

GLOBAL HANDWASHING DAY

15 October 2008



News note

CHILDREN CELEBRATE GLOBAL HANDWASHING DAY

Ulaanbaatar, 15 October 2008 - From Egypt to India, China to Peru, Ethiopia to Indonesia, playgrounds and classrooms, local communities and big cities were buzzing on Global Handwashing Day (15 October 2008) with high profile awareness-raising and educational activity to accelerate handwashing behavior change on a scale never seen before.

In Mongolia, educational and information efforts, targeting school and kindergarten children and their parents, were embarked on in each district of Ulaanbaatar by Public and Private Partnership, formed by government and non-governmental organizations, international agencies and the private sector, such as the Ministry of Education Culture and Science, Ministry of Health and its' agencies, UNICEF, Word Vision, Save the Children UK and Mon-Chemo Co. Ltd.

Launching Global Handwashing Day, representatives of the Public and Private Partnership visited kindergarten # 30 in Bayangol district and taught the children the importance of proper hand washing with soap. Kindergarten teachers organised an engaging performance and the children demonstrated to the visitors how to wash hands with soap properly.

Over 150 children from *khoro* 11 of Bayangol district are being raised up in this kindergarten. Hygiene and sanitation facilities, suitable for children, provided by UNICEF had contributed to improved hygiene practices and prevention of infectious diseases among the kindergarten children.

According to health specialists, incidence of Hepatitis is inclined to increase in the country in 2008 and 2009. Therefore, promotion of good personal hygiene practices and proper handwashing with soap is critical for preventing infectious diseases.

Globally, every 20 seconds a mother's heart breaks over a loss of her son or daughter, caused by a preventable diarrheal disease. A simple hygiene habit – washing hands with soap – could have saved these children's lives.

Diarrhea is both preventable and treatable, yet families in developing countries continue to pay the price of this disease in lost lives, missed school days, reduced resistance to infections, impaired growth, malnutrition and poverty.





When coupled with educational initiatives, handwashing with soap is one of the world's most cost-effective preventive health interventions and has been proven to reduce the risk of not only diarrhea, but also some of its more severe manifestations, such as cholera and dysentery, by 48-59 percent.

2008 Global Handwashing Day spotlights this important issue in the year that the UN General Assembly has designated the International Year of

Sanitation (IYS) to promote improved hygiene practices and draw attention to the world's enormous sanitation challenge. Handwashing plays an important part in the efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals relating to health improvements, education, reduction of poverty and child mortality, as well as access to and effective use of water supply and sanitation services.

The coalition behind the Global Handwashing Day is an alliance of public and private partners who together



form the Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing, an international initiative to promote handwashing with soap to reduce diarrhea in developing countries and implement large-scale handwashing interventions by combining the expertise and resources of the soap industry with the facilities and resources of the governments.

For more information, please visit:
www.globalhandwashing.org

About UNICEF

For 61 years UNICEF has been the world's leader for children, working on the ground in over 150 countries to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for poor countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, quality basic education for all boys and girls, access to clean water and sanitation, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of governments, businesses, foundations and individuals.

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