

PRESS RELEASE

UNICEF Presents Water Pumps to Ministry of Regional Development to Increase Access to Safe Water

Mbabane, March 2008 To support Swazi Government in its response to the ongoing drought emergency, UNICEF presented 100 hand water pumps and 10 electric submersible pumps to the Ministry of Regional Development and Youth Affairs (MRDYA).

The pumps will be installed in some of the more than 120 boreholes and wells drilled by the nation's water crisis task team (WCTT), comprised of technical people from relevant line ministries, such as the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Natural Resources. These boreholes will serve communities deemed worse hit by the drought.

“UNICEF's donation came at the right time,” said Minister of Regional Development and Youth Affairs, Chief Siphon Shongwe. “It looks like another terrible year ahead, with little rain and crops dying. This partnership will help us and will benefit the nation.”

In 2006/2007, Swaziland experienced the worst drought in more than a decade. High temperatures combined with a lack of rainfall decimated crops and left large numbers of people with acute shortages of safe and adequate water. This can lead to increased disease outbreaks, particularly of cholera and diarrhoea. Children, especially those under five years old, are at the greatest risk of contracting these diseases.

“We are pleased to work with the Ministry and to secure essential supplies for the drought response,” said Dr. Jama Gulaid, UNICEF Representative. “These pumps will benefit 55,000 families and children and bring us closer to our goal of providing access to safe water for all those who need it.”

Minister Shongwe will accompany teams from MRDYA to install the pumps in the targeted communities. The Minister called for continued commitment and hard work in the face of the continuing drought.

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.