

Press statement

Japan and UNICEF Sudan join hands to ensure mothers and children in Sudan have access to quality maternal and newborn health care services.

Port Sudan 24 January 2024 –Mothers and their newborns in Sudan will have improved access to quality healthcare services, thanks to the Government of Japan’s generous contribution of \$2.3 million to UNICEF Sudan through the project titled “Alleviating the impact of the crisis on pregnant women and newborns in Sudan”.

The health system in Sudan is on the brink of collapse: an estimated 70% of health facilities in conflict-affected areas are not functional. Prior to the conflict, the situation of mothers and newborns in Sudan was already dire. The maternal mortality ratio was unacceptably high at 270 per 100,000 live births and newborn mortality at 27 per 1,000 live births. Neonatal deaths accounted for almost half of child deaths in Sudan.

“UNICEF is particularly worried about the youngest children, including the 1.5 million babies who will be born in the country this year”, says Mandeep O’Brien, UNICEF Representative in Sudan. “We are grateful to the People and Government of Japan for their lifesaving support to these young girls and boys, as well as their mothers”.

Japan’s contribution will focus on improving the availability of maternal and newborn healthcare, while improving the quality of services provided at both community and facility-levels in states hosting large numbers of displaced people. The project aims to reach the most vulnerable ones – 36,600 women and 35,500 newborns – with quality maternal and newborn health care services.

“The situation in Sudan caused by the conflicts is very severe, and sadly, the most vulnerable are always the most terribly impacted. The Japanese government maintains its commitment to addressing the humanitarian catastrophe, working with UNICEF to aid mothers and their newborns in Sudan”, says Kentaro Mizuuchi, Chargé d’affaires of Japan to Sudan.

In Sudan, millions of the most vulnerable children and families are caught in the crossfire with no or limited access to essential services including water, food and nutrition, healthcare, and safety. The situation is projected to further deteriorate, with increased humanitarian needs in health and nutrition. Thanks to the generous support from partners like Japan, UNICEF can stay and deliver for the most vulnerable children in Sudan.