

Republic of The Sudan

National Legislature Council of States

**Conference of Parliamentarian Ladies in the Association of Senate &
Shoora Councils in Africa and The Arab World**

Sudanese Representative Practice

**Khartoum – Friendship Hall
during period 18-19 March 2012**

Sudan is now considered of the largest African countries in relation to its area of 1,882,000 sq. km., while population is 33,419,625. It extends from the desert in the North up to almost Equator. To the East it is bordered by the Red Sea coast, and extends westward into Africa. Due to this distinguished strategic location, land of Sudan enjoys considerable cultural and environment diversity to create linkage and communication bridge between countries in Asia and Africa along with countries towering over Mediterranean during more historic ages. Sudan is today a resultant of historic reality and its ancient role was revealed in its population structure. It is a form of various human groups of diversive ethnics and culture origins merged into the country of Sudan.

Impact formulating this structure is shown in the Arab Islamic influence together with the African trend coming from centre of the continent.

Sudan was and still receives in coming people from everywhere, and land of Sudan becomes a gathering place to different races and cultures as it is simultaneously a bridge for thoughts and religions, between outside world and Africa along time ago. Ancient Muslim historians and Arab travelers have shown aspects of life in their writings.

Prior to foundation of Islamic Sultanates and kingdoms, starting by Fong Kingdom (1504), Fur Sultanate, Tagali Kingdoms and Mosabba'at, custom was prevailing transactions and Sultans and Kings of such Sultanates did not issue written laws, pamphlets or regulations that should be followed. Legislation power was devolved to guardian who follows Islamic Sharia'a and consideration of Holy Quran and prophet Sunna as two sources for legislation.

The issue had been strongly established after revolution of Imam Mohammad Ahmed Al-Mahadi, who ended the Turkish-Egyptian rule in 1885. And imposed his powers all over cities of Sudan at that time, as he issued pamphlets and addresses stating majors and directives that should be followed in administration, government and justice.

Pamphlets of Al-Mahadi during his life and some of Caliphate Abdullah ones thereafter become one legislation sources while meetings of Emam AL-Mahdi and his Khalifate Abdullah resembled Shoorā institutions, via which opportunity of opinion giving to run the public affairs.

Sudan community come to know early power of legislation and control through its primitive societies and across Christian and Islamic states, Turkish rule, Mahadiya and condominium rule and up to the national system of rule whether totalitarian or multi-party.

There were different titles for legislator and control bodies over ages. At the level of local communities, they were know as Councils of Lords and Mediators, as well as (Nozar and Omad, Shartai and Mokuk) Councils.

At national level titles included names of: Legislative Assembly, Constituent Assembly, Parliament, Senate, People's Assembly and National Assembly.

Sudan parliamentary practice was not isolated from parliamentary practice in the world. Sudan parliament has developed concepts, properties, powers and functions throughout six different phases of national systems of government.

Period from early 20th century and up to now, witnessed about twenty parliaments varies in formation, relation with systems of government, functions and jurisdiction. It commenced by formation of the Governor-General Council (1910) followed by foundation of Consultative Council for North Sudan (1943) and hence Legislative Assembly (1948-1953) composed of (79) members by election and appointment by the Governor General. Thereafter, the country adopted bicameral system – being the parliament in Dec. 19-1955, when House of Representatives was formed (1954-1958) by 95 members through direct and indirect election, and Senate (1955-1958) of 55 members by election and appointment. Practice was hence changed during rule of November 17-1958 Government by establishment of Central Council, at national level out of 86 members by election and appointment (1965-1968), following October 21 Revolution, 1984, parliament was known for the name of the First Constituent Assembly.

Following Oct. 21 Revolution 1964:-

During era of the 2nd democracy (1965-1968), following Oct. Revolution 1964, parliament was known for the title of the First Constituent Assembly when the sole representative council was adopted, pursuant to stipulation of article (41) of the provisional constitution of 1964. It was formed out of two categories: Members representing geographic constituencies and members representing (Khirrijeen) or gradates and their number was 171 members, by election, witnessing entry of the first woman into the parliament (Ustaza/ Fatima Ahmad Ibrahim). Then came the second Assembly (1968-1969), out of 261, by direct election.

During rule period of (May – 25 – 1969), practice was resembled in the Five People's Assemblies which are: The First People's Assembly (1972-1973) formed of 265 members, representing three categories by election and appointment, Second People's Assembly (1974-1978) out 261 members by election and appointment.

Third People's Assembly.

Fourth People's Assembly: (1980-1981) out of 386 members, by election and appointment, and Fifth People's Assembly: (1982-1985) out of 165 members.

During third democracy, practice was given the name of: Constituent Assembly (1986-1989) formed of 301 members by direct election.

After foundation of national salvation government, the system took gradual steps toward multiparty system and democracy-shifting from phase revolutionary legitimacy to constitutional legitimacy.

According, National Interim Assembly was formed (1992-1996), pursuant to the Fifth decree of 1991 to fill in constitution gap by appointment, and the second National Assembly (1996-1999) formed by election, pursuant to the stipulation of the 13th constitutional decree, by (284) member via direct election in geographic constituencies, and some members by election from the National Congress, according to the political system and its rules in representation.

The third National Assembly was founded being the first parliament elected under Republic of the Sudan of 198 as it was elected by the end of the year 2000. Coinciding with presidency elections and formed of 385 members.

As for the Fourth National Assembly (2005-2009), it was formed pursuant to a CPA, signed in Nivasha, dated January 9, 2005, where article No. (117) of Sudan Interim Constitution of 2005, stipulates formation of national legislature, composed of the National Assembly and Council of States.. adopting bicameral system.

National Assembly is formed of (450) member with percentage of 52% for NCP, 28% for SPLM and 20% for other political force of both Northerners and Southerners.

In 1953, woman candidacy was adopted and only 12 women had benefited therefrom because voting right necessitates holding the secondary certificate.

Sudanese woman obtained the right of election and candidacy in election of 1964 following October revolution. Statistics indicate the woman voting percentage in election following Oct. revolution was greater than men voting percentage, where percentage in Khartoum 40% while men voting was 24% and in Kordofan 23% against 16% for men and Darfur is 28% against 17% for men, and accordingly woman actually surpassed man in voting.

As for woman participation in parliament, it did not happen to exceed 10% during all times. While now and after legislative elections in April 2010 and with the democratic transformation witnessed by Sudan, elections were run at both levels of the centre and states, pursuant to the mixed system that add between geographic constituencies and system of party lists, where candidate who get greater number of votes shall be the winner. In individual candidacy, election law decides 60% for geographic constituencies, 25% for women and 15% for proportional representation.

Law has, for the first time granted objective identification for woman advantage where law secures percentage of 25%% of seats in parliament as the status in relation to system of proportional representation with the purpose of allowing opportunity to the greatest possible number of parties to participate in the national legislature and state one, knowing that each state in Sudan has a legislature undertaking its functions of legislation and control. As woman is represented therein by 25% also.

Council of States is equivalent to Senates and similar councils. Membership of the first Council of States amounted to (50) members – 47 men and 3 women with percentage of 6.17 and that was prior to separation. This percentage increased to 21.7% in the present Council of States formation as there are endeavours to increase percentage later.

Women to men percentage in the different Sudanese Parliaments

Name and date of parliament	No. of members	No. of members		Women to men percentage
		Men	Women	
Constituent Assembly 1965	171	170	1	0.6%
Constituent Assembly 1968	261	261	0	0
First People's Assembly 1972	265	265	13	5.1%
Second People's Assembly 1974	261	250	11	4.4%
Third People's Assembly 1978	318	301	17	5.6%
Fourth People's Assembly 1980	386	386	18	4.9%
Fifth People's Assembly 1982	165	154	11	7.1%
Constituent Assembly 1986	303	301	2	0.7%
Interim National Assembly 1994	284	258	26	10.1%
National Assembly 1996	421	400	21	5.2%
National Assembly 2001	385	350	35	10%
National Assembly 2005	450	369	81	21.9%
National Assembly 2010 the present one.	347	260	87	33%