

The Republic of South Sudan



Ministry of Health *Office of the Undersecretary*

Ministry of Health Press statement on the World Health Day Event April 7, 2022.

***Dear Line Ministries,
Parliamentarians,
City Council Officials,
United Nations Agencies,
NGOs,
Civil Society,
Media and
Partners.***

Greeting to you all from the Ministry of Health.

World Health Day has been observed annually on 7 April, since 1950, to commemorate the anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization (WHO) two years previously. This year's theme, ***Our Planet, Our Health***, serves as a timely reminder of the inextricable link between the planet and our health, as the burden of noncommunicable and infectious diseases rises alongside growing incidence of climate-related challenges.

Climate change is manifesting in increasing temperatures, rising sea levels, changing rainfall patterns, and more frequent and severe extreme weather conditions such as flooding. The WHO estimates that more than 13 million annual deaths globally are due to avoidable environmental causes, including the climate crisis.

With direct consequences for the key determinants of health, climate change is negatively impacting air and water quality, food security, and human habitat and shelter. Consequently, the burden of heart and lung disease, stroke and cancer, among others, is growing in Africa and the world¹ at large.

¹ Global Burden of Disease (2019)

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In South Sudan, the WHO estimates that Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) account for 27% of all causes of death. The most common contributors to mortality being cardiovascular diseases (10%), cancers (7%), chronic respiratory diseases (2%), diabetes mellitus (1%), other NCDs (8%) and injuries (9%). Noncommunicable diseases in South Sudan like in the African Region, are set to overtake communicable diseases, maternal, neonatal, and nutritional conditions combined, to become the leading cause of death by 2030.²

The recent flooding witnessed in many parts of the country and extremes of weather are examples of the effect of climate change. These have facilitated mosquitos to spread malaria further and faster than ever before. Malaria thus, remains the leading cause of death and morbidity in South Sudan.

Furthermore, South Sudan like many countries in the African Region also faces water and sanitation scarcity whether in health facilities or communities. Waterborne diseases such as hepatitis E virus and diarrheal diseases are on the rise especially in the most affected States of Unity, Upper Nile and Jonglei States.

CALL FOR ACTION

To improve this situation, we need to act on the social and economic determinants of climate change and health, by working across sectors to improve living and working conditions, and access to education, particularly for the most marginalized groups.

Government, civil society, nongovernment organizations and communities need to work together, empowering one another to ensure the continued delivery of essential health services during future extreme events, while containing the growing incidence of environment- and lifestyle-related diseases.

Tobacco pollutes the planet and our lungs. South Sudan has not yet signed at the United Nations level into law the WHO-Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (WHO-FCTC). We call on the government to sign this treaty so that it can be translated into policies for tobacco control in the country. Tobacco control policies such as creating smoke free zones, banning tobacco advertising, increasing taxes on tobacco products, putting in place danger labels on tobacco packets and assisting people who want to quit smoking do so have proven effective the world over in controlling the tobacco problem.

We call on city planners and the mayor to protect biodiversity, create new parks and gardens, establish lanes for bikes and strengthen waste management in the city.

² Bigna JJ, Noubiap JJ. The rising burden of non-communicable diseases in sub-Saharan Africa. 2019. Lancet Global Health. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(19\)30370-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(19)30370-5)

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Finally, we call on all individuals at their respective capacities to embrace healthy lifestyles free from tobacco smoke, embracing adequate physical activity, ensuring healthy dietary practices that includes plenty of vegetables, less trans fats and use less plastics that damage the environment.

GOOD LUCK. "OUR PLANET OUR HEALTH"



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