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Philips launches tablet sized ultrasound in Kenya

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Singapore: Royal Philips has launched a mobile ultrasound system VISIQ, a tablet sized device, in Kenya for remote monitoring of expectant mothers.

According to the Philips 'Fabric of Africa trends' report, women in Africa are at significant risk of premature death, with particular high mortality rates recorded in pregnancy. Women in semi-urban and rural areas across Kenya often die due to preventable complications during child birth as they have no access to ultrasound screenings to detect critical conditions. The Kenyan Ministry of Health is aiming to reduce child mortality rates, improve maternal health, meet the UN Millennium Development Goals and revitalize Kenya's health infrastructure.

VISIQ is a portable device and would be available for expectant mothers who do not have access to healthcare technologies in remote areas.

"It makes me proud to see how Philips' cost-effective, easy to operate ultrasound systems can make a real difference in Africa. It shows that meaningful innovations can contribute to saving people's lives," said Mr Peter van de Ven, vice president and general manager, Philips Healthcare Africa. "Improving access to healthcare is high on the Philips agenda in Africa and we are very eager to contribute to the Vision2030 goals of the Kenyan government to improve access to quality care for all Kenyans. VISIQ allows clinicians to provide ultrasound in a variety of clinical environments, offering soon-to-be parents the comfort of having regular pre-natal check-ups."

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), diagnostic imaging is crucial in healthcare. Many countries in the developing world cannot afford to purchase expensive high technology imaging equipment despite the urgent need to use imaging resources in these countries. "There is a growing global focus on cost effective systems, smaller footprints and imaging equipment which is both easier to operate but has improved clinical functionality. The Philips VISIQ has been specifically designed with this in mind and embodies Philips' image quality legacy, driving innovation and efficiency in ultrasound imaging. VISIQ provides high quality images for quick and reliable diagnostic decision making," summarized Mr Peter van de Ven.

According to the company, small outpatient clinics or community centers would be able to carry out comprehensive obstetric and abdominal scans themselves rather than referring patients to regional ultrasound centers. This enables fast diagnosis and treatment. VISIQ is designed much smaller than a traditional ultrasound machine with reduced energy consumption so as to increase its accessibility in community care programs in remote rural areas for screening, triage and fetal well-being scans.