



Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar and Beginnings Fund Launch US\$9.6 Million Partnership to Improve Maternal and Newborn Health

Five-year partnership will strengthen care across 63 health facilities, with a focus on safer childbirth and improved care for newborns.

Zanzibar, 21 October 2026: The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, through its Ministry of Health, and the Beginnings Fund today launched a five-year, US\$9.6 million partnership to accelerate progress towards ending preventable maternal and newborn deaths and stillbirths and improve access to quality care for women and newborns across Zanzibar.

The Beginnings Fund will build on the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar's efforts to upgrade health infrastructure, including the construction of new hospitals and health centres, and to increase the number of skilled health workers available to provide quality maternal and newborn healthcare.

The partnership will introduce innovative health technologies, including ultrasound scans and digital monitoring during childbirth, to support health workers in detecting potential complications earlier so women and newborns can receive the care they need sooner. It will also expand group pregnancy care, where women receive health checks alongside group education and support to help prevent and manage anaemia and other pregnancy-related risks.

Overall the Fund, through this partnership, will contribute to improving the quality of care across 63 health facilities in five priority districts on Unguja and Pemba, helping more women experience safer pregnancies and childbirth, and improving health outcomes for newborns.

H.E. Nassor Ahmed Mazrui, Minister of Health of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, said:

"Our priority is to ensure that every woman in Zanzibar can access quality care during pregnancy and childbirth, and that every newborn receives the care they need. This partnership with the Beginnings Fund will help us strengthen the services available across our islands, building on the progress we have already made."

"By improving the skills of health workers, expanding access to specialised services, and making better use of health information, we can address gaps in care and accelerate progress towards our national maternal and newborn health goals."

The partnership will also strengthen midwifery-led services, equip health facilities to manage complications during childbirth, expand specialised newborn care, support the construction of up to two neonatal care units, and provide additional training for health workers.



In addition, the investment will support improvements in digital health and data systems, helping the Ministry of Health and health workers monitor the quality of maternal and newborn care, identify gaps, and make informed decisions to improve these services.

Alice Kang'ethe, Chief Executive Officer of the Beginnings Fund, said: *"We know what works. More lives are saved when basic, affordable care consistently reaches those who need it the most. Timely care during pregnancy, skilled midwives at birth, and emergency services when complications arise are key. At the same time, innovation is expanding what is possible. Having the right services available at the right time can make all the difference. That is what this partnership is about."*

"Our role is to work alongside the Ministry of Health Zanzibar and national organizations to ensure health workers have the skills, tools, and support they need to provide quality care, while strengthening the services women and newborns rely on every day."

H.E. Dr Shamma Khalifa Al Mazrouei, Director General of the Mohamed bin Zayed Foundation for Humanity, and a founding donor of the Beginnings Fund, said: *"Many of the complications that threaten the lives of mothers and newborns are preventable. The difference is whether risks are identified early, if skilled care is available, and health facilities are equipped to respond."*

"Through the Beginnings Fund, we are proud to join with Zanzibar to strengthen that continuum of care and ensure health workers have the tools they need to identify risks and act in time. This partnership can help turn that capacity into what matters most: safer births, healthier mothers, and a stronger start for newborns across Zanzibar."

The partnership will prioritise five districts including Mjini, Magharibi B, and Kaskazini A on Unguja, and Micheweni and Chake-Chake on Pemba, which together account for 74% of maternal deaths, 78% of perinatal deaths, and more than 38,000 facility deliveries annually in Zanzibar.

Over five years, the partnership is expected to reach approximately 200,000 women and their newborns, contributing to Zanzibar's national targets of reducing maternal mortality by 19%, stillbirths by 32% and neonatal mortality by 44%.

The Ministry of Health will lead implementation, working alongside local and technical partners including Health Improvement Project Zanzibar (HIPZ), WAJAMAMA, Ifakara Health Institute, and the Benjamin Mkapa Foundation.

The Beginnings Fund's catalytic investment will complement approximately US\$44.8 million in planned co-investment from the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar and implementing partners.

The Zanzibar partnership follows the Beginnings Fund's programming with the Governments of Malawi, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Kenya, and Ethiopia, as the Fund expands its work alongside African governments to improve maternal and newborn health through country-led investments.

ENDS



About the Beginnings Fund

The Beginnings Fund is a philanthropic initiative working alongside African governments to accelerate progress toward ending preventable maternal and newborn deaths and stillbirths by investing in high impact, cost effective and evidence based interventions. 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 women and newborns.

As of September 2026, the Fund has raised US\$496.4 million towards its initial US\$525 million fundraising goal.

For more information: <https://beginningsfund.org/>

Media contact: BeginningsFund@brunswickgroup.com