

UNICEF Humanitarian Action: Afghanistan Donor Update 30 Sep 2004

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TOWARD ADVANCEMENT OF AFGHAN CHILD'S AND WOMAN'S RIGHTS

A drought Flash Appeal issued by Government and UN to mitigate water shortage

Efforts continue to stop polio transmission among Afghan children

Education being brought to Afghan girls in communities without schools

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration progressing for 5,000 former child soldiers

1. EMERGENCY OVERVIEW AND CURRENT SITUATION

Today, the humanitarian situation of children in Afghanistan is strained not only by the continuing insecurity and violence, but also by the drought. In fact, large parts of Afghanistan are now facing severe drought, as highlighted in a new appeal by the Government of Afghanistan. 2004 was the sixth year in which rain and snowfall were significantly below average, exacerbating the chronic water shortage that has been plaguing the country since 1997. Populations are now threatened in at least 17 of 33 provinces across the country. This triggers the displacement of the population, mostly due to lack of drinking water. Available figures indicate that close to 4,000 people, with 3,000 displaced from Kandahar and Helmand provinces alone. But displacement could be much higher than documented so far, with people moving within their family support networks.

This month, new data has been released on the condition of women and children in Afghanistan in the form of the 2003 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) findings. Key indicators highlighted in the report include:

- 1 in 9 children born in Afghanistan will probably die before the first birthday.
- 1 in 6 children will probably not survive until the age of five.
- The national illiteracy rate amongst Afghans over the age of 15 is 71 per cent.
- Nearly 60 per cent of primary school age girls are not attending classes.
- Nearly 90 per cent of births take place at home, and a similar percentage are attended by unskilled birth attendants rather than properly trained health practitioners.
- Diarrhoeal disease affects nearly 30% of children under the age of five, but treatment of the condition is limited, with nearly half of children suffering from diarrhea not being given adequate fluids during their illness.
- 1 in 5 children under five years old suffers from acute respiratory infections, but nearly three-quarters of these children are not taken to hospital or other health centres for treatment.
- Nearly 60 per cent of Afghan households do not have a safe water point, while one-third of households do not have a sanitary latrine.
- Nearly 7 per cent of primary school age children age work for an income
- Nearly 6 per cent of children do not live with both parents



The data from the MICS shows several areas of progress in recent years, notably increases in girls' enrolment. However, continued efforts are required to tackle maternal mortality, access to water and sanitation and the related incidences of water-borne disease, and protection of vulnerable children.

2. UNICEF's RESPONSE

Ensuring Safe Drinking Water to People Affected by Drought: In response to the drought noted above, the government in cooperation with the UN agencies and donor community issued a Flash Appeal for providing assistance to the drought-affected population. Using US\$ 200,000 from its existing resources, UNICEF has already provided water and sanitation equipment including water tankers, chlorine tablets and collapsible water tanks to some of the areas in the north. To date, 252 new water points have been established for 44,100 people in the areas of high returnees and IDP, mostly affected by drought.

Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation to All Schools: UNICEF continues to support the Ministry of Education to provide safe drinking water and sanitary latrines to all schools. During 2004, a total of 566 schools (out of the 1,100 schools planned) have been provided with safe drinking water to benefit 280,000 children, and latrines constructed for 502 schools (of the 973 planned) for 250,000 children, combined with hygiene education for 363 teachers (of the 3,351 planned). The work is ongoing in all regions, except for the south where most of the activities have been postponed until 2005, due to the insecurity resulting in the absence of reliable partners and lack of monitoring by UNICEF.

Field Monitoring and Quality Assurance of Work: Due to the deteriorating and volatile security in the country, field monitoring of activities and the general humanitarian situation by UNICEF staff has been severely limited in some areas. In view of this, government officials and local communities are being mobilized to do monitoring of the projects in their own communities. UNICEF has also been establishing partnerships with independent NGOs (both national and international) to conduct field monitoring. In southern region, this has been ongoing for the past several months, with positive results. In central region, UNICEF conducted training on field monitoring for the NGO staff and government officials.

Response to Flash Flood Emergency: In mid-August, flash floods affected 12 provinces of central highland, northeastern and central and eastern regions of the country. About 5,700 families were affected and a number of shops, wells, protection walls, culverts, roads and agricultural lands destroyed. Following an inter-agency assessment of the affected areas, relief items were sent to the affected provinces. UNICEF assisted families with 300 tents, 1,084 bundles of tarpaulin plastic sheets and other

relief items, including family kits, Oral Rehydration Salt, blankets, children shoes and socks, and jerry cans.

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of Child Soldiers: The process is ongoing with the disarmament and demobilization of underage soldiers and their reintegration into their communities, in coordination with Afghan New Beginning Programme, local government authorities, NGO partners and UNAMA. This project also supports reintegration of other war-affected children. To date 2,600 child soldiers (out of the 5,000 initially identified) have been demobilized through the support of 8 local DDR Committees in north-eastern, eastern and central highlands regions. UNICEF provided technical and financial support for community-based reintegration programmes, combining informal education, skills training and livelihood promotion, life skills and psycho-social support to 4,100 war-affected youth including child soldiers (out of the 10,000 initially targeted), and livelihood support to 500 of their families. Database on DDR has been established and a workshop held in June with implementing partners, in which monitoring and evaluation measures, with follow-up mechanisms, were agreed upon. Finally, a Technical Working Group on Child Soldiers was established to provide guidance and technical support to the DDR process and advocacy at community levels. The DDR process in southern and western regions has been postponed until 2005, mainly due to lack of funding and insecurity.

Advancing Girls' Education: Following the extensive Back-to-School Campaign in 2002-2003, the net enrolment rate for Afghan children 7-13 years increased to 54%: 67% for boys and 37% for girls (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2003, UNICEF and Central Statistic Office). However, key factors still prevent entry, such as the distance to the school, inadequate facilities and no separate schooling for girls and boys. UNICEF is currently supporting the Ministry of Education (MOE) with the following activities in order to enroll another 1 million girls in school by end of 2005:

- **Back-To-School Campaign:** UNICEF with the MOE distributed teaching and learning materials to 4.2 million school-children and 74,500 teachers for the school year started in March. Preparations are underway for distribution to another 580,000 children and 5,500 teachers in schools starting new academic year in September. UNICEF is also preparing for the distribution of teaching and learning materials to 6 million children and their teachers in 2005. For this, funds are required now to initiate the procurement process.

- **Teacher Training:** In January through March, 27,000 teachers participated in a 9-day teacher training across the country in language arts, pedagogy, land mine awareness and prevention of violence and abuse against children. The teaching standards for primary school teacher have also been developed with support from Teachers College, Columbia University. A group of Afghan educators are now working to develop training package for short-term training of teachers using these standards.

- **Accelerated learning courses for over-aged girls:** To ensure over-aged girls' enrolment into the formal education system at their age-appropriate grades, UNICEF has been supporting the Accelerated Learning Programme since 2003. A total of 45,900 out-of-school children (81% girls) in 8 provinces in the north-eastern, eastern and southern regions participated during the winter session (December 2003-March 2004). Of these, 43,000 have successfully advanced to the next grade in March. The summer course for 27,700 children in Kandahar, Hilmand and Nangahar provinces is scheduled for completion in mid-September.

- **Community-based Schools:** UNICEF is currently supporting community-based educational opportunities for children, especially girls in villages, where no formal schools are accessible. The first phase of this project is to establish 1,500 community-based schools for 75,000 girls and boys in the areas where girls' enrolment is below national average. So far, villages have been identified and training for provincial educational officials has been completed. The type of support needed for the establishment of schools (e.g. mosques, home-based, or tents) is being discussed between the educational authorities and local communities. Community members, who can be teachers of these schools, are also being identified and pedagogical and life-skill teacher training is being planned to support them. A training package has been developed and teacher training will start in late September with the training of trainers.

- **Rehabilitation of Teacher Training College:** UNICEF has been supporting the MOE for construction or rehabilitation of 8 Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) mainly in eastern, southern and northern regions. The work started with 4 of them and will start soon with the rest. This project is mainly funded by the Japan-Ogata Initiative Fund.

Child Trafficking and Kidnapping: By August 2004, 270 Afghan children (suspected of having been trafficked) were deported from Saudi Arabia. The children received interim care support in the transit centre in Kabul, run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) with UNICEF support.

Reintegration assistance has recently started for these children in northeast provinces. A pilot project to raise awareness among children on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children through children's groups is reaching 500 children in Badakhshan Province. A committee was established for Combating Child Trafficking and the Nation Plan of Action to counter child trafficking was finalized in July, soon to be presented by the MoLSA to the Cabinet for its approval. A nationwide awareness campaign is planned later this year, which urgently requires funding. At the same time, a situation assessment of child trafficking started in early September in 3 high risk regions and the neighbouring region in Pakistan. The findings will form a basis for designing a communication strategy and production of awareness raising materials. A case study on reported cases of children missing or kidnapped will also be conducted in Kabul to gain a better understanding of the nature of the problem, follow up mechanisms and protection gaps.

Polio Immunization Campaign: National efforts to eradicate polio from Afghanistan continue, as three new cases were found during 2004. UNICEF, with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and WHO, is increasing its actions for immunization of children against polio involving 40,000 vaccinators (45% women). So far two rounds of National Immunization Days (NIDs) were held in March and April, targeting all children below five years of age. Over 6.6 million children (over the NID target of 6 million) were reached during the two rounds. Additionally, three Sub-National NIDs were conducted in areas with low immunization coverage, also exceeding the targets. As the polio transmission is expected to be higher in the coming few months, the critical Fall NIDs were held for 29-31 August and another round planned for 28-30 September.

Protection of Women and New Borns against Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus: In 2004, UNICEF is supporting the MOH to conduct the Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus Elimination (MNTE) Campaign for 4 million women of childbearing age to increase the protection of women and their new born babies against tetanus. So far, two rounds were conducted in March/April and May nationwide, except for the major cities already covered in 2003. Ministries of Education, Women Affairs, Religious Affairs and Justice were also involved during the preparations. Both rounds reached 3.22 million women, with a coverage rate of over 62%. Many Afghan teachers, health workers and community members were mobilised in the process of vaccination, registration and social mobilisation. The third round MNTE campaign will be conducted in early 2005, pending on the availability of funds.

While continuing with the campaign approach, UNICEF continues to support the MOH for establishing a more sustainable approach to immunization through fixed routine immunization facilities throughout the country (currently 800 of 2,000 required) under the comprehensive Expanded Programme for Immunization Project.

Religious Leaders Training: Religious leaders have been very supportive of campaigns on Back-to-School campaign and children's health care. In 2004, UNICEF aims to strengthen partnership with religious leaders as social mobilizers and counsellors to achieve better welfare for Afghan children and women. The Ministry of Religious Affairs was supported to conduct training for 75,000 religious leaders nationwide on the benefits of girls' education, immunization, maternal health care, salt iodisation, and child protection issues. To date, training manuals in two local languages have been developed, two-day training workshops held for 20 national facilitators in Kabul, and a three-day workshop held for 50 religious trainers in eastern region. In September, training for 25,000 religious leaders started with regional training of trainers in western and northern Afghanistan. The training in the rest of the country will be held in 2005 due to the security concern and funding shortage.

Universal Salt Iodization (USI): To protect the Afghan population against the scourge of iodine deficiency, UNICEF is making progress towards Universal Salt Iodization and plans for 85% coverage with the establishment of 9 salt iodization plants by end-2004. To date, 7 plants are operating across the country; establishment of another is ongoing in the north, while the plan to establish a plant in Kandahar has been dropped due to insecurity and latest finding that Kandahar is not a significant salt production or trade place. With the 7 established plants of a production capacity of 5MT/hr, sufficient iodized salt could be produced to cover the needs of most Afghan households. A communication campaign is being organised, in order to dramatically increase the demand for iodized salt among the population. A national micronutrient status survey was carried out in partnership with CDC-Atlanta in early 2004 to investigate the prevalence of iodine deficiency disorders, iron deficiency, and Vitamin A deficiency. The analysis is ongoing and the first draft report will be produced by end-November.

Safe Motherhood Initiative: To reduce one of the world's highest rates of maternal mortality, UNICEF is committed to the provision of quality emergency obstetric care (EmOC) facilities to all 32 provinces. To date, the facilities have become functional in 27 provinces (mostly through support from partner NGOs), including 5 Centres of Excellence (CoE) in major cities. A number of trainings on EmOC have been carried out in these CoEs in partnership with John Hopkins Programme for International Education in Gynecology and Obstetrics (JHPIEGO). In order to increase the awareness on safe motherhood and

increase demand for available services, a national Safe Motherhood Initiative (SMI) communication strategy has been finalized in collaboration with MOH. To increase women's access to quality EmOC, a community midwifery project has been initiated in partnership with JHPIEGO and other partners. Recent withdrawal of some of the partner NGOs from insecure areas is a concern for quality assurance of the EmOC services as well as the construction and renovation of EmOC facilities. UNICEF is searching alternative ways with the MOH to fill the gap left by the NGO withdrawal.

Mine Risk Education (MRE): UNICEF continues to coordinate, provide capacity building initiatives, develop new teaching and training methodologies, and provide technical support for MRE activities for the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan. To date, MRE was provided to over 300,000 returnees at encashment centre, with assistance from UNHCR. More than 10 MRE teams were trained as part of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes for ex-combatants. Over 500 new community volunteers were identified and trained as part of the community-based MRE programme targeting mine/UXO impacted communities. Mass media programme is being developed with launch date in late 2004. Research on the perceptions, knowledge and attitudes regarding landmine victims and disabilities is ongoing as part of an awareness and advocacy programme currently being developed.

Promoting Juvenile Justice: The draft Juvenile Code was agreed upon by all relevant judiciary officials (legislative department, Supreme Court, Attorney General's office) in May and is soon to be presented to the Council of Ministers for approval. The Comparative study between the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Afghan laws was finalized, ready for printing. The study identified gaps between the CRC and the Afghan laws, which will be rectified in the new Juvenile Code. Another study on Customary Law and Children is also being finalized. As part of its capacity building activities, UNICEF supported a series of trainings on CRC for government officials in all regions. UNICEF has also been supporting a Juvenile Rehabilitation Center in Kabul since 2003 with the aim to promote alternatives to imprisonment and also separation of young offenders from adult criminals.

Protection of Children Deprived of Parental Care: An assessment on the situation of children in institutions, jointly carried out by MoLSA and UNICEF in 2003, revealed that over 80% of the children in the institutions have a living parent and that placement of children in orphanages is being used as coping mechanism by vulnerable families. As a result, the government has made a commitment to adopt a non-institutional approach and support family-based alternatives for these children. UNICEF has been providing technical support to MoLSA, to develop a Plan of Action for the reform of social protection systems and services and enhance technical capacity of the Ministry. Workshops were held in July to seek their input for the Plan. A pilot project for the reunification of 200 children from Kabul orphanages with their families started in July. As an initial step towards the development of social services in Afghanistan, a group of 20 master trainers from MoLSA, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and partner NGOs, were trained on the basics of social services. 70 government and NGO staff working with children at risk were trained on family and community support work. Regional trainings for 250 staff of MoLSA, MOJ, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and partner NGOs are currently ongoing throughout the country.

Birth Registration: Taking advantage of the established nationwide network of immunization campaigns, the birth registration campaign for all children under five years of age took place, along with the Maternal Neonatal Tetanus Elimination Campaign in March/April and May. It was a combined effort of the Ministries of Interior and Health. Initial reports from 19 provinces show the registration of 1,774,583 children (87% of the target). UNICEF also supported the Ministry of Interior with equipment and supplies to revitalize the routine birth registration system, based on the more sustainable community-base approach mobilizing health facilities and community leaders.

HIV/AIDS Prevention: UNICEF is supporting the National HIV/AIDS Control Programme (NACP) and working with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Women Affairs. UNICEF provides technical assistance and provides financial support to the AIDS programme. Major achievement to date includes the establishment of NACP in MoH, training of 1,500 health professionals, mid-level managers and religious leaders on HIV, working with different youth group, and incorporation of HIV into school curricula.

3. 2004 FUNDING REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIPTS

UNICEF programme requirements for 2004 amounted to approximately US\$ 89 million. To date, over US\$ 64.8 million has been received, which include the available funds from last year and the regular resources from the Programme of Cooperation between UNICEF and the Government of Afghanistan. UNICEF now requires about US\$ 24 million to meet its resource needs for the rest of 2004. The table below shows the breakdown of programme requirements by sector:

Programme	Total Needs	Funded	% Funded	Funding Gap
Health and Nutrition	32,960,080	21,745,056	66%	11,215,024
Education	34,117,600	24,769,547	73%	9,348,053
Water and Environmental Sanitation	11,087,152	9,323,422	84%	1,763,730
Child Protection	8,178,800	6,496,352	79%	1,682,448
Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation	2,555,000	2,470,958	97%	84,042
TOTAL	88,898,632	64,805,336	73%	24,093,296

In addition, UNICEF is appealing for US\$ 1.52 million, as part of the recently issued drought Flash Appeal by the government. UNICEF's request would support the provision of (1) safe drinking water through water tankers and (2) sanitation facilities with hygiene promotion, and (3) other emergency supplies to 150,000 families in the drought-affected areas.

The table in the following page shows donor contributions received for the 2004 programme during December 2003 through 27 September 2004.

DONOR	RECEIVED (US\$)	DONOR	RECEIVED (US\$)
Government:		National Committee for UNICEF:	
Australia	852,432	Canadian NC	25,878
Denmark	1,636,700	German NC	1,694,728
Finland	373,134	Japan NC	399,401
Japan	8,244,892	Korean NC	362,250
Netherlands	1,000,000	Slovak NC	7,453
Sweden	15,810,276	Spanish NC	178,148
USA	9,296,887	UK NC	373,134
Other:		US Funds	2,457,113
Rotary International	1,190,000		
UNAIDS	54,599		
IDRC	54,996		
Thematic funds for child protection	200,000		
SUBTOTAL:	38,713,916	SUBTOTAL:	5,498,106
GRAND TOTAL		44,212,022	

Note: These contribution figures are not necessarily an extract of the UNICEF financial records.

4. CURRENT PRIORITIES

UNICEF Afghanistan urgently seeks support for the following projects for September to December 2004 as below:

TABLE 3: PRIORITY REQUIREMENTS FOR SEPTEMBER THROUGH DECEMBER 2004		
Project	Beneficiaries/Coverage	Funding Shortfall (US\$)
Drought Flash Appeal: Safe Drinking Water	150,000 families in affected areas	1,512,500
Demobilization & reintegration of child soldiers and water affected youth	4,000 underage soldiers and other war-affected young people	1,600,000
Back-to-School campaign in 2005	6 million school children & teachers (G1-6)	12,000,000
Expanded Programme for Immunization	5 million women & 6 million children	2,400,000
Child Trafficking (awareness raising campaign)	All Afghan children and their families	200,000
TOTAL		17,712,500

Further details of the UNICEF Afghanistan Programme can be obtained from:

Waheed Hassan
 UNICEF Afghanistan
 Kabul
 Tel: 0093 (0)79 50 7000/1
 Fax: 00873761924996
 Email: whassan@unicef.org

Olivier Degreef
 UNICEF EMOPS
 Geneva
 Tel.: +41 22 909 5655
 Fax: +41 22 909 5902
 Email: odegreef@unicef.org

Dan Rohrmann
 UNICEF PFO
 New York
 Tel: +1 212 326 7009
 Fax: +1 212 326 7165
 Email: drohrmann@unicef.org