



## ANNOUNCEMENT

### The 1000 Day Project – Improving the nutritional status of children in Laos

15 November 2012

UNICEF and MMG have partnered with the Laos Ministry of Health to improve the nutrition of children in Southern Laos. The '1000 Day' project aims to provide Lao children health and nutritional support from conception up to the age of two – the first 1000 days.

MMG Limited, which operates the Sepon Mine in Savannakhet province in Southern Laos, has pledged US\$ 1.4 million over a three-year period to an initiative that will distribute approximately 4 million micronutrient sachets which contain important vitamins, zinc and other nutrients.

The project will be implemented in Saravane, Phongsaly and Savannakhet provinces, including communities around the Sepon Mine. It aims to reach an estimated 180,000 children, aged 6 – 59 months, through an innovative, two-pronged approach involving health services and the private sector.

“The first 1000 days of life represent a window of opportunity”, said UNICEF Representative in Lao PDR Tim Schaffter. “Failing to provide the essential micronutrients for health development can lead to life-long impacts.”

Nutrition experts have determined that just one sachet of micronutrients added to a child’s meal each day will have a significant effect in improving their health and development. The sachets will be distributed free of charge via health services to families with children considered most vulnerable and at highest risk of under-nutrition. The private sector will also employ a social marketing strategy to promote and sell the sachets at a subsidised cost to families in areas identified as more likely to be able to afford the supplements.

“This is a highly important project that will target some of the provinces with the highest rates of anemia and other nutrition problems,” said Dr. Inlavanh, Vice Minister to the Ministry of Health Laos. “We know the damage that a lack of proper nutrients can cause to a young child’s health and that this damage is irreversible later in life. Undernourished children will never develop as fully, either physically or cognitively, as when properly nourished early in life.”

In addition UNICEF will provide technical support to help health workers and community volunteers to educate families about the importance of good nutrition practices, ensuring long term sustainable change.

“Through our support of UNICEF/IZA’s “Zinc Saves Kids” initiative, we’ve seen the difference zinc and other micronutrient supplements can make to early childhood development,” said MMG CEO Andrew Michelmore. “With the support of the Lao Ministry of Health and UNICEF, we are extending these benefits to Lao children.”

In Laos, meeting the nutritional needs of children in the earliest years of life is a particular challenge, with rates of chronic malnutrition affecting more than 40 per cent of Lao children under five years old. Micronutrient deficiencies are persistent and widespread among infants and young children, largely due to the poor diet, which is mostly rice-based. Experts at UNICEF highlight that under-nutrition contributes to more than one-third of child deaths globally, and that combatting it is most effective when focusing on the first 1,000 days of a child's life.

According to Tim Schaffter, "This program will be an important boost to broadening evidence-based nutrition interventions already adopted by the Laos Government, complemented by innovative approaches that aim to reach more remote areas where needs are greatest."

**End.**

### **About The MMG – UNICEF Partnership**

MMG and UNICEF partnered from late 2011 to raise funds, awareness and provide on-the-ground programs to target zinc and other micronutrient deficiencies internationally. Through a matched giving campaign via the UNICEF website, and programs such as the Lao 1000 Day project, the partnership aims to distribute the benefits of zinc and other micronutrients to prevent the deaths associated with chronic diarrhea and the life-long impacts of micronutrient deficiencies in early childhood development.

To encourage others to contribute to expanding the reach of micronutrient supplements world-wide, MMG have launched a year-round matched giving campaign through UNICEF's Inspired Gifts web site.

For more information please visit [www.unicef.org.au/mmg](http://www.unicef.org.au/mmg)

### **About UNICEF**

UNICEF works in over 190 countries to promote and protect the rights of children. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, clean water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and HIV.

### **About MMG**

MMG is a mid-tier global resources company which explores, develops and mines base metal deposits around the world. Headquartered in Melbourne, Australia and listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange (Stock Code: 1208), the Company is one of the world's largest producers of zinc and also produces significant amounts of copper, lead, gold and silver. MMG benefits from an experienced international management team and the support of its majority shareholder China Minmetals Corporation. MMG currently owns and operates the Century, Golden Grove and Rosebery mines in Australia, the Kinsevere mine in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the LXML Sepon mine in Laos. For more information visit [www.mmg.com](http://www.mmg.com)

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