

Strengthening the healthcare system through an effective General Medical Council

“SSGMC will endeavour to regain public confidence in the healthcare system”

The Chairman and members of the South Sudan General Medical Council (SSGMC) were formally sworn into office on the 17th November 2014. Establishing South Sudan's first healthcare regulatory body has been a trying process plagued by human capital, fiscal and infrastructure challenges. Despite all the seemingly insurmountable challenges, the SSGMC has finally established its authority to set standards for medical, dental and pharmaceutical practice in the country.

The SSGMC was founded to ensure that doctors and healthcare institutions deliver a high standard of care with emphasis on patient safety. A clear short term strategy for the first year in office is already in place and the council is currently formulating the framework for future activities guided by a vision, mission and core values that will underpin its activities. The council will rigorously monitor and measure the outcomes of its strategic activities to ascertain their effectiveness and determine the way forward.

It is no secret that the average South Sudanese patient is dissatisfied with the quality of healthcare provided in the country. Publicised incidents of negligence and overt malpractice by doctors with unverified qualifications have eroded trust in the medical profession. The SSGMC will endeavour to regain public confidence in the healthcare system by closely monitoring standards of medical professionalism. The inevitable alignment of medical practice in South Sudan with that of neighbouring East African countries may constrain some of our doctors who trained in Sudan due to linguistic and other barriers. The Council will address these issues by promoting continuous professional development and training of doctors to adapt to new concepts while ensuring a favourable work environment.

The SSGMC will soon have a website that will be the hub of all its activities and communication with the profession, public and patients. This has been made possible through direct support from the International Finance Corporation-Health in Africa Initiative group, a subsidiary of the World Bank. The leadership of the organization is fully committed in their support for the SSGMC for which we are truly grateful. We have also engaged the WHO office in South Sudan to help strengthen the effectiveness of the SSGMC in an advisory role and engagement with other regulatory bodies in the region. Our effectiveness as council and regulator in our country will depend on incorporating the views of all stake holders. We humbly call upon all concerned in South Sudan and beyond to join us in our quest to improve the health of our public.

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