

# UNICEF Somalia Monthly Review

March 2004



## Two killed in Somaliland attack

In the Northwest Zone, or 'Somaliland', two employees of the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) were killed when their car was ambushed on Friday, 19 March on the Hargeisa-Berbera road. Those killed were a Kenyan national acting as a consultant to GTZ, and a Somali driver. A German staff member also in the car was slightly injured. Later reports indicated that the gunmen were apprehended at Dhoqoshi, a village in Togdheer region, about seven kilometres from the border with Ethiopia. Somaliland authorities are interrogating those arrested.

The Northeast Zone, or 'Puntland', was calm during the reporting period. The recent tension in relations between Somaliland and Puntland over the disputed Sool region has diminished.

In central and southern Somalia, intermittent conflict between rival clans and militia, and incidents of banditry, continued. Areas most affected were the southern port-town of Kismayo, the Jilib-Buale area, Merka, Beletwyene, parts of Bay and

Bakool regions and the western parts of Gedo region. Major interclan fighting was reported in Cerale in Galgaduud in which more than 60 people were reported killed and more than 150 wounded. Mogadishu was generally quiet although the situation in the city remains insecure, with many armed criminal gangs roaming the streets.

*Boat tragedy:* Reports from Sanaag, northern Somalia, indicate that at least 85 people died when two boats, each carrying illegal immigrants, collided in the Red Sea off the coast of Sanaag region. One boat sank, with 85 passengers drowning. Only eight passengers and five crewmen survived. The other boat was damaged, but all 105 passengers were rescued by coastal guards from Puntland.

## Peace talks continue...

Despite intermittent disputes, the Somali National Reconciliation and Peace Conference, held in Nairobi, Kenya, continued to move forward to its next phase. One of the key disagreements continued to be over the mode of selection of MPs for a Transitional Parliament.

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On 29 January, 43 Somali leaders met in Nairobi and signed what was described at the time as "a landmark breakthrough" agreement on a number of contentious issues that had earlier been plaguing the peace talks. On 19 March, 17 of these leaders, calling themselves the "Somali Leaders' Committee" (SLC), issued a statement expressing dissatisfaction with the management of the peace process. However, on 20 March, another group of leaders expressed support for the talks. It condemned the SLC's threatened withdrawal and instead called for the "pushing of the conference to its final stage, which is the formation of transitional government without delay".

The dispute on the selection of MPs for the transitional Parliament focuses around how it will be effected and by whom. Some of the leaders felt that responsibility for selection should be vested in the 24 leaders who signed the Cessation of Hostilities agreement on 29 January, while others want the role to be vested in traditional leaders and clans.

The talks, sponsored by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), began in October 2002 in the western Kenyan town of Eldoret, but were moved to Nairobi in February 2003.

They have been dogged by wrangles over the interim charter, the number of participants and now the selection of future parliamentarians, among other things.

## Political developments...

A high level delegation from Somaliland, led by Dahir Rayale Kahin, visited the United Kingdom, Belgium and Germany during the month and held meetings with government officials in those countries.

In Northeast Somalia ('Puntland'), sources close to the governing authorities said that political discussions continue on the possibility of extending the mandates of the current governing structures which expire in April 2004.

## Health programme highlights...

*Training:* During March, UNICEF trained health workers from 13 health centres in Galbeed region of Somaliland in safe motherhood. Health information cards for patients were distributed to those trained for utilization in their respective health centres. In Puntland, UNICEF trained managers of vaccine storage facilities.

## 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

*Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI):* In Somaliland, UNICEF organized planning workshops for EPI activities in Hargeisa and Borama towns. The workshops reviewed the constraints faced in past campaigns and drew up a list of priority villages to be targeted for immunisation campaigns. A week-long immunization exercise was carried out in Baki, Zeila, Lughaya and Borama districts of Somaliland. About 2300 children were immunised. During immunisation activities in Awdal region, pregnant women were vaccinated against tetanus and children were given vitamin A.

In central and southern Somalia, UNICEF repaired and installed vaccine storage equipment at maternal and child health centres run by the Somali Red Crescent Society in Balad and by World Vision in Buale. UNICEF also organized a training of trainers workshop in preparation for EPI campaigns this year. Some 20 people were trained.

*Equipment repair:* UNICEF repaired defective equipment and provided spare parts for vaccine storage facilities in Berbera town and Hargeisa in Somaliland.

*Supplies:* UNICEF distributed drugs, medical supplies and equipment to health facilities in Puntland.

*Safe motherhood:* UNICEF identified people to support the promotion of safe motherhood and initiated contact with health facilities in Burao, Somaliland, to foster cooperation between the safe motherhood advocates and the facilities. Some 3000 clean delivery kits were distributed by the NGO Candlelight, a UNICEF partner, to maternal and child health centres (MCHs) in Awdal region.

*Cholera:* UNICEF participated in Cholera Task Force meetings held in Bossaso, Puntland, and in Mogadishu to discuss activities for cholera prevention and control. UNICEF provided chlorine for treatment of drinking water and organized awareness on prevention and control through social mobilisation activities. In Puntland, 35 people from the local administration, Somali Red Crescent Society, hospitals and maternal and child health centres were trained in chlorination of water and social mobilisation for cholera prevention. Cholera is endemic in Somalia and occurs between December and May annually.

*Polio eradication:* UNICEF trained some 20 District Polio Officers in surveillance and held a planning workshop for polio immunisation campaigns in Puntland. Supplies have been pre-positioned in eight districts of Bari region in preparation for immunisation activities.

## Emergency

### *Fire outbreak*

UNICEF supplied relief items to 650 families in Mandere village near Jowhar in Central Somalia after a fire destroyed their homes.

### *Training*

UNICEF trained members of drought-affected communities in Sool in hygiene, sanitation and chlorination. UNICEF supplied chlorine for treatment of drinking water to affected communities. In the drought-affected Sool and Sanaag plateau, some 26 out of 33 wells have been rehabilitated by Horn Relief with the support of UNICEF.

## Nutrition programme update...

*Malnutrition:* Results of UNICEF screenings of children for health and nutrition in the drought-affected Sool and Sanaag regions of northern Somalia in February indicated that of some 7,457 children about 1,490 were moderately malnourished and 126 were severely malnourished. Indications were that overall, about 20 percent of the children are malnourished. UNICEF and Action Contre La Faim signed an agreement for the NGO to carry out a nutrition survey in drought-affected areas of Garowe, Dangorayo and Burtinle districts in the Nugal region, Puntland.

*Supplementary feeding:* In central and southern Somalia, UNICEF supported screening of children for malnutrition and distributed supplementary food in nine feeding centres in the Bay and Bakool regions and also in six MCHs in Mogadishu. An increase in children at the supplementary feeding centres in Bay and Bakool was noted, a fact attributed to food shortages being experienced as a result of drought. The centres provided some 2,429 malnourished children with food including Supermix, a food gruel. Food rations for families were provided by WFP.

## Water and Environmental Sanitation update...

*Projects:* Construction works; installation and supply of equipment; and excavation of trenches for laying pipes were some of the activities undertaken in support of Gabiley, Borama and Odweine water projects in Somaliland. Construction of water tanks for four schools in Borama has commenced. The tanks will supply water for hand-washing. In Puntland, UNICEF continued drilling of borewells, supplied pipes and other materials and equipment for water projects in Jurrille, Jedded and Garowe. Discussions were held with staff of the Garowe Water Authority on the establishment of an effective management structure for the Garowe water supply system. In Merka, southern Somalia, drilling of two borewells for the Bufow water project was completed.

*Training:* UNICEF held a one-day briefing session on sanitation and hygiene promotion for 18 participants from seven community-based organisations (CBOs) from the Bari region, Puntland. The CBOs will carry out a baseline survey on sanitation and hygiene practices in 12 villages where UNICEF has undertaken water and environmental sanitation projects. UNICEF also initiated a baseline survey for Loyaddo village

and Dami internally displaced persons (IDP) camp in Somaliland.

*Rainwater harvesting:* UNICEF undertook a feasibility study for the establishment of a roof rainwater harvesting and storage system for Rabdhure town in central Somalia.

*Future projects:* UNICEF staff visited Sarsare, Korkoor, El Garas and Kulanjerer villages to assess the operation, maintenance and daily water use with the objective of identifying sanitation and technical improvement requirements to be implemented later this year.

## Education highlights...

*Annual Primary School Survey:* UNICEF staff attended a three-day workshop in Bossaso in March to review the 2003/4 Annual Primary School Survey questionnaire and to make adequate translation of difficult terminology into Somali to ensure that enumerators are able to collect the required information. UNICEF staff trained the enumerators in northwest, northeast and central and southern Somalia after which the field data collection got underway in the second week of March. Data collection was completed in Puntland and Somaliland and is underway in central and southern Somalia.

*Learning Achievement Study:* In 2001, prior to the distribution of textbooks for grades 1 to 4 and the related in-service training of primary school teachers, a baseline study was conducted to establish how teachers taught and the literacy and numeracy standards of students in Grades 2 and 4. As a follow-up to this earlier exercise, a similar study will be undertaken in 40 schools in Somalia in April. In preparation, UNICEF staff and those of the education sectors of the Somaliland and Puntland administrations attended a three-day refresher training in Hargeisa, Somaliland. The training focussed on administering the tools and tests.

*Mentoring:* UNICEF-trained mentors continued to provide guidance and advice to teachers, Community Education Committee (CEC) members and Non-Formal Education (NFE) groups in order to improve the quality of their work.

*Fire:* Some six classrooms were destroyed in a blaze at Mandhere Primary School near Jowhar, central Somalia. Due to the devastation of the fires, approximately 150 children have nowhere to learn other than sitting in the shade of the village's trees. UNICEF has provided materials to enable resumption of learning.

## Youth update...

*Training:* A Leadership and Organizational Development (LOD) training of trainers workshop was held in Bossaso for 26 youth from all over Somalia. Those trained will train some 800 managers of youth groups in the country. In Puntland, some five youth groups received guidance and advice on their roles from UNICEF-trained youth mentors. Three groups in Bossaso and two in Galkayo were covered. UNICEF is also supporting sensitisation on Child Protection issues by the mentors who interact with the youth groups.

*Sports:* UNICEF donated supplies for sports to youth groups in Bossaso including footballs, whistles, basketballs, t-shirts for girls and sportswatches.

## HIV/AIDS prevention and control update...

*Advocacy:* As part of the strategy to accelerate HIV/AIDS awareness during the commemoration of special events such as UN days, UNICEF staff met with the women's groups organizing International Women's Day (IWD) celebrations in Somaliland and suggested ways in which messages on HIV/AIDS and women could be incorporated into the discussions and

activities which formed part of the IWD events.

*Policy development:* UNICEF is assisting the Somaliland technical committee for HIV/AIDS to develop a HIV/AIDS policy for Somaliland. A consultant has been hired to draw on experiences and documents including the vision set out in the *Strategic Framework for the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) within Somali Populations*, developed in 2003. Other documents include the HIV/AIDS and STI action plan for Somaliland; assessments of the national policies of neighbouring countries such as Kenya, Djibouti and Ethiopia; experiences of countries and communities with the same cultural and religious issues (such as Sudan, Senegal and Zanzibar) and countries which have achieved a reduction in prevalence, such as Uganda.

*Materials:* UNICEF has developed Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials for use in HIV/AIDS awareness activities in Somaliland and has also completed a draft translation of the summary of the HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework into Somali.

## Child Protection update...

*Study results disseminated:* UNICEF staff met representatives of Save the Children Alliance (UK) to discuss the Child Rights Situation Analysis study in Somaliland. The two parties resolved to disseminate the results of the study not only to local authorities, NGOs and UN agencies, but also to communities. They proposed to create a Child Rights Forum for Somaliland. In Puntland, UNICEF distributed findings of the Child Protection Study that was undertaken last year to 11 youth groups based in Nugal and Mudug.

*Networking:* UNICEF organized meetings in Garowe and Galkayo in Puntland during which Child Protection networks in Nugal and Mudug regions respectively were established. Participants were drawn from local communities and the local administration.

A child protection advocates/youth mentors' training workshop in Puntland reviewed lessons learned on child protection, community mobilisation and youth mentoring activities.

*Community mobilisation:* Some 25 child protection advocates and UNICEF staff met in Bossaso between

14 and 25 March to review their activities in the previous four months.

The participants reported on their achievements in working with communities throughout Somalia. The review will help them in their efforts to mobilise communities to adopt measures and plans of action to prevent violence and abuse against children and provide protection to the most vulnerable of them. A specific session was devoted to community mobilisation on FGM eradication. The advocates were given further training to enhance their skills in community mobilisation and child protection advocacy work.

## Communication for Development update...

*Radio initiative:* UNICEF staff participated in a workshop for development of a new series of *Saxan Saxo*, a radio programme on health issues of concern to Somali women. The radio programme, supported by Health Unlimited, is broadcast through the BBC Somali Service.

*Youth broadcasting:* A two-day workshop was held to review the Youth Broadcasting Project activities in Somaliland.

As part of the project, UNICEF has trained members of 20 youth groups in northwest, northeast and central and southern Somalia in audio and video production skills as a step to empowering and giving voice to youth. Somaliland has eight youth groups involved in the project.

The youth produce programmes which relate to their own interests while covering areas under UNICEF's mandate - Health, Nutrition, Education, Water and Environmental Sanitation, Education, HIV/AIDS and Youth Development. UNICEF staff specializing in these programme areas help the youth develop appropriate and correct messages.

## Special Events

*International Women's Day:* On March 8, UNICEF in collaboration with local authorities, organised activities to mark International Women's Day. In Hargeisa, women's groups organised a rally at Khayria Centre where speeches were delivered by politicians and women activists. NAGAAD, the local umbrella women's group, organised a discussion meeting at the Mansoor Hotel with the theme of total eradication of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Edna Aden, a local authority in Somaliland, was the keynote speaker during the occasion. A young girl who had undergone FGM gave a moving personal account of

her experience. She said she had suffered to the extent that she had to quit school and said that she now envied other girls who did not have to endure the physical pain and psychological trauma of FGM.

The celebrations in Somaliland ended with a high-level reception hosted by the wife of the head of the local governing authority. In her speech she highlighted the achievements of women in Somaliland and the challenges to greater fulfillment of human rights for all citizens.

In Mogadishu, UNICEF organised activities in partnership with youth broadcasting groups (whose videos on issues related to women's rights were shown), women's NGOs, child protection networks, medical institutions, religious and traditional leaders and the media. The theme of the Day was "Stop violations against women" with emphasis on eradication of FGM. A local women's NGO, COGWO, organised a press briefing that presented findings of a survey conducted by UNICEF on FGM. During the briefing, the message by UNICEF Executive Director, Carol Bellamy on the occasion of IWD was delivered. The message was translated into Somali and emphasised the role of education in helping women achieve their rights. During the Day, three radio stations in Mogadishu - Benadir, Shabelle and Bariga Africa broadcast

key messages and aired programmes to raise awareness on the harmful effects of FGM and the need to eradicate it.

*World Water Day:* UNICEF organised activities to commemorate World Water Day which is marked on 22 March. The main activities were in Garowe, the administrative capital of Puntland. Garowe was selected since an urban water supply project implemented by UNICEF was recently inaugurated there. The commemorative activities included a tour of the water project site and a meeting with community and local administration officials.

In Jowhar, central Somalia, the Day was marked with speeches from representatives of local authorities and NGOs, women's and youth groups. Representatives of Farjano Water Company spoke during the occasion. Farjano runs the Jowhar Water System and is one of the earliest models of successful public-private sector partnership for water management in Somalia. Farjano took over running of the water system after rehabilitation was completed with UNICEF support in 1997. Prior to the project Jowhar was one of the places regularly experiencing severe cholera outbreaks. Since the project's inception, cholera has virtually disappeared and community access to potable water has been ensured. The project supplies most of the

30,000 residents of Jowhar. The Farjano Water Company comprises representatives of different clans and has extended water connections, while ploughing company profits into supporting a local school, Kulmis Primary, and supporting recreational and other activities among the youth in the town. During the Day, Radio Jowhar aired messages to promote hygiene and sanitation and safe water usage and consumption.

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