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World Bank Seeks Innovative Ideas to Improve Nutrition in South Asia

KATHMANDU, February 12, 2009 — The World Bank today launched a competitive Development Marketplace for Nutrition aimed at finding and funding innovative ideas that will change the lives of thousands of pregnant women, infants, and young children in South Asia.

Titled “**Family and Community Approaches to Improving Infant and Young Child Nutrition,**” the Development Marketplace is looking for entrepreneurial organizations across South Asia to submit proposals for local, small-scale projects which have the potential to be scaled up and replicated. The winners will be selected by an international jury of development and nutrition experts at the Development Marketplace event in August, 2009 in Dhaka, Bangladesh and will receive funding to implement their proposals.

*“Malnutrition affects the lives of millions of infants and young children in South Asia,” said **Isabel Guerrero, World Bank Vice President for the South Asia region.** “It saps a child’s growth potential, delays enrollment in school, limits school achievements, and lowers lifetime earnings. This competition offers a unique opportunity to channel small grants directly to community organizations and NGOs who present innovative ways to address this devastating problem.”*

Malnutrition is the single biggest contributor to child mortality in the world. In no place is this problem more serious than in South Asia, where child malnutrition rates are among the highest in the world. Both child underweight and stunting rates in the region are nearly double those in Africa. In Nepal, Malnutrition remains a big problem, evidenced by the fact that nearly half of all children below the age of 5 suffer from stunted growth. Nutrition “stuck” with one in two children under age 5 years is anemic, and 39% of them are underweight.

*“Recent evidence clearly shows that there are proven effective interventions to improve nutrition,” said **Andrea Vermehren, World Bank team leader for the Development Marketplace.** “However, effectively implementing these interventions - and implementing them at scale is a major challenge. We believe this effort will help find new ways of providing innovative solutions to malnutrition.”*

The South Asia Regional Development Marketplace is implemented in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), Micronutrient Initiative, UNICEF, and the World Food Program. The competition is open to civil society groups, social entrepreneurs, youth organizations, private foundations, academia, and private sector corporations in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and

Sri Lanka. The maximum award will be US\$40,000 per proposal. Proposals will be accepted until March 31, 2009.

For eligibility criteria, details on the competition and to submit proposals online, please visit the South Asia Regional Development Marketplace website – www.worldbank.org/nutritiondm2009.

The Development Marketplace global competition has awarded nearly US\$46 million to small-scale projects over the last eight years. Using this funding as a launching pad, projects often go on to scale up or replicate elsewhere, winning prestigious awards within the sphere of social entrepreneurship.

For more information about the World Bank's work in South Asia, please visit <http://www.worldbank.org/sar>

For more information about the World Bank's in Nepal, please visit <http://www.worldbank.org/np>

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