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“Management of land use systems for enhanced food security:  
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## Participatory Approaches of Women and their Impact on Natural Resources Management

TAISSER H. H. DEAFALLA<sup>1</sup>, ELMAR CSAPLOVIC<sup>1</sup>, MUSTAFA MAHMOUD EL ABBAS<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Technische Universität Dresden, Institute of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing, Germany*

<sup>2</sup>*University of Khartoum, Forest Management, Germany*

### Abstract

The issue of gender mainstreaming has become a major concern over the past years in Sudan, where the country is weak in strategies, policies and legal frameworks that support the women's rights. Despite that women play a cornerstone in rural areas through responsibilities in decision making, extension, motivation and outlook within the milieu of natural resources. As a case study, South Kordofan State of Sudan now has existing risks and vulnerabilities associated with many reasons; the environmental and climatic impacts, high rate of poverty, as well as ethnic conflicts between nomads and sedentary farmers, in addition to with socio-ethnic and socio-political conflicts destabilising the critical areas on the western and southern parts of the state. This study aimed to investigate the role of rural women in forest management (covered both the displaced and non-displaced women), effects of forced migration on their land uses, in addition to identify the potential developments strategies. Primary data collected through a stratified two-stage random sampling technique. 200 households using a cluster survey methodology were interviewed. Moreover, rapid rural appraisal (RRA) with focus on 5 group discussions disaggregated by sex and age was applied. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis of data were made using SPSS software. Furthermore, multi-temporal satellite imagery (i.e. LANDSAT TM, and RapidEye) from 1984 to 2014 were used to evaluate and assess the land use/land cover (LU/LC) changes in selected areas under different scenarios of gender participatory approaches covering 15 sampled areas. Post classification analysis (PCA) technique was applied. The results revealed a high rate of reforestation, which in nearly 50% of the sampled areas was related to the significance of women's influences on forest harvesting and processing. The other main reason of reforestation was the insecure condition. On the other hand, the study showed that the women's economic opportunities remain restricted by the rigid cultural patterns and social rules in marketing of forest products. More emphasis on the potential role and the ability of women to participate in public forums by integration with more developed programs as much as possible could contribute to both rural development and objectives of biodiversity conservation.

**Keywords:** Conflicts, gender, LU/LC, remote sensing, South Kordofan State