

Kenya Millennium Villages get boost in fight against diarrhea

Nairobi, 07 February 2011 - More than 345,000 zinc tablets, used in diarrhea treatment for children, were recently donated to two Millennium Villages in Kenya by the American health company Novus, through the not for profit organization Vitamin Angels, located in California, US.

The tablets were received by the health teams in Sauri, Western Kenya, and Dertu, Northern, in February. They will be used in the management of acute diarrhea among children under five years of age. 'This donation is timely in view of the fact that diarrhea remains one of the leading causes of childhood morbidity and mortality,' said Margaret Wagah, the regional nutrition coordinator for the Millennium Villages in East and Southern Africa. 'The zinc supplementation will serve as a useful nutrition intervention for promoting child survival in the villages.'

'We are very proud of our partnership with Vitamin Angels and how our collective efforts can have such a tremendous impact on the lives of children in need,' stated Thad Simons, President and CEO, Novus International, Inc. 'Partnering with Vitamin Angels is an easy choice for us, their work directly aligns with our vision to 'help feed the world affordable, wholesome food and achieve a higher quality of life.'

Howard Schiffer, President of Vitamin Angels noted, 'We know what a huge difference this zinc will play in saving children's lives. We are thankful to our partners, Novus and Millennium Villages, for their commitment to reaching the children most in need.'

The zinc received will be used to supplement the oral rehydration salt (ORS) and reduce the burden of diarrheal episodes in infants and children under five. Some 1.5 million children worldwide die each year from diarrhea -- most of them in sub-Saharan Africa. According to the WHO and UNICEF, widespread use of ORS in conjunction with zinc can prevent up to 88% of deaths from diarrhea. This is the first time Dertu and Sauri receive zinc tablets donations, respectively 20 and 35 boxes. Usually, supplies are provided by the Kenya Ministry of Health.

In 2010, the village health teams went out of stock, and had to treat diarrhea cases with ORS only. The US donation will cover the local needs in 2011.

###

About Vitamin Angels

Vitamin Angels is dedicated to reducing child mortality worldwide by advancing availability, access and use of essential micronutrients, especially Vitamin A, to newborns, infants and children under five. In 2010, Vitamin Angels connected over 24,000,000 children in 43 countries, including the US, with the vital nutrients they need as a foundation for good health. To learn more about global malnutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and Vitamin Angels' solution for change, visit www.vitaminangels.org.