

Statement by the UNICEF Representative
Ms Carrie Auer at the official handover of GAVI funded
vehicles to the Ministry of Health

Wednesday 14th October, 2009

The Hon. Minister of Health, Prof. Moses Chirambo, MP

The Deputy Minister of Health, Mrs. Tereza Mwale, MP

The Secretary for Health, Mr. Chris Kang'ombe

All Senior officials from the Ministry of Health

District Health Officers

Members of the Press

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honored to join you this afternoon to officially hand over to the Ministry of Health vehicles bought with funds from the Global Alliance on Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI). The 20 ambulances, five 10-ton trucks and three double cabs are part of the US\$ 14 million Malawi has received from GAVI for health systems support. UNICEF is proud to make this donation of behalf of GAVI who are not physically present in Malawi.

Hon. Minister, ladies and gentlemen, this donation will go a long way in boosting Malawi's progress towards improved health for all children. As many of you are already aware, the country has already made significant progress in reducing neonatal, infant and under-five mortality.

In 1992, infant mortality was at 136 deaths per 1000 live births and under-five mortality was estimated at 239 deaths per 1000 live births. Fourteen years later, infant mortality and under-five mortality had declined by 47 per cent and 49 per cent respectively.

If these trends continue, Malawi will achieve the Millennium Development Goal of a two-thirds reduction in child mortality by 2015. These achievements are not by accident. They result from a sustained political will, hard work, and the concerted efforts of the government and its partners to make low cost, high impact interventions widely available to all Malawians.

To mention a few, about 71 percent of children aged between 12 to 23 months receive all the recommended vaccines. By 2006, 38 per cent of households owned at least one insecticide-treated mosquito net and 25 per cent of under-five children slept under a treated net. I would like to congratulate the Government of Malawi, through you Honourable Minister, for these truly outstanding achievements.

GAVI's support to Malawi falls within its objective of strengthening health delivery systems in developing countries. While previous GAVI support was

limited almost exclusively to the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), today's donation is part of GAVI's strategic shift to supporting health system. Without a strong and robust health system, immunization cannot be effectively carried out.

This donation complements GAVI's support to Malawi, which has included funding the procurement of the Pentavalent vaccine. GAVI has also funded activities for strengthening delivery of EPI services. The US\$ 14 million GAVI funding for Health Systems Support is yet another gesture of GAVI's determination to help the government to deliver better health for all Malawians.

Honourable Minister, I am pleased to hear that your ministry has established a task force to oversee implementation of various activities under this programme. This is an encouraging start and let me assure you of our continued support to ensure the programme's success.

Finally, permit me to emphasize the importance of prudence in the use of these resources. Good stewardship and timely implementation and reporting are crucial if Malawi is to continue enjoying the goodwill of GAVI and other like-minded partners. I have no doubt that the improvements in transport will translate into improved delivery of essential health services throughout the country.

On behalf of GAVI, and indeed on my own behalf, I would now like to invite you, Hon. Minister, to receive the keys as a symbol of our official handover of the vehicles to the Government of Malawi.

Honourable Minister.