

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### UNICEF assisting children & women newly displaced from Mogadishu

**Nairobi, Kenya, Friday, 16 November 2007** — Despite access and security limitations, UNICEF is working with local partners in southern Somalia to bring much-needed relief to over 100,000 people newly displaced by the recent upsurge in conflict in the capital, Mogadishu.

Throughout 16 years of instability, UNICEF has never withdrawn from this country” said UNICEF Representative for Somalia, Christian Balslev-Olesen, “UNICEF is deeply concerned about the displaced families currently living in make-shift camps along the road between Afgoye and Mogadishu. We are committed to helping them and where access is limited we are working with local partners, already on the ground, to reach the most vulnerable”.

“UNICEF is helping to respond to the basic household needs of people who continue to arrive from Mogadishu in their hundreds every day. So far, we have provided shelter and non-food items for over 60,000 people and we are supporting the provision of health, water and sanitation services and education,” said Balslev-Olesen

To combat the risk of disease transmission in the camps, UNICEF is contributing to the daily delivery of over 3 million litres of water and the construction of 1600 latrines to serve 250,000 people. The children’s agency is also assisting partners to lay a water pipeline from the nearest water source to ensure a regular supply of potable water for camp dwellers.

Thirty school tents will soon be erected to create safe spaces and learning opportunities for over 6,000 children aged between 6 and 13. UNICEF is providing teaching and learning materials and working with community education committees to train 120 teachers.

A safe environment is especially crucial in a situation where children may become separated from their families and vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. UNICEF is therefore supporting partner organizations to provide recreational activities, locate and reunite with their families any separated children. UNICEF is also building awareness in thirty settlements to prevent violence against children, child recruitment and the transmission of cholera and HIV.

Support to mobile health clinics and nutrition screening to identify malnourished children will be complemented by a National Immunisation Day in collaboration with WHO. The first week of December will also see the launch in Afgoye of a package of health care services for over 260,000 people including over 50,000 children under the age of five. “The health and well-being of displaced children and women are extremely important to UNICEF. The expanded immunization programme will ensure that children living in the camps are protected against measles, polio and tuberculosis and fortified with Vitamin A. In addition, pregnant women will receive iron and Vitamin A supplements, immunization against tetanus and assistance at the time of delivery” said Balslev-Olesen

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### **About UNICEF**

*UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.*