

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

LIBERIA

DONOR UPDATE 9 MAY 2005

URGENT NEEDS FOR REINTEGRATION OF CHILDREN ASSOCIATED WITH FIGHTING FORCES (CAFFs)

- 11,780 children associated with fighting forces that have been disarmed, demobilised and reunited with their families (except for 36), desperately need schooling and vocational training
- At least 500,000 children missed years of school because of war, and require the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP), condensing 6 years of education into 3
- Safe drinking water a top priority for schools and health centres
- Additional funding required for polio eradication and scaling up the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI)

1. EMERGENCY OVERVIEW AND ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

Liberia is recovering from almost two decades of conflict that was marked destruction of life and property, massive population displacement, and a collapse of basic social services. The security situation has considerably improved, but the re-establishment of state authority and law and order has only just begun. The recovery of basic social services to pre-war levels is in the early stages. The implementation environment in terms of communication and service infrastructure is so difficult that the majority of interventions have to be organised as emergency programmes. There are a growing number of reports indicating that there is recruitment of children in Liberia to be fighters in Côte d'Ivoire.

An estimated 250,000 persons were killed and over half a million people were displaced during the conflict. However, since the signing of the Accra Peace Agreement on 17 August 2003 and the deployment of the UNMIL Peacekeeping Mission, the overall security situation has considerably improved. The disarmament and demobilisation of over 100,000 former combatants has had a significant influence on the security situation. Despite the gradual and real improvements in security, large-scale public violence in Monrovia in October 2004 showed the fragility of the social and political situation in the country. Peace in Liberia remains fragile, especially as national elections are scheduled to be held in October.

Currently, there are several issues that are of over-riding concern because they have both humanitarian and security implications. They are the reintegration of the 103,000 ex-combatants that have been registered by the DDRR (Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration Programme); the repatriation of refugees and resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs); re-establishment of basic services in the areas of return of IDPs and refugees; and the possibility of an influx of refugees if conflict breaks out in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire and/or Guinea.

The majority of ex-combatants have requested education as part of their reintegration. This demand coupled with the fact that education is a major factor in the restoration of normal social life, has made the rebuilding of the Education Sector a major priority,



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especially for children associated with the fighting forces (CAFF).

As of end April, over 100,000 IDPs had returned to their home counties. With this spontaneous and assisted return, it is critical that basic services, water and sanitation facilities, food production, shelter, and roads are rehabilitated ASAP.

Another major humanitarian concern is a possible spill-over from Côte d'Ivoire, as witnessed in late October 2004. It took two forms: the influx of an estimated 10,000 refugees, into the country, mainly into Nimba County, and the potential re-recruitment of Liberian ex-fighters in Côte d'Ivoire. It is expected that the number of refugees could fluctuate considerably, though so far there are no reports of significant changes in the number of the refugees in border areas. There are, however, unconfirmed reports of cross-border movements of ex-fighters, especially in March/April of this year. The possible recruitment of children continues to be a major concern. To counterbalance this possibility, it is essential that the border areas are targeted to restore education and provide economic activities through the DDDR skills training reintegration projects.

2. UNICEF RESPONSE: ACTION AND IMPACT

Education

Because of war, at least 500,000 children (or approximately half of the total student population) have had some significant interruption in their education and are now too old for their school grade. For these children to catch-up, UNICEF has helped launch the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP). The programme condenses six years of primary schooling into three years of intensive activities to enable children/youth make up for lost educational years. UNICEF is presently supporting the Ministry of Education to implement ALP in 115 community schools in eight counties. Teachers are receiving special training on ALP methodology. ALP is gender equal and offers a tremendous opportunity to rapidly impact Liberia's high illiteracy rates and low primary school completion figures. ALP schools have also opened in rural areas. 500 teachers have been trained to utilize the ALP rapid approach to learning. All UNICEF ALP Schools receive a Recreation Kit.

Overall, the education system is in desperate shape. UNICEF is supplying school materials (notebooks, furniture and recreational kits) for teachers and students. In the past few weeks, three counties (Sinoe, River Cess, and Nimba) have been supplied with UNICEF educational materials, benefiting 235,000 children. **Since 2004, UNICEF has provided educational materials for over 1 million children. However, needs continue to be enormous.** IDP and refugee populations are beginning to return home and in large numbers, creating an urgent need for schools. Illiteracy levels continue to hover around the 70%, and only 33% of primary school students reach the 5th grade. With only 12% of Liberia's girls graduating from secondary school – and with less than one of five teachers in public schools female – support is urgently needed for UNICEF's Girls' Education programme – including teacher training initiatives that are bringing hundreds of Liberian women into classrooms. UNICEF has supported the Ministry of Education in training 625 teachers to complete their primary school teaching credential (C- Level). This credential, condensed into 10-weeks from its traditional one-year length, offers student-centred learning approaches and the opportunity to increase the quality of primary education. If our funding requirements are met, 800 female teachers will be trained at the C-certificate level this year. Also in 2005, Lifeskills and ALP teaching methodology are now being introduced at teacher training institutes.

Water and Environmental Sanitation

Only 35% of Liberians have access to safe water. UNICEF is helping to provide clean water, sanitation, and hygiene to schools, health clinics, and communities in seven counties (Bong, Bomi, Grand Gedeh, Lofa, Nimba, Maryland, and Montserrado), targeting areas where IDPs are returning home. UNICEF has provided wells and latrine facilities in 740 schools, benefiting approximately 220,000 pupils. To provide separate latrine blocks for girls and boys in assisted schools, another 1,000 latrines must be provided by end of 2006. During the first quarter of 2005, UNICEF supported the installation of 111 wells with hand pumps, 18 institutional latrines, and 60 family latrines.

UNICEF is supporting the development of a policy framework and technical guidelines for water, sanitation and hygiene, and the coordination role for sector ministries through the rehabilitation of office spaces, provision of vehicles, computers, copiers, printers, communication equipment, generator and pumps, sewerage desludging equipment, and drilling materials. In Liberia, environmental infections, including diarrhoea and cholera, are major child killers (diarrhoea is responsible for 22% of the deaths in children under 5). In an effort to reverse the trend of annual high incidents of diarrhoea and cholera, UNICEF has restored and is strengthening the capacity for hygiene promotion at the national level through training and reorganization of a national action team comprised of 48 members from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Education, and NGOs. During the first quarter of 2005, hygiene training has been completed in 3 counties and the remaining 12 counties will be completed by mid-year. During the same period, approximately 500 schools in 5 counties, with an estimated enrolment of 100,000 pupils have been reached with hygiene promotion.

Health and Nutrition

Liberia has some of the world's worst health indicators. Access to basic health care is extremely low. Infant and under-five mortalities are at 157 per 1,000 live births and 235 per 1,000 live births respectively, and maternal mortality is at 580 per 100,000 live births. With public expenditure in health at less than US\$1 per capita prior to the war, the reach and quality of health services is chronically inadequate.

UNICEF's health and nutrition programme this year reached more than 1 million children during the first two-rounds of polio National Immunization Days (NIDs). Immunizers also distributed hundreds of thousands of Vitamin A capsules. UNICEF provided the Ministry of Health with all of the vaccines used in NIDs, as well as all of the cold chain equipment. UNICEF is investing nearly

US\$1 million this year as the funder of the NIDs social mobilization efforts nationwide. **For the final two NIDs rounds in November and December 2005, UNICEF has the capacity to help distribute 100,000 insecticide-treated nets to mothers with young children to protect their newborns from malaria – the biggest child killer in sub-Saharan Africa. Cost to donors: US\$1 million. Commit today to protect Liberian children from the scourge of malaria.** UNICEF's measles mortality reduction control intervention has reached about 1.5 million children – a coverage rate of 98.7%. UNICEF also contributes to capacity development for Government and NGOs' EPI staff in skills such as coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and implementation of supplemental immunization activities. Protocols for therapeutic feeding and national nutrition policy and action plan have been completed and this year supplementary feeding kits are benefiting about 10,000 children. In close collaboration with WFP, support is given to public education and nutrition orientation programmes in Monrovia, targeting 7,000 parents and care givers – and needs to be taken to scale nationally. UNICEF works in collaboration with other UN agencies and Government within the framework of the Expanded Theme Group on HIV/AIDS. Preparations are underway to establish sites for prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) integrated with maternal health services and youth-friendly health services.

Child Protection

UNICEF is the lead child protection agency in Liberia, undertaking and coordinating interventions with its NGO partners, including DDRR for children, preventing sexual abuse and exploitation, responding to the care and protection needs of children without primary care givers, and establishing systems for the protection of children's rights. UNICEF and its partners are guiding efforts to improve capacity to implement the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* at the national and community level.

Through the disarmament and demobilisation process, a total of 11,780 CAFF were reached. Education and skills training are fundamental: up to 11,000 demobilised children will participate in the Community Education Investment Programme (CEIP), ALP, and/or the Skills Training programme. Additionally, Community Resource Centres need to be established in 10 communities in each of the seven focus-counties of return. **Funding is urgently needed so UNICEF and its partners can help reintegrate CAFFs by providing schools and skills training to every child associated with fighting forces.**

UNICEF is working with the UN Country Team as the focal point for UN agencies in implementing the Secretary General's bulletin on protection against sexual abuse and exploitation. UNICEF is collaborating with the UN Civilian Police in the training of the Liberian National Police on child rights and child protection. Since January 2005, UNICEF has supported the training of 905 newly-recruited police.

UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and NGO partners to ensure that the care provided to children living in orphanages is of adequate standard and protects the best interests of children. To devise an appropriate response to the increasing numbers of children orphaned by AIDS, UNICEF has concluded a situation analysis of children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS. The findings of the situation analysis will be used to inform policy and programming for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) at both national and grassroots level. The National Task Force on OVC will disseminate the report to stakeholders at the end of May 2005. Using sports and drama as the channel for message dissemination, more than 4,000 youth in 20 youth groups are being trained in the prevention of HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence, child rights, peace building and leadership skills, and with adequate funding from donors more than 10,000 youth will be reached by the end of 2005.

3. 2005 REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIPTS

In December 2004, the UN and the transitional Government of Liberia launched the Integrated Humanitarian Appeal 2005, where UNICEF outlined a total funding requirement of US\$ 30.3 million to support the reintegration and rehabilitation process. The same amount was requested through UNICEF's Humanitarian Action Report 2005 (**US\$ 30,313,000**). During the latter part of 2004, UNICEF distributed a separate fundraising document, in line with the national Results Focused Transitional Framework, summarising the funding requirements (US\$ 30,213,000) for UNICEF's priority areas, such as rebuilding social services and reintegrating children formerly associated with the fighting forces. The table below indicates the funding level and shortfalls of UNICEF requirements for 2005:

TOTAL CONTRIBUTION BY SECTOR AGAINST YEAR 2005 APPEAL AS AT MAY 5 2005				
Programme	UNICEF Appeal 05	Amount Received	% Funded	Funding Gap
Health & Nutrition	7,482,000	1,779,657	23.8%	5,702,343
Education	12,502,000	462,350	3.7%	12,039,650
Child Protection	6,595,000	132,100	2%	6,462,900
Water, Sanitation, & Hygiene	3,634,000	687,040	18.9%	2,946,960
GRAND TOTAL	30,213,000	3,061,147	10.1%	27,151,853

The table below shows the total funds received against the 2005 fundraising:

TOTAL 2005 EMERGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS BY DONOR AS AT MAY 5 2005		
Donor	Total amount (US\$)	Sectors
Netherlands	904,000	WASH, Health & Nutrition
Italy	663,130	Health & Nutrition
Ireland	594,450	Education, Child Protection
ECHO	557,400	Health & Nutrition
Canada	201,613	Health & Nutrition
French National Committee	140,554	Health & Nutrition
Total	3,061,147	

The table below lists the current priority projects and related urgent funding needs:

CURRENT PRIORITY REQUIREMENTS AS OF 5 MAY 2005		
Sector	Purpose	Requirements USD
Child Protection	Reintegration of Children Associated with Fighting Forces	4,000,000
Health and Nutrition	Rehabilitation of primary health care facilities	3,000,000
Health and Nutrition	Nutrition	500,000
Education	Improving access to and quality of primary education	6,000,000
Child Protection and Education	Action to prevent recruitment of children in cross-border areas	1,500,000
TOTAL		15,000,000

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