

MEDIA RELEASE

UNICEF TRAINS MYANMAR JOURNALISTS ON HEALTH-RELATED REPORTING

Training aims at enhancing reporting skills on child survival issues/Special focus on Exclusive Breastfeeding

Yangon, 14 July 2009 – UNICEF is currently conducting a five-day training course for 25 Myanmar journalists to enhance reporting skills on health-related issues focusing on exclusive breast feeding, child-focused reporting and media ethics. With this training, UNICEF hopes to bring the journalists' reporting skills to international reporting standards. Participants include 25 junior to mid-level print journalists working in the private sector.

In light of the upcoming National Nutrition Month in August, the training pays particular attention to the importance of Exclusive Breastfeeding (EBF) and its related messages aimed at ensuring proper infant and young child feeding practices in Myanmar. These messages include early initiation and not giving water to the infant in the first six months in addition to breast milk - recommendations which are essential for a baby's healthy start in life. By covering these issues and thus helping to promote these areas, reporters in Myanmar can make a difference in the lives of the country's children and their families.

The training agenda also includes sections on planning and working on a story, effective interviews, news worthiness, children and the media, guidelines on ethical reporting on children, UNICEF photography guidelines and basic photography, and news gathering and sources of information. Journalists will also put to practice their newly acquired skills and knowledge during a field visit and produce reports on exclusive breastfeeding.

"The media has an important role to play in protecting babies", said Dr Siddharth Nirupam, Child survival Specialist of UNICEF Myanmar's Health and Nutrition section at his welcoming remarks. "Through this training you will learn more about EBF and improve your skills to write powerful stories on this issue. Your efforts will help saving the lives of Myanmar infants and young children. We hope that this is the beginning of a long cooperation between Myanmar media and UNICEF on this important issue."

The second batch of the training for another 25 journalists will be held from 20 to 24 July for another 25 journalists. In addition, a workshop for senior editorial members to enhance sensitization and editing skills will also take place on July 27. Editorial support is a critical element and the final determinant for assignment and publication.

For many years, UNICEF Myanmar has been training journalists in understanding and covering children's issues in particular in the larger context of development issues. The trainings are an opportunity for journalists to receive international-standard instruction and help spread life-saving information on children's issues.

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