

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **GUYANESE ASKED TO “PUT CHILDREN FIRST” AS CHILDREN TAKE TO THE STREETS DURING MASHRAMANI CELEBRATIONS 2007.**

**Georgetown, Guyana UNICEF, February 19, 2007** - as Guyanese prepare to celebrate the annual festival of Mashramani on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, all sectors were asked to “Put Children First” by the children themselves when they took to the streets last Saturday 17<sup>th</sup>, in the Children’s Costume Parade, one of the largest such occasions in recent years.

The Children’s Costume Parade is a spectacular colourful event that showcases the talent and creativity of young people as Guyana celebrates its Republican status every year, carnival style.

Sponsored by UNICEF (Guyana) under the theme “**Visions of a Bright Future – Put Children First**” over 100 children from seven primary schools in the city, jumped and danced to popular local calypso, and with much energy displayed eye catching costumes with messages of love and hope.

According to 9 year old Keisha, who briefly stopped to give us a comment. “*I was happy when UNICEF chose our school to be in this parade, ‘cause children need love and protection... that’s why I am in this section which says “Love and Protect us”... we having fun but I hope the people on the streets seeing the messages and could stop treating children bad.*” With that she swiftly ran off to rejoin her peers in spreading message to all Guyanese. Other segments portrayed in the costume band included Keep Us Healthy, Let Us Play and Educate Us.

As an extension of the children’s participation in “Mash 2007”, the topics in the various segments will form the basis for national debating and essay competitions within the primary levels scheduled to begin early March this year.

“Mello” the official mascot for Cricket World Cup 2007 was also present at the parade, keeping the cricket and the ball in the air while having fun with children.

The Honourable Minister of Education Ms. Desiree Fox and UNICEF Representative Johannes Wedenig were among the officials who led the parade along the streets of Georgetown, the capital of Guyana.

#### **About UNICEF**

*UNICEF is on the ground in 155 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world’s largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.*

#### **For more information:**

**Mr. Johannes Wedenig, Representative, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname**

**Tel. 623 7056; 592 226 7083; 227 3662; 225 9993**

**Fax: 592 226 5894**

**e-mail: [jwedenig@unicef.org](mailto:jwedenig@unicef.org)**

**Leslyn Thompson, Communication Officer**

**Tel. 623 7056; 592 226 7083; 227 3662; 225 9993**

**Fax: 592 226 5894**

## MEDIA RELEASE

e-mail: [ljthompson@unicef.org](mailto:ljthompson@unicef.org)



[“Last minute details! UNICEF Representative Johannes Wedenig \(left\) and Minister of Education Hon. Desiree Fox prepare to lead the Children’s Costume Parade](#)



[I’m serious – Put children first - Children in the segment on “Educate us” at the Children’s Costume Parade.](#)