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EUROPE/GERMANY - Children with disabilities at the centre of 53rd Campaign by Star Singers (Sternsinger) who have chosen Cambodia as the symbolic country

Aachen (Agenzia Fides) - For the 53rd time, around the time of 6 January, the “Star Singers” (Sternsinger) of the German Mission of Childhood, will be on the streets of Germany with their Christmas carols. “Children show their strength” is the motto of this year's campaign in the German dioceses that will see around half a million German girls and boys go from door to door in the clothes of the Magi kings, bringing the stars with them. Cambodia is the symbolic country for the 2011 campaign and they want to draw attention especially to children with disabilities who live in the country to educate people to social problems. Cambodia still suffers the consequences of dictatorship and civil war. Malnutrition and lack of basic sanitation are the cause of many disabilities. In addition, there are still four to six million anti-personnel mines that kill or maim. “The children of Cambodia show us that you can play football with no legs and write with no hands,” said Msgr. Krämer, President of the German Mission of Childhood, which together with the Association of German Catholic Youth (BDKJ) is organizing the campaign. The children show that with a little support, despite a handicap, you can achieve almost anything. “Children are often an example and model, when even with great misfortune they are able to overcome certain situations,” said Msgr. Krämer. The campaign also aims to spread this message.
At the formal opening of the 53rd Campaign by the Star Singers to be held on 30 December in the diocese of Essen, approximately 1,500 girls and boys from various dioceses will participate. On 1 January 2011 there will be 22 Star Singers from the diocese of Mainz participating in the celebration presided over by Pope Benedict XVI in St Peter's Basilica. Three of them, wearing the traditional clothes of the Magi, will participate in the offertory procession. On 5 January, German Chancellor Angela Merkel will receive 108 Star Singers in her offices in Berlin. Four girls and boys from each of the 27 dioceses in Germany will represent their peers participating in the campaign.
Wearing clothes of the Magi, with their guiding star and their songs during the Christmas season and the beginning of the new year, the Star Singers will be knocking on the doors of German homes. About half a million children from 12,500 Catholic parishes in Germany will bring the blessing “C + M + B” (“mansionem benedicat Christus - Christ bless this house”) to families, collecting donations for their contemporaries who are suffering throughout the world. The gathering of German Star Singers has become the largest initiative of solidarity throughout the world, which sees children working for their contemporaries in need. (MS) (Agenzia Fides 29/12/2010)

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