

PRESS RELEASE

Improving maternal health care for rural women in Zanzibar

Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania, 13 October – A maternity ward was opened today at Kivunge District Hospital. The renovated facility will increase access to timely, high-quality and comprehensive maternal and child health care, including emergency obstetric and newborn care, for the 200 women who give birth in the predominantly rural area in the north of Zanzibar every month; and means that pregnant women experiencing complications no longer have to make the one hour journey to Mnazi Mmoja Hospital in Zanzibar Town.

UNFPA's contribution of \$200,000 to the renovations, with funding from Global Affairs Canada through the Afya Bora Project – a joint programme implemented by UNFPA and UNICEF in Zanzibar – is part of on-going support to the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar to strengthen the health system and improve access to quality maternity services for rural and hard-to-reach women in Zanzibar. Investing in infrastructure – including the renovation of six health facilities in Unguja and Pemba – and strengthening human resources for health through training and the innovative task-shifting initiative, have been delivered under the Afya Bora Project. A boat ambulance, the Afya Bora – the first of its kind in the region – is also now operational and transporting pregnant women from the small islands of Pemba to hospital for maternal care.

The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar has made significant headway and commitments to tackling preventable maternal mortality as articulated in national visions and regional and global development agendas, including the Five-Year Zanzibar Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (MKUZA III) – yet progress made still falls short of a world where every childbirth is safe.

UNFPA, as part of interagency efforts in Zanzibar, will continue to support the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar to realize its development goals – and UNFPA's 2030 Vision of zero maternal deaths – and is committed to accelerating efforts to make motherhood a life-changing and safe experience for all women in Zanzibar, wherever they live.

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