

MEDIA RELEASE

UNICEF SOUTH AFRICA INAUGURATES SUB OFFICE IN CAPE TOWN BACKS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR CHILDREN IN THE WESTERN CAPE

Cape Town 17 August 2007... UNICEF SOUTH AFRICA today officially inaugurated its first sub office in the country to be located in the Western Cape Provincial Legislature building in Cape Town.

At a colorful ceremony attended by officials of the Western Province cabinet and legislature as well as children, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Premier of the Western Cape Province, Ebrahim Rasool and UNICEF Country Representative in South Africa Macharia Kamau.

The UNICEF sub office will focus its work on Parliamentary affairs related to children as well as national and provincial programme support activities for child survival and development, including fundraising.

In his remarks at the signing ceremony Mr. Kamau said that poverty constitutes a denial of human rights and dignity and related opportunistic diseases are the cause of much death and suffering in SA.

He warned that poverty and disease remain the biggest threats to children's lives and their well being today and robs many of them of their futures.

Deepening poverty is clearly a function and a consequence of historical inequitable distribution of assets and of the current poor delivery of services and access to resources such as housing, quality education, health and social services.

In this regard the situation in the country related to HIV/AIDS, poor neo-natal care and feeding practices, the continuing exceptionally high mortality of adults between the ages of 30 and 50 years old that leaves hundreds of thousands of children orphaned, remain very high on the list of UNICEF's concerns, Mr. Kamau said.

While applauding the establishment of The Interim Provincial Advisory Council on Children in the province, the UNICEF Representative noted that the council faces enormous challenges.

Speaking on the Western Province in particular, he lamented the unacceptably high levels of child abuse, violence, exploitation and murder of children that seem to happen across socio economic classes.

The plight of hundreds of thousands of children in the province who live in decrepit informal settlements is a matter of particular grave concern to UNICEF. The cold, wet, infested conditions

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in which they live are a serious health concern, while alcohol and drug abuse compounds the already dire situation brought on by poverty, disease and squalor.

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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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