Improving access to COVID-19 treatment in South Sudan

Juba, 16 May 2020 – To provide supportive treatment for severe and critical COVID-19 patients, the World Health Organization (WHO), working with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Medical Corps (IMC) has supported the Ministry of Health to upgrade and equip the Dr John Garang Infectious Diseases Unit (IDU).

The expansion of the IDU, that began on 13 April 2020, has augmented the bed capacity in the IDU from 24 to 82 to bridge the demand gaps for admission. The new 82 bed capacity treatment unit has a temperature controlled dispensing pharmacy and a fully equipped laundry to boost infection prevention and control.

“The coronavirus pandemic is a widespread public health crisis. Hence, effectively addressing it requires significantly improving access to comprehensive clinical care which will be provided by the expanded IDU”, said Dr Angok Gordon, the Incident Manager for COVID-19.

Over the past few months, the Ministry of Health with support from partners have been implementing a comprehensive preparedness and response activities that aim to improve access to testing and treatment for COVID-19.

“Public health emergencies put health systems and their ability to deliver health care services under strain”, said Dr Olushayo Olu, WHO Representative for South Sudan. “As the COVID-19 situation rapidly evolves, caring for prevention of the disease and caring for those who are sick, in the safest manner possible, is our top priority”.

Working with partners

Due to the unprecedented public health situation of COVID-19, the global response to this pandemic requires partner organizations to work together to deal with the challenges which may lie ahead.
The expansion of the IDU is a joint effort of the Ministry of Health, WHO, WFP and IMC to respond to this pandemic due to the increase in the number of confirmed cases.

All severe and critical COVID-19 patients are now cared for at the Dr John Garang Infectious Diseases Unit (IDU) managed by the IMC, which is assisting the Ministry of Health to run the facility.

As part of South Sudan’s Ebola emergency preparedness and response efforts, the facility was originally constructed by WHO in collaboration with the Ministry of Health in December 2018. The Unit also serves as a national infectious disease training and simulation facility.

WHO continue to support the Ministry of Health in enhancing the COVID-19 response through strengthening national and sub-national coordination, surveillance and contact tracing, laboratory testing, procurement of supplies as well as training health workers among other support.

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