



CHRISTIE'S



**ART FOR HEALTH
L'ARTE CONTEMPORANEA INCONTRA LA DONNA
Press conference in Rome highlights Christie's "Art for Health" Auction
to save mother and child lives**

*WHO, The Partnership, artist Elisabetta Farina and NGO Imagine Onlus- talk about
the innovative Art project- Art for Health*

Rome, June 16, 2008 -A press conference in Rome has highlighted the innovative Art for Health collaboration between an Italian artist, Elisabetta Farina, the World Health Organization (WHO), The Partnership, the Italian NGO, Imagine Onlus, which will auction some 40 original women's paintings on Wednesday 18 June at the prestigious headquarters of Christie's auction house in Rome (by invitation only).

The proceedings will be fully devoted to the project "A mobile clinic for 'La Mosquitia'," in the Central American country of Honduras, a project of Imagine Onlus and the Reproductive Health Department of the WHO.

"We thought we would reach out to them," says the president of Imagine Onlus, Ignazio Marino. "The project to buy a mobile clinic for the population of Mosquito's, the ethnic group most widespread in the territory, aims to improve the health conditions of local communities, with particular attention to women and children. We will work in the prevention and treatment of diseases such as malaria and anemia, launching a process of awareness-raising and health education to increase awareness about preventive measures, focusing on women and children. A medical and paramedics team will be able to reach the most remote local communities along the Rio Kruta and the surrounding lakes, to provide basic medical assistance following WHO guidelines."

All this will be possible thanks to the proceeds from the sale of Elisabetta Farina's paintings, auctioned by Christie's, at its Roman headquarters, the Palazzo Massimo Lancellotti, on 18 June. It is an opportunity to unite art and solidarity in support of women's health worldwide. "I believe that every product of creativity and of human action has a special significance if it is able to contribute to the growing discussion and collaboration," says Elizabeth Farina. "My paintings are voices that denounce the existence of so many avoidable injustices. They are, in fact, words pronounced 'by women for women' in a sort of physical and mental journey where reality and fiction join to improve the living conditions of many people."

The Art for Health project was launched in 2006 by the Department of Reproductive Health and Research of WHO. "The objective of the Art for Health project is to use art to raise awareness about the health problems affecting entire countries and improve reproductive health worldwide, especially the health of women and children---including 'a mobile clinic for the Mosquito in Honduras'," says Dr Mario Meriardi, Coordinator for maternal and Child Health at the Department of Reproductive Health and Research (RHR), WHO. "The artworks commissioned for Art for Health were created to invite the audience to relate to the women portrayed, to change the erroneous idea that disadvantaged women are victims of their circumstances. The paintings we create show the image of capable women, ready to promote their health and that of their families."

"The indicators", continues Dr Meriardi, "show that many developing countries are not on target to reach the Millennium Goal No. 5 (To reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio between 1990 and 2015). These data show that the world faces an enormous challenge for the improvement of reproductive health, especially in economically disadvantaged countries." Dr Meriardi notes an urgent need to develop alternative strategies to attract the necessary resources.

Experts have recently agreed that an additional investment of US \$ 10.2 billion per year is needed to resolve the problems relating to maternal and child health in the most affected countries. "The need for funding for maternal child health in the world is a priority," says Dr Flavia Bustreo, Deputy Director of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health. "In 2005, Italy allocated just over 5 cents of a US dollar per capita for activities in support of maternal and child health. On the other hand, Luxembourg (with 31.8 U.S. dollars) and Norway (10.3 U.S. dollars per capita) are the countries in Europe that invest the most. We hope that Italy returns to be one of the leading countries in solving this important problem," said Dr Bustreo.

Art for health attempts to raise awareness about WHO worldwide projects in the areas of health, development and women's health research." The huge discrepancy in reproductive health between women from rich countries and poor countries is one of the most glaring examples of social injustice of our days," says Dr Paul Van Look, Director, RHR -WHO. "This is why we decided to involve Imagine Onlus in the project 'Art for Health' in Italy."

Somewhere in the world, a child dies every 3 seconds and a pregnant woman dies every minute. More than 530,000 women and 3 million newborns do not survive conditions due to pregnancy and childbirth complications. These deaths, most of them preventable, occur among the poorest people of Africa, Asia and Latin America, who bear the brunt of maternal and child mortality. Africa registers 33% of maternal, 28% of the neonatal and 43% of the overall child mortality. In Ethiopia, 166 children out of 1,000 die before they turn five years of age each year, a rate 30 times higher than in Italy.

In Honduras young women die during childbirth due to hemorrhages; children die largely from malaria, anemia and infectious diseases of various kinds. The situation is particularly critical in the Mosquito region where about 300 pregnant women die per 100,000 newborns and 3.2% of children under five years are affected by malaria. 75% of the Mosquito population lives below the poverty line and the region is a very poor one, with isolated communities lacking in infrastructure and health services and regularly devastated by hurricanes and tropical storms.

The paintings to be auctioned by Christie's on 18 June 2008 have already been seen by thousands of people who viewed the Exhibitions of 'Art for Health' in Cape Town, Dar es Salaam, Kuala Lumpur, London, Milan, Paris and Parma, among other locations.

For more information regarding the auction, please contact:

Advocacy officer Marta Seoane- +41 79 475 5551

Email: seonem@who.int

In Rome (Italian): "

Ufficio Stampa, Adnkronos Comunicazione

Stella Manduchi +39 06 5807 490 – 331.6747458

Maria Teresa Marino +39 06 5807 494 – 347 7673952

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The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health was launched in September 2005 to accelerate efforts towards achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 (reduce child mortality) and 5 (improve maternal health). The Partnership aim is to intensify and harmonize national, regional and global action to improve maternal, newborn and child health. It is made up of a broad constituency of more than 250 members representing partner countries, UN and multilateral agencies, nongovernmental organizations, health professional associations, bilateral donors and foundations, and academic and research institutions. The Partnership, whose Secretariat is hosted by the WHO, collaborates with WHO departments in a number of maternal, newborn and child health projects. As such, it supports Art for Health by organizing exhibitions at different events, raising awareness about the project and its goals to different constituencies and organizations around the world. More information about The Partnership: www.pmnch.org