



## HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN SOMALIA

### Monthly Analysis

#### April 2006

*This report was written in cooperation with the UN Agencies in Somalia*

### HIGHLIGHTS

The early warning issued in February 2006 by FAO/FSAU that some regions of southern Somalia could face a moderate risk of famine conditions during the second half of 2006 if the Gu rains failed, has now dissipated. Good and generally well distributed rains fell over much of southern and northwest Somalia during April, and just recently over the northeast, mitigating the effects of the drought. This said, while the start of the 2006 Gu season brings welcome improved conditions, it is still too early to determine its impact on the present situation. A clearer understanding of the Gu's performance will only be possible towards the end of May 2006.

Even if the Gu rains are good, humanitarian needs in Somalia will remain vast and require concerted and sustained efforts. The aid community is fully engaged in responding to the crisis, but various factors continue to affect the pace, coverage and implementation of the response, including logistical constraints due to the continuing lack of infrastructure and now localized flooding; insecurity; lack of sustainable access and humanitarian space; lack of partners and poor operational capacity; and delayed funding from donors.

During his second visit to the region, and a one day visit to Somalia on 1 May 2006, the Special Humanitarian Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Mr. Kjell Magne Bondevik stressed that even if recent rains have mitigated the impact of the drought in some of the more critically affected areas, they bring new challenges such as a heightened risk of water borne diseases, difficulties of access, and localized flooding. Mr. Bondevik noted that it is critical that immediate humanitarian needs are met and that there also be an investment in longer-term rehabilitation to pave the way for development.

In a meeting with Prime Minister Gedi and Parliamentary Speaker Shaykh Aden, Mr. Bondevik reiterated the paramount importance of safe and sustainable humanitarian access for the delivery of aid assistance in Somalia and called upon the Transitional Federal Government to do what is in its power to facilitate and promote an enabling environment for service delivery. Throughout the month, efforts also persisted in garnering grass-root support for basic humanitarian principles on access and protection.

The situation in Mogadishu remained tense during April with rising friction between the 'Union of the Islamic Courts' and the 'Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-terrorism'. Concerns are high that fighting might erupt at any time further aggravating the already precarious humanitarian situation. Of particular concern to aid organizations is the protection of civilians, particularly those who do not have the means to leave the capital, as many have already been doing. An operational contingency plan is being elaborated while all those concerned are called upon by the civilian population to desist from fighting.

A total of 202 wild poliovirus cases have now been confirmed in Somalia and results are pending on seven additional suspected cases. Polio was eradicated in Somalia in 2002, but now the country poses one of the greatest threats to the global eradication of polio. Mogadishu region experiences the majority of the outbreak (162 cases) but Lower Shabelle and Middle Shabelle, Bay, Sool, Mudug, Gedo, Lower Juba, and Bari are also impacted.

During a stop-over in Nairobi, on 27 April, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, met with aid organizations active in Somalia to assess the prevailing human rights situation in Somalia.

## ACCESS and SECURITY

After Baidoa was closed to UN staff at the end of March 2006, security concerns persisted in April related to the presence in town of unpaid roaming militia cantoned outside Baidoa. To mention a few episodes, on 7 April, armed militia took over the empty annex to UNICEF's compound that had been loaned to the Parliament – later returned on 19 April. On 10 April, a security incident over the transit of a WFP food convoy to Baidoa resulted in the death of at least one militiaman and a number of injuries, including that of an MP. Although the situation temporarily improved with the arrival of a considerable number of militia from Puntland in mid-April, overall security in Baidoa still needs to be addressed. Efforts are now being made by the UN and the international community to help stabilise Baidoa and provide support for the institutional set-up of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Elders active in the Digil and Mirifle reconciliation process in Bakool also continue to work for the stabilization of Baidoa and the region at large.

The situation in Mogadishu remained tense during April with rising friction between the 'Union of the Islamic Courts' and the 'Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-terrorism'. Mediation efforts by elders have ceased and the two sides have been engaging in recriminatory exchanges as well as regrouping and rearming. Fighting could blow up at any time now and concerns are high that the fighting will be the worse seen yet, with a potential of spreading into other areas of southern Somalia. This would have disastrous humanitarian consequences at a time when local stability is key for the success of the humanitarian response.

Sporadic bursts of fighting in April between the two sides have already triggered movement of residents. According to reports, those with the means to do so are moving out, in some cases as far as Kenya. Of most concern to the aid community are thus the most vulnerable groups who do not have the means to move far and who might end up moving from one part of the capital to the other, avoiding neighbourhoods where the fighting takes place. Intense fighting would also heavily impact on access of aid supplies into southern Somalia as El Ma'an port is the main supply pipeline into the area. After the fighting in Mogadishu in March, WFP food aid was stuck for five days in the port until the fighting ceased.

In southern Somalia particularly, efforts have been on-going to disseminate and sensitise local authorities on basic humanitarian principles on access and protection of aid as well as aid personnel. During his one-day visit to Somalia on 1 May 2006, and in talking to Prime Minister Gedi, the Special Humanitarian Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Mr. Kjell Magne Bondevik reiterated the paramount importance of safe and sustainable humanitarian access for the delivery of aid assistance in Somalia. On Mogadishu, Mr. Bondevik appealed to all those concerned to work towards the deflation of the situation.

April saw more acts of piracy, the latest one occurring on 27 April when pirates hijacked a Kismayo-bound vessel off the coast of Harardheere (Galgadud region) and commandeered it to the coastal town of Gaan. The vessel has now reportedly been released but the threat of more such incidences remains.

In the Juba regions, the volatile security situation remains an overriding constraint limiting the presence and activity of humanitarian organizations. A number of roadblocks and checkpoints between Afmadow and Dhobley and Buale and Sakow continue to be reported and aside for a general lack of proper infrastructure, access by road is now hampered by the arrival of the *Gu* rains that have rendered seasonal roads impassable. Reduced access due to the rains was also reported in Berdale and Dinsor in Bay region. WFP, whose activities particularly have slowed down due to the rains, has already developed an airdrop operation plan should roads become completely inaccessible.

In the northwest, the overall situation was calm except for increased tension due to intense hostilities between the Puntland authorities and the predominantly Warsangeli community in the Majayahan area (Eastern Sanaag) over exploration of mineral resources.

In the northeast, as of 15 April, all UN international staff was cleared to return to Garowe after Abdi Salad Abdi was officially sworn in as the new Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, ending an extended period of high tension in the Garowe area. UN staff had been relocated to Bossaso due to insecurity stemming from the cabinet reshuffle in late February 2006.

## PROTECTION

As movement of population throughout southern Somalia continues to be tracked, of concern is whether the displaced have access to assistance in their new locations of displacement, or as the case may be with the onset of the rains, back in their original place of origin. Protection needs remain greatest amongst protracted IDP communities that are burdened by multiple displacements. In urban centers, the displaced have received some form of assistance, for example food aid through WFP, but relatively little else. In rural areas, where access to and information on the displaced is limited, the situation is even harder to monitor. The Protection Working Group is following up with the relevant clusters on the need to share information to better target the needs of the displaced. Increased efforts are also being made to enhance reporting capacity as well as augment the number of partners involved in the tracking system to enhance analysis of movement patterns and trends.

According to the tracking and analysis of population movements, during the start of April the majority of movements were related to pastoralists as well as IDPs primarily induced by both drought and conflict. During the first two weeks of the month, 2,271 pastoralist families moved to Belet Hawa town in Gedo region and surrounding areas. Another 210 pastoralist families were reported to have arrived in the IDP settlement of Kulanjareer in Lower Shabelle, while 200 pastoralist families settled in the northern outskirts of Wajid town. Movement of IDPs was also recorded towards the outskirts of Luuq town and Wajid town (2,500 IDP families), while another 1,360 families were reported to have arrived in Qansadhare town. Since the start of the rains, movements generally reflect the expected seasonal patterns, but also show the continued desperation of the Somali people. Indeed, there has been a de-concentration of pastoralist families in riverine areas, as those still with livestock have returned to hinterland pastoral areas where rain has fallen. On the other hand, non-pastoralists, and pastoralists who have lost most or all of their livestock and other assets, remain in urban areas in search of alternative livelihood opportunities or humanitarian aid.

As reported in last month's report, in late March 1,780 Somalis had crossed the border and arrived in Dadaab refugee camp in northern Kenya. At the time it was unclear if they had left Somalia as a result of the drought or due to the fighting in Mogadishu in February 2006. As now confirmed by UNHCR, the Somalis arrived from Benadir, Lower and Middle Juba region. Of the total, 612 arrived from Mogadishu and surrounding areas (70% being single male applicants aged between 15 and 22 years old) all claiming to have fled the fighting. The rest, from Lower and Middle Juba, cited both clan fighting as well as the drought as a reason of their movement.

On 27 April, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, met with the Somalia UNCT, the international community and Protection Working group to assess the prevailing human right situation in Somalia. Given the weak human rights environment in Somalia and the need to assist the Somali authorities in building appropriate institutions, discussions evolved around the role of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the possible opening of an OHCHR office in Somalia by the end of the year.

Between 19 and 24 April, three fires broke out in three different IDP settlements in Bossaso, Puntland. In all, 16 households were destroyed but no lives lost. The frequency of such outbreaks before the arrival of the hot and windy season is a worrying trend. Since the beginning of the year, six different fires have occurred in sites in Puntland: three in Bossaso, two in Garowe and one in Galkayo. At a meeting on 25 April among aid partners and the Bossaso Municipality, discussions focused on developing a Fire Fighting and Prevention Plan for IDP sites, with UNHABITAT providing technical backstopping on urban planning and development of the settlements. The Fire Plan intends to find immediate ways to decrease the risks and exposure of the IDP settlements to fire outbreaks ahead of the imminent hot season.

In Somalia's deeply traditional and strongly patriarchal society, women's issues are still not given the due consideration and priority. One such issue is women's access to justice and representation in courts. Women in Somaliland have stated that they prefer to refer their cases to the Sharia Courts as it often offers them the best forms of redress and recognises the rights awarded to them by Allah. Since 2003, UNIFEM has been working in collaboration with its partner East African Human Rights Watch (EAHRW) to engender the legal and judicial systems in Somaliland. In November 2005, EAHRW started providing legal services in Hargeisa which mainly targets women litigants. As in other locations, land disputes are numerous in Somaliland and in April, EAHRW listed land disputes as the key complaint for women to seek legal intervention. Most cases are brought out by women who are widowed, divorced or abandoned by their husbands yet these women are the most vulnerable in the society as they have no one to fight for them or to protect them from being exploited. EAHRW underscores that women in Somaliland lack adequate access to legal information when compared to their male counterparts. This is largely as a result of the high levels of illiteracy among women and the cultural barriers that they encounter when seeking legal redress. There are three legal systems in Somaliland: - customary-Xeer, Sharia and secular. The interpretation and management of these systems are often male dominated resulting in discrimination against women and infringement on their individual rights. The cost and time needed for court appearances often causes many women to give up their cases midstream. Raising awareness and offering women free assistance and legal advice is one of the key steps towards access to justice by the women.

## RETURN and REINTEGRATION

At the height of the Somali crisis in the early 1990s, nearly half of the then 7.5 million population was either internally or externally displaced. Since then, over one million Somali refugees have returned home from exile, half of them with UNHCR assistance. An estimated 700,000 refugees have returned to Somaliland alone, while over 400,000 have returned to Puntland. With the voluntary repatriation to Somaliland close to completion - UNHCR expects to complete repatriation to Somaliland by mid-2006, with the last 6,000 refugees returning from Djibouti -, the voluntary repatriation prospects of the remaining Somali refugees in exile depends on tangible improvements in the security situation, provision of basic services and income generation opportunities in the future areas of return, namely Puntland and Central/South Somalia.

It is estimated that some 350,000 Somali refugees remain in exile (226,300 in the immediate region: Djibouti - 6,000; Ethiopia - 15,175; Kenya - 138,826; and Yemen - 63,551. Others in locations such as Europe, USA and other gulf countries). With these figures in mind, UNHCR is forging partnerships with other agencies including FAO and UNDP, to help consolidate the process of repatriation of refugees and reintegration of returnees to Puntland and Central/South Somalia. In these zones, UNHCR is allocating increased resources to enhance its involvement in reintegration activities. By 30 April, UNHCR had initiated 15 Quick Impact Projects in education, income generation, sanitation, farming and returnee monitoring. It is expected that as conditions improve, the number of Somali refugees who will repatriate, particularly from Yemen, may increase in the coming months of 2006 as compared to last year, and may be at its peak in 2007 and 2008.

## LAW and ORDER

On 21 April, the first police officers to be trained in decades graduated from the Armo Police Academy in Puntland which initiated training in December 2005. Over the last five months, 132 male and 19 female cadets underwent an intensive training course covering law enforcement, international standards of human rights, community policing, basic police training, investigations, non-violent disarmament, physical fitness, self-defense and discipline. Computer lessons were also provided for female cadets. Coming from the different regions of Puntland and the Centre/South, the police officers will be deployed to service in Baidoa, where the Extraordinary Session of the Somali Transitional Federal Parliament is currently taking place, as well as in newly constructed police stations for the protection of IDPs in Garowe and Bossaso in Puntland.

The first phase of construction of Armo Police Training Academy is complete. The second phase is ongoing, and includes a dispensary that the local Armo community will have access to, dormitories for female cadets, two classrooms, two additional dormitories for male cadets, a multi-purpose hall and sports facilities. Once completed, the training facility will accommodate up to 600 police officers.

As part of UNDP's Rule of Law Programme, the establishment of the Armo Police Academy has as an ultimate goal the development of a professional civilian force able to effectively contribute to the restoration of peace while training the trust of the community, and the provision of high calibre training. Part of ensuring the longevity of the Academy is the engagement of former police officers to conduct the training.

## HEALTH and NUTRITION

A total of 202 wild poliovirus cases have now been confirmed in Somalia and results are pending on seven additional suspected cases (two from Benadir, and one from Galgadud, Bay, Bakool, Mudug and Togdheer respectively). The current outbreak has occurred within nine of the 19 regions of Somalia as follows: Benadir (162); Lower Shabelle (26); Middle Shabelle (4); Bay (3); Sool (2); Mudug (2); Gedo (1); Lower Juba (1); and Bari (1). March National Immunization Days (NIDs) were conducted in all districts and preliminary results show 90% coverage. The next round of NIDs is planned for 2-4 May. On 2 May UNICEF, WHO and the Ministry of Health of Somalia held meetings with 20 development agencies as well as a news conference on polio eradication for Somalia, requesting US\$11 million to support repeated, high quality immunization campaigns and to maintain sensitive and quality active Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) surveillance, particularly in insecure areas.

A Joint UNICEF/WHO Mission on a Measles Outbreak Assessment in Hadaftimo village (Baran district in Eastern Sanaag) carried out between 18 and 22 April 2006 reported a total of 260 measles cases with 6 deaths. Local health workers believe that the source of the outbreak were sick children from Nomadic areas. According to the mission report, the outbreak started with 15 cases on 9 April and comes as a result of low immunization coverage and lack of surveillance activities. In January 2006, a measles catch-up campaign was conducted in Eastern Sanaag but health workers informed the joint team that the rate of refusal was very high in the community due to rumours concerning the quality of the vaccines. In March 2006, only 37 children were immunized in routine vaccination. Vaccines used are also reportedly not well preserved. Members of the community have requested for vaccines to immunize their children before the measles spreads to other villages, and for support to monitor and supervise outbreak interventions.

Meanwhile, the measles mass vaccination campaign and Vitamin A supplementation in all drought affected areas of Bay, Bakool, Lower and Middle Juba and Gedo has been completed in 22 districts. The campaign is ongoing in the remaining eight. Monitoring for any outbreak continues and no major outbreak of disease was reported in April. WHO experts held field discussions on strengthening immunization services with field UNICEF, local authorities, and health NGOs including the Somali Red Crescent Society, International Medical Corps, and World Vision International. The measles mass catch-up campaign will start in the second week of May in Mogadishu.

In Somalia, the epidemiological profile is characterized by common communicable diseases, which could be controlled with simple and cheap measures. Hundreds of private practitioners are operating in clinics, hospitals, pharmacies and shops, in a totally deregulated system, and in a policy and strategic vacuum. The quality of basic health services has substantially deteriorated, while access to health care is heavily conditioned by the limited ability to pay of the majority of patients. In Somaliland and Puntland, efforts to put in place the basic elements of a health care delivery system have been made.<sup>1</sup> Despite their weaknesses, these regional health sectors start from a comparative advantage point. In southern Somalia, the situation is far different and efforts are being made to address this. In coordination with its health partners, between 25 and 30 April, WHO undertook a training on Surveillance and Control of Communicable Disease in Emergencies for health workers selected from the drought affected regions. Held in Merka, Lower Shabelle, a total of 28 health workers were provided with basic information on surveillance of communicable diseases (detection, investigation and response to selected epidemic-prone diseases including acute watery diarrhea, measles, meningococcal diseases and malaria) as well as the health and nutrition consequences of drought and emergency response.

The possibility of avian influenza in Somalia remains very low. Poultry is not a major food item in the country, and Somalia is not on the preferred migratory path of birds. The Kenya Medical Research Institute/Centers for Disease Control Laboratory in Kenya has undertaken two sets of tests on samples from birds in Somalia (Marerey and Gambole) both of which have come back negative for the H5N1 strain. Still, for early warning and preparedness measures, an Avian Flu Working Group has been created for Somalia and a Pandemic Preparedness plan developed with WHO as the UN lead agency. WHO will provide staff and partners with regular updates and advise on the necessary precautions, vaccinations (if any), and treatment to be taken with regards to avian flu.

With the onset of the rains, weakened and vulnerable children and women are susceptible to acute respiratory infections and diarrhoeal diseases, including cholera and malaria. Cholera prevention and surveillance activities are ongoing in all affected areas and partners have agreed to mainstream cholera preparedness into the ongoing water and sanitation response and develop common principles and guidelines for cholera preparedness. Partners are also up-scaling the hygiene and sanitation component, especially the construction of latrines and community hygiene awareness promotion.

As briefly touched upon last month, the nutrition survey undertaken in Gedo region in March highlights the major health and nutrition-based conditions in what is viewed as the epicenter of the drought. With an estimated total population of 375,000, almost half (180,000) are in a state of 'Humanitarian Emergency' as per FAO/FSAU's Post 2005 *Deyr* Integrated Analysis. With an additional 81,000 people in an 'Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis', this places roughly 70% of the total population in extreme survival conditions with children facing the greatest threat.

The survey, undertaken by FAO/FSAU with UNICEF, Gedo Health Consortium, WFP, FEWSNET, Somali Red Crescent Society and COSV, found high malnutrition: 23.8% Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM), and 3.7% Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). Crude mortality was measured at 1.04 per 10,000 persons per day and under-five mortality at 2.46 per 10,000 per day, well exceeding acceptable SPHERE standards for sub-Saharan Africa. Over 60% of children were introduced to complementary feeding between birth and 3 months of age and 56% of children 6 to 24 months were not breastfeeding at the time of the assessment. In some areas night blindness was reported underlining the effects of micro-nutrient deficiencies.

Diarrhoea and ARI were the most common illnesses reported in the two weeks prior to the survey. Approximately, 76.8% of the children had received vitamin A supplementation during the six months prior to the survey and 60.9% vaccinated against measles. About 95.3% of the children had received polio immunization at least once. However, the real measurement of health care is access to services. UNICEF estimates that only 62% of the population is covered through existing health services. In present conditions, a large portion of the population has moved to new areas in search of better survival conditions including relief assistance. As more and more children fall into conditions of malnutrition the risk of wider disease outbreak and ensuing mortality is a mounting concern. The present national Measles/Vitamin A campaign covering the South has reportedly completed all districts in Gedo region but Garbaharey, Bula Hawa and Belet Weyne. Over the coming weeks, analysis will indicate the effectiveness of the campaign, a key pillar of the emergency response especially in light of soaring malnutrition levels.

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<sup>1</sup> JNA sub-cluster Health Draft Report, 21 April 2006.

A further review of nutritional status in Southern Somalia since January highlights the following:

Nutrition surveys (Jan-Mar 2006)	Gedo Region (FSAU, UNICEF, GHC, WFPS, SRCS, COSV) March 06	Qansadheere, Bay Region MSF-H Jan 06	Wajiid IDP, Bakool Region, (FSAU, UNICEF, ACF, WFP) Jan 06	Wajiid District, Bakool Region, (FSAU, ACF, UNICEF, WFP) Jan 06	Rabdure District, Bakool, (FSAU, IMC, UNICEF); Jan 06
GAM	23.8 %	19.4%	27.1%	14.7%	5.9%
SAM	3.7%	1.8%	8.6%	2.2%	1.4%
CMR (per 10000/day)	1.04	0.3		0.57	0.898
U5 MR (per 10,000/day)	2.46	1.3		1.24	1.534
Measles coverage	60.9%	N/A	76.2%	79.7%	81.0
Polio	95.3%	N/A	82%	86.3%	96.9

Three nutrition surveys were conducted in April covering Buale and Sakow districts, Afmadow district and Jilib riverine populations the results of which will be available shortly.

Given the prevailing impact of the drought, critical malnutrition rates and 'alert' mortality rates, these surveys highlight the continuing need to enhance existing humanitarian interventions in food aid, nutrition response, water and sanitation and health services outreach to prevent the further loss of life.

## HIV/AIDS

A call for proposals for year two of the HIV component of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) starting in July 2006 was released on 4 April 2006. During this year two of the programme, nearly half (44%) of the funds will be channeled through Somali organizations, including NGOs, Government Ministries and the three AIDS Commissions in Somaliland, Puntland and South Central to enhance implementation of responses by local communities and strengthen local capacity. To ensure that as many Somali organizations as possible responded to this call for proposals, a special meeting with Somali civil society organizations was organized in Nairobi on 11 April to provide information and support for proposal writing. The deadline for receipt of proposals is 4 May 2006. For the first time, the AIDS Commissions in Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia will play a key role in the review and selection of proposals for the GFATM resources.

### *HIV/AIDS and Gender Based Violence*

Women and girls in IDP and returnee settlements suffer persistent discrimination and marginalization, in most instances subjected to gender based violence (GBV) with sexual violence especially rape as the most common form. These women and girls are very vulnerable as they lack clan protection in a clan based society and are resource poor. It is in this context that UNIFEM and its local partners started training peer and psychosocial counselors to offer social support to female IDP and returnees and also to raise awareness on the link between GBV and HIV/AIDS.

Since the beginning of 2006, in Somaliland, UNIFEM has supported the training of 20 female community peer counselors from IDP and returnee settlements along the Somaliland/Ethiopian border - towns of Alaybaday, Gabbilay and Waajale - on HIV/AIDS awareness and the link to GBV. Locations along the border were chosen as cross border migrations amongst the population greatly increase women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. Trained in various workshops, UNIFEM estimates that the psychosocial counselors have since reached more than 2,000 women directly and indirectly, yet the level of HIV/AIDS awareness in these areas remains very low and in some cases is still non-existent. Those who have already been infected are in denial while still indulging in sexual relations unknowingly exposing themselves to counter-infection. As part of the awareness raising campaign, advocacy materials were developed and distributed in the main centres of implementation. To really influence behavioural change, however, there is need to continue and intensify campaigns aimed at educating the public on issues of HIV/AIDS and the factors that put them in the high risk category.

Through similar activities in Puntland, UNIFEM has trained female community peer and psychosocial counselors from IDP and returnee settlements in Bossaso, Garowe and Galkayo. The trainees vary from women leaders in the settlements to health workers in existing hospitals who are now promoting and raising GBV awareness, monitoring incidences of GBV in their respective settlements, as well as offering social support to the survivors of GBV. According to the psychosocial counselors, rapes and sexual defilements are the most common forms of violence in the IDP and returnee settlements.

## LIVELIHOODS and FOOD SECURITY

The early warning issued by FAO/FSAU in February 2006 that some regions of southern Somalia could face a moderate risk of famine conditions during the second half of 2006 if the Gu 2006 rains failed, has now dissipated and a worst-case scenario has been averted. Good and generally well distributed rains fell over much of southern and northwest Somalia during April, and just recently over the northeast. The rains have now mitigated the effects of the drought replenishing water catchments, improving water access and supply for both humans and livestock. Pasture is starting to regenerate, livestock conditions are starting to improve, and farmers have been preparing their land for cultivation. Pastoralists are also moving back to traditional grazing hinterland away from the riverine areas.

The start of the 2006 *Gu* season is highly welcome yet again, it is too early to determine its impact on the present situation and the food security situation of the 2.1 million drought-affected people still remains precarious. According to FAO/FSAU, an understanding of the *Gu's* performance will be clearer in late May 2006.

Until the end of April, the northeast had received patchy and minimal rainfall aggravating localized water shortage conditions. The recent rains have helped replenish *berkads* and improve the situation, yet developments need close monitoring. While food security indicators are good, the humanitarian community should not lose sight of northern Somalia which is predominantly still in a state of recovery from the 2004 drought. The rains undoubtedly improve conditions, but without proper water management infrastructure, presently lacking, rains will only bring so much relief.

Meanwhile, the rains bring new challenges. Heavy rains and downpours at the end of April in Hiran, Lower Shabelle and parts of the Juba Valle resulted in the death of a number of livestock as well as localized flooding. According to field reports, in Jalalaqsi (Hiran region) heavy rains inundated agricultural fields in the villages of Bilal, Biyo-kulele, Kurdaley, El-Ano, Dheen, War-Dhen, Bur-Eylo, Washaqaaley, Show, Ukure, Bure-Bure, Majabale, Masaarole, War-Gubey, Raso, Osman Ano and Sariiro. In and around Jowhar, various broken and collapsed river banks resulted in localized flooding, which also occurred in Buale district along the Juba river. In Jowhar, aid partners have already met twice to discuss flooding and together with the Middle Shabelle Administration acted to raise the river embankment. FEWS NET reports that heavy rainfall has fallen in the Ethiopian highlands – should this be continuous, it could result in increased river levels of both the Shabelle and Juba rivers and further localized flooding.

The aid community remains fully engaged in responding to the crisis in southern Somalia, but various factors continue to affect the pace, coverage and implementation of the response. These include logistical constraints due to the continuing lack of infrastructure and now localized flooding; insecurity; lack of sustainable access and humanitarian space; lack of partners and poor operational capacity; and delayed funding from donors. A tremendous task still lies ahead for some of the clusters which, regardless of the performance of the 2006 *Gu* rains, requires sustained and reinforced efforts to address the vast humanitarian needs. The rain performance will be closely monitored by the clusters as it will impact on the timing and kinds of response interventions that will need pursuing or adjusting. Aid organizations active in water and sanitation have for example stopped conducting water trucking.

### *Special Humanitarian Envoy for the Horn of Africa Visits Somalia*

On 2 May 2006, the Special Humanitarian Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Mr. Kjell Magne Bondevik, wrapped up a five nation mission to Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya, during which he was able to see first-hand the effects of consecutive years of drought and disruption of livelihoods. Traveling to Somalia on 1 May, Mr. Bondevik visited Baidoa and Wajid, accompanied by the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, donors, media and UN representatives.

In Baidoa, the Special Envoy met with Prime Minister Gedi and Parliamentary Speaker Shaykh Aden. Mr. Bondevik urged the TFG to do what is in its power to secure access and protection as preconditions for any sustainable delivery of humanitarian assistance. Somalia is in desperate need of basic services such as food, water, health centers, schools, roads and other such infrastructure. Recent rains in some of the critically affected areas have mitigated the impact of the drought but also bring new challenges such as a heightened risk of water borne diseases, difficulties of access, and localized flooding. It is critical that immediate humanitarian needs are met and that there also be an investment in longer-term rehabilitation to pave the way for development.

Mr. Bondevik commended the progress achieved to date by the TFG and noted that now is an opportune time to change the perception that many have of Somalia as a chaotic and insecure country to one of a country with a responsible and responsive government in a new reconciliatory process. The Prime Minister called for an increased presence of the UN in Somalia which Mr Bondevik noted is being considered particularly in Baidoa, where the UN plans to commence holding regular meetings with the TFG. With regard to the limited implementation capacity of aid partners, particularly in southern Somalia, Mr. Bondevik urged donors to be flexible in their funding to support and invest in the operational capacity of organizations for the long term, especially that of NGOs. Despite the obstacles set by insecurity, Mr. Bondevik encouraged the aid community's innovative ways of providing services.



In ACF's TFC in Wajid, 2 year old Halima drinks fortified milk. Halima comes from Bansova village 45 Kms from Wajid. She has just arrived in the TFC, accompanied by her mother. Back home, Halima's 5 siblings are being taken care of by her father. Source: OCHA

This was Mr. Bondevik's second mission to the region since he was appointed Special Humanitarian Envoy by the UN Secretary General in February 2006.

In Wajid (Bakool region), Mr. Bondevik visited the therapeutic feeding centre (TFC) run by *Action Contre la Faim*, 'Maslah' IDP site, and Kurta village some 30Kms away where he witnessed the abysmal state of basic infrastructure in Somalia. One of only two TFC's in Bakool region, women and children walk as far as 90Kms to access ACF's center. In Kurta village, a borehole rehabilitated by UNICEF served around 3,000 people at the peak of the drought and still women walk as far as 30Kms to collect water. Mr. Bondevik was appalled by the living conditions of IDPs, the worse he has ever seen.

Overall, Mr. Bondevik summarized his mission as positive, impressed by progress achieved by the government as well as the work undertaken by aid organizations operating in very harsh conditions.

The Special Envoy plans to return to the region later in the year. In the meantime, he will visit donor capitals calling for increased support to Somalia.

#### COORDINATION and CONSOLIDATED APPEALS PROCESS (CAP)

At the last Somalia Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) meeting on 11 April 2006, the creation of a Logistics cluster was endorsed by IASC members, bringing the total clusters in Somalia to eight: i) water and sanitation, ii) health and nutrition, iii) food aid, iv) agriculture and livelihoods, v) education, vi) access, vii) IDPs and protection, and viii) logistics. The establishment of the IASC in Somalia and adoption of the cluster approach comes as a result of, and is in compliance with the Global Humanitarian Reform initiated in 2005 by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Jan Egeland.

Of the US\$ 326,718,040 appealed for in the revised 2006 Somalia CAP, US\$ 90,678,634 - or 28% - has been funded, while another US\$ 13,105,060 has been pledged. Food remains the best funded sector (40%), with other key sectors such as agriculture, education, health, shelter, water and sanitation that enable the provision of basic social services and livelihood recovery, worryingly under-funded. Donors are consistently encouraged to take note of this funding bias; while food is undoubtedly a high necessity, support to other critical sectors must not be forsaken.