

MEDIA RELEASE

Steady Progress Being Made in Achieving the Millennium Development Goals for Ethiopia's Children

ADDIS ABABA/GENEVA/NEW YORK, 24 February – UNICEF Executive Director Ann M. Veneman today highlighted progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Ethiopia and expressed hope for the future of the country's children.

“Child mortality in Ethiopia has declined by 40 per cent in the last 15 years,” said Veneman. “We must build upon these gains to further improve the lives of children.”

Under-five mortality rates in Ethiopia have steadily declined to 123 out of every 1,000 live births. This is down from peak levels in 1990 when 204 out of every 1,000 children died before the age of five.

Yet with close to 400,000 children under-five still dying from preventable causes each year, Ethiopia continues to have one of the highest child mortality rates in the world.

Veneman's trip to Ethiopia, which included visits to a commercial flower farm and a coffee cooperative, has underscored the importance of developing the national economy in order to achieve sustainable improvements in the conditions of Ethiopia's children.

While in Ethiopia, Veneman also participated in the opening of the Plumpy'Nut factory in Addis Ababa, which is producing the ready-to-use-therapeutic food.

“Therapeutic foods such as Plumpy'Nut will help save the lives of severely malnourished children and help fight malnutrition across the country,” said Veneman.

Effective partnerships among Government, affected communities, donors and UN agencies have also been a major factor in this success. The Enhanced Outreach Strategy for child survival – the largest ever collaboration between the UN and the Government of Ethiopia – and the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) campaign, are pillars of this success.

“Partnerships are essential for Ethiopia's success against the challenges of poverty, disease, nutrition, protection and education,” said Veneman. “We must act with urgency and build on our achievements so that Ethiopia's children not only survive, but thrive.”

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