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PRESS RELEASE

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U.S. GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS SAVING MOTHERS, GIVING LIFE (SMGL) TEAM BUILDING MEETING IN CROSS RIVER

Abuja – Last week Saving Mothers, Giving Life (SMGL) Initiative concluded a productive week-long, global team-building meeting, sponsored by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Calabar, Cross River State.

The five-year, \$18 million USG initiative is a public-private partnership that addresses the three primary delays associated with maternal and newborn health: the delay in seeking services, the delay in reaching care, and the delay in receiving high-quality care at a health facility. In 2014, Nigeria became the third country to adopt the initiative after successes were reported by the program in Uganda and Zambia.

The meeting, organized by the Cross River State Government in partnership with USAID, brought together national and regional partners and key stakeholders to share updates on the progress of activities in Uganda and Zambia and guide inputs on expansion in Nigeria. The U.S. Consul General, John Bray, USAID Acting Mission Director, Aler Grubbs, and the Governor of Cross River State, Prof. Benedict Ayade participated in the opening ceremony. SMGL team members worked together to provide solutions to problems, share lessons learned, and lay the groundwork for increased collaboration and technical assistance.

“Health challenges in Nigeria are not always a result of limited access to facilities, but access to enough skilled professionals and quality services within those facilities. Saving Mothers, Giving Life Initiative is helping reduce both maternal and neonatal mortality. We will continue to support and encourage the Cross River State Government in its efforts as we look to expanding the program into other areas in Nigeria,” said Consul General, John Bray.

A woman dying from pregnancy and childbirth related complications is a major challenge in Africa and reducing maternal mortality has become a global priority.

In Nigeria, the probability of a maternal death occurring is 1:13. In partnership with host countries and non-governmental organizations, the U.S. Government has been working to not only reduce, but also end preventable maternal and newborn deaths globally.

About USAID: USAID partners to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies while advancing our security and prosperity. In its partnership with Nigeria, the United States strengthens social stability through social services, supports transparent and accountable governance, promotes a more market-led economy, and enhances Nigeria's capacity as a responsible regional and trade partner.

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