

MEDIA RELEASE

“Silver Banner Award” conferred on UNICEF by the Regional Council of Tuscany-Italy

Florence- Italy, 29 – 30 November 2006- During a ceremony devoted to “Voluntarism and Volunteers”, the President of the Regional Council of Tuscany Hon. Riccardo Nencini, conferred the ‘Silver Banner Award’ on UNICEF. The Silver Banner Award is the highest recognition yearly assigned by the Regional Council of Tuscany to distinguished people and organizations for their commitment and tireless efforts for the advancement of humanity.

Marta Santos Pais, Director of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre received the award on behalf of the UNICEF Executive Director, Ms. Ann M. Veneman.

“This occasion is very special for UNICEF as we are celebrating the 60th anniversary from when, immediately after the Second World War, UNICEF started its work in favour of the European children, who were living in extremely terrible conditions for the consequences of the war” Marta Santos Pais remarked in thanking the Regional Council of Tuscany for the award.

She also acknowledged the importance of the contribution given by young volunteers in different parts of the world saying that “Their role and contribution on educating their peers on the rights of children, on the prevention against HIV/AIDS or against grave human rights violations like Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) need to be recognized and enhanced”.

Marta Santos Pais recognized the important commitment of the Region towards children. The decision of hosting next year an international meeting –called S. Rossore – as a preparatory event to the follow-up session of the United Nations General Assembly to review the commitments taken by Governments at the 2002 Special Session, is to be considered in the context of the overall agreement signed between UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre and the Tuscany Region.

The Silver Banner Award was presented to UNICEF and other important personalities and organizations, including the Coordinator of the UN Volunteers Programme Ad De Raad; the founder of the Acid Survivors Foundation (Bangladesh) Monira Rahman; the Director, Cesare De Florio La Rocca, of the project Axé from the Centre for the protection of children and adolescents of Salvador Bahia, a project initiated in collaboration with UNICEF Brazil; the Head of the project for rehabilitation in Afghanistan of the International Committee of Red Cross, Alberto Cairo; the representative in Italy of Amnesty International Paolo Poggiati.

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About the “Festa della Toscana”

The yearly “Festa della Toscana” is an official celebration established by the Regional Council of Tuscany to commemorate the abolishment of Death Penalty by the Grand Duke of Tuscany Peter Leopold on 30 November 1786, first time in the whole world.

Every year, on the occasion of the Festa della Toscana, the Regional Council selects distinguished people or organizations in the area of human rights to confer its Silver Banner Award on.

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