PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Children in need of shelter and protection - South Asia Earthquake
SOS Children's Villages ready to care for hundreds of unaccompanied children in Pakistan

The exact number of children who have been orphaned or separated from their families as a result of the October 8 earthquake is still unknown, as rescue workers continue to airlift children from the disaster regions. SOS Children's Villages Pakistan is prepared to provide safe shelter and care for hundreds of affected and unaccompanied children and women. SOS Children's Villages is also transporting and distributing relief packages in Muzaffarabad, and is helping the Austrian government in their logistical planning and transportation of water plants and relief goods.

14 October 2005 - "It still remains to be seen how many children have been affected and are unaccompanied. We are prepared to care for every child and have the capacity to take in any number of children," said Souriya Anwar, President of SOS Children's Villages in Pakistan. "We are also accommodating unaccompanied women - the first children and women have already started arriving at our emergency shelter in Islamabad."

Injured children are being airlifted from the disaster regions and flown into hospitals around the country. SOS Children's Villages is working closely with local authorities and hospitals to identify children requiring safe shelter and care, and is bringing them to the organisation's emergency shelter in Islamabad. In addition, a further seven SOS Children's Villages throughout the country are prepared to accommodate and care for quake-affected children - these facilities remained virtually undamaged by the earthquake.

As approved by the Pakistani government, SOS Children's Villages will be acting as the temporary guardian of the children until these can be reunited with their families. For the reunification process SOS Children's Villages is collecting as much information as possible from the child, and setting up a database including the child's photograph. Children who were orphaned, or those who cannot be reunited with their families, will be offered long-term care in a family environment at an SOS Children's Village.
The organisation is also transporting and distributing emergency aid in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir, in the form of relief care packages containing dry food and water as well as blankets, mattresses and tents. Inspection teams of SOS Children's Villages will be assessing the damage to a newly-built yet still uninhabited children's village in Muzaffarabad, to determine whether it can serve as an emergency shelter for earthquake survivors.

SOS Children's Villages is making full use of its longstanding experience and humanitarian work in Pakistan, and is helping the Austrian government in their logistical planning and transportation of relief goods to the country. These relief goods include four water plants which will provide 25,000 people with daily drinking water. The premises of SOS Children's Village in Muzaffarabad may also serve as a base camp for the Austrian relief aid.

**SOS Children's Villages has been carrying out humanitarian work in Pakistan since 1975 and currently operates seven SOS Children's Villages, six youth facilities, seven schools, four vocational training centres, four SOS Social Centres and two SOS Medical Centres.**

**SOS Children's Villages is active in 132 countries and territories. 438 SOS Children's Villages and 346 SOS Youth Facilities provide more than 59,000 children and youths in need with a new home. More than 131,000 children/youths attend SOS Kindergartens, SOS Schools and SOS Vocational Training Centres. Around 397,000 people benefit from the services provided by SOS Medical Centres, 115,000 people from services provided by SOS Social Centres. SOS Children's Villages also helps in situations of crisis and disaster through emergency relief programmes.**

To organise interviews with the President and Vice-President of SOS Children's Villages in Pakistan, or for more information on the organisation's international work, please contact:

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