

# Transforming lives of people in S. Sudan by providing essential healthcare is a priority

## Press Release

Working in partnership with the Ministry of Health, donors are providing essential medicines and supporting more than 10,000 health workers in 1,000 facilities across the country.

From treating common diseases and helping women give birth safely to vaccinating children against preventable illness and improving nutrition services – this vital work is saving countless lives every day.

But COVID-19 represents a grave risk to people in South Sudan and threatens to disrupt the progress made. It is the biggest international health crisis we've seen in generations and requires a decisive, evidence-based and coordinated response that builds on the strong foundations that have been laid.

That is why, as development partners, we have come together to provide additional urgent support in the fight against the global pandemic. We are working closely with the South Sudan Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity, the UN and other national and international partners.

This assistance is provided through the Health Pooled Fund (HPF), led by the UK Government and supported by the governments of Canada, Sweden, the European Union and the United States of America as well as Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and through the World Bank's Provision of Essential Health Services Programme (PEHSP).

Together, through these initiatives, we are providing an initial contribution of US\$15.1m to Government-led efforts to prevent and respond to cases in South Sudan, covering seven out of the eight pillars of the National Preparedness and Response Plan.

This support is scaling up infection prevention and control, improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene in facilities, supporting Points of Entry to the country, distributing information materials across local communities, and providing essential drugs and supplies. We are also reaching some of the most remote communities through trained Boma Health Workers to ensure no one is left behind.

Today is International Nurses Day, which marks the contribution nurses make to society around the world. They – and all health workers - are the beating heart of the response to COVID-19. They must be given both the financial and technical support they need. We were pleased to see the additional funding allocated to the Ministry of Health and we hope that these funds will be used to support health workers and strengthen the health system across South Sudan. As donors, we remain committed to ensuring health workers delivering the HPF and PEHSP-supported package of services continue to receive incentives.

Their safety is paramount. That is why, in addition to providing training for health workers on how to identify, diagnose and manage cases, we are working to ensure frontline workers are protected. This will help minimise the risk of infection for themselves, reduce transmission within their communities, and enable them to continue providing life-saving interventions.

While COVID-19 represents a significant challenge for South Sudan's fragile health system, we must continue to prioritise support to vital primary health care services that save lives of the poorest and most vulnerable across the country.

HPF is providing around US\$335m in support to over 800 primary health centres in South Sudan, with an additional \$105.4m to over 200 health facilities from the World Bank.

Last year, HPF provided 1.9 million treatments for common diseases in children under five, and 72,000 women with comprehensive support through pregnancy. In addition, the World Bank provided more than a million essential health and consultation services to the people of South Sudan with a focus on women and children. It is vital that those in need can still access these services and children continue to be immunised against other deadly diseases. We cannot sacrifice these gains or allow a legacy of COVID-19 to be the resurgence of killers like polio and measles. To do so would cost lives.

Government, health workers, and international partners all have an important role to play in this response. But stopping the spread of the virus is everyone's responsibility. It is absolutely critical that people follow the public health advice given by the High-Level Task Force and the World Health Organization. This includes washing your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or into your flexed elbow (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze, avoiding close contact with others, and restricting any unnecessary movements.

This crisis is a moment for solidarity and resolve, and as international partners we are proud to play our part to support the people of South Sudan. Together we can stop the spread, save lives and strengthen healthcare services for the future.

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