

Driving Darfur's development

By **HISHAM SALIH A. YAGOUB**

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, SALIH YAGOUB GROUP (SAY)



HISHAM S. A. YAGOUB

holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Evansville, Indiana. He joined Yagoub Group in 1992 and during a long career was responsible for modernising group companies and introducing international standards, especially for the Afritec, Samil, Darfood and Al Nakhel factories. He currently serves as the Deputy Chairman and the Managing Director of SAY Co, as well as Managing Director of two sister companies (Afritec Ingredients and Samil Industries) which are partnerships with international investors.

One of Sudan's largest conglomerates, the Salih Yagoub Group (SAY) was founded by leading businessman and philanthropist, and current Chairman, Salih Abdelrahman Yagoub. The group is family owned and led by the Chairman with the assistance of his younger sons Mohamed and Omer Salih A. Yagoub, myself, and a dedicated team of experts.

The core businesses of SAY comprises the following: our gum arabica division and the Afritec Ingredients Factory for gum arabica ingredients. This is a joint venture with Nexira International of France. Then, there is Darfood, in the peanut sector and finally our Al Nakheel meat factory which is Sudan's first export graded facility for the processing of organic grass fed meat. Finally there is Samil which is a joint venture set up in 2011 with French company Onyx Développement, part of the Nutriset Group, to develop malnutrition solutions for young children, among them, Plumpy'Nut and Plumpy'Sup, which are now being used in several developing countries, with special emphasis on the needs of Sudan and neighbouring African nations.

Samil

Plumpy'Nut is a Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) with similar nutritional value to F-100 milk for nutritional rehabilitation of children with severe acute malnutrition. Plumpy'Sup is a Ready to Use Supplementary Food (RUSF) developed for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition in children aged six months or more. It can also be used to prevent severe malnutrition, particularly with children that have recently completed therapeutic feeding programs. These two products are pastes that need neither preparation or dilution for consumption. Both are produced for the PlumpyField network of independent producers that manufacture ready-to-use nutritional solutions right in the countries where they are most needed. These products are used in the treatment and prevention of malnutrition, and comply with the highest international standards on quality. By sourcing locally, these members sustainably contribute to the

social and economic development on their countries and to the fight against malnutrition.

Thanks to the Yagoub family's experience in the agri-food sector, a state-of-the-art production unit in Khartoum was soon set up that is now able to meet most of the needs in Sudan and neighbouring countries for RUTF. Now, Samil's world-class quality and production standards is helping improve Sudanese peanut production and thus create better access to the export market for other producers.

Darfood: Driving development in Darfur

Leveraging our core competencies in the sector of malnutrition products and groundnuts processing, Darfood was established as a joint venture with Onyx Développement. The Darfood Company Limited is also supported by RVO, the Dutch cooperation agency, which has supplied 750,000 for the purchase of a peanut sorting line unit.

Since 2017, Darfood has been producing high-quality peanut products at a newly built mill in El Daen, in the east of Darfur province. The plant has been located in Sudan's main peanut growing area, which produces between 150,000 to 200,000 tons annually, and is providing a major boost to the local economy, creating around 200 jobs in the province. The plant has a daily production capacity of 150 tonnes.

SAY was already involved in the groundnut sector in Darfur, procuring, distributing, and trading, which gave it a thorough knowledge of the Darfuri peanut market and a good working relationship with local producers. Darfood will not only guarantee the right quality for its partners and Samil, but also reduce transportation costs, as well as keeping processing value within the region. SAY has also been active in Darfur for many years, producing gum arabica. Some of the producers who now supply SAY with gum arabica are also peanut growers that have been working with the company over the years. ▶



SAY is helping meet the challenge of reconstruction and local development in a region with a history of conflict

► Cooperation agreements have already been signed with local agricultural cooperatives, ensuring the producers to obtain part of their income. Training and assistance will also be provided to producers to strengthen their involvement.

Peanuts are bought from farmers’ cooperatives, shelled and sorted and then processed at the Darfood Edible Oils Mill to make Plumpy’Nut.

Oil produced at the plant is sold to Sudanese food producers or on the international markets. The waste products left after raw materials processing are used to make peanut cake, which is sold as animal feed, while shells are compressed and sold as bio-mass energy or used as fuel to power the plant, in line with the company’s environment policy.

Attracting investment to Darfur

By locating in Darfur, SAY is helping meet the challenge of reconstruction and local development in a region with a history of conflict, but that is now set to take advantage of its huge agricultural potential. This industrial initiative includes the whole sector, from supporting the growers, who have started to be trained by Darfood and with whom cooperation agreements have been set up, to the conversion of this agricultural raw material in all its forms. The implementation of this processing unit will support local development and enhance the value of this agricultural network, while constantly striving for quality. Throughout the process, from harvesting to transformation, special care will be taken to respect high-quality production standards.

The Darfood project came about through SAY’s on-the-ground daily experience of the social and economic cost to the region of not having exploited its

huge potential to produce high quality peanuts for the international market, as well as the possibility of developing a local confectionary industry, and also to produce RUTF due to unreliable supplies of high graded premium.

Furthermore, SAY recognised that Sudan was not playing a significant role in the international markets for HPS (Hand Picked Selected Peanuts) nor in the local market for this product, despite being one of the main peanuts producers in the world.

This was because Darfur’s peanuts processing sector was poorly developed and under-resourced, which affected all stakeholders in the value chain.

Until now, local producers were obliged to send their peanuts to Khartoum for processing, thus, the Darfood project supports the growth of businesses in the food production chain, both upstream and downstream.

SAY highlights the socio-economic advantages of the Darfood project in directly improving the lives of thousands of local farmers and households in Darfur, as well as its wider impact on the development of the region. The sorting facility will contribute directly and indirectly to the creation of jobs for young Darfuris, particularly women, while stimulating the production of quality groundnuts and introducing modern tools and methods to the farming there.

At the same time, local producers will benefit from professional assistance and training programs being facilitated by the project’s professional specialists to rural communities, as well as securing new markets for their produce.

SAY hopes the creation of the first modern agro-food processing facility will send out a signal and encourage other private investors to set up large scale projects in the region. E

Left:

An ultra-modern facility

Right:

Combatting malnutrition

