

Child care still a challenge—Unicef

by Bright Sonani

Unicef has said although a recent Malawi Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (Mics) shows the country has made progress in the areas of child health and access to clean water, a lot needs to be done to improve lives of children.

Speaking during the launch of the Mics report in Lilongwe, Unicef country representative Aida Girma said the results of the survey show Malawi is on course to achieving some of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

"This achievement is a clear testimony of enormous efforts that have been exerted by the government, civil society, development partners and communities in investing in children. The achievement demonstrates what can be accomplished when national commitments and partnership are matched by resources and political will.

"However, the survey results also show that much needs to be done to improve the lives of children. It particularly highlights the dire situation for children and women living in rural areas. It shows

that children and women in these areas are most likely to be deprived of access to basic information, health, education, water and sanitation," said Girma.

She said the situation required concerted action from all stakeholders involved in activities of child and women care.

National Statistical Office (NSO)'s Commissioner of Statistics Charles Macninjiri said the Mics results indicate a decline in maternal mortality rates, infant and child mortality levels, and the increase in fertility rates and in the use of family planning methods compared to previous surveys.

Minister of Economic Planning and Development Ken Lipenga, who officially launched the survey report, said the survey will assist the country to fulfil a number of policies and international obligations.

NSO conducted the survey with financial and technical support from Unicef.

It covered about 31,200 households in all the districts of the country except Neno and Likoma.

According to the survey, infant mortality rate stands at 72 per 1,000 live births while the under-five mortality is at 122 per 1,000 live births.

The maternal mortality ratio is estimated at 807 per 100,000 live births while in urban areas the figure goes as high as 861.



Girma: Much needs to be done