

PRESS RELEASE

World Prematurity Day: Tanzania's Ministry of Health launches new program to save newborn lives across the country

- Of the over 2 million newborns in Tanzania every year, 16.6% are preterm according to [WHO](#) – this is one of the world's highest preterm birth rates
- Tanzania is one of only 4 countries to partner with NEST360, leading the way for innovative African-led care for preterm babies
- Temeke Hospital in Dar es Salaam officially opens newly renovated newborn ward, one of 7 large hospitals in Tanzania that are implementing and evaluating this new package of care

DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA – Tuesday November 16, 2021. Tanzania's Ministry of Health, Temeke Referral Hospital, and the NEST360 (Newborn Essential Solutions and Technologies) program, today launch a new partnership for improved newborn care in Tanzania. Tanzania's Health Minister, Dr. Dorothy Gwajima, will be chief guest.

Temeke Hospital is coordinating the grand opening of the newborn ward with global World Prematurity Day, which takes place on November 17. The day aims to raise awareness for the challenges of preterm birth and shine a light on the risks and consequences faced by preterm infants and their families worldwide. The newly improved newborn ward is now able to offer a bundle of innovative medical technologies with training to transform care for small and sick newborns.

According to [UNICEF](#), in 2019, 42,814 babies born in Tanzania died in their first 28 days of life. The government is committed to improving newborn survival and reducing the risk of death and disability at the time of birth to reach national and global targets. Last year, Temeke Hospital cared for 2528 newborns.

Improvements to the newborn ward at Temeke Hospital mark a critical advancement to developing the hospital's ability to manage the care of small and sick newborns. The main causes of newborn death result from lack of oxygen at the time of birth, infection, low birth weight, and early birth. New life-saving medical equipment and advanced care practices will enable the Temeke Hospital to prevent newborn deaths.

Dr. Felix Bundala, who works in the Mother and Child Health Unit in the Tanzania's Ministry of Health, Community Development, Elderly and Children, says:

"We're working to reduce neonatal mortality. There are global and regional goals for achieving that by 2030. Globally, the target is reducing them to less than 12 deaths per 1000 live births. Our national target is reducing them to less than 15 deaths in 1000 live births by 2025. But what we have observed is that neonatal intensive care in most of our health facilities is very poor."

For his part, Dr. Shukuru Kibwana, In-charge of the Neonatal Ward at Temeke Hospital, says;

"There have been massive improvements after adopting NEST program's floor plan in the neonatal care unit at the facility. Before, there was no proper plan of work in the neonatal units and at some sections, neonatal units were non-existent. Now, we have uniform designs that ensure children get treatment in improved conditions. We expect this would help cut down neonatal deaths".

The NEST360 program implementation involves facility renovations to support the installation of new devices such as phototherapy lights, oxygen concentrators, and suction pumps. The government also organises training for doctors, nurses, and biomedical technicians on how to use, maintain and repair equipment plus continuous quality improvement initiatives throughout the program.

“Health care workers need knowledge on effective use of medical equipment to ensure newborn survival and prevent disabilities as they thrive. Continuous interaction between health care workers and biomedical engineers is needed. A Planned Preventive Maintenance (PPM) is essential to ensure equipment functions and avoid equipment graveyards in the facilities,” says Dr. Nahya Salim, Paediatrician and NEST Clinical Lead in Tanzania.

“This bond is stimulating sustainable innovations and solutions tailored to our needs to save lives of newborns. Local technical institutions are working closely with facility teams to support the implementation of the NEST program” (Dr. Nahya Salim,).

About Temeke Hospital

Temeke Hospital is found in Tanzania’s port city of Dar es Salaam. It started as a dispensary in 1972 and was upgraded to health center in 1980, then it acquired the status of District Hospital in 1985 and later upgraded to regional referral hospital in 2010. It serves the Temeke District population (over a million people) and its neighboring districts of Mkuranga, Rufiji, Kisarawe and Ilala. The hospital has 313 bed capacity. The Pediatric and Neonatal wards started in 1981 and 2012 respectively. The Neonatal ward’s installed capacity is 75 babies.

About NEST360

NEST360 (Newborn Essential Solutions and Technologies) is an international alliance of clinical, technical, and public health experts who have joined together to end preventable newborn deaths at hospitals across Africa. NEST360 established an evidenced-based, health-systems model to deliver, sustain, and scale a package of technologies and services to improve the quality of newborn care.

The NEST360 model enables countries to meet newborn survival targets by improving outcomes, saving newborn lives, and empowering the medical workforce of the future. The NEST360 model has been implemented in four countries with plans to expand to all of sub-Saharan Africa by 2030.

www.nest360.org

For more information about the NEST Program: +255752312300 | +255683105670

Inquiries on interviews with experts: +255222774756 | +255627155157

High-resolution IMAGES are available for download at: <https://ifakarahealthinstitute.smugmug.com/>

Data from: <https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/global-estimates-preterm-birth/en/>

<https://data.unicef.org/resources/levels-and-trends-in-child-mortality/>