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OCEANIA/PAPUA NEW GUINEA - Maternal mortality rate has doubled due to childbirth

Port Moresby (Agenzia Fides) - In the years between 1990 and 2008, around the world, the rate of maternal mortality in childbirth has decreased by 34%. One cannot say the same unfortunately for Papua New Guinea, where it has doubled. Approximately 99% of pregnant women who died, lived in developing countries, and the risk continues to increase in rural areas. In Papua New Guinea, predominantly a rural area, gender disparities and poor health conditions of services have contributed to the worsening of this phenomenon. According to the United Nations Development Program, the country's maternal mortality rate is 250 deaths per 100,000 live births. They better reflect the data recorded in 2006, reporting 733 deaths per 100,000 live births, after Afghanistan the highest in the Asia Pacific region. Experts say that the lives of pregnant women could be saved under the medical supervision of births and prenatal and postnatal care. The World Bank calculates that 17% of the inhabitants of the region cannot use an access road to reach the centers, also two-fifths of the health facilities lack electricity and basic medical equipment. One of the reasons why in Papua New Guinea there are many deaths is due to the fact that 67% of women give birth at home, often without the help of well-prepared midwives. Health facilities run by the Church, about 60% in the country, are the most functional. The Church of the Nazarene operates a district hospital in Mount Hagen in the Western Highlands Province, and health services in the rural area of the province of Jiwaka. Each month, a group of health workers visit 16 rural facilities offering prenatal testing, child care, health education and family planning. The more complex pregnancies are taken to the hospital. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 02/05/2012)

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