



Update regarding 2016

To HDI's friends and supporters

December 18, 2016

We rejoiced when 300 000 tablets of misoprostol landed in Niger Sunday Dec. 4 and were released from Customs the 7th - no bribes. Sincere thanks to The Kavli Trust, Izumi Foundation, Rotary, and all of you who make that and all else reported here possible! Results are promising so far in the initiative to prevent excessive bleeding and give Three-Step Treatment when it occurs. Among 86 761 births in health centers and hospitals through November, 2.32% (2 012 women) bled too much (over 500 ml) vs the expected 18%, while 11.5% usually bleed more than 1 000 ml if nothing is done to prevent and treat it. Bleeding took the life of 14.6% of those who died, compared with the expected 25%-35%.

Kavli Trust support for obstetric fistula prevention in Niger includes funding for visits to other countries to share information, so as many women as possible can benefit from this work.

HDI visited Malawi in December 2015, Nigeria in February and Bangladesh in March this year. One state in Nigeria decided to do as Niger is doing, using its own funds! HDI is helping with planning, including the Baseline Survey against which to measure impact. This Nigerian state wishes to prevent obstetric fistula, to halve bleeding deaths, and reduce other "easily preventable" maternal deaths.

Niger has now achieved a 93% reduction of birth-related mortality from all causes in its pilot area the size of Rhode Island. In the entire project area 120 sq. mi. bigger than Rhode Island and Delaware combined, maternal deaths are down 88% in the 12-months ended June 30th compared with Year 1.

116 652 have given birth since last time anyone died of obstructed labor, previously reported to be the most common cause of maternal deaths as it is in parts of Afghanistan. Among 110 017 August 2009 - November 2016 births, one woman got a fistula in this area which was the main source of patients for teams of American surgeons who visited Niger 4 times a year to repair obstetric fistulas.

Many of you know HDI was started to help eradicate Guinea Worm Disease which brought degrading forms of suffering and great economic loss to 3.5 million in 22 countries in the mid-1980s. This year it has afflicted 22 individuals across 3 countries through October. Carter Center is the leader, while HDI in the US and Norway is the other NGO that has been working to eradicate this throughout the past 26 years.

HDI has from 2009 helped provide over 45 million doses of medication (3 drugs in 5 combinations) against "Neglected Tropical Diseases" in Togo. That work is fully funded by the American people through USAID, while everything else HDI does is possible thanks to donations from foundations and individuals, for which we are enormously grateful!

Thank you ever so much for your help, support, and encouragement in 2016 and for the future!!!


Dr. Anders Seim, Executive Director, HDI