

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS RESPONSE IN ETHIOPIA

CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN

The 2003 humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia emerged in 2002 in the Eastern regions of Afar and Somali due to the very poor performance of both *belg*¹ and *meher*² rains, spreading throughout the country and covering large regions such as Oromia, Amhara, Tigray and SNNP³. The impact of the 2002/2003 drought, and its rapid expansion to large sectors of the population even to areas not usually severely affected by crises, has never been so intense. Crisis-coping mechanisms were seriously deteriorated and communities reached an extraordinary level of vulnerability. In 2003, a total of 13.2 million⁴ people, of which more than 2.2 million (17%)⁵ children under 5 years of age or more than 5.8 million (44%)⁵ children under 15 years of age, were in need of humanitarian assistance and protection.

Anthropometric surveys conducted in 2002/ 2003 by NGOs and Emergency Nutrition Co-ordination Unit (ENCU) indicated a very serious situation, with Global and Severe Acute Malnutrition Rates of over 15% and 2% respectively in most drought-affected areas. The inadequate quality of food provided, combined with already existing poor diets lacking in crucial micronutrients and high rates of chronic malnutrition and the very low access to basic health services, clean water and sanitation, rendered children particularly vulnerable.

Consecutive years of poor rains also resulted in an estimated 4.4 million people facing an acute lack of water and requiring emergency assistance. Moreover, the drought emergency has aggravated the impact of HIV/AIDS, as the affected people had to find alternative coping mechanisms to meet basic needs such as food. These mechanisms involved migration in search of casual labour, dropping out of school, and exchanging sex for food or cash. All these increased the risk of contracting HIV and put young people, especially girls, at high risk of infection.

The inaccessibility of many rural areas, poor infrastructure, sparse and uneven coverage/distribution of facilities, insufficient manpower and poor quality of services contributed to a fundamentally challenging environment for the realization of child rights.

ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2003

The 2003 emergency response in Ethiopia was designed to strengthen the capacity of the government structures at all levels and to improve the co-ordination between all parties involved in the humanitarian response.

¹ *belg*: small rains – January – April

² *meher*: main rainy season: June – September

³ SNNPR: Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples' Region

⁴ A Joint Government - UN Appeal - Update of Emergency Assistance Requirements & Implementation Options, August 2003

⁵ Statistical Abstract 2001, Central Statistical Authority, March 2002

Control Support Team in the Ministry of Health was re-activated and expanded in order to co-ordinate efforts (also replicated at regional level). All interventions have been strengthened through detailed micro-planning and training at regional and district level. UNICEF has so far procured and distributed emergency stocks of anti-malarial drugs with an estimated value of \$US1.2 million directly to the zonal level. In addition, 156,000 insecticide-treated nets have been procured and support has been provided to operational costs.

In 2003, UNICEF has provided 362 emergency drug kits for Ethiopia, while additional 528 kits are currently being procured and distributed. Some 155 renewable medical supply kits were as well distributed, with 100 more in the pipeline. Each emergency drug kit contains 29 essential drugs for treatment of the ten most common infectious diseases affecting vulnerable populations, especially women and children under five years old and is intended to serve a population of 10,000 for three months.

MEASLES 'PLUS'

UNICEF, in partnership with WHO, MOH, USAID and NGOs, has targeted over 21 million children from 6 months to 15 years for measles vaccination and Vitamin A supplementation in 2002-2003. As a result of these campaigns, no outbreaks of measles have been reported in 2002/03. A further 9.5 million children are being targeted for measles and Vitamin A supplementation in 2004. UNICEF, as an active member of the Interagency Co-ordinating Committee, has been assisting the Government in the overall planning of the campaign, providing technical and material support including 25.2 million doses of measles vaccines, 23.3 million auto disable syringes, 2.3 million reconstituting syringes, 261,375 safety boxes and 46 million capsules of Vitamin A.

WATER AND ENVIRONMENT SANITATION

While the initial response was in Afar and Somali regions, the emergency interventions have expanded in 2003 to cover the six most affected regions (Afar, Amhara, Oromia, SNNP, Somali and Tigray). UNICEF supported the rehabilitation of 646 water schemes benefiting over 1,219,570 people. Funding has also been provided for the drilling and construction of 326 new schemes including shallow and deep wells and spring developments in the six most drought-affected regions benefiting 467,800 persons. Emergency water and sanitation supplies: water purification units of 4000 lt/hr capacity, collapsible containers and Roto-tanks, family drinking water kits and purification chemicals, have also been distributed in all the drought-affected regions benefiting approximately 150,000 people. In several of the worst-affected areas no immediate durable solution could be applied, so that temporary life-saving interventions were undertaken through water tankering to 143,000 people in drought-stricken communities, IDP camps, Therapeutic Feeding Centres and health centres. Additionally the programme provided water purification support to 57,000 flood affected people and drought-affected communities through point of use (chlorine and combined deflocculent and disinfection tablets and purification bags) and collective water treatment (chlorination through bladders, extension of town schemes). The combined efforts in water tankering, rehabilitation of water points and drilling of new wells have assisted over 1.8

million people, i.e. 41.5 per cent of the 4.4 million people requiring emergency water assistance.

EDUCATION

The main strategy has been to provide children in the affected regions with school shelter and emergency supplies, orientation of teachers and school principals on the educational and psychosocial needs of drought-stricken children and on methods and ways of teaching and handling students under stress. In 2003, more than 18,000 pupils in severely drought-affected regions have received basic educational materials. This has been complemented by targeting vulnerable girls with specific supplies such as school uniforms.

Construction materials have also been provided for 30 primary schools affected by war and drought in Tigray Region. Tents and school furniture have been procured and distributed to schools destroyed by floods in the Wabe-Shabelle river basin and for establishing and strengthening learning centres for grades 1 to 4. Efforts are also being made to assist 39 drought-affected schools in the pastoral areas of Afar and Somali region under a new UNICEF/WFP joint programme for the provision of integrated basic services in some of the schools targeted for feeding activities.

HIV/AIDS PREVENTION

Emergency HIV/AIDS activities have been implemented in selected areas of Somali, Amhara and SNNP regions. The main strategy has been to provide HIV/AIDS prevention education, care and support and other closely related issues such as harmful traditional practices at general food distribution sites using local anti-AIDS clubs as well as clan and religious leaders. Drama and community dialogues have proven to be successful methods for both building awareness and facilitating community problem solving and action. In SNNPR alone some 168,666 food beneficiaries were successfully reached through community dialogue sessions within a four month period. Some 42 people from HIV/AIDS prevention and control offices, health offices and NGOs were trained on facilitators' role in community dialogue on HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support, 271 members from 18 anti-AIDS club and 60 DPPC staff and workers received training on HIV/AIDS as well as skills to prevent sexual and gender-based violence.

In Somali region, 20 food distribution committee members and 16 woreda facilitators were trained to provide HIV/AIDS education, reaching about 1,800 food aid beneficiaries at four food distribution sites. Four anti-AIDS clubs were also established in drought affected woredas to implement HIV/AIDS activities. Emergency HIV/AIDS activities were conducted in close partnership with the regional HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Offices (HAPCO). In addition, woreda AIDS councils, DPPB and local and international NGOs were involved in the planning and implementation of activities. Similarly, in Amhara region over 80,874 people were reached with key HIV/AIDS prevention messages at food distribution sites in two zones (North Wollo and South Gondar). A total of 10 distributors and four Anti-AIDS clubs were also trained to ensure continuity of teaching and dialogue about HIV/AIDS at food distribution sites.

GENDER AND CHILD PROTECTION

UNICEF extended and reinforced its existing Child Vulnerability program, which focuses upon street children and orphans in 14 towns. This includes setting up drop-in centers for children who have been separated from their families for extended periods of time, as well as increasing the capacity of Government Counterparts through training and other support, including family packages to set up child-support committees and appropriate follow-up to ensure that children remain in their communities. The programme focuses on providing a comprehensive package of services for street children and has also served as an important link between community-based organizations, non-government organisations and relevant Government Ministries, allowing for a much more comprehensive response. Other responses to the emergency have included psycho-social training of Government counterparts focusing upon protection issues and the provision of emergency support to women in Tigray. Training on the prevention of sexual exploitation in humanitarian crisis has been provided to staff within UNICEF, WFP and the Save the Children Alliance. A training of trainers on the prevention of sexual exploitation has also been provided to Government Counterparts from several ministries.

EMERGENCY SHELTER

In addition to the shelter and non-food items delivered to 53,329 IDPs in East and West Hararge, and to 107,950 people affected by flood in Somali Region during the period January to July, UNICEF has recently procured a large stock of non-food items for the immediate response to over 40,000 most affected children in several regions. Ten thousand jerrycans, 14,584 cooking pots, 20,000 cups, 20,000 plates, 10,300 plastic sheets and 13,680 soap bars were procured for Somali Region. An additional 6,500 plastic sheets, 24 large canvas tents, 8,807 kerosene stoves and 8,801 cooking pots were delivered to Tigray Region. For SNNP Region, 12 motorcycles and 2 large Rubb-halls were procured offshore to assist the Regional Government (DPPB) in improving early warning and rapid response preparedness. Seventeen large canvas tents and a supply of stoves, cooking pots, plates, bowls, jerry cans, blankets, soap and plastic sheets have been locally procured as well as part of the emergency and recovery assistance to the people most affected by the drought.

MINE RISK EDUCATION (MRE)

The phase out for handover of responsibility of MRE from the UNICEF-sponsored NGO RaDO to the regional Government in Tigray and Afar has commenced. In the first phase, UNICEF, through RaDO, is developing training packages for selective Government staff in the regions. The training of regional government staff will commence at the start of 2004. UNICEF has also worked towards building the capacity of the Ethiopian Mine Action Office (EMAO), addressing training shortfalls. Field staff are now trained in basic MRE and community liaison and deployed to the field to work alongside the mine clearance teams.

Due to the return of people to the Zalenbesa area and the commencement of reconstruction of building in this war torn town, EMAO mine clearance teams have completed battle area clearance (surface area clearance). EMAO and RaDO have also increased their dissemination of MRE to the building contractors and community in the Zalenbesa area to be aware of possibility of suspicious objects been found when digging and building.

UNICEF 2003 EMERGENCY APPEAL

PROPORTION OF 2003 APPEAL FUNDED BY SECTOR as of 1 December 2003				
Sectors	Target (US\$)	Funded (US\$)	% Funded	Unfunded
Health & Nutrition	30,311,168	25,675,607	84.7	4,635,561
Water & Sanitation	19,094,777	7,419,077	38.8	11,675,700
Education	1,740,748	174,999	10.1	1,565,749
HIV/AIDS Prevention	537,449	80,323	14.9	457,126
Gender, Child Protection & Shelter	2,915,136	2,099,891	72.0	815,245
Total	54,599,278	35,449,897	64.9	19,149,381

In addition to the above, in-kind donations for a value of about \$ 2 million have been received from the Norwegian Government: water equipment, BP-5 biscuits, BP-100 enriched milk and anti-malaria drugs. Moreover, the Norwegian Government has recently pledged about \$US 715,000, to support on-going efforts to combat the massive malaria epidemic.

UNICEF PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN 2004

The overall objective of humanitarian interventions in 2004 is to address the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable populations with emergency and recovery activities, to mitigate suffering in the aftermath of the drought and acute crisis in 2003. Efforts will be put in link humanitarian interventions with longer-term approaches to address chronic vulnerability and to respond to emerging acute situations.

NEEDS FOR UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN 2004

UNICEF (ETHIOPIA) FINANCIAL SUMMARY	\$US
Health & Nutrition	11,362,574
Water and Environmental Sanitation	17,800,000
Education	2,421,848
Gender, Child Protection and Shelter	1,819,500
HIV/AIDS Prevention	820,000
Mine Risk Education	684,000
Total (\$US)	34,907,922