

By Steven Nsamaza

On Friday, a week dedicated to mother and child health was concluded in Kayonza District where a new maternity ward at Rwinkwavu Health Centre and the Rwinkwavu Hospital laundry facility were inaugurated.

The event attended by officials from the Ministry of Health, Kayonza District and Partners in Health kicked off the day by planting trees in the type of Artemisia repellent that ward away mosquitoes.

The launch to plant trees was conducted at Kayonza modern secondary school where the trees were planted by officials including Member of Parliament, Jacqueline Mukakanyamugenge, Kayonza Mayor, Jean Claude Murenzi and Dr Innocent Turate from the ministry and other officials from Partners in Health.

According to Dr Turate, the Head of Institute of HIV/AIDS Disease Prevention and Control (IHDPC), research had found that the artemisia repellent tree can ward away mosquitoes that cause malaria. He explained to students that they were planting these trees near the dormitories so that they can be protected from mosquitoes but cautioned them to look after the trees but also continue to use mosquito bed nets.

### **New maternity**



The new inaugurated maternity ward was constructed by Partners in Health locally known as 'Inshuti Mu Buzima' at a tune of \$286,000 (approximately Rwf245m). The maternity at the health centre is expected to improve maternal health care in Rwinkwavu and the neighbourhood.

Eugene Kajuga Kayijuka, the head of Rwinkwavu Health Centre said that the new facility will greatly enhance maternal health care given that they were lacking one where every expectant mother could be transferred to the hospital against protocol.

Kayijuka observed that since its opening a month ago, the maternity had received about 76 women who gave birth, now an average of three women give birth daily at this health centre. He further revealed that almost all these women were sensitized

on family planning services.

The first woman who gave birth at the new maternity on the morning of April 6 was presented with different gifts as provided in the Rwandan culture and as a way to encourage more women to utilise health facilities and always give birth at the health centre.

Dr. Alex Coutinho, the Executive Director of Partners in Health said that the inaugurated facilities were to further improve healthcare in the area. He emphasized his organisation's dedication and partnership in Kayonza.

"Our partnership with Kayonza is forever," Dr Alex assured the residents adding that Partners in Health will support healthcare as long as it is required. He revealed that in the coming year they will put more efforts in maternal health, malaria and other diseases. They are to invest in building more health posts in the district and will also construct orthopaedic centre of excellency, a branch of medicine dealing with diseases of the bones and joints.

On his part, the Mayor appreciated the ministry for having chosen Kayonza District for the event. He listed the different activities that were carried out which also helped improve health in his district.

Mayor Murenzi said that during the week various medicaments were distributed, children were tested, child growth monitored, the public was sensitized on malaria and other diseases and planted tree.



Kayonza as a district with one of the highest malaria prevalence at 46 per cent, the Mayor said that it was a time to further emphasise and strategize the fight against malaria. The fight was taken to rice growers in wetlands, mining concessions, students and other populations.

Carried out every six months the Mother and Child health week provides an opportunity to mothers and their children where healthcare is brought to their localities. During the week an integrated package of preventive services is provided along with routine services at health facilities.

