

The Abbott Fund Announces \$1 Million Partnership with the Secretary's International Fund for Women and Girls to Empower Women in Burma

ABBOTT PARK, Ill., Jul. 24 /CSRwire/ - The Abbott Fund, the foundation of the global health care company Abbott, today announced a partnership with the U.S. Secretary of State's International Fund for Women and Girls to empower women and address critical community needs in Burma, also known as Myanmar. Over the next two years, the Abbott Fund will provide \$1 million to the Secretary's International Fund for Women and Girls to support grassroots organizations that are working to advance health, education and economic opportunity for women in Burma.

This public-private partnership follows a recent fact-finding trip to Burma in May 2012, organized by the U.S. Department of State's office on Global Women's Issues. Under the leadership of Ambassador-at-Large Melanne Verveer, the delegation included representatives from the Abbott Fund and other private-sector organizations. Discussing critical challenges confronting Burma with Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and other leaders and members of civil society, the delegation also assessed grassroots programs with the goal of identifying partnership opportunities to further improve the lives of women in the country.

"Through decades of challenges, the people of Burma have developed a resilient and resourceful civil society," said Ambassador Verveer. "By supporting existing grassroots organizations, this public-private partnership with the Abbott Fund will help build the capacity of local organizations and communities to drive progress and development for women."

"During our recent trip to Burma with Ambassador Verveer, we met dozens of women who are leading local organizations, making significant contributions to address critical community needs," said Katherine Pickus, vice president, the Abbott Fund. "The Abbott Fund aims to further strengthen the capabilities of these organizations to advance health, education and economic opportunities for women – at a transformational time that holds great promise for the country's future."

All partnership funding will be provided to Burmese organizations staffed by the people of Burma. Key areas of programmatic focus include health awareness, prevention and treatment; education and training; and expanding economic opportunities for women. Specific organizations will be identified by the Secretary's International Fund for Women and Girls in the coming months.

The Abbott Fund's new grants in Burma follow efforts by Abbott and the Abbott Fund to provide humanitarian aid in the country in recent years, including more than \$600,000 in support for relief and recovery efforts after Cyclone Nargis. The Abbott Fund provided \$250,000 to advance the work of CARE, an organization focused on empowering women,

and Abbott donated \$386,000 in vitamins and antibiotics to AmeriCares, Heart to Heart, Direct Relief International and MAP International.

About the Secretary's International Fund for Women and Girls

The Secretary's International Fund for Women and Girls is a U.S. State Department-led, privately-funded initiative committed to providing flexible, rapid, targeted, and high-impact grants to nongovernmental organizations working to meet the critical needs of women and girls around the world. The State Department is committed to advancing the rights of women and girls as a central focus of U.S. foreign policy interests, in partnership with the private and nonprofit sectors.

About Abbott and the Abbott Fund

Abbott and the Abbott Fund's social programs focus on expanding access to health care and advancing science education, with an emphasis on meeting critical needs – including the needs of women and girls in developing countries. One example: in Afghanistan, Abbott and the Abbott Fund have worked with Direct Relief International and the Afghan Institute for Learning to strengthen health care for women and girls by training more than 60 midwives, supporting women-staffed clinics that provide critical care for more than 100,000 women, and advancing health education for more than 600,000 women and families.

Abbott is a global, broad-based health care company devoted to the discovery, development, manufacturing and marketing of pharmaceuticals and medical products, including nutritionals, devices and diagnostics. The company employs approximately 91,000 people and markets its products in more than 130 countries.

The Abbott Fund is a philanthropic foundation established by Abbott in 1951. The Abbott Fund's mission is to create healthier global communities by investing in creative ideas that promote science, expand access to health care and strengthen communities worldwide.

Abbott's news releases and other information are available on the company's website at <http://www.abbott.com>. For more information on the Abbott Fund, visit <http://www.abbottfund.org>.

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