

PRESS RELEASE

Head of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation pays visit to the SNNP Region of Ethiopia and renews Italy's commitment to fight HIV and STIs

Addis Ababa, 11 February 2019. On 6-7 February 2019, the Head of the Addis Ababa Office of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, Mr. Tiberio Chiari, travelled to the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNP) of Ethiopia to engage with the implementing partners and meet the beneficiaries of the project "Community Health Education, Capacity & Knowledge building" (CHECK).

The project, funded by the Government of Italy through the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation and implemented by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS), has a budget of 500,000 Euros and aims to support the prevention of HIV/AIDS and communicable diseases and the promotion of sexual and reproductive healthcare in the SNNP Region.

The visit provided an opportunity to renew Italy's commitment to fight HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and to strengthen the partnership with UNAIDS. In Hawassa, the **Head of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, Mr. Tiberio Chiari**, together with **UNAIDS Executive Director and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Michel Sidibé**, met two CSOs, *Medhin Ethiopia Positive Elders Association* and *Tilla Association of Women Living with HIV*, which are implementing some activities within the CHECK project. Furthermore, they visited the Hawassa Industrial Park (HIP), potential HIV transmission site.

The Regional Director of UNAIDS, Dr. Catherine Sozi; the UNAIDS Country Director and Senior Advisor to AU and UNECA, Mrs. Berthilde Gahongayire; the State Minister of Health, Mrs. Seharla Abdulahi; the Former State Minister, Dr. Kebede Worku; the Head of the Regional Health Bureau, Mr. Aknaw Kawaz, also joined the visit.

The CHECK project contributes to reducing the spread of Communicable Diseases thanks to a combination of mutually reinforcing interventions focusing on disease prevention, health promotion and peer support which target especially women and youth in areas at highest risk of transmission. In particular, the project plays a crucial role in achieving the target 3.3 of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 3: By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases.

Over the past 15 years, Italy has invested 50 Million Euros in favour of the development of the health sector of Ethiopia, and has pledged 15.85 Million Euros in the Country Framework 2017-2019 with the aim to ensure high quality and equitable health services for all Ethiopians.

For more information, kindly contact: Veronica Cornacchione, Communication Officer, Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, Tel. +251 966 254149; v.cornacchione@itacaddis.it