

PRESS RELEASE

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DCI DONATES \$1.1 MILLION TO UNICEF FOR WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION AND HYGIENE EDUCATION

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia – Development Cooperation of Ireland (DCI) has donated \$1.1 million to UNICEF for water supply, sanitation and hygiene education in Guraghe, Silite and Sidama zones in the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR).

The money will be used over a one-year period to assist 67,935 beneficiaries in the region and is an extension of on-going programme between DCI and UNICEF in SNNPR. A portion of the donation will be used to improve rural water supply, including the installation of pumps and generators, tools and spare parts and social mobilisation and community training.

In addition to the contribution from DCI, the Government of Ethiopia will contribute staff salaries and the use of facilities, such as stores and offices, to make the project possible. Staff time and technical assistance will be donated by UNICEF. The beneficiaries will provide labour and assist the construction crews.

“UNICEF is profoundly grateful for the generous contribution made by DCI, which will make safe water and sanitation a reality for the people in these zones,” said UNICEF Representative Bjorn Ljungqvist. “This programme unites the efforts and resources of the Government, UNICEF, the Donor and the local community and serves as a model for sustainable development in the region.”

The implementing agencies for the programme are the Water Resource Bureau, the Water Works Construction Enterprise, private drilling companies and the Regional Health Bureau.

DCI has been actively involved in the water and sanitation sector in Ethiopia since the beginning of its programming activities in 1994. This support has primarily been undertaken in the area-based programmes in Silite, Sidama and Guraghe. Large varieties of water supply systems and technologies have been supported and are in use in various communities throughout these areas. Access to clean potable water has increased as a result of these interventions. However, water coverage levels remain low and the impact of the recent drought has put increased demands on already limited resources.

“The recent drought had a devastating impact for many of those living in SNNPR,” said Pauline Conway, Charge d’Affaires at the Irish Embassy. “DCI is committed to continue our work with the Ethiopian Government and UNICEF to improve water and sanitation

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coverage in the region. Only by involving communities in such projects can we ensure sustainability over the long-term.”

After consultations with DCI, the Regional Water Bureau and the Zonal Water Desks, UNICEF undertook an assessment of 17 deep well sites in the region, which had been drilled but the accompanying schemes were not completed. Sixteen of the 17 water sources required some form of support to make them operational and provide clean, safe water to the local population. Such an intervention would ensure that the investment already made by DCI in the drilling of the deep wells would be maximized and that vulnerable communities in these drought-prone areas would get much needed water.

While access to safe water is undoubtedly a priority and will decrease the high occurrence of water-borne diseases in the target communities, sanitation and hygiene education is also a priority. For this reason, sanitation and hygiene education has been incorporated into the development of the water supply schemes. This component shall see the provision of latrines at 14 primary schools and 14 health posts in the target communities with appropriate hygiene education targeting water and sanitation behavioural change.

In order to ensure the long term maintenance and repair of the water and sanitation facilities provided, WASHE committees shall be trained in the management and maintenance of the water schemes and school latrines. Pump caretakers shall also be trained and essentials spares provided for all schemes. Tool kits shall be procured and provided to each *Woreda* (district) so as to ensure on-going operation and maintenance of the facilities provided.