

Press Statement  
Hon. Dr. Riek Gai Kok  
Minister of Health  
Republic of South Sudan  
March 21, 2018

**Distinguished Guest, Ladies and Gentlemen – Good Morning.**

I received with great honour and humility, the invitation by the Carter Center to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Global Review Meeting for Guinea Worm Eradication.

I whole heartedly appreciate the warm reception and hospitality accorded to me and the South Sudan Team by the Carter Center.

The Carter Center represented by H. E President and Mrs. Carter are true friends of the people of South Sudan.

This strong friendship is rooted in the deep desire to advance a better life for the people of South Sudan.

In December 2017, South Sudan hosted the 12<sup>th</sup>. Annual Review Meeting for the Guinea Worm Eradication Programme in Juba, under the auspices of the First Vice President of the Republic of South Sudan, H.E Gen. Taban Gai Deng.

We were honoured by the participation of a High level delegation from the Carter Center in the persons of; **Mr. Craig Withers** (Senior Director for International Support), **Dr. Ernesto Ruiz-tiben** (Director for Guinea Worm Eradication), Mr. Adam Weiss (The Associate Director for Guinea Worm Eradication) and Ms. Sarah Yerian (Country Representative, South Sudan).

The Carter Center delegation were able to pay a courtesy visit to H.E Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of the Republic of South Sudan, who thanked the team and appreciated the role of the Carter Center in supporting South Sudan to get rid of Guinea worm disease.

**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

Today, I'm pleased to announce on behalf of the government and people of South Sudan that, after Fifteen months of reporting zero cases, South Sudan has successfully interrupted Guinea worm disease transmission; having reduced cases from 20581 in 2006 to zero in 2017.

For these, I want to sincerely thank the Carter Center and her donors, and other partners for their unwavering support to the eradication campaign in South Sudan.

This is a great achievement for our young nation.

## **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

In South Sudan, the Carter Center has built itself the reputation of recruiting highly qualified, self-motivated expatriate Technical Staff who effectively integrate themselves to the communities, leave and work within the endemic communities including cattle camps and not in the towns or hotels or luxury air-conditioned rooms.

I'm aware that, some of the technical advisors are present today, and it is because of your sacrifices that we have come this far. **You have made all of us proud.**

Today, I also want to reiterate that, the government of South Sudan is not under the illusion that the work has finished.

In fact, we are mindful of the challenges ahead especially during the pre-certification phase as this requires even more commitment and redoubling of efforts, because this will be the most challenging distance to cover.

The Ministry of Health recognizes the need to strengthen **SURVEILLANCE** and **POPULARISE the Cash reward** for reporting of cases. On that basis:

The Ministry of Health is rolling out its flagship programme of the Boma Health Initiative to bridge gaps in access to basic health services for the majority of our population, and will draw lessons from the successful community-based structures of the Guinea worm Eradication Programme.

The implementation of the Boma Health Initiative (BHI) will also build synergies necessary to effectively take South Sudan across the finish-line and be certified free of Guinea Worm Disease.

On behalf of the President, **H.E Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardiit** and government of South Sudan, we will leave no stone unturned and in the spirit of partnership with the Carter Center, World Health Organisation and UNICEF to ensure that, South Sudan will soon join the family of countries already certified free of Guinea Worm Disease.

**Long Live President and Mrs. Carter**

**Long Live President Salva Kiir Mayardiit**

**Long Live South Sudan**

**Long Live the Carter Center**

**God Bless You All**