

Press statement

UNICEF Sudan and the Government of Japan join hands to ensure children in Sudan have the best start in life

KHARTOUM 29 January 2023 – Mothers and their newborns in Darfur will receive critical antenatal and postnatal care, thanks to the Government of Japan’s generous contribution of \$796,259 to UNICEF Sudan through the project titled “Lifesaving Healthcare for Children in Sudan”.

In Sudan, far too many infants – and their mothers – die from preventable or treatable conditions. While there has been a significant reduction in under-five mortality from 128 (1990) to 58 (2020) per 1,000 live births, the same cannot be said for neonatal mortality, which remains at a worrying 29 per 1,000 livebirths. Neonatal deaths now account for almost half of child deaths in Sudan. The first month of life is a vulnerable period and critical for a child’s survival, with one third of the deaths occurring within the first 24 hours of life.

Therefore, the contribution from the Government of Japan will focus on improving the quality of newborn care in eight health facilities in North and South Darfur states. The project aims to reach 25,200 mothers and their newborns as well as 13,500 young children with lifesaving maternal and child healthcare. In addition, 360 health workers, including 200 midwives, will receive critical trainings to improve the quality of care provided in the targeted states.

“Simple, cost-effective and evidence-based interventions for prevention and treatment of causes of neonatal death are available and the majority of newborn deaths could be prevented through implementation of these interventions in a timely manner” says Mandeep O’Brien, UNICEF Sudan Representative. “I want to applaud the Government of Japan for this new funding which will not only provide immediate essential and lifesaving services, but it will also build on the investments that the Japanese Government has made for the children and their communities in Sudan over the past years.”

“It is our honor to work with UNICEF to reach the most vulnerable newborns, children and their mothers with lifesaving healthcare through our project titled ‘Lifesaving Healthcare for Children in Sudan’” said **H.E. Mr. Takashi HATTORI, Ambassador of Japan to Sudan**. He added, “It is important to give children – also the girls and boys living in emergency-affected locations – the best start in life and ensure they receive every opportunity to survive and thrive.”

UNICEF Sudan has received generous funding from the Government of Japan for lifesaving health and nutrition interventions before. This project will focus specifically on improving access and quality of community-based newborn healthcare services, including immunization, in North Darfur and South Darfur states.