

West Darfur takes an important step towards safe water for all.



Fadl Elmola Alhaga, West Darfur's Wali, Mr. Isameldin Abdalla, West Darfur's Wali, Sudan's Undersecretary of Health, Sudan's Minister of Health, Mohamed Yousif, and WHO Representative for Sudan Dr. Naeema Al Gasseer (Photo: Hibat Abbas/WHO Sudan).

On January 29 a brand new, state of the art laboratory for water quality opened in West Darfur. With WHO support to construction of the lab, as well as the provision of cutting edge water testing equipment, the lab will provide local access to water quality diagnostics and analysis for the first time in decades. Ultimately, the lab will improve access to safe water for 2,8 million Sudanese people. The West Darfur water lab is one of five such facilities in each of Darfur's five states, and each facility can test over 200 water samples per day for chemical and bacteriological factors. Before the opening of these labs, samples had to be transported to Khartoum for testing which was costly and time-consuming. Now, over 8 million Darfur residents will have rapid results and potential response measures at their fingertips. Safe water will protect all especially women and children from many diseases that are preventable. The West Darfur laboratory team received training on testing techniques from international WHO facilitators. The lab also provides accreditations to water sources and water bottling factories.

At the opening ceremony, Dr. Al Gasseer said: "Access to safe water is a human right and one of the Sustainable Development Goals. With this new laboratory, West Darfur, the other Darfur states, and all of Sudan take an important step towards this crucial goal."

The new facilities rely on the generous support of the Government of Qatar, through the

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, as part of the Darfur Development projects. The opening ceremony was conducted and attended by high-level dignitaries including the Governor of West Darfur, the Undersecretary of Sudan's Health Ministry, Mr. Isameldin Abdalla, WHO's Representative in Sudan, Dr. Naeema Al Gasseer, and West Darfur's State Ministers of Health, Social Welfare and Animal Husbandry.

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