



Measles vaccination team in the field, North Darfur State, Sudan, 27 July 2015. Photo: © WHO 4 August 2015 | Khartoum – The Federal Ministry of Health, in coordination with WHO, has mobilized financial and human resources to respond to the measles outbreak in Sudan.

Her Excellency Mrs Sumaia Okoued, Sudan's State Minister of Health said, “The Federal Ministry of Health, with the support of WHO, vaccinated a total of 6 339 733 children aged 6 months to 15 years between January and June 2015; this number represents 38% of the total target of 16 495 955 children of the same age group in Sudan.”

The outbreak started in late December 2014 and affected 11 localities of Kassala and Gedaref States by January 2015. In April, the outbreak was reported in an additional 28 localities in Kassala, Sennar, the Red Sea, and West, East and North Darfur states. A 10-day vaccination campaign from 22 April to 1 May 2015, funded by the Measles and Rubella Immunization Initiative, was conducted by the Ministry of Health, in coordination with WHO, to control the outbreak. The campaign targeted 1 698 104 children aged 6 months to 15 years and recorded administrative coverage of 101% and an independent survey result coverage of 97.4%.

“Recent measles reports showed success in case management and better implementation of immunization activities. Credit is due to the Sudanese Association of Pediatricians and clinical staff working in case management,” said Dr Malik Alabbasi, Director-General of the Public Health Care Directorate in the Federal Ministry of Health.

WHO, through the Central Emergency Response Fund, supported the Federal Ministry of

Health in June 2015 to contain the measles outbreak in 52 localities in the states of South, North, East and Central Darfur. A campaign (21–30 June 2015) was conducted in these states targeting 3 534 863 children (6 months–15 years) which achieved 100% administrative coverage.

“The Ministry of Health and WHO are currently working to enhance case investigation, management, and response measures in the outbreak states through the deployment of teams of epidemiologists from the Ministry and WHO country office in Khartoum and sub-offices,” said Dr Naeema Al Gasseer, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Sudan. Dr Al Gasseer stressed the joint work being undertaken with partners, such as UNICEF and Médecins Sans Frontières, to support health in Sudan.

A joint Ministry of Health/WHO expert mission also visited North Darfur State on 26 July to investigate measles cases in Zamzam camp for internally displaced persons and coordinate a joint urgent response to contain the situation and activate the Early Warning and Response System (EWARS) in this location.

The joint Ministry of Health/WHO mission also coordinated effective implementation of a plan of action involving community leaders and clerics in the Zamzam camp which accommodates about 180 000 people. Community-based surveillance for vaccine-preventable diseases in the camp was proposed by WHO with orientation sessions designed for religious leaders on simple case detection, notification and investigation of suspected cases.

Routine immunization programme activities are ongoing for children in the camp and pregnant women targeting 10 568 children under 2 years of age for measles vaccine and 5967 pregnant women for tetanus toxoid. Vaccination services are delivered by 20 vaccinators from 8 vaccination centres. WHO recommends conducting a joint comprehensive review of current interventions of the Expanded Programme on Immunization to control the outbreak and develop a quality plan for a national campaign in early 2016.

Lack of sufficient funds is still hampering the implementation of a country-wide immunization campaign and continues to jeopardize the health of 16.5 million children aged 6 months to 15 years in Sudan.

### **Related links**

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[Central Emergency Response Fund](#)

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