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Sudan: a deepening health crisis that calls for urgent attention

Remarks by Dr Shible Sahbani, WHO Representative in Sudan
Media briefing at the Palais des Nations

11 April 2025, Cairo/Geneva – The two-year war in Sudan has plunged the country into a humanitarian crisis of epic proportions marked by violence, displacement, hunger but also disease and death.

Currently, 20.3 million people – over 40% of the population – require urgent health assistance. The health system is devastated, leaving millions without healthcare. Two-third of Sudan's 18 states are reporting multiple disease outbreaks, including malaria, dengue, measles and cholera: the latter took already 1567 lives: Malnutrition is widespread with 3.7 million people in need of nutrition interventions. In Darfur, over 2.5 million displaced women and girls have no access to basic reproductive health services.

In addition of being a famine crisis, the humanitarian situation in Sudan is also a protection and health crisis. At the same time, attacks on healthcare are on the rise. In the past 24 months, WHO has verified 156 attacks on health causing 318 deaths and 273 injuries. Data from 7 states reveals that 38% of hospitals are non-functional and 62% partially functional.

WHO is determined to continue working to improve health access for Sudan's people. With our assistance over the past 2 years:

Over 1 million people were treated at hospitals, primary health care facilities and mobile clinics;

Close to 75,000 severely acute malnourished children with medical complications received treatment at stabilization centres;

11.5 million children have been vaccinated for polio and measles;

12.8 million people have received cholera vaccines;

and 2,250 metric tons of critical medicines and supplies have been distributed to all 18 states.

WHO must continue to implement its operations, including in previously unreachable areas like Khartoum and Al Jazirah states.

However, recent funding cuts have severely affected our operations.

Half of the 9.3 million people targeted by the Health Cluster for health interventions in 2025 will be affected.

Services at 335 health facilities will be reduced, including trauma and emergency care, essential services and critical programmes like surveillance and immunization.

We call on our partners to continue their support for WHO. Above all, we call for peace and health for Sudan's people.

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