hub of executive cultural activity is the Department of Culture, set up within the Ministry of Culture and Information in 1977 'to correct the idea of culture in a country like the Sudan which comprises many minorities and environments, such correction being needed to make culture productive', to quote the announcement of its establishment. Its functions were defined as follows:

To revive the written national heritage and preserve the oral heritage.

To concern itself with the nation's theatre, music and fine arts.

To publish and disseminate Sudanese intellectual production, and encourage the book industry.

To encourage reading and plans to set up public libraries.

The essence of the department's work lies in fostering and organizing the links between the cultural heritage and contemporary cultural trends. Hence special importance attaches to the Centre for Folklore Studies and Cultural Documentation, one of the bodies subordinated to the department. This centre carries out research into aspects of popular creativity in music, speech, decoration, rhythm and the visual arts. Its fundamental tasks are to set up national archives for Sudanese folklore; by studying Sudan's heritage and arts to play an effective part in giving concrete expression to national unity; to undertake the studies needed to develop our popular arts; and to work to establish a link between individual and popular creativity.

In this way the centre is becoming an important source and repository of specialized information about the various kinds of folk creativity, which helps in general cultural planning and assists the activities of other bodies

Cultural bodies

such as the Folk Arts Group and the Folk Instruments Group. In the centre anthropologists and folklore specialists carry out fundamental studies of the various folk cultures and arts. From these academic and descriptive studies the arts groups derive their mass-appeal material; and the Children’s Puppet Theatre Group relies to some extent on this for material for children’s folk-tales, which the group members then adapt for the live theatre. In the planning field the centre enables the cultural groups and centres in the various regions to define their needs and tasks in relation to their local cultures. For this purpose it works in collaboration with the Provincial Affairs Section in the department, which has executive responsibility for supervising the setting up of cultural groups and centres and follows up their work with the local authorities in the regions. The various sections of the department give an idea of the range of its activities and responsibilities, namely:

**Centre for Folklore Studies and Cultural Documentation**

This includes sections for the study of languages and dialects, folk literature, music, singing, dancing, folk technology, costume, cosmetics, folk ornament, folk customs, traditions and beliefs.

**Drama and Variety Section**

This section, the centre of theatrical activity in the Sudan, works to overcome the lack of any authentic dramatic tradition in the cultural heritage. Drama is a newcomer on Sudan’s cultural scene; it still depends to some extent on experimentation, borrowing and clumsy writing, and suffers from lack of clear intellectual or artistic vision. It also suffers from a scarcity of personnel with proper training for theatrical work. Other important aspects relate to the content of the theatrical movement and to the kind of theatre calculated to help establish this art in the contemporary culture of the Sudan.

The theatre is still a type of modern skill that will need a conscious effort to establish. Bold efforts are being made to use Sudanese historical material, and to exploit some of the semi-dramatic forms found in tribal rites and religious practices, which will help to forge close links between the theatre as a modern international skill and the local cultural and artistic heritage.

The Drama and Variety Section supervises all dramatic and variety activities, including the National Theatre, the provincial theatres, the Folk Arts Group, the Sudanese Acrobats Group, the Children’s Puppet Theatre Group and the Folk Instruments Group.
Cultural bodies

The Mass Culture Section

Its responsibilities may be summarized as (a) presenting suitably simplified cultural material for different educational levels and social classes, and (b) linking cultural questions with daily life through the mass media, especially radio and television (because of their continuous programmes).

Part of its work is carried out in collaboration with other bodies working in the mass culture field, e.g. bodies for the eradication of illiteracy.

Short Film Unit

Since the beginning of this year this has been part of the nucleus of the National Cinema Centre, its task being to record on film that part of the cultural heritage that is reeling under the blows of modern social and economic change. It is also used to document traditional folk industries and handicrafts such as the manufacture of Nile boats, sāqias (waterwheels) etc.; and to produce short films to help in the fight against functional illiteracy and for general education.

Children’s Culture Section

This is concerned with the development of children’s creative abilities through dramatic, musical and manual artistic activities. It works in collaboration with youth centres and the relevant departments in the Ministry of Education and Guidance.

Library Section

At this stage it is concentrating its efforts on (a) setting up the National Central Library, with branches in the regions produced by developing the existing regional libraries, and (b) supervising the setting up of libraries for the cultural centres and groups when such groups are established.

Cultural Publishing Section

This section helps to publish works by young writers, and also specialized studies in the fields of folklore and the cultural heritage. It produces a specialized cultural periodical called the Journal of Sudanese Culture.
Cultural bodies

Provincial Affairs and Cultural Groups Section

This supervises cultural activities in the regions in co-operation with the local authorities, according to programmes agreed by both sides. It is responsible for planning the establishment of cultural groups, these being the hubs of official cultural activity in the regions. A cultural institute is like the central Department of Culture in miniature, and has very close links with the local cultural environment. In every institute that has been built there is a library providing library services in the regional capital and supplying smaller libraries in the cultural centres in the large villages and other towns in the region. There is a possibility that mobile library services will be introduced in the future.

Work has been completed on the El-Fasher Cultural Institute, which was opened in May 1977 in El-Fasher, capital of the province of North Darfur in the western Sudan. Also completed is the Al-Damazin Institute, opened in May 1978 in Al-Damazin, capital of Blue Nile Province in the south-eastern Sudan; while work is almost complete on institutes in other areas, such as the Kasala Institute in Kasala province in the eastern Sudan, the Port Sudan Institute in Red Sea Province and the Dongola Institute in the Northern Province. In May 1979 the Regional Cultural Centre was opened in the city of Juba, capital of the Southern Region. This is a large centre, and those in charge of it are aiming to make it a centre for the direction and development of cultural work in the Southern Region.

Foreign Cultural Relations Section

This section co-ordinates cultural exchanges in conjunction with the other sections, prepares details of cultural relations to be included in bilateral agreements, and follows up their implementation. Its work goes on in collaboration with the Culture Department of the Foreign Ministry.

Office for the Registration of Literary Works

This office was set up under the Authors' Copyright Law promulgated in 1973 to supervise the legal registration of literary, artistic and scientific works in order to protect authors' copyright.

The President of the Republic's Prizes for Literature and the Arts

These are divided into (a) prizes for merit, (b) honorific prizes, (c) encouragement prizes, (d) prizes for folk creativity, (e) prizes for promise and (f) personal prizes. Winners of the first three types of prize also receive
gold and silver medals, and have their works published. Winners of the prizes for merit are given special precedence in the state.

Other bodies working in the cultural field include:

**National Council for Literature and the Arts**

This is a high-level planning and supervisory body in the field of literature and the arts, its aims being to develop, promote and disseminate them; to give them a national character; to preserve the Sudanese heritage in all domains; to foster and develop aspects of literary, artistic and cultural creativity; and to deepen the Sudanese Idea, enriching it and broadening its scope so as to emphasize the unity of the Sudanese nation.

The council has a Board of Governors consisting of *ex officio* members together with members appointed by the President of the Republic because of their qualifications. The Minister of Culture and Information is the chairman of the council. It has three branches, for literature, the arts and culture, each run by a group of members who are specialists in the particular field. The branches are divided into specialist committees, as for instance the Poetry Committee and the Narrative Prose Committee within the Literature Branch.

The council’s statute provided for the establishment of a Regional Council for Literature and the Arts, with its headquarters at Juba, capital of the Southern Region. This is supervised by the Regional Minister.

**State Cinema Institute**

This was set up in 1970, now comes under the Minister of Culture and Information, and has the following functions:

- To bring about a cinematic revival in the Sudan, and to produce films.
- To import and distribute films.
- To exercise active censorship over films.
- To plan and set up new cinemas in the Sudan.
- To spread awareness of the cinema, and set up a cinema and cinematic information library and a cinema research centre.
- To create close links with other cinema institutes and cinema clubs, and arrange joint activities.

The institute includes sections for import and distribution, cinematic documentation, education and statistics and publicity and propaganda, and is run by a board consisting of owners of cinemas, people working in the cinema industry and educators concerned with the art of the cinema. The institute produces a magazine of cinematic education.
Sudan Records Office

This was set up in 1948, its legal framework being completed by the promulgation in 1965 of the law relating to its organization and in 1966 of the Law for the Depositing of Literary Works (amended in 1971 to include contemporary writers). The documents preserved by the office include the following:

The government archives. These contain government printed documents from the beginning of the twentieth century, and the papers of ministries and constitutional, legislative and administrative departments and bodies.

Private papers. These comprise individuals' private books and papers.

Historical documents and manuscripts. These include the private documents and manuscripts of the Mahdist period (1883–99), i.e. about 80,000 documents, together with the documents of the Condominium (1899–1956) and a large collection of manuscripts and old books connected with the pre-nineteenth century history of the Sudan.

The Records Office also houses a collection of Sudanese newspapers and magazines.

Department of Antiquities and National Museums

The Department of Antiquities and National Museums is a specialized academic department engaged in a wide range of activities to do with the location, excavation and conservation of ancient remains. It publishes the scientific research work in the department’s annual journal Kush, which is an international reference source for Sudanese archaeological studies. The department also disseminates historical and archaeological awareness among the masses, using the information media, especially television and radio, for this purpose. The department supervises a number of museums, namely:

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE SUDAN

This houses the archaeological heritage of the Sudan from the Early Stone Age to the end of the Christian period and the beginning of the Muslim era.

KHALIFA’S HOUSE MUSEUM

This museum is devoted to the Mahdist period during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. It was set up in what was the residence of the Khalifa Abdullah, successor to the Imam Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahdi, leader of the Mahdist revolt.
MUSEUM OF POPULAR HERITAGE

Here are displayed objects belonging to the various Sudanese tribes, including examples of their arts, domestic implements and artefacts relating to their beliefs and customs.

REGIONAL MUSEUMS OF AL-OBEID
AL-FASHER AND MEROWE

The Sudan is rich in archaeological heritage on the banks of the Nile and in the west and east. The most important archaeological sites, which attract research workers and scholars from both within and outside the country, are the traces of the Meroitic period in the area of al-Naq`a, al-Masurat and al-Bajrawiya, and those in the Jebel al-Barkal area and on the banks of the Nile northwards to Nubia, where remains of the Ancient Egyptian civilization are to be found. Excavation is currently in progress, with the help of international organizations and expeditions from universities in friendly countries, in the western Sudan, in the Wadi Howar area, and in the southern Sudan. A joint Department of Antiquities/Khartoum University/French Government expedition is carrying out a comprehensive archaeological survey of the eastern Sudan area.

There is a Museums and Archaeology Committee, which among other things supervises the department’s budget proposals, advises on archaeological excavation and grants licences to exploration teams which request them.

Radio and television

Transport is difficult in such a large country as the Sudan, especially in some parts at certain times of the year; and consequently radio and television assume special importance. It was probably this that led to the complete integration and co-ordination of information and cultural bodies within a single Ministry of Culture and Information. Whether this administrative link continues or the two bodies are separated, co-ordination between cultural programmes and mass education programmes will undoubtedly continue.

There is one central broadcasting service and a number of rural television stations, besides the national television centre in Omdurman which was set up in 1963.

The first regional television station was that in the Jezira: it opened in 1972, and a rural television station was set up in it in 1976. This is a pilot scheme presenting instructional environmental services concerned with the Jezira area, which represents the biggest agricultural concentration

1. In western and northern Sudan.
in the Sudan. Working there alongside the television technicians is a group of sociologists and experts in the eradication of functional illiteracy. The rural television presents programmes that stem from the agricultural village environment and cater for its occupational and cultural needs; it does this by investigating the farmers’ own concerns and setting out to present programmes on health and nutritional education, home economics, motherhood and child care and how to derive maximum benefit from the agricultural environment. There are also programmes aimed at improving methods of agricultural production.

In this interchange between the television centre and the villages, rural television is linked to its public by a network of ‘Communal Viewing Clubs’ in the villages. These clubs now exist in the first stage in 100 villages. The administration of the Jezira agricultural scheme helps to set up the clubs and buy the television sets. Then, from the small committee of village farmers that is responsible for running the club in question, the television organization chooses one person to receive a short training course in the correct operation of the set. The committee organizes the follow-up, discussion and criticism of the programmes, and remains in constant touch with a standing agency within the television organization.

With the setting-up of television studios transmitting in the Atbara area, in the north of the country (where the largest and most long-standing concentrations of workers and industry are situated because of their association with the headquarters of Sudan Railways), the plan is to introduce television services catering for the industrial environment as a counterpart to rural television which caters for the agricultural environment.

These television stations and the booster stations located in various parts of the country are linked through a microwave network. The general programme on national television receives international programmes via the artificial satellite station at Umm Haraz, south of Khartoum.

**Regional Ministry for Culture and Information**

The administrative infrastructure of culture in the Southern Region has begun to develop in the last five years. The Juba Public Library was opened at the beginning of January 1975, a number of centres for the development of popular art have been set up, and in May 1979 the Regional Cultural Centre was opened in Juba. This is a big cultural institute containing facilities for theatrical activities, dancing and folk music, and a library. It is big enough to house a regional archaeological and popular creativity museum, a folklore study centre and other kinds of cultural and artistic activity.
Tracing for scripture,
size $43 \times 42$ cm, by
Professor A. M. Shibrain

'Scene for Future',
size $60 \times 45$ cm, by
Professor A. M. Shibrain

Ceramic 'Witness V',
size 250 cm, by Salih
Elzaki.
Shops at Wadi Halfa, capital city of the Sudanese Nubia. [Photo: Unesco/R. Keating.]
We have deliberately delayed discussing educational strategy in the Sudan because of its specially important relationship to cultural strategy. In an earlier chapter we pointed out that the latter rests on three basic principles: the representation of the nature of Sudanese culture in its unity and diversity, the decentralization of its administration, and the relationship between traditionalism and change when dealing with social and economic development problems in planning instruction and training. Our educational strategy emphasizes that:

We must look upon higher education establishments as sources of cultural, social and technological influence on society, and take care when planning them to distribute them among the regions so that the various parts of the country may benefit from their presence and suitable local conditions be prepared for their activities. Care must be taken to see that they are co-ordinated with each other to work towards national goals, and that they co-operate with each other and with similar establishments in other countries.

It also stipulates that:

the expansion of university education must be dedicated to the need to produce high-level trained manpower, so as to end the large deficiencies in the supply of expertise in the pure and applied sciences; studies in existing universities must be directed into these fields, and to supplying cadres with the specialized higher qualifications needed for the expansion and adaptation of university education. At the same time universities should be more concerned to raise the level of social and cultural life, to treat the ills of society, to advance it by bringing their studies to bear on development, to provide adult education, and to admit some external students who have not fulfilled the academic conditions.¹

¹ Sudanese Education: an Evaluation and a Strategy for Action. This comprehensive report contains the findings of the general survey of the education sector, Ministry of Education, 1977. It includes the working results of the commission charged to carry out this task and draw up an educational strategy. Its work took two years, using field
One of the most remarkable and important decisions of the strategy was making Arabic the medium of instruction at every stage and for every subject. This put a stop to the dualism of having a language of general education (Arabic) and a language of higher education (English, in most fields). This decision about the medium of instruction also took into consideration the areas in which Arabic is not the mother tongue; the compilation of suitable alternative textbooks for every area; the use of the Khartoum Institute for training specialists in the teaching of Arabic to non-Arabic speakers to carry out research work and run training courses to help in this; and the setting up of a standing body for linguistic planning to carry out research on the local languages and Arabic's links with them.

The details were set out in the terms of reference of this Standing Technical Body for Linguistic Planning.

To study the situation of Sudanese languages as regards number of speakers, range, and use for various purposes; together with Arabic's position among them and the problems it faces as a language of instruction and a common language of communication.

To produce scientific practical ways of spreading Arabic, as the national language, over the widest possible area in all parts of the country, especially in areas where it is not at present spoken.

To investigate the unification of curricula nationwide, at the same time bearing in mind conditions in areas where Arabic is not the mother tongue or another language is spoken alongside Arabic (especially the southern provinces) and proposing methods appropriate to such local conditions.

To carry out research and field studies in various parts of the country to determine their linguistic character and the steps needed to disseminate Arabic in them and remove the obstacles to its use as a language of instruction.¹

As regards the Southern Region,

it is educational policy nowadays to Arabize education, while preserving the local languages among those who speak them. This is the policy decided by a resolution of the Supreme Executive Council of the Southern Region, which has made Arabic the language of instruction in public elementary and secondary schools, with English in upper secondary schools and resort to local languages in the first and second forms of elementary schools in rural areas.²

and theoretical studies and joint working parties of representatives from the International Bank and Unesco and planners and educational statisticians from the Ministry of Education. The report includes an evaluation of the educational system in the Sudan, a proposed strategy for future years and statistics. See report, pp. 12, 117, 115, 45, 47, 51, 52, 57.

1. Sudanese Education . . . , op. cit.
2. Ibid.
Culture and educational strategy

Educational strategy has been endeavouring to establish close links between education and the varied rural environments in the Sudan, not by keeping to the usual types of school at various levels but by modifying them to suit the nature and needs of each particular environment (within the limits of the national educational objectives). In the field of elementary education, therefore, planning within the Ministry of Education and Guidance is aimed at setting up what are called integrated rural education centres, supplementary schools and basic education centres, and at developing Koran schools (Khalwa) and village schools alongside normal primary schools.

Integrated rural education centres

The report on educational strategy described them as follows:

They form the ideal type of elementary school in rural areas, since they constitute a centre for the life of the community and a focal point for its varied activities. Besides teaching children, the centres also open their doors for the eradication of illiteracy and for adult education. They give training in everything calculated to improve life in the villages and the country, such as agriculture, co-operation, home economics, health and rural industries. The schools are located within complexes together with health care and guidance units, maternity centres and agricultural guidance units for crop cultivation and animal husbandry. They afford integrated opportunities for continuous education on the basis of a comprehensive programme, taught with the help of local officials attached to the ministries and departments who work in the countryside and live amongst its people.¹

Supplementary schools

These are attached to the fifth and sixth forms in elementary schools. They were proposed as a partial solution, in order to give those who had begun their education outside the formal structure (in a Koran school, a village school, a centre for the eradication of illiteracy or by self-instruction) an opportunity of continuing in formal education. "In this capacity they are a link between formal, semi-formal and informal education".²

Koran schools (Khalwa)

These are ancient institutions with deep roots in the history of culture and education in the Sudan and in people’s consciousness. They are centres of spiritual and learned influence, and their traditions have continued without

¹. Sudanese Education . . ., op. cit.
2. Ibid.
Culture and educational strategy

a break for four centuries. Children enter at the age of 4 or 5 to study the Koran, improve their Arabic and study hadith, Koranic exegesis and the foundations of Islamic law. Their field of activity has shrunk a good deal recently because of the spread of formal education, so that Koran schools (estimated to number about 2,700) have become one of the props of elementary formal education. 'All they need is for their standards to be raised' by increased supervision on the part of the controlling body for religious affairs, 'and for a link to be created between them and elementary schools which would enhance their contribution to the service of society'.

Village schools

The report said:

'In communities to which Islam has not spread, such as some parts of the Southern Region, this type of school performs an educational function similar to that of Koran schools. This makes it an institution to be encouraged by linking it to primary education'.

Basic education centres

Since there are more children at present than elementary schools can absorb, the strategy proposed setting up basic education centres to take those children from 9 to 13 whom schools cannot absorb and organize them into groups of fifty in the school buildings outside normal school hours. The basis of the work with them is to be widened to include, beside reading and writing, some arithmetic, religious education and scientific activities, to prepare them for entry to Supplementary School.

In this way they will enter the stream of formal state education.

As regards secondary state education, the most important proposal was that practical material should take its place as an essential component (of the programmes). Pupils should have opportunities for manual work in spheres relevant to the environment, such as agriculture. The work will vary according to the location of the school, to include e.g. growing arable crops, fodder, vegetables or fruit, chicken-farming or stock-breeding, or work in ornamental tree nurseries or local industries. This in turn may involve weaving cotton or wool, wood-carving, carpentry, metal-work or tool-making, and also cottage industries and rural handicrafts found in the various environments in different parts of the country.

1. Sudanese Education..., op. cit.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
As regards the upper secondary stage, specialization has been starting relatively early, and became policy seven years ago, with the building of specialist vocational schools for agriculture, industry, trade, home economics and teacher training. The report on strategy proposed "the immediate start of experiments with "comprehensive" schools (schools with a number of specialities; institutions combining theoretical and applied studies under one roof)."¹

Beyond secondary school there are four national universities, and a number of institutes and colleges specializing in agriculture, natural resources and vocational fields such as advanced nursing, public health, etc. There is also a branch of Cairo University in Khartoum.

'Higher education establishments are national institutions, despite the fact that they are dispersed in various parts of the country and that one of their tasks is laid down as to give attention to the fundamental problems of local environments'.² Each of the four universities is different in academic character from the others, while they complement each other in supplying trained personnel and catering for the more advanced specialities. The University of Khartoum, the oldest of the universities, has the characteristics of a traditional university, with ten faculties covering the human sciences and pure and applied science. The ten faculties are those of literature, law, economics and social studies, education, science, medicine, veterinary science, agriculture, pharmacy and engineering. There is also a Faculty of Higher Studies, which supervises the work of students registered for higher studies in co-operation with their own faculty. The Islamic University of Omdurman, however, at present has no Faculty of Science. It has three faculties, of Islamic studies, social studies and literature. The decree setting it up ordained for it a special character concerned with the study of the Muslim Arab heritage, the enrichment of Sudanese life with elements from Muslim Arab civilization, the employment of its special attributes in the service of Sudanese society, and the study of Arabic and Arabic linguistics. Attention was to be paid to the university's special character in the context of Sudan's role and position in propagating Islam in Africa; and also to the heritage of the Sudanese Koran schools, which have for centuries been the goal of students and scholars from West Africa.

In 1977 and 1978 two universities were set up. One was the University of Juba, in the Southern Region, which has faculties of natural resources, social and environmental studies, education and medicine. Its terms of reference include seeking to raise people's level of performance by means of theoretical learning and practical experiment. The other, the University of the Jezira in the agricultural area in the middle of the country, is made up of four faculties: agriculture (in two complementary halves, namely

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¹ Sudanese Education . . ., op. cit.
² Ibid.
botanical and zoological), agricultural sciences and industries, and human and environmental medicine. There is also an Institute for Rural Studies, i.e. social science, anthropology, economics and public administration. Its statutes lay down that it should admit those qualified among the rural population and enable them to regenerate their practical skills by the addition of theoretical learning.

As regards institutes and colleges of higher learning, we shall confine ourselves to those directly concerned with cultural work.

**Institute of African and Asian Studies**

This is attached to the University of Khartoum, and concentrates on higher studies and research in its field. There are close links between it and the government cultural apparatus over training and joint research, in particular between its folklore section and the Centre for Folklore Studies and Cultural Documentation in the Department of Culture. The institute is endeavouring to set up special archives for popular literature in the Sudan.

**Institute of Music and Drama**

This institute was opened at the beginning of May 1969 as part of the ministry responsible for cultural affairs and information. In 1976 the institute was transferred by government decree from the Ministry of Culture and Information to the National Council for Higher Education, as an institution of higher education. Plans are afoot to turn the institute into an academy of arts, in which the subjects taught would include music, drama, folk art and cinema.

Its basic activities are teaching music and drama, concern for and recording and studying the musical and dramatic heritage, and co-operating with institutions working in this field at home and abroad.

The institute is assembling archives documents on musical and dramatic history in the Sudan. It produces the quarterly *Journal of Music and Drama*, and also publishes musical and dramatic works.

**College of Fine and Applied Arts**

The history of the college goes back to the beginning of the 1940s, when the then Department of Education introduced art as a subject in the educational curriculum. Next the training of art teachers started at the Institute of Education at Bakht ar-Ruda in 1943. In 1946 the School of Design was founded at Gordon Memorial College (now the University of Khartoum). In 1951 the School of Design moved to the buildings of the Khartoum
Technical Institute and took the name of School of Fine and Applied Arts, later becoming a college when it obtained its academic and administrative independence in 1971. After a period of attachment to the Ministry of Culture and Information it became in 1975 one of the colleges within the Institute of Colleges of Technology, this being a higher educational establishment. Its objectives may be summarized as follows:

To prepare and train specialists in the fine and applied arts able to make an effective contribution in all fields. This is achieved by programmes of study for (a) designers, (b) teachers of art and (c) visual artists.

To promote and foster artistic culture and disseminate it through study and research into the cultural heritage and popular art, so as to amalgamate the tastes of the various peoples who are striving to create a unified Sudanese nationality.

To seek to link the local culture and heritage to other peoples’ cultures and help to enrich the common heritage of mankind.

To use artistic taste combined with professional expertise in industrial production so as to bring it into our daily lives in shapes and colours appropriate to our Sudanese context.

The course at the college lasts four years, beginning with a preparatory year after which the students specialize in one of the college’s ten sections. After sitting the final examination (both practical and theoretical), successful students are awarded the degree of Bachelor of Arts. The sections of the college are graphic design, printing and binding, painting, textile design and printing, sculpture, pottery, Arabic and Roman calligraphy, industrial design, drawing, history of art, and general studies. This is in addition to further education evening classes held in the college.\(^1\)

**Department of Religious Affairs and Charitable Foundations**

In 1979 it was decided to merge the Ministries of Religious Affairs and Charitable Foundations, the Department of Youth from the Ministry of Youth and Sport and the Ministry of Social Affairs and make them departments of the Ministry of Pedagogy and Higher Education, which was renamed Ministry of Education and Guidance. This was because these ministries’ work had close links with the fields of education, instruction and guidance. Then the Department of Social Affairs was split off to be administered by a Supreme Council for Social Affairs, without affecting the fundamental tasks of these bodies. The duties of the Department for Religious Affairs remained the same as they had been in the ministry, namely:

To foster religious studies, preaching and spiritual guidance.

To give due regard to spiritual values, as sources of culture that directly influence the emergence of national unity.

To supervise and look after mosques.

To supervise churches, look after Christian institutions, train clergymen and seek to set up a Sudanese Christian church for Christian citizens.

To develop the charitable foundations financially, so that their revenue may be used in the service of society.

To co-ordinate foreign religious connections.

Its duties include fostering the mosques so as to restore their original noble function (as centres of cultural and spiritual influence during the golden age of Muslim civilization), caring for the Sufi brotherhoods, supervising the kindergartens attached to the mosques and spreading Koranic scholarship.

The project of printing the Koran in the style of Abu Umar al-Duri (this being the prevailing style in the Sudan) has almost been completed.

The Institutes of the Noble Koran, founded from 1966 onward, come under this department. There are now six institutes in the various provinces. Also attached to it is the Sharwani Institute for the Noble Koran and its Scholarship, a unique institution, the first of its kind in the Democratic Republic of the Sudan and the second in Africa after the Institute of Koranic Recitation at the al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo. Its aim is to turn out first-class reciters of the Koran and men who know it by heart, who may be relied on to safeguard the Noble Koran and its scholarship. The course at this institute lasts six years. In two years students obtain a certificate called the 'Certificate of Recitation'; and successful ones then go on to the stage of specialization in methods of recitation. After a further four years students obtain a diploma in methods of recitation.

The department also supervises the affairs of the Christian religion in the country, through the Church Affairs Section. Its most important aims are:

To Sudanize the foreign Christian clergy, replacing them with Sudanese Christian clergymen when prepared and trained.

To seek to set up a higher institute to train and educate Christian clergymen who wish to enter the priesthood, in order to Sudanize church appointments.

To give religious guidance to Christian citizens.

To supervise all church activities.

To participate in church conferences at home and abroad.

To give annual grants to the various churches.

Department of Youth

Its duties now are no different from what they were when it was a department of the Ministry of Youth and Sport. It is concerned with children from the age of 7 to about 20, organizing cultural competitions and providing
ways of discovering talents and abilities (and of acquiring skills) in youth centres set up in various Sudanese towns and furnished with libraries and instructional equipment. The Instruction and Publication Section also helps to publish some literary works by young writers.

Under this department comes the Children’s and Young People’s Palace, which enables young people to acquire further skills through vocational training or artistic hobbies such as music and drawing, provides educational clubs within the national educational system, and inculcates public spirit through production projects.

This department is also responsible for administering the Youth Training Centres and Centres for Youth and Social Care.

**YOUTH TRAINING CENTRES**

The Youth Training Centres Project was set up in accordance with the project document, which laid down that the Ministry of Youth, in collaboration with the United Nations (ILO), should set up centres to train young people of both sexes who had had only elementary education or no education at all. This was intended to give them a grounding in skilled trades such as carpentry, tool-making, household management, etc., and at the same time help them and their needy families to earn a living.

**CENTRES FOR YOUTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

These were set up by the Ministry of Youth and Sport after the ministry itself was set up in 1969. The idea was to take advantage of the existence of concentrations of young people in various areas to set up centres for them, which would bring them together and canalize their energies for the good of the country through various social, cultural and sporting activities.

The United Nations is helping the centres by providing them with experts, advisers and volunteers, by making a budgetary allocation for the purchase of equipment from abroad and by supplying various centres with means of communication. The local body (previously the Ministry, now the Department of Youth) provides buildings and builds workshops for vocational training, in addition to handling the budget and providing the administrative framework. The vocational training course lasts nine months or a year, after which the trainee, having acquired a grounding in his chosen trade, enters the local labour market to earn his living. There are special activities for women, including household management, dress-making, sewing, textile printing and running kindergartens.

The centres also comprise general activities thought to develop the trainees’ minds, broaden their culture and provide recreation for them, such as photography, acting, drama, music and reading.
Youth training centres are spreading throughout the Sudan, including the southern provinces, but centres for youth and social care, to the number of ninety, have so far been confined to the northern provinces.\(^1\)

**Eradication of illiteracy and functional adult education**

This field now comes under a special body in the Ministry of Education and Guidance, though for a time the work was split between the Ministry and the Central Body for the Eradication of Illiteracy, part of the government's political apparatus. The idea of involving a political body in this field was in order to stress the need to tackle the problem at the highest possible level. In February 1972 the Law for the Eradication of Illiteracy and Functional Adult Education was promulgated, and in accordance with its provisions the National Council for the Eradication of Illiteracy and Functional Adult Education was set up. Work in this field has now been amalgamated with the Ministry of Education and Guidance, as part of the effort to link up formal, semi-formal and informal educational activities, to produce an entity which serves the ends of lifelong education and allows people to continue their education at any stage in their lives.

\(^1\) The Sudan Gazette and The Sudan Almanac, 1976-1977, op. cit.
Summary

The plan for the implementation of cultural policy is to try to bring together bodies working in the cultural, instructional and educational field and to ensure co-operation between them. At the same time the idea of decentralization needs to be pursued and regional organizations strengthened and given increased support. This will help in the end to achieve direct control and resolve the various local problems in ways appropriate to the various environments. It will also give the greatest possible scope for democratic administration, through the system of popular local government, and for effective participation in drawing up local cultural development policies related to the social and economic circumstances of each area. The role of the central bodies is confined to general policy-making and national planning.

This can be done by adopting the system of regional government and pursuing the idea of popular local government through a chain of national, regional and local councils.
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