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## UN health agency set to receive 50 million H1N1 vaccines for developing countries



The H1N1 vaccine is being donated to developing nations [File Photo]

**10 November** - A giant pharmaceutical company is slated to donate 50 million doses of the pandemic H1N1 vaccine to the United Nations public health arm, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced today.

Under a new agreement signed with GlaxoSmithKline, WHO expects to receive the first shipments of the vaccine by the end of November.

WHO has a list of 95 developing countries that are eligible to receive donated vaccines, and aims to secure enough vaccines to cover 10 per cent of the population of these countries.

“We welcome this very generous donation by GlaxoSmithKline, which will go to protect the health of the world's poorest people,” said WHO Director-General Margaret after signing the agreement at the agency's Headquarters in Geneva.

“This is a real gesture of global solidarity towards those who would not be otherwise able to have access to the vaccine,” said Ms Chan. “WHO will now work to see that these vaccines are distributed to those who need them.”

Last week, WHO warned that the world has not yet hit the peak influenza season between January and February when more cases are expected. The agency also stressed that despite concerns about the side effects of the vaccine, it remains one of the best tools available to fight the virus.

As of 1 November, there have been more than 482,000 laboratory confirmed cases of pandemic influenza H1N1 worldwide and over 6,000 deaths reported to WHO. As many countries have stopped counting individual cases, particularly of milder illness, the actual number of people contracting the virus is likely to be higher than the number of confirmed cases.

## Lebanon and Israel must do more to achieve permanent ceasefire – UN envoy



Michael Williams, UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon, addresses correspondents

**10 November** - Despite recent “worrying incidents” in southern Lebanon, where Israel and Hizbollah militants battled fiercely three years ago, talk of a new war is alarmist, but all sides must do more to translate the cessation of hostilities into a permanent ceasefire, a senior United Nations official warned today.

“The Secretary-General condemns all violation of resolution 1701, whether in the form of rocket launches, air land or sea violations, the active maintenance of an arms depot or the use of surveillance equipment on sovereign Lebanese territory,” Special Coordinator for Lebanon Michael Williams told reporters after briefing the Security Council on the latest developments.

Resolution 1701, adopted by the Council in August 2006, called for an end to hostilities between Israel and Hizbollah, respect for the so-called Blue Line separating the Israeli and Lebanese sides, disarming of militias and an end to arms smuggling. Hizbollah, which has not disarmed, is part of a new unity government formed in Lebanon yesterday.

The rocket launches into Israel, the almost daily Israeli flights over Lebanon, the arms depot maintained by Hizbollah and the apparently Israeli surveillance equipment left on Lebanese territory raise the spectre of a potential escalation. But the cessation of hostilities that followed the adoption of 1701 “has actually held remarkably well,” Mr. Williams said, calling this a tribute to the UN peacekeeping force known as UNIFIL, the Lebanese and the Israelis.

“To the best of my knowledge... probably no other country in the world – probably, I may be wrong – is subject to such an intrusive regime of aerial surveillance [as Lebanon],” he noted. “Now we also have other events, the discovery of listening devices which almost certainly seem to have been left by the Israelis. Are these violations? Yes, of course they’re violations of 1701.”

He called for more to be done to safeguard what has been achieved in the past three years. “While welcoming the parties’ stated commitment to resolution 1701, which is critical, we also stress the need for more tangible steps to facilitate forward movement in the direction of a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution,” he said.

“Lebanon, Israel and the international community must be vigilant and undertake greater efforts in the coming period to allow us to move forward.”

Asked whether he would categorically say that there was no arms smuggling into Lebanon, he replied: “No I would not say that... it’s an established fact that Lebanon does not have an active border control regime in the way that most countries have on their borders.”

He cited UN missions in 2007 and 2008 that called the borders “very, very porous. Now that’s an objective and scientific assessment of what pertains on the borders. What they were not in a position to say is what may or may not come across the borders,” he added.

As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon did yesterday, Mr. Williams congratulated the new national unity government, noting the challenges facing it in the economic, political and social fields as well as in exercising its authority throughout the whole country.

## UN rushes aid to flood victims in El Salvador

**10 November** - The United Nations has sent a disaster assessment team to El Salvador and released a \$50,000 cash grant to help the small Central American country recover from torrential rainfall that caused massive flooding and triggered landslides, killing at least 140 people and displacing nearly 14,000 others.

Announcing the grant today, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) cited the Government's appeal for international aid to ensure that essential supplies such as food, water, hygiene kits, beds and blankets are provided to those whose homes have been destroyed or damaged.

Members of the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team and the OCHA Regional Office in Panama have started arriving in the country to provide support in damage assessments and coordination of the relief effort.

On Sunday, El Salvador was lashed by torrential rains, with some 355 millimetres (just over one foot) falling in just four hours, putting a quarter of the country at risk for landslides.

Besides the death toll, some 60 people have been reported missing. Over 120 shelters have been established and are currently accommodating some 13,775 people. About 1,835 homes are affected, with 200 of them destroyed.

The office of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in El Salvador has begun providing bottled water, school-in-a-box kits and personal hygiene kits for the affected families, and is requesting support from donor countries to continue helping children as part of the relief effort.



Some of the people in El Salvador who were displaced by Hurricane Ida and moved into 118 government shelters

## In face of Abbas' electoral withdrawal, UN again urges Israeli settlement freeze

**10 November** - Terming Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' announcement that he will not run for re-election "a loud and clear wake-up call," a senior United Nations official today called on Israel to freeze all settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory.

"Either we go forward decisively to a two-State solution in accordance with Security Council resolutions, or we risk sliding backwards," UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert Serry said after meeting Mr. Abbas in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

"I conveyed to President Abbas the Secretary-General's strong support for his leadership. But it is clear that this precious asset is now in jeopardy. I believe President Abbas' announcement last week is a loud and clear wake-up call. I repeat the Secretary-General's call for a freeze on all settlement activity."

The UN is a co-sponsor, together with the European Union, Russia and the United States, of the Roadmap peace plan that seeks a two-State solution to the Middle East conflict, with both Israel and Palestine living side by side within secure and recognized borders.

Israel occupied Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem which it annexed, proclaiming the whole city its eternal united capital in a move not recognized by the international community, in the 1967 war. Since then it has built dozens of settlements in the West Bank and areas of East Jerusalem, although it withdrew from Gaza in 2005.

Last month, in a message to the Jerusalem International Forum in Rabat, Morocco, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the



President of the Palestinian National Authority Mahmoud Abbas

city, revered as sacred by Jews, Christians and Muslims, must be the capital of two States – Israel and Palestine – with arrangements for the holy sites acceptable to all, if peace in the Middle East is to be achieved.

## Millions of poor across Africa set to suffer deepening food crisis, warns UN report



Grain prices in Mali are still far higher than before the food price crisis

**10 November** - Despite good global cereal harvests this year, millions of people in dozens of poor countries are in desperate need of emergency humanitarian aid due to stubbornly high food prices, the United Nations agricultural agency warned in a report released today.

Critical food insecurity is affecting 31 countries and the situation is particularly acute in East Africa, where prolonged drought and mounting conflict have left an estimated 20 million people in need of food aid, according to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).

The latest Crop Prospects and Food Situation report, published ahead of next week's World Summit on Food Security in Rome, noted that although international food prices have fallen significantly since their peak a few years ago, wheat and maize prices rose in October and rice export prices are still high above pre-crisis levels.

"For the world's poorest people who spend up to 80 per cent of their household budgets on food, the food price crisis is not over yet," said FAO Assistant Director-General Hafez Ghanem. "It is now a global priority to increase investment in developing country agriculture in order to fight poverty and hunger."

The report said that in Western Africa cereal production for 2009 is set to decline from last year because below average rainfall forced farmers to re-plant crops in many parts of the region and led to livestock losses in Mali, Chad and Niger.

The dire food situation in the region is worsened by cereal prices remaining well above the levels of two years ago before the hike in food prices, with the price of millet in the markets of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger ranging from 21 to 42 per cent higher, and imported rice between 22 and 46 per cent higher.

In addition, an expected reduction in Nigeria's cereal production could lead to new price rises across West Africa, the report said.

The FAO report also voiced deep concern over the situation in Eastern Africa as crops and pastures are expected to fail due to poor rains and an increase in armed conflict, resulting in more trade disruptions and continuing high food prices.

Kenya's maize production is forecast to be 30 per cent down on last year, leaving almost 4 million Kenyans either highly or extremely food insecure, and in Ethiopia the number of people in need of food aid jumped from 5.3 million in May to 6.2 million in October.

## Number of civilians escaping tribal violence in DR Congo on the rise – UN

**10 November** - The number of civilians fleeing tribal violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) into neighbouring Republic of Congo since last week has topped 21,800, the United Nations refugee agency reported today.

Details about the clashes between two tribes in northern DRC that began in early November are emerging now that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Republic of Congo authorities have visited the civilians who fled and are scattered across villages along a 160-kilometre stretch of the Oubangi River that separates the two Congos.



A village on the Republic of Congo side of the Oubangi River, which marks the border with the DRC

Fighting first erupted in March between the Enyele and Munzaya tribes over disputes based

on farming and fishing rights in the village of Dongo, in DRC's Equateur province.

In that first round of clashes, over 200 houses were burned and more than 1,200 residents fled to Republic of Congo. UNHCR said that last Wednesday's clashes forced 21,800 – mainly ethnic Munzaya women and children – from their homes into the northern Republic of Congo after initially estimating 16,000 refugees had crossed the border in fear.

“They told our staff they were fleeing Enyele tribesmen who, they said, had gone from house to house, pillaging, raping and killing,” UNHCR spokesperson Andrej Mahecic told reporters in Geneva.

Over the weekend, UNHCR began distributing blankets, sleeping mats, mosquito nets, kitchen sets and jerry cans, reporting that more than 20 of the refugees arrived in Republic of Congo with gunshot wounds. The agency rushed nine of the severely injured to Impfondo hospital, including an 11-year-old girl who had her right leg amputated.

“Refugees have mostly stopped crossing the border amid reports that the DRC military forcefully intervened in Dongo to stop attacks by armed Enyele, who appeared to have organized into a militia,” said Mr. Mahecic.

“In spite of this government action, on Monday our colleagues in the Republic of Congo could still see smoke from burning houses across the river,” he added. “While some of the new arrivals told us they would like to go back to their villages once the Enyele militia is crushed, others felt too traumatized.”

## Ban urges more States to adhere to global pact on explosive remnants of war

**10 November** - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called on those States that have not yet done so to adhere to the global pact dealing with explosive remnants of war, noting the deadly toll that these weapons which are left over after conflict takes on society.

“Armed conflict leaves in its wake not only chaos, grief and hardship, but also explosive remnants of war that kill and maim long after the end of hostilities,” he told the opening of the Third Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW).



“Protocol V, which provides the legal framework for addressing this horrendous humanitarian and developmental impact, can help us eliminate this deadly hazard,” he added in a message delivered yesterday in Geneva by Sergio Duarte, the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

The CCW aims to protect military troops from inhumane injuries and prevent noncombatants from accidentally being wounded or killed by certain types of arms. Protocol V focuses specifically on unexploded and abandoned ordnance which include artillery shells, grenades and gravity bombs. They pose severe threats to civilians because they can explode without cause or accidentally be triggered to detonate.

The Secretary-General congratulated States Parties for having established the machinery for implementing the Protocol, and encouraged them to make full use of the mechanism.

He also encouraged them to promote information sharing on the use or abandonment of explosive ordnance – bilaterally, through the UN, or through another entity as appropriate.

Mr. Ban said he was encouraged to see the “considerable increase” in the number of State Parties to the Protocol since last year, and commended the 61 States that have expressed their consent to be bound by the Protocol.

At the same time, he called on those States that have not yet done so to ratify Protocol V without delay, reminded them of their responsibility to provide protection to civilian populations both during and after armed conflicts.

“The United Nations will continue to assist you in your noble efforts,” he pledged.

## Flooding drives Somalis from their homes amid aid funding shortfall, warns UN



A group IDPS shelter under a tree as floods have rendered thousands living in camps in and around Mogadishu homeless

**10 November** - Around 16,000 Somalis have been forced from their homes by severe flooding in the south of the strife-torn country, the United Nations humanitarian arm said today, while underscoring that a funding shortfall is hampering relief efforts.

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that recent flooding has devastated areas of southern Somalia, damaging river embankments, collapsing latrines and contaminating shallow wells.

The forecast for the coming weeks predicts a moderate chance of further flooding, with OCHA devising a contingency plan to assist some 450,000 people in southern Somalia.

Despite the mounting humanitarian need in the Horn of Africa nation, there is a significant shortfall in funding for emergency relief efforts, stressed OCHA, noting that while the number of people needing aid had doubled, donations were down 40 per cent.

OCHA reported that to date, the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) for Somalia had received approximately \$507 million, or 60 per cent of the \$850 million requested for this year.

Somalia’s funding crisis also severely impacts the impoverished country’s health sector, which has only received 48 per cent of the \$103 million it needs for 2009.

Within that amount, the World Health Organization (WHO) has requested almost \$13 million, of which only \$3.2 million – or less than a quarter – has been donated.

The lack of funding jeopardizes response to the many health risks in a country suffering from one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises, WHO spokesperson Paul Garwood told reporters in Geneva.

WHO’s latest update on Somalia noted the growing number of diseases the Somali population suffers, including diarrhoea, some cases of cholera, suspected measles and acute respiratory infections.

## As fighting escalates in Yemen, UN agency repeats call for humanitarian access

**10 November** - The United Nations refugee agency said today it is extremely concerned about the recent escalation of the conflict between Government forces and rebels in northern Yemen, and once again appealed for access to those displaced by the fighting.

“We again appeal for the protection of civilians and secure and unhindered access for humanitarian workers to deliver much needed assistance,” Andrej Mahecic, spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), told reporters in Geneva.



A scene in Al Mazraq camp, Yemen

UNHCR now estimates that some 175,000 people have been affected by the conflict with Al Houthi rebels since 2004, including those displaced by the latest fighting which began in August.

Some 2,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) arrived from embattled Sa'ada governorate to the Al Mazrak camp in Hajja governorate over the past few days, the agency reported.

The Al Mazrak camp, now hosting some 8,700 IDPs, has been reorganized and extended to accommodate the new arrivals,

while another 11,000 IDPs are sheltered by host families and communities.

Over the weekend, UNHCR airlifted a shipment of emergency relief items from its central emergency stockpile in Dubai, including large tents and prefabricated warehouses that will help to improve aid delivery.

Meanwhile, the agency's office in Riyadh was informed yesterday by the Saudi authorities that the situation at the Alp border is stable, allowing UNHCR to continue its cross-border aid activities.

"We are hopeful that we will receive the security clearances from the Saudi authorities for the next aid convoy in the coming days," said Mr. Mahecic.

## UN official lauds role of sport in European Union development programmes

**10 November** - A senior United Nations official today praised the European Commission for its use of sport in bringing together diverse communities within the continent's geopolitical bloc, as well as helping people in poor countries.

"Mainstreaming sport in all the areas where the European Commission is working, particularly the use of sport for social change and integration within the European Union member States, but also in the assistance towards developing countries, is a very crucial step," said the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, Wilfried Lemke.



Wilfried Lemke, Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace

Mr. Lemke, who is on a visit to Brussels, is slated to restart an EU-UN partnership in the arena of sport for development and peace, and to discuss potential collaboration with heads of UN agencies.

"The EU will definitely be an important partner in the reactivation of the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group," he said.

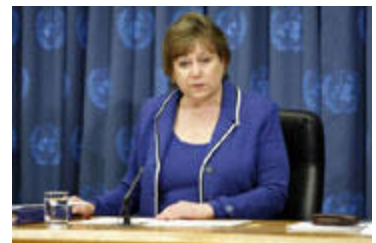
Following his visit to Brussels, the Special Adviser will head to Dubai, where he will be chairing the Global Agenda Council on the Role of Sports in Society set up by the World Economic Forum last year.

After that he travels to South Africa to attend the inauguration of the first Football for Hope Center in Cape Town, as well as the inauguration of the Interdisciplinary Centre of Excellence for Sport Science and Development of the University of Western Cape.

## UNICEF chief focuses on child health, climate change on visit to Mali

**10 November** - The head of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said greater attention should be paid to the negative impact of climate change on the world's poorest and most vulnerable people, especially children, as she toured the West African nation of Mali.

Ann M. Veneman, Executive Director of UNICEF, discussed child health and climate change with President Amadou Toumani Toure and other officials in the landlocked country, where over half the population lives below the poverty line.



UNICEF Executive Director Ann Veneman

"One in five children in Mali do not survive to see their fifth birthday. Most of these children are dying from preventable diseases like pneumonia, diarrhoea and malaria, often exacerbated by under nutrition. In Mali, 32 per cent of children under 5 years old are under weight."

As part of her 5 to 8 November visit, Ms. Veneman visited Timbuktu which has been severely impacted by climate change. Situated in the Sahel region of northern Mali, the city's branches of the Niger River have dried up due to drought and much of the land is now arid and unable to yield crops.

She praised a food-for-work programme in Timbuktu, supported by the World Food Programme (WFP), where women grow vegetables and rice on land that has been reclaimed from the advancing desert. The women are also planting trees as part of a reforestation programme.

"These women are empowered to produce needed food while adapting to the impact of climate change," said Ms. Veneman. "As the Copenhagen climate change summit approaches, it is important to recognize that climate change is adversely affecting the lives of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people."

Countries will meet next month in the Danish capital to agree on a new climate change agreement that would enter into effect after the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gas emissions expires in 2012.

The Executive Director and President Toure also launched a month of activities commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## UN receives provisional voters' list for much delayed Ivorian presidential poll

**10 November** - Côte d'Ivoire's independent electoral commission today handed over a provisional voters' list to the top United Nations envoy there, a step forward towards holding the much-delayed presidential poll in the West African country, split by civil war in 2002 into a Government-ruled south and a rebel-controlled north.

But Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's Special Representative Young-Jin Choi warned that important steps remained to be taken and while the elections were now in reach, serious work was needed to overcome the final challenges.

The elections, originally scheduled for as far back as 2005, are now planned for 29 November after repeated postponements, but UN officials have voiced concern at possible further setbacks.

Mr. Choi, who heads the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), called for accelerating the remaining technical steps, such as the printing and distribution of national identity and voter cards.

The Security Council established UNOCI in 2004 to help ensure a ceasefire and pave the way for permanent peace and democratic elections following the civil war. Reauthorized repeatedly since then, most recently until 31 January 2010, it currently comprises nearly 8,400 uniformed personnel, as well as 407 international civilian personnel.

## Independent UN expert urges greater efforts to help South Ossetia's displaced

**10 November** - An independent United Nations human rights expert who just completed a visit to South Ossetia has called for "more pragmatism and less politics" to improve the situation of those displaced during last year's armed conflict that pitted Georgia against separatists and their Russian allies.

Walter Kaelin, the Secretary-General's Representative on the human rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs), cited lack of shelter as the main problem faced by those displaced within South Ossetia during the fighting in August 2008.

It is estimated that 680 houses, in addition to a number of public civilian installations, were destroyed in Tskhinvali during



A shipment of electoral logistical support materials for Côte d'Ivoire provided by UNOCI arrives

the fighting, as well as many villages, he noted in a news release issued following his 5 to 6 November visit.

“Reconstruction is progressing far too slowly. Many will have to live through a second winter without having their own roof over their head,” said the expert, who reports to the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council.

“I also saw several villages, which had an ethnic Georgian population prior to the 2008 conflict, that are now empty and have been systematically destroyed,” he said.

Mr. Kaelin said he also met with ethnic Ossetians, who had been displaced during the first conflict in 1991-1992.

“All displaced, whether they were displaced in 1991-1992 or 2008, have the right to return and restitution of their property,” he stated. “Return for everyone regardless of where they live now must be facilitated by both sides in a pragmatic way respecting the rights of internally displaced persons.

He added that a mechanism “with international expertise” is probably needed to effectively address property issues, given the different waves of displacement in the region.

Mr. Kaelin encouraged both sides to make use of the Geneva discussions and other channels of communication to agree on first steps to alleviate unnecessary hardships for the civilian population, while continuing to work towards a more comprehensive solution.

The ninth round of the Geneva discussions, a forum that brings together representatives of the conflict parties and the international community to discuss, among other issues, questions relating to refugees and IDPs, will resume tomorrow.

The Representative also called on all sides to show more flexibility in agreeing on access routes for the international community to provide humanitarian assistance and help with the recovery and reconstruction effort.

“These are practical arrangements that do not in any way pre-determine political questions. With a minimum will to compromise we could have had an agreement long ago allowing humanitarian organizations to help the most vulnerable to resume normal lives.”

Mr. Kaelin, who carries out his duties in an independent and unpaid capacity, visited Georgia in October 2008 but had been unable to access the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia at that time.

“Flexibility on all sides has allowed me to carry out this visit,” he noted. “I can report that I have enjoyed full access to all places in the South Ossetia that I requested to see. I also had open and frank discussions with key decision-makers on the South Ossetian side and will continue the dialogue with the Georgian Government.”

## Secretary-General calls for global alliance to protect world's biodiversity



**10 November** - As a year-long campaign to safeguard the world's biological diversity gets underway, Secretary-General called on countries and people all over the planet to engage in a global alliance to protect life on Earth.

The General Assembly proclaimed 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity to raise awareness of the unprecedented loss of species – at a rate that some experts estimate to be 1,000 times the natural progression – as a result of human activities.

“A wide variety of environmental goods and services that we take for granted are under threat, with profound and damaging consequences for ecosystems, economies and livelihoods,” Mr. Ban stated in a message issued yesterday, when initial celebrations – under the slogan “Biodiversity is life, biodiversity is our life” – began.

“In this International Year, we must counter the perception that people are disconnected from our natural environment,” he added. “We must increase understanding of the implications of losing biodiversity. In 2010, I call on every country and each citizen of our planet to engage in a global alliance to protect life on Earth.”

The Secretary-General also called for generating a greater sense of urgency and establishing clear and concrete targets, stating that the failure to protect biodiversity should be a “wake-up call.”

In a separate video message issued yesterday, Mr. Ban said that the consequences of biodiversity loss for economies and people will be “profound,” especially for the world’s poorest.

In addition, he cited the need for a “new vision,” noting that the goal set by world leaders in 2002 to substantially reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010 will not be met.

In September 2010, the Assembly will hold a special high-level meeting to give the international community an opportunity to demonstrate much-needed leadership on the issue. That will be followed in October by the Biodiversity Summit to be held in Nagoya, Japan, which will adopt a new strategic plan for implementing the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

“2010 is going to be a historical year for the biodiversity family,” the Convention’s Executive Secretary, Ahmed Djoghlaif, told a news conference in New York last week, as he launched the logo for the Year which shows intertwining representations of flora, fauna and human figures within the figures 2010.

## Home furnishings giant IKEA raises money for UNICEF



Soft toys from the IKEA campaign to fund UNICEF projects

**10 November** - More than 500,000 children, mainly in Africa, are expected to benefit from home furnishings and accessories firm IKEA’s Holiday season fundraising campaign, which will donate one euro for every soft toy sold to the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the non-governmental organization (NGO) Save the Children.

“In UNICEF we know that there is no better investment than that in the education of children,” Philip O’Brien, Director of the agency’s Private Fundraising and Partnerships division, said today of the “1 euro is a fortune... a smile is worth so much” Soft Toys Campaign.

“IKEA’s wonderful Soft Toy Initiative takes this message to hundreds of thousands of customers worldwide and gives them the opportunity to personally contribute to ensuring that millions of children in Africa have a quality education and a better future.”

Now in its fifth year, the campaign has raised over \$25 million for both organizations. The fundraising drive started on 1 November and will stretch to 24 December.

The donations from this year’s sales go from the IKEA Social Initiative to UNICEF in support of “Schools for Africa” with a focus on Child Friendly Schools in six countries – Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Ethiopia, South Africa, Madagascar – as well as education and protection projects in China and Russia.

The IKEA funding will help UNICEF mainstream the comprehensive Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) approach to ensure a quality education for all children.

In Ethiopia, for example, 350,000 children in 300 primary schools stand to benefit from improved quality education through a combination of innovative approaches like school cluster based educational interventions, teacher training, furnishing of educational materials, equipped classrooms, libraries and the provision of sanitation facilities such as separate latrines, hand-washing facilities and potable drinking water.

Since the campaign started in 2003, UNICEF has received almost \$12 million, benefiting education projects for 7 million school age children in more than 20 countries.

IKEA has launched a fun website called Soft Toys AID, supporting UNICEF and Save the Children's education programmes. On the site, the IKEA Soft Toys get together to sing for a better world and visitors are invited to join them in an attempt to create the world's biggest choir.

"We believe children to be the most important people in the world, and supporting projects that give children access to quality education is an important and rewarding task of IKEA Social Initiative," Marianne Barner, head of the Initiative, said.

## Eco-friendly initiatives recognized with UN-backed award

**10 November** - A range of eco-friendly start-up initiatives in Bangladesh, Colombia, India, Niger, Southern Africa and Zimbabwe have won a notable sustainable development award, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) announced today.

The Supporting Entrepreneurs for Environment and Development (SEED) Award recognizes promising new locally-driven enterprises that work to improve livelihoods, tackle poverty and manage the sustainable development of natural resources in developing countries.



Farming project in Ethiopia

"The SEED Gold Winners show us that a low-carbon, resource-efficient green economy is as much a developing country and rural community issue as it is a developed country one," said UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner.

"These genuinely inspiring initiatives are generating multiple economic, social and environmental benefits and being achieved often against enormous odds. The challenge now is to scale them up," noted Mr. Steiner.

The five Gold Winners of the 2009 SEED Award include an association of small-scale women farmers in Zimbabwe striving to reverse severe land degradation through organic farming; a Bangladeshi non-governmental organization (NGO) developing a low-cost solar lantern made from recycled parts of kerosene lanterns; a group in Colombia setting environmental standards for local miners; civil society organizations in Southern Africa and India developing bio-cultural procedures to help indigenous communities share the benefit of local resources; and institutions in Niger establishing sustainable solid waste management systems to keep cities clean.

The SEED Award consists of individually-tailored business support services worth \$35,000 for up to one year to help establish each scheme and increase its impact over the long-term. The services include access to relevant expertise and technical assistance, meeting new partners and building networks, developing business plans and identifying sources of finance.

The SEED Initiative, founded in 2002 by UNEP, is a partnership with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).