

## MASSIVE UNICEF HEALTH CAMPAIGN BEGINS

JAKARTA, JUNE 7 – An ambitious immunisation campaign to fight an outbreak of diseases in the wake of the central Java earthquake has started.

Health teams are rolling out across the quake affected districts to make sure nearly a third of a million children will be immunised against measles and receive vitamin A boosts.

Another 1.2 million people between the ages of 15 and 60 will receive tetanus immunisation.

UNICEF's Head of Health David Hipgrave said: «Children who are malnourished and living in overcrowded conditions are vulnerable to vaccine-preventable diseases.

« Conditions such as those after the earthquake lead to a more rapid transmission of the measles virus and can lead to serious illnesses. Malnourished children can even die from measles.»

The first round of immunisations against measles began today in the bid to reach 320,000 children under the age of five. They will also receive vitamin A boosts.

Tetanus immunisation began too for those aged 15 to 60.

### Health squads

The local Vice Bupati opened one of the first immunisation rounds in Banyusoco, Playen, Gunung Kidul district. Other teams began work in Kulon Progo, Yogyakarta district, and Klaten.

The vaccination teams have been drawn from the district health departments with supplies from the provincial health departments. UNICEF is to replenish those supplies.

The World Health Organisation and UNICEF will share the operational costs. The WHO is funding Yogyakarta Province districts and UNICEF those in Central Java Province districts. American Red Cross, United Nations Fund and CDC/Atlanta are donors and partners in this effort.

UNICEF is providing tetanus diphtheria vaccine. This is being shipped in from India and will take about a week to arrive. In the interim period tetanus toxoid vaccine will be used. Tetanus immunoglobulin and tetanus toxoid will be given to wounded patients.

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