



**Spotlight Initiative**  
To eliminate violence against women and girls

## **UWOA Press Statement on Escalating cases of Maternal Mortality, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022 in Members Lounge - Parliament**

In Uganda, mothers are dying at an alarming and increasing rate. We have increasing seen women lose their lives during the COVID19 lock down, and continue to die in health facilities due to negligence and corrupt practices by some Health workers. The current maternal mortality ratio in Uganda is 336 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births as per the UDHS, the number is are higher, and government and Ministry of Health has not paid attention to these deaths.

*97% of pregnant women attend Antenatal care (ANC) visit. However, 60% of women in Uganda complete atleast 4 out of the 8 recommended visits, and only 29% have their first visit during the first trimester (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Month). Even though 74% of childbirths in Uganda are attended by skilled health personnel, it is important to note that 44% of women do not receive postnatal care within 2weeks after childbirth.*

Maternal mortality is also still a big challenge especially among the teenage mothers who contribute approximately 18% of all maternal death. With over the over 300,000 Teenage pregnancies reported, the maternal mortality is going to increase if government does not intervene to ensure, the necessary supplies and health workers are in place.

The most common direct causes of maternal injury and death remain; excessive blood loss during childbirth, high blood pressure during and after pregnancy, unsafe abortion, especially among the young women, is the leading cause of death at 22%, obstructed labor leading to rupture of the uterus. Other Indirect causes such as anemia, malaria, and heart disease among others. Bleeding (hemorrhage) is the leading cause of death contributing 42% of all death reviewed and 90% of hemorrhage is postpartum hemorrhage, 36% of maternal deaths occurred among young mothers less than 24 years who should have been in school. Teenage pregnancy contributes up to 17% of all maternal deaths. Maternal and Child Health (MCH) is a key indicator for measuring the development of any nation including Uganda.

### **Government Commitment to Women and Child Health**

The Constitution of Uganda sets out the State's duty to ensure all Ugandans enjoy access to health services and to take all practical measures to ensure the provision of basic

medical services to the population. However, there is no specific provision on the right to health.

In line with the Sustainable Development Goal 3: The Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA) are advocating for a reduction in maternal mortality in the country. We call upon the government of Uganda to fulfill its statutory obligation by providing basic maternal health services to Ugandan women. These services include; prenatal care services, skilled medical officers health facilities at provision of Emergency Obstetric Care and postpartum care.

The Government has spent a lot of resources and continues to do so to prevent death from COVID! ( which is commendable. However, all lives matter and no woman should die while giving birth.

### **Our Demands**

1. Government ensures that necessary resources are allocated to the Health Sector to address the gaps in provision of maternal health services;
2. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should prioritize issues of Maternal Health in the 2022-2023 National Budget so that necessities for maternal care are catered for by Government.
3. Ministry should ensure maternal death audits are conducted and where the health-workers are responsible necessary action should be taken.
4. We call upon government to improve access to quality care and medicines among poor and marginalized populations;
5. The Ministry should set up dedicated hotlines where women in labour can report all cases of corruption and negligence at a health facility.

**FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY**

**HON. SARAH OPENDI**

**CHAIRPERSON - UWOPA**