

Deworm the World to expand programmes in 15 countries in 2009

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Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, 31 January 2009 – During the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2009 in Davos-Klosters, the Deworm the World (DtW) Task Force announced the expansion of deworming programmes in Kenya, Guyana, India and 12 other countries through the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). **Deworm the World** is an initiative of the Forum of Young Global Leaders (YGLs).

Since the YGLs launched DtW in 2007, the task force has made a significant impact in promoting deworming around the world. In the words of Michael Kremer, Gates Professor of Developing Societies, Department of Economics, Harvard University, USA, a YGL and founding member of the task force: "The community of YGLs has focused their effort on this initiative because mass treatment of school children for parasitic worms, at a cost of less than 50 cents per child per year, is the most cost effective way to increase school participation of any approach rigorously tested."

The YGLs recognized that they could make a unique impact and meaningful difference by tackling this issue, and are increasing access to education by supporting, coordinating and advocating the expansion of school-based deworming programmes.

In January, President Bharrat Jagdeo of Guyana, also a YGL, announced his commitment to roll out deworming across Guyana and treat all school-age children in the country in 2009. Prime Minister Raila Amolo Odinga of Kenya announced the scale-up of sustained deworming programmes through a national school health programme to treat 3 million children in the most at-risk areas of the country in 2009. Josette Sheeran, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), Rome, announced a partnership with DtW to increase coverage to treat an additional 2 million children in 12 more countries in 2009 under WFP-assisted school feeding programmes. Vikram Akula, Founder and Chairman, SKS Microfinance, India, also a YGL, committed to using his company's distribution network to treat 1 million school-age children through a pilot deworming programme that will launch this year.

Deworming is a challenge that plays to YGL strengths. The issue is global – spanning virtually every developing country – as is the YGL network. Kristin J. Forbes, Professor of Economics, Sloan School of Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA, a YGL and founding member of the task force, said of the progress made since launching this initiative: "Our experience with Deworm the World shows the amazing power, energy and synergies of the YGL network. YGLs from all sectors – including microfinance, media, fundraising, academia, NGOs and the private sector – have all made contributions of some kind to show that the community as a whole is much more powerful than the sum of its parts."

YGL Alejandro Ramirez, Chief Executive Officer, Cinopolis, Mexico, another founding member of the task force, has produced a short film that is a call to action against

parasitic worms. Directed by award-winning Eugenio Polgovsky, the film will premiere at the Deworm the World event in Davos on Friday 30 January.

The YGLs have raised the profile of this important issue and continue to work to expand deworming programmes across the globe. Many additional programmes are ready to launch as soon as funding for activities such as shipping and training are identified, potentially increasing worldwide coverage from 10% to 30% over three years.

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