

## Firm moves in to counter waterborne diseases

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With the high death rate of infants in the country, a new water filter programme has kicked off to reduce water related diseases. The Lifestraw Family water filters programme is set to start in Western and Nyanza province which contribute to the highest rate of under five year deaths nationwide making to 2 out of every 5 live births.

Speaking at the launch in Kakamega, Vestergaard Frandsen, CEO of Vestergaard Frandsen company said the program is targeted to benefit 900,000 families (4 million residents) of Western Province to enable them have quick access to safe drinking water at home.

The door to door campaign program is the first ever in Africa with the aim of providing safe water to the residents for the next 10 years. "Each gadget will deliver at least 18,000 liters of U.S. EPA-quality drinking water, enough to supply a family of four with safe drinking water for at least three years," held Mr. Frandsen.

He adds that with the gadget in place, deforestation will be on the decrease as the introduction of the lifestraw carbon for water will directly impact the use of firewood.

"The beneficial impact to the climate change will be great. That is green house emission will decline rapidly," said the CEO of Vestergaard Frandsen company.

Dr. Quinto Ahindikha, the Provincial Director in the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (PDMOHS) in Western Province said that in every 1,000 live births of children under five years of age, 121 lives are lost to water related illnesses.

Diseases like malaria, typhoid, and diarrhea are common in Western Kenya and have been claiming many lives of children under five.

According to Dr. Ahindikha, diarrhea alone causes three out of every 10 live births due to unsafe water in the province, adding that eight out of every 10 cases in Kenyan hospitals can be prevented at home.

According to statistics, nearly 1.2 billion people in the world lack access to safe drinking water and 60 percent of these lives are in sub- Sahara Africa and Asia. Whereas World Health Organization reveals that more than 3.5 million people die each year from water related illnesses and more of these deaths are in children aged below 0- 14 years.

"The impact of diarrhea diseases on children is estimated to be greater than the combination of HIV and AIDS, TB and Malaria," held Dr. Ahindikha.