

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

LIBERIA

DONOR UPDATE 24 MAY 2004

URGENT NEEDS FOR REINTEGRATION OF CHILDREN ASSOCIATED WITH THE FIGHTING FORCES, EDUCATION AND MEASLES

- **The UNMIL-led disarmament and demobilisation process resumed on 15 April and is currently ongoing in 4 key areas. While more than 1,800 children have disarmed and are demobilising, funding support is immediately required to meet their reintegration needs.**
- **The Back-to-School campaign has enabled over 600,000 students to return to school, bringing a sense of stability and hope to many urban and rural communities across the country. Significant donor support is now urgently needed to ensure that the remaining estimated 400,000 children also have the chance to go to school, and that all children can stay in school once enrolled.**
- **UNICEF increases interventions in some of the hardest to reach areas of the country, supporting life-saving therapeutic feeding and measles immunisation.**

1. EMERGENCY OVERVIEW AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) process resumed on 15 April in Gbarnga town, Bong county. Opening in a phased manner, disarmament is now also underway in Buchanan, Tubmanburg and outside of Monrovia, reaching MODEL, LURD and former-government forces. In three weeks, more than 11,000 combatants have disarmed, and are currently in the process of demobilisation or have already returned home. Children associated with the fighting forces (CAFF) are demobilising in smaller numbers than expected, but UNICEF and child protection agencies are working closely with UNMIL to ensure all CAFF benefit from the process.

The early success of the DDRR process and the deployment of 15,000 UNMIL peacekeepers through much of the country are returning confidence to the civilian population. As security continues to improve, many Liberian refugees are spontaneously returning home from Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. These returnees, and those who remained behind, are now faced with dire humanitarian needs requiring an urgent and coordinated response.

The Donors' Conference for Liberia held in New York in early February showed great commitment to the reconstruction among the world's leading donor governments. The total pledges amounted to over US\$ 522 million, which will be channelled according to the Results-Focused Transition Framework. The National Transitional Government of Liberia and the international and humanitarian community await receipt of the pledges committed.

With the improving security situation, UNICEF now has a real opportunity to improve the lives of the children and women of Liberia. After fourteen years of war, children are beginning to return to school, to receive basic health services, and, to the extent possible, to resume a normal childhood. But the challenges faced by UNICEF and the humanitarian community in realising the possibilities can only be met with continued support of the donor community.



Boundaries/names shown do not imply official UN endorsement.

2. UNICEF RESPONSE

Education

UNICEF continues to support the Ministry of Education in the Back to School Campaign (BTS), which aims to return an estimated one million children back to their classrooms by the end of 2004. As of 30 April 2004, 7,275 School-in-a-Box kits have been distributed within eight accessible counties, providing educational supplies for a total of 582,000 children. More than 800 quick intervention kit-bags have been distributed in three newly accessible counties where schools are re-opening, providing learning materials for an additional 40,000 children. Trained teams from the Ministry of Education and NGOs, working with County and District Education Officers, have assessed schools in nine counties, providing critical information for the Rapid Assessment of Learning Spaces (RALS) database. The assessment continues to expand in more counties as safe access becomes possible. Planning staff at both the Ministries of Planning and Education are being trained to manage and maintain the RALS database.

More than 7200 teachers have now returned to their schools with knowledge acquired from the orientation workshops and with skills in Rapid Educational Response, emphasising numeracy, literacy, sports and recreation, psychosocial and counselling principles, music and drama education. An estimated 13,000 teachers are still waiting to go through the 2-day orientation workshop. UNICEF partners, including the Jesuit Refugee Service, the Danish Refugee Council and ADRA, will conduct teacher orientation workshops in Bong, Grand Gedeh, Maryland, Grand Kru and River Gee counties, reaching more than 6,500 teachers by June 2004.

Girls' education remains a central priority in addressing gender disparities pervasive throughout the Liberian education system. Working with the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), UNICEF is supporting the development of a "Girls News Magazine," produced and managed by young girls. Additionally, a weekly radio broadcast programme has been established by UNICEF in collaboration with six local radio stations. The radio programme called 'Facts for Life' will broadcast news and recorded programme items relating to health, nutrition and child protection on a weekly basis.

Water and Environmental Sanitation

With NGO partners and the Ministry of Rural Development, UNICEF is supporting the construction and rehabilitation of wells, boreholes with hand pumps, and communal latrines for 18,000 IDPs and their host communities in Montserrado and Margibi counties.

As part of the BTS campaign, UNICEF continues to provide water and sanitation support to schools. UNICEF-supported partners have provided 240 schools with water and /or latrines with hand washing facilities since December 2003 with funding provided by the US government. These facilities are benefiting a total of 96,000 students in schools located in Montserrado, Bassa, Margibi and Bong counties. By August 2004, an additional 260 schools will be outfitted with adequate WES facilities, benefiting approximately 105,000 more children. Funding expected from the United Kingdom will support the provision of WES facilities in 350 schools in the newly accessible counties of Nimba, Lofa, Bong, Cape Mount, and Bomi.

Hygiene promotion 'Training of Trainers' workshops are ongoing in Monrovia, with 40 facilitators trained to date. UNICEF is also working to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Rural Development, the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy and the Environmental Health Department at the Ministry of Health, through the rehabilitation of office spaces, provision of vehicles, computers, copiers, printers, communication equipment, generator and pumps, and drilling equipment. UNICEF is supporting the collection and field testing of water samples and the rehabilitation of a central water laboratory.

Health and Nutrition

Since June 2003, more than 1.24 million children between the ages 6 months and less than 15 years have been immunised against measles, with all children aged 6-59 months among them also receiving Vitamin A supplementation. The immunisation campaign aims to reach 1.5 million children by the end of 2004.

To re-build immunisation capacity within the country, training on the harmonisation of supplementary measles vaccination methods, micro-planning, cold chain and injection safety, and waste management is being conducted with implementing partners. To restore the routine Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI), UNICEF has installed a 40 cubic meter cold room as a central cold store, established 6 regional cold stores, and is in the process of procuring additional cold chain equipment and logistics supplies for a total of 175 facilities in the 15 counties.

UNICEF is working with NGO partners to provide support for supplementary and therapeutic feeding of malnourished children in IDP camps and host communities. As of April, 15 supplementary and 4 therapeutic feeding centres have been established, benefiting approximately 18,000 children under five years of age, as well as pregnant and lactating women. UNICEF has provided supplementary feeding kits, weighing scales, height measuring boards, BP5 and F-100 therapeutic milk, UNIMIX and cash assistance to partners. In support of improved nutrition practices, public education is ongoing to promote good infant and young child feeding practices, targeting 10,000 parents and care givers.

To support emergency reproductive and basic health services, UNICEF has trained 250 reproductive health service providers and 350 other health workers on current management of malaria, diarrhoea and respiratory infections. UNICEF has also supplied drugs, basic equipment and medical supplies and has signed agreements with partners for the reactivation of 33 clinics. An

additional 57 clinics will be reactivated this year, with plans to provide at least 5 health facilities in each county. In 2004, UNICEF expects to support more than 200,000 IDPs and host communities with integrated basic health services.

Child Protection

With the resumption of the larger DDDR process, UNICEF continues to play a leading role in advocating for and protecting the rights of children associated with fighting forces (CAFF). UNICEF is working with child protection agencies in the provision of interim care services for demobilised children, supporting 28 Interim Care Centres (ICCs) in six counties. These ICCs are currently serving 1,819 children-1,514 boys and 305 girls. With the swelling numbers of children in ICCs, UNICEF urgently requires funding to assist an eventual total of 40 ICCs. To support reintegration of CAFF, UNICEF aims to ensure that at least 60% of all demobilised children have opportunities for formal primary and secondary education or non-formal education such as accelerated learning, vocational skills training, apprenticeships, life skills training and other youth empowerment projects.

Family tracing and reunification services are also being extended to an estimated 5,000 separated children, including both IDP and refugee children. It is expected that 65% of demobilised children will be reunified with their parents or families through tracing and reunification services. Children who cannot be traced will require alternative care arrangements such as foster and group care, which will include the provision of support to the families and communities taking in the children.

Sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) remains a major problem in Liberia. To reverse the prevalence of SGBV, UNICEF is supporting local partners in building the capacity of women, girls and community members. Interventions include awareness and sensitisation on the prevention and response to SGBV. Greater efforts are needed to establish accessible programmes that respond to the survival, development and protection needs of children and youth who have been raped, sexually abused and exploited. Services will include medical, material, psychosocial and legal support.

3. 2004 APPEAL REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIPTS

Within the 2004 UN Consolidated Appeal framework, UNICEF outlined a request of just under US\$ 39.9 to provide humanitarian assistance to Liberian children and women in need. To date, US\$ 13,209,350 million has been received. UNICEF is grateful to the donors listed in the table below for their contributions.

Table 1: FUNDS RECEIVED FOR 2004 CAP REQUIREMENTS BY DONOR AS OF 13 MAY 2004			
DONOR	RECEIVED (US\$)	DONOR	RECEIVED (US\$)
Government:		National Committee for UNICEF:	
Japan	3,639,510	Japanese NC	500,000
US BPRM	2,400,000	United Kingdom NC	453,614
Sweden SIDA	1,558,441	German NC	342,858
ECHO	870,646	French NC	240,909
USAID OFDA	600,000	Spanish NC	262,499
Italy	592,417*	US and UK NC	239,182
Netherlands	556,000		
Finland	373,134		
Norway	291,120		
Norway	289,020		
Subtotal Governments	11,170,288	Subtotal National Committees	2,039,062
GRAND TOTAL US\$ 13,209,350			

* Firm commitment from the Government of Italy

4. IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES

UNICEF greatly appreciates the funding already received from donors this year. In the next two months, however, UNICEF Liberia urgently needs funding to support reintegration of CAFF, education and health interventions, including measles immunisation and the provision of basic health services.

UNICEF Liberia requires funding to support the DDDR of children, sustaining and expanding its capacity to respond to the needs of demobilised CAFF. Beyond basic support in terms of living, accommodation and basic social services, UNICEF is currently developing an integrated reintegration response covering a range of services to be pre-positioned as CAFF leave the ICCs. These services include Family Tracing and Reunification, Alternative Care Services, Accelerated Learning Programme, Community Education Investment Programme, Skills Training and an Apprenticeship Programme. The total funding requirements to support the programme through the end of the year are almost US\$ 8 million.

Education remains desperately under funded. Liberian children are waiting to return to the classroom, but without funding to support the education programme, this will be impossible. UNICEF is working closely with the Ministry of Education, with other UN agencies including UNDP and WFP, and with NGO partners to rebuild the education system, but the challenges are vast. Immediate funding would provide education supplies, instructional materials and equipment for students, teachers, schools and learning spaces in areas of the country that are only now accessible.

The measles campaign initiated in June 2003 and undertaken with several key government and NGO partners has vaccinated more than 1.24 million children to date. However, there are still 300,000 Liberian children living in difficult to reach areas who must receive vaccinations immediately. Liberia now ranks fifth highest in the world in terms of under five mortality rate from measles. With immediate funding, UNICEF could complete its measles vaccination campaign in a few months. Given the poor access to health care prevailing throughout the country, the restoration of routine immunisation services and reactivation of an additional 57 clinics as part of the re-integration and capacity building process also require urgent funding support.

The table below summarises the most urgent projects:

Table 2: PRIORITY REQUIREMENTS AS OF MAY 2004		
Project	Beneficiaries/coverage	Amount Required (US\$)
1. Education	400,000 children and 13,000 teachers	6,000,000
2. Reintegration of CAFF	15,000 children	8,000,000
3. Routine EPI	1,200,000 (children <5yrs and women of reproductive age)	450,000
4. Reactivation of basic health services	200,000 children and their mothers	850,000

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