

NEWS NOTE

Global Handwashing Day: Handwashing with soap keeps Cholera away from you and your family

JUBA, South Sudan 14 October 2016— To mark the ninth Global Handwashing Day, hundreds of thousands of children across South Sudan today washed their hands with soap and clean water to promote handwashing as an effective method for preventing diseases.

The day this year is marked under the theme '*Handwashing with soap keeps Cholera away from you and your family*,' as South Sudan continues to grapple with a Cholera outbreak that has affected more than 2,500 people and resulted in 38 deaths.

"The simple practice of washing hands with soap and water can drastically reduce diarrheal and acute respiratory infections which are a common cause of death in children less than five years," said UNICEF's Representative in South Sudan, Mr. Mahimbo Mdoe.

Following the cholera outbreak in July 2016, UNICEF and partners responded by intensifying the promotion of washing hands with soap and clean water at critical times such as after using the toilet and before touching food. UNICEF has also worked with the Government and partners in establishing cholera treatment and oral rehydration centres. This has resulted in a decline in the number of cases in Juba which was the worst hit by the disease. New cases are however being reported in Mingkaman and Fangak which calls for more action to prevent spread of the disease.

"Handwashing with soap and clean water will drastically reduce outbreak of disease like Cholera that is repeatedly destroying the lives of people in Juba and elsewhere in the country," said Honorable Sophia Pal Gai, Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation.

The decline in the number of cholera cases in the capital can be attributed to the continuous mobilization of communities, school children and individuals to wash hands with soap and clean water during critical times," said Peter Mahal Dhieu, the Director General for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation.

This year, UNICEF and partners have reached nearly 27,195 families with hygiene promotion messages for cholera prevention, and trained more than 200 social mobilizers, 550 hygiene promoters and 1,402 community leaders on key hygiene practices. In addition, more than 48 schools – covering 23,152 children and 160 teachers – were reached with important hygiene messages and three compactor trucks were given to Juba City Council for garbage collection and disposal from cholera hotspots.

UNICEF and partners have also distributed 146,878 water purification tablets, 56,373 bars of soap, 83,782 packets of oral rehydration salts and 10,000 educational booklet to over 147,994 people.

UNICEF continues to work with schools to make handwashing and good hygiene a part of daily routine.

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About Global Handwashing Day:

The annual Global Handwashing Day celebrations are occasions to emphasize the benefits of handwashing with soap in the prevention of common but potentially deadly diseases such as diarrhoea and pneumonia.

Global Handwashing Day is celebrated on October 15. The Global Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing with Soap initiated Global Handwashing Day in 2008, and it is endorsed by governments, international institutions, civil society organizations, NGOs, private companies and individuals around the globe. Visit www.globalhandwashingday.org

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