

Shoprite expands feeding programme countrywide to fight hunger and malnutrition

The Shoprite Group announced today, (Wednesday 24 June 2009) an addition of eight mobile kitchen units to complete the roll out of the group's national feeding programme in aid of the poorest of poor communities in South Africa and to also act during disaster and humanitarian relief efforts.

Three thousand children from disadvantaged communities in Gauteng will be present at the Kaalfontein Primary School in Tembisa when the Shoprite Group introduces the new mobile kitchen units which will immediately be deployed countrywide.

The Group estimates that through this national feeding programme it will be distributing at least 4.4 million meals of nutritional soup and bread over the next 12 months to help improve the nutritional status of the people of South Africa, especially children and senior citizens, as well as the thousands of people affected by job losses.

In announcing the additions to the fleet of mobile kitchen units Brian Weyers, Director of the Shoprite Group, said that the group is acutely aware of the further economic pressure placed on the less privileged sectors of society with the country facing recession for the first time in 17 years.

"We took cognisance of the link between economic development, poverty alleviation and malnutrition and have re-looked our role and responsibility in this regard. In the process we have focussed social spending for 2009 on helping more and more South Africans who worry how they will feed their families.

"Not only do we continuously strive to bring South Africans the lowest prices, but we have now broadened this with substantial social support. Since we have piloted the feeding program we have served a total of 1.7 million meals of nutritional soup and bread. The new mobile kitchens will enable the group to reach out across the country to distribute nutritional meals to the poorest of the poor.

The project launched with two mobile kitchen units in March this year serving Gauteng and the North West Province. It will now expand with two further mobile soup kitchens in each of the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal provinces and one each in the Free State/Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces bringing the total to 10.

"Each mobile kitchen is manned by three Shoprite staff members who are supported logistically by the Shoprite supermarket in the area in which it operates. A public relations team of nine people will coordinate the relief effort countrywide," he said.

In conclusion Weyers said that as the largest retailer on the continent, serving 56% of South Africans in its supermarkets in this country, Shoprite regard it as its duty to combat hunger in the country and to assist wherever possible in bringing at least a nutritious meal per day to impoverished South Africans.

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Issued on behalf of the Shoprite Group

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24 June 2009