



No Woman Should Die While Giving Life

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East African Caravan on Maternal Health arrives in Kampala on July 14th, 2010

An estimated 536 000 maternal deaths occurred worldwide in 2005. Slightly more than half - 270 000 - of these preventable and unnecessary deaths occurred in the sub-Saharan Africa region alone.

It is unacceptable that mothers and newborns are no more likely to survive today than two decades ago, with prospects worst in countries battling AIDS, conflict and poverty. Little progress has been made in the response to ensure that African women and girls enjoy the right to sexual reproductive health. Consequently, preventable, detectable and treatable obstetric complications-including post-partum haemorrhage, infections, eclampsia, anaemia (exacerbated by malaria and HIV), prolonged or obstructed labour and complications of unsafe abortion account for the majority of maternal deaths.

ABANTU for Development in collaboration with UN Millennium Campaign-Africa, the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), Akina Mama wa Afrika (AmWA), Solidarity for African Women's Rights Coalition (SOAWR), White Ribbon Alliance and other partners launched an East African Caravan on Maternal Health on 3rd July, 2010 in Nairobi, Kenya. The Caravan then travelled to Arusha and Mwanza in Tanzania, Kigali in Rwanda, and Kabale, Mbarara and Masaka in Uganda. The key message of the caravan echoes the African Union slogan: **'No Woman should Die while Giving Life!'**

Dr Angelina Dawa of ABANTU who is leading the caravan states that, 'improved health, including sexual and reproductive health, contributes to economic growth, societal equity, gender equality and democratic governance, thus bringing tremendous benefits to women, families and societies. Reproductive health and rights are instrumental for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).'

In the various cities and towns, the Caravan has held public rallies with women and men, girls and boys, health professionals and policy makers, on the crisis of maternal mortality in Africa, providing information and basic medical services to prevent maternal deaths and morbidity. The caravan also collected real life testimonies of the various human rights violations women endure that result in the high rates maternal mortality and morbidity in the region.

The Caravan officially arrives in Kampala on Wednesday July 14, 2010 at 12:00PM at Mengo Primary School Open Grounds, opposite the Namirembe Diocesan offices close to Sanyu Babies Home. **The Caravan will be received by the Right Reverend Wilberforce Kityo Luwalira, Bishop of Namirembe Diocese** during a press conference. Remarks will be made by Caravan organizers Dr. Angelina Dawa of ABANTU for Development and Ms. Christine Butegwa of Akina Mama wa Afrika.

The Caravan arrives in Kampala just prior to the 15th Ordinary Session of the Assembly African Union Summit, where the Heads of State will discuss Maternal and Child health and Development in Africa.

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