



PRESS RELEASE

INTERGRATED CHILD HEALTH AND SANITATION WEEK

10 to 14 December, 2007

2 million children and over half a million women to benefit

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2008 the International year for Sanitation (IYS). The IYS aims at raising awareness on the importance of sanitation and its impacts on achieving all the MDGs. For Malawi, the IYS will be launched simultaneously with the Child Health and Sanitation Week. The main launch ceremony will be in Salima where the Minister of Irrigation and Water Development, Honourable M. Sidik Mia, MP, will be the Guest of Honour.

The Government of Malawi through the ministries of Irrigation and Water Development, Health, Information and Civic Education, and the Department of Nutrition and HIV/AIDS in the Office of the President and Cabinet in partnership with the United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) will conduct the Integrated Child Health and Sanitation Days from 10 to 14 December, 2007.

The week will focus on activities that have high impact on the welfare of the child and are also of low cost compared to other interventions that take time and are expensive. Six of these high impact and relatively low cost interventions include three that are related to water and sanitation and the other three that are related to the health sector.

These high impact interventions are aimed at reducing infant, child and maternal mortality in Malawi currently estimated to be among the 20 highest in the world with under five Mortality at 133 per 1000. The main causes of child death in Malawi are Malaria, diarrhea diseases and acute respiratory infections according to the Demographic Health Survey 2004.

The Government of Malawi and its partners are committed to promoting child survival and development by addressing these causes of child and maternal deaths. During the nationwide campaign the following activities will therefore take place:

1. provision of Vitamin A supplementation to children between the ages of six and 59 months and women within eight weeks of delivery.
2. Provision of de-worming pill to children between 12 and 59 months of age.
3. Re-treatment of bednets
4. Promotion of drinking safe water (water handling including storage and household water treatment

5. Promotion of handwashing with soap at critical times (after using the toilet before handling food, before feeding the baby and after nappy change)
6. Promotion of proper disposal of human faecal matter/ proper latrine use

It is believed that effective delivery of these high impact interventions as a package could substantially further reduce child mortality and morbidity and thus accelerate achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Malawi.

During this period it is estimated that over two million children and just over half a million women will benefit from Vitamin A and the de-worming pill. At least three million mosquito nets are also targeted for re-treatment.

The general public is therefore called upon to take pro-active steps towards improving sanitation facilities at household and community level, practice hand washing at critical times, drink safe water to significantly reduce the prevalence of water and sanitation related diseases and sleep under an Insecticide Treated Mosquito net to prevent Malaria. The general public is further called upon to patronize Demonstration Units in their respective communities.

By visiting these demonstration sites we are contributing to Malawi's efforts of achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Together, we can.

A.F. Mchiela (Mrs.)
**SECRETARY FOR IRRIGATION AND WATER
DEVELOPMENT**

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