

## Micronutrient Initiative Partners to Support Innovative Ideas that Deliver Improved Nutrition

**Dhaka, Bangladesh, February 22, 2009** – A regional competition inviting proposals from all South Asian countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) under the theme: “Family and Community Approaches to Improve Infant and Young Child Nutrition” was launched today at Dhaka’s Sonargaon Hotel. This regional competition is part of the Development Marketplace (DM), a competitive grant program that identifies and funds innovative, early stage development projects with high potential for development impact and replication. Under the competitive grant, up to 40,000 \$ will be provided in grants for the implementation of winning projects. Representatives from the World Bank, UNICEF, the United Nation’s World Food Programme, Micronutrient Initiative (MI) and GTZ announced the Development Marketplace on Nutrition in front of members of the media and distinguished guests.

Administered by the World Bank and funded by various partners, including MI, DM has awarded more than \$54 million to innovative projects identified through country, regional and global competitions since 1998. The goal of the South Asia Regional Development Marketplace (DM) on Nutrition is to identify and fund novel ideas that deliver improved nutrition to infants and young children during their first two years of life and to pregnant women. DM creates a platform for engaging civil society and grassroots organizations to share their experiences and innovative ideas with the broader development community on how to improve nutrition among the poor in South Asia.

“We look forward to welcoming these nutrition entrepreneurs from Bangladesh and around the region to Dhaka later this year and making awards to the most innovative proposals”, said Tahseen Sayed, acting Country Director of the World Bank in Bangladesh.

Speaking at the occasion, Dr Zeba Mahmud, Director of the Micronutrient Initiative in Bangladesh said “MI is very pleased to be part of the South Asia Development Marketplace for Nutrition. We see this as a perfect mechanism for encouraging innovation in the region, a region that is highly in need of fresh approaches for addressing the burden of malnutrition. While the proposed projects will be of a smaller scale, we believe this will also generate ideas for large scale programs for vulnerable people and support to build on the winning small-scale programs.”

Dr Mahmud further stated, “We are very pleased to see the interest of the media in this Development Marketplace, and in nutrition more generally. The media are important partners in our common fight to find and apply solutions to address malnutrition”.

“MI is very grateful to the Government of Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) who provided the funding for our contribution to this Development Marketplace”, added Dr Mahmud.

### About the Micronutrient Initiative

The Ottawa-based Micronutrient Initiative is an international not-for-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that the world’s most vulnerable – especially women and children – in developing countries get the vitamins and minerals they need to survive and thrive. Its mission is to develop, implement and monitor innovative, cost-effective and sustainable solutions for hidden hunger, in partnership with others.

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