

UNICEF Somalia Monthly Review

July 2006



Merka welcomes aid...

Leaders in Merka have thanked ShelterBox, a UK organization for donating tents to families in internally displaced persons' (IDP) camps. Speaking to representatives of ShelterBox in late July, they urged the organization to inform the UK and international communities that the town of Merka is open to support from humanitarian organizations interested in helping Somalis.



One of the ShelterBox tents donated to a family in an IDP camp in Merka, Central Somalia. **Credit: UNICEF Somalia/Robert Kihara**

"We want the UN and UK flags to be on top of buildings and cars," they said, "we are thankful to UNICEF for liaising with ShelterBox to provide tents with tools, clothing and utilities for the poorest in IDP camps," said the Deputy Governor of Merka, Mohamed Ali Haji while speaking to ShelterBox representative, Joe Cannon. Mr Haji said it was reassuring that ShelterBox had delivered on their promises and followed up with a visit by their representative.

The Middle Shabelle regional administration said it welcomed the

international community and private businesses to invest in the region and said that like most of Somalia, the region would benefit in terms of investment in the education, health and water sectors. "Tell the British not to forget Somalia," said Mr Ali Haji. "Britain knows Somalia well and peace is going to be restored. Somali people are realizing the need for peace and need support from the UK, UN and the international community." The members of the local administration said they were intent on working for peace to ensure improvement of living standards.

During the visit, ShelterBox representatives visited Merka Hospital, IDP camps, Ayub Orphanage and an agriculture school. Merka is about 90km south of Mogadishu. Dr Abdi Hersi who runs the hospital for COSV, an Italian NGO said two out of four doctors in Merka supported two other hospitals in Qoryole and Brava.

UNICEF supports Merka Hospital's primary health care programme. The salaries for the 60 hospital staff are paid by COSV and donations from the local community and the Diaspora. UNICEF also provides incentives for staff.

Challenges: The hospital has no funds for X-ray and other key equipment and the quality of old equipment is deteriorating rapidly. Funds collected only meet basic costs for patients and though poorer patients get exemptions, the numbers of poor are increasing making it difficult to cope. Normal payments for services are about half a dollar per patient. Common diseases

Contents...

Merka welcomes aid...1

Political developments...3

Security developments...4

Programme Updates...

Health update...4

Nutrition update...5

Water and Environmental Sanitation update...5

Education update...6

HIV/AIDS update...6

Child Protection...6

Youth development update...6

Communication for development update...7

reported are kwashiorkor, marasmus, diarrhoea, tuberculosis, malaria, hypertension, chronic heart diseases and diabetes. The resources used to cater for poor patients are increasingly eating into the budget for hospital salaries.

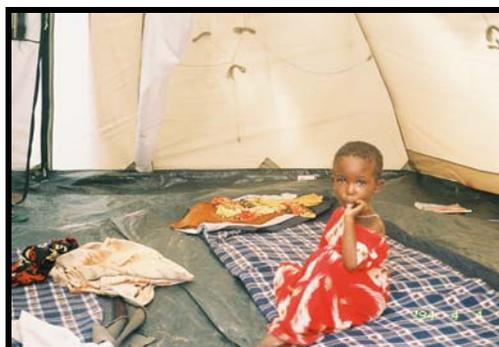
The hospital is an excellence centre for HIV treatment, control and prevention. It has a blood bank and voluntary counseling and testing centre for HIV/AIDS. However, it needs a dental and eye care unit. It also hosts a vaccine storage facility. Fighting that occurred recently for control of Mogadishu left its facilities stretched.

On average, the 100-bed facility receives about 100 patients a day. During the visit to the hospital in late July, Faduma Omar, 20, was nursing her son Mohamed Hassan, 2, who was down with kwashiorkor. Fadhia Ahmed, was also admitted with her daughter, Fadhuma Haji Mohamed who had measles.

Notwithstanding these odds, the Merka community (whose name sounds remarkably close to America) extended an open hand to the international community to help it. Among the infrastructural needs is the construction of a good road network between it and Mogadishu with the current one in a very poor state. The town has a scenic seafront which under ideal conditions could provide growth opportunities for the tourism industry.

UNICEF is also providing school tents (Alorunda tents from Norway) to serve

as classrooms. About 100 tents that can accommodate about 40 children each will be put up in 10 regions of Central/Southern Somalia. The school tents each of which costs \$2000 to \$3,000 (different from the ShelterBox tents which are small and for single families) are easier to put up, cheaper and cooler. A tent takes three days to put up given that their foundation does not require going very deep. Most residents of IDP camps in Merka depend on subsistence livelihoods that include selling charcoal. UNICEF has so far provided about 30 ShelterBox tents to families in Merka.



A girl takes a rest inside one of the ShelterBox tents donated to her family in an IDP camp in Merka, Central Somalia. **Credit: UNICEF Somalia/Robert Kihara**

ShelterBox representative Mr Cannon promised to follow up on requests for other assistance made by the Merka community though he gave no commitments. The tents come with various household items including utensils, sleeping bags and tools.

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 and Mogadishu

Galgaduud
Hiran
Middle Shabelle
Lower Shabelle
Benadir
Lower Juba
Middle Juba
Gedo
Bay
Bakool

Political developments...

Some parts of Mogadishu witnessed tension between rival militia. Mogadishu is now firmly under the control of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). During the month, members of the ICU headed by Sheikh Shariif Sheikh Ahmed - chairman of the executive committee and members from civil society groups, business people and politicians held discussions and agreed to nominate a consultative committee for the ICU with members overseeing security, peace negotiations with the Transitional Federal Government, maintenance of law and order, re-opening of Mogadishu sea and airport and setting up of a regional administration for Benadir region. The ICU has asked all foreign visitors to Mogadishu to get permission from the ICU before coming into the areas it controls so as to enable it to plan visits and to ensure security.

The Independence Day for Somalia, 1 July, was celebrated in Mogadishu, Merka and Kismayo for the first time in several years. During the month, Al-Jazeera TV organized a TV debate on the current situation in Somalia. Intellectuals and politicians from the Diaspora, TFG, ICU, Arab League and Somaliland participated in the debate.

In Northwest Somalia ('Somaliland'), the issue of minority rights received new focus during a symposium organized in Hargeisa and attended by the Somaliland Justice Minister. A representative of one of the communities that regards itself as a minority one, Gabooye, said there was

need for laws to safeguard their interests and to ensure that they are able to access public services like health and education and to secure political representation. The local administration promised to look into the issues raised.

Crisis in Parliament: Following a row over the impartiality of the Northeast Somalia ('Puntland') Parliament Speaker, the incumbent was removed and a new one appointed. Puntland is a semi-autonomous state within Somalia with its own administrative structures. Meanwhile, a bill seeking to govern the exploitation of natural resources was approved by the Puntland parliament.

Visits-mission: The President of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed visited Garowe, Puntland's administrative capital and held talks with the local administration and traditional leaders. Prior to being elected President of the TFG, Abdullahi Yusuf was President of Puntland.

Meetings were held in Somaliland and Puntland as part of the Joint Needs Assessment process that involves the UN, World Bank and local authorities in Somaliland, Puntland and the rest of Somalia. The meetings were an opportunity to review plans and recommendations by local administrations, communities, international and local NGOs, and civil society. UNICEF Somalia Representative Christian Balslev-Olesen visited Somaliland and met local leaders and discussed various issues related to UNICEF programmes key among them issues of education.

Security developments...

For the first time in 16 years, Mogadishu is experiencing calm and security. This has been greatly welcomed by residents who are now able to move freely and even drive at night without fear. Public transport and private cars are now more increasingly used and gradually people have started rehabilitation of their houses and business premises. Repairing of roads and markets is also taking place. UNICEF has provided tools to the ICU and the Benadir regional administration, civil society groups/organizations and public who have started engaging in clean-up campaigns in Mogadishu. Baidoa continues to be the seat of the remaining members of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG).

In other locations in Central/Southern Somalia, isolated incidents leading to deaths were reported. In one incident in Middle Shabelle a school pupil was killed and three others wounded by a grenade that exploded as they played with it.

On 28 July 2006, a former TFG minister of Constitution and Federal Affairs was killed by an unidentified man armed with a pistol in Baidoa. The killing occurred while the Minister was returning from a mosque. Following the death, demonstrations erupted in the town. Four suspects were arrested in connection with the incident.

The inauguration ceremony for the new Bay regional governor, Haji Mohamud

Mohamed Aden was held in Baidoa on 6 July 2006. The TFG President Abdullahi Yusuf attended the ceremony. Reports from Gedo and Bakool region confirmed the presence of Ethiopian troops in Baidoa. On 27 July 2006, seven cabinet members of the TFG cabinet resigned their seats in the government. On 30 July 2006, TFG parliament attempted a vote of no-confidence against Prime Minister Ali Gedi. The vote secured 126 votes, 10 short of those required to sail through.

Health update...

Training: UNICEF trained 348 people to carry out measles vaccination in Mogadishu. Religious leaders have also been involved in the effort to raise awareness on the need for immunization. Youth leaders were trained in immunization, malaria and HIV/AIDS prevention. About 20 members of the Regional Health Board (RHB) from Saanag and Togdheer regions in Somaliland were trained in hospital management. Refresher training was carried out for hospital and administration staff from health facilities and the local administration.

UNICEF staff undertook field visits to health facilities in Somaliland and rewarded staff that had excelled in duty. During a consultative meeting in Erigavo, local business people pledged support to revitalize the regional referral hospital in Erigavo.

Advocacy: Various initiatives were conducted during a week-long initiative dubbed 'malaria week' in five villages

and towns in Somaliland. Dramas on malaria were staged. Among the organization's that played a key role was the Horn of Africa Voluntary Youth Organization Committee (HAVOYOCO) which has a Circus that stages acrobatic shows.

Polio: Polio immunization was carried out in various urban and rural locations. In Puntland, the campaign carried out by UNICEF, the World Health Organization and other partners targeted 122,000 children aged less than five years.

Maternal Neonatal and Tetanus campaign: The campaign was launched by Puntland President, Mohamud Muse Hirsi in Garowe, the state's administrative capital towards the end of July. The campaign targeted about 135,000 women aged between 15 and 45 years.

Malaria: 700 health workers were trained in the use of the latest artemisinin-based combination drug treatment. More than 25,000 long-lasting insecticide treated nets were supplied to partners in Central-Southern Somalia for distribution to children under five years of age and pregnant women.

Nutrition update...

Training: 24 staff of partner NGOs were trained to integrate nutrition programmes into community

development initiatives in Central/Southern Somalia. Staff of Idhanka Maternal and Child Health Centre in Somaliland received on-the-job training in nutrition.

Education support: 27 members of community education communities that are largely responsible for school management in Somalia/Somaliland, were trained in nutrition and its impact on learning among children. The training focused ways to ensure proper nutrition for children to boost learning.

Supplies: UNICEF distributed iron-cum-folic acid supplements for prevention and treatment of anaemia to health facilities in the five regions of Somaliland.

Water and environmental sanitation update...

Projects: Rehabilitation of 10 wells in Baidoa was completed and spare parts for boreholes distributed to Bakool region. In Puntland, construction works continued at three projects supported by the European Union.

Training: Ninety residents of internally displaced persons camps were trained in hygiene promotion. Hand-pump caretakers were trained in Baidoa.

Sanitation: UNICEF donated tools to local authorities and communities for cleaning up Mogadishu

Education update...

School construction: 14 school tents were donated to three schools in Lower Shabelle and Bakool regions. Three classroom tents were distributed to two IDP camps in Merka town of Lower Shabelle. Five hundred children will benefit. UNICEF will provide the schools with teaching and learning materials. Two schools constructed in collaboration with the UN Office of Project Services (UNOPS) have been completed and are ready for handover. The schools are in Quljeed and Buss villages of Somaliland. Construction of Illinta Dhexe school and four girls' only schools in Berbera, Borama, Burao and Erigavo is continuing. Seventeen school tents were distributed to 10 villages of Alabaday and Sheikh districts of Somaliland. The tents are expected to accommodate 1,500 children. Some 240 sets of school desks and benches were distributed to schools serving marginalized communities and internally displaced persons in Somaliland.

Training: 1,042 teachers in Central/Southern Somalia were trained in basic skills while 78 people were trained to train head-teachers in school management and administration.

Talks: UNICEF held discussions with Somaliland ministry of Education staff to discuss ways to realize the vision of education for all children. The

Somaliland administration praised UNICEF's contribution that has enabled it to run 520 schools in Somaliland.

HIV/AIDS update...

As part of the women-to-women initiative 30 women were trained in Somaliland to undertake awareness raising activities for HIV prevention and control. Another 30 women were trained in a similar initiative in Puntland. In order to prevent mother to child transmission, emphasis is being put on integrating prevention, control and awareness into Safe Motherhood activities.

Advocacy: An advocacy initiative for HIV/AIDS was launched through print and electronic media in Hargeisa.

Youth development and participation update...

Training: Fifty youth from Mogadishu were trained in local-governance issues. The training modules developed by UN-Habitat aim to provide opportunity for young people to actively participate in planning and decision-making in their communities. In Puntland, 90 youth from Garowe, Bossaso and Galkayo districts were similarly trained. Another sixty youth from Puntland were trained in leadership and organizational development.

HIV/AIDS: Twenty three youth leadership trainers and mentors from

Child protection

Mobilization: Social mobilization was carried in Benadir, Bay, Bakool, Gedo and Middle Jubba to raise community awareness about child protection.

Training: Forty education mentors from Somaliland were trained in psychological and social dimensions of providing care and support for children. They will in turn train about 500 head-teachers in Somaliland. Another 26 mentors of teachers from Puntland were similarly trained.

Central/Southern Somalia were trained in HIV/AIDS prevention, awareness and control as well as in education and immunization issues. The training aimed to enable youth to mobilize their peers to participate in social development. Youth groups played a key role in supporting community mobilization, monitoring and supervision of immunization campaigns in Bossaso, during the reporting period.

Communication for development update...

Advocacy: Twenty four participants were trained to integrate nutrition issues into development initiatives during emergencies and regular development programmes. Radio broadcasts in Mogadishu helped raise awareness on cholera prevention and control. Similar initiatives and community mobilization were held in preparation of World Breastfeeding Week in Central/Southern Somalia. The initiatives were held in partnership with local NGOs and community-based organizations.

Broadcasting: Youth from nine regions were trained by the Mogadishu-based Horn Afrik Media. The aim of the training was to enhance the skills of youth producers of audio programmes.

Training: 32 youth from Sahil, Awdal, Togdheer and Hargeisa regions of Somaliland were trained to facilitate community dialogue for identification of priority development needs. As part of the child-to-child training initiative, 30 youth were trained to facilitated setting up of school clubs.

If you have questions about the UNICEF Somalia Monthly Review please contact:

Denise Shepherd-Johnson, Communication Officer.
E-mail: dshepherdjohnson@unicef.org

OR Robert Kihara, Assistant Communication Officer.
E-mail: rkihara@unicef.org
Tel: 254-2-623958/ 623950/ 623862/ 623959/ 350410.
Fax: 254-2-520640/ 623965

Credit for majority of content in this report goes to UNICEF staff in Somalia.