

MEDIA RELEASE

GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN DONATES US\$1 MILLION TO UNICEF TO PREVENT MALARIA IN ETHIOPIA

ADDIS ABABA - 20 August: The Government of Japan today donated US\$1 Million to UNICEF for the prevention of infectious diseases among children in Ethiopia.

An estimated 344,000 children under five will die of preventable causes including malaria in Ethiopia this year.

"Children have the right to be protected nationally and internationally from any infectious disease," said Kinichi Komano, Ambassador of Japan to Ethiopia. "Young children and pregnant women are most at risk from the severe effect of malaria including death. Thus, we believe that the fight against infectious diseases is the main health agenda of the time."

The Japanese funds will be used to fight malaria which is prevalent in over 75 per cent of Ethiopia putting over 50 million people at risk.

"Japan has been a generous supporter of child survival interventions in Ethiopia contributing to the remarkable 40 per cent reduction in under five child mortality rates recorded since 1990," said Bjorn Ljungqvist, UNICEF representative in Ethiopia. "This continuing support is critical to fight childhood killers like malaria that can be prevented."

In view of the upcoming Ethiopian Millennium, which begins on 12 September 2007, Ethiopia is implementing a Millennium Anti-Malaria Campaign with a target distribution of 20 million anti-malaria nets free of charge in malaria prone areas.

To date, 18 million nets have been distributed providing protection for 9 million households in what is the largest campaign of its sort in Africa.

The campaign also includes mass anti-malaria treatments using the anti-malaria drug Coartem which, together with the expanded use of anti-malaria nets, is resulting in substantial declines in malaria and no malaria epidemics experienced during the past two years.

"No child need die of malaria and with the success of the Millennium Anti-Malaria Campaign we are on the verge of achieving a remarkable milestone for child survival in Ethiopia," said Bjorn Ljungqvist, UNICEF Representative in Ethiopia.

"We must, however, maintain the momentum and ensure continued support for anti-malaria interventions in order to maintain sufficient quantities of new nets to replace those that wear out. Today's contribution from Japan will go a long way in this regard."

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