

PRESS RELEASE

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ENHANCED OUTREACH STRATEGY FOR CHILD SURVIVAL SUCCESSFULLY TARGETS CHILDREN AND MOTHERS AT GRASSROOTS LEVEL IN SNNPR

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia – UNICEF Representative Bjorn Ljungqvist recently visited Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) to see the achievements on the ground of the Enhanced Outreach Strategy for Child Survival Intervention (EOS/CSI) promoting preventive health care for mothers and children at the community level.

The EOS/CSI is a three-year project being implemented by the SNNPR Health Bureau and is meant as a transition strategy to the Government's Health Extension Package (HEP). The target population is 1.6 million children between the ages of six to 59 months in the 54 most food insecure *woredas* spread over 11 zones of the region.

"The EOS campaign is ensuring that mothers and their children receive the basic preventive health care that is their fundamental human right," said Ljungqvist when he visited several remote EOS sites in the Hamer region of SNNPR last month. "By taking health care to the grassroots level, working with community volunteers, we ensure that every mother and child gets the care they need and deserve, ensuring that preventable diseases are treated before they become more serious and endanger children's survival."

The EOS/CSI stems from the Child Survival Partnership, an alliance between the Government, UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to improve child health and save children dying of preventable causes. Ethiopia was selected as the first target country of the Partnership because of the Government's commitment to child survival. While Ethiopia has made great strides in improving child health, much of its rural population has limited access to modern health-care services.

The EOS/CSI was piloted in 14 *woredas* in Sidama and Wollaita zones. In the first phase of the project from 26 June-7 July, 541,763 children in 22 *woredas* were covered. Ninety-five per cent of children 6-59 months received Vitamin A supplementation; 87 per cent of children between 1-5 years received deworming; 97 per cent of children under one year of age were vaccinated against measles; 94 per cent of children 6-59 months were screened for acute malnutrition and the nutrition status of 44 percent of pregnant and lactating mothers was screened with 19 per cent of them found to be eligible for supplementary feeding.

Phase Two of the project, adding 14 additional *woredas*, began 3 August. Phase Three, adding an additional 4 *woredas*, started 9 August.

The Child Survival Partnership was formed globally to prevent two-thirds of the 10 million child deaths that occur annually, which could be treated with existing knowledge and known remedies for diarrheal disease, malaria, pneumonia and neonatal causes. Malnutrition is a common underlying cause in 60 percent of these deaths. Ninety per cent of deaths occur in 42 countries, and over 50 per cent of deaths occur in just six countries, with Ethiopia having the sixth largest number of annual child deaths - approximately 470,000.