

Press Release

Attention: News Editors

For immediate release

## **AT LEAST 30 WOMEN LIVING WITH FISTULA TO BENEFIT FROM FREE SURGERIES**

*Nairobi County, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021*.... Over 30 women living with Female Genital Fistula including leaking of urine and stool are expected to receive free surgeries and medical advice during a week-long camp at Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH).

The Fistula camp which will be held until 28<sup>th</sup> May is part of a partnership between Safaricom Foundation, UNFPA, Flying Doctors Society of Africa, AMREF Health Africa and Beyond Zero Initiative. It comes as the world marks International Day to End Obstetric Fistula (IDEOF) on 23<sup>rd</sup> May.

Safaricom Foundation in partnership with Flying Doctors Society of Africa, and other partners have been working together to offer free treatment to women with fistula and create awareness about the importance of quality maternal health services.

“This initiative seeks to raise awareness and amplify the plight of women with obstetric fistula, a condition that continues to affect women in sub-Saharan Africa & Asia. As we work towards, ending fistula by 2030, we must intensify partnerships to prevent cases from happening while treating those living with fistula, some of whom have had to wait many years to access treatment”, said Joe Ogutu, Safaricom Foundation Chairman.

Over 1,400 women in 7 counties have benefited from previous camps that have been held in Nairobi, Nyeri, Makeni, Kitui, Kisii, Kilifi and Embu.

“The Covid-19 pandemic has strained access to health care services especially in maternal and reproductive health services. We are grateful to be able to offer this service after a long halt. We

therefore urge all women who have been suffering in silence during this period to come forward and seek treatment” Ms. Tanya Nduati, CEO of Flying Doctors’ Society of Africa

"Obstetric fistula is a sensitive indicator of the quality of sexual and reproductive health services and a severe assault on quality of life of those unfortunate to live with a fistula. UNFPA remains committed to supporting the Government of Kenya in all efforts to eliminate obstetric fistula and other maternal morbidities" Dr. Ademola Olajide, UNFPA Representative, Kenya

The World Health Organization has termed fistula as the single most dramatic aftermath of neglected childbirth estimating that more than 2 million women live with fistula worldwide. It is estimated that there are 3,000 new fistula cases in Kenya each year, and only 7.5 percent of these are able to access medical care. This means that every year, more than 2,700 women with new fistula cases do not receive the necessary medical attention.

**ENDS.....**

### **About Safaricom Foundation**

#### **Partnering to Transform Lives**

Safaricom Foundation partners with Kenyan communities, organizations and institutions to improve and transform lives.

With a footprint in all of Kenya’s 47 counties, and a strong history of partnerships dating back to our inception in 2003, the Safaricom Foundation has worked with Speed, Simplicity and Trust to implement over 1,000 community projects, impacting over 4.5 million people.

Our current strategy builds on our strong history of results and partnerships, and will contribute towards the Sustainable Development Goals. We will leverage the power of innovation and technology to drive our projects forward; and will also offer a blend of philanthropic grant funding and co-created partnership programmes.

The participation of Safaricom staff in our projects will extend our personalized approach towards partnerships; and our project monitoring and our dissemination forms will provide platforms for technical assistance, learning and capacity building.

### **About Flying Doctors’ Society of Africa**

The Flying Doctors Society of Africa (FDSA) is a charitable organization established in 1971 that fundraises in order to enhance medical outreach and access to medical emergency services through our networks. We rely on our donors, members being our primary donor as all unutilized membership subscriptions supports our Fistula programme. Fistula is a condition that affects women and young girls across the continent. In Kenya, it is estimated that fistula accounts for 6% of all maternal deaths and prenatal loss if left untreated.

Our programme strives to reduce the effects of fistula such as isolation, poverty, family breakdown, stigma and enabling women to contribute to the community's growth. Over the last 7 years, we have funded surgeries to nearly 1,400 women and impacted lives to more than 1,200 households; a number that is minimal compared to the women not treated. Our objective of preventing and managing Fistula contributes to the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goal 3, of Ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all at all ages.

### **About UNFPA**

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), is the lead UN agency on sexual and reproductive health. UNFPA is addressing fistula prevention (as well as prevention of maternal & newborn mortality & morbidity, and stillbirth, and quality of maternal care), through its leadership of the global Campaign to End Fistula as well as the global Midwifery programme, which is active in over 140 countries.