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UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

ERITREA

DONOR UPDATE

20 JUNE 2002

URGENT NEEDS IN NUTRITION/HEALTH, EDUCATION AND LANDMINES AWARENESS

- ◆ Large number of IDPs not returning home because of landmine/UXOs threats
- ◆ Refugees returning to areas lacking health and education facilities
- ◆ Protection support critical for children among IDPs and returning refugees
- ◆ Only 23% of Appeal funded

1. EMERGENCY OVERVIEW AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Current humanitarian situation

On 13 April 2002, the long awaited decision by the Eritrea and Ethiopia Border Commission (EEBC) was finally announced and both governments immediately announced their acceptance. The implications of this decision are far reaching with regard to the humanitarian situation in Eritrea. Firstly, some 57,200 internally displaced people (IDPs) are yet to return to their places of origin as their home areas remain inaccessible because of landmine/unexploded ordnance contamination or because the areas are still under Ethiopian control. It is expected that EEBC's decision will facilitate the clearance of landmines and the gradual return of the displaced populations to their homes. Secondly, more than 13,000 people expelled from Ethiopia are still in camps. A stable situation following the demarcation of the border will allow for this group to be resettled. Thirdly, some 48,000 Eritrean refugees from Sudan have returned primarily into the war- and drought-affected areas in Eritrea. With the prevailing peace, about 90,000 more will return this year. All these groups require considerable relief and resettlement support, while the areas need rehabilitation and reconstruction of basic services. The other dimension to this peace process is that it will allow the affected communities to settle and begin a more productive agricultural and economic life. However, the drought situation in the three regions of Anseba, Northern and Southern Red Sea continues to affect some 524,000 people whose lives are dependent on humanitarian assistance.



Major humanitarian concerns

UNICEF humanitarian concerns are well articulated in the 2002 Consolidated Appeal (CAP). Due to the large number of water facilities destroyed during the war and the drying up of water sources in drought-affected areas, provision of water and sanitation is one of the priorities, which aims at addressing health, hygiene and domestic requirements of the affected populations. Moreover, illnesses such as diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections, malaria and various skin conditions continue to affect large populations both in the conflict- and drought-affected areas. These conditions are exacerbated by high rates of malnutrition amongst children and limited access to curative and preventive health services.

In education, there is clear evidence that the rapid developments made before the outbreak of conflict in 1998 have been lost, when large numbers of schools were either destroyed or vandalized. The displacement of populations and the economic effects of drought have forced many children to stay at home. Pupil-teacher ratios have increased dramatically as teachers were either drafted into the military or displaced. Learning materials are in short supply. The bitterness created by the war between the two countries calls for UNICEF's involvement in peace education. In child protection, the situation of orphans and unaccompanied children remains a cause for concern. Traditional coping mechanisms and safety nets have been over-stretched due to the impact of war and drought. The emergence of woman- and girl-headed households is also creating problems for adequate protection and care of children. Finally, the return of displaced populations to their homes is being hampered by the presence of landmines. The victims of recent mine incidents have been largely women and children.

2. UNICEF RESPONSE: ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

Health and Nutrition: Reaching all children not possible without adequate funding

UNICEF continues to support measles immunisation campaigns in the Temporary Security Zones (TSZ). In areas bordering with Sudan, UNICEF is undertaking cross-border polio immunisation of children under five to prevent the re-introduction of polio in Eritrea. Tremendous progress has been made in vaccination against preventable diseases in recent years. The rate of immunisation of 12-23 months old children has increased from 15% in 1993 to 86% in 2000. Tetanus toxoid coverage with two doses administered to pregnant women also increased from 23% to 87%. In the last three months, UNICEF has provided 200,000 (DPT) vaccines and 400,000 pieces of auto-disabled syringes. The first round of the 2001 National Polio Campaign was successfully conducted on 12-13 November, covering 355,000 children, or 86% of children under five. Solar refrigerators and 1.2 million doses of oral polio vaccines were used for the campaign. UNICEF provided US\$ 222,850 worth of essential drugs, vaccines, solar cold chain equipment and supplies for childcare services. With USAID/TASC and WHO, training of community and health workers on childcare was conducted. Sixty-six community workers were trained on childcare practices, while 150 professional health workers on integrated management of childhood illnesses (IMCI).

Nutrition surveillance in the TSZ indicates low level of malnutrition – about 5% amongst children. This progress is due to the general food distribution by WFP and supplementary food support for children and pregnant and lactating women provided by UNICEF and other NGO partners. However, nutrition assessment in drought-affected areas of the country indicates a high rate of malnutrition (15%) amongst children. Overall humanitarian assistance has had a positive impact on the health of Eritrea's children. Plans to provide therapeutic feeding in hospitals and health facilities in areas receiving returning refugees largely depends on funding of the health component of CAP which has so far received very little funding.

Water and Sanitation: Japanese funding comes at the right time

UNICEF has, in the last five months, supported the rehabilitation of 17 water supply systems in drought- and war-affected areas and in villages in the TSZ where IDPs are returning from various IDP camps. There are currently several water projects in various stages of completion, five in Gash Barka, three in Debub and two in the Southern Red Sea Region. Once completed, these projects are expected to provide 45,000 people with access to clean water. USAID, CIDA, the Swedish Government and the Swedish National Committee for UNICEF are the major donors to this project. Local communities in Anseba region where seven water projects were completed earlier are being facilitated to ensure efficient management of the water facilities. In addition, seventy hand pumps are being installed in the three regions to support returning IDPs in areas affected by war and drought. Here, villagers are being trained to manage rehabilitated water systems and government institutions responsible for water and sanitation are receiving technical assistance to enhance their performance. However, 12 water supply systems require immediate rehabilitation in the TSZ and drought-prone areas. The lack of relevant capacities within the Government to supervise and monitor the process has hindered rehabilitation. In addition, late delivery of supplies has also obstructed the implementation of water and sanitation activities.

Following a recent generous grant of US\$ 1.65 million of the Japanese Government, UNICEF in co-ordination with UNHCR, is in the process of providing water and sanitation facilities to 14 settlements hosting returning refugees

from Sudan. The Japanese funded projects cover five of the six regions in the country. The interventions include rehabilitation and construction of new water sources, establishment of sustainable water management structures, promotion of hygiene education and water/sanitation services in schools and health facilities. The total number of beneficiaries under this programme is estimated at 60,100. Additional funds would support the programme to go to a larger scale.

Emergency education remains largely unfunded in 2002

UNICEF supported a comprehensive assessment of damage to schools in areas that were accessible soon after the war. In total, 65 schools were in various levels of disrepair and lacked furniture, teaching and learning materials. UNICEF is supporting rehabilitation of 19 of the schools and has provided makeshift classrooms in two communities, benefiting 8,400 children (3,220 girls). Rehabilitation of 13 schools is complete but access to the remaining six has been impeded because of landmines. Textbooks for about 26,000 children are in print and other teaching and learning materials for 20,000 children are on order. 600 teachers have gone through upgrading training to improve their teaching skills and training manual for psychosocial guidance and counselling is being developed for teacher trainers. This is to ensure that the teachers are prepared to provide psychosocial care for children in need of such support while at school. Under an integrated basic education and school feeding agreement with UNICEF, WFP is supporting 42,000 children in selected schools in the drought- and war-affected areas to improve school attendance and classroom performance.

While the Canadian Government contribution of US\$ 248,448 to the education sector of 2002 CAP is highly appreciated, the wide funding gap for education interventions has impeded progress in this sector. Immediate assistance is required for the rehabilitation of 36 more schools and supply of teaching and learning materials for 80,000 children in the TSZ. Moreover, UNICEF is planning to support peace education initiatives but without funding, this important project may not commence soon. UNICEF, however, recognises the previous contributions for the education sector from the UNICEF National Committees of Italy, Germany, UK and France, and the Governments of Sweden, the Netherlands, US and Canada, which enabled the implementation of activities described above.

Rehabilitation and reintegration of vulnerable children and women is a major concern

Emergency funds have been re-programmed to establish cafeterias for some 1,300 school-aged children from the surrounding villages of Senafe to facilitate their schooling in the only functioning schools in the area. Many of these children have to walk for miles each way to attend school. Some have extended family members in Senafe with whom they often stay during the school week. However, these families are often over-stretched and struggling to support themselves. Thus, providing the children with their meals through this project is one way of alleviating the problems. In the meantime, related supplies and equipment have been delivered to the regional office and distributed to the children. Sensitisation activities on HIV/AIDS and landmines will continue as planned with the National Union of Youths and Students (NUEYS).

Under the UNMEE Quick Impact Project (QIP) proposal, UNICEF, with Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare (MLHW), UNMEE forces, various ministries and local NGOs, has worked out plans to establish a child-friendly play area for over 1,000 war-affected children in Senafe. The *Play Zone* is designed to provide physical, emotional and intellectual stimulation by creating an environment that helps children restore their childhood and sense of normalcy. Child protection has plans to include returning refugee children in its orphan reunification programme. However, lack of funds has so far impeded progress in this area.

An assessment of the situation of children among refugees returning from the Sudan has found several orphans, including those with disabilities and those separated from their parents. Moreover, several households hosting such vulnerable children are in dire need of assistance. Arrangements will have to be made to provide assistance to such vulnerable children and their households, including female households. Such assistance could include support to income generating activities.

Communication for HIV/AIDS prevention and landmine/UXOs threat remains a priority

The increase of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and the doubling of the number of HIV/AIDS cases each year in Eritrea call for concerted effort for prevention. In April 2002, UNICEF in collaboration with UNHCR and the Ministry of Health signed a memorandum of understanding to accelerate HIV/AIDS awareness among returning refugees and their host communities. An association of People Living With HIV/AIDS known as BIDHO was established in January and is expected to address denial, stigma and discrimination that perpetuate conspiracy of silence on HIV/AIDS in Eritrea. The association works closely with the UNICEF initiated "Caring for US" initiative.

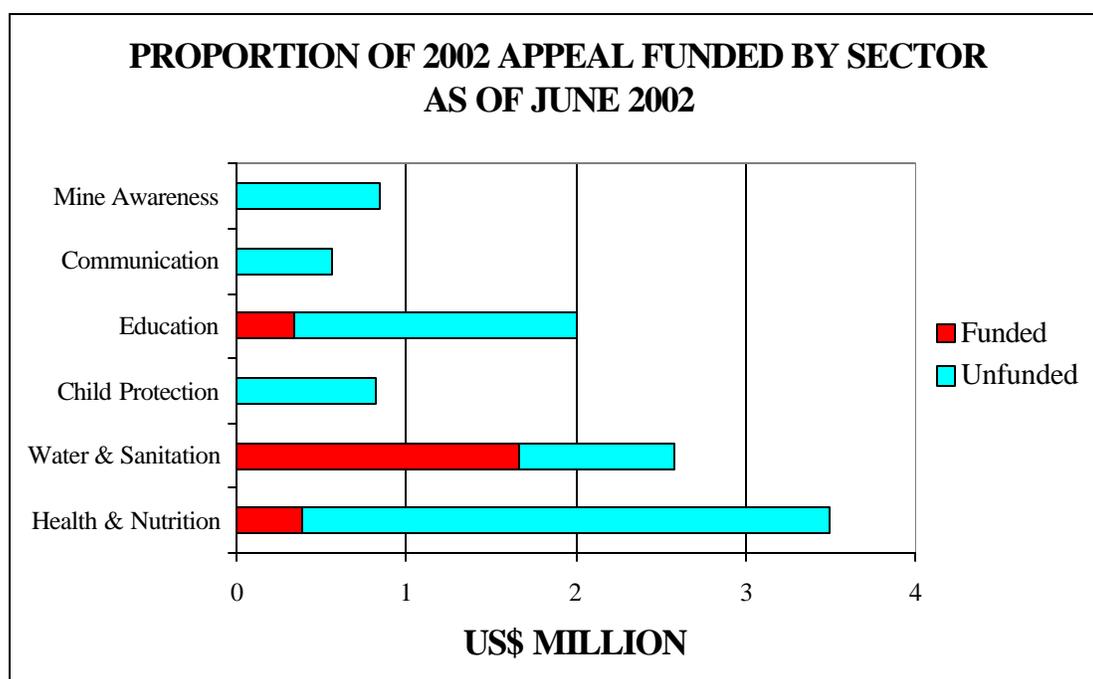
Mine Risk Education (MRE) has expanded to cover Assab in the eastern part of the country. Collaboration with the Ministry of Information has resulted in production and dissemination of 15 radio programmes and seven-radio drama on mine risk education. A permanent Eritrea Demining Agency team has already provided mine risk

education to 62,000 IDPs and refugees. This is in addition to 55,000 reached between July 2001 and March 2002. Through the school based mine risk education initiative, 268 teachers have so far been trained. The teachers are supported to train other teachers and youth leaders within the schools. An inter-agency review of emergency mine risk education activities was conducted with special attention paid to coordination, capacity development, monitoring and evaluation. In February, UNICEF trained 30 mine risk education facilitators on the use of puppetry for mine awareness. With the recent announcement of the decision of the Boundary Commission, movements related to return of displaced people to their homes will increase. With most of these areas still heavily mined, the mine risk education remains a priority.

3. APPEAL REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIPTS

Within the framework of the 2002 Consolidated Appeal, UNICEF outlined US\$ 10,292,500 million to provide humanitarian assistance to children and women in Eritrea. The following table and graph indicate the breakdown of funds received for each sector and the relative funding gap. UNICEF extends its appreciation to all donors who made generous contributions.

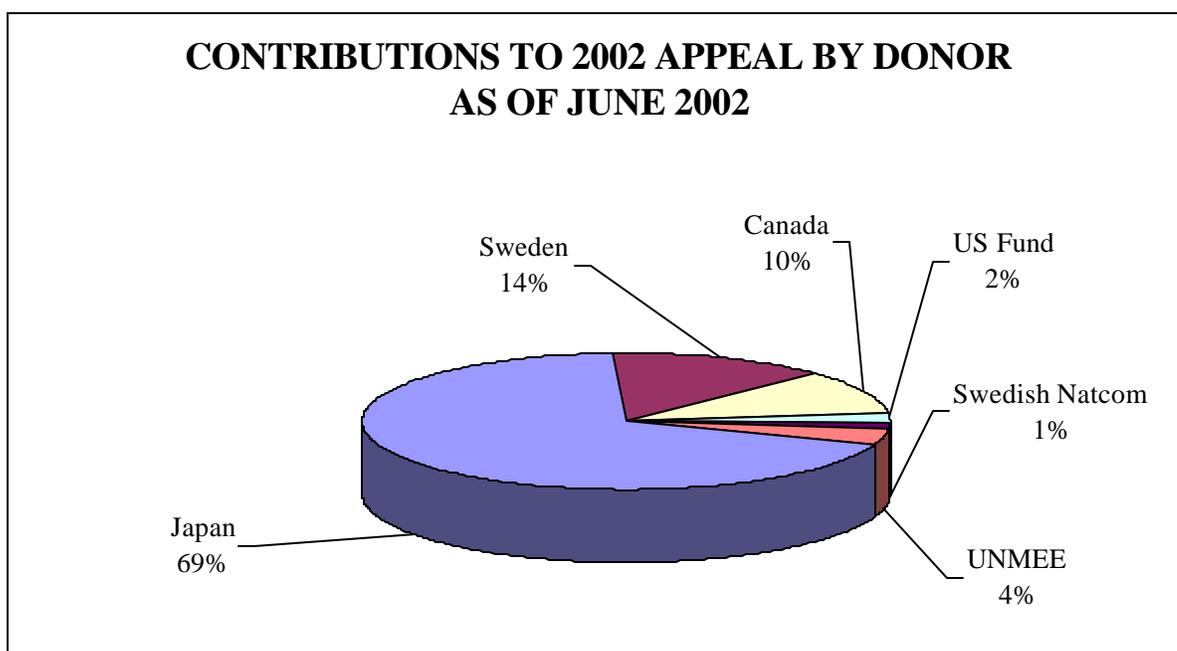
Table 1. 2002 APPEAL REQUIREMENTS AND FUNDING				
AS OF JUNE 2002				
Sector	Target (US\$)	Funded (US\$)	% Funded	Unfunded (US\$)
Health & Nutrition	3,500,000	388,625	11	3,111,375
Water & Sanitation	2,580,000	1,674,000	65	906,000
Education	2,000,000	342,335	17	1,656,665
Communication	556,500	0	0	556,500
Mine Awareness	840,000	0	0	840,000
Child Protection	816,000	0	0	816,000
Total	10,292,500	2,404,960	23	7,886,540



The table below, along with the respective graph, shows the contributions received for the 2002 Appeal, by donor. As indicated, the largest contribution of US\$1,650,000 came from the Government of Japan.

Donors	Income/Pledge (US\$)
Japan	1,650,000
Sweden	328,335
Canada	248,448
US Fund	53,000
Swedish Natcom	35,107
UNMEE	90,070
Total	2,404,960

Natcom = National Committee for UNICEF



4. IMPACT OF UNDER-FUNDING AND CURRENT PRIORITIES

With only 23 per cent of the CAP 2002 funded so far, several critical activities are not being implemented. Moreover, the expected increase in the number of returning refugees from Sudan and the urgent need for the provision of basic services to them and their host communities call for urgent humanitarian action. In addition, the demobilization of child soldiers which has just commenced will require increased HIV/AIDS awareness campaign as the former soldiers return to their communities.

The table below outlines the three most urgent priority projects:

Project	Beneficiaries/coverage	Amount Required (US\$)
1. Health and Nutrition	Provision of therapeutic feeding for returning refugee and host community children in Gash-Barka region. Training of health workers in therapeutic feeding and nutritional surveillance. Target: 40,000 children.	650,000

2. Education Response	Provision of teaching and learning materials, school furniture and hygiene education to war-affected and returning refugee children in Gash-Barka and Debub regions. Target: 100,000 children.	600,000
3. Reintegration of vulnerable women and children	Rehabilitation, reintegration and provision of psychosocial support to war affected and returning refugee children and women. Target: 50,0000 children and 600 female and child-headed households.	450,000

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