

MEDIA RELEASE

Strengthening the cold chain system to preserve vaccines in Myanmar

UNICEF hands over new cold chain storage facility to Myanmar Ministry of Health

YANGON, 12 August 2008- UNICEF and WHO handed over a new cold chain facility to the Myanmar Ministry of Health today. The facility can hold a full national 8-month-supply for 6 different vaccines and will be a crucial center for distributing vaccines for routine and emergency immunizations nationwide to divisions, states and communities.

The new facility offers much needed storage capacity as the number of health campaigns is increasing especially in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis. It comes as an addition to the already existing central EPI storage rooms at Yangon Children's Hospital.

“Immunization is vital in the survival of Myanmar’s children, especially in areas affected by disaster, where diseases easily spread”, said Dr. Osamu Kunii, Health and Nutrition Chief at UNICEF Myanmar. “And the key to any successful immunization program is to make sure that the cold chain does not get broken at any point so that the life-saving vaccines do not get ruined.”

At the facility, new vaccines coming into Myanmar can be stored in large quantities to address the rising demand of vaccinations which are part of mass immunization campaigns, such as polio and measles. The facility consists of 3 cooler rooms and 4 freezer rooms. BCG, OPV, Measles, DPT, TT and Hep B vaccines will be stored here. The facility cost USD 440,000 to build – a joint effort by UNICEF and WHO.

In the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis, UNICEF has also been supporting measles campaign and routine immunization sessions in settlements, the rehabilitation of cold chains at all levels, the revitalization of routine immunization in the affected areas in a successful effort to avoid possible outbreaks of disease.

For further information, please contact

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