Saudi company to invest in Sudan agri, animal projects
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KHARTOUM – The executive director of the Saudi agricultural company, Iktifaa, Mohamed Bin Saeed Al-Atiya, has announced that his company will establish agricultural and animal projects in Sudan's state of Sennar and the Northern state to produce grain and cattle feed.

Al-Atiya stressed in statements on Thursday following meetings with officials in Khartoum, Sennar, and Northern states that his company would grow wheat, corn, and oilseeds such as sunflower and peanuts as well as investing in cattle fattening projects.

He said that the chairman of Iktifaa's board of directors, Prince Abdulaziz Bin Mashaal Bin Abdul Aziz directly instructed the company to invest in Sudan within the framework of the initiative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah for achieving Arab food security.

Al-Atiya, who met with the agricultural minister Ibrahim Mahmoud Hamid, said that he visited the two states and saw their plans to attract Arab investments in agriculture particularly investments from Gulf states, adding that he was briefed on the investment opportunities in the agricultural and animal sectors.
He asserted Sudan was among the first countries which responded to King Abdullah’s initiative for achieving Arab food security, saying that Sudan enjoys vast resources including large agricultural land, animal wealth, and water.

The governor of the Northern state, Ibrahim Al-Khidir, for his part, said Saudi Arabia has 40 years of experience in agricultural investments and stressed that his state has unparalleled fertile land, pointing out that integration between the two countries would lead to food self-sufficiency in Saudi Arabia, Sudan and the Arab world.

Last year, Sudan signed an agricultural cooperation agreement with Beijing which gives Chinese companies several options to operate in Sudan.

The accord aims at promoting Sudan self-sufficiency and exporting surpluses to China and the rest of the world to contribute to solving the world’s food shortage.

Once hoped to be the breadbasket of the Arab world, Sudan’s agricultural sector has continued to deteriorate over the years mainly as a result of negligence, drought, mismanagement, high taxes and the overall economic climate.

Sudanese farmers often complain about the high costs of imported materials such as fertilizers. Many of them were sent to jail as their debt piled up. Foreign investors also complain about lack of infrastructure and unfriendly laws which they say deters them from putting money in Sudan’s vast farmlands. In May of last year, a Saudi investment firm said it will hold off its planned agricultural project in Sudan to produce wheat and other basic food items until the government eases a ban to repatriate profits. — Agencies