



AFRICA/SOUTH SUDAN - 2,054 mothers die for every 100,000 children born alive: 1 woman out of 7 during pregnancy or childbirth

Juba (Agenzia Fides) - Decades of conflict and marginalization have made South Sudan the most dangerous country on earth where to give birth, with the highest maternal mortality rate in the world. 2,054 mothers die for every 100,000 babies born alive. Many of the deaths are not recorded because 90% of women give birth outside medical facilities and without the assistance of qualified health care personnel. One South Sudanese woman out of 7 dies during pregnancy or delivery, often due to infections, bleeding and lack of trained midwives that could prevent up to 90% of maternal deaths. In the maternity ward of Juba Teaching Hospital, staff members do not have sufficient or adequate drugs, as well as trained personnel. There is a shortage of beds for mothers and many women now come when their health has deteriorated. One of the main causes of this tragic phenomenon dates back to the civil war in the 50s, when it was absolutely impossible to train medical personnel. Now, 7 years after the signing of the peace agreement, and a year after the declaration of independence of South Sudan, things seem to be changing. In the new college for the training of nurses and midwives of the Hospital of Juba students from 17 states across the country, are determined to acquire skills in the field and return to their villages in order to reduce the scourge of maternal mortality. The United Nations Fund for the Population (UNFPA) is distributing kits for mothers, surgical instrumentation and life-saving drugs, even though there is still a lack concerning basic elements such as scissors, sterile gauze, cotton. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 20/7/2012)