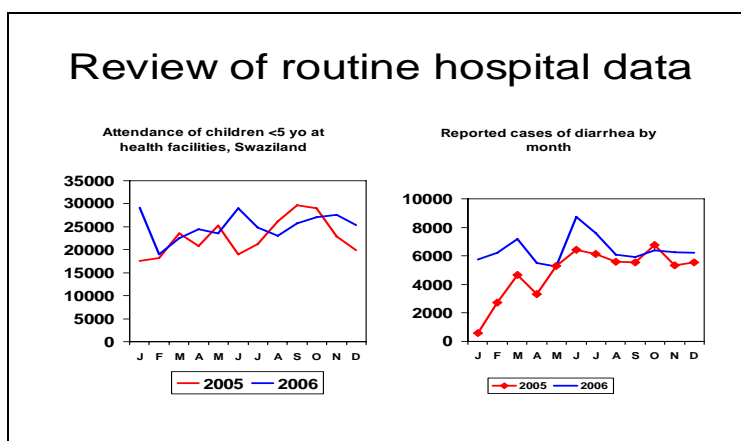


UNICEF Situation Report Swaziland - External

22 June 2007

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- A quick review of routinely collected data at the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW) does not show marked seasonal variations of health indicators for which data is available, namely hospital attendance, reported cases of diarrhea, and respiratory infections in children. The incidence of respiratory infections is expected to increase later in the winter and peak in July and August. Fortunately, the planning of the child-health activities which MOHSW carried out in March and June (see below) with UNICEF assistance took into account the seasonal pattern of childhood diseases and include several high impact interventions.



- Water is becoming increasingly scarce in areas hit by the drought. In Lavumisa (southeast corner of Swaziland), NGOs reports indicate a sharp rise in the price of a jerry can of water. A local NGO, African Mayors Initiative for Community Action on AIDS at the Local Level (AMICAALL), together with the Army, assisted the inhabitants of the area by providing water and transport to help community members fetch fire wood for the Neighbourhood Care Points (NCPs) that provide food for orphans and vulnerable children near Lavumisa.
- Following the declaration of a national disaster, the National Disaster Task Force (NDFT) is awaiting the release of funds from the Ministry of Finance for the immediate response interventions planned by line ministries in drought affected areas.
- CANGO circulated an invitation to a food security consortium next week to discuss the situation in relation to the drought in the country and examine the preliminary finding of the VAC. NGOs are key partners of Government and UN agencies in implementation and so follow-up to the VAC assessment is underway to determine food aid distribution mechanism, geographic locations, and time frame..

VAC ASSESSMENT

Analysis of the survey data is almost complete and preliminary results are expected on 28 June. The findings will address some data gaps and inform the medium and long-term plans of the humanitarian community and the government.

UNICEF RESPONSE

UNICEF Swaziland has continued to support a number of interventions:

Child Protection: On the 21 June, UNICEF and the Ministry of Rural Development and Youth Affairs (MRDYA) convened a meeting of the National Child Protection Network. The meeting was attended by 88 national and international partners including representatives of relevant Ministries, regional authorities, UN, civil society and media. An update on the humanitarian situation was presented along with information from the country's Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission. Partners discussed implications of the drought for children; identified the current gaps in coverage in the areas of health, water and sanitation, education, protection and nutrition; and then worked in groups to develop short and long term recommendations. MRDYA and UNICEF will circulate the recommendations of this meeting and monitor follow up actions.

Early Childhood Development (ECD): The Day of the African Child (DAC) took a new direction in 2007. The Prime Minister, UNICEF and other partners supported observances in all drought-affected regions from the 13-16 of June with wide participation of Government (including the Minister and Deputy Minister of MRDYA, members of Parliament, regional administrators, regional secretaries and regional education officers) and media. Regional teams were empowered to work with technical officers and service providers (especially teachers) on a number of critical issues facing the Swazi population (rearing practices, early education, birth registration, prevention of child abuse and trafficking, etc). Communities were mobilized also to work with children and sensitize them through a number of activities (dramas, song, dance performances, etc). Children reached through the regional launches exceeded 12,000 (almost 3,000 in each region).

Health & Nutrition: UNICEF continues to support the Ministry of Health promote child survival (interventions) under the umbrella of the "Child Health Days". In the past week, Swaziland successfully carried out the second Child Health Days campaign in 2007 in Hhohho, Manzini and Shiselweni regions and Lubombo. The aim of the campaign was to deliver a package of services – measles immunization, vitamin A supplementation, deworming tablets, and physical assessment – to children under five years old as well as orphans and vulnerable children. To reach the 40,000 children targeted, the duration of this year's campaign was increased from five to seven days to 10 to 12 days in three regions and to 10-12 days in Lubombo, the region with poor coverage. Although results of the campaign are being tallied, early reports show a larger coverage than had been achieved in 2006, nearly 1000 neighbourhood points. UNICEF will assist the Ministry to use the results to identify under-served areas, develop strategies to reach un-reached children, and overcome some of challenges encountered including the need for increased social mobilization.