Earth Institute puts roots down in Africa

By SSI staff writer

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia—In less than six months Professor Jeffery Sachs has visited Ethiopia twice, and specifically visited Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi on both occasions. And although Sachs is known for taking on a broad range of subjects in regards to Millennium Development Goals, the creation of policy to build a sustainable future and others, his particular focus on this visit was the issue of health.

During his visit the Ethiopian Ministry of Health announced an ambitious five year acceleration of primary health care program at the close of last week. It is attempting to rally funding support from the international community. If put into full action the Health Extension Program is calling for some 1.7 billion USD to train 26,000 young women between the ages of 16 and 21 years of age. The program is hoped to have a major impact on preventative health care in the country and was developed completely by the Ministry of Health. Although the total funds required have yet to be raised the program has already begun using Ethiopian government funds with some 2,400 women set to complete a one year preventative training program by the end of 2004. The initiative is being supported by the newly formed Center for National Health Development in Ethiopia (CNDHE) that was officially inaugurated during Professor Sachs visit to Ethiopia this past weekend.

The center, which began some of its operations in July, has been designed to provide technical assistance to the Federal Ministry of Health and is being headed by Dr. Awash Teklehaimanot, a noted Professor of clinical Epidemiology and Director of the Malaria program at Columbia University. As well CNDHE will serve as an independent evaluator of the Health Extension Program and other health programs. In particular the center hopes to raise the general awareness of preventative health issues throughout the entire country through its relationship as a sort of think tank for the Ministry of Health and working with NGOs.

Sachs on his part noted that the center is an Earth Institute initiative to “assist the government to scale-up health services”. And although it is certainly not the Institute’s first project in Africa, it is the first center for the Earth Institute physically on the African continent, as well as it is in its own national based center. According to Sachs, “extreme poverty could be reduced sharply and quickly” with the implementation of a program such as the one being proposed. The initiative for the creation of the center in Ethiopia is the brainchild of Dr. Awash and was carried-out as a direct result of the ambitious preventative health program developed by the Ministry of Health.

Also on hand for the official opening of the center were Earth Institute media personnel from New York who took the opportunity to visit 150 women being trained at a preventive health training center in Asela, Ethiopia. Dr. Awash explained that this initiative is bold and is the first of its kind. According to Awash, it is a difficult decision for a mother to take a half-day journey or more to a clinic when she has doubts about things such as the clinic being open when she arrives or if it will have the medicine required to treat her child.

In regards to his discussion with PM Zenawi, Sachs disclosed that sector plan are being developed with the goal of, not only putting trained health workers in place throughout the country but to have 20-30 trained personnel in each Kebele (neighborhood or sub-district) to handle a broad range of issues from health to infrastructure and education. The PM also explained during their meeting that even if donors do not come through with the requested funding, Ethiopia has a plan B to carry-out the proposed health initiative.

Sachs explained that funding would allow a more rapid quality implementation of the program and commented that, “Ethiopia has excellent leadership, combined with incredible need. Therefore the urgency and possibility for action are combined.” When asked about his relationship with Zenawi, Sachs said that he works with many African heads of state and that, in particular, it has been a pleasure working with the PM of Ethiopia.

Professor Jeffery Sachs is the advisor to Secretary General, Kofi Annan in regards to the Millennium Project. The Project has the objective of significantly reducing the hardships of the poorest of the poor by 2015.

Yemen

Job Vacancy Announcement

In its endeavors to enhance its in-flight services by recruiting multilingual female flight attendants from selected countries, Yemen Airways is inviting applications for flight attendant positions by individuals who fulfill the following requirements.

1. This job vacancy is open to Ethiopians and Yemenis of Ethiopian Origin
2. Applicants should not be more than 24 years old
3. Applicants should be single
4. Applicants should have completed 12 grade secondary school
5. Eye sight of applicants must be perfect
6. Applicants must be able to write and speak English
7. Applicants must be more than 1.60 meters in height

Applications must include one postcard size and one passport size photos, all relevant C.V. plus supporting documents and be forwarded by registered mail to the following address.

Area Manager Ethiopia
Yemen Airways
P.O. Box 1079
Addis Ababa

The deadline for submission of applications is December 31, 2004. Only short listed incumbents will be contacted for physical appearance and interview on a date to be notified later on.

Successfull applicants will be based in Sana’a and Aden and will be provided the necessary housing and training by Yemen Airways.