

A Word from the UNICEF Representative

During his recent visit to Northwest Somalia (Somaliland), UNICEF USA Ambassador Clay Aiken paid tribute to the efforts done on the ground to improve the lives of Somali children and women.

For us at UNICEF Somalia, Clay Aiken's visit and on-going support for creating awareness and raising funds are both welcome and much appreciated for he reinforces a long-held belief that together, we can make a difference for the children of Somalia.

The visit highlighted the issues facing children in Somalia and the efforts of many international and local organizations that UNICEF continues to work with, often in trying circumstances, maintaining a foothold of hope in Somalia. It is time to say thank you to those like Clay Aiken who believe in UNICEF's mission and vision and whose support and confidence in us reinvigorates our staff.

In a country where 2.6 million people (almost 40% of the entire population) are in need of humanitarian assistance, whose dire situation is further affected by the on-going civil unrest, drought, soaring food prices and displacement, we cannot work without the strong backing of our donors and partners.

A big thank you to governments, UNICEF National Committees and individuals around the world who continue to support us and believe that together we can make a difference.

Christian

Christian Balslev-Olesen



Meeting the Millennium Development Goals in Somalia remains a daunting task. With focusing on MDGs 4 and 5, UNICEF in Somalia contributes to increasing access to and the quality of basic services for accelerated child survival, development and protection.

Somalia Fast Facts

- 2.6 million are in need of humanitarian assistance (By end of 2008, the number is most likely to increase up to 3.5 million, 50% of the entire population)
- Malnutrition rates are unacceptably high, exceeding 20% (global acute malnutrition) in some areas
- Under-five mortality rate: 145 per 1000 live births* (15% of children die before the age of 5)
- 1-year-olds immunized against Measles: 35%*
- An estimated 1.1 million people are internally displaced
- 13,000 people were displaced during the month of June alone
- 7 aid workers were abducted, 4 killed during June
- UNICEF's funding needs revised upwards to respond to the worsening humanitarian situation. US \$ 32 million remains unfunded
- UNICEF and partners continue to deliver humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable across Somalia
- * State of the World's Children 2008



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SPECIAL EVENTS

UNICEF USA Ambassador Clay Aiken Visits Somalia



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UNICEF USA Ambassador Clay Aiken with children in Boroma, Northwest Somalia

By Denise Shepherd-Johnson

Hargeisa, Somaliland, 2 July 2008 – During a five-day visit to the self-declared republic of Somaliland in north-west Somalia, UNICEF USA Ambassador Clay Aiken was moved by the work that UNICEF is doing under challenging circumstances.

“In a country that’s better known for conflict, insecurity, drought and floods,” said Mr. Aiken, “it’s truly remarkable that UNICEF is still able to make a difference to the health, education and well-being of Somali children.”

Mr. Aiken travelled to Hargeisa, Gabiley and Boroma to see UNICEF-supported projects firsthand – projects that promote child health, safe water, sanitation and hygiene, primary education, child protection and girls’ empowerment.

Somalia is a country in which less than 25 per cent of the population has access to basic health services, and only 29 per cent have access to a safe water source. Fewer than 30 per cent of children attend primary school. It’s also a place where almost every girl is circumcised, and it has amongst the highest maternal mortality rates in the world.

Playing basketball with girls in the enclosed facility of the Somaliland Cultural and Sports Association (SOCSA), Mr. Aiken saw the opportunity given to females by the UNICEF-supported organization. “Here, girls are able to learn about leadership and health, acquire life skills and play sports within a safe environment,” he said. “Even the youngest girls that I’ve met at SOCSA impressed me with how confident and articulate they are as a result of this project.”

At a camp for 1,500 displaced families in Hargeisa, Mr. Aiken met Abduraman, 11, who helps to support his five siblings and blind mother by working each morning to collect stones. He uses his earnings to pay for school, which he attends in the afternoon.



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Clay Aiken talks to children in Dami Camp for internally displaced people in Hargeisa, Somaliland

“Somalia has some of the lowest enrolment rates in the world, but every child has the right to an education,” said Mr. Aiken. “UNICEF is working to help ensure that even working children get to go to school.” UNICEF has also provided the camp with child protection monitors, teacher training and school materials.

In Boroma, Mr. Aiken saw how the town’s water system is functioning with UNICEF’s support. Under a public-private partnership, the system provides safe water to 95 per cent of the town’s population including schools and hospitals.

Mr. Aiken also visited maternal and child health clinics to see nutritional feeding and immunization activities along with projects supporting children with disabilities, the eradication of female genital mutilation/cutting and the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

“Somali families want the best for their children and people really want to help bring about change,” he said. “Fortunately, UNICEF has always been there and continues to provide the support needed to make a difference.”

Highlights of UNICEF's Activities during June

The security situation deteriorated over the month of June with a profound number of casualties and displaced people. The repeated abduction and targeting of aid-workers is alarming, as it limits access to the increasing number of people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance.

Despite the growing insecurities in Central South Somalia, UNICEF, in partnership with other UN agencies and NGOs, continues to provide humanitarian support including nutrition, water and sanitation, education and child protection interventions.



4,600 nets for 17 villages in Lasanood District. The net distribution was done for free and was complemented by training of NGO partners on Malaria treatment, prevention and control, as well as awareness raising through local radio stations.

Water, Hygiene and Sanitation:

In Central South Somalia, UNICEF supports daily water trucking, providing more than 2 million litres of safe drinking water in the IDP settlement near Mogadishu. New power and pumping units were installed on 2 borewells in Dhusamareb (Galgadud Region) benefit-

ing a total of 40,000 people. Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD) response activities were finalized in Hiran and Middle Shabelle Regions, targeting 50,000 people in total, and additionally covering 5,000 IDPs during the recent conflict in Hiran. Activities included chlorination of dug wells, and identifying heavily used wells in the most AWD prone areas for installation of solar power, pumping units, water tanks and kiosks.

Education:

On the occasion of the Day of the African Child (June 16), girls' right to education was highlighted by child-to-child clubs and school clubs in Jowhar (Middle Shabelle), through activities such as debates, sports, and house-to-house advocacy. In Bay Region, UNICEF provided school supplies to 31 primary schools, 9 non-formal centres and 6 schools for IDPs that were assessed to be lacking adequate education materials. Eight tents were provided to cater for 640 children out of 1,240 children without adequate learning space in the villages of Merka District (Lower Shabelle). Rehabilitation of primary schools in Merka is also under way.

Child Protection:

UNICEF in partnership with COGWO NGO supported providing psychosocial support, counseling and health education for 1,394 people at the AMISOM field hospital in Mogadishu, while in the Afgoye Corridor where about 300,000 IDPs are hosted, recreational supplies such as volley and basketballs were provided for 6 sites.

A recent monitoring trip revealed that there is a considerable number of juveniles imprisoned in Somaliland, many without passing through the court system, usually for disobedience to parents or petty crimes. UNICEF and UNDP started a campaign to have most children released and provided with legal assistance.

Nutrition:

In Central South Somalia, 32 NGO and Benadir Hospital personnel were trained on the management of acute malnutrition, as most partner organizations are planning to expand their feeding programmes. The training was aimed at ensuring provision of better treatment for children in Lower Shabelle, Middle and Lower Juba and Benadir Regions. Meanwhile nutrition programmes continue to be implemented. Daily provision of cooked supplementary food for about 550 children under-five started at the 4 IDP camps in Jowhar (total population of 4,000 in the 4 camps), in cooperation with local partners.

In North East Somalia (Puntland), the UNICEF supported outpatient therapeutic unit for severely malnourished children in IDP camps is functioning under the management of Bassaso Hospital. About 300 children were treated during the last week of June alone.

Health:

In an EPI accelerated campaign in Baidoa and Burhakaba (Bay Region), about 2,850 children under-one were immunized, out of 9,000 under-one children targeted through routine and accelerated campaigns.

In Puntland, North East of Somalia, Cholera prevention activities continued following confirmation of presence. UNICEF -with WHO- supported chlorination, surveillance, social mobilization and awareness activities for prevention and control.

In June UNICEF supported the provision of 54,600 long-lasting insecticide treated nets for Malaria prevention. In Central and South Somalia, 15,000 nets were distributed to 7,500 households in Garbaharey (Gedo Region). 35,000 nets were delivered to World Vision for distribution in Baidoa and Burhakaba (Bay Region). In Puntland, UNICEF provided

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High returns: A community invests in a safe and stable water supply system

By Iman Morooka

Haraf Village, Somaliland, July 2008:

Water has long been a scarce resource in Somaliland where many of its population have to walk two hours daily, even five hours for some people, just to fetch water for their households. Where collecting water has traditionally been the task of women and girls, this harsh situation has hindered many young girls from attending school regularly.

But for 7 year-old girl Amira, where the water kiosk is located right in her own village, both going to school and fetching water are part of her daily routine. "I come once a day to get water. When I have school, I go either before school early in the morning or in the afternoon after school" said Amira.

Haraf Village, a few kilometers outside Hargeisa, the capital city of Somaliland, now enjoys a stable source of safe drinking water thanks to a water pumping system run by solar energy, which UNICEF supported setting up with funding from the Danish Government, in partnership with the Ministry of Water and Mineral Resources, NGO Red Sea, and the local community itself.

"Traditional generators are costly to operate and manage as they constantly require fuel and man power. With the rising fuel prices, conventional methods make it difficult for poor people to have stable access to water" said Ahmed Suldan, Director General at the Ministry of Water and Mineral Resources. "We have long hoped to introduce the solar energy powered equipment, and with the help of UNICEF, we were able to make this a reality in five villages so far".

Haraf is one of the villages that benefited from the pilot project supported by UNICEF. Although the village used to get water from the hand-pump that UNICEF also has helped install more than 20 years ago, it has become extremely difficult to cover the needs of the increasing number of residents and internally displaced people (IDPs) in the area, while a diesel-powered system would be too costly for the village to run and maintain.

Ali Aideed, the village elder and member of the local Water and Sanitation Committee, has donated the necessary land for setting up the new system, and continues to play a vital role in maintaining and managing the solar panel, the water tank and two water kiosks.



©UNICEF Somalia/2008/Morooka
Seven year-old Amira pushes home the jerrycan that she had just filled with clean water.



©UNICEF Somalia/2008/Morooka
Nafisa fetches water every day for her family from the recently set up taps in Haraf Village.

"Volunteers from the village clean the tank once a week, and they make sure that taps are well maintained and water is not wasted" said Aideed, who also took the lead in building fences made out of bushes around the solar panel. "The taps don't only serve the people of Haraf Village. Residents from surrounding villages and IDPs, even trucks from the city of Hargeisa, come here to collect water" said Aideed.

Nafisa, a mother of six, goes to the water kiosk three times every day. "Now it is much easier for us to get water from the tap and it is cleaner and tastes much better than before because it comes from further deep. We still use the hand-pump water for the livestock and washing while the tap water is for drinking and cooking. Many of us need the water, so we have to use in moderation" said Nafisa.

"UNICEF continues to support local authorities, communities and the civil society to come up with different solutions to provide environmentally sustainable and stable sources of safe water, in a package that would include hygiene and sanitation promotion as well" said Ibrahim Ali, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Officer at UNICEF in the North West Zone of Somalia. "It is planned that later this year, we will also extend the water pipe to the village school in Haraf".

Due to the general scarcity of water in the region, compounded by repeated droughts and the growing number of population, there is a growing need for finding long-term and low cost solutions to ensure the provision of water. This pilot project is an example of how, with a small investment and the strong commitment of the community leaders and members, a clean source of water can be made available for multiple communities.

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