

Press release

**AMREF, together with its main partner the Sanofi Espoir Foundation, has inaugurated the PRECIS program to train midwives in Côte d'Ivoire**

**Abidjan, September 8, 2016-** AMREF Flying Doctors / Health Africa, the leading African public health NGO, has launched an extension in Côte d'Ivoire to its Regional Capacity Building Program for Nurses and Midwives (PRECIS). This training program will be inaugurated during the official ceremony held in Abidjan on September 8<sup>th</sup> in the presence of Madame Raymonde Goudou Coffie, Minister of Health and the Fight against AIDS (MSLS). It will be implemented by the National Institute of Health Officer Training (INFAS) with the support of its main partner, the Sanofi Espoir Foundation, which has long been engaged alongside AMREF. In Côte d'Ivoire, PRECIS aims to train 1,000 students in a two-years diploma course up to 2019.

Each year, over 180,000 African women die during pregnancy, childbirth or post-partum. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest maternal mortality in the world, with an average of 510 deaths per 100,000 live births<sup>1</sup>. In Côte d'Ivoire the maternal mortality rate is 645 to 100,000<sup>2</sup> with a 45% of births attended by skilled health personnel in rural areas<sup>3</sup>. Yet one trained midwife can take care of an average of 500 mothers and their babies each year<sup>4</sup>.

AMREF's international campaign entitled Stand Up for African Mothers aims to train 15,000 African midwives. With programs already deployed in nine countries in Africa, more than 8,000 midwives have now been received training.

PRECIS plans to strengthen the training and skills of nurses and midwives in the Francophone countries of West Africa, using a combination of e-learning platform and practical courses. Depending on the needs identified together with country health authorities, this program focuses on strengthening initial training courses aimed at complementing the basic training of young students, or on continuing education courses that cater to the needs of midwives and nurses already in practice.

Launched in Senegal in 2013, PRECIS has already helped upgrade skills in this country through professional education with a first class of 165 midwives and nurses, who graduated on September 2 in Dakar. In Côte d'Ivoire, the program will be implemented with the assistance of the INFAS in nursing and midwifery schools in five regions - Abidjan, Aboisso, Bouaké, and Korhogo Daloa. The goal is to train a first cohort of 1,000 trainees over two years, to 2019.

Mireille Faugere, President of the Board of AMREF in France, which gives special support to training health personnel using e-learning and m-learning in Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire via the AMREF regional office in West Africa, said: " *For women, newborn infants and children living in rural and remote areas, there is a vital challenge to provide access to care and health services so they can live in dignity. Training through the PRECIS program's e-learning solution provides an up-to-date lower-cost and practical response to training qualified health workers, midwives and nurses. The primary pillar of health systems is their human resources – the men and women engaged in the front line to*

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<sup>1</sup> Source: INED

<sup>2</sup> Source: World Bank, 2015

<sup>3</sup> source: UNFPA, State of midwifery practice in the world - 2014

<sup>4</sup> Source: AMREF



*aid mothers and children. The PRECIS program we are launching here today is designed to serve these actors, and improve their knowledge, skills, and practice."*

A founding partner of AMREF's Club Santé Afrique and its Stand Up for African Mothers international campaign since 2011, the Sanofi Espoir Foundation is the main source of PRECIS' development support in Senegal and its extension to Côte d'Ivoire.

For Xavier Darcos, President of the Sanofi Espoir Foundation, the Foundation and AMREF share a common vision of the need to train local actors. *"Being able to give birth in healthy conditions is a fundamental human right and a basic dimension of social justice. Yet this battle has still not been won in every country. No single person or organization can solve these challenges, which is why it is so important to build multi-stakeholder partnerships, as is perfectly illustrated today with the coming together of different public and private institutions to launch PRECIS and pool resources and expertise to achieve shared objectives."*

After the first pilot phase in Senegal, and then Côte d'Ivoire, Benin will be the third sub-Saharan country to benefit from the implementation of PRECIS.

**About AMREF:**

Founded in Kenya in 1957, AMREF Flying Doctors is now the leading African public health NGO. Each year the organization runs 150 programs for 10 million beneficiaries in 30 countries, mainly in rural communities with a priority focus on women and children. AMREF Health Africa is also the leading non-profit organization to provide health personnel training for 150,000 African nurses, community health workers, medical assistants, and midwives every year. AMREF has twenty offices in Africa, Europe and North America. *For more information:* <https://amref.fr>

**About the Sanofi Espoir Foundation:**

The Sanofi Espoir Corporate Foundation was created by the Sanofi Group to capitalize on nearly 20 years of international commitment to solidarity. It is tasked with helping reduce health inequalities, particularly among the neediest communities, using a socially responsible approach. It focuses on three main areas: fighting childhood cancers, reducing maternal and neonatal mortality, and providing access to healthcare for the most deprived communities. Its "Midwives for Life" initiative, funded with more than €2 million annually, helps improve midwifery skills and highlights their work in nine countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. *For more information:* [www.fondation-sanofi-espoir.com](http://www.fondation-sanofi-espoir.com)

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