

UNICEF Somalia Monthly Review

January 2006



Drought...

Approximately 1.7 million people are in need of timely humanitarian assistance in Somalia due to failed rains in 2005 and the cumulative effect of poor living conditions for more than a decade. Southern Somalia in particular faces a widespread humanitarian emergency.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Food Security Analysis Unit (FSAU), an estimated 1.5 million people in North, Central and Southern areas are in a state of humanitarian emergency, and a further 200,000 are at high risk of acute food and livelihood crisis.

These figures do not include up to 400,000 internally displaced people previously identified by the aid community in need of assistance and protection. Immediate causes of the crisis are a severe drought combined with localized conflicts. FSAU estimates crop production for this year to be 50% of the post war average – the lowest cereal production in over ten years. Cattle deaths in the worst affected areas are already reaching 20-30%, and could reach up to 80% by April. Malnutrition rates range from 10-25% (global acute malnutrition) in some areas and are expected to get worse in the coming months.

Worst affected are southern regions of Gedo, Lower Jubba, Middle Jubba, and areas of Bay and Bakool. Given the severity and the potential for rapid deterioration, FSAU has stated that there is a moderate risk of famine for Gedo region and surrounding areas in

coming months especially if the required humanitarian response is inadequate.



Women and children line up to receive food rations in Central/Southern Somalia while below a bare and patched landscape is testimony to the effects of the drought. Photo credit: UNICEF Somalia/Brendan Bannon



"The drought compounds what was already a dire humanitarian situation, and is affecting communities in areas beset by years of high malnutrition and morbidity rates, chronic food insecurity, clan fighting, and suffering from consecutive bad harvests," said the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Mr Maxwell Gaylard. "We have now a common understanding of the magnitude of the crisis. It is the worst drought in a decade and the number of

Contents...

- Drought ... 1
- Political developments...2
- Security developments...3
- Emergency...3

Programme Updates...

- Health/Nutrition ...3
- Water and Environmental Sanitation...4
- Education...5
- HIV/AIDS ...5
- Communication for development...5
- Youth ...6
- Child Protection ...6

people in need of immediate assistance and protection has drastically increased compared to six months ago when one million people were identified in need of assistance." In mid-January 2006, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) established a Ministerial Disaster Committee – chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Salim Aliyow Ibrow - to handle the drought and liaise closely with the humanitarian community on the response. The Office of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia will ensure a coordinated response by the aid community with the TFG and other local and regional authorities.

In cooperation with UN, NGO and community-based partners, UNICEF is currently prioritizing improving access to safe drinking water, expanded nutritional surveillance and response activities. In addition, UNICEF together with WHO is preparing a measles and Vitamin A campaign for the south starting in early March that will target over 75,000 children aged six months to 15 years of age. School tents and education supplies are also being distributed to drought affected areas of Southern Somalia.

"To address the situation, the aid community will have to increase its operational capacity in the southern regions to better address the needs of affected populations," said Mr. Gaylard. In northern Somalia, the rains were generally normal enabling continued improvement in rangeland and livestock conditions. Despite this, some localized pockets in the North received very little rain, placing recovery of communities at

risk. In north and central areas, 290,000 people thus remain in need of continued assistance.

Political developments...

Parliament to meet: The first full Somalia-based session of the parliament elected in 2004 will be held in Baidoa on 26 February 2006. Speaker of the Somali Transitional Federal Parliament, Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan, made the announcement in Nairobi following an agreement signed in Aden, Yemen, between Transitional Federal Government President Abdullahi Yusuf and the Speaker. However, TFG Prime Minister Ali Gedi expressed reservations saying more consultations and deliberations are needed.

President returns: Northwest Somalia ('Somaliland') President Dahir Rayaale Kahin returned home on 29 January after visits to Norway, Germany and Ethiopia. During his tour, the President lobbied for development support and securing international recognition for Somaliland which is as yet unrecognized internationally.

Assessment meeting: A Joint Needs Assessment (JNA) meeting was conducted in Somaliland. The UN and the World Bank organized the meeting in the capital Hargeisa with representatives of the Somaliland administration, private sector and civil society organizations.

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

The Joint Needs Assessment provides a constructive platform for national and international actors to agree on joint priorities for Somalis. The JNA seeks to create opportunities to achieve peace and security, promote good governance and the rule of law and to begin recovery, reconstruction and development. It also seeks to involve Somalis in a sustained process of consultation.

Reshuffle planned: Northeast Somalia ('Puntland') President Mohamud Muse Hirsi returned from medical treatment overseas and announced he would reshuffle his cabinet.

Security developments...

Clashes: An armed clash took place in Bossaso, 'Puntland' between members of the police and coast guard in mid-January. Four people were injured. In Central/Southern Somalia, 10 people were killed and over 12 others wounded after fighting erupted between rival militia in the Somalia/Ethiopian border village of Dacdheer. In Mogadishu, fighting between rival militia left at least 15 people dead.

Emergency update...

Provision of health services to IDPs continued through health posts in IDP camps in Bossaso and Gardo in Puntland. In the education sector, installation of school tents continued in seven major IDP camps of Bossaso. Following a fire outbreak in Damanyo IDP camp in Mogadishu, 178 houses and a Koranic school were destroyed and two children killed. UNICEF provided mosquito nets and relief items to affected families.

Following a fire outbreak in Awdinle IDP camp which destroyed Awdinle school, UNICEF supplied a school tent and 600 textbooks. Teachers and the local community education committee helped resume learning activities.

Health and Nutrition update...

Measles: UNICEF in collaboration with WHO and the Somaliland Ministry of Health and Labour (MOHL), carried out a measles campaign in Sanaag and Togdheer regions. UNICEF provided vaccines and equipment for the campaign and supported it through public advocacy, social mobilization and training of staff. The campaign targeted 149,000 children aged between nine months and 15 years.

Vitamin A capsules (which enhance the immunity of children against common infections and prevent childhood blindness) were also distributed to children under five years of age.

Polio: The continued spread of polio throughout Somalia is of major concern. The first cases of the polio to re-emerge were in Mogadishu in September 2005 ending the country's three year status as polio-free. By the end of 2005 there were 362 cases of acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) associated with polio. Having originated in Yemen, the spread of the poliovirus can be attributed to an alarmingly high rate of refusal of polio vaccination coupled with difficulty in access due to insecurity and the remoteness of some areas. There are currently 167 confirmed cases of polio [two in Sool, two in Bay Region, 11 in Lower Shabelle and the rest in Benadir]. For 2006 alone, 21 cases of acute flaccid paralysis are pending lab confirmation. Following one round of sub-national immunization days in January in the Central/South, another round of immunization in the entire country, will begin on February 20.

Supplies: UNICEF distributed medical supply kits for Maternal and Child Health (MCH) centres in Todgheer, Awdal and Hargeisa through collaboration with the Somaliland administration and the Somali Red Crescent Society (SRCS). Other supplies were distributed to partner organizations in Puntland and Central/Southern Somalia

Facility opens: The Armo health post in Puntland which was put up through

community collaboration with UNICEF was opened. Armo is a small community 90 km south of Bossaso, Puntland's commercial capital situated along the Gulf of Aden coastline.

In Central/Southern Somalia, 442 malnourished children in Isdhawrto village received supplementary food supplies as drought continued to bite. UNICEF in partnership with FAO, Action Contre La Faim and International Medical Corps supported nutrition surveys in Rabdure and Wajid districts.

Water and Environmental Sanitation update...

Projects: The Dararweine Water System in Somaliland was completed and is now operational. In Puntland construction of the Hafun water supply system continued. Hafun was the worst-hit location by the Tsunami of 2004. In Somaliland, community hygiene awareness activities took place in Laso Dawaco, Mandhera, State House and Idhanka areas targeting about 5,000 people.

Between 22 and 24 January, heads of various UN agencies visited drought-hit areas of Southern Somalia that included Wajid and Garbaharrey. A recurring problem cited was the lack of water and community leaders subsequently appealed to UN agencies and humanitarian organizations to alleviate this need. Follow-up to this, UNICEF is making efforts to rehabilitate borewells and support water trucking.

Education update...

Schools built: UNICEF in collaboration with the Somaliland administration finished construction of six primary schools in locations where internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees from refugee camps in Ethiopia and the poorest people are living. The construction of schools is part of the Back to School campaign that UNICEF in collaboration with Somali communities is running to get school age children back in class. The six schools will accommodate about 2,200 children. Another eight schools are being constructed in Somaliland through collaboration with the UN Office of Project Services (UNOPS).

Rehabilitation of five primary schools is going on in Middle Shabelle, Bay, Galgadud and Gedo regions of Central/Southern Somalia. The work will entail rehabilitation of 13 classrooms, eight latrines, offices, verandahs and perimetre walls.

School tents: twenty-eight school tents were put up in seven IDP settlements in Bossaso. Each camp now has four large tents each with a concrete floor to provide learning. Teachers in the schools were selected from the IDP communities and will receive specialized training. Two other school tents were provided to education centres in Jowhar,

Central Somalia. The Jowhar tents will cater for about 210 children attending alternative education in basic literacy skills. Before the supply of the tents, the children were studying in congested quarters in Horseed section of the town.

Training: 320 teachers attended an 18-day in-service teacher in Mogadishu. UNICEF staff and Transitional Federal Government (TFG) officials attended the closing ceremony.

HIV/AIDS update...

Advocacy: Thirty Somaliland members of parliament were trained in basic facts about HIV/AIDS. The Horn of Africa Voluntary Youth Organization Committee (HAVOYOCO) held circus and drama performances to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS prevention and control. In Puntland, UNICEF staff met the Puntland AIDS Commission to discuss areas of collaboration and institutional building. In Central Southern Somalia, focus group discussions were held in Merca with several women leaders to identify priority areas to reduce women's risks and vulnerabilities to HIV infection in Somalia and to guide the development of a new community based initiative to support women's groups in the HIV and AIDS response.

Communication for development

Training: UNICEF trained local councillors and administration officials from Somaliland on participatory integrated community development processes. Meetings were also held between UNICEF and local administrations and NGOs in Somalia to discuss development plans and community contributions to them. In Central/Southern Somalia, discussions were held between members of various women's groups on HIV/AIDS, women and related issues.

Supplies: UNICEF distributed supplies required by voluntary, counseling and testing centres (VCTs) in Merka, Jowhar and Mogadishu as well as to five hospitals in Somaliland (in Hargeisa Boroma, Berbera and Burao) .

Child protection update...

Bill planned: The Somaliland Minister for Justice, Ahmed Hassan Ali Asow announced that a Juvenile Justice Bill would soon be tabled in Parliament for approval. He was speaking at a workshop organized by UNICEF and the ministry in Hargeisa. Somaliland currently relies on a penal code that does not take into consideration unique circumstances of child offenders.

In Puntland, child protection action plans were developed for eight communities through a joint effort between UNICEF and TASS, a local NGO. UNICEF in collaboration with Oxfam Netherlands (NOVIB) is building the capacity of staff of the Puntland Students Association (PSA). The association is a member of an umbrella child protection network.

Training: UNICEF and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining provided training in mine awareness to 16 people from Puntland Mine Action Centre; members of the Explosive Ordinance Disposal team from Puntland police and journalists.

Somali Children's Day: The Day was commemorated in five major towns in Central/Southern Somalia. The event was organized in collaboration with civil society members involved in child

protection activities. The Day has been organized annually in Central/Southern Somalia to enhance advocacy for children's rights. It traces its origins to two incidents: on 24 December 2002 a school bus from the Ahmed Gurey High School was attacked in Mogadishu by unidentified militia, killing and injuring several students and in January 2003 a 12-year-old boy from Osman Bin Afan school in Mogadishu was killed during another attack on a bus.

Projects end: Two pilot projects that were supporting disadvantaged children in Mogadishu and Belet Weyne towns wrapped up. Through the projects, street children received basic literacy skills, medical services and counseling. A total of 279 children were supported to integrate with their families.

Youth

Training: UNICEF in collaboration with UN-HABITAT trained 16 youth from eight districts in Somaliland as trainers in youth participation in local governance. Youth groups in Puntland were trained in leadership and organizational development. In Central/Southern Somalia, UNICEF trained 220 youth aged between 14 and 18 years in leadership and organizational development as well youth peer education.

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.