

MEDIA RELEASE

PRIVATE JAPANESE DONOR, Mr. KIHACHIRO ONITSUKA HONORS MEMORY OF ATHLETE ABEBE BIKILA WITH \$1 MILLION DONATION FOR NUTRITION PROGRAMMES IN ETHIOPIA

ADDIS ABABA, 2 October 2008 – UNICEF Ethiopia received a donation of \$1 million dollars from late Mr. Kihachiro Onitsuka, a private Japanese donor and founder of the multinational sporting goods company. The fund was received through the Japanese National Committee for UNICEF to support the Community-Based Nutrition Programme in Tigray and Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region. (SNNPR)

Mr. Onitsuka, made the contribution in honor of the renowned Ethiopian Athlete, Abebe Bikila, who won and broke the Marathon world record at the Olympics in Rome in 1960 and Tokyo in 1964 successively. Abebe also participated in the Mainichi Marathon in Japan and won both in 1961 and 1965.

The family of the late Mr. Onitsuka recalled their father's special relationship with Athlete Bikila and his concern for the wellbeing of Ethiopian children. When Abebe ran the Mainichi Marathon in Japan, Mr. Onitsuka visited him in his hotel and measured his feet because he was impressed by Abebe's victory running barefoot in the Rome Olympics .

We thank the late Mr. Onitsuka and his family for their generosity," said Bjorn Ljungqvist, UNICEF Representative to Ethiopia. "This contribution will help children to grow healthier and strengthen communities' capacity to prevent child malnutrition in future generations."

The Ambassador of Japan to Ethiopia, H.E. Mr. Kinichi Komano also appreciated the generous donation from Mr. Onitsuka as the wellbeing of children is vital for the future of a nation. The donation also demonstrated the commitment of the people of Japan towards the development of Ethiopia and showed the strong ties between the peoples of the two countries, the Ambassador said.

The funds will provide weighing scales and Family Health Cards used to monitor the development and growth of children. It will also support the training of health workers and members of the community to improve child care practices and prevent malnutrition.

The Community-Based Nutrition Programme (CBN) has been initiated by the Ministry of Health, with support from UNICEF and other partners, to tackle and prevent malnutrition at family and community levels.

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