

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

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;

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.

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 \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ 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, \_\_\_\_\_ 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.