



SIAPS Concludes Five Years of Pharmaceutical Systems Strengthening in South Sudan

By Abraham Ayuen, Communications Specialist

On November 8, 2016, the US Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services (SIAPS) Program convened a key stakeholder meeting in Juba, South Sudan, to reflect on lessons learned, achievements, and final transition plans as the project concluded five years of pharmaceutical systems strengthening in the country.

“I think we have effectively assisted the people of South Sudan over the last five years. The work that the project staff did through MSH’s great leadership is very impressive. I am very proud of everyone who worked with the Ministry of Health for pulling together,” said Jeffrey Bakken, the USAID South Sudan Mission Director.

From October 2011 to October 2016, SIAPS provided technical support to the Ministry of Health to ensure effective functioning of the Drugs and Food Authority and the Central Medical Stores, whose work has effectively improved monitoring of essential medicines and curbed the flow of substandard and counterfeit medicines into the country. By the end of its fifth year, SIAPS had coordinated the distribution of essential medicines and medical supplies worth more than USD 53 million to 80 counties in South Sudan through the Emergency Medicines Fund project.

“During the five-year project implementation, SIAPS, as the lead technical advisor to the Ministry of Health, worked with donors and health partners to develop innovative approaches to resolving pharmaceutical management challenges in the country,” said Dr. Bortel Ohisa, Director of the Central Medical Stores.

SIAPS has strengthened pharmaceutical supply chain management at the national, state, and county levels by providing training for 1,000 health workers and improving medicine storage facilities. SIAPS built the capacity of health workers and equipped medical stores with logistics equipment and pharmaceutical management information tools. SIAPS supported the establishment of the Ministry of Health Logistics Management Unit and introduced pharmaceutical management tools, such as the Electronic Dispensing Tool, to manage antiretrovirals in Juba Teaching Hospital, and a pharmaceutical dashboard for the Ministry of Health. Both are generating critical data on essential medicine consumption.



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“Through these efforts, we were able to effectively coordinate distribution of essential medicines and supplies to all counties in the country and to overcome challenging security, political, and logistical obstacles. Everybody pulled together and made this project work,” said Bakken.

SIAPS also worked with the National Malaria Control Program to enhance the planning, coordination, and implementation of malaria control and prevention activities in South Sudan. SIAPS has provided technical assistance to ensure the successful distribution of malaria commodities, the development and dissemination of malaria treatment guidelines and policy documents, and the completion and dissemination of two malaria indicator surveys in 2010 and 2013.

“Although SIAPS has come to an end, USAID remains committed to supporting pharmaceutical supply chain management strengthening in South Sudan. We have a new project coming online to provide technical assistance called the Global Supply Chain project,” said Bakken.

Bakken noted that the new project will consolidate USAID’s supply, procurement, and distribution of pharmaceuticals across all of its health projects. Through this new project, USAID hopes to continue collaborating and building partnerships with health partners and donors in South Sudan.

“As we all know, the challenges facing South Sudan are perhaps greater than ever. Only by working together, and in the best interests of the people of South Sudan, can we hope to overcome these challenges and meet critical health needs of the people of South Sudan. Congratulations to Management Sciences for Health, the SIAPS project team, and the Ministry of Health for a job well done,” said Bakken.

