

UNFPA deploys national UNV midwives to help reduce maternal mortality in South Sudan

In its efforts to end maternal death in South Sudan, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) with additional funding from Canada and in collaboration with the United Nations Volunteer program has recruited 15 national midwives to be deployed across health facilities in the country. This batch of national UN volunteer midwives joins an already existing group of 30 international midwives who have been serving in the country since 2010. Mr. Barnabas Yisa, UNFPA Representative applauded the efforts of the Government and people of Canada for the resources provided to south Sudan for this unique initiative. He also highlighted the strong partnership with the Ministry of Health, UN agencies and other partners as a major factor for strengthening midwifery services in the country.

“I am so happy to be selected because I would like to really make my contribution to improving maternal health in my state” said Martha, graduate midwife from the Juba College of Nursing and Midwifery who will return to her home state in Jonglei to serve at the Bor state hospital. She is among the 4 males and 11 female volunteer midwives to be selected from a robust and competitive process. Most of these midwives have recently graduated from Health Sciences Institutes across the country.

UNFPA together with the MoH organized an induction workshop for these midwives in order to equip them and give them a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities as volunteer midwives in helping to reverse the curve of maternal mortality in South Sudan which is one of the highest in the world with a ratio of 2054/100,000 live births. The Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health challenged the midwives to be the change agents in the country and urged them to help to build and improve health care services for all South Sudanese. Midwives will also be paired with young graduate midwives in Canada through a remote distant exchange program for knowledge sharing. Members of the Canadian Association of Midwives also facilitated discussions with the volunteer midwives on respectful and ethical care.