



Jun 04, 2008 09:00 ET

UNICEF Child Representative Wins Prestigious Top 20 Under 20 Award

Bilal Rajan, 11, Honoured for Helping Children in Need Around the World

TORONTO, ONTARIO--(Marketwire - June 4, 2008) - UNICEF Canada congratulates 11-year-old UNICEF Child Representative, Bilal Rajan, who was honoured today with a prestigious Canadian Top 20 Under 20 Award. Bilal is the youngest recipient to receive the award this year.

"We are extremely proud of Bilal for the extraordinary work he does to raise awareness and funds for the world's most vulnerable children," said Nigel Fisher, President & CEO, UNICEF Canada. "Bilal has made a significant impact on the lives of children around the world and is the perfect example of the remarkable change that can come when young people resolve to make a difference, and act on that resolve."

Bilal, who lives in Richmond Hill, Ontario, has been given the award, presented by Youth In Motion, in honour of his outstanding efforts to advocate and fundraise to improve the lives of children around the world. To be chosen as a Top 20, honourees must have demonstrated innovated ideas, leadership and achievements in their life, school, community, province or country.

Although he is just 11 years old, Bilal has years of experience responding in innovative ways to global issues. He started at the age of four when he set up a stand and sold clementines, raising \$350 to help earthquake victims in India. In 2004, he raised \$6,000 to help the children affected by severe tropical storms in Haiti. In response to the devastating tsunami later that year, Bilal initiated the Canada Kids Earthquake Challenge, through which Canadian children raised more than \$1.8 million dollars to help their peers whose lives were impacted by the disaster.

Most recently, Bilal launched a national fundraising challenge called, Me and You for the Children of Myanmar to benefit UNICEF Canada's emergency appeal for the affected children of the Myanmar cyclone.

As a UNICEF Canada Child Representative, Bilal has travelled across Canada to reinforce the message that children can help other children in need. As part of his work for the Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF campaign, Bilal traveled to Malawi in 2005 to see the impact made by his Canadian peers through their Halloween fund raising. Although it was encouraging for Bilal to see the wonderful changes made possible by UNICEF, he said it was clear that much remains to be done.

"I'm honoured to receive this award and hope that others will be motivated to do whatever they can to help those in need all over the world because together we can make a difference," said Bilal Rajan.

In addition to travelling the world, fundraising and advocating for UNICEF, Bilal is a straight A student who attends St. Andrew's College. He is also an author of a new book, Making Change, which will be released later this year with partial proceeds from the sale going to UNICEF Canada.

About UNICEF

UNICEF is the world's leader for children, working in 156 countries and territories to save, protect and enhance the lives of girls and boys. UNICEF supports child health and nutrition programmes, promotes quality basic education, protects children from violence, exploitation and AIDS, and is the world's largest provider of vaccines for developing nations. With six decades of on-the-ground experience, UNICEF saves and rebuilds children's lives in natural disasters and conflict.