

Kigali, Rwanda 29 November 2010 — The Ministry of Health (MoH), has dedicated this week to the health of mothers and children, with various activities lined up across the country to promote their wellbeing.

According to the Ministry of Health, the objective of the week is to counter the causes of deaths amongst children and mothers - one of the top priorities of President Paul Kagame's second term in office.

Most of these diseases that claim numerous lives of children and mothers are preventable.

Speaking during a live televised town hall meeting, yesterday, the Minister of Health, Dr. Richard Sezibera, said that though Rwanda has taken strides in reducing deaths in mothers and children, there was still a long way to go.

Statistics from the 2005 Health and Demographic Survey, showed that there were 750 deaths of mothers per 100, 000 live births. However, a global survey that was conducted in 2009 showed that Rwanda had improved. It showed that there were 383 deaths of mothers per 100, 000 live births.

"Despite the strides that we have made in reducing these deaths, there is still a lot needed to do because we don't want to see any parent die while giving life," Sezibera said, adding that most of the diseases that cause the deaths are preventable.

The causes of death that were cited, include, malaria, poor nutrition, and mothers who don't get antenatal care.

Current statistics from the MoH show that 28 out of 1, 000 babies die before they are one week old, 34 out of 1, 000 before 1 and a half months, 64 out of 1, 000 don't make a year while 103 out of 1,000 don't make it to their fifth birthday.

The cause of these deaths is attributed to immunisable diseases and stomach worms caused by limited hygiene in homes which can all be prevented. And, diseases caused by malnutrition like kwashiorkor.

"Rwanda is a country which has enough food and there is no valid reason as to why children should die of malnutrition," Sezibera said.

According to the Ministry of Health's Dr. Fidel Ngabo, the week is going to focus on immunizing children from all kinds of diseases and administering de-worming drugs and vitamin A tablets.

The campaign is expected to take place at over 2, 000 sites across the country and at the district health centers.

The campaign on the national level will take place in Gicumbi districts with special emphasis on the treatment of Bilharzia that is common in communities around lakes.

Source: [allAfrica](#)