

UNICEF Somalia Monthly Review

February 2005



Political developments

Somali President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and Prime Minister Ali Muhammad Gedi undertook a nine-day tour of Somalia. It began on 24 February with visits to Jowhar, Belet Weyne, Garowe, Bossaso, Galkayo and Baidoa. The delegation, however, did not visit the capital, Mogadishu. Two delegations of the Transitional Federal Government comprising about 80 parliamentarians visited Mogadishu. They were welcomed by thousands of people including militia commanders, the union of Islamic courts, the mayor, civil society groups and members of the business community. In a related development, an African Union fact-finding mission visited Belet Weyne, Central Somalia and Galkayo, Northeast Somalia ('Puntland') on 21 February to assess the situation there and to plan for deployment of peace-keeping troops.

In Northwest Somalia ('Somaliland'), the House of Elders held talks with representatives of registered political parties and the Electoral Commission about upcoming parliamentary elections scheduled for 29 March 2005. There have been differences between parties on whether to stick to the date. The opposition insists that the date be adhered to and not be tied to registration of voters.

Transition: One of the oldest traditional leaders in Puntland, Islaan Mohamed Islaan Muse, died in Garowe on 17 February 2005. Born in the Nugal Valley in 1921, he was chief of his

community from 1936. He played major roles in all peace building initiatives in Northeast Somalia and chaired the conference which led to establishment of Puntland as an autonomous region. Puntland state of Somalia was set up in 1998 with Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed being elected the President. Abdullahi Yusuf went on to be elected President of Somalia in October 2004. Unlike Northwest Somalia which declared sovereignty and decided to break away from Somalia, Puntland has always been committed to remaining an integral part of Somalia.



Children in a tent class in Hafun, Northeast Somalia. Following the Tsunami, UNICEF provided tents that continue to serve as classrooms for pupils. Credit Jesper Morch/UNICEF Somalia.

Freed girl leaves: Zam Zam Ahmed Dualeh, the 16 year-old girl who received a five year jail sentence in December 2004 for espionage in Somaliland, was freed on Wednesday 2 February. She was released, unconditionally, by the Somaliland authorities into the custody of the Independent Expert on the human rights situation in Somalia, Dr. Ghanim

Contents...

Tsunami relief continues ...1

Political developments...2

Security developments...3

Programme Updates...

Health ...3

Water and Environmental Sanitation...3

Nutrition ...4

Education ...4

HIV/AIDS ...4

Youth ...4

Child Protection ...5

Communication for development...6

OTHERS

UNICEF mission...3

Emergency...4

Alnajjar. He then accompanied Ms. Dualeh back to her home in Puntland.

Arrested on 15 August 2004, a Hargeisa court sentenced Ms. Dualeh to four years' imprisonment for alleged espionage and one year for purportedly lying about her name, identity and clan. She was suspected to have been obtaining secret information about the Vice-President's house on her visit to Hargeisa from Puntland. She denied the charges. It was alleged that Ms. Dualeh was mistreated by police officers during her detention. Upon the request of the Independent Expert, the Somaliland administration confirmed its commitment to investigate the allegations and ensure that it would respect any decision by Ms. Dualeh to seek redress in a court of law.

Dr. Alnajjar was on his fourth annual fact-finding visit to the region since being appointed Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in June 2001. His mandate is to assess the prevailing human rights situation in Somalia and report his findings to the UN's Commission on Human Rights. During his visit, Dr Al-Najar said the conditions at Hargeisa Central Prison were deplorable and recommended that a new prison be set up.

Security developments

A journalist with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) was killed by unidentified gunmen in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, on

Wednesday, 9 February. Kate Peyton, 39, who was working for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), was shot in front of the Sahafi Hotel as she was getting into a car. She was rushed to Medina Hospital for treatment where she died later. Killings of prominent personalities who had welcomed the formation of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) occurred in Mogadishu. Those killed included Abdirahman Warsame Elmi a former secondary school headmaster and a former police colonel, Hersi Dhore. The killings were condemned by all civil society groups, religious groups and the media in Mogadishu.

In Belet Weyne, a physiotherapist was shot dead following complaints by a patient. The killer who was a relative to the patient tried to escape to Ethiopia but was arrested. Intermittent conflict, banditry and other incidents of insecurity were reported in Galgaduud, Bakool and Gedo regions.

Health update...

Immunization: UNICEF in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Somaliland Ministry of Health and Labour held National Immunization Day campaigns over three days in Somaliland in the last week of February. About 185,000 children were given polio drops.

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, Mogadishu and Kismayo Offices

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

Supplies: UNICEF distributed drugs, equipment and other medical supplies to maternal and child health (MCH) centres in various locations in Somalia.

Mental health: Two local NGOs in Somaliland, GAVO and SORAG, which are supported by Comic Relief Humanitarian Organization, announced that they will start a three year programme for the treatment of the mentally ill in Somaliland. Their long term objective is to increase the capabilities of the two mental hospitals in Hargeisa and Berbera by training staff and enhancing their welfare, improving treatment and disseminating information to the public.

Nutrition update...

Food distribution: UNICEF in collaboration with the World Food Programme provided supplementary food to 1,237 malnourished children in Sanaag and Togdheer regions. In Puntland, UNICEF supported a feeding programme for malnourished children in IDP camps in Bossaso. The feeding programme was integrated with immunization, hygiene and sanitation activities.

Awareness: UNICEF printed Operational Guidelines for Supplementary Feeding Programmes for distribution to staff of health facilities to enable them respond adequately to nutrition needs of vulnerable populations.

In Adale district, some 60 children aged between one and six years were screened for malnutrition. The results indicated that 20% of them were moderately malnourished with another 16% severely malnourished. The main cause of malnutrition in Central/Southern Somalia is inadequate access to health services, poor sanitation practices, inappropriate feeding and a general lack of awareness on maternal and child care issues.

Records from the Adale MCH centre, the only operational one in the area, indicated that 13 children had been diagnosed for night blindness which is an indication of vitamin A deficiency. Malaria and measles were reported to be the main diseases affecting children in Adale. UNICEF is developing an action plan in collaboration with, Saacid, its key health partner in Adale district to extend EPI activities there.

Water and environmental sanitation

Projects: A local NGO in Puntland completed the rehabilitation of eight shallow wells in Hafun area which was the worst affected by the Tsunami that hit Somalia. In Central/Southern Somalia, UNICEF is considering the possibility of rehabilitating a bore-well in Middle Shabelle region.

Sanitation: Construction of 30 pit latrines was completed in Hafun and a landfill for disposal of waste completed

UNICEF mission

UNICEF Somalia Representative Jesper Morch visited Hargeisa. During the visit he launched the Back to School campaign in Somaliland. Mr. Morch held discussions with Somaliland ministers concerning cooperation with UN agencies and the administration specifically on UNICEF programmes in Somaliland. Launching the campaign, Mr Morch emphasized the importance of educating children, especially getting more girls into school and improving the quality of education through teacher training.

four kilometers away from Hafun. The Somali Red Crescent Society (SRCS) continues to undertake garbage collection and disposal in Hafun as well as chlorination of drinking water sources.

Education update...

Examination centre: Discussions were held on the setting up of an examination centre for primary and secondary school examinations in Somaliland. Representatives from the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) that is funding the project, staff of the local administration, chancellors of Hargeisa and Amoud Universities and representatives of international organizations took part in the discussions.

Field mission: UNICEF staff visited various schools in Somalia to assess the status of enrolment, infrastructure and teaching. One of the schools visited was in Maandere village in Jowhar district. The UNICEF team found that enrolment in the local school was low, there was lack of enough space for school expansion and that the school had poor ventilation. UNICEF staff raised these issues with the community education committee which pledged to launch a campaign for enrolment and support for the teachers either in kind or in cash. UNICEF helped form a community education committee (CEC) for Gara'ad school in Puntland. Following UNICEF-led community mobilization, the enrolment has risen from 70 to 116.

Gara'ad is one of the areas hit by the Tsunami.

In other visits to Adale, Warsheik and Nur-nirgood districts, all along the coastal areas of Middle Shabele region, Central Somalia, UNICEF staff found that enrolment in schools was low. The causes ranged from high school fees in Adale primary school, closure of the school in Nur-nirgood to lack of water and negative attitude to education in Warsheik. To redress the situation, UNICEF will undertake social mobilization initiatives, provide materials and help in rehabilitation of school infrastructure.

In non-formal education initiatives, UNICEF staff visited schools and learning centres in Jowhar and Merka town. In the schools visited, attendance was good. During the visit to one of the non-formal education centres in Merka, separate classes were found to have been started for school age children apart from those of youth learners. UNICEF-supported non-formal education initiatives in Somalia focus on helping young people who missed out on opportunities to attend formal education have a second chance to acquire basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy. The curriculum also has a component that teaches such skills as relating to one another, reproductive health, peace, conflict management and protection of the environment.

Policy review: UNICEF in collaboration with the Somaliland Ministry of

Emergency

Locust invasion: Locusts were reported to have invaded Karin area east of Berbera city destroying pasture and crops. A local council member Ahmed Mohamed Hirsi appealed to international organizations for assistance to reduce the damage by the locusts.

UNICEF Somalia Representative Jesper Morch and Senior Programme Officer Siddharth Chatterjee visited Hafun the worst affected location by the Tsunami which hit the Northeast Somalia coastline in December 2005. They met those affected and UNICEF staff involved in relief efforts. A UN inter-agency mission visited the Tsunami-affected areas in Puntland on 2 February. In Bossaso they visited the Askar Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp where a blaze destroyed dwellings in January. The mission revised the figures of those affected by the Tsunami in key areas including Hafun, Bander Bayla, Dangoray, Eyl and Jerriban districts down to 48,750.

Education completed a draft of the Somaliland Education Policy which is to be submitted to the cabinet for approval. UNICEF staff in Hargeisa, Somaliland, reviewed an emergency preparedness plan to help UNICEF intervene adequately in the education sector in emergency situations.

Campus launched: The assistant Minister of Fisheries and Coastal Development of Somaliland inaugurated the Hargeisa University's Faculty of Fisheries and Marine in Berbera.

Youth development...

Rehabilitation: The rehabilitation of Berbera Youth Multipurpose Development Centre in Somaliland continues.

Meetings: UNICEF staff in Puntland met representatives of youth organizations and student associations to assess possibilities of future cooperation. In Central Somalia, a workshop was held in Jowhar with 31 youth mainly from Mogadishu and Jowhar participating. The one week workshop trained the youth in basic conflict resolution and peace building skills.

HIV/AIDS prevention and control update...

Awareness: UNICEF developed messages to raise awareness in Somali and English on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STI). The messages are to be disseminated

during drought relief interventions in Sanaag and Sool regions. In Bossaso, Puntland, UNICEF held an awareness session for 35 female teachers. The session was held at Altadamun NGO training centre. In Jowhar, Central Somalia, the local HIV/AIDS working group held awareness raising sessions for 32 members of local militia as well as youth who attended a workshop there. A similar session was held for youth and students in Belet Weyne.

UNICEF staff from Somalia working on HIV/AIDS issues attended a meeting in Nairobi for appraisal on issues related to practices, policies and procedures for voluntary counseling and testing. They visited various laboratories that undertake testing and observed the measures in place for pre and post-test counselling. They also visited the Kenya National AIDS Control Programme, a government institution responsible for monitoring HIV/AIDS programmes and practices at national level. The experiences gained will come in handy as discussions are underway on establishment of HIV/AIDS secretariats in Somaliland, Northwest Somalia and Central/Southern Somalia respectively. The secretariats will be expected to coordinate all



Fishermen with their catch in Tsunami-hit Hafun. The community is recovering with the help of the international community. Credit: UNICEF Somalia/Jesper Morch.

HIV/AIDS activities in their areas of jurisdiction once they are set up.

The UNAIDS Representative for Somalia visited Somaliland and held discussions with UNICEF on plans for HIV/AIDS prevention and control. The officer also held discussions with committees set up in Somaliland to fight HIV/AIDS as well as staff of other UN agencies based there.

Child Protection update...

Day marked: UNICEF in collaboration with Somaliland Culture and Sports Association (SOCSA), a women's sports, drama and cultural organization marked the International Day for the Eradication of FGM on 6 February. Hargeisa University hosted some of the speakers on the day that focused on the significance of eradicating FGM. UNICEF information materials on FGM eradication were distributed including the publication *Women's Rights in Islam and Somali Culture*. Another meeting was held at Timo-Adde basketball court. About 1,000 people attended drama and song performances there.

In Central/Southern Somalia, the Day was commemorated in Mogadishu, Jowhar and Baidoa. In Mogadishu, UNICEF collaborated with COGWO, a local NGO to mark the day. Activities held included a workshop for 60 youth, community-based organizations, media, women, circumcisers, traditional birth attendants, HIV/AIDS task forces and religious leaders. Radio debates

were also aired on various issues related to female genital cutting. Similar activities were organized in Jowhar in collaboration with Jowhar Women's Group and in Baidoa with Baidoa Women's Group. Organizations involved in child protection initiatives played a key role in activities held on the Day.

Awareness initiatives: Consultants from Tostan, an NGO based in Senegal that is active in the fight against FGM and Entishar, their affiliate in the Sudan, visited Somaliland, Puntland and Central/Southern Somalia. They met with UNICEF staff and leaders of women's NGOs and discussed Tostan's approach to eradication of FGM. Tostan staff organized workshops in each of the locations visited.

UNICEF staff participated in a conference on female genital mutilation held in Djibouti. The conference had participants from East and Central Africa, Arabic countries, UN and other international agencies. Participants shared common experiences on FGM and how to eradicate it.

Communication for Development

Youth broadcasting initiative: The implementation of the initiative continues. In Somaliland, eight youth groups are to produce 24 radio and TV programmes with the first two already produced.

Dialogue: UNICEF initiated community dialogue in various locations in Somalia where local leaders discussed priority needs. UNICEF has embarked on a process where it will ensure that its key programmes are converged to benefit communities. During the meetings leaders were sensitized on the need to lead in safeguarding children's rights.

If you have questions about the UNICEF Somalia Monthly Review please contact:

Denise Shepherd-Johnson, Communication Officer.
E-mail: dshepherdjohnson@unicef.org

OR Robert Kihara, Assistant Communication Officer.
E-mail: rkihara@unicef.org

Tel: 254-2-623958/ 623950/ 623862/ 623959/ 350410
Fax: 254-2-520640/ 623965

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