

## PRESS RELEASE

### **GIRLS EDUCATION AND CLUSTER EDUCATION SCHOOL PROGRAMME RECEIVES LARGE NEW SUPPORT FROM THE NETHERLANDS GOVERNMENT**

Girls education activities in 7 regions of Ethiopia will receive \$US 12 Million in support over 3 years from the Netherlands Government after an agreement was signed between UNICEF and the Royal Netherlands Government Embassy in Addis Ababa today.

The 7 regions are Afar, Somali, Amhara, Oromia, Benishangul, Gambella and SNNPR.

In signing the agreement, the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Ethiopia, H.E. ALPHONS HENNEKENS, highlighted the commitment of the Netherlands Government to support efforts in increasing access to good quality education for girls. He also indicated the importance of improvement of the Cluster Schools system as these are very important in supporting teachers.

Mr. Bjorn Ljungqvist, UNICEF's Representative in Ethiopia said "We are most grateful for this generous support from the NETHERLANDS Government. This support will go a long way to improving significantly the access to schooling by girls. There is global evidence showing that one of the very best social investments any country can make is in Girls' education. By educating girls you benefit all levels of society and can also prevent many of the social abuses suffered by girls and women today."

The 3 years project will not only increase access to education but also work to improve the facilities of schools in those regions, Strengthen teacher preparedness and effectiveness and upgrade school management capacities. The project will develop model girl and child friendly schools, support PTA development and also Alternative Basic Education (ABE) facilities to address the special social conditions of people living in the designated areas.

The project supports the national commitment to Education as part of the national development and poverty reduction strategy.

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