

Government of Kenya and the Beginnings Fund Sign Cooperative Agreement to Expand Access to Quality Maternal and Newborn Care

- *Five-year partnership, supported by USD 80 million in catalytic funding, will strengthen maternal and newborn health services across 21 priority counties.*

Nairobi, Kenya | 3 August 2026: The Government of Kenya, through the Ministry of Health, and the [Beginnings Fund](#) today signed a Cooperative Agreement, formally launching a five-year partnership to expand access to quality maternal and newborn care across the country.

The Beginnings Fund is a philanthropic initiative that pools and deploys catalytic philanthropic capital alongside African governments to improve maternal and newborn health, ensuring more women and babies have access to quality care. Working in partnership with governments, the Fund invests in cost-effective, evidence-based interventions that save lives and strengthen health systems.

This partnership with the Government of Kenya will be delivered through the Beginnings Fund's unique approach of strengthening people, products, and systems by investing in the health workforce, essential medicines and technologies, referral networks, and health information systems in high-volume facilities to improve the quality of maternal and newborn care.

Despite significant progress in improving maternal and child health, preventable maternal and newborn deaths remain a public health challenge in Kenya. Maternal mortality remains at an estimated 355 deaths per 100,000 live births, while neonatal mortality stands at 21 deaths per 1,000 live births and stillbirths at 19 per 1,000 births. The majority of these deaths are preventable through timely, high-quality care during pregnancy, childbirth, and the first weeks of life.

Through the partnership, the Beginnings Fund will provide USD 80 million (approximately Kenya Shillings 10.4 billion) in catalytic funding over five years to support the delivery of improved maternal and newborn health services across 21 priority counties and approximately 200 high-volume health facilities. The programme is expected to reach approximately 5.9 million women and newborns and contribute to preventing an estimated 46,494 deaths by 2031. The Beginnings Fund investment will complement investments by the national and county governments and partners, reinforcing the partnership's collaborative, government-led model.

The partnership aligns with the Government of Kenya's maternal and newborn health priorities, including Every Woman Every Newborn Everywhere (EWENE) Acceleration Plan, the Maternal and Newborn Health Rapid Results Initiative, Universal Health Coverage reforms, and Taifa Care.

Cabinet Secretary for Health, Hon. Aden Duale, said:

"Frameworks or agreements do not save lives. Implementation does. I therefore urge the Beginnings Fund, implementing partners, and all responsible institutions to move with urgency

from signing to execution. Every delayed procurement, every postponed activity, and every missed milestone represents mothers and newborns whose lives remain at unnecessary risk. Our collective responsibility is to ensure that this investment reaches health facilities, health workers, and communities without delay. The measure of success will not be the amount of money disbursed, the number of meetings held, or the volume of reports produced. Success will be measured by reductions in maternal deaths, reductions in newborn deaths, reductions in stillbirths, stronger health systems, and greater public confidence in our healthcare services."

Alice Kang'ethe, Chief Executive Officer of the Beginnings Fund, said:

"We are honoured to partner with the Government of Kenya in advancing its vision for maternal and newborn health. At the Beginnings Fund, we believe lasting progress is achieved when governments lead and partners work alongside them. Kenya has demonstrated that commitment by placing mothers and newborns at the centre of its health agenda and bringing together government, counties, health workers, implementing partners and philanthropy around a shared vision. Our role is to provide catalytic support that strengthens the people, products and systems needed to deliver quality care, building on the leadership, expertise and commitment that already exists within Kenya's health system. We hope this partnership will demonstrate what is possible when governments lead and partners work together to improve the quality of care for women and newborns."

The partnership reflects the Beginnings Fund's approach of co-designing country investment plans with governments and national partners, ensuring philanthropic investments align with country priorities and support proven, evidence-based interventions, the health workforce, and stronger health systems.

Kenya is among the first countries to formally launch a country partnership under the Beginnings Fund, joining Malawi, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Zanzibar, Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana, Lesotho, and Nigeria in the Fund's country partnerships across Africa.

The Beginnings Fund is supported by a coalition of investors, including founding donors: the Mohamed bin Zayed Foundation for Humanity, the Gates Foundation, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), Delta Philanthropies, and The ELMA Foundation, who are committed to accelerating maternal and newborn survival across Africa.

H.E. Dr. Shamma Khalifa Al Mazrouei, Acting Director General of the Mohamed bin Zayed Foundation for Humanity, and one of the founding donors of the Beginnings Fund, said:

"Every birth should be a moment of hope, yet every day mothers and newborns die from causes we know how to prevent. Kenya has set out a clear national vision to change that, and we are proud to support that leadership through the Beginnings Fund. By working alongside governments and partners to strengthen the health workforce and equip health facilities with the tools needed to deliver quality maternal and newborn care, we can help ensure more mothers and babies receive the care they need when they need it most."

Faustina Fynn-Nyame, Executive Director of the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), said:

"No mother or newborn should die from causes we know how to prevent. This partnership marks a significant milestone in Kenya's efforts to improve maternal and newborn survival and expand access to quality care. We commend the Government of Kenya for its leadership and commitment to prioritising the health and wellbeing of mothers and babies, and the Beginnings Fund is proud to support this vision. Sustainable progress is achieved when governments lead, partners align behind shared goals, and investments strengthen national health systems."

Dr. Paulin Basinga, Africa Director of the Gates Foundation, said:

"No family should lose a mother or newborn because lifesaving care was too far away, came too late, or remained out of reach. This agreement reflects a shared commitment to tackling persistent and emerging challenges in maternal and newborn health, and shows what is possible when government leadership is matched with catalytic funding to ramp up delivery and impact. We are proud to support this partnership to expand quality care and solutions that reach the women and newborns who need them most."

The signing of the Cooperative Agreement marks the beginning of a long-term partnership between the Government of Kenya and the Beginnings Fund, reinforcing a shared commitment to strengthen maternal and newborn health and ensure every woman and every newborn has access to safe, quality care.

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About the Beginnings Fund

The Beginnings Fund is a philanthropic partnership working alongside African governments to end preventable maternal and newborn deaths and stillbirths. In its first phase (2026–2031), the Fund is targeting 10 countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zanzibar, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, with the ambition of preventing more than 300,000 deaths and improving access to quality care for 34 million mothers and newborns. As of July 2026, the Fund has raised USD 495.4 million toward its USD 525 million Fund One goal.

- For more information, visit <https://beginningsfund.org/>
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