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REEBOK AND THE U.S. FUND FOR UNICEF PARTNER TO HELP PUT CHILD LABORERS IN SCHOOL

The 'Fund for Iqbal' is Created In Memory of Slain Child Activist

NEW YORK, May 6, 2004 – Last night, at the 2004 Reebok Human Rights Award ceremony, the U.S. Fund for UNICEF became the recipient of a generous grant from Reebok International Ltd. The grant to support UNICEF is in memory of the late Iqbal Masih, a child laborer turned child rights activist who was the recipient of the Reebok Youth Action Award in 1994. Tragically, Iqbal was shot and killed in his home village outside Lahore, Pakistan in April 1995; he was 13.

UNICEF will use the grant to fund education programs to help put child laborers in school in south Asia. The Asian and Pacific regions harbor the largest number of child workers in the five to 14 age group, 127.3 million in total. Iqbal felt very strongly that children should be inside classrooms learning, instead of working. UNICEF has long advocated that education is a powerful means of preventing child labor, because children who are in school are at less risk of exploitation.

"Many child workers are not only being exploited, they are often being denied education, basic health care, and adequate nutrition," said Charles J. Lyons, president of the U.S. Fund for UNICEF. "Exploitative child labor is an unconscionable practice that must end. UNICEF recognizes that this is a fight that can not be won without allies in the private sector. Reebok's grant is a welcome partnership that we hope will become a trend."

Iqbal was just four years old when he experienced one of the most exploitative forms of child labor - debt bondage. Iqbal's parents sold him to a carpet maker at the age of four to finance his elder brother's wedding. For six years, Iqbal was often chained to his work station. He suffered beatings and other forms of punishment. One afternoon, after six years of enslavement, Iqbal managed to escape and made his way to a rally organized by the Bonded Labor Liberation Front, where he addressed the crowd and spoke out for the first time against child labor.

Later, with assistance from others, he confronted the carpet master and secured his emancipation. Iqbal went on to become a leading activist against child labor. By raising awareness about the cruelty of child labor and exploitation he helped to secure the freedom of hundreds of his peers.

"Iqbal's determination to see that all children have access to education inspired us back in 1994, and continues to inspire us today, said Paul Fireman, Chairman and CEO of Reebok International Ltd. "With this grant, we honor Iqbal's dream to end child labor and to ensure that all children are in classrooms."

The Reebok grant of \$250,000 will be distributed to UNICEF over a period of three years. UNICEF will use the generous donation to fund its "Education as a Preventive Strategy" program in south Asia. The program has existed since 1986; it seeks to respond to three main challenges to educating working children:

- Access -- Getting working children into the classroom. Strategies to achieve this include early childhood programmes, distance learning, bilingual education and flexible scheduling of classes, so that children who are working can also attend school.
- Second chance opportunities – Getting working children in school often requires transitional arrangements, including non-formal education and accelerated classes.
- Retention -- Keeping children at risk of dropping out because of economic, cultural and social reasons, in school. Interventions include financial incentives to families, and improving the quality of education by integrating life skills and livelihood components.

ABOUT CHILD LABOR

An estimated 246 million children are engaged in exploitative child labor, in clear violation of international labor standards. Of those, almost three-quarters work in hazardous situations or conditions, such as working in mines, working with chemicals and pesticides in agriculture or working with dangerous machinery. They are everywhere toiling as domestic servants in homes, laboring behind the walls of workshops, hidden from view in plantations.

Millions of girls work as domestic servants and unpaid household help and are especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Millions of others work under horrific circumstances. They may be trafficked (1.2 million), forced into debt bondage or other forms of slavery (5.7 million), into prostitution and pornography (1.8 million), into participating in armed conflict (0.3 million) or other illicit activities (0.6 million). However, the vast majority of child laborers – 70 percent or more – work in agriculture.

ABOUT UNICEF

Founded in 1946, UNICEF helps save, protect and improve the lives of children around the world through immunization, education, health care, nutrition, clean water and sanitation. UNICEF is non-partisan and its cooperation is free of discrimination. In everything it does, the most disadvantaged children and the countries in greatest need have priority. For more information, please visit www.unicefusa.org or call 1-800-4UNICEF.

ABOUT THE REEBOK HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM

Reebok has a longstanding commitment to human rights. The Reebok Human Rights Award exposes injustice and supports young human rights defenders who have made significant contributions to human rights through non-violent means. Grants provided by the Reebok Human Rights Foundation help support human rights initiatives around the globe. Reebok's commitment to human rights is reflected in its business practices that prohibit the use of child labor and other abuses of internationally recognized labor standards. For more information about the Reebok Human Rights Program, please visit <http://www.reebok.com/humanrights>

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