



## PRESS RELEASE

# Malawi commits to halve maternal and neonatal deaths over next five years

## As the country hosts a global conference on improving quality of care for maternal, new-born and child health

The Governments of Malawi and eight other countries from Africa and South East Asia have committed to halve maternal, new-born and stillborn births. The commitment comes at a time Malawi and eight other countries launch the Network on the improvement of quality of care for maternal, neonatal and child health.

Through the Network for Improving Quality of Care for Maternal, New-born and Child Health the governments of Bangladesh, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda have committed to putting in place actions to improve the quality of care that pregnant women and new-borns receive in health facilities.

In the network UNICEF and WHO in collaboration with the government of Malawi seeks to broaden a unique focus on intervention coverage to include quality and equity by ensuring more people, particularly those who currently experience barriers in accessing the care are reached and dignity by ensuring that quality health services are delivered respecting the rights of the people seeking care.

"The vision of the network and its partners is for every pregnant woman, newborn and child to receive good quality care, especially in health care facilities," says Minister of Health Dr. Peter Kumpalume, MP, highlighting government's commitment to make a real difference to women and children across the country.

UNICEF Country Representative Johannes Wedenig says the time is now for the Government of Malawi and its development partners to ensure actions are coupled with investments in infrastructure, training and capacity building to ensure that all pregnant women and new born



receive the best health services. “We believe that through collaborated efforts we can collectively reduce the number of mothers and new born babies who die during birth or immediately after birth,” says Wedenig.

WHO Representative in Malawi Dr Eugene Nyarko says, “Malawi has the highest premature birth rate in the world, with 18 percent of all babies being born too early and 13 percent with low birth weight. Malawi has managed to almost halve child mortality since 1990, but as under-five child death rates fall, new-born deaths have increased as a share of overall child mortality.”

The network on Quality of care on maternal, new-born and child health aims at building and strengthening national institutions and processes for improving quality of care in the health sector, accelerating and sustaining implementation of quality-of-care improvement packages for mothers, new-borns and children, facilitate learning, knowledge sharing and generation of evidence on quality planning, improvement and control and develop, strengthen and sustain institutions and methods for accountability for quality of care.

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