

## **MEDIA RELEASE:**

### **MMG partnership addresses child malnutrition in Laos**

**10 June 2014**

MMG Limited today commenced the distribution phase of the '1000 Day Project' to improve child nutrition in southern Lao PDR, where the company operates the LXML Sepon copper mine.

The public-private partnership with the Lao Ministry of Health and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) aims to improve nutrition in a critically important phase of childhood development – the first 1000 days. MMG has pledged US\$1.38 million over three years to support the project.

The partnership will distribute four million micronutrient sachets containing vitamins, iron, zinc and other nutrients to over 180,000 families. When mixed with a daily meal, the supplement will fortify a child's diet to help prevent malnutrition, anaemia and similar illnesses. This will also be supported by a community education program on good hygiene, proper nutrition and age-appropriate feeding practices.

The sachets will be distributed by the Lao Health Ministry, (UNICEF), Lao PDR Women's Union (LWU) and Population Services International (PSI) across the three provinces of Savannakhet, Saravan, and Attapeu, with the potential for further expansion across the Lao PDR.

Poor nutrition contributes to over one-third of child deaths globally and affects more than 40 per cent of Lao children under five years old. The first 1,000 days of a child's life are critically important in preventing nutrition-related diseases. Micronutrient deficiencies, such as anaemia, result in serious cognitive and physical impairments.

Executive General Manager Stakeholder Relations Troy Hey said that MMG's investment in this project is an important part of its commitment to the region.

"At MMG our belief – we mine for progress – is reinforced by long-term investment in partnerships with our people and communities. The 1000 Day Project is further evidence of this investment, exploring new partnerships for the development of a generation of children around our Sepon mine in southern Lao PDR," said Mr Hey.

"The development of our country depends on giving children a healthy start in the early stages of life," said Dr Inlavanh Keobounphanh, Vice Minister of Health, Lao PDR. "This initiative is absolutely critical in helping the Lao PDR meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for childhood survival and nutrition. It will bring better health and other opportunities to Lao children and future generations."

"Good nutrition can bring powerful benefits to individuals and communities. Children who are well nourished, especially in the first 1000 days of life, are more likely to be healthy and able to learn," said Dr Viorica Berdaga, Acting Representative, and Chief of Health and Nutrition, UNICEF Lao PDR. "By mobilising development partners and working with vulnerable communities, we can change the lives of thousands of families."

In the first year, the micronutrient sachets, branded 'SuperKid', will be distributed at no cost to families with children under two years of age in Savannakhet province in targeted remote or other disadvantaged areas.

Additional sachets will be provided at a subsidised price, and made available to families with children under five years of age.

The University of British Columbia conducted research to successfully deploy the project.

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*A mother feeds her child with SuperKid, a vitamin and mineral supplement, being introduced through private-public sector partnership to reduce rates of anaemia and other micronutrient deficiencies in Lao PDR.*

**Credit:** UNICEF/Bree Fitzgerald

**About MMG [www.mmg.com](http://www.mmg.com)**

MMG is a global resources company which explores, develops and mines base metal deposits around the world. It is headquartered in Melbourne, Australia and listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange.

MMG believes in mining for the progress of its people, investors, host governments and communities.

In partnership with the government of the Lao PDR, MMG owns and operates the LXML Sepon mine. MMG also owns and operates the Century, Golden Grove and Rosebery mines in Australia, and the Kinsevere mine in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**About UNICEF [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)**

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere.

**The MMG–UNICEF Partnership [www.unicef.org.au/mmg](http://www.unicef.org.au/mmg)**

MMG and UNICEF partnered from late 2011 to raise funds, awareness and provide on-the-ground programs to target zinc and other micronutrient deficiencies internationally. Through a matched giving campaign via the UNICEF website, the partnership aims to distribute the benefits of zinc and other micronutrients to prevent the deaths associated with chronic diarrhoea and the life-long impacts of micronutrient deficiencies in early childhood development.

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