



**IN THE LEAD-UP TO THE ELECTIONS, UNICEF GOODWILL AMBASSADOR MIA FARROW
ENCOURAGES YOUTH TO BE NON VIOLENT ACTORS OF CHANGE**

**UNICEF and Search for Common Ground launch a \$1.6 million programme
supported by the Peace Building Fund**

NEW YORK/CONAKRY, GUINEA, 10 May 2010 – UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Mia Farrow launched a \$1.65 million project geared at youth to encourage them to be peaceful actors of change in the lead up to the elections.

"Working with young leaders to build understanding and help them work through their differences is essential during the political transition and beyond" said Mia Farrow, at the ceremony yesterday in Conakry.

Working approximately with 23,000 young men and women in the disadvantaged neighborhoods of Conakry and in Forest Guinea, the project, supported by the United Nations' Secretary General Peace Building Fund, will be implemented by UNICEF in partnership with **Search for Common Ground**, the United Nations Industrial Development Fund (UNIDO) and the Ministry of Youth and Sport.

Young people aged 15-34 years old represent 30% of the population in Guinea. Many of them have not completed basic education, often unemployed and lack access to information. They have very few opportunities to express their needs, aspirations and grievances, and to participate in social, political, and economical decision making processes. The lack of understanding and opportunities paired with the deficit of information has led to youth being easily manipulated and caught in outbreaks of political violence.

"Through our programme, young people learn about their rights, non violent ways of dealing with adversarial situations, and about democratic change. Better informed, they are able to resist political manipulations and will become a non violent drive of positive change during and beyond the transition in Guinea" said the Country Director of Search For Common Ground, Quentin Kanyatsi.

In total, the Peace Building Fund is providing \$6 million to the UN system in Guinea to support peace building and conflict prevention activities in support to the peaceful transition towards and beyond democratic elections.

To generate employment opportunities for young people, 25 waste management enterprises will be created in Conakry, with the support of UNIDO. In addition, 1150 young people will be trained in business management, in partnership with the national NGO 'Youth Employment Network', 300 young people will receive small financial grants to start small businesses and 'Youth Centres' will be established nationwide to provide information and training about small businesses.

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