

## Malawi still grappling with high maternal mortality

At 807 deaths per 100,000 live births, Malawi's maternal mortality remains one of the highest in the world. This was revealed last Thursday in Lilongwe, when the Malawi government in collaboration with UNICEF launched the Malawi Multiple Indicator Cluster (MICS) 2006 survey.

By [Gregory Gondwe](#) 9 Jul 2008

MICS is the largest nationally representative household sample survey that aims at obtaining the latest and most up to date data at district level on key indicators of the well-being of children and women in the country according to UNICEF and National Statistical Office (NSO).

UNICEF country representative for Malawi, Aida Girma, said this nationally representative survey of children, women and men has shown that more women are still dying when giving birth.

The survey shows that maternal mortality for urban areas is 861 and for rural areas is 802.

"The survey particularly highlights the dire situation for children and women living in rural areas," said Girma. "It shows that children and women in these areas are most likely to be deprived of access to basic information, health, education, water and sanitation."

On his part, Economic Planning and Development Minister Dr. Ken Lipenga who officially launched the survey report with Girma said, MICS serves as one of the main monitoring tools by providing necessary data at national, regional and district levels.

"This also serves as a baseline for various intervention programmes government comes up with," he said.

Dr. Lipenga said, Malawi government is trying to put in place strategies to fight enemies of national development like maternal mortality.

"Government has been developing and implementing long and medium term strategies that translate the national and international goals into reality," he said.

In 2000, government launched the Malawi Vision 2020, which is a policy framework that sets out a long-term development perspective for Malawi and two years later it launched a three year Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), which presented a first attempt to translate the long-term strategy of Malawi Vision 2020 into medium-term, focused action plans.

Dr. Lipenga said lessons learnt in the other strategy have resulted in the development of a much comprehensive policy called the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS).

"This is stimulating economic growth with much emphasis in the reduction of the high maternal mortality," he said.