

1000 Days Video Launch- Speech by Steve Dowall

Respected Director and members of the press,

We welcome you to LIFT today for the launch of the 1,000 Days video. The Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund takes good nutrition very seriously, and we promote it across all of the projects that we fund as a resilience measure to bolster people's ability to learn, to work more productively, and cope with setbacks and change. There is more information about LIFT's work to improve the livelihoods and food security of rural poor people in the package that you have received.

The video we are promoting today is funded by LIFT and made in collaboration with the LEARN consortium and the Ministry of Health's National Nutrition Centre. Its purpose is to raise awareness on the importance of good nutrition in the 1000 day's between a woman's pregnancy and her child's second birthday. In 2014, Myanmar joined the Scaling Up Nutrition movement or the SUN movement, and with your support, this video can play a major role to promote good nutrition in Myanmar.

I cannot stress the importance of the 1,000 days campaign enough: Myanmar is listed as one of the world's 36 high-burden countries for chronic malnutrition and stunting, and the rate of child stunting among the poorest quintile of the population is nearly 50 per cent. That's one in every two children. What is particularly dangerous is under-nutrition during the first 1000 days of life, as it limits a child's future growth and development.

Better nutrition is a priority in the government's strategy to alleviate poverty, and this is reflected in the *National Plan of Action on Food and Nutrition* and the new *National Social Protection Policy and Strategy*, where one of the eight flagship programmes is a special nutrition cash transfer programme for pregnant women and mothers of young children.

LIFT is supporting government efforts and has made nutrition a core part of its own new strategy by increasing expenditure on nutrition specific and nutrition-sensitive programming. LIFT has supported

around 252,000 households or around 1.1 million people improve their food security by more than one month - but clearly there is much more to be done.

LIFT is directly addressing these nutrition challenges :

- i) insufficient knowledge of good nutrition practices – this video is a prime example
- ii) inability to afford a nutritious diet and maternal/child health care
- iii) difficult access to nutrient rich food, and
- iv) insufficient nutrition-sensitive information and evidence in Myanmar to mobilise resources.

You will have received a package with television and radio broadcast versions of the 1000 days video when you arrived today; I appeal to all of you to spread the 1000 days message as widely as possible. We need to ensure that awareness on the importance of good nutrition in a child's first 1000 days reaches every section of society right across the country.

I would like to now invite Dr May Khin Than, the Director, National Nutrition Centre to address to the press. After that, Elizabeth Whelan and Saw Eden from Save the Children, will introduce the video.

Many thanks to you all and I look forward to seeing the video on your channels.