

MEDIA RELEASE

EU DONATION SAVES LIVES IN ETHIOPIAN CHILD SURVIVAL CAMPAIGN

ADDIS ABABA, 13 February 2007: A dramatic coverage increase for a UNICEF- backed Child Survival initiative has been achieved in Ethiopia. This was made possible through a donation of €7,600,000 from the European Union.

The money funded The Enhanced Outreach Strategy (EOS) programme – a ground-breaking project which has provided life-saving interventions for Tigray, Oromia, Amhara and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR). Between October and December 2006, over 5.3 million children between six and 59 months old received vitamin-A supplementation and nearly five million received de-worming treatment.

Additionally, over 5.2 million were screened for malnutrition and referred to WFP's Targeted Supplementary Food Programme. More than 840,000 pregnant and lactating women also received the same treatment.

UNICEF Ethiopia's Project Officer for Nutrition Sylvie Chamois said: "We are truly grateful for the EU's support. It is only through the continued support from our partners that UNICEF can provide vital materials and expertise to help millions of children grow into healthy adults.

"Through contributions, UNICEF provides items like micronutrients, deworming tablets, therapeutic products as well as logistics and technical expertise. We aim to assist the Ethiopian Ministry of Health provide a basic Child Survival Package to all Ethiopian children."

Thanks to the EU donation, two regional Emergency Nutrition Coordination Units (ENCUs) were also revitalised in the Tigray and SNNP regions. These facilities will monitor nutrition trends, and coordinate emergency responses when and where they are needed.

Two new regional ENCUs are planned for Amhara and Oromia regions, and should be ready for business by spring 2007. Further EOS interventions are also scheduled between May and June in all four regions.

By the end of June, the second EOS round will be delivered to more than 5.9 million children and 1.2 million pregnant and lactating women in the four regions supported by the EU.

EOS is a national programme aiming to cover six basic low cost, high-impact child survival interventions for women and children.

Around 40 per cent of Ethiopia's population currently has no access to vital health services. In many other parts of the country, access is at best patchy. As a result, Ethiopia has some of the world's serious problems of child mortality and morbidity in the world.

UNICEF provides vaccination, micronutrient supplementation, deworming, malaria nets and malnutrition screening to more than 6.7 million children and 1.6 million women every six months through EOS. This is the biggest project of its kind.

UNICEF's partnership with WFP is also unique compared with other African countries and a good example of UN Reform in practice. EOS is a key strategy in reaching the Millennium Development Goals in Ethiopia.

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