

PRESS RELEASE

FREE SURGERIES FOR CHILDREN WITH CLEFT LIP/CLEFT PALATE DEFORMITIES IN HANOI AND OTHER NORTHERN PROVINCES

From March 29th to April 2nd, 2010 with the sponsorship of **Sika Vietnam**, Operation Smile Vietnam will partner with Vietnam Cuba Friendship Hospital, Hanoi to provide free medical check-up and surgeries for children born with cleft lip and cleft palate deformities coming from Hanoi and other adjacent provinces. It is estimated that 100 patients will receive treatment during this mission. The patients will also receive a portion of transportation and food expenses incurred during their stay at the hospital.

The five-day surgery mission will be scheduled as follows:

March 29th: Medical check-up and screening
Vietnam Cuba Friendship Hospital, 37 Hai Bà Trưng, Hanoi

From March 30th – April 2nd: Surgeries
Vietnam Cuba Friendship Hospital, 37 Hai Bà Trưng, Hanoi

This is the second in a series of 5 missions of surgeries for children with cleft lip/cleft palate deformities which **Sika Vietnam** has committed to sponsor in 2010. The first one took place in Ho Chi Minh City earlier this month, from 8 – 12 March 2010, and the remaining 3 missions will be conducted in Ho Chi Minh City and other cities throughout the country. Sika Limited (Vietnam) is a 100% foreign invested Swiss company specializing in production and provision of chemicals for construction. It has had a presence in Vietnam since 1991.

Families whose children were born with cleft lip and facial deformities can register for the program with Operation Smile Vietnam at (04) 3936 5426. Alternatively, they can bring their children to the fore-mentioned hospital during the morning of March 29th for a medical check-up, consultation and surgery.

For the sake of patients' health and safety, surgeries are only executed for cleft lip patients above 6 months old weighing at least 8kg, and cleft palate children above 18 months old weighing 10 kg and over. Malnourished children or children with asthma, high fever, heart attack, diabetes or other internal diseases will be placed on a waiting list in order to ensure they are in good health before undergoing the surgery.

The year 2009 marked twenty years of operation of Operation Smile Vietnam. Since its establishment in 1989, Operation Smile Vietnam has provided free surgeries to over 14,000 children born with cleft lips and cleft palates. Each surgery takes about 45 – 60 minutes, with a cost of approximately \$150 USD for medicines and hospital fees. In the coming years, Operation Smile Vietnam is aiming to provide free surgeries for 2,500 – 3,000 children each year to minimize the number of patients suffering from facial deformities. Every year, Vietnam has an estimated 3,000 new patients born with cleft lip and/or palate deformities (based on 1:500 birth rate).

For more information about Operation Smile Vietnam, please visit: www.operationsmile.org.vn or contact Operation Smile Vietnam offices at (08) 3920 7356 (HCMC) or (04)3936 5426 (Hanoi) during office hours, or hotline: **0904 88 5555**. For more information about Sika, please visit <http://sika.com.vn/>.

