

UNICEF Somalia Monthly Review

September 2005



Political developments...

Tension continues between President Abdullahi Yusuf of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and some Mogadishu-based TFG members. The President has set up the temporary seat of his administration in Jowhar, 90km north of Mogadishu. The tension was aggravated by a meeting held in Bal'ad town, 60 km south of Jowhar by members of the Mogadishu group. The TFG Minister of Reconstruction and Resettlement, Col. Barre Aden Shire meanwhile initiated efforts to try and resolve differences between the President and the Mogadishu-based members.

Northwest Somalia ('Somaliland') Foreign Affairs Minister, Ms Edna Adan Ismail repeated calls for Somaliland to be accorded international recognition. She was speaking to Somalilanders living in London. Ms. Adan Ismail said Somaliland had set the foundation for democratic institutions and should be rewarded through recognition. The British envoy to Ethiopia, Bob Deware visited Hargeisa to observe the elections held on 29 September. The United Kingdom is one of the countries that contributed to the election process. The Somaliland Ministry of Justice meanwhile appointed lawyers to represent 547 prisoners. Members of the local lawyers association and the Legal Clinic will represent the prisoners.

Elections: Some 246 candidates contested the parliamentary elections held on 29 September. Seven women were among the candidates.



Olad Omer a person living with HIV speaks at the launch of the Somaliland National HIV/AIDS Commission on 15 September, 2005. He appealed to residents of Somaliland not to stigmatize or discriminate against people living with HIV/AIDS. Credit: UNICEF Somalia/NWZ Office.

The parties participating in the poll were the ruling UDUB party, the largest opposition party, Kulmiye, and the Justice and Welfare Party known by its Somali acronym, UCID.

Donors contributed 1.4 million euros (US \$1.75 million) to fund the elections. The EU provided a major proportion of this.

Staff relocated: Following a UN Security directive, UNICEF on Thursday 8 September relocated international staff from Jowhar, UNICEF's main office location for Central/Southern Somalia. The precautionary measure was taken due to military movements in Jowhar's vicinity. Thereafter, from Sunday 11 September 2005, the Middle Shabelle administration denied UNICEF national staff access to the compound. However, on 13 September the administration rescinded the decision and returned control of the compound to the UN.

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Security update...

Central/Southern Somalia continued to experience internal displacement and unrest. The situation in Kismayo area of Southern Somalia showed improvement (**Editor's note:** In early October a UN staffer was killed in Kismayo). In Hargeisa, Somaliland's capital, a local court finished the hearing of a case in which 10 people were charged with committing terrorist acts. Somaliland police meanwhile raided a terrorist hideout in Hargeisa city and arrested five suspects including their leader Abdirahman Indha-ade. Three policemen were wounded during the arrest. An assortment of weapons including anti-tank and anti-personnel landmines and remote-controlled explosion devices were seized.

Reports indicated that the suspects were part of a Mogadishu-based group accused of planning and carrying out the 2003 killings of Italian aid worker Annalena Tonelli, British teachers Dick and Enid Eyeington, and a Kenyan working for the German Technical Cooperation agency, GTZ.

Health update...

Polio: UNICEF and the World Health Organization on 22 September launched a three-day emergency polio immunization campaign in Mogadishu. Following the identification of two polio cases in Wardhigley and Yaqshid districts of Benadir region of Somalia. Mogadishu is one of the districts in the region. The two confirmed cases are the first to be identified in Somalia since

October 2002 and were identified by the WHO national polio surveillance system. WHO is investigating additional suspected cases in the region. Laboratory reports suggest that the virus originated in Aden, Yemen.

Training: Fifty traditional birth attendants were trained in Hargeisa. The attendants are from Buhodle and Togwajaale districts. They also received medical kits to enable them carry out their work.

Health facilities: UNICEF in collaboration with the Association for Integration and Development (AID), a local NGO in Bossaso, Puntland established health facilities in four IDP camps - Askar, Elay, Shabelle and Tuur Jaalle. UNICEF Somalia Representative Christian Balslev-Olesen inaugurated two of the facilities. Construction of health facilities continues in Bander Bayla and Bargal communities that were affected by the Tsunami. Discussions have been initiated with communities in Dhinowda, Suuj, Qundhed, Falah Falah, Lamiya, Baarmadoobe and Hurdia with a view to revitalizing health services.

Emergency

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): Discussions on resettlement of IDPs took place in Bossaso between members of the local administration and UN staff. Efforts are underway to identify a suitable location for resettling them with UN Habitat and the local administration leading the process.

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



Somaliland President Dahir Rayale Kahin (at podium) with members of his cabinet at the launch of the HIV/AIDS commission on 15 September, 2005, in Hargeisa, capital of Somaliland. Credit: UNICEF Somalia/NWZ office.

Nutrition update...

Surveys: UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) Food Security Assessment Unit (FSAU) carried out two nutrition surveys in Hargeisa, Somaliland and Eyl/Dangoray and Galdogob districts in Puntland. The preliminary results of the surveys in Puntland indicated a decrease in malnutrition. The surveys in Hargeisa were carried out in IDP settlements.

Deworming: UNICEF in collaboration with HEAL NGO and the Somaliland Ministry of Health and Labour started de-worming that is targeting 24,000 primary school children in Hargeisa, Togdheer and Sanaag regions.

Training: UNICEF trained 10 women from SHARDO (a community-based organization) in food preparation,

identification of malnutrition, hygienic water use, sanitation, prevention of diarrhoea and proper nutrition practices for women and children.

Nutrition education and demonstration sessions were initiated in Darussalam Community Maternal and Child Health (MCH) centre in Awdheghe district, Lower Shabelle region.

Water and Environmental Sanitation

Projects: Construction of the Hafun Water Supply Project in Puntland has started. Hafun was the worst-hit by the Tsunami of 26 December, 2005. In Central/Southern Somalia, UNICEF staff visited villages along the coast that were affected by the Tsunami to assess the water supply situation.

As a follow-up to the visits, the water supply in Merka is to be improved. In Somaliland, digging of four wells to serve the Garbacawl and Afdoox communities has started. Construction of the El la Helay water system began in collaboration between the community and an NGO. UNICEF trained 25 water managers, operators and administrators from Sahil region of Somaliland in effective management processes.

Sanitation: In Puntland, construction of sanitation facilities continues at seven primary schools to benefit an estimated 3,500 pupils. The Association for Integration and Development, a local NGO, continues to undertake hygiene promotion activities in IDP camps in Bossaso. In Somaliland, construction work started for the provision of sanitation and hygiene facilities at Ali Hussein and Harag Waafa schools.

Education update...

Training: Following a 10-day course in Puntland, twenty-nine teacher trainers have started a training programme for 790 teachers in Bossaso and 250 teachers in Gardo. Puntland Minister of Education, Ahmed Said Aw-Nur attended the launch of the training in Bossaso. In Central/Southern Somalia, teacher training workshops were held in Mogadishu and Belet Weyne. A total of 804 teachers (including 158 for schools in IDP camps) will benefit from the training.

In Somaliland, UNICEF organized a three-day workshop for regional education officers and non-formal education mentors to enhance coordination between them and UNICEF. Non-formal education (NFE) provides children and youth who missed

out on formal schooling with a second chance to learn how to read and write. Some of the graduates later continue formal learning in primary schools.

Back to School Campaign: UNICEF in collaboration with the Somaliland Ministry of Education and community education committees started construction of 14 new primary schools and erection of 30 school tents in Erigavo, Ainaba, Hargeisa, Burao, Berbera, Gebiley and Borama. The construction is expected to result in an additional 8,000 school children per year getting access to learning space. The initiative is part of the Back to School Campaign that UNICEF is running in Somalia. In Central/Southern Somalia, UNICEF and partner organizations carried out a three-day registration drive that enrolled 250 previously out-of-school children in Jowhar town of Middle Shabelle region.

Rehabilitation and construction: Construction of five primary schools in Tsunami affected communities of Hafun, Fo'ar, Hurdia, Baarmadoobe and Handa is nearing completion. Construction works of Al-Nawawi, Kubo and Biyo Kulule primary schools in Puntland started during the reporting period.

IDP Education: UNICEF completed the short-listing of 48 candidates to serve as teachers for children of IDP communities in Bossaso, Puntland. UNICEF and the Bossaso municipality are working towards establishing tented schools to serve the main IDP camps.

HIV/AIDS...

Commission launched: Somaliland launched the National HIV/AIDS Commission in Hargeisa on 15 September. Somaliland President Dahir Rayale Kahin will chair the commission which will oversee plans and coordinate efforts to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS. The commission will also design strategies for providing affordable and effective anti-retroviral drugs to those living with HIV/AIDS.

Its mandate also includes information dissemination, documentation, planning, monitoring and evaluation. The President Kahin has appointed 14 members to the commission. Speaking at the launch, the President called for an end to stigmatization against people living with HIV/AIDS.

UNICEF Representative, Christian Balslev-Olesen pledged UNICEF's support to the initiative and appealed to leaders to support the campaign against HIV/AIDS. He commended President Kahin for supporting the formation of the commission. Olad Omar, a person living with HIV, further urged people in Somaliland not to stigmatize those with HIV/AIDS. He called for compassion for those infected, affected and afflicted. He also requested the President to help set

up facilities for treatment, counseling and testing.

Training: HIV/AIDS sensitization workshops were held in Lower Shabelle region of Central Somalia for local authorities, religious and traditional leaders and women.

Voluntary Counselling and Testing: UNICEF trained participants from Puntland and Central/Southern Somalia in Voluntary Counselling and Training (VCT). Visits were made to Mogadishu and Merka VCTs in Central Somalia to review their operations. In August and September 2005, Hayat VCT Centre in Mogadishu received seven clients - two couples among them - before the sole resident counselor went on leave. The Merka VCT which become operational in early August registered four people - including a couple intending to marry. The Kismayo VCT centre which opened in September is yet to receive clients.

Youth development...

Workshops: UNICEF conducted a three-week workshop for 22 participants on leadership and organizational development/ youth peer education (LOD/YPE) in Merka, Central Somalia. Another LOD/YPE training workshop was held Somaliland for 14 youth trainers of trainers who will train 3,500 youth aged between 14 and 18 years.

UNICEF organized youth symposia in Puntland and Central/Southern

Child Protection...

Training: UNICEF sponsored 19 psychosocial care providers from Somaliland and Puntland to a course in Uganda to strengthen institutional and community capacity to respond to psychosocial needs of children and women. The trainees visited communities that have undergone trauma.

In Central Somalia, UNICEF conducted a workshop on protection of street children. Participants included members of Islamic courts, traders, security guards and community leaders. Another three-week training took place for child protection advocates. Participants were 19 trainees. UNICEF sponsored the official in charge of child rights' issues at the Somaliland Ministry of Justice to participate in the 2nd East and South African Conference on Universal Birth Registration held in Mombasa, Kenya.

Somalia that had participants from youth networks. The symposia were part of the preparatory process to help select youth to participate in the Africa Development Forum that will take place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Advocacy: A workshop on the problems of teen marriages was held in Hargeisa. Members of 100 youth groups attended and resolved to form a committee to highlight issues related to early marriages and pregnancy.

Magazine: UNICEF entered into an agreement with Youth Development Organization (YODO), a local NGO in Puntland to facilitate collection of input to *KOOR*, a youth magazine. With support from UNICEF, the magazine is produced in Hargeisa, Somaliland. It addresses youth and HIV/AIDS issues and is distributed through youth groups in Somalia. Two editors will collect input from youth networks in Puntland.

Education: UNICEF held discussions with youth organizations in Bossaso on the establishment of primary schools in six IDP camps in Bossaso using school tents. Members of these organizations have been involved in the Back to School Campaign that UNICEF is running in Somalia to register out-of-school children. The youth have been involved in the registration, organization of communities and identification of potential candidates for teaching in the IDP schools.

Sports: Hargeisa Municipal Council handed over land (donated by a well-wisher) to the Ministry of Youth and Sports for the development of a sports

ground. The Municipal Council also plans to hand over four play grounds to four of the five districts in the town.

Communication for Development

Workshop: UNICEF organized a community dialogue training workshop in Boqolka Bush IDP camp in Bossaso. About 50 people - mainly women - attended the training.

Photo project: 60 Somali young people from across the country have been reviewing and selecting the best of their photos taken as part of a photography project supported by UNICEF Somalia. The pictures, depicting various aspects of youth leadership & development, will be included in an exhibition to be mounted at the African Development Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The project provided the young people with training in photography and another means of communicating their view of the world to others.

Youth Broadcasting Initiative: UNICEF staff met youth broadcasters to review plans for programme production. Since 2003 UNICEF has facilitated audio and video training for young broadcasters. UNICEF staff also provide technical input to youth productions on topics that fall within UNICEF's mandate. Programme ideas discussed during the September meeting included migration of people from Somalia, the rights of children in IDP communities, female genital cutting, hygiene, HIV/AIDS, polio, girl child education and the risks posed by expired drugs.

Meanwhile, youth broadcasting groups in Mogadishu also met in September to discuss issues related to their work. They noted that one of their challenges is to meet on their own initiative rather than wait until UNICEF organizes a forum. Lack of editing facilities such as computers is another handicap. UNICEF however continues to provide equipment for editing depending on availability of resources. In September, software for audio editing was distributed to youth groups in Mogadishu and Jowhar in Central Somalia. Camera tripods were also distributed to five youth groups.

Special events...

International Day of Peace: UNICEF collaborated with various UN agencies, local authorities, communities and partner organizations to mark the International Day of Peace on 21 September. The celebrations were held in Kismayo, Wajid, Baidoa, Hargeisa and Garowe among other locations. The Day is marked annually in Somalia and Somaliland.

World Literacy Day: UNICEF, in collaboration with the local administration and other organizations, marked World Literacy Day in Somaliland. The organizations included UNESCO, CARE and Norwegian Refugee Committee. Commemorated on 8 September each year, the Day was set aside by the UN following a resolution in 2001 to make 2003 – 2012 the Decade of Literacy. Similar celebrations were held in Jowhar, Central Somalia.

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