EU – UNICEF Partnership promoting nutrition and long-term health of children in Africa and Asia is the focus of Brussels photo exhibition

Brussels, 30th March 2016 - A European Union-supported initiative which has boosted the nutritional status and long-term health prospects of some of the poorest children in Africa and Asia is the focus of a photography exhibition in central Brussels which has been on display in the Galerie Ravenstein for the past two weeks.

The images on two giant exhibition cubes portray some of the ways in which a five-year old partnership between the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund, UNICEF, has raised political and public awareness around the importance of good nutrition in countries as varied as Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mali, Nepal, the Philippines and Uganda.

About half of the world’s 159 million chronically malnourished children live in Asia, the result of poor breastfeeding or child feeding practices, limited access to health care and other issues. The EU and UNICEF joined forces to address this crisis in 2011, with the ‘Maternal and Young Child Nutrition Security Initiative in Asia (MYCNSIA)’.

In the same year, the Africa’s Nutrition Security Partnership (ANSP)’ was set up as a multi-donor agreement primarily funded by the EU, focusing on improving nutrition security among women and young children in Africa.

“The photos in this exhibition underline the tremendous impact our initiative has had in the nine countries it covers, whether strengthening government policies and budgeting around nutrition, or by directly supporting the efforts of health teams on the ground” said Marjeta Jager, Deputy Director General at DG DEVCO.

Among the achievements of MYCNSIA was a sharp reduction in child anemia in parts of Bangladesh due to the use of Multiple Micronutrient Powder and a 9% fall in child stunting in regions of Lao PDR covered by a media campaign promoting breastfeeding and a community-based child feeding project. Meanwhile, the ANSP helped elevate child nutrition on Africa’s political and health agenda, with the finalization and adoption of the African Regional Nutrition Strategy (ARNS) and related sub-regional frameworks. It also saw the establishment of new nutrition-focused academic study programmes in Mali and Burkina Faso.

“The ANSP has really broken new ground in terms of spreading understanding and building political will around complex nutrition and child health challenges,” said Noala Skinner, Director of UNICEF Brussels Office. “It’s the combination of this policy-level work and community interventions in both Asia and Africa that demonstrate the effectiveness of our partnership with the European Commission.”

The photo exhibition, organized in cooperation with Brussels BOZAR- Centre of Fine arts and by the Galerie Ravenstein, continues until 30th March.

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About UNICEF

UNICEF works in more than 190 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. For more information about UNICEF and its work visit: www.unicef.org

About DG International Cooperation and Development

The Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) is responsible for designing European international cooperation and development policy and delivering aid throughout the world. The EU and its Member States remain the world’s largest donor (in terms of official development assistance, or ODA.) EU collective ODA amounted to a total of €58.2 billion in 2014.

For more information contact:

Simon Ingram, Senior Communication Advisor, UNICEF Brussels, singram@unicef.org, +32 491 90 51 18

Stacey Vickers, Team Leader, Press and Social Media, European Commission, stacey.vickers@ec.europa.eu, +32 229 94153