

Launch of the UK-South Sudan Alliance for Health Sector Development



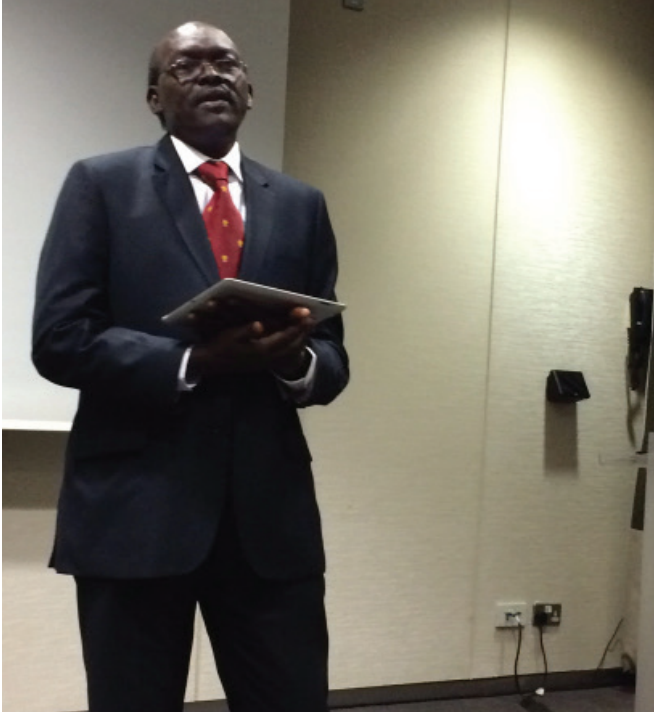
Taking questions at the launch of the Alliance. From the right: Dr Lul Deng, Director of Public Health, South Sudan (sitting), Professor Mayen Achiek, Dean of the Medical College, University of Juba, Professor Ali Jawad, International Medical Director, RCP, Dr Rich Bregazzi, Alliance development lead and Steve Crump, International Manager, RCP (credit: Diane Graham).

Monday 30 October saw the launch of the *UK-South Sudan Alliance for Health Sector Development*, at the Royal College of Physicians (RCP), London, in front of fifty guests.

These included South Sudan's ambassador to the UK, Ambassador Maker Deng; Professor Mayen Achiek, (Dean of the College of Medicine at Juba University, and Vice President of the General Medical Council of South Sudan), and Dr Lul Deng (Director of Public Health, and representing the Ministry of Health). Others present included representatives of UK charities, funding organisations, individual medical specialists, and the leaders of the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiology, and the International Federation of Surgical Colleges – all there as friends of South Sudan. It was especially good to welcome guests from the South Sudan diaspora, several of whom the author had last seen in Juba, and who are now studying in the UK.

Speeches were warm, full of goodwill, and spoke of collaboration and support for the development of healthcare capacity. Professor Ali Jawad, International Medical Director of the RCP first welcomed the guests, followed by speeches from Ambassador Deng, Professor Achiek, and Dr Deng. Dr Rich Bregazzi (the author, and Alliance development lead), then spoke of the progress made, thanks to the efforts of many people over many years, and noted that this was a significant moment. The institutional framework was now in place, he said, but we still had to embed sustainable improvement in practice, and that this required a combination of knowledge, finance and learning-by-doing.

The Alliance will be a 'managed network', co-ordinating support, reaching out for funds and skills, and focusing these on practical objectives agreed with the Ministry of Health. As an independent coalition of individuals and organisations, we intend to have a



Professor Mayen Achiek, Dean of the Medical College, University of Juba (credit: Diane Graham).

far reaching impact on capacity building, through education, training and the strengthening of health institutions and infrastructure.

Our first objective is to arrange a visit to Juba by a small team of healthcare professionals from the UK, early in the New Year. We will use this to assess the situation on the ground, and to discuss and agree our strategy with the Ministry of Health and local health institutions. Following this, we intend to propose and find funding for a 'Pathfinder Project': our first practical project to increase medical capacity.

They say that "Well begun is half done." Much remains to be done, if we are to realise the potential of the Alliance. However, we have begun well. As one guest put it, "Last night's launch of the UK-South Sudan Alliance at the RCP was a triumph".

Dr Rich Bregazzi

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