

UNICEF Somalia Monthly Review

January 2004



Somali factions sign new peace agreement

Peace talks: Somalia's various political factions and the Transitional National Government (TNG) signed a landmark agreement on Thursday 29 January. The peace initiative was the culmination of intense negotiations among the factional leaders on a power-sharing agreement. Those who signed the accord were the President of the Transitional Government, Mr Abdiqassim Salad Hassan, factional leaders Musa Sudi Yalahow, Mohammed Dheere, Adan Mohammed Nur "Madhobe", Mohammed Qanyare Afrah, Col Adullahi Yusuf and representatives of civil society including Mrs Asha Haji Elmi and Sharif Salah Mohamed Ali.

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan welcomed the accord signed by Somali leaders on the political transition of their country, which has long been wracked by war and poverty. The agreement came after more than 14 months of talks aimed at establishing an all-inclusive, national government. Under the deal, there will be 275 Members of Parliament, with 12 percent of seats set aside for women.

Security developments

Tension between Northwest Somalia ('Somaliland') and Northeast Somalia ('Puntland') in the Sool area continued to mount as Somaliland deployed its army in Adhi-Adeye village, 30 km north

of Las Anod, regional capital of Sool. Tension has been building between the two sides ever since Puntland forces took control of Las Anod, late in December 2003. Sool and Sanaag fall geographically within the borders of pre-independence British Somaliland, but most of the clans there are associated with those in Puntland.

Central and Southern Somalia continued to experience unrest and intermittent fighting, acts of banditry and kidnapping. On January 29, United Nations Field Security Officer, Rolf Helmrich was kidnapped at Wirkoy, 45km north of Kismayo, the main port town in Southern Somalia, as he traveled to Jamame. (*Editors note: Helmrich was released on Saturday, 7 February*).

More than 20 people were killed in inter-clan fighting over land in Belet Weyne town, Central Somalia. In Kismayo, one person was killed by a stray bullet during a shoot-out over a *khat* dispute (an amphetamine leaf akin to the coca leaf of South America).

Political developments

Appointments: The Somaliland House of Representatives endorsed the appointment of five ministers by President Dahir Rayale Kahin. The House had earlier rejected the appointments.

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New council: A strategic council was established comprising the top echelons of all three official political parties in Somaliland and the parliament. The council is charged with the task of dealing with issues of utmost national priority, including the current crisis related to the conflict in Sool region.

British visit: A delegation of British lawmakers consisting of seven MPs, one international development consultant and two officials from the British Commission in Addis Ababa visited Hargeisa on a fact-finding mission in January.

Leaders talk: In Baidoa, Central Somalia, reconciliation talks started on the 23 January in a bid to end the tensions and dispute, which have rocked the Bay region. At least 300 traditional leaders took part in the talks.

Health programme update

Supplies: UNICEF provided drugs and Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) supplies to partners in Bari, Nugal and Mudug regions of Puntland. UNICEF also trained staff of health facilities in the management of vaccine storage facilities. The training took place in Garowe, Sinu-Jiif, Burtinle, Galkayo, Bursalah and Galdogob. In Central Somalia, UNICEF distributed 50 metric tonnes of health and nutrition supplies to partners in Bay, Bakool and Lower Shabelle regions.

Training: UNICEF and Somaliland health authorities revised and standardized the training of EPI vaccinators.

Services resume: Allaybaday Maternal and Child Health (MCH) centre, which had been closed for almost a year due to lack of health staff, reopened after UNICEF negotiated with community leaders and the local administration. UNICEF will provide refresher training for the newly-recruited health workers for the centre and will be supplying equipment and drugs to the facility.

Cholera: A total of 66 cases of cholera were reported during January in Mogadishu. These and other cases are handled with support from the Cholera Task Force in Mogadishu, currently comprised of UNICEF, WHO and Medecins Sans Frontieres. UNICEF distributed Oral Rehydration Salts and intravenous solutions to hospitals and health facilities in Benadir, Middle Shabelle and Lower Shabelle regions. Cholera strikes Central and Southern Somalia from December-June annually.

EPI: UNICEF carried out immunization in Abdul Aziz and Madina districts of Mogadishu in collaboration with SIFA and Muslim Aid-UK NGOs. Some 5,236 children were immunized against the six childhood killer diseases - tuberculosis, measles, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus and polio. UNICEF repaired refrigerators for storage of vaccines in Rabdure, Baidoa and Luuq.

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

Nutrition programme update

In Central and Southern Somalia, UNICEF organised food and cookery demonstration sessions at three MCH centres in Kismayo district to promote greater awareness of nutritional issues and supervised delivery of supplies to various health facilities. Vitamin A and iron-cum-folic acid supplements were distributed through partner organisations to 21 MCHs in Bay, Bakool and Gedo regions.

UNICEF conducted an assessment of the nutrition situation in three new Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in Wajid district in collaboration with Action Contre La Faim (ACF), World Vision, WFP and FAO's Food Security Assessment Unit (FSAU). The assessment indicated that the situation in all the three camps was critical and requiring urgent intervention. Plans are underway to initiate a supplementary feeding programme to serve the IDPs. The plans include a system where cases can be referred to the Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) - Belgium Therapeutic Feeding Centre in Huddur for severely malnourished children. Outreach health services need to be organized in all the camps, and efforts intensified to increase access to water and sanitation facilities especially in the Bakarweyn camp.

Water and Environmental Sanitation programme update

Projects: In Somaliland, UNICEF rehabilitated the Kalawle village borewell, started the digging of two wells in Gabiley and completed construction of the Gabiley water supply system reservoir. Technical problems delayed rehabilitation of the Odweine borewell. In Puntland, the Galkayo Water Company, which is managing the Galkayo town water supply, has so far installed more than 1,600 connections to private dwellings. New bore-well site for Garowe water system established and drilling about to start. Minister of Municipality and Rural Development committed to cost share in construction of new bore-well for Gardo Town, Puntland.

In Central and Southern Somalia, UNICEF completed the drilling of a borewell for the Merka water supply system at Bufow. UNICEF also trained some 40 people in hand pump maintenance after the rehabilitation of 20 wells in Tiyeglow, Bakool region.

Sanitation: Construction of communal latrines in Boon village, Somaliland, has been completed. Similar facilities for Loyado village are nearing completion. In Central and Southern Somalia, construction of school sanitation and handwashing facilities for Moyko, Sheikh Hassan Barsane and Biyo Adade village schools in Middle Shabelle region and others for

Emergency

During January, UNICEF and partners provided support to the drought-affected Sool and Sanaag regions in northern Somalia. The support included water tanks and jerricans, which were distributed by Horn Relief, a local NGO. The NGO is currently rehabilitating 22 wells with UNICEF support. UNICEF is also training people to chlorinate drinking water supplies as well as social mobilisers to raise awareness on sanitation and hygiene in areas affected by drought.

UNICEF staff undertook health and nutrition interventions in some 27 villages. As a result, children were immunized and provided with deworming medicine in addition to treatment for various diseases.

Sakow Town Primary School in Middle Jubba region were completed. *Training:* School sanitation and hygiene training was conducted in Bulow, Garasweyn, and Yed primary schools. Some 120 teachers and community education committee members were trained. Some 180 other people were trained in positive behaviour change in water use, sanitation and hygiene in Qansadhere, Korunbod, and Dinsor.

Education programme update

Textbooks: Additional textbooks for Grades 1-4 were shipped to Somaliland during the month. The 52,998 textbooks are for teaching of Somali language, science, mathematics, social studies, Arabic and Islamic studies. The 4779 accompanying teachers' guides had already been airlifted to Hargeisa.

The books will be distributed when schools open in February. Also to be distributed will be school and pupil registers and other tools for record keeping in schools.

In Puntland, distribution of education supplies to 200 schools was completed during January. In Central and Southern Somalia, UNICEF distributed supplies to 53 primary schools in Baidoa, Burhakaba, Merka and other areas in Bay and Lower Shabelle regions. The supplies included school, class and pupil registers.

Rehabilitation of schools: Rehabilitation of eight classrooms, a basketball court,

the football field and latrine facilities for Sheikh Ali Ibrahim Primary School in Hargeisa is nearing completion. This school is located in one of the most populated areas in Hargeisa and has about 100 children per class in most of the lower classes. Because of limited facilities, there was no new Grade I intake in the last academic year.

An office and storeroom for Lafa-Rug primary school in Hargeisa was completed as well as playground. Two classrooms for Dami Primary School were also completed. A fence and latrine are currently under construction.

In Puntland, UNICEF completed the rehabilitation of Harago Primary School. In Central and Southern Somalia, rehabilitation of schools in Merka and Jamame is continuing.

Mentoring: The process of guiding and advising community education committees (CECs) was underway throughout Somaliland, Puntland and Central and Southern Somalia during January. UNICEF revived the District Education Board in Baidoa town, Central Somalia.

Computer Training: UNICEF-sponsored computer training for all the six regional education officers from Somaliland, their assistants and four local education and youth staff started in Hargeisa, Borama, Berbera, Burao and Las Anod. The training will enable the participants to use the Education

Management Information Systems (EMIS) software developed by UNICEF. The software ensures easy retrieval and efficient utilisation of timely and relevant data on primary schools by education authorities, communities, international/national NGOs, UN agencies and donors.

Youth programme update

Mentoring: Youth guidance and advice initiatives (mentoring) continued in Puntland. The activities took place in Galkayo and Bossaso and focussed on developing management and organizational development skills for members of 15 youth organizations. Those to be mentored had earlier participated in UNICEF's Leadership and Organizational Development (LOD) training.

Rehabilitation: In Puntland, construction and rehabilitation of three basketball playgrounds in Wa'ye, Dangorayo and Bursalah towns is close to completion as well as that of a football ground in Gardo. UNICEF is also rehabilitating a youth resource centre in Bossaso, the commercial capital of Puntland. After completion of the ongoing work at the aforementioned places, UNICEF will support the local youth groups and communities in establishing management boards to ensure proper utilisation and access to the facilities by the intended beneficiaries. In Central Somalia, UNICEF continued the rehabilitation of Jowhar football ground, Balad basketball ground

and Hiran Public Library. Rehabilitation of Tiye glow football ground continues.

Network meeting: UNICEF organized a meeting for representatives of 10 youth organizations in Bossaso which resulted in the creation of a regional youth network that should help the youth groups to create and set common goals and lead to greater interaction. In Central and Southern Somalia, UNICEF provided guidance and advice to youth groups in various regions. Non-formal education learning materials were distributed to the groups.

Youth broadcasting: UNICEF staff met religious leaders, NGOs and local authorities in Mogadishu to enlist support for youth training in radio and TV broadcasting by UNICEF. Youth groups in Mogadishu produced programmes on HIV/AIDS, female genital mutilation, mine awareness, protection and youth participation, health and nutrition, girls education and women's empowerment. Shabelle Radio and HornAfrik television stations in Mogadishu commenced broadcasting of the programmes.

HIV/AIDS programme update

2003 goals outlined: UNICEF organized a meeting for the local administration, civil society and other key players in HIV/AIDS prevention and control initiatives in Somaliland to update them on UNICEF's goals in HIV/AIDS this year; the ongoing

HIV/AIDS knowledge attitude, behaviour and practices (KABP) survey and the HIV prevalence survey being done by WHO. The HIV/AIDS action plan for Somaliland was distributed to participants. The meeting discussed the current status of sentinel sites which will provide diagnosis, treatment and monitoring of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and how they can be better utilised.

The relevant local authorities said they had a crucial role to play in mobilisation of the community against HIV/AIDS. They said that Imams and mosques must play a bigger role in advocacy for expanding community response. Another commented that since they now had office in all regions, they could also provide assistance in the fight against HIV/AIDS. In furthering the efforts against HIV/AIDS, some of the participants of the meeting met additional influential members of the local authority structure to update them on the HIV/AIDS programme for Somaliland and the action plan for Somaliland.

Training: In Puntland, UNICEF and the local authorities conducted a counselling course for 20 religious and community leaders on community-based counselling. A workshop to build the capacity of partners involved in HIV/AIDS issues was held in Garowe, the administrative capital of Puntland in mid-January. Participants recommended that more materials in Somali language be made available.

Distribution: In Central and Southern Somalia, UNICEF distributed information materials on HIV/AIDS capacity building to various organisations. UNICEF also organized a HIV/AIDS awareness workshop for 25 traditional birth attendants and circumcisers with focus on HIV/AIDS transmission and preventive measures during deliveries.

Study: UNICEF completed a HIV/AIDS Knowledge Attitude Behaviour and Practices (KABP) study covering Hamarweyne, Wardhigley, Hodan and Heliwa districts in Benadir region and Merka and Qoryoley districts in Lower Shabelle region. UNICEF undertook the study in collaboration with the following organizations: Concern Worldwide, SANNASO, Hamarweyne Health Committee and Research Development Group of Mogadishu.

Child Protection programme update

Mine-risk education: UNICEF staff participated in the Somaliland Mine Action Strategic Planning meeting held from January 14-16. The meeting, organised by the Somaliland Mine Action Centre (SMAC), aimed at drawing up a plan to reduce the effects of landmines. The document arising out of the deliberations will soon be available to all the agencies involved in mine-action and mine risk education activities.

Training: Child protection advocates from Puntland were trained in social mobilization techniques.

Networking meeting: UNICEF staff in Bossaso held discussions with partners, youth groups and individuals to prepare for upcoming child protection meetings and workshops. During the meetings, the participants discussed the capacity and commitment of organisations to undertake child protection activities.

Former Child Soldiers Reintegration and Rehabilitation project: In Mogadishu, UNICEF continued to provide assistance to the Elman Peace Centre in the rehabilitation and reintegration of former child soldiers. UNICEF is assisting in the expansion of the project to Merka and Kismayo towns.

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