

UNICEF Supports Child Protection with Presentation of Vehicles to Regions

Mbabane, 7 August, 2007 – To provide continued support to interventions for children at the regional level and to show its commitment to the nation's efforts toward decentralization, UNICEF presented four four-wheel drive vehicles to the Ministry of Regional Development and Youth Affairs (MRDYA) on Tuesday.

Regional Administrators simultaneously started the engines of the Toyota Hilux vehicles that will go back with them to each of their regional offices to be used in implementing and monitoring many interventions, especially those that benefit children.

As services are decentralized to the regions, it is imperative that regional offices are able to monitor services throughout each region, taking stock of programmes for vulnerable populations and identifying overlaps and gaps that exist. This task has become more difficult as the nation responds to two national disasters – the ongoing drought and the recent forest fires. MRDYA, in cooperation with the regions and the National Disaster Task Force, is managing the nation's response to both challenges.

"We are aware that a lack of transport represents major constraints in programme implementation, monitoring and follow-up of ongoing activities, especially in rural areas," said Runar Soerensen, deputy representative for UNICEF Swaziland. "Hence UNICEF is glad to hand over four Toyota vehicles to the Ministry to ease its work nationwide."

Principal Secretary for MRDYA, Christabel Motsa, chaired the presentation of vehicles, held at the Ministry office. "This generous gift from UNICEF is going to the regions to support children," said Christabel Motsa, principal secretary for MRDYA. "The regions have become the custodians of a number of projects for children. At this desperate time when we face such challenges with the national disasters, these wheels will assist the regional offices in monitoring and supervising projects, especially those for children."

Acting Minister of the Ministry of Regional Development and Youth Affairs, Elijah Shongwe, accepted the keys to the vehicles from Soerensen, expressing the Ministry's gratitude for the presentation of the vehicles as well as UNICEF's ongoing work for children and women in Swaziland.

"UNICEF's work for children and children's rights cannot go unnoticed," said Shongwe. "And UNICEF has our assurance that these vehicles will be used properly and utilized only for the purpose with which they were given – to monitor and better children's welfare."

About UNICEF

UNICEF is on the ground in 155 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.