



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Italy supports vital events registration in Ethiopia

The Italian Government funds UNICEF with Euro 500,000 to UNICEF to strengthen vital events registration system in Oromia and SNNP regions

ADDIS ABABA, 7 December 2016 – The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation funded UNICEF with a total contribution of €500,000 to strengthen the civil registration system for children’s rights to identify in two regions of Ethiopia: Oromia and SNNPR, in collaboration with the respective regional Vital Events Registration Agencies (VERAs).

The support is crucial as it represents the preliminary condition towards the creation of a fully functional civil and vital registration system of birth, death, marriage and divorce. The funding aims to improve and standardize the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system and contribute to children’s right to identity to protect them from abuse and exploitation, as well as ensure their access to basic services.

The support comes at a critical time in light of Ethiopia’s creation of a fully functional nationwide civil and vital registration system of birth, death, marriage and divorce in August. The funding aims to improve and standardize the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system and help protect children from abuse and exploitation, as well as ensure their access to basic services.

In addition, vital events registration is an important pre-requisite for measuring equity, monitoring trends, and evaluating the impact and outcomes of broader development programmes, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

At the signing ceremony, the **Ambassador of Italy to Ethiopia, H.E. Giuseppe Mistretta** stated that “the registration of birth represents the first step towards the recognition of an individual within a society, allowing him or her to access to basic services and protect him or her from abuses and violence. Avoiding anonymity and invisibility, birth registration sets the basis for an efficient planning of the governmental policies and strategies of good governance”.

“All our current and upcoming projects of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation in Ethiopia are aligned with the priorities and strategies set by the Government of Ethiopia. This initiative’s objectives are also expressed by the Proclamation on Vital Events Registration and National ID (Proclamation No. 760/2012), adopted in August 2012. Coherently with the government strategy, the initiative we are signing today aims at improving the institutional and technical capacity of Regional Vital Events Registration Agency (RVERA) in Oromia and SNNPR to effectively lead and coordinate the registration of vital events” said **Ms. Ginevra Letizia, Head of the Addis Ababa Office of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation**.

Ethiopia has one of lowest levels of birth registration in the world at just 7 per cent. With the new system, however, registration of vital events in Ethiopia has been modernized. From regional up to federal and city level administration, UNICEF is supporting standardisation of registration and certification services, which has been officially launched nationwide.

“UNICEF appreciates the timely contribution from the Italian Government to count every child, and in the process, to make every child count. With proof of age and identity, we can protect every child from diverse child protection concerns including abuse, neglect and exploitation, early marriage, child labour and trafficking, and help them to access basic social services, including education and health,” said **Gillian Mellsop, UNICEF Representative to Ethiopia.**

About Italian Agency for Development Cooperation: the Agency promotes the eradication of poverty, the reduction of inequality, the affirmation of human rights and dignity of individuals - including gender equality and equal opportunities. It works also in the field of conflict prevention and support for peace processes. The Italian Development Cooperation has been working in Ethiopia since 1984 in the traditional sectors as health, agriculture and rural development, education, WASH, Private Sector Development and Emergency to which gender and migration were recently added. Visit us at www.itacaddis.it and www.ambaddisabeba.esteri.it or follow us on Facebook and Twitter at @AICSAddisAbeba and @ItalyinEthiopia.

About UNICEF: UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere. For more information about UNICEF and its work visit: www.unicef.org. Follow us on Twitter and Facebook.

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