

## AMOR MATERNITY UNIT DELIVERS ITS 1000<sup>TH</sup> BABY



The AMOR Maternity Unit opened in Nov 2009.

In 2008, AMOR foundation and its managing partner Lifeline Malawi entered into an agreement in which AMOR Foundation provided funding to enable Lifeline Malawi construct a modern maternity unit at Kasese in Dowa district of Malawi. The Maternity unit opened and delivered its first baby on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2009. On the 15 April 2009 the Founder of AMOR Foundation Ms Tasha de Vasconcelos also appointed EU ambassador, for humanitarian causes by President Jose Manuel Barroso opened the AMOR maternity.

In addition to constructing the Maternity unit, AMOR foundation has been paying for operating costs for the facility which include purchase of medicines and supplies, paying salaries for midwives and support staff, community outreach programme for maternal and child health services and other housekeeping expenses.

On 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2011, AMOR Maternity unit delivered its 1000<sup>th</sup> baby since it was opened in 2009. Sellina Edwin is the 1000<sup>th</sup> baby to be born at the Unit. She was born to the Edwin and Natalia Banda, a young couple who got married only last year. Sellina is their first born child. The couple couldn't hide their excitement when Lifeline Malawi staff visited them at their home two weeks after their daughter was born. *"We chose to have our baby at AMOR maternity because the facilities at the unit are excellent and the midwives are friendly"*. In fact Edwin and Natalia live at Kabwinja Village, some

21 Kilometers away from AMOR Maternity unit. Their regular Health Centre is only 7 Kilometers from their village but it lack most of the basic facilities. For example the health centres experiences persistent stock outs of medicines, there is no waiting room for pregnant women who have come to deliver and the maternity ward only operates with one midwife. This is no wonder why Edwin and Natalia braved to travel such a long distance to access better maternity services at AMOR Maternity unit.



Edwin and Natalia with their new baby Sellina in front of their House

Sellina was born at 1.00pm on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2011. Her birth weight was 2700g. The Midwife who conducted the delivery, Marion Chikuse told the reporter that Natalia was admitted with labour pains to the Maternity unit earlier on the day she delivered and labour progressed without difficulty.

Apart from Maternity services, the AMOR foundation supports delivery of other maternal health serves including access to modern family planning contraceptives, prenatal care and prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV (PMTCT) through counselling, HIV testing and provision of antiretroviral drugs to HIV positive pregnant women and their exposed babies as per recommended standard regimen.

Maternal health indicators in Malawi rank among the worst in the world. However, recent efforts and collaboration among Development partners, the Government and other stakeholders has seen some improvements in maternal and child health indicators. The most recent Malawi Demographic and Health Survey (MDHS 2010) has shown that Malawi Maternal mortality Ratio has improved from 894 to 675 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. Although 97% or more pregnant women receive prenatal care from trained health professional, the proportion of deliveries attended by skilled trained attendant are much lower, in some cases as low as 70%. Total Fertility Rate has gradually but slowly declined from 6.7 in 1992, 6.3 in 2000, 6.0 in 2004 and recently to 5.7 in 2010. The statics are worse for people in rural areas. AMOR Foundation are making a significant contribution, especially in rural areas to help Malawi attain her targets for the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.