



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

## Statement

By

Dr Nchabi Richard Kamwi, MP  
Minister of Health and Social Services

During the

**Launching of the  
Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of  
Maternal Mortality (CARMMA) in Namibia**

LEGARRE STADIUM, GOBABIS,

16 December 2009

Programme Director, Deputy Minister of MoHSS –  
Cde. Petrina Haingura,  
Madam Penehupifo Pohamba - First Lady of the Republic of Namibia  
and Patron of the Maternal and Child Health Agenda  
His Worship, the Mayor of Gobabis – Cde. P. Katjaoha  
The AU Commissioner for Social Affairs – Adv. Bience Gawanas,  
Hon. Governor of Omaheke region –  
Cde. Laura Macleod- Katjirua,  
Hon. Governors, Regional Councillors and Distinguished Traditional  
leaders,  
The UNFPA Representative to AU and ECA Ms. Etta Tadesse,  
The WHO Country Representative – Dr M. Robalo  
The Distinguished Development partners, UN Agencies  
Representatives of the US Government,  
The SWAPO Party Regional Coordinator – Cde. Uietele  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Members of the Civil Society organisations,  
Senior Government Officials,  
Members of the Media,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am grateful to be part of this important occasion to launch **the Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality (CARMMA)** in Namibia.

The main objective of this event is to create awareness on the importance of comprehensive approach towards improving maternal and child health in Namibia.

I congratulate the National Task Force on Maternal and Child Health of the Ministry of Health and Social Services for coming up with a theme for this day, which is Namibia Cares; no Women should die

while giving birth. I learned that this theme is in line with the AU theme on the same subject.

**P**rogramme Director,

Namibia has experienced challenging times over the past five years with respect to maternal and child mortality. The results of the Demographic and Health Surveys in 1992 showed that Maternal Mortality stood at 225/100 000 live births increasing to 271/100 000 in 2000 and doubling to 449/100 000 in 2006 and that the under five mortality which stood at 83/1000 live births in 1992 had declined slightly to 62/1000 in 2000 and had marginally increased to 69/1000 live births in 2006.

As a result, we informed the nation, the stakeholders and our development partners that the alarming increase in a number of women dying while giving birth and the increase in child mortality was a matter for concern. I am glad; here we are to launch this CARMMA initiative! If we continue at the pace that we are now tackling this unwarranted state-of-affair, my prediction is that come 2011, there will be a decline in both maternal and child mortality.

Maternal death often results from complex and multiple factors. There is a strong correlation between safe deliveries, a woman's educational level and contraceptives usage. The underlying causes of maternal death stem from risk factors related to anaemia, malaria, tuberculosis, hepatitis and HIV/AIDS. However, the major medical causes of maternal death are haemorrhage, eclampsia or convulsions resulting from hypertensive disorders during pregnancy, abortion complications, obstructed labour and other infections.

Programme Director,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government through the Ministry of Health and Social Services has identified priority areas for improving the healthcare system during the next five years. These are outlined in the Strategic Plan of the Ministry.

Programme Director,

Allow me to highlight a few of the achievements to date.

- **Namibian Roadmap** for accelerating the reduction of maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality has been developed and costed and resources are being mobilized to ensure full implementation;
- **The Ministry** has received support from development partners and has procured essential equipment, medicines and supplies that are needed for the provision of essential and basic and comprehensive emergency obstetric care;
- **Through our Community-Based approach** in partnership with civil societies we have targeted individuals, families, and communities by improving their knowledge in order to ensure effective utilization of available maternal health services;
- **We have also purchased outreach service vehicles and ambulances** to improve the referral system.

Today, we are seeing more women delivering in health facilities than before. More than 80% of pregnant women have access to maternal health services through clinics. The Ministry will continue to work in partnership with all stakeholders to improve the environment for women and children.

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Emergency Obstetric Care is one of the corner stones to improving maternal health. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that we create a conducive environment for healthy mothers who will in turn produce healthy babies. In this regard, we need to join forces with the traditional authorities and community members at large.

Programme Director,

The launch of the Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality presents another opportunity in our concerted effort to ensure equitable access to quality Health Care Services. This campaign will enable the Health and Social Care system ensure that **The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Vision 2030** objectives, are achieved.

It is my firm believe that the synergy and active involvement of all stakeholders, some of whom are in our midst, will continue beyond the 2009 fiscal year.

At this juncture, I would like on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Namibia thank those who contributed to the success of this campaign. In particular, the African Union, our Development Partners, the UN agencies and the US Government.

Programme Director,

Before I sit down, I have the honour and privilege to invite the First Lady of the Republic of Namibia to the podium. She is not new to this agenda. Earlier this year, I approached the First Lady to take up the

responsibility of serving as Patron. I am glad to say that she accepted and took on this responsibility with honour and pride.

**In her acceptance speech, she said, “As a mother myself, I can easily relate to this subject. Parenthood brings with it the strong desire to see our children grow up in a happy and healthy environment”.**

**Judging by her unwavering commitment to ensure that women and children health rights are being protected and being a committed and experienced health worker herself, you will all agree with me that there is no better person to deliver the keynote address on this occasion.**

**Please join me in welcoming the First Lady, Madam Penehupifo Pohamba to the podium.**