

## MEDIA RELEASE

## UNICEF Hands over Newly Built Rural Health Facilities to Myanmar's Ministry of Health

**Nay Pyi Taw, 23 June 2010:** UNICEF handed over 24 newly built and medically equipped Rural Health Facilities to the Ministry of Health in an official ceremony held today in the Myanmar capital. Three of these facilities are Rural Health Centres and 21 are Sub Rural Health Centres located in the Ayeyarwaddy division. They were built as part of UNICEF's longer term recovery support to improve children's and women's health in the cyclone-torn and hard to reach areas in Delta.

The Health Facilities will serve primary health care needs to an estimated population of 150,000. Most of the new facilities have replaced health facilities destroyed by Cyclone Nargis two years ago causing severe breakdown to the health service delivery capacity. The RHCs were constructed in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health with funding support from the Government of Japan.

UNICEF Representative Mr. Ramesh Shrestha officially handed over the facilities to Dr. Win Myint, Director General, Department of Health. Senior officials from the Ministry of Health, officials from the Embassy of Japan and UNICEF were also in attendance.

Mr. Shrestha received a 'Certificate of Appreciation' from the Ministry of Health for UNICEF's support in building the rural health facilities.

"This is a milestone moment toward establishing easy access to quality health care for children and women in the Delta. UNICEF is very pleased to hand over 24 completed Rural Health Facilities to the Ministry of Health. We expect these health facilities not only to help in recovery from the impact of the cyclone but also to have a long term role in reducing disease and mortality among the communities in Delta." said Mr. Ramesh Shrestha, UNICEF Representative in Myanmar, "My sincere thanks to the Ministry of Health for valuable guidance and the Government of Japan for generous support to reconstruct the destroyed rural health facilities. This is a partnership worthy of its cause – better health for children and families in Myanmar."

H.E. Mr. Yasutoshi Nogawa, Ambassador of Japan to Myanmar, sent his regards stating, "I wholeheartedly welcome this occasion signifying an important step toward the betterment of the health sector. The aftermaths of Cyclone Nargis are still felt in the region, and with many health facilities severely damaged by the Cyclone, their restoration has been one of the most essential and imperative needs. I do hope that these facilities will be fully utilized for improving the people's health in the region as well as make a valuable contribution to the friendship between Japan and Myanmar."

UNICEF has also provided 102 fiber glass boats to help health workers to organize outreach activities in 12 Townships in Ayeyarwaddy and Yangon divisions affected by the Cyclone Nargis.

The Rural Health Facilities are equipped with a labour room and other essential medical amenities. They are appropriately furnished and each includes a power generator to enable night-time deliveries and emergency treatment.

Some of the health facilities were reconstructed using lightweight technology suitable for soft (mangrove) soil conditions with low loadbearing capacity. In other places, the structures were built with reinforced concrete. However, both types of structures are built with the capacity to withstand earthquake and cyclone up to a certain intensity.

The Rural Health Facilities offer a wide range of essential primary health care services for children and women including ante natal and post natal care, delivery and birth, nutrition and exclusive breast feeding, immunization services and so on.

**About UNICEF**

UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 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.

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