

MEDIA RELEASE

JAPAN DONATES US\$ 4.7 FOR MALARIA CONTROL AND POLIO ERADICATION IN ETHIOPIA AS FLOODS THREATEN OUTBREAKS OF MALARIA

Addis Ababa - 24 August 2006: UNICEF today received US\$ 4.7 from the Government of Japan for malaria control and polio eradication in Ethiopia.

“This contribution is particularly timely as we brace ourselves for possible outbreaks of malaria in flood-affected areas of Ethiopia,” said Bjorn Ljungqvist, UNICEF Representative to Ethiopia.

Pools of water that remain after the floods create ideal breeding grounds for malaria transmitting mosquitoes.

Averting potential malaria outbreaks, particularly in flood affected areas is therefore an immediate priority.

Stagnant waters also contribute to poor sanitation and can result in outbreaks of disease adding to mortality rates.

“I am pleased to report that as a result of our work with the Government of Ethiopia in the roll back malaria campaign and with the generous support of donors like the Government of Japan we have been able to respond to flood-related emergency needs for Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs) in South Omo region by tapping into pre-positioned supplies,” said Ljungqvist.

“30,000 ITNs, a proven prevention mechanism against malaria transmission, are now being dispatched to the flood affected communities of South Omo.”

Ethiopia has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world – 871 per 100,000 DHS 2000 live births, and one of the highest rates of under five child mortality - 123 per 1000 DHS 2005 live births.

Today’s Japanese contribution will also contribute to reaching the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of decreasing under-five mortality rates by 50% by 2015 through reducing malaria deaths by two-thirds.

This will be done by supporting the Ethiopian government’s goal of universal coverage with Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs) among 50 million people affected by malaria by 2007.

This is the largest anti-malaria programme in Ethiopia's history and one of the largest in the world.

This Japanese contribution of 300,000 ITNs will bring malaria protection to nearly one million people.

2.5 million out of this 4.7 million dollar contribution will also be used to help wipe out polio.

Two rounds of national supplementation immunizations are planned for November and December 2006. About fifteen million (15,000,000) children are expected to benefit from each of the campaigns. 38,000,000 doses of polio vaccine and about 17.9 million US Dollars will be needed for each of the two rounds.

Polio immunization campaigns will continue in 2007 and 2008 as part of the massive effort to contain the advance of polio transmission in Ethiopia following the cross-border transmission of December 2004.

“Japan has once again proven to be one of the best, persistent and consistent donors that follows through on commitments,” said Ljungqvist. “UNICEF once again applauds the Government of Japan for this generous contribution which will make a critical difference in the lives of Ethiopia’s most vulnerable women and children.”

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