



The International Zinc Association

Press Release

Zinc to play key role in reducing preventable childhood deaths in India

IZA partners with the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation on the India Essential Medicines Initiative



May 28, 2013, Brussels —The International Zinc Association (IZA) has pledged its support to a program with the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to scale up intake of zinc and oral rehydration salts (ORS) by children in the state of Uttar Pradesh in India. The partnership aims to save lives of tens of thousands of children by accelerating progress towards reducing preventable childhood deaths from diarrhea.

More than one of every four diarrhea-related deaths among children under five worldwide occurs in India; with Uttar Pradesh accounting for roughly 25 per cent of these (approximately 60,000 deaths annually). Over 90 per cent of these deaths can be prevented with a simple, highly effective treatment of zinc and ORS. Although it costs less than US \$0.50 to treat a child, less than 1 per cent of all children receive the full-recommended treatment.

This is due in part to a lack of awareness among caregivers and providers that zinc and ORS are the nationally recommended treatment for diarrhea. Without demand, there is limited incentive for suppliers to invest in production and distribution of these products. To overcome this, an ambitious, large-scale program was designed to significantly increase the use of zinc and ORS by simultaneously pursuing three key objectives:

- 1. Generate provider demand:** Mobilize networks of rural medical practitioners (RMPs)¹, local kiosks and retail outlets to stock and promote zinc and ORS.
- 2. Generate caregiver demand:** Support the design and execution of widespread communication and marketing campaigns and conduct health diplomacy through community leaders.

¹ RMPs represent a large proportion of private providers in rural India.

- 3. Ensure and expand a solid supply base:** Increase production of affordable, high-quality zinc and ORS products and support the commercial introduction of innovative products and packaging.

The goal of the partnership is to significantly increase the coverage of zinc and ORS in Uttar Pradesh to 35 percent by 2015 and help save the lives of over 40,000 children by 2015, and tens of thousands more thereafter.

IZA's direct contribution will extend the impact of these activities in an additional high-priority district of Uttar Pradesh, allowing the programs to reach even more children suffering from diarrhea. IZA is a proponent of public private partnerships. Since 2010, IZA has partnered with UNICEF to support zinc supplementation and health care programs through the *Zinc Saves Kids* initiative.

"We are pleased to support work with CHAI and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in their efforts to reduce the number of child deaths caused by diarrhea," said Stephen Wilkinson, Executive Director of IZA. He added, "By combining our efforts with similar initiatives the reach is broadened and more lives can be saved. This program also compliments IZA's other zinc and health initiative with UNICEF."

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About IZA

IZA is a nonprofit organization representing the global zinc industry by supporting and advancing zinc products and markets through research, development, technology transfer and communicating the unique attributes that make zinc sustainable and essential for life. IZA is supporting UNICEF's zinc and health programs through the Zinc Saves Kids initiative. IZA is also promoting crop health through its Zinc Nutrient Initiative. Please visit www.zinc.org to learn more.

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