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South Sudan launches major push on measles vaccination

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The campaign will use a combination of fixed and outreach vaccination sites



The Ministry of Health, South Sudan, in partnership with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, UNICEF, WHO and other key partners, has launched a nationwide measles vaccination campaign. The campaign aims to vaccinate more than 2.7 million children aged 6-59 months against the highly infectious disease.

The launch of the measles vaccination campaign highlights South Sudan's resilience in rolling out immunisation campaigns despite competing health priorities including recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The national vaccination campaign is a timely response to the recent outbreaks the country has been witnessing following pandemic-related declines in measles vaccination coverage. According to WHO figures, between January 2022 and 1 February 2023, health authorities in South Sudan reported an outbreak of measles, with over 4,000-suspected cases and 46 deaths across the country. The country has conducted several outbreak responses campaigns to help mitigate public health impact, and this nationwide push is vital because 95% coverage is required to curb transmission.

The campaign will use a combination of fixed and outreach vaccination sites, with a focus on reaching children in remote areas. It will also include community mobilisation activities to raise awareness of the importance of measles vaccination. In readiness for the campaign, the Ministry of Health has worked to build capacities of community health workers, not only to roll out the vaccination but also serve to curb vaccine hesitance and increase community awareness.