

# UNICEF SOMALIA MONTHLY BULLETIN

UNITE FOR CHILDREN

Volume 1, Issue 5

May 2008

## A word from the UNICEF Representative

Given the current instability and crisis in Somalia, the country is unlikely to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 says a recent UNICEF Somalia report. This state of affairs is a wake up call to the daunting task facing the international community and the Somali people as they strive to lay a foundation for their children's future. It is also a stark reminder that the dreams of Somalia's children for a better future have been shortchanged.

Good dreams are made of a sound education, good health care, good and adequate water supply and sanitation and a sound foundation for the youth. For Somali children to live their dreams, the alternatives to chaos need a place in our collective psyche as humanitarian workers, Somali leaders and citizens. The message needs to be clear: Good dreams are better than war any day.

True to UNICEF's call, it is time to unite to make a difference for Somalia by keeping in mind that each child counts. In many ways the world and Somalis need to unite to help children have hope in the future. Unite for Children, UNICEF's rallying call cannot be more timely and relevant than it is in today's Somalia.

It is grossly unfair for a generation to lose their dreams and to fall off the map of hope. Somali children have



Children and women in Afgoye, Central Somalia with supplies of UNIMIX supplied by UNICEF to alleviate malnutrition. Photo credit: UNICEF Somalia/Jumbo

been denied the dream of achievable Millennium Development Goals. As UNICEF says in its 2007 *Consolidated Emergency Thematic Report*, it and its partners' humanitarian response remains a drop in the ocean of need.

To save the dreams of the Somali child is the world's challenge. As long as Somalia remains a landscape of dashed hopes and dreams, the world for all its progress and development remains scarred. A hungry child is a vulnerable child. Somalia is a hungry child waiting to be saved. Save a life, save the world and unite for Somalia's children.

*Christian*

Christian Balslev-Olesen

**UNICEF in Somalia contributes to meeting Millennium Development Goals and Millennium Declaration Targets by increasing access to and the quality of basic services for accelerated child survival, development and protection.**

## IN THIS ISSUE

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Security remains fluid                        | 2 |
| Skills give girls confidence                  | 3 |
| Supply distribution continues                 | 4 |
| Afgoye food distribution overcomes challenges | 5 |
| HIV and Protection                            | 6 |
| Education networks strengthened               | 7 |

## ACCELERATING CHILD SURVIVAL

**95% of children under one in Somalia have not received the full recommended course of vaccinations. One in eight children dies before his/her fifth birthday. Somalia has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world.**

**UNICEF and WHO work with government and NGO partners to improve young child survival by increasing access to and the quality of health centres through vaccination, nutrition and malaria prevention programmes.**

## Security situation in Central/Southern Somalia remains fluid

The security situation in Mogadishu and other parts of Central/Southern Somalia remains fluid with intermittent attacks, killings and conflict between rival militia. During the last month, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troop base was attacked by insurgents. In the resultant fire exchange 18 civilians were killed and 20 people wounded. In Jowhar, Middle Shabelle the situation was relatively stable with the town under the control of the Islamic Courts.

However, the roads leading out of Jowhar were not secure as incidents of robbery and ambushes of public transport were reported. In Galgaduud/Gal Mudug region a driver with the Somali Red Crescent Society was shot dead on 23 May. On 29 May 2008 the air traffic control room at Galkayo Airport was destroyed by mortar fire. Sea piracy continued to be a problem off the Puntland coast. There have been more than 20 reports of hijackings off the Somali coast so far this year.

A Canadian Oil Company, Africa Oil Corporation, has imported oil exploration equipment to Bossaso, Northeast Somalia ('Puntland') and is expected to begin exploring for oil in the Dharoor valley 135Km from Bossaso. Representatives of a Chinese state-owned oil company are currently visiting parts of Mudug region, in Somalia's semiautonomous State of Puntland, sources said.

The UN, African Union and the Arab League have welcomed the peace deal between the Transitional Federal Government [TFG] of Somalia and the opposition Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia [ARS] following 10 days of United Nations-facilitated talks.

UN news quoted Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as saying in a statement that he "commends the leadership of both parties for taking this important step towards a durable political settlement for Somalia, and hopes that other Somali groups and individuals will soon adhere to this agreement." Ban called on the international community to provide "strong diplomatic and financial support for the effective implementation of this agreement."

Prior to the resumption of the talks, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General emphasized that though the peace process may create strains in some circles of Somali society, peace should prevail. He called on Somalis as previously to provide support for reconciliation in the country which is crucial for the success of peacemaking.

TFG Prime Minister Nur Adde Hassan Hussein arrived in Baidoa and opened a meeting aimed at drafting a new constitution for Somalia. During the opening speech, Mr. Adde emphasized the importance of the new charter in reflecting the will of all Somalis.

### Skills for life training gives girls greater confidence to solve problems

*By Jairus Ligoo and Kamal Nidam*

“I do things knowing I am responsible, I am able to talk to mother, father and other siblings with confidence and I have started to ask my father questions that I would not have been able to before. Sometimes I even explain to him about the lessons I learnt from the workshop.”

These are the words of 18-year-old Saida Noor Ahmed from Bossaso, Northeast Somalia ('Puntland'). Saida is a beneficiary of the girls' leadership initiative (GLDI), a UNICEF-led process that delivers interactive life skills' sessions enabling girls to discuss various social issues affecting them and to engage with parents and leaders to have the issues addressed.

Through the initiative, Saida and her peers are seeing a turnaround in their relations with peers, friends and family as they are now better off at dealing with personal and social conflict. At personal level, Saida has become more adept at solving disputes between her friends in a peaceful way - a practical application of knowledge learnt from the initiative specially designed for and implemented by girls.

Saida is grateful to GLDI mentors like 20 year old Manal Ahmed Mohamed from Bari region of the semi-autonomous Puntland State of Somalia. Manal is enabling girls like Saida to learn and acquire key life skills necessary for their enhanced participation in social development. Manal is one of the 70 girls' leadership mentors trained by UNICEF from one of its local partner organizations. She facilitates the interactive awareness raising and life skills' sessions.

UNICEF has developed a girls' leadership resource kit that is specifically aimed at enhancing girls' participation in responding to various social and development challenges. Mentors like Manal find it both practical and resourceful as they facilitate these sessions. Manal does not want to be the only girl doing this and is busy mobilizing fellow girls to be part of her 'dream team', she organizes creative 'speak out' sessions where girls hold discussions and positively influence each other.

Manal understands her country's history and knows how much damage the prolonged civil war has done not only to her but to other girls. Says Manal, “The civil war has since 1991 made living in Somalia very difficult especially for girls. People have been leaving Mogadishu for other regions seeking peace, and it

has been so hard for girls to be educated let alone express themselves and to speak out.”



**Saida: now more confident after UNICEF training. Photo credit: UNICEF Somalia.**

Manal feels that the situation in her region is improving with girls gaining exposure to different initiatives, such as the leadership one.

“We have learnt that we can continue learning and participate in social activities in different ways. I am confident and have the ability to speak out and share my opinion with other girls, boys and even parents”. Asked why she got interested in the initiative, Manal responds with a broad smile “it is different and promotes a special understanding on the essential role that girls can play in our community, take action and make a difference among peers in society”.

Manal has facilitated several girls' workshops and 'speak out' sessions. She has trained 30 girls from her region as co-trainers, and together last year they reached 120 girls equipping them with knowledge on rights and life skills. Manal believes that life skills are a very important tool to be able to effectively engage with the society and to give girls the ability to understand how to make decisions, think creatively, solve and deal with personal problems and build positive peer relationships.

***In the coastal town of Bossaso, it's not only the sea waves that can be heard, but a wave of skilled girls like Saida and Manal who see themselves as young role models for girls.***

# UNICEF SOMALIA MONTHLY BULLETIN

## Health — Distribution of vaccines and EPI supplies continues

*Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI): Routine distribution of vaccines and other EPI supplies to partners continued throughout the month. Ensuring functional vaccine storage facilities continues to be a priority for saving lives of Somali children.*

*Malaria: 15,000 insecticide treated nets are to be distributed to Garabaharey district and surrounding villages benefiting 7,500 households.*

*Diarrhoea prevention: Emergency preparedness and response teams are active in three regions of Puntland. The teams are focused on acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) and are conducting chlorination, surveillance, social mobilization, programme communication and advocacy to prevent and control AWD.*

## Nutrition - Three nutrition surveys carried out in Northeast Somalia

*Surveys: With the support of UNICEF, FAO's Food Security Analysis Unit carried out three nutrition surveys in Addun, Hawd and all IDP camps in Galkaio and Garowe towns between 27 April and 17 May 2008. The surveys are part of the regular surveillance system to measure the nutritional status among children aged between 6 and 59 months. The preliminary results of these surveys have shown a deterioration of the children's' nutritional status due to drought and inflation. In response to the critical situation of malnutrition in IDP camps, UNICEF will support the Social Development Research Association (SDRA) to run community-based therapeutic care both among Galkaio IDPs and in Bossaso to fill the gap left after the MSF withdrawal from Bosasso.*

*Baidoa town has only one supplementary feeding programme serving about 650 children under five years each month. Severely malnourished children have to be transported 90km to the nearest therapeutic feeding centre. This dire situation is being addressed through discussions with Baidoa Hospital management and NGOs centering around opening a stabilization centre and out-patient therapeutic feeding programme in Baidoa hospital. Among the plans include the opening of an additional two out-patient sites linked to maternal and child health centers run by NGOs.*

## Drought - Northern regions of Somalia remain food insecure

*Most pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood zones in northern regions of Somalia remain generally food insecure. However, localized areas in Hawd in Togdheer, Nugal Valley, and Sool plateau of Sanag and Sool are facing moderate risk of acute food and livelihood crisis. There are 190,000 urban people who are identified in acute food and livelihood crisis mostly in Togdheer, Sool, Sanaag and Bosasso. Excessive heat has accelerated the drying up of water sources and there has been a further deterioration of pasture, which is close to depletion. The situation warrants UNICEF to review the current response, support inter-agency coordination and facilitate the establishment of regional emergency committees to provide water, health and nutritional services.*

## Water Sanitation and Hygiene — Water purification supplies distributed

*Diarrhoea prevention: Diarrhoea prevention: ChlorFloc for water purification was distributed to riverine communities in Mahaday and Jowhar districts in Middle Shabelle for 200 families at risk due to their dependence on river water. In Jowhar town, chlorine for household water treatment was distributed through water kiosks. 300 families in Jowhar who depend on water from canals and shallow wells were given Aquatab for water treatment. In Hiran, the acute watery diarrhoea response is currently covering the districts of Beletweyn, Bulo Burti and Jalalaqsi, with an estimated coverage of 4,000 households. The assistance provided includes the chlorination of wells and the provision of ChlorFloc and Aquatab to vulnerable families with no safe drinking water source. Radio programmes for cholera prevention and control were aired through radio stations in Baidoa, Mogadishu and Jowhar. A total of 12 radio programmes were broadcast by the three stations in May. **More on page 5.***

## Afgoye food distribution overcomes challenges

**May 2008** - Community sensitization prior to food distribution took place through meetings with camp leaders, community mobilisers and security personnel in a total of 221 IDP camps.

44,500 children aged six to 59 months living in the camps in the Afgoye corridor were assessed for their nutritional status, registered and given ration cards. Of the 44,500 children assessed, 0.9% (416) were found to be severely acutely malnourished and 8.6% (3,812) moderately acutely malnourished. 23.0% (10,258) were found at high risk of acute malnutrition and 67.4% (30,014) with normal nutritional status.

The 416 children with severe form of acute malnutrition were referred to the two existing out-patient therapeutic feeding programme (OTP) sites managed by Muslim Aid (UK). 37 children with disease conditions were transferred to the MSF Swiss operated Stabilization Care Centre. The highest number of acutely malnourished children and those at high risk of malnutrition were found in Elesha, Hawa Abdi, Faculty of Agriculture and Lafole Boys Orphanage camps accordingly.

Further data analysis showed that both the highest number of malnutrition cases, 3.6% (1,620), and those at risk of malnutrition, 7.8% (3,489), were in the age group of 48 to 59 months. The lowest number of malnutrition cases 0.7% (296) and the lowest number of those at high-risk, 1.6% (713), were in the age group of 6 to 11 months. Possible causes of the figures are that children in the age group of 48 to 59 months may be grouped with older children/adult family members and not get their fair share of the family food. In the case of those between 6 and 11 months, most of them are breastfed and closer to mother's/ caregivers attention and care.

### Supplementary food distribution

On 4 May, Jumbo NGO received the first batch of 20,000 bags of 10kg UNIMIX at the Lafole Boy's Orphanage site. The remaining balance was expected to follow but intensified demonstrations in Mogadishu by the population due to soaring food prices and traders' refusal of the old Somali shilling put a halt to the dispatch of UNIMIX from the

UNICEF Mogadishu warehouse. However, as the situation normalised, the UNIMIX supply flow to the distribution sites resumed on 7 May and con-



A mother and child receive supplies of UNIMIX during the distribution. Photo credit: UNICEF Somalia/Jumbo

tinued up to 10 May.

The UNIMIX distribution was planned and executed at nine sites. The food distribution at each site continued for five consecutive days and a total

### Water supplies distributed — From Page 4

Awareness: Community hygiene awareness promotion training took place in Wajid for community education committees from schools in Bay, Bakool and Gedo regions.

UNICEF has embarked on a partnership with 10 organizations to improve the water, sanitation and hygiene conditions of an estimated population of 600,000 persons in almost all regions of Somaliland of whom 45% are children and women. Among the activities to be undertaken are rehabilitation of school latrines and handwashing facilities; hygiene promotion training; maternal and child health centres' improvement and improvement of water sources. In addition, at least 20,000 rural people, 30% of them children and 15% of them women, now have access to clean drinking water in Somaliland following the commissioning of a borewell drilled by UNDP. The beneficiaries live in and around Geedbalaadh village.

# UNICEF SOMALIA MONTHLY BULLETIN

## Communication, HIV, Empowerment and Protection (CHEP)

### HIV

- Anti-retroviral therapy support and home-based care training was conducted for 10 people from Central/Southern Somalia. They were drawn from the community, hospitals, community-based organizations, relatives of people living with HIV and people living with HIV. The training aimed to increase understanding of the importance of anti-retroviral therapy and to reduce stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV.
- Four awareness raising workshops on HIV/AIDS prevention and control were conducted for 160 participants from Central/Southern Somalia who included women's groups, youth, community leaders, farmers, drivers, religious leaders, private laboratorists and pharmacists. Radio debates involving health professionals, religious scholars, women, youth and community members were also aired.
- 42 women and girls from five regions of Somaliland participated in a HIV prevention and control knowledge course. The course was jointly organized by UNICEF and Concerned Committee of Somalis (CCS). The course was part of the women-to-women initiative in response to HIV which aims at helping women and children, especially adolescent girls, to help themselves prevent HIV infection and then participate in the national response to AIDS. The initiative began in Somaliland as a pilot project in late 2006 until December 2007. It has reached at least 15000 women and girls. The initiative hopes to reach some 25000 women and adolescent girls in the next 12 months.
- The Puntland AIDS Commission with support of the Global Fund conducted advocacy workshops in Bossaso, Garowe and Galkayo towns that drew the participation of 100 community members. Among participants were religious leaders, community leaders, district commissioners, mayors of each town, and representatives from youth and women's clubs.
- Dandor NGO has conducted six days' training in basic facts on HIV/AIDS for 60 participants (women, youth, religious leaders and community leaders) from Bossaso town IDP camps and seven surrounding villages. Dandor also carried out advocacy activities in Bossaso district and surrounding villages.
- *Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) of HIV:* A three-day PMTCT training session was conducted in Hargeisa. The session had 20 participants from Awdal and Galbeed health facilities. The training will aid the establishment of new PMTCT services.

### Protection

A trip to Sahil region found that a lot of children and youths are in prison. There are over 70 youth in Mandhera prison alone including, some as young as 15 years. These children are incarcerated in two small cells in appalling conditions. The cells have almost no ventilation and there is barely room for each boy to lie down. Most of the children in Mandhera prison, which serves Hargeisa region, have been put there by the Regional Security Committee, an extra-judicial body which has the authority to send youths accused of disturbing the peace to one or two years detention without due process of the law. At the prison in the port town of Berbera, of 15 youth in jail, three were girls, recently arrested for fighting. The girls, one of whom was 13 years old, have not been given a trial. UNICEF and UNDP, as part of their joint programme for Justice for Children, appealed to the Ministers of Justice and Interior to intervene. Commitments were made to release all under-18s on the Day of the African Child. This is of particular significance in light of Somaliland's recently passed Children Justice Law, which ensures child-friendly judicial and custodial processes, as well as diversion mechanisms for children accused of petty offences.

Regional child protection networks in Galkayo, Garowe and Bossaso towns of Puntland carried out child protection advocacy and awareness raising activities in their localities through local FM radios. In Puntland, four local partners have carried out psychosocial activities through schools, and have reached a total of 865 persons with a variety of psychosocial interventions. Discussions were held between UNICEF and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) on ways in which a child protection unit can be established within AMISOM operations in Mogadishu. The two sides have agreed to the secondment of a Child Protection Advisor who will oversee training on child and civilian protection, monitoring and reporting against child recruitment. Along the Afgoye corridor, trainings have been carried out for 210 Community Education Committees on basic psychosocial support to children who have suffered displacement, bereavement and been exposed to trauma. This is in an effort to make schools more child-friendly environments. Recreational supplies (T-shirts, volley and basket balls, whistles ) were provided to a Child Friendly Centre in Afgoye corridor and the children and young people have started sports tournaments, under adult supervision. **MORE ON PAGE 7**

## Contact Us

If you would like to learn more about our programmes or where your support would make a difference, please contact:

Christian Balslev Olesen  
Representative  
cbalslev@unicef.org  
+254 733 629-933

Denise Shepherd-Johnson  
Chief of Communication  
dshepherdjohnson@unicef.org  
+254 722 719 867

Robert Kihara,  
Communication Officer,  
rkihara@unicef.org  
+254 721 244 800 or  
+254 722 206 883

### Communication for development

Five facilitators of the Participatory Integrated Community Development process were trained in the training of community development committees in the community driven development programme. Radio programs for cholera prevention and control were aired through radio stations in Baidoa, Mogadishu and Jowhar.

## Education - club networks strengthened

*Networking:* A meeting was held to strengthen networking among school clubs from nine schools in Jowhar. 31 people participated. The child-to-child learning clubs presented achievements of the clubs in the areas of mobilization, registration campaigns for out of school children, awareness raising in sanitation in and around school compounds, villages and IDP camps. During the registration campaigns, the clubs influenced 3,916 school age children to enrol in schools. School clubs at Kulmis Primary School planted fruit trees and flowers at Kulmis school garden. The fruit trees include papaya which is now ripening.

Among activities undertaken by the school clubs has been the establishment of collection boxes in schools. The funds collected are used to support worthy causes. A recent beneficiary of the system was when a child was hurt in school and the funds were used to hire a vehicle to rush him to hospital. In another incident a contribution was made to the family of a child whose mother had died.

*Girl education:* WFP's strategy on boosting girl's enrolment and attendance in some schools in Central/Southern Somalia has attracted more girls to go to school. For each girl who attends schooling for a month, WFP provides four litres of cooking oil as a reward for school attendance. For example, this incentive has seen the total enrolment of grade one for a COSV supported school stand at 869 girls out of 1,073 enrolled pupils. In another school whose total enrolment is 3,998, girls make up 2,529, and in a third school 6,229 out of the 12,215 students are girls.

*School opening:* The next school year will commence in October 1 rather than November 15 given that the holy month of Ramadhan starts in early November.

---

## We are on web!!!

Find us at : [www.unicef.org/somalia](http://www.unicef.org/somalia)

---

## Communication, HIV, Empowerment and Protection (CHEP)

### Empowerment

*Training:* Twenty communities in Awdal and Sahil regions of Somaliland where a community-driven development (CDD) initiative is being piloted, have received further capacity building to manage and execute their community action plans. Some 200 community committee members, an average of 10 from each community, have been trained in leadership in development and gender in development; conflict management, record keeping, financial management, resource mobilization, monitoring and evaluation and networking and collaboration.

Forty-four participants in the Girls Leadership Development Initiative have been trained in HIV and adolescent basic education to enable them train communities and peers. Another 46 girls and four boys from Hafun which was affected by the 2004 Tsunami were trained in leadership and organizational development.

*Sports:* UNICEF distributed sports materials to eight youth organizations and groups in Afgoye corridor, Merka and Jowhar towns of Lower and Middle Shabelle regions for 4,900 youth.