

## USAID/Madagascar Mission Director visits the Boeny region

**Mahajanga, January 24 2012** – USAID/Madagascar Mission Director, Mr. Rudolph Thomas, visited the rural communes of Ambolomoty, Antanambao-Andranolava, and Boanamaray, in the Boeny region, on January 23-24 to observe and appreciate the support that USAID/Madagascar and USAID/SanteNet2 are providing in the field of health in this region. Mr. Thomas visited the USAID-funded and SanteNet2-implemented emergency obstetrical and neonatal care program; this program helps identify danger signs in pregnant women and newborn children and has put in place a medical evacuation system using local means that started in 2010.

“Results are outstanding,” Robert Kolesar, Senior Health Advisor at USAID/Madagascar noted. “More than 80% of pregnant women in the area are able to identify danger signs during pregnancy or in newborn children. Half of participating villages have started a solidarity fund that pays for the evacuation of women and babies in danger.

A long way from the office in Antananarivo, Rudolph Thomas could meet with Marie-Ange, a young mother who suffered obstetrical complications during her pregnancy and whose life was saved thanks to the help of her community—a small village in the Boeny region.

Mr. Thomas appreciated the efforts that the villages have made, and spent time in extensive discussions with community health workers and local social development committee members, commending their involvement and encouraging them to continue.

The SanteNet2 project is a major component of USAID’s assistance in the health sector in Madagascar. Apart from the mother and child health aspect, SanteNet2 supports community health workers in 6,000 villages that provide services in malaria control, family planning, water and sanitation, fight against sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. The project works in the regions of Amoron’i Mania, Analamanga, Analanjirifo, Androy, Atsimo Atsinanana, Boeny, Atsinanana, Haute Matsiatra, Itasy, SAVVA, Vakinankaratra, and Vatovavy Fitovinany. The USAID/SanteNet project began in August 2008 and will end in July 2013. Its total budget, entirely funded by USAID/Madagascar, is more than \$31 million.

