

UNICEF, Nelson Mandela Foundation and the Hamburg Society sign MOU Consolidates partnership to promote Schools for Africa in 6 southern African countries

Johannesburg, 16 May 2008 ... UNICEF, the Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF) and the Hamburg Society today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at the Foundation's headquarters in Johannesburg to consolidate their partnership to promote the six nation *Schools for Africa* (SFA) campaign.

The campaign aims to raise funds that will see over 4 million children in Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa and Zimbabwe enjoy improved learning environments that are safe, protective, healthy and accessible, with newly built or rehabilitated classrooms, furniture (blackboards, desks and chairs), teaching and learning materials, safe drinking water and separate sanitation facilities for girls and boys. Children will also benefit from better teaching and learning processes with trained teachers and community members, who will work together to make schools child-friendly.

"No other investment has such a lasting effect as the education of children," said Per Engebak, UNICEF Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa. Children who go to school are healthier, more self-assured and can more easily assume a profession. And, education is the only effective "vaccine" against HIV and AIDS."

"Furthermore, the *Schools for Africa* initiative is an ideal vehicle to help achieve Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3 which set specific targets for universal primary education, gender equality, and the empowerment of women. We also see the initiative as a way to mainstream Child Friendly Schools (CFS) standards to ensure a quality education for all children," he added.

more

Child Friendly Schools (CFS) is an established strategic framework developed and successfully implemented by UNICEF and its education partners worldwide since the 1990s to create better learning environments for children. Among other things, it advocates a rights-based approach to learning with strong community involvement, provision of clean water and sanitation and sensitivity to the needs of girls in schools. However, despite the acknowledged importance of education for all children, achieving universal primary education (MDG 2) has proven difficult the world over, UNICEF says.

According to a 2005 report produced jointly by UNICEF and UNESCO, some 121 million children were reportedly out of school. Forty-five million of them were from sub-Saharan Africa. Sixty five million of those out of school globally are girls. And, twenty one million children were out of school in the Eastern and Southern Africa region alone. Additionally, a majority of the 31 countries which are at high risk of not achieving universal primary education by 2015 are located in sub-Saharan Africa.

An opportunity to transform lives through education

“In this campaign, we have yet another opportunity to help transform the lives of children through quality education. We are pleased to have these three organizations aligning themselves with this expanded initiative, which also accelerates the achievement of positive results at the policy level within UNICEF’s six focus countries in Southern Africa,” said Macharia Kamau, UNICEF South Africa Country Representative.

The signing of the MOU strengthens the existing partnership between UNICEF, the Nelson Mandela Foundation and the Hamburg Society in an ongoing collaboration to support positive progress towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDG 2 and 3) and the targets for universal primary education and empowering women that are similarly reflected in the goals of the Africa Union’s Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015).

more

According to Nelson Mandela Foundation CEO Achmat Dangor, one of the principal signatories to the MOU, “it is to intensify efforts to ensure that all children in Africa have access to the kind of education that will transform their lives and the future of our continent”.

Other signatories at today’s ceremony were Per Engebak UNICEF Regional Director Eastern and Southern Africa, Peter Kramer – Hamburg Society, Per Stenbeck Director Programme Fundraising and Partnerships, UNICEF Geneva and Macharia Kamau, UNICEF South Africa Country Representative.

Intensive global fund raising by UNICEF National Committees

A major element of the expanded *Schools for Africa* campaign is the intensive fundraising effort already in place by UNICEF National Committees around the world. Countries participating in the initiative will receive fund-raising support from UNICEF National Committees in Germany, Canada, Italy, Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland, Poland, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Australia, United States, Korea, Portugal, Austria, Finland, France, Hungary, Croatia and Czech Republic.

Programmatic interventions at the country level through UNICEF country offices’ support to Governments will provide the foundation of the campaign.

In addition, major individual and corporate partners such as Peter Kramer, Chairperson of the Hamburg Society as well as Gucci, currently the largest single donor for Schools for Africa, Siemens, ING, Payback, Cadbury, Bobcat, Orbis and T-Mobile who support UNICEF’s global education initiatives, are continuing to contribute to the campaign.

Ends

Notes to editors:

The objectives of this partnership are: -

- To raise funds in order to provide better quality education for children in Africa with a focus on marginalised children such as girls and Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC)
- To build and rehabilitate 1 000 schools
- To train 80 000 teachers to provide children with quality basic education and skills for surviving and thriving in life
- To offer a safe and protective environment where children can learn and play
- To ensure children are informed on hygiene, health issues and HIV prevention among others
- To ensure access to clean water and sanitation
- To ensure that children receive school books and other school and sports and recreation materials
- To support the Government and other partners to transform all primary schools into 'child friendly' learning spaces by sharing best practices and lessons learned through the Schools for Africa initiative.

For more information, please contact:

Media: Yvonne Duncan, Mobile: 27 82 561-3970; yduncan@unicef.org

Programme info: Nadi Albino, Mobile: +27 82 561 3972; nalbino@unicef.org

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