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30,000 FAMILIES IN PAKISTAN RECEIVE SHELTER ASSISTANCE FROM SAVE THE CHILDREN

Thirty thousand families living in earthquake-hit villages in the remotest parts of Pakistan and India have now received help from Save the Children (SC) according to Save the Children's Pakistan Earthquake Response Situation Report released today by Liz Gibbs of SCNZ.

The families have received tents, large plastic sheets, shelter kits, blankets and household items to provide basic shelter for more than 30,000 families. On top of this assistance, Save the Children has also:

- * Distributed 133,497 corrugated iron sheets to more than 18,000 households,
- * Established 92 safe play spaces, and
- * Provided the opportunity for more than 4,000 children to enter school, many for the first time in their lives.

"This is a pleasing milestone but there is much more to be done. Rain and snowfall in the last few days has presented new challenges for the region. The temperature dropped to below -8 degrees celcius in the mountains and some relief operations have been constrained by road blockages. Save the Children sent two teams to Seran and Chattar Plain valleys to assess the situation after the current spell of heavy snowfall.

"Keeping warm is a constant battle for families like those in the Meira camp in Northern Pakistan where women are now making mud stoves with assistance from SC. United States Senator John Kerry paid a visit to the camp earlier this week and called on a school where 2000 children were receiving warm uniforms distributed by Save the Children.

"New Zealanders can help by donating to Save the Children New Zealand's 'Blankets for Kashmir' appeal. Blankets make a huge difference to the health and wellbeing of children and their families as they battle the cold over winter," Liz Gibbs said.

One blanket costs \$34. So far, SCNZ has raised enough money for 3000 blankets.

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Notes to Editor

- * The 'Blankets for Kashmir' programme was launched on the 15th of December 2005. More information on this can be found on the SCNZ website www.savethechildren.org.nz.
- * Further facts and figures on the situation in earthquake-hit Pakistan are available in the attached situation report.