

Media Advisory: Micronutrient Initiative Recognizes CIDA and Minister Oda for Continued Commitment in Helping to Save and Improve the Lives of Women and Children in Developing Countries

OTTAWA—May 20, 2009-- The Micronutrient Initiative (MI) would like to recognize the Honourable Beverley J. Oda, Minister of International Cooperation, and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for their global leadership and commitment in supporting micronutrient programming in developing countries. In a speech today at the Munk Centre for International Studies, Minister Oda announced that Canada will place a high priority on initiatives that increase access to healthy and nutritious foods. The focus would be on countries such as Afghanistan, Haiti, and others in Africa and the Americas.

“We are encouraged by Minister Oda’s announcement today on aid effectiveness,” said Micronutrient Initiative President Venkatesh Mannar. “Providing access to essential micronutrients is among the most cost-effective measures to save and improve the lives of women and children and strengthen entire communities.”

Millions of the world’s most vulnerable do not get enough nutrients, such as iron, iodine, vitamin A, folic acid and zinc, in their diet. These nutritional deficiencies can lead to illness, blindness, preventable mental disorders and, too often, death.

Low cost doses of micronutrients, when consumed regularly through foods or supplements, ensure that communities grow healthy, strong and realize their full potential.

Last year a panel of eight leading economists, the Copenhagen Consensus, ranked the provision of micronutrients as the world’s best development investment. They determined that an annual investment of US\$ 60 million in vitamin A and zinc supplementation for children alone would yield benefits worth more than US\$ 1 billion per year.

Micronutrient Initiative is a Canadian independent, not-for-profit organization committed to promoting simple, cost-effective solutions for hidden hunger and developing innovative new solutions where needed. Headquartered in Ottawa, Micronutrient Initiative is the longest-standing organization dedicated solely to work with micronutrients. Micronutrient Initiative works in the field in countries such as India, Bolivia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Senegal, Kenya and Ethiopia.

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

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