Juba, 14 December 2017:Â Cholera in South Sudan remains an important public health problem which has affected 21 571 people and resulted in 462 deaths since the onset of the outbreak on 18 June 2016. This has been the longest and largest outbreak in magnitude and geographical extent, its impact exacerbated by the protracted crisis, insecurity, displacements and declining access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Access to improved sanitation facilities across South Sudan remains at less than 10% while access to safe drinking water from improved water sources is estimated at 60%.

As part of the ongoing cholera response, the Ministry of Health of South Sudan with support from WHO and partners has deployed cholera vaccines to complement traditional cholera response strategies in several high-risk populations and locations. From the 2 178 177 doses secured by WHO in 2017, a total of 1 133 579 doses have already been deployed with 879 239 doses used during the first round and 254 340 doses utilized in second round campaigns in 16 cholera-affected and high-risk populations countrywide.

“When used alongside other interventions for improving access to safe water and sanitation, oral cholera vaccines are very effective for cholera prevention and control, giving protection to those at risk, especially when the recommended two doses are administered,” emphasized Dr Pinyi, Director General for Preventive Services at the Ministry of Health of South Sudan.

The most recent consignment of 737 819 doses, requested by WHO from the Global Task Force on Cholera Control (GTFCC) stockpile was in Juba by 11 December, 2017. The vaccines have been deployed to areas and counties with pending second round vaccination campaigns and these include Kapoeta South, Kapoeta East, Tonj East, Aburoc and Malakal Town.

The campaigns in Kapoeta South, Kapoeta East, and Tonj East are already underway from 12 to 17 December, 2017. The success of the ongoing round of campaigns is attributed to collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Health, WHO, Health Cluster, United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), International Organization for Migration (IOM), American Refugee Committee (ARC), Comitato Collaborazione Medica (CCM), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and other partners. Currently, the WHO teams in the field are supporting the campaign including training of vaccinators and supervising the process to foster compliance to oral cholera vaccine protocols.

According to the WHO Epidemiologist Dr Joseph Wamala, the use of Oral Cholera Vaccine will bridge the transition from cholera treatment and emergency WASH interventions to multi-sectoral interventions including long-term WASH interventions to prevent recurrence of outbreaks in cholera hotspots.

In its continued efforts to fight cholera, the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with WHO and partners, recently resolved to develop a revised cholera response strategy that is aligned with the Global Cholera Roadmap 2030. The strategy will aim to reduce cholera deaths by 90%

before 2030 in South Sudan. To attain this target, the overall leadership and coordination of cholera prevention and response activities will be enhanced through the formation of a multi-sectoral cholera control program. This will entail improving case detection, rapid response to prevent widespread outbreaks, prevention of avoidable cases and deaths, as well as implementing multi-sectoral interventions including water and sanitation hygiene (WASH) measures to prevent recurrent cholera outbreaks in cholera transmission.

http://afro.who.int/news/south-sudan-implements-second-round-oral-cholera-vaccination-enhance-outbreak-response-efforts