



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN
Office of the Spokesperson

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Darfur Mortality Rate Declines, But Remains “Extremely Fragile” - Survey

Khartoum, 28 June 2005: “Mortality in Darfur has significantly declined but the health of the people remains extremely fragile” concludes the new region wide mortality survey undertaken by the Ministry of Health, UN agencies and NGO partners under the technical guidance of WHO and commissioned by the UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator, Manuel Aranda Da Silva.

“Major progress has been made by the humanitarian community and the GOS in Darfur. However, we must not allow the situation to slide back,” said Mr. da Silva after reviewing the figures.

Over 70 people, many of whom were trained epidemiologists from Sudan and other nations of the world carried out the survey in the field from mid May to mid June. More than 3000 families, totaling about 26,000 people in the three states of Darfur, were interviewed. The survey examined mortality among displaced in camps, displaced outside camps and residents affected by the conflict between mid November and the end of May.

The crude mortality rate was around 0.8/10.000/day in all three population groups in Darfur which is below the international crisis threshold (1 death/10.000/day), and is three times lower than in the previous survey.

Injury was an important cause of death in N Darfur accounting for nearly a third of the total deaths. This matches with the observed demographic gap among 15–35 year old males throughout the state.

Among those children who died in West Darfur, nearly fifty percent died of diarrhea, which is a preventable condition.

The report also points out that there was a meningitis outbreak in N and W Darfur which was picked up by the early warning system, showing that disease surveillance needs to be strengthened.

The UN Humanitarian Coordinator also added a word of caution. “Deaths due to malaria could rise as the rainy season is approaching and preparedness for malaria control needs to be stepped up urgently,” he said. He added that in addition, preventable causes of death, such as diarrhea, require consolidation and expansion of water and sanitation interventions.

Deaths due to measles were relatively low due to the successful measles vaccination campaign carried out last year. The next campaign, planned for July, should be implemented without fail to avoid any further preventable deaths due to measles.



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In conclusion, the survey confirms a significant decline in mortality in the recent months compared to the previous period. However it is crucial to maintain the momentum in the gains made by the humanitarian community and the government as the health situation in Darfur will remain fragile especially in view of the approaching rainy season.