

## Annual World Breastfeeding Week Celebrated in Ethiopia

World Breastfeeding Week was celebrated for the 6<sup>th</sup> year in Ethiopia with a wide range of awareness activities and a celebratory half day gathering on August 7 at the Kality Federal Prison Administration for Women. The event was organized by the Federal Ministry of Health with partners USAID and Save the Children through the ENGINE project as well as UNICEF. The theme for this year was: ‘Breastfeeding – A winning goal for life.’ This year’s theme asserts the importance of increasing and sustaining the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding - in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) countdown and beyond.



The event targeted prisoners currently serving time who are all mothers of children under 5 years of age. They were all informed about the importance of exclusive breastfeeding for the duration of 0-6 months and the message was delivered in a variety of entertaining ways which included a song and drama performance by a group of young children.

*Left: Prison mothers as guests of honor for Ethiopia’s 6<sup>th</sup> World Breastfeeding Week celebrations*

Dr. Taye Tolera, from the Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH) mentioned that nutrition is a significant component of the government’s Growth and Transformation Plan as it has a huge impact on the building of future generations who will then be responsible for the country’s future advancement. He further explained that the efforts towards educating mothers on breastfeeding practices have played a large role in curbing the country’s child mortality rates.

*Below Left: A drama and song performance from a group of young children*

*Below Right: Save the Children’s Deputy Director of Nutrition, Yetayish Maru*



*“800,000 child deaths a year occur worldwide as a result of improper breastfeeding”*, a statement made by UNICEF’s Nutrition Specialist, Selamawit Negash. She went on to commend the correctional facility for its efforts to keep female prisoners and their children together as this played a key role in ensuring that they are breastfed and healthy. Deputy Director of Nutrition for Save the Children, Yetayish Maru also explained the usefulness of breastfeeding not only for the mother and child but also for the community and the country as a whole.

One of the inmates, Tigist Asnake, who has benefited from breastfeeding her child, spoke about the health of her baby after taking advice to exclusively breastfeed.

World Breastfeeding Week was launched twenty two years ago by World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA). Over 175 countries celebrated and advocated for the cause this year.