

Media Release

New UNICEF Representative presents credentials to Government

Pretoria, 10 November 2008... Aida Girma, the new UNICEF Representative in South Africa, today presented her credentials to the Government of South Africa, represented by Dr. Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, Minister in The Presidency.

In welcoming the new UNICEF Representative at the Union Buildings, Dr. Tshabalala-Msimang, whose portfolio includes the Office on the Rights of the Child (ORC), expressed hope that the two organisations would continue to work closely together in deepening their strategic collaboration on programmes for the development of the country's children.

Ms. Girma expressed UNICEF's gratitude to the Government and people of South Africa for the support and partnership UNICEF has enjoyed with the country. She cited South Africa's special provisions for children's rights in its Constitution, its progressive Children's Act and the location of children's development issues in the Office of the President as testimony of the country's commitment to children.

"I see the need for strong partnership between the ORC and UNICEF in order to ensure the realisation of the provisions stipulated in the Children's Act," she said.

Following the formal accreditation procedure, Ms. Girma briefed senior ORC officials on the focus of UNICEF's work including the major challenges faced by South African children. She then presented the Minister with a short background document on these issues.

Aida Girma, who was recently Representative of UNICEF in Malawi, took up her new position at the United Nations children's organisation in South Africa on 17 October, 2008. She is the fifth Representative to hold this position since 1994, when the first cooperation agreement was signed between the Government of South Africa and UNICEF. Ms Girma has also held the position of Country Coordinator for UN AIDS in Maputo, Mozambique.

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A native of Ethiopia, Aida Girma holds an M.Sc. in Development Economics concentrating in Community Development, from New Hampshire College, Manchester, New Hampshire, USA, as well as a B.Sc. in International Development (Human Services), from the same institution. She studied Business Administration in an undergraduate programme at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin and obtained a Certificate in Management and Financing of Health Programmes in Developing Countries from Harvard University, School of Public Health, Boston, Massachusetts., USA in 1995.

Ms. Girma is married and is the mother of an eight year-old son. She is fluent in English and French.

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Note to Editors:

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