

## STATEMENT

15 April 2009

### **Statement by Ted Chaiban, UNICEF Representative to Ethiopia at the Press Conference announcing the \$6 Million Government of Japan Donation to UNICEF for Children Affected by Food Price Increases**

H.E. Mr. Kinichi Komano, Ambassador of Japan  
Members of the media  
Colleagues, friends,

Thank you for joining us this afternoon as we announce this contribution from the Government of Japan to Ethiopia for children made vulnerable by rising food prices.

Your Excellency, on behalf of UNICEF and the children and families that we reach through our programme of cooperation with the Government of Ethiopia, allow me to say *Ameseginalehu*, thank you.

The Government of Japan has been a steadfast supporter of immunization and malaria control programmes in Ethiopia. Since 2004, UNICEF has received 14 million USD from Japan for infectious disease interventions implemented with the Ethiopian Ministry of Health.

Today's donation of 6 million dollars, one of the largest single contributions to UNICEF Ethiopia, continues this reliable support that we have enjoyed from the Japanese Government.

Japan's support is especially impressive as it comes during this time of global economic stress which is also affecting the Japanese economy.

The Ethiopian Ministry of Health, with the support of UNICEF and partners like the Government of Japan, has made significant progress towards the universal provision of basic preventative health care throughout Ethiopia. Major childhood killers like malaria and measles have been tamed. The roll-out of the Health Extension Programme enables easy access to immunization, child health and nutrition services, sanitation interventions, reproductive health care including neo-natal care and safe delivery options at the village level, all of which are revolutionizing child care and saving children's lives. The under-five mortality

rate has gone down more than 40 per cent since 1990 – it is indeed a major achievement.

The global economic crisis need to be confronted to maintain the child survival gains achieved in Ethiopia over the past decade.

Millions of Ethiopians depend on cash and food for work programmes for their daily survival, and millions more require emergency food assistance.

The cost of food has skyrocketed throughout the world, including Ethiopia. The purchasing power of vulnerable families has been compromised, and this means making difficult choices including cutting back on diet, and diminished capacity to access basic services including education and health care.

Children's rights to adequate nutrition, health and education should not, however, fall prey to the global recession.

This support from the Government of Japan will help the country address the risks and ensure that it consolidates and sustains its achievements on behalf of Ethiopia's children.

Specifically, this donation will enable the roll-out of the community based nutrition programme to 35 food insecure districts of Oromia and Amhara regions, benefiting close to 900,000 children.

Cash transfers, revolving loans and training on managing a small business will be made available to 1680 of the most vulnerable families.

This donation will also support the expansion of the health extension programme to some of the poorer communities in outlying areas of Addis Ababa thereby providing basic health care to more than half a million children.

UNICEF applauds the Government of Ethiopia for its commitment to improving child health and nutrition, and the Government of Japan for its continued support to the development of Ethiopia.