

UNICEF headquarters New York celebrates world prematurity day - Executive Director Ms. Henrietta Fore visits UNICEF exhibit for World Prematurity Day

NEW YORK, 15 November 2019 -- Every year, 15 million babies are born prematurely – more than one in ten of all babies around the world. November 17th marks World Prematurity Day, providing a great opportunity to raise awareness and call attention to the heavy burden of death, disability and the pain that preterm birth causes, and show existing solutions that UNICEF through its multisectoral approaches, is providing. Without a major push to address prematurity, we will not reach the Sustainable Development Goal for health.

To commemorate the occasion, the global Maternal, Newborn and Adolescent Health Unit (Health Section) in collaboration with WASH, Nutrition and ECD sections set up a visual gallery at the UNICEF house lobby to showcase UNICEF's response to address the burden. Showing their support for the effort, Executive Director Henrietta Fore and Programme Division acting director Ms. Henriette Ahrens were the exhibit's first attendees.

After a short introduction by Ms. Ahrens where she highlighted the importance of the issues around prematurity, Executive Director Fore was introduced one-on-one to the teams responsible for the display. The organizing team representatives from Health, WASH, Nutrition and ECD Sections collaborated for one collective goal: to highlight the issues of preterm birth, newborn health and talk about solutions.

The visual gallery included stations on:

- Neonatal resuscitation – hands on demonstration for staff members on neonatal mannequin
- 3D Film on real life experience of delivery room action – Seeing is believing
- Kangaroo Mother/Father care station – Essential newborn care and being a champion in your team and work place
- Hand washing station and water filter – Necessity for infection prevention and control
- Squatting Slab (toilet) – Necessity for respectful and dignified maternity care
- Display of relevant training materials, global reports and key publications from Health, WASH, Nutrition and ECD programs
- Photo Gallery capturing success stories from the field on improving care for PTB/LBW and observation of WPD

Stopping at the first station, Executive Director Fore shared her personal experience with prematurity. "In my family we had some premature babies, so I understand the burden," said the Executive Director. "Out in the field I've been privileged to see these interventions and what we do makes all the difference, it helps not only the children but the families as well."

Continuing on through the gallery, ED Fore praised the innovative initiatives to ensure quality care for maternal and newborn health while promoting early childhood development.

“We need to get a lot more visitors,” said the Executive Director. “I’ll bet there’ll be more people who want to be part of your team.”

As her visit concluded, the ED Fore described the exhibit in glowing terms, calling it, “...educational, interesting, well done, appealing and family friendly.”

UNICEF HQ World Prematurity Day Photo Gallery



Group picture with UNICEF Executive Director Ms. Henrietta Fore



Organizing team



ED Fore practices resuscitation skills



ED Fore reviews global ENAP Country Progress Report



Dr Tedbabe Hailegebriel demonstrates Kangaroo Mother Care



ED Fore browses through Early Childhood Development tools



Keep them warm – ED Fore examines premie hats knitted by UNICEF headquarters staff members. Over 4,000 hats have been knitted and distributed to KMC Units in various health facilities through UNICEF regional and country offices



*Proud grandmas joined the initiative !
Ms Jung Sook Choi (left) knitted over 1,000 hats
Ms Hae-ok Kim (right) knitted over 500 hats and still counting*