

Supermodel Naomi Campbell weeps



● Touched on seeing mothers and their newborns crowded in Temeke hospital maternity wing

By Khalfan Said

Visiting Global Ambassador of White Ribbon Alliance (WRA) Naomi Campbell yesterday shed tears after witnessing mothers with their newly born babies sharing beds or sleeping on the floor at Temeke hospital.

The British supermodel was visiting the hospital in Dar es Salaam as part of her charity work in the country for the Alliance.

Naomi was emotionally overwhelmed after witnessing three women, who had just delivered sharing a small bed.

A number of others lay on the floor and on benches with their newly born babies.

Those who were yet to deliver sat on the floor due to acute shortage of beds and wards.

"This is unbelievable," was the phrase she kept uttering as she surveyed the tiny, congested maternity ward.

The model retreated to a nearby tree and leaning on it wept silently. She was consoled by colleagues.

"We appeal to the government to provide us with more beds; we are overcrowded," said one of the mothers who sat on one of the beds with her baby and two colleagues.

One of the midwives who pleaded anonymity said: "The place is too small for us, it needs expansion. I delivered a baby on the floor because we don't have beds. The authorities are aware of the situation," she said.

According to the acting medical in-charge of the hospital, Dr. Gilbert Buberwa, there has been a sharp

increase of in-patients which the hospital has been unable to handle.

"The facilities we have can no longer cater for all these people, that is why this is happening. We really have to do something about this as a nation," said a nurse who would not give her name.

"This is unacceptable, it's very unfair. How can people be treated like these?", asked Stara Thomas also in tears. The local singer was accompanying Naomi Campbell at the hospital.

Later on the visiting model distributed khangas to mothers and presented bouquets of flowers to two wards.

Sources told The Guardian that, as the Global Ambassador for WRA, she was in the country for her Fashion for Relief (FFR), a charity catwalk event to raise funds for an awareness campaign for safe pregnancy and childbirth.

Meanwhile, Correspondent Hellen Nachilongo reports that Tanzania is unlikely to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 unless major attention and investment is channelled to reducing under-five and maternal mortality.

Health and Social Welfare minister, Prof David

Continued on Page 2

Combo photo of British supermodel Naomi Campbell, who is Global Ambassador for White Ribbon Alliance, weeping after visiting a congested maternity ward (L) at Temeke District Hospital in Dar es Salaam yesterday. (Photo: Khalfan Said)

Supermodel Naomi Campbell weeps

From page 1

Mwakyusa made the remarks in Dar es Salaam yesterday when receiving ambulances, vehicle, motorbikes, maternal and newborn health equipment worth 1.3bn/-.

He said improving maternal, newborn health and care for pregnant women is among priority areas calling for support from everyone.

According to the minister the ambulances and communication equipment will improve referrals in

Mbeya, Lindi, Kagera and Kigoma regions and will have an impact on maternal and newborn care.

"This system will save the precious lives of thousands of children every year from death because of lack of such equipment," he said.

"The support we are receiving will strengthen the tumour control programme and other neglected tropical diseases which continue to be a serious challenge in the country," Prof mwakyusa said.

He thanked the European Union (EU) and World Health Organisation (WHO) for the support and called on other partners and stakeholders to follow their example.

For his part the UN Resident Coordinator Alberic Kacou said they decided to donate the equipment because the Sub Saharan African countries including Tanzania suffered from high maternal and child mortality rates.

The WHO Country Representative Jean Tapko said Tanzania was among

eight countries benefiting from the organisation's assistance, calling for strengthening of the national capacity to face the challenge.

"Pregnant women and children are supposed to be given priority care, including protection from malaria in the country," he said.

This is a second phase project which will run from 2009/10. The EC and WHO programmes are being implemented in Coast, Lindi and Rukwa regions as well as Zanzibar.