

# UNICEF Somalia Monthly Review

December 2005



## Drought looms...

Children, women and vulnerable communities in Somalia face a serious food shortage in the coming months. With people already suffering from the effects of poor health and insecurity, a food crisis will compound their anguish further.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO's) Food Security Assessment Unit (FSAU), with information verified by numerous agencies operating in Somalia, asserts that the humanitarian situation is steadily worsening and that poor rains have dramatically affected food availability. FSAU estimates, released on 20 December 2005, put at two million the number of people vulnerable to humanitarian emergency and/or acute food and livelihood crisis in Somalia with 1.7million of them being in Central/Southern Somalia.

In the worst affected regions of Gedo, Bakool, Bay and Middle and Lower Jubba, agencies are already reporting increased admissions at feeding centres and a rise in cases of diarrhoea in certain areas. There is urgent need for interventions in the health, water, nutrition and other sectors to ensure livelihood to avert a major crisis.

For many years the affected regions have faced food insecurity and destitution, local conflict, recurrent displacement and the absence of effective local administration. These factors have seriously undermined the efforts of UNICEF and other agencies to improve humanitarian conditions.

Contributory factors include the worst harvest in a decade; conflict that has caused displacement and disrupted markets and livestock migratory patterns; poor rains in neighbouring countries, limited migratory options and support mechanisms; limited access to critical areas by humanitarian bodies; sea piracy causing disruption to delivery of food supplies; and unacceptably high levels of acute malnutrition that are already emerging in some areas.



**As drought bites, livestock a mainstay for nomadic families are affected. Credit: UNICEF Somalia/05/Shassan.**

In response to the situation, UNICEF is currently supporting 12 partners operating 40 health facilities – primarily Maternal and Child Health (MCH) centres – along with several therapeutic feeding centres. UNICEF and implementing partners are also updating their response plans including supplies and other technical support requirements. Priority items have been identified for vaccination activities

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(measles, Vitamin A), the provision of essential drugs, the supply of nutritional commodities, water equipment and shelter materials. Discussions have taken place with the World Food Programme towards coordination in areas where insecurity, weak local administration and lack of implementing partners remain major challenges.

Initial UNICEF planning targets are based on reaching some 295,000 people in 16 districts of Bay, Bakool, Gedo, Lower and Middle Juba regions of Central/Southern Somalia. This is likely to expand in the coming months. Despite major operational constraints that hinder activities in Southern Somalia, UNICEF maintains an international presence in its main zonal office at Jowhar as well as several other locations. This is enhanced by UNICEF national staff overseeing several satellite offices in Mogadishu and Baidoa. UNICEF and UN operations in Kismayo remain suspended following the killing of a Somalia UN staff member in early October. As of end-December, UNICEF's immediate funding requirements to undertake emergency work amount to approximately US\$3.4million, up from the \$2 million estimate of early December.

The UN and international and national NGOs are actively engaged in a coordinated response to help in the situation that is rapidly developing in Somalia. Only timely, appropriate and well coordinated support will avert a major humanitarian crisis.

## Political developments...

The Somaliland *Guurti* (House of Elders) endorsed the election of an opposition-backed Speaker after a dispute between parliamentarians belonging to the ruling UDUB party a the opposition. Somaliland has three main parties - UDUB, Kulmiye, the largest opposition party and the Justice and Welfare Party known by its Somali acronym, UCID.

A delegation of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia led by President Abdullahi Yusuf visited Northeast Somalia ('Puntland') on 20 December 2005 and participated in the inauguration of Armo Police Academy, 100km to the south of Bossaso. The academy will train members of the police force for the new Somali government. Among those attending the inauguration were staff of UN agencies, donors and the Kenyan Ambassador to Somalia. The TFG delegation also visited Bossaso, Garoowe, Burtinle and Galkayo towns and held discussions with members of the Puntland administration, traders and community leaders. Puntland is a semi-autonomous region of Somalia. Though it has its own President, it has vowed to remain an integral part of Somalia. Unlike Puntland, Northwest Somalia ('Somaliland') declared sovereignty about 10 years ago and has no intention of being part of Somalia. As yet, Somaliland is unrecognized by the international community.

## UNICEF Operational Areas...

### Northwest Zone – Hargeisa Office

Awdal  
West Galbeed  
Togdheer  
Sahil  
Sool  
Sanaag

### Northeast Zone – Bossaso Office

Bari  
Nugal  
Mudug

### Central and Southern Zone – Baidoa, Jowhar and Mogadishu

Galgaduud  
Hiran  
Middle Shabelle  
Lower Shabelle  
Benadir  
Lower Juba  
Middle Juba  
Gedo  
Bay  
Bakool

*Chinese visit:* A delegation led by the Chinese ambassador to Kenya visited Jowhar, the temporary seat of the Transitional Federal Government. The envoy met government officials and announced that China would establish a diplomatic presence in Jowhar.

## Security developments...

One person was killed and 20 injured on 24 December 2005 as police in Hargeisa, Northwest Somalia ('Somaliland') tried to calm the relatives of a man killed in a land dispute. The incident took place at Hargeisa Group Hospital where the family (which had gone to collect the body of the kinsman) insisted on the apprehension and execution of the killer before they would proceed with burial.

## Emergency...

*Workshop:* Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) training workshops were held for UNICEF's partners in Puntland and Somaliland. The workshops were held in Hargeisa, Somaliland's capital and Garowe, Puntland's administrative capital. About 30 officials from UN agencies, the Puntland administration and other partners participated in the training and shared experiences and information on emergency interventions in Puntland. These included the response to the Tsunami of December 2005. The workshop also discussed ways to enhance collaboration between various organizations.

*Tsunami update:* Construction of schools, water systems and health centres with UNICEF support continues in areas affected by the Tsunami.

*Internally Displaced People (IDPs):* IDPs in Puntland continue to receive health care through health posts established in September 2005 by UNICEF in partnership with the Association for Integration and Development, a local NGO. The posts are in five major camps - Askar, Elay, Shabelle and Tuur Jaalle in Bossaso and Gardo IDP camp in Gardo district.

*Fire:* An IDP camp in Mogadishu caught fire leaving 178 families from the 600 who live in the camp homeless. A boy and a girl lost their lives.

## Health and Nutrition update...

UNICEF in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Somaliland administration on 22 December 2005 launched a measles immunization campaign in Sahil and Awdal regions targeting 150,000 children aged between one and 15 years. The Somaliland Minister of Health launched the campaign during which Vitamin A supplements were provided to 50,000 children. A similar exercise took place in Puntland in collaboration with the local administration, local and international organizations. In Puntland, 71,450 children aged between one and five years were provided with Vitamin A supplements during the measles

campaigns implemented between November and December 2005.

## Water and Environmental Sanitation update...

*Projects:* Construction of the Hafun water system continues. Hafun was the worst-hit location by the Tsunami of 2005. Norwegian Church Aid has completed similar projects in BaqBaq, El Dhidar and Bandar Beyla. The latter three projects will serve about 3,500 people. Other projects continue in Somaliland and Central/Southern Somalia.



**A woman and children drawing water. UNICEF supports the provision of water services in locations all over Somalia.**

**Credit: UNICEF Somalia/2005/NEZOffice.**

## Education update...

*Construction of schools:* 14 new primary schools were completed in Somaliland in December. Constructions included classrooms, offices, staff rooms, stores and latrine facilities. In major towns, existing schools received

additional classrooms to house the large number of pupils. The new schools will accommodate 5,040 children. Other schools were completed in Puntland. Among them were schools in four villages of the Tsunami-affected Hafun district that will accommodate 2,500 children in double shifts.

*Donors visit:* A joint UNICEF/UK Department for International Development (DFID) mission visited Puntland and toured education facilities in Bossaso and Gardo towns. The team held discussions with the local administration and community education committees. Follow-up to the visit, DFID, UNICEF and the Puntland administration are to develop a plan of cooperation to support the education sector in Puntland.

*Training:* In-service teacher training was completed in early December for 125 teachers in Buurtinle and another 285 in Galkayo town in Puntland as part of a joint initiative between UNICEF and the Puntland Ministry of Education. The trainees were the last of a group of teachers to undertake comprehensive in-service training in 2005. In total, 1,449 teachers were trained.

*School tents:* The first model school tents have gone up in two IDP camps in Somalia. The tents, each comprising four classrooms and one office, were erected in Askar IDP camp in Bossaso and in Gardo IDP camp. The tents are a component of the UNICEF-supported Back-to-School Campaign in Somalia aimed at boosting school enrolment. UNICEF and the Bosasso Municipality

are working together to ensure access to education for 2,000 children of IDP families in a total of eight IDP camps. As part of the agreement, each camp will get at least one school tent.

## HIV/AIDS update...

*Youth week:* Somaliland commemorated 'Youth and HIV/AIDS week' towards the end of November 2005. With the theme, *Stop Denial*, it emphasized the need for youth to recognize the risk posed by HIV; to avoid risky personal behaviour and to organize themselves to reinforce values that help protect them against HIV. Activities during the week included dialogue forums in Hargeisa, Borama, Berbera and Burao towns. Drama performances, football tournaments, information raising and awareness through floats and processions on mobile trucks, TV and radio programmes were some of the other highlights of the week.

*World AIDS Day:* Observation of the Day took place in various locations. In Somaliland, the newly-inaugurated National AIDS Commission played a major role in marking it. UNICEF also provided support to a wide range of activities including discussion forums involving local authorities, civil society and religious leaders. The emphasis was on the daily challenge of HIV/AIDS prevention and control.

*Training:* Two female youth from Somaliland were among young people represented at the International

Conference on HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections in Africa (ICASA) 2005 held in Abuja, Nigeria. UNICEF supported their participation.

## Youth ...

*Centre opens:* The Berbera Youth Multi-Purpose Centre was officially opened by the Somaliland Minister of Youth and Sports in a ceremony attended by the local mayor. GAVO, a youth organization will be responsible for running the centre's programme of sports, youth events, awareness-raising and counselling. Meanwhile, the rehabilitation of Hargeisa Girls' Multi-purpose Centre continues.

*Supplies distributed:* UNICEF in collaboration with local administrations supported distribution of sports supplies in Somaliland and Puntland. Among the supplies were furniture, television sets and computers to the Hargeisa, Berbera and Burao youth multi-purpose centres. The furniture included reading tables, shelves, filing cabinets, and chairs. Books were also provided in some locations.

*Magazine launch:* A new-look *KOOR* magazine was launched in Bossaso, Puntland, in December. The youth magazine, supported by UNICEF, focuses on a variety of issues of interest to young people including HIV/AIDS. Copies of the re-designed magazine were distributed to youth groups across the country. The magazine is produced in Somaliland.

## Child protection update...

*Training:* Thirty people are now trained as trainers in psychosocial care. They will now go on to train health and education professionals and civil society staff to constitute a cadre of trained psychosocial workers for support and care in vulnerable communities in Somalia.

Training on the monitoring and reporting of child rights violations was also conducted in Merca for child protection advocates. This training will provide the starting point for a new protection monitoring system which will ensure UNICEF Somalia's compliance with the new reporting requirements of Security Council Resolution 1612.

In Hargeisa, Somaliland, a Child Rights Forum meeting discussed the state of orphanages, street children and juvenile justice. Participants included members of organizations involved in advocacy for child rights. Advocacy initiatives were also carried out targeting 16 communities including those in Tsunami affected areas and IDP camps in Puntland. As a result of the initiative, the communities developed child protection action plans.

MPs allied to the TFG based in Jowhar have proposed the establishment of a parliamentary committee on orphans and vulnerable children. UNICEF has undertaken to support this initiative in the first months of 2006.

*Tsunami effects:* UNICEF carried out an assessment of psychosocial problems facing Tsunami affected communities in Puntland. Once the assessment is completed, recommendations will be put forward on ways to address the problems.

## Communication for development

*Youth broadcasting:* production of eight video/radio programmes commenced through organizations that UNICEF has supported through capacity building for audio and video production. The organizations are under the umbrella of the Somaliland National Youth Organization (SONYO). The programmes focus on issues of concern to the youth.

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**Credit for majority of content in this report goes to UNICEF staff in Somalia.**