

UNICEF Somalia Monthly Review

November 2006



One million could be affected by floods

Widespread flooding has directly affected an estimated 340,000 people along riverine areas in Central/Southern Somalia: 194,000 along the Shabelle and 146,000 along the Juba. If the situation persists, up to one million people could be directly affected in the coming weeks. In Northeast Somalia ('Puntland'), recent heavy rainfall has caused localized flooding. The floods came at a time when almost 1.8 million people (August 2006 estimates) in Somalia were facing a highly vulnerable humanitarian context and in need of assistance and still recovering from the effects of a major drought.

Since mid-September food relief, shelter materials and tens of thousands of treated mosquito nets and sandbags have been distributed by the UN and its partners. More non-food items (NFIs), medical, food and other supplies are being prepared for transport to affected areas. Different organizations are taking the lead in coordinating the flood response along the Juba and Shabelle rivers. Local authorities and the Somali Red Crescent Society are providing support. Both the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Council of Somali Islamic Courts (COSIC) have established flood emergency committees at local level with whom UN agencies are cooperating and sharing information.

In Hiran, the response has resulted in delivery of food, water trucking and provision of medical treatment. In Middle and Lower Shabelle, UNICEF and other

organizations have been involved in the distribution of non-food items as well as hygiene promotion. In the Juba Valley the response has been challenged by limited and reduced presence on the ground by humanitarian agencies.



Cowering under cold, but glad to have some polythene for shelter, these residents of Farbaraki village, Balad district are some of the beneficiaries of UNICEF support. Credit: UNICEF Somalia/CSZ Office-Yalahow.



Marooned by floods, these houses in Hiran are a stark reminder of the challenges facing relief efforts in Central/Southern Somalia where UNICEF continues to provide relief support. Credit: Somali Red Crescent Society.

The total needs for the ongoing floods response are estimated at around US\$ 28.4 million, of which around US\$ 10.3

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UNICEF is assisting 250,000 people in urgent need of supplies. To date, UNICEF has delivered shelter materials, blankets, jerry cans, soap, cooking sets, hand tools, sandbags, nutrition supplies and birth delivery kits. In addition, supplies for water treatment are being distributed.

million has been provided by the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). Beneficiaries have so far included the Food and Agriculture Organization, WFP and UNICEF. The humanitarian community is appealing to donors for an additional US\$18.1 million to cover activities in the sectors of health, water and sanitation, nutrition, food, logistics, protection, education, livelihoods and early recovery.

Somalis and local authorities have also undertaken self-help initiatives. A Council of Somali Islamic Courts (COSIC) initiative in Mogadishu raised about US\$500,000 for the flood-affected from local and Diaspora contributions. Priority needs are mainly in the water and sanitation sector given that outbreaks of waterborne diseases are of major concern. Access to affected populations remains a big challenge with more boats and aircraft required. Due to little or no infrastructure, and flooding itself, several primary roads are now completely impassable while airstrips are either dilapidated or unusable because of the rains. Trucks have been stuck in the mud for days trying to transport food.

Two helicopters have been secured by WFP to offer logistics support to UN and NGOs. Flights are in many cases the only means of transporting aid supplies and WFP plans to start food air drop operations.

On the political front, any outbreak of fighting resulting from deterioration in the present political stand-off between the Transitional Federal Government

and COSIC would have a disastrous impact on the ability of communities to cope and exacerbate already precarious food security and livelihood conditions.

Political and Security developments update...

The Council of Somali Islamic Courts organized demonstrations in Mogadishu to protest against a proposed UN Security Council resolution in support of the deployment of foreign peacekeepers and lifting of the arms embargo on Somalia. Following talks between the Speaker of the now-split TFG Parliament, Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, and some MPs with representatives of COSIC in Mogadishu, the two sides agreed on the need to continue deliberations geared towards securing a peaceful resolution to differences between COSIC and the TFG leadership based in Baidoa. TFG President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and the Prime Minister Ali Ghedi opposed the Speaker's initiative.

In the late afternoon of 30 November, a car bomb explosion at a check point near Baidoa killed eight people including a child.

Various reports of skirmishes between COSIC and TFG troops and militia backed by Ethiopia were reported. One of the skirmishes was between COSIC forces and those of Colonel Abdi Qaybdid, an ally of the TFG in Bandiradley – 60km south of Galkayo. Several people were killed and others injured.

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

A delegation led by the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for Somalia, Ambassador Francis Fall, visited Baidoa on 21 November and met the TFG President and Prime Minister. The delegation urged both the TFG and the COSIC to continue dialogue and avoid escalating conflict in Somalia.

Unrest: A riot broke out in Berbera town, Sahil region of Somaliland on Thursday, November 17. The disturbances occurred as residents protested the removal of metal scrap for export from the former Berbera Cement Factory compound. Five people were injured and one reported killed in the effort to quell protestors.

Health update...

Advocacy: Social mobilization was conducted to raise awareness on maternal health services available in Somaliland. Advocacy was also carried out for immunization against polio. Print and electronic media carried content on issues crucial to the immunization exercise.

Polio: A polio immunization campaign took place between 6 and 8 November in Puntland. UNICEF in partnership with WHO, media and NGOs mobilized communities to ensure immunization of 141,965 children.

Training: Personnel were trained to carry out a measles campaign in Elbur and Galhareri and other locations in Central/Southern Somalia. Rehabilitation of maternal and child

health (MCH) centres and training of health workers took place in Adale, Warsheikh, Runnirgod and Merka.

UNICEF supported a three-week training of trainers course in the prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV. It took place in Jinja, Uganda. A total of 20 participants from Somalia took part.

Donations: Three ambulances were donated to provide support to community-based emergency obstetric care in Puntland. The vehicles will serve communities in Hafun, the worst-hit location by the Tsunami of December 2004, Bender Beyla and Eyl.

Nutrition update...

Training: Thirty health workers from Burao and Borama hospitals in Somaliland were trained in management of severe malnutrition. Another 90 staff of MCH centres were trained in administration of vitamin A and iron-cum-folic acid supplementation to mothers after delivery. In Puntland, UNICEF in collaboration with the Galkayo Education Centre for Peace and Development trained 35 people in advocacy for breastfeeding. Training of community and maternal health centre workers commenced in areas affected by the Tsunami of 2004.

UNHEARD VOICES

Somali youth get a hearing

An opinion poll conducted in May among Somali children from across the country gives voice to their dreams, aspirations and opinions.

The poll initiated by UNICEF in partnership with Africa Child Policy Forum is the first of its kind in Somalia: a country that has not known peace for close to 16 years. It sampled 531 children (286 boys and 245 girls) aged between 9 and 17 years old, in four key urban and rural locations (Merca, Beletweyne, Bossaso and Hargeisa).

The poll indicates that parents are crucial in instilling important values and indicates that the following are the most important values instilled by them: 'respect for others', 'telling the truth', 'not stealing' and 'being responsible.'

90% of Somali children sampled, enjoy a remarkably good relationship with their parents and appreciate them most for their love, and care.

Poll highlights appear in boxes in next two pages....2

Water and Environmental Sanitation update...

Projects: Construction and rehabilitation of water projects in Arabsiyo, Gebiley, Berbera, Agabar and Wadamagoo continued in Somaliland. Similar work took place in Huddur, Baidoa and Bur Hakaba in Central/Southern Somalia.

Sanitation: School sanitation projects continued in Somaliland and Puntland. In Somaliland, 30 teachers were trained in hygiene and environmental sanitation. Wheel barrows, shovels, rakes and pick axes for environmental clean-up were donated to four European Union funded projects in Puntland. Twelve latrines were completed in Aran, Gorisane and Habare primary schools in Bay, Central Somalia. Construction of another 14 latrines and digging of wells is going on in Merka and its environs.

Education update...

Training: About 400 teachers were trained in mentoring of primary school teachers in subject-teaching and methodology. Another 415 teachers were trained in Mogadishu. A major challenge in Somalia is overcrowding in classes with some classes in major towns having 70 to 80 students. Meanwhile training of community education committees continues. The committees are widely responsible for school management and development in Somalia.

Advocacy: UNICEF initiated advocacy in Puntland and Somaliland targeting

teachers, students, local authorities and community members as part of the effort to promote school clubs for child-to-child learning.

Classroom tents: Twenty-two school tents were installed in 12 villages of Somaliland. The tents are currently facilitating learning for 660 students. Tents were repaired in Bossaso, Puntland where 2,000 children learn under school tents. In Central/Southern Somalia, 47 school tents were provided to schools in Lower Shabelle, Gedo and Bay regions. Construction of Baidoa Girls Primary School was completed.

Supplies: Education supplies were distributed to schools in all regions of Somaliland, parts of Puntland and in Central/Southern Somalia.

Youth Participation and Development update...

Training: Seventy-three youth were trained in the use of participatory education theatre for development in Somaliland, Puntland and Central/Southern Somalia.

Addis meeting: UNICEF facilitated participation of Somali youth in the African Development Forum held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

HIV/AIDS update...

UNICEF has helped the Network of People Infected and Affected by HIV, Youth Advocacy and Social

UNHEARD VOICES...2

According to the poll, two-thirds of the children believed that elections are a 'very effective' means to improve the state of things in the country. Rural children expressed the most confidence in elections. Though none of the children had ever experienced an election, it is notable that the majority supported a democratic electoral process.

On the topic of 'young people's participation' only 17% of children said they were consulted on matters affecting them in their community. One third said they were never consulted, while 45% did not know of any system of consultation.

Among issues on which they would like to be consulted, education received top billing. Issues which most concerned them were the need for more schools (12%) and for improvements in educational standards (12%). Other matters on which they wanted to be consulted were insecurity, hygiene and health matters, and health information. Despite the country's insecurity, 60% of the children said that they wanted to continue to live in Somalia. A third said they would consider living in another country with 23% favouring the USA; 24% Britain and 17% opted for Asia.

Development in Somaliland to establish an office with furniture and equipment. The organization is dedicated to helping people living with HIV. Among the activities planned by the organization is the organization of a weekly meeting of people living with HIV at their compound to discuss issues pertinent to their welfare.

'Woman to woman': As part of this initiative for HIV prevention and control, 600 women in Somaliland participated in discussions on information and knowledge about HIV/AIDS. Meetings were also organized for 300 other women and girls as part of a peer education component of the initiative. The participants were drawn from development projects and met each week in smaller groups to discuss issues related to HIV. Thirty women facilitators were trained in the implementation of the initiative in Puntland.

Advocacy: HIV regional working groups in Hiran, Middle Shabelle, Benadir and Lower Jubba conducted advocacy activities round the Youth-HIV AIDS week. The activities were carried out in Belet Weyne, Mogadishu, Jowhar and Kismayo districts. Activities included team sports competitions and athletics; debates and discussions, art competitions, quizzes and street processions.

Advocacy: The video *Somalis on HIV and AIDS taking action, making a difference* was distributed in Hiran and Galgaduud regions as well as to 17 international and Local organizations.

Testing: UNICEF donated a CD-4 count machine to the Somaliland administration. The donation from the Global Fund Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) is useful in monitoring the viral load of persons with HIV.

Child Protection update...

Network: A child protection network was established by 16 partner organizations from Togdheer region. Child protection advocates from different locations were trained in Bossaso.

Gender issues: A workshop was held in Somaliland bringing together organizations involved in supporting victims/survivors of gender-based violence. Participants shared information on services on offer and discussed how to establish efficient referral procedures.

Training: Twenty-four national protection advocates were trained in Puntland. Twenty-eight staff of organizations involved in providing psychological care and counseling also received induction into various issues related to the work of their organizations.

Advocacy: Communities in four IDP camps in Mogadishu and three other locations were sensitized on child protection issues. Special focus was paid to the prevention of gender-based violence.

UNHEARD VOICES...3

The cultural practices considered most harmful by the children were female genital mutilation (57%), early marriage (38%); male circumcision; child bondage and polygamy.

No particular person emerged strongly as a role model for the children, although they identified the following as people they looked up to: traditional and religious leaders; athletes, musicians and teachers. 25% of children polled said they had no 'role model'.

In their vision for Somalia the majority of children – almost 75% - were positive that in future, the country will be a better place to live in. Their confidence was founded on hopes of 'good governance' (37%); 'less delinquency and violence' (25%); 'better education' (24%); 'better economic situation' (22%); and 'less poverty' (10%). Only 10% were not optimistic about the country's future and expressed concern about the 'worsening economic situation' and 'more delinquency in society'.

Said UNICEF Representative for Somalia, Christian Balslev-Olesen : We have documented evidence of previously unheard voices of Somalia's youngest citizens. Responsible adulthood begins by giving children the space to voice their opinions. We urge Somali parents, community leaders, authorities and the international community to listen".

Communication for Development update...

Child-to-child: A meeting was held in Somaliland to discuss the training of teachers as part of the child-to-child learning process.

Training: 35 participants were given refresher training in the Participatory Integrated Community Dialogue (PICD) development process. The process is a UNICEF initiative to enhance community dialogue to identify development priorities. Participants were drawn from Bossaso, Gardo, Iskushuban, Bender Beyla, Rako and Waciye districts of Puntland. Also in attendance were representatives of the Puntland administration and NGOs. In Central/Southern Somalia, UNICEF provided input into workshops on community dialogue attended by members of local authorities in Bay, Bakool and Gedo regions.

Partnerships...

Repatriation: UNICEF provided humanitarian assistance to people repatriated to Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, arrangements were put in place to arrange the reception and reunification of minors with their parents.

UN-Somaliland talks: The UN Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator for Somalia Eric Laroche, UNICEF Somalia Representative, Christian Balslev-Olesen and other senior UN staff met 13 Somaliland ministers in Hargeisa. The UN officials briefed the

Somaliland counterparts on the UN development agenda for Somaliland.

Marginalised get support: In an article in the *Horn Tribune* dated November 26, an article titled *Breaking cast Barriers* gave insights into UNICEF support for marginalized/minority clans in Hargeisa, Somaliland. The clans are now able to access social services such as the provision of water.

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