

Are Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Commitments reaching the intended frontline?

Q1 Samasha Newsletter
April 2026

While priorities for women’s and newborn health continue to grow, the real test is whether they translate into services at the point of care. Closing the gap between commitments and delivery remains the defining challenge.



Message from the Executive Director

Throughout the region, health for women and newborn remains a priority—but sustaining progress is becoming increasingly complex. While priorities continue to grow, the real test lies in whether they are reaching the frontline and being translated into services at the point of care.

At Samasha, our focus remains on strengthening accountability and partnerships that drive real results.

In this edition, we reflect on key moments and share how collective action is helping close the gap between commitment and service delivery—ensuring every woman and newborn receives the services

Cornelia Asiimwe
Executive Director



From Dashboards to Delivery: Making Digital Health Work for Mothers and Newborns



39th African Union Summit
– Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



“Digital technologies must go beyond generating data — they must drive accountability and real improvements in care.”- Dr. Hana Balkhy

Closing the gap between national priorities and actual service delivery remains one of the biggest challenges in this space. We already know what works—the question is how we make it happen, and this is where digital tools come in. When used well, these tools turn data into practical steps, improve oversight, and ensure that mothers and newborns receive quality services when it matters most.

At the CARMMA Plus High-level side event on Digital Health technologies for RMNCAH, leaders reaffirmed the need to use data-driven approaches to advance the Maputo Plan of Action and CARMMA Plus and reinforce tracking systems across the member states.

Digital technologies have the potential to support frontline workers, improve tracking, and enhance decision-making. For Samasha, this reinforces a key priority: using data and CSO-led tracking frameworks like the Motion Tracker Approach to push for collective follow-through, improve oversight, and close the gap between what we know and what is delivered.

We Risk Losing Hard-Won Gains Without Urgent Action



MNH Policy & Financing Dialogue – Nairobi

“Progress is evident but sustaining it is becoming increasingly complex as financing declines and demand rises.”
- Eric Jemera

Sustaining progress in maternal health requires more than just priorities and strong political will. It will also require renewed investment, stronger oversight, and policy choices that match the scale of need. The focus now must shift to what works in practice—approaches that deliver results where they matter the most.

Across project countries, the path ahead is becoming clearer. Recent gains are under threat amidst declining resources and increasing demand from a growing young population that continues to reshape challenges. How we respond now will determine whether these gains continue or stall.

In response, Samasha, in collaboration with SASA! partners, convened policymakers and advocates to create space for honest, solution-driven discussions. These conversations are sharpening priorities around domestic financing, accountability, and policy follow-through. They are also pointing to clear opportunities to increase investments and reinforce monitoring systems.

The priority is how to keep the pace going—turning dialogue into sustained implementation and ensuring that the right decisions and priorities translate into real improvements in services for mothers and newborns.

From Dialogue to Delivery: Turning Lessons into Results



Peer Learning Session – Nairobi

Maintaining progress towards the SDG health targets will require more than shared learning. It will depend on how effectively insights are translated into coordinated implementation that improves service delivery where it matters most.

In many countries, health systems continue to face persistent challenges—from workforce gaps and commodity stock-outs to weak referral systems—affecting the consistency and quality of services.

During the International Maternal and Newborn Health Conference 2026 in Nairobi, we convened civil society, government, and strategic partners for a peer learning session. The discussion drew on key lessons from partners across Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and Senegal—highlighting shared challenges and practical solutions from implementation.

A clear opportunity emerged: stronger coordination by civil society, deeper collaboration with governments, and more intentional use of media can help unlock key barriers.

The emphasis now is on turning these insights into implementation—aligning efforts and scaling what works to deliver real improvements in services for every woman and newborn.

“Real progress depends on how well we align partnerships, amplify voices, and use every platform—from policy spaces to media—to drive action.”

Key Insights



As funding tightens, the focus must shift to what delivers results. Progress is only sustained when learning evolves into implementation. Over the next six months, we will deepen our work with partners in Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, and Senegal.

Working alongside coalitions, CSOs, champions, and advocates, we will continue to drive evidence-informed advocacy grounded in real experiences, while intentionally leveraging media and positioning storytelling to elevate key issues. This will help shape public dialogue and accelerate implementation.

Appreciation

This work would not be possible without the strength of collaboration. We extend our appreciation to our partners who continue to drive accountability and progress for women and newborns through the region.

