Government to match War Child appeal to support children traumatised by war

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Department for International Development has today (Tuesday 9th October) announced its commitment to match funding raised through War Child’s appeal to support children in the Central African Republic traumatised by war.

The appeal will raise funds for a new 18-month project to provide targeted psycho-social support and further generalised support to children whose development is held back by the after effects of the country’s brutal civil war.

UK aid will match pound-for-pound the first £500,000 raised by the appeal, as the Department for International Development calls on nations, donors and organisations to all work together to support children around the world who have suffered trauma and distress as a result of conflicts.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

“In the Central African Republic the development of many children is held back by the trauma and distress of living through conflict. War Child’s appeal will help improve hundreds of children’s lives and transform their futures through psycho-social support.”

“The British public show time and again their compassion and desire to see a better future for the world’s poorest children, which is why during this appeal the UK government will match pound for pound the public’s generosity up to £500,000.”

The project seeks to improve the psycho-social wellbeing of children, empower them to resolve their own problems and create a better learning environment in schools.

Thanks to both the generosity of the British public and the partnership from UK aid and War Child, around 400 children will have improved psycho-social wellbeing. Children will be empowered to solve their own problems, and their learning environment in school will be improved. The project estimates it will support 2,000 children will improved access to recreational spaces and interaction with their peers.

Rob Williams, CEO of War Child UK said:

“We’re delighted that War Child has been awarded this aid match, which will allow us to deliver vital psychosocial support to children living with the consequences of war – children whose experiences we have shone a light on through our Learn to Live campaign. This support will double the generous donations we receive from the British public – showing what a huge difference UK Aid can make to children’s lives.”

Today, one in six children live in conflict zones – that’s more than 350 million children worldwide.

Children exposed to conflict often face severe emotional stress which can lead to the development of mental health issues. All too often, people with mental health conditions have their human rights violated and experience stigma, discrimination and exclusion in all walks of life.
Mental health is an essential global development issue and critical to poverty reduction. Investing in mental health is key to delivering on the promise of the Sustainable Development Goals. One in four people will develop a mental health condition in their lifetime, and mental health conditions are one the leading causes of disability and ill-health worldwide.

Unless support is provided, trauma and distress can last well beyond the conflict. Failure to address these issues can be detrimental to a child’s development and can ultimately hinder their ability to contribute fully in their societies. In schools, children are unable to learn effectively if they are facing high levels of stress which limits their ability to develop the essential skills they need to get on in life.

NOTES TO EDITORS

- War Child’s appeal would start in October 2018 and the project would launch in January 2019.
- Through UK Aid Match, the UK government will match all donations pound for pound up to £500,000.
- UK Aid Match brings charities, the British public and the UK government together to collectively change the lives of some of the world’s poorest and most vulnerable people.
- It is designed to provide opportunities for the UK public to engage with international development issues and have a say in how UK aid is spent, whilst boosting the impact of the very best civil society projects to reach the poorest people in developing countries.
- For every £1 donated to a UK Aid Match charity appeal, the government will also contribute £1 of UK aid, to help these projects go further in changing and saving lives. UK Aid Match is funded from the international development budget, for donations made by individuals living in the UK.
- The announcement precedes the launch of major new study on Global Mental Health, supported by the UK government. The Lancet Commission on Global Mental Health and Sustainable Development, provides a new blueprint for action on mental health in some of the world’s poorest countries. The report and website will go live at www.globalmentalhealthcommission.org on 9 October at 23.30 BST.
- As the government marks World Mental Health Day (Wednesday 10th October), the UK Government is hosting the first Global Ministerial Mental Health Summit here in London to drive change.
- At the summit, the government will affirm it’s a commitment to place a greater focus on mental health and psychosocial support in its education in emergencies work. [In a new Disability Inclusion Framework to be published at the end of the year, DFID will further set out how it will drive change on mental health and work to eradicate the stigma and discrimination faced by many.]