Flash back.

The WHO South Sudan Office collaborates with partners to convene a meeting of Guinea Worm disease.

15th December 2011 - South Sudan. As the world awaits for the moment South Sudan is declared Guinea Worm free, the WHO South Sudan Office in collaboration with the Ministry of Health Republic of South Sudan, the Carter centre and UNICEF convened 6th Annual review meeting for South Sudan Guinea Worm Eradication Program from 8th to 9th December 2011.

The meeting was convened with the objective of reviewing the year 2011, focusing on the achievements, challenges and the progress of the program during year. This meeting was also meant to discuss how best partners can work together in 2012 to completely eradicate Guinea Worm from South Sudan.

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Dracunculiasis (Guinea worm) is a crippling parasitic disease caused by Dracunculiasis medinensis, a long thread-like worm. The disease which is transmitted exclusively by drinking contaminated water.

During 2011, a total number of 1054 cases of guinea worm were reported globally from four endemic countries (Ethiopia, South Sudan, Mali and Chad) a decline from 1797 cases reported in 2010. Although there was tremendous progress seen in 2011 as reflected by the drop in the number of cases, South Sudan reported the bulk of the cases out of the 1054 cases reported globally during the year. South Sudan reported 1028 cases (97.5%) while other countries like Mali reported just 12 cases, Chad reported 8 cases and Ethiopia 8 cases, two of which were imported from South Sudan.
With this high number of cases, the Government of South Sudan has continued to show willingness and commitment towards the eradication of the diseases. This commitment was re-echoed by the deputy minister for health Dr Yata Luori Logori during the review meeting. He said, “Our challenges are many. We have limited access to safe and clean water with only 22% of all the population in South Sudan accessing clean and safe water, most of our population are displaced either due to attacks from rebel groups or cattle rustling, the Ministry of Health has made Guinea worm eradication a priority”.

Dr Yata, urged all the Village Health Committees, Surveillance Officers and all frontline workers to assist in eradicating Dracunculiasis from South Sudan by 2013 to achieve the social and physical well being of all the people.

Other key personalities that re-echoed their commitment towards eradicating the disease and addressed the partners were; The Under secretary in the ministry of health, Dr Makur Maker Koriom, the Minister of health, Equatoria state, Mr. Sam Felix Makuja, Dr AlWadi, the chairman of the International Certification Committee for Dracunculiasis Eradication, Dr Eranesto Ruiz from the Carter centre Atlanta and Mr. Ken Meskel from UNICEF WASH who represented the UNICEF Country Representative.

The meeting was attended by donors and technical people from WHO Geneva and the Regional Office for Eastern Mediterranean, the Carter Center, UNICEF and the Ministry of Health, Republic of South Sudan and states.