

## MEDIA UPDATE

### South Africa: Emergency Relief Update No. 3

#### UNICEF provides conflict resolution expert and humanitarian standards trainers to help ease tensions amongst displaced people in Western Cape shelters

**Cape Town, 16 June, 2008...**UNICEF has provided a conflict resolution and mediation expert to help the Government of the Western Cape Province better understand and respond to the settlement crisis in several of the camps for displaced persons.

Tensions linked to the strategy of reintegration of the foreign nationals into their former communities have heightened, following the outbreak of xenophobic violence in the informal settlements that saw thousands of residents flee to various temporary shelters in Cape Town four weeks ago.

Tensions have been further exacerbated by wet, rainy and cold conditions and poor quality rations, which camp residents say are not similar to their usual diets. Fortunately, to avoid micronutrient deficiencies, some multivitamins have been distributed to under five children in some of the camps.

According to current estimates, as of 14 June 2008, the Western Cape houses some 14,000 displaced persons many from Somalia, the DRC Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda and Zimbabwe. These foreign nationals are reluctant to embrace the Government's strategy of reintegration, expressing fear of returning to the communities they fled at the height of the xenophobic attacks.

Attempts to provide humanitarian relief are frequently thwarted by camp residents in some of the temporary shelters, who often bar entry to government officials -- a situation that has given rise to mounting concerns over safety, security and stability at the camps, and in some instances, has caused delays in delivery of humanitarian assistance to residents.

#### **UNICEF and UN agencies to provide training in humanitarian principles and minimum standards in disaster response**

Although the Western Cape Province has had experience in managing crises during the past years, officials see the current situation as one with unique and complex challenges, requiring special expertise and resources to handle it.

The Western Cape Provincial Government invited UNICEF and United Nations agencies, WHO, UNHCR, IOM, OCHA and the Red Cross to help them conduct a rapid assessment of the humanitarian situation so as to identify essential needs of the displaced persons in order to improve their living conditions.

At a weekend meeting, provincial government officials welcomed UNICEF and UN agencies' assistance and agreed on the provision training modules by the cluster lead agencies.

The training modules deal with humanitarian principles, humanitarian worker's code of conduct and offer a sectoral/technical focus. UNICEF will train four emergency management working groups which including site managers of the province's 55 temporary shelter sites.

UNICEF experts will present their plan of action to the Western Cape Provincial Government today Tuesday 17 June. Training is expected to begin between Thursday and Friday 19- 20 June.

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UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and from HIV and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.

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**To support UNICEF's work to assist the victims of xenophobic violence in South Africa, please visit the UNICEF South Africa website: [www.unicef.org/southafrica](http://www.unicef.org/southafrica)**