

Chapter 1

Introduction

It is almost two years since the beginning of the rebel insurgency in Darfur, but the conflict continues, the ceasefire has been frequently violated, and the world's worst humanitarian crisis continues to deepen. At the last estimate, more than 1.6 million people had been displaced as a result of the systematic attacks on villages with associated violence, killings, burning of homes, looting of livestock, and theft and destruction of material assets.

It does not need research to demonstrate that the conflict in Darfur has destroyed livelihoods. This study attempts to go beyond the obvious and immediate impacts of the attacks, to consider the medium- and long-term impacts on how people are able to survive, and their longer-term future. The purpose of the research was to investigate the effects of the humanitarian crisis on the livelihoods of selected communities in Darfur, in order to help refine strategic humanitarian interventions. The study pays particular attention to the impact on remittances sent from Darfurians working in Libya, Khartoum and Gederaf, and also the role of livestock production and livestock trade between Darfur and Libya, and between Darfur and Khartoum. It takes a strategic longer-term view of how the conflict is affecting Darfur, beyond the initial shock and the immediate needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Methodology

Research undertaken in the midst of complex emergencies must adapt to the constant challenges of insecurity, shifting access to different parts of the population, and highly charged political contexts where few actors are neutral, let alone objective. The analytical tool applied for investigating livelihoods is the adapted livelihoods framework used by the Feinstein International Famine Center (FIFC), which is based on the DFID sustainable livelihoods framework¹ and the Collinson framework.² A diagram of the adapted livelihoods framework is shown in Figure 2.

This study fills a gap that is widely recognised by both the international community and the Sudanese authorities, in that it employs conflict analysis and considers the impact of macro factors (such as markets, trade, tribal affiliation and political economy) and on the livelihoods of the different groups in Darfur, and is not limited to IDPs.

The core elements of the FIFC framework used in the analysis include:

1. **livelihood goals**, many of which may be competing, which means that households must constantly re-prioritise and make trade-offs between one goal and another;
2. **the assets or resources** available to households, which may be either directly owned or otherwise accessed. These include:
 - **natural:** land, water (including rights of access to grazing land, water points, common natural resources)

- **physical:** livestock, stores and stocks, equipment
 - **financial:** money, debt, credit, claims/obligations, investments
 - **human:** health and nutritional status, adult labour and care providers, skills and level of education
 - **social:** household social networks, social institutions, social exclusion, norms, trust, values and attitudes
 - **political:** appropriate in the context of conflict;
3. **livelihood strategies**, which are what people actually do, or the means by which they achieve their goals. Livelihoods usually comprise multiple strategies; and
 4. **the policies, institutions and processes** that affect the way in which households maintain or gain access to their assets and keep control over them. The manner in which households use their assets is shaped or influenced by ‘transforming structures and processes’ – which may include, for example, the processes of climatic and environmental change, rural urban migration, Arabisation and Islamisation, and wider economic pressures of exchange rate hikes or inflation. ‘Institutions’ is a term used to refer to customs, rules or common law that have been an important feature of a particular group or society for a long time. The native administration in Sudan is a good example of an institution. The term can also be used to mean established body or organisation.
 5. The study analyses livelihood goals, strategies and assets at the micro and meso level – the level of the household and local community. Livelihood goals are in a sense the objectives of the household which influence the combination of assets and strategies that are subsequently mobilised. The household’s resources must be managed to reduce risk, prevent erosion of assets and promote further accumulation of assets where this is desired. Household assets are both a resource and a source of risk or vulnerability – for example, when assets are deficient (such as a lack of adult labour), or there is no access to credit or a lack of social networks or when the accumulation of assets gives rise to the risk of robbery with violence or communal conflict. There may also be a significant cost to the household in terms of maintaining assets – for example, in maintaining residence on the land to ensure land rights, or in long-distance migration with livestock to ensure access to water and pasture.

Policies, institutions and processes, on the other hand, are identified and analysed more at the macro level. In the context of Darfur, this means reviewing the salient political, social and economic features of the evolving conflict and looking at how these have affected livelihoods. This has elements of a political economy analysis of conflict¹, and is vital if the more strategic and longer-term impacts on livelihoods are to be understood.

Commodity chain analysis has been applied in relation to livestock production and trade, and also to labour migration and remittances. It has been used to consider how these areas

¹ According to Collinson, political economy analysis ‘is concerned with the interaction of political and economic processes in a society: the distribution of power and wealth between different groups and individuals, and the processes that create, sustain and transform these relationships over time. When applied to situations of conflict and crisis, political economy analysis seeks to understand both the political and the economic aspects of conflict, and how these combine to affect patterns of power and vulnerability. According to a political economy approach, vulnerability should be understood in terms of powerlessness rather than simply material need’.

have been affected by the war economy, and in order to identify governance structures and exchange relationships within commercial networks, beginning with primary production and moving up from the local to the international level.

Phased approach

The study included a background review of literature and liaison with partners (June–July 2004); field work in Libya (July 2004); field work in Darfur, Khartoum and Gederaf (September to October 2004); and briefings and preparation of the final report (October–December 2004).

Independent research in Libya has not been possible for US based academics since the imposition of sanctions in the early nineties, and to our knowledge this is the first study of its kind investigating Sudanese labour migration. An invitation from the Libyan Red Crescent enabled three members of the Tufts team to visit Tripoli, Benghazi and El Kufra in the south east. During the visit the team was able to meet with;

- Representatives of relevant libyan government offices (including local governor, customs officials, immigration and veterinary offices),
- Libyan Red Crescent staff, including medical staff responsible for health certification of Sudanese migrants.
- Libyan agricultural projects employing Sudanese workers
- Sudanese associations (formal and informal)
- Darfurian traders
- Focus groups of selected Darfurians (ethnic groups, livelihood groups, recent arrivals, long-term established workers etc)
- Faculty at University of Benghazi, and the University of El Kufra.

To coincide with the visit to Libya, four Professors from the University of El Kufra conducted a rapid assessment survey on the social and economic status of Sudanese living in Kufra. A non-random sample of 385 sudanese were interviewed from a range of locations in Kufra area. The results have been included in this report.

Study team

The field study team included four members from Tufts University (one faculty member, two experienced practitioners with research experience and an expert in livestock production and trade), three from Ahfad University (one faculty member and two research assistants) and one expert local consultant from Darfur. Of the six core team members, three were Sudanese, although four team members had previous experience of living and working in Darfur.

Selection of study sites

Within the limitations imposed by issues of security and access, case-study sites in Darfur were selected to provide a wide geographical distribution and thereby diversity in livelihoods based on natural resources. They were also chosen to provide a balanced

range of ethnic groups, both large and small and reflecting different political viewpoints. The team travelled from El Fasher to Mellit, Kutum, Disr, Kebkabiya, Seraif (Beni Hussein), Seraf Umra, Assernei, El Geneina, Gokur and Nyala. Case studies are included of the following locations:

- North Darfur: Kebkabiya, Mellit, Disr and Seraif
- South Darfur: Nyala
- West Darfur: El Geneina, Gokur village, Arab settlement.

The study used qualitative research methods for collecting primary data during field work, including key informant interviews, focus group discussions and a range of participatory rural appraisal techniques (including semi-structured interviewing, proportional piling, historic timelines, mapping migration routes, ranking and scoring, transect walks, 'chapatti' or Venn diagrams, and direct observation).

The team identified and sought out a range of key informants in each location, including local leaders within the native administration, traders and local experts in livelihood-related issues (e.g. government and NGO workers). These key informant interviews were complemented by a range of focus group interviews, with groups representing different ethnic groups in each of the case-study areas. These groups included IDPs, pro-government groups, groups based in areas controlled by the Sudanese Liberation Movement (SLM) and displaced people living in abandoned villages.

Interview numbers have been substituted for all names of key informants and focus group members, in order to protect their privacy.

Background on Livelihoods in Darfur

This section provides some background context to livelihoods in Darfur, focusing on the background environmental and climatic factors that determine food security, and briefly reviewing the standard approaches to food security monitoring and early warning in the region. The history of conflict and its inter-relationship with failing livelihoods is taken up in the next chapter.

The three states of North, West and South Darfur make up Darfur region and cover a vast area of 510,000 sq km (one fifth of Sudan), stretching from the Sahara in the north to the equatorial forest in the south. Darfur shares borders with the Sudanese states of North and West Kordofan and Bahr El Ghazal and with the neighbouring countries of Egypt, Libya, Chad and Central African Republic (Figure 1).

The region's ecological diversity in part results from its wide-ranging zones of rainfall:³

1. a desert zone north of 16°N, with less than 100mm of rainfall annually and variability in rainfall of 35–60 per cent;
2. a Sahelian zone 12–16°N, with 100mm–150 mm of rainfall annually, 9.5–12 arid months and 25–35 per cent variability;

3. a Sudanic zone, 9–12°N, with 6.5– 9 arid months, 500mm–900mm rainfall annually and 25–30 per cent variability.

The region's location in the transitional zone between the Sahelian and the desert zones means that its natural resource base is fragile, especially in its northern areas, and this exposes it to environmental and production hazards. There is a single rainy season (mostly July–September), during which rainfall variability is more important in relation to food production than the total amount of rainfall.

The region consists of upland and lowland areas. Volcanic mountains, basement complex plateaux and outcrops of Nubian sandstone occur especially in Jebel Meidob in the north-east and Jebel Mara in the centre of Darfur. The altitude of Jebel Mara, at up to 3,000 metres, has a significant effect on the amount of rainfall there and its reliability. The lowlands include the northern desert, stabilised goz sand sheets in most of the east and part of the south of the region, important alluvial soils in the north and west (including the wadi networks) and extensive drainage basins in the south.³

Population density varies according to these ecological and climatic zones. North of 16°N, population density is very sparse (Figure 1), while the state of West Darfur is densely populated. The last official population census was carried out in 1993, but this is generally considered to be outdated. Most publications from UN agencies cite the population figures published by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2001), which assume a population growth rate of between 2.38 per cent (for West Darfur) and 2.48 per cent (for South Darfur). Their mid-year 2004 estimate for the total population of Darfur region was 6,556,000. Substantial numbers of people have left Darfur as a result of the crisis, either as refugees to Chad (approximately 190,000), or as labour migrants or as displaced people to other parts of Sudan or to neighbouring countries including Egypt and Libya, other Arab states and Europe. The actual numbers of displaced people and labour migrants is unknown.

Darfur is geographically remote from the rest of the country (El Fasher is more than 1,000km from Khartoum), and is especially remote from the areas of highest grain production in Central and Eastern Sudan.⁴ This remoteness contributes to a relative lack of access to markets outside the region. Transport costs from Central Sudan to Darfur were estimated to be upwards of 33 per cent of the final selling price of grain in 1987. According to one report: *'Within Darfur, the poor infrastructure similarly affects the regional grain market network. Although in good harvest years the regional marketing system appears to be well integrated, in poor years supplies to remote markets in north Darfur quickly dry up. Markets such as Cuma and Malha were particularly badly served in previous periods of drought. Costly and difficult transport discouraged local traders from serving these small markets, particularly during the rainy season when market supplies were most needed.'*⁴

A study in the late 1980s found that 53–65 per cent of households' total budget was spent on food.⁵ More recent work by Save the Children's (SCUK) Household Economy unit shows that this trend varies in different food economy zones within Darfur, but that

generally poor households rely less on purchased food sources than on their own production, as compared with better-off groups (Table 1).

Table 1 Food purchases as a percentage of households' source of food

Food economy zone	Poor	Middle
Agro-migrant zone	35 – 45%	45 – 50%
Mixed cash crop	30 - 35%	
Pastoral	20–25%	45–50%
Tombac (chewing tobacco)	50–60%	30–35%

Critical elements of rural livelihoods and the food security of the region include the annual grain harvest, livestock production and market systems. Rural production systems are a function of altitude, rainfall and soil type, which are obviously inter-related. The soils cultivated in Darfur include the sandy goz soils and the more fertile and therefore important alluvial soils (including wadis). Poor households tend to have less or no access to wadi or alluvial soils. Swift and Gray (1988) identify five main rural production systems, with local variants (Box 1).³ The food economy profiles compiled by SCUUK go a step further and take into account the full range of food and income sources that characterise each food economy zone in North Darfur (Box 2). These include markets, trade, labour migration and artisanry, as well as the coping and crisis strategies that people use during times of drought and political instability. (As well as farmers, there is also a significant urban population of traders, government officials and other professionals in the region).

While these household economy zone classifications are extremely useful in relation to food security monitoring, they tend to suggest there is a certain homogeneity within food economy zones and heterogeneity between them. While there are distinguishing characteristics (cattle herding is confined to the south, for example, and camel herding to the north), it is important to understand that farming and herding are practised throughout Darfur, and rarely undertaken as separate activities. In other words, nearly all farmers rear livestock, while nearly all herders cultivate crops.

The distinction between farmer and herder is usually one between sedentary agro-pastoralists and more mobile pastoralists, the roots of which lie in ethnic identity or tribe. It is this critical aspect of livelihoods that until recently has been consistently missed or ignored in the assessments and monitoring of food security. For example, the existing food economy profiles make passing reference to the tribes in a particular zone, but do not explain the distinction between sedentary farmers on the one hand and pastoralists on the other. This level of analysis has not improved during the recent crisis, and now the passing reference by the international community is to the 'most affected' groups (Fur, Zaghawa, Masalit and possibly Tunjur) and a listing of Arab groups, with no mention of their relative size or their social, economic or political importance. In the context of the current crisis it is imperative that identity is reintroduced as a critical dimension in the analysis of livelihoods. For this reason, this study uses ethnic identity as a key variable for investigation.

Box 1

Five categories of rural production system in Darfur³

1. Goz/wadi farming in North Darfur (31.6 per cent of total farmers)

The staple crop is millet planted on large areas of sandy goz soil, as well as on smaller areas of alluvial wadi soils. Households grow part of their annual consumption requirements. Watermelon is the main intercrop, which provides a useful cash income. Goz soils predominate in the north-east, while in Kebkabiya alluvial soils are common. Livestock have traditionally been part of this production system, with camels, sheep, cattle and goats all owned in small numbers by farming households.

2. Goz/wadi farming in South Darfur (34.5 per cent)

This follows the same pattern as in the north except, because of higher rainfall, there are higher and more stable yields and more varied crops. In the past, the practice of shifting cultivation, with movement of residence, was common. However, local population growth and immigration from North Darfur has led to continued cultivation of the same area. Millet is the dominant crop, while minor crops include sorghum and groundnuts (an important cash crop). On alluvial soils millet is less widespread. Gum arabic has remained a resource for about one in three households. Livestock production is important, especially of cattle and goats. Hired herdsman are used.

3. Jebel Mara mixed farming (7.2 per cent)

The high altitude of Jebel Mara has an effect on its rainfall, which averages 450mm–500mm. As a result, the area produces a grain surplus, except for particularly dry years. Farmers have a mixed agricultural economy, with extensive millet and sorghum cultivation at lower altitudes combined with irrigated citrus cultivation on the Jebel itself. Groundnuts and wheat are also grown, and there are vegetable gardens in the valleys (onion, chillies, okra). Livestock is widely owned, although ownership is precarious because of civil disturbance. Terracing and the concentration of water run-off, as well as some permanent streams, allow simple irrigation to be carried out.

4. Camel, sheep and goat pastoralists (5.74 per cent)

Camel, sheep and goat pastoralists are concentrated mainly in North Darfur: the Zaghawa tribe in the north-west and the Meidob in the north-east. The famine in the 1980s caused much greater livestock losses in North Darfur than in South Darfur: 53–54 per cent of the livestock died, and 32–33 per cent remained.

5. Cattle pastoralists (8.6 per cent)

Cattle pastoralism is common in South Darfur, and was previously significantly nomadic, practised mainly by Rizeigat groups. Small stock, i.e. sheep and goats, is also kept. A significant number of herders is hired in the pastoral system, which therefore becomes a livelihood strategy in itself. Cattle pastoralists in South Darfur used to migrate long distances, trekking north with the rains from the Bahr el Arab river to wet season pastures and cultivation areas, followed by a return some months later to dry season wells and pastures along the Bahr. Widely and increasingly, cattle pastoralists also cultivate crops (millet, sorghum, groundnuts, okra).

Box 2 The six food economy zones (FEZs) in North Darfur (SCUK) (summary descriptions apply to baseline years)

The goz food economy zone⁶

Location: A wide area including Um Kedada, Mellit, Sayah and most of El Fasher and northern Dar El Salam administrative units. El Fasher, Mellit and Um Kedada towns are the main urban centres and the main markets for this FEZ.

Ecology: Flat to undulating goz is the predominant soil, with scattered mountains and short-lived seasonal streams (khors). Annual rainfall ranges from below 150mm to 250mm, with high variability locally and from year to year.

Livelihood strategies: Rain-fed cultivation of millet and watermelon in goz sandy soil, supplemented by small to medium herds of sheep and goats. In poor households it is common to seek agricultural labour, while for middle-income households the main sources of income are trade, money sent from family members abroad and the sale of livestock. Herding is one method of acquiring livestock, as herders are often paid in kind.

Total annual income: For a poor household, about SD 43,900 (US\$300); for a middle-income household, about SD 100,000 (US\$667).

The pastoral food economy zone⁷

Location: The northern part of North Darfur State.

Ecology: This area is dominated by a semi-desert climate. Annual rainfall is less than 200mm, with a declining pattern northward.

Livelihood strategies: Livestock herding is the core livelihood in this FEZ. Sheep and camels are traded in Mellit, Kutum and El Fasher markets. Seraf Umra has also become an important market for animals. Direct export of camels from Darfur to Libya and Egypt is common. Goats are sold mainly in local Darfur markets for local consumption. In a poor rainfall year, wild foods make a significant contribution to the diet of poor and middle-income households.

Total annual income: In Malha, for a typical poor household SD 30,000 (US\$230); for a middle-income household SD 80,000 (US\$615).

The agro-migrant food economy zone⁸

Location: This zone extends from the non-wadi areas of Kutum and Fata Barno Administrative Units in Kutum locality to the Jebel Si/Kebkabiya Administrative Units in Kebkabiya locality.

Ecology: The dominant soil types are stony hills and hard, sandy clay soils. The annual rainfall is 200mm–250 mm. This FEZ forms a transition area between the wadi, goz and pastoral FEZs.

Livelihood strategies: Most farmers grow millet, with limited land holdings and small to medium-size herds of mainly sheep and goats, and a few cattle. Men also migrate to Central Sudan or (less commonly) to the Gulf States in search of work. Women tend to migrate to South/West Darfur in search of agricultural employment. Consumption of wild foods is common. Livestock sales represent the most important source of income for middle-income households, because of their relatively better holdings. Remittances are the second most important source of income for middle-income households.

Total annual income: South Kutum: poor group SD 33,000 (US\$226); and for Jebel Si, SD 19,700 (US\$135).

Mixed cash crops food economy zone⁹

Location: Covers southern Um Kedada (Tewaisha and El Lait Administrative Units) and southern Dar El Salam Administrative Units. The dominant tribes are the Berti, Hamar and Zaghawa. Other tribes are the Tunjur, Ga'al, Fur, Gawama'a, Beni Omran, Beni Hussein, Burgo and Meidob. There are also Dinka IDPs who were displaced from Bahr el Ghazal in 1992.

Ecology: Poor savannah with relatively dense vegetation dominated by hashab (*acacia Senegal*). Annual rainfall is between 300mm and 400mm.

Livelihood strategies: Groundnuts, watermelon and sesame are the main cash crops, with sesame being grown mainly in Dar Al Salam. Other crops are kerekede (hibiscus) and lubia. Family members of poor households work on the farms of better-off households. The Dinka IDPs have no access to land and are involved in an exploitative sharecropping system. Livestock holdings are sheep, goats, cattle and a few

riding camels. Tawesish, El Laeit and Dar Al Salam are the main small market towns. The area also has market linkages with Ed Daein in South Darfur and Ghebaish in West Kordofan.

Total annual income: For a typical poor household about SD 78,500 (US\$396); for a typical IDP family about SD 55,388 (US\$281).

Tombac food economy zone¹⁰

Location: Includes Taweila, Korma, western parts of El Fasher and the southern parts of Dar Al Salam.

Ecology: The annual rainfall varies from 200mm–350mm, with a declining trend going northwards. Fertile clay soil around seasonal riverbeds, known locally as wadis, is the most common soil for tombac cultivation (chewing tobacco).

Livelihood strategies: This area produces most of Sudan's supply of tombac. The main food source for most poor households is food purchase, supplemented by their own crop production (millet) and agricultural labour (paid for with food), wild food and milk. Major income sources are the sale of tombac, agricultural labour on tombac farms, hiring of land and donkeys to better-off households and livestock sales. The main tombac markets are El Fasher, Taweila, Korma, Tabit and Shengil Tobay.

Total annual income: For poor households, about SD 71,515 (US\$447); for middle-income households SD 166,250 (US\$1,039). Better-off households here are among the wealthier households in North Darfur.

Wadi food economy zone¹¹

Location: Crosses Kutum, Fata Borno, Kebkabiya and Seraf Umra, and covers the people who cultivate crops along the banks of Wadi Kutum, Wadi Bari and Wadi Borgo and their branches.

Ecology: The wadi soil consists of alluvial silt, clay and/or loamy soil. The depth of soil and its composition varies between the upper and lower parts of a wadi, and from one wadi to another. The depth of ground water varies from 3–6 metres. The annual rainfall is 300mm–400mm for the Kebkabiya area and 200mm–300 mm for the Kutum area.

Livelihood strategies: These depend on wadi landholdings, which are inherited and which vary by wealth group. Millet and sorghum are grown as a staple food and groundnuts (mainly in Kebkabiya) as a cash crop. In winter (mid-November to February), irrigated vegetables and beans are grown for sale in the local markets and then exported to other markets, mainly in El Fasher. Fruit trees, such as mango, guava and lemon, are also owned by some households. The main sources of income in the wadi food economy are cash crops and livestock sales, and for poor households also local employment.

Total annual income: For poor households SD 66,200 (\$454); for middle-income households SD 85,200 (\$585); and for better-off households SD 248,800 (\$1,709).

A number of conclusions can be drawn from this very brief review of livelihoods:

1. Sedentary farming is traditionally practised in juxtaposition with pastoralism. The two activities are traditionally associated with different tribal groups and have defined their relationship to land use.
2. Over the course of time the farming communities – for example, the Fur – have aspired to produce livestock as a means of acquiring wealth, while the nomadic communities have expanded into cultivation with mixed success. In the marginal areas of the north and north-east, agricultural cultivation is a high-risk activity as a result of low and variable rainfall. Those pastoralist communities that moved south early enough have acquired land, and their livelihoods reflect the local patterns of cultivation and livestock herding. Hence, currently nearly all farmers raise livestock, while nearly all pastoralists cultivate crops. The numbers of true nomads are very small indeed.
3. The recent and current systems used to monitor food security in the region have deliberately excluded tribal identity and conflict as a factor in their analyses. As a result, complex interactions, including conflict between tribes related to the use of natural resources, have received relatively little attention.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

FIGURES

Figure 1 Darfur Region, Sudan (Source : HIC, 2004)

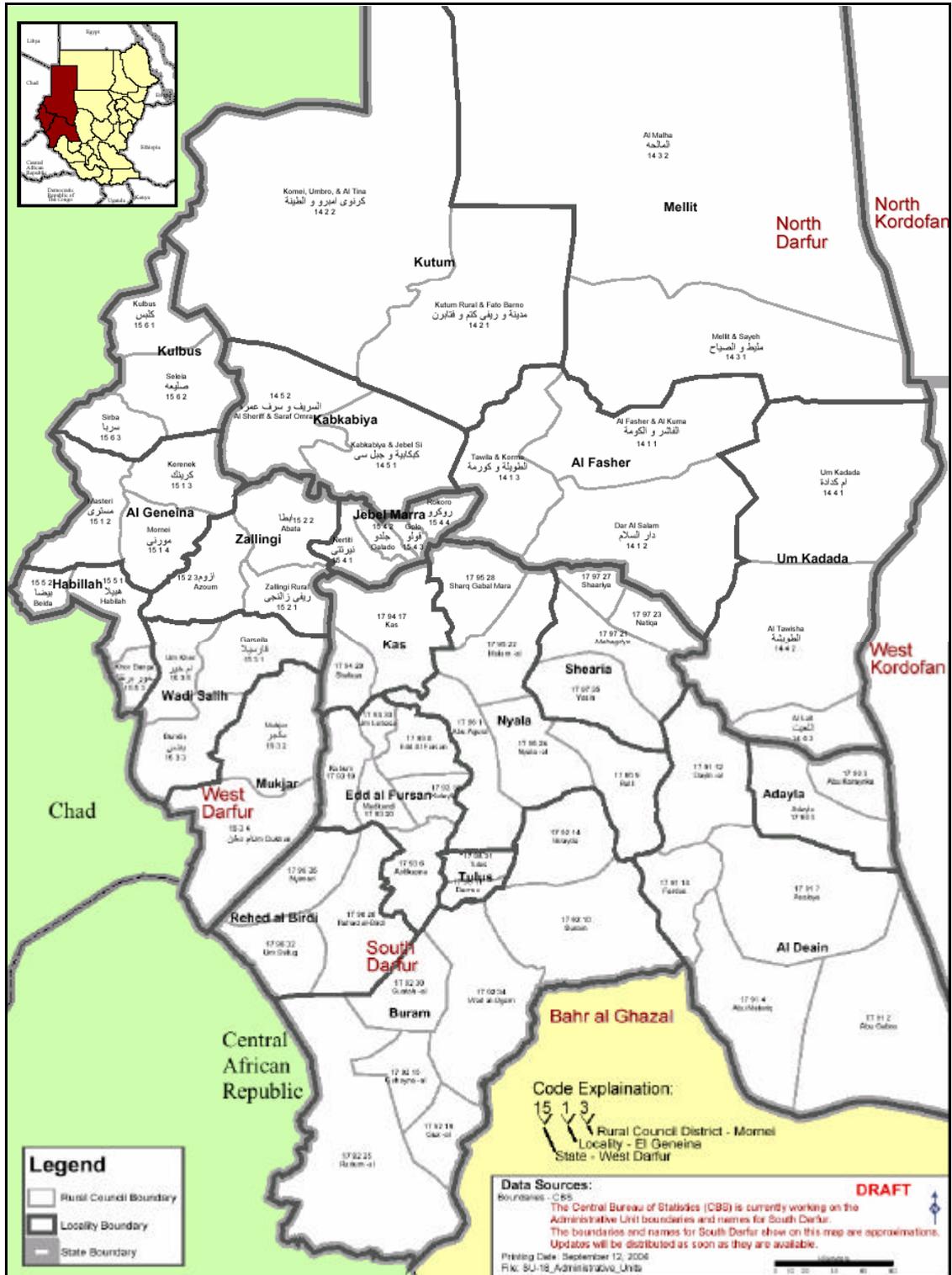


Figure 2 Humanitarian Livelihoods Framework

