

EVALUATION OFFICE

**UNICEF'S RESPONSE TO  
THE EMERGENCY IN THE  
HORN OF AFRICA,  
2011–2012:  
LESSON-LEARNING  
EXERCISE**

Final Report — Summary

August 2012

# UNICEF's Response to the Emergency in the Horn of Africa, 2011–2012: Lesson-Learning Exercise

## **Final Report – Summary**

29 August 2012

## **PREFACE**

On behalf of the Evaluation Office, I am pleased to present this summary report, which outlines key findings, lessons and recommendations from an internal lesson-learning exercise reviewing UNICEF's response to the Horn of Africa crisis in 2011–2012.

UNICEF's response in the Horn was the first emergency response to be assigned Level 3 status since the launch in mid-2011 of the Simplified Standard Operating Procedures, which were developed to ensure an effective corporate response to large-scale emergencies. As the report shows, the activation of the Level 3 procedures led to one of the largest emergency operations UNICEF has ever undertaken – and perhaps also one of the fastest. Given the scale of the response and to understand how well the new SSOPs had served, the EO was asked to undertake a “light yet thorough” lesson-learning exercise highlighting those aspects of its response that worked well, those that worked less well, and why. The aim was to identify lessons for action relevant not only in the Horn, but also for future Level 3 emergencies.

In meeting the request for a “light yet thorough” exercise, the Evaluation Office employed a conventional lesson-learning approach emphasizing internal, participatory self-reflection by colleagues on their experiences, perceptions and opinions. We believe this process has also served as a catalyst prompting further planning and action to strengthen internal processes and better address emergency needs in the continuing crisis. This participatory process was bolstered by a strong evidence-based approach, building on an extensive document review which provided a foundation for subsequent interviews, consultations and discussions. A survey focusing on key issues yielded further information. The main priority was to conduct a timely review of UNICEF's internal systems, processes and procedures for the purpose of rapid organizational learning. This inevitably limited the scope of the exercise. The review stops short of being a full evaluation, which would have examined in much greater detail the causes and characteristics of the crisis, UNICEF's engagement with partners, and programme results. Nevertheless, the present exercise has attempted to retain evaluative rigour, candour and objectivity while drawing out useful lessons.

The exercise was conducted between February and April 2012 and a full report was completed in June 2012. This is the basis of the present summary report and it should be noted that the present report has not updated references to the evolving situation on the ground or to actions taken by UNICEF management since mid-2012. However, management has already begun to take actions on a number of issues noted in the report, and a formal management response and action plan is in preparation. The present report is therefore best seen as a snapshot of UNICEF's response as it stood in the first part of 2011.

This assignment was undertaken by a very capable team, to whom I am most grateful for completing a big task within a tight time frame. Simon Lawry-White led the exercise, with support from consultants Cynthia de Windt and Mari Denby. Within the Evaluation Office, Robert McCouch (Senior Evaluation Specialist) provided overall management, with assistance from Erica Mattellone (Evaluation Specialist).

Sincere thanks are also owed to the many UNICEF staff from across the organization who engaged in this exercise, despite the many urgent calls on their time. I would like to acknowledge the support of Elhadj As Sy (Regional Director, ESARO) in his role as Global Emergency Coordinator and Elke Wisch (Deputy Regional Director, ESARO); and UNICEF Representatives and Deputy Representatives in the affected countries: Ted Chaiban and Patrizia Di Giovanni (Ethiopia); Rozeanne Chorlton, Sikander Khan and Hannan Sulieman (Somalia); and Marcel Rudasingwa and Madhavi Ashok (Kenya). I am also grateful to members of the Reference Group for the exercise, along with a Peer Review Panel consisting of Bernt Aasen (UNICEF Regional Director, TACRO), Peter Salama (Representative, UNICEF Zimbabwe), and Pierrette Vu Thi (Former Representative, UNICEF Democratic Republic of Congo). Most of all, I would like to extend appreciation to the many colleagues in the Regional and Country Offices who, despite working tirelessly in the midst of a highly complex emergency, made time to share their insights and experiences.

Colin Kirk, Director  
Evaluation Office  
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## Acronyms

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AS	Al-Shabaab
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CEAP	UNICEF Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CO	Country Office
CCCs	Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action
CR	Country Representative
CSB	corn soya blend
DCO	Djibouti Country Office
DHR	Division of Human Resources
DOC	Division of Communication
DPP	Division of Policy and Practice
DRD	Deputy Regional Director
DRR	disaster risk reduction
ECHO	European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid
ECO	Ethiopia Country Office
ED	Executive Director
EMOPS	Office of Emergency Programmes
EMT	Emergency Management Team
EO	Evaluation Office
EPF	Emergency Programme Fund
EPRP	emergency preparedness and response planning
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
ERMT	Emergency Regional Management Team
ESAR	Eastern and Southern Africa
ESARO	Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (UNICEF)
EWEA	Early Warning Early Action
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	focus-group discussion
FSNAU	Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (for Somalia)
GAM	Global acute malnutrition
GBV	Gender-based violence
GEC	Global Emergency Coordinator
HAC	Humanitarian Action for Children
HAU	Humanitarian Action Update
HPMS	Humanitarian Performance Monitoring System
HoA	Horn of Africa
HQ	headquarters
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IM	Information management
IMEP	Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRT	Immediate Response Team
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
KCO	Kenya Country Office
KII	key informant interview
L2	Level 2 (Emergency)
L3	Level 3 (Emergency)
LLE	Lesson-Learning Exercise
LTA	long-term agreement

MoU	memorandum of understanding
NatCom	UNICEF National Committee
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OED	Office of the Executive Director
OPSCEN	Operations Centre
OPT	outpatient therapeutic feeding (centre)
PARMO	Public Sector Alliances and Resources Mobilization Office
PCA	Programme Cooperation Agreement
PD	Programme Division
PFP	Private Fundraising and Partnerships (Division)
RD	Regional Director
RMT	Regional Management Team
RO	Regional Office
RUTF	ready-to-use therapeutic food
SAM	Severe acute malnutrition
SCO	Somalia Country Office (formally the UNICEF Somalia Support Office)
SD	Supply Division
SitRep	Situation Report
(S)SOP	(Simplified) Standard Operating Procedure
TA	Temporary appointment
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WFP	World Food Programme

## CONTENTS

Executive Summary .....	viii
Summary of findings and lessons .....	xi
Summary of principal recommendations .....	xiv
1. Introduction .....	1
1.1 Objectives and purpose of the lesson-learning exercise.....	1
1.2 Methodology.....	1
2. Background to the Crisis and UNICEF Early Response .....	2
2.1 Escalation: Lead-up to Level 3 declaration.....	3
2.2 Level 3 declaration and internal coordination.....	4
2.3 Summary of UNICEF results .....	5
3. Level 3 Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure and Simplified Standard Operating Procedures .....	7
3.1 Summary.....	7
3.2 What went well .....	7
3.3 What went less well .....	8
3.4 Implications of the Horn of Africa emergency response for Level 3 response.....	9
4. Preparedness, Early Warning, Early Action.....	12
4.1 Summary.....	12
4.2 Early warning.....	12
4.3 Utilization of UNICEF early warning .....	12
4.4 Emergency preparedness and response planning .....	13
4.5 Early action.....	13
4.6 Discussion .....	13
5. Human Resources.....	15
5.1 Summary.....	15
5.2 What went well .....	15
5.3 What went less well .....	16
6. Supply and Logistics .....	17
6.1 Overview.....	17
6.2 What went well .....	17
6.3 What went less well .....	18
7. Resource Mobilization .....	19
7.1 Summary.....	19
7.2 What went well .....	20
7.3 What went less well .....	21

8. Security .....	21
8.1 What went well .....	21
8.2 What went less well .....	22
9. Partnerships.....	22
9.1 Summary.....	22
9.2 Government partners.....	22
9.3 Non-governmental organisation partners.....	23
9.4 United Nations partners.....	23
9.5 Cluster coordination .....	24
9.6 Integrated sector/cluster working .....	26
10. Planning, Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation .....	26
10.1 Summary.....	26
10.2 Strategy development.....	26
10.3 Assessments.....	27
10.4 Planning and performance monitoring.....	27
10.5 What went well .....	28
10.6 What went less well .....	28
10.7 Discussion .....	30
11. Advocacy and Communications .....	32
11.1 Summary.....	32
11.2 What went well .....	32
11.3 What went less well .....	33
11.4 Discussion .....	34
12. Long Term View: Disaster Risk Reduction and the Resilience Agenda.....	35
12.1 Summary.....	35
12.2 Risk reduction: Emergency response vs. development programming.....	35
12.3 UNICEF's emerging resilience agenda.....	36
13. Further Observations .....	37
13.1 Summary.....	37
13.2 Communication with and accountability to affected people.....	37
13.3 Limits of subsidiarity .....	37
13.4 UNICEF bureaucracy.....	38
13.5 Cost-effectiveness .....	38
14. Conclusion.....	39

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Objectives and purpose*

In December 2011, UNICEF senior management agreed to conduct a Lesson-Learning Exercise (LLE) on UNICEF's response to the emergency in the Horn of Africa (HoA). According to the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the exercise, the LLE aimed to provide a structured corporate reflection, drawing out major lessons and insights on which aspects of UNICEF's corporate response to the HoA emergency worked well, which aspects worked less well, and why. The aim was to provide practical recommendations to strengthen the operations supporting the HoA response, and UNICEF's procedures for addressing future emergencies, in particular any adjustments required to the Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure (CEAP) and its associated Simplified Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs) in the longer term. The ToR indicated that the LLE should focus mainly on UNICEF's internal operations, processes and procedures. The LLE is not a formal evaluation and thus has relied almost entirely on the views of UNICEF staff and on UNICEF documentation. No government, United Nations or non-governmental partners were interviewed, and there was no third-party verification of the views and statements of UNICEF staff.

### *Background*

Drought has been a regular occurrence in the HoA throughout the past several decades, a situation which has been compounded by prolonged conflict in Somalia. UNICEF country offices (COs) in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia had been responding to the effects of such drought on women and children through their regular country programmes. All COs had anticipated an escalation of the drought in 2011 and had initiated scale-up interventions in early 2011. By July, the situation had deteriorated to a point where malnutrition rates reached alarming levels across the HoA, famine was declared in parts of southern Somalia, and the number and condition of refugees fleeing Somalia was capturing world headlines. UNICEF then executed a massive scale-up of programmes with an unprecedented corporate mobilization of support sparked by the first activation of the CEAPs for a Level 3 (L3) emergency response.

### *Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure*

The activation of the CEAP for Level 3 emergencies was successful in quickly mobilizing very substantial resources from across the organization and from donors and UNICEF national committees. The personal involvement of the Executive Director (ED) added credibility to the L3 activation. The appointment of the Regional Director (RD) of the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) as the Global Emergency Coordinator (GEC) was seen as appropriate, and he was credited with having performed well in the role, balancing the imperative for action with giving primacy to CO leadership of the emergency response. The Regional Office (RO) performed well in coordinating the COs and with headquarters (HQ), and managed the communications traffic between the offices well. Coordination between the RD as GEC and the Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS) worked well after an initial period of uncertainty, given that there was no precedent or plan for the GEC to be anyone other than the Director of EMOPS. Roles and accountabilities between CO, RO and HQ were not always clear. The Immediate Response Team (IRT) was not deployed, which the RO and COs were relieved about, although not everyone agrees that this was the right decision. Emergency Management Team meetings tended to focus too much on practical discussions of staffing, funding and supplies, and not enough on strategy. The first implementation of the CEAP and the draft SSOPs, even if used in a form adapted for this emergency, provide many lessons for the future, and several clarifications and modifications are proposed.

### *Preparedness, early warning and early action*

Both external and UNICEF early warning systems highlighted the prolonged drought and the deteriorating food security and nutrition situation in the HoA during 2010 and 2011. UNICEF COs started to react to the warning signs from late 2010–early 2011, building on their earlier prepositioning of stocks as part of emergency preparedness and response planning. The scale of the pre-L3 UNICEF response was constrained by the available funding. While COs were well aware of the steady deterioration in the situation in 2010–2011, the dramatic rise in malnutrition rates during the second quarter of 2011 in the worst-affected areas of the HoA was not anticipated. This led to mass displacement in and from Somalia. In Ethiopia, the national response, including UNICEF's contribution, came closest to being early and adequate enough. The scale of the combined response of international actors in response to clear warning signs was inadequate. UNICEF's L3 declaration came late, and in reaction to media attention on the refugee influx to Kenya, rather than in response to data available on the situation of children. UNICEF could have launched an L3 response well before July 2011, though without the global media attention on Somali refugees in Kenya and the declaration of famine in Somalia, the scale of the response would likely have been more modest. UNICEF staff sentiment on whether UNICEF's response was timely is somewhat divided.

### *Human resources*

The rapid deployment of human resources for this emergency was agreed to be one of the most successful aspects of UNICEF's mobilization. Personnel in all categories – surge, temporary assistance (TA), consultants and standby partners were seen to be of high quality. Country Representatives willingly released staff for surge deployments in response to the L3 activation. HQ, ROs and COs worked well together in planning deployments. Staff were very committed but some reached burn-out without sufficient attention to the stress they were under. In response to the L3 declaration, some staff cancelled leave, while others did not. These decisions were not consistent. While emergency recruitment was accelerated by the application of the fast-track recruitment procedure, arrival of personnel on site was sometimes delayed by slow deployment and lack of basic equipment.

### *Supply and logistics*

UNICEF mounted its largest-ever supply operation for the HoA emergency, with Somalia the main focus, enabled by quick, flexible funding, on a large scale. COs were satisfied with the UNICEF performance in supplies – “Right goods, right time, right specs” (survey). All COs had prepositioned stocks following their emergency preparedness and response exercises before the emergency, including in zonal centres. In just over three months after the L3 declaration, by 31 October, UNICEF had delivered 10,500 metric tonnes of life-saving supplies for Somalia alone, and by January 2012, 21,000 metric tonnes had been delivered. At the time of writing, the great majority of these supplies for Somalia remained unused because of the Al-Shabaab (AS) ban on UNICEF activities in southern Somalia. Logistics proved very challenging in Somalia. UNICEF received US\$2.98 million in in-kind donations. COs reported long lead times for some supplies, both local and offshore. For some supplies, funding was not made available until late in 2011. COs are concerned about their capacity to monitor supplies and partners' ability to report on them. UNICEF needs to strengthen its emergency logistics capacity.

### *Resource Mobilization*

Resource mobilization for the HoA emergency was fast and effective, once L3 was declared by UNICEF, with almost US\$400 million raised by the end of 2011, some 95 per cent of the amount sought in the revised regional Humanitarian Action Update for 2011 (see chart below). This was a significant achievement given the prevailing difficult funding environment. A third of all funds raised came un-earmarked from UNICEF National Committees (NatComs), a vital contribution which allowed education and child protection, often neglected by donors in emergencies, to be funded. The RO managed the regional thematic funds well, according to COs. The ED's direct approaches to key donors are thought to have influenced their funding decisions. Some donors insisted on separate funding requests and reports, which created significantly more work for COs. Situation reports were considered by the Public Sector Alliances and Resources Mobilization Office to have been useful for donors.

### *Security*

The emergency response in the Somali region of Ethiopia, northern Kenya, and especially in southern Somalia was constrained by poor security. UNICEF has been investing in additional security measures in the region. The security management environment has been changing as country United Nations Security Management Teams take a more proactive approach to enabling programming in high-risk areas.

### *Partnerships*

UNICEF built on its existing partnerships and worked successfully with partners to scale up its emergency response. UNICEF also expanded and added NGO partnerships in all countries. The management of Programme Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) proved challenging, as in previous emergencies, although COs showed ingenuity and adopted a risk management approach to minimise delays. Collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP) on supplementary feeding in Somalia and with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on programmes in the camps in Kenya and Ethiopia also required a sustained management effort. UNICEF needs a new global agreement with UNHCR on its work in refugee emergencies, building on the current progress being made at country level. UNICEF also provided surge capacity to strengthen the coordination of the clusters/sectors it leads.

### *Planning, monitoring, reporting and evaluation*

For the HoA, UNICEF implemented a pilot version of the Humanitarian Performance Monitoring System (HPMS). This represents one of UNICEF's first attempts to implement such a system. A majority of informants consider that the HPMS has improved the quality of UNICEF reporting of programme results. The introduction of the system during the emergency caused some disruption to COs, which consider that the system was not well adapted and was too complicated and demanding. COs also consider that the intense work required to adapt to an evolving system impacted on the emergency response. Many partners have poor reporting systems and were not used to reporting on results, as opposed to activities. UNICEF should establish minimum standards for reasonable expectations of data for reporting and ensure that COs in high-risk countries are 'data ready' for an L3 emergency.

### *Advocacy, media and communications*

The United Nations, including UNICEF, was largely unsuccessful in focusing international attention onto the growing crisis in HoA before famine was declared in Somalia. Once media interest began to focus on the HoA emergency in July 2011, UNICEF was successful in positioning the emergency as a 'children's crisis'. The UNICEF response to the emergency is thought of internally as 'media-driven'. UNICEF's bold messaging on the threat to children's lives probably increased its media coverage, and related fund-raising. The ED is seen as having made an important personal contribution to the advocacy effort. UNICEF was constrained by circumstances in its external communications in Somalia and Ethiopia, and chose to keep a low profile in the refugee emergency. The management of visits of journalists, donors and NatCom directors placed a significant management load on COs. UNICEF needs to include advocacy as part of its emergency planning process.

### *Long-term view: Disaster risk reduction and the resilience agenda*

UNICEF has much to learn from the results of its long-term investments in building the capacity of national systems to respond to shocks. The extension of health and nutrition services that reach into vulnerable areas in Kenya, and especially in Ethiopia, helped to reduce the impact of the drought in those countries. UNICEF needs to build partnerships with organizations which are influential in the domains of risk reduction and resilience so that its programmes can have maximum impact in concert with others. For these countries the risks are already well understood. UNICEF will need to continue to advocate for the establishment of these services in the most vulnerable areas, whose populations are typically also the least powerful.

### *Further considerations*

- ◆ UNICEF did not appear to have any concerted strategy for communicating with people affected by the HoA emergency, either to listen to the needs of populations directly or through partners, to engage them in planning, or to explain what services people can expect. UNICEF needs a strategy to allow it to fulfil its Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) commitments to accountability to affected people.
- ◆ UNICEF needs to recognise the limits of subsidiarity in ensuring that UNICEF COs are properly equipped to respond to emergencies.
- ◆ UNICEF still suffers from bureaucratic systems that constrain emergency response and should make sure that adequate technical support is available to prevent procedures slowing the response.
- ◆ UNICEF does not have an understanding of the cost-effectiveness of its emergency programmes, or any way of analysing it.

### **Summary of findings and lessons**

1. The CEAP showed itself effective in rapidly mobilising financial and human resources and supply and logistics support. The personal involvement of the ED added credibility to this UNICEF L3 response, and will be important again in the future. The CEAP proved its worth at its first use. UNICEF has already amended the L3 SSOPs to take account of several of the shortcomings of the draft SSOPs in the March 2012 approved version.
2. The draft SSOPs for L3 tended to the assumption that CO capacity needs to be *replaced*, while in the HoA, CO capacity was not replaced but *supplemented* by the L3 activation. The revised approved SSOPs now allow for decisions to be made regarding the extent to which CO capacity is to be supported.

3. Some regional and HQ advisers were unsure of their role in, and accountability for, the emergency response. In UNICEF's decentralized structure a simple clarification of responsibility may not be possible, but collective accountability through enhanced HQ-RO-CO networking during emergencies could provide a way forward.
4. For Somalia, as well as Kenya, early warnings did not lead to adequate response by the United Nations system, including UNICEF. By revising its approach to Early Warning Early Action, UNICEF can ensure that senior management is aware of, and responds to, growing threats.
5. The current recognised triggers for nutrition emergencies did not work to protect children in the HoA, partly because they are not adequately predictive of the situation children will face as a result of a coming crisis. By the time famine is declared, it is already too late for children.
6. If UNICEF's approach to emergency preparedness were modified, it could bring together CO preparedness and RO/HQ preparedness to allow for Level 1, 2 and 3 scenarios and response to be planned in advance in high-risk countries.
7. Prepositioning of supplies, especially in zonal centres, allowed the emergency response to start quickly, while the emergency supply pipeline was being filled. UNICEF-supported emergency preparedness exercises have had an impact beyond prepositioning, by drawing government and other partners into a joint process for preparedness planning.
8. The reinstatement of the emergencies recruitment team in DHR and the application of the fast-track emergency recruitment procedure proved vital to UNICEF's rapid deployment of personnel.
9. All COs had capacity gaps in one or more functions during the emergency, even though COs had good capacity and the RO had reviewed requirements with them. UNICEF could help to ensure that all gaps are filled by including a more thorough review of human-resource needs after an L3 declaration.
10. UNICEF has developed its supply capacity and network to the point where it can quickly mobilize on a large scale, including taking on the supply of products with which it has little experience. Logistics and supply monitoring were identified as outstanding challenges, in part because of the very challenging circumstances.
11. The rapid and generous response of public and private donors showed the trust enjoyed by UNICEF thanks to the strength of its country programmes in the region and relationships with donors at capital and country levels. The HoA emergency again highlighted the importance of un-earmarked funding for financing interventions seen by donors as less immediately life-saving.
12. The HoA emergency response shows how essential established partnerships are. Long-term investment in government and non-governmental organization (NGO) partnerships pay off in terms of access, influence and operational capacity.
13. The application of the UNICEF PCA presented challenges for UNICEF COs and NGO partners in the HoA emergency. UNICEF can learn from the measures UNICEF COs took to speed up the process. The March 2012 SSOPs for L3 set out how the organisation's procedures allow for streamlining of the PCA process. This will help, but lack of staff and partner knowledge of procedures will continue to be as much of a challenge as the PCA procedures.
14. UNICEF programming for refugees was hampered by the lack of clear terms of engagement with UNHCR. Building trust and improving cooperation at country level should lead in time to the agreement of a revised global memorandum of understanding (MoU).
15. High levels of media attention on a relatively small group can lead to it receiving too much attention and too many resources, compared with a less visible, but also severely affected, majority. This is inconsistent with UNICEF's equity focus.

16. Cluster/sector coordination arrangements vary between countries in the HoA and do not follow the IASC standard cluster approach in any country. Understanding their strengths and weaknesses would help to improve global guidance on the cluster approach. Sub-national coordination, though not always strong, has the potential to improve coordinated service delivery. Its improvement, however, will require the cluster system to be adapted at the sub-national level to intentionally merge groups of clusters.
17. UNICEF COs in the region aspire to more inter-sectoral working within UNICEF. There is potential for improving the effectiveness and value for money of UNICEF emergency interventions by integrating services at the point of delivery, backed up by integrated support from regional and HQ levels, rather than the individual vertical sector support that tends to prevail currently. This implies a more cohesive approach to UNICEF and cluster support to local governments and communities.
18. The introduction of the Humanitarian Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) was problematic and resource intensive, but results data did improve as a result of its deployment. UNICEF can use the experience gained to help define minimum requirements for performance data and start to build CO capacity in high-risk countries to meet these requirements.
19. UNICEF did not have the capacity at country level to consistently report on results from the emergency response, nor did most of its partners. The introduction of HPMS, while very challenging, has brought some improvement, but without more investment in advance of emergencies, UNICEF remains vulnerable to not being able demonstrate its performance.
20. UNICEF positioned the emergency as a 'crisis for children'. UNICEF had no advocacy plan for the HoA emergency, and has yet to integrate advocacy into its emergency response planning.
21. Given the marginalized communities, especially pastoralist communities, in the HoA, UNICEF needs to continue advocating for their social protection, while supporting emergency response capacity in marginal areas, for example, the mobile health and nutrition teams deployed to the Somali region of Ethiopia.
22. The development of national systems for social service provision in vulnerable and marginal areas reduced nutrition-related illness and deaths. There is potential to replicate this approach.
23. Accountability to affected people was hardly considered during the HoA response. As a member of the IASC, UNICEF has signed up to commitments in this area, which, taken seriously, will require profound changes in practice, but also bring real benefits.
24. UNICEF has bottlenecks to overcome in its emergency management processes. By deploying sufficient experienced staff to major emergencies, it can avoid blockages that held back the HoA emergency response. COs found that UNICEF procedures were a constraint on operational effectiveness, for example, data management, the processing of NGO agreements, and support to donor and other high-level visits. By documenting and exploiting the ways that COs succeeded in managing these obstacles, UNICEF can both establish good practice and help to clarify the levels of procedural risk that the organisation is ready to take to save lives.
25. UNICEF has no model for understanding or improving the cost-effectiveness of its emergency interventions. As financial resource constraints for emergency response and donor scrutiny increase, this could become a strategic weakness for the organisation.

## Summary of principal recommendations

A summary of the main recommendations emanating from the exercise is included here. Further details on each of these recommendations is provided within a Recommendations section at the end of each chapter, as are additional recommendations. In these sections of the main report, where the following short-listed recommendations are repeated they are bolded in order to emphasise their relatively higher priority.

The Deputy Executive Director responsible for UNICEF's emergency operations is leading the preparation of the organisation's formal management response to the report's recommendations. Within the Recommendations section of each chapter of the main report, specific assigned responsibilities for each recommendation are articulated.

### Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure (CEAP)

1. At their first revision in 2013, in the L3 CEAP and SSOPs, UNICEF should:
  - a. Clarify and expand on the purpose of 'single chain of command', together with a fuller background and rationale for the L3 activation;
  - b. Clarify that the L3 CEAP and SSOPs apply to all types of emergency, including regional and slow-onset emergencies, and making the links between L3 and Level 2 (L2) emergencies, the SSOPs for which will have been concluded by 2013;
  - c. Consider replacing the term 'no regrets' with a fuller explanation of how UNICEF can emerge at the end of the emergency response having achieved everything possible;
  - d. Develop a standard ToR for the IRT, including its role in reviewing the capacity needs of the CO(s), and agreeing on a staffing plan with the RD and Country Representative (CR), for agreement by the GEC, with periodic review;
  - e. Develop criteria for the nomination of the GEC;
  - f. Clarify that any thematic funding for the emergency is to be managed by the GEC, wherever the GEC is located, with associated tracking, monitoring and reporting on allocations;
  - g. Include the automatic deployment of an international security officer, where not already present; and
  - h. Ensure that COs engaged in an L3 emergency response are exempted from major organisational change initiatives as long as the L3 response persists (*see 13.4 below*).
2. Whether or not the Director of EMOPS is designated the GEC for an L3 emergency, the role of EMOPS within HQ as support to the GEC needs careful definition, including its role as the main channel for information requests and tasks to and from HQ to the RO and CO. Whoever is appointed as GEC, his/her immediate team must include at least one adviser who is an expert in UNICEF SSOPs for L2/L3.

### Preparedness, early warning and early action

3. UNICEF should devise an emergency preparedness system for L2 and L3 emergencies that brings together HQ-RO-CO, and factors in current capacities in the country and region.

### Human resources

4. At the onset of an L3 emergency, each CO involved should systematically review and report its human resource capacity and gaps to the GEC. The GEC, supported by the RD<sup>1</sup> and IRT, should then carefully review these and act to ensure that any capacity gaps are closed, setting aside the CO's own self-assessment where necessary. At the same time, the GEC and IRT should address any capacity gaps in the RO.

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<sup>1</sup> Or Director of EMOPS if the RD is the GEC, and vice versa.

5. UNICEF should develop an emergency deployment procedure to add to the fast-track emergency recruitment procedure to ensure that the arrival of staff on emergency deployments is not held back by various clearances and practical arrangements such as lack of equipment. Country-level briefing and handover notes for staff should be part of that procedure.

### **Supply and logistics**

6. Emergency logistics management is under-resourced in UNICEF and needs to be strengthened. In particular, more emergency logisticians should be available for deployment from the Supply Division (SD) without weakening the Division's own logistics capacity).
7. Supply monitoring at the point of distribution remains weak. UNICEF needs a strategy for training both programme officers and UNICEF partners in supply tracking and reporting.

### **Resource mobilization**

8. Using lessons learned from the HoA emergency, UNICEF should advocate with donors to allow transaction costs to be reduced by not having to prepare separate proposals and reports for separate donors. UNICEF can appeal to the special conditions pertaining during an L3 emergency to press for the use of the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) or its equivalent. For UNICEF-specific funding, donors may require in exchange that the UNICEF appeal and 180-day plan (or equivalents) include some more detail on targets and planned results.

### **Security**

9. An L3 response taking place in a high-risk environment should trigger the deployment of a dedicated international security officer, if one is not already in place.

### **Partnerships**

10. UNICEF needs to conclude a new global agreement with UNHCR regarding its engagement in refugee settings. This will require careful, unhurried negotiation, drawing on the trust generated through positive experiences of improved relationships at country level.

### **Sector integration**

11. UNICEF should develop and test models to increase the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of its emergency response through integration of sectors at the 'point of delivery', especially in remote, vulnerable areas – whether via community centre, school, water point, or health post.

### **Results**

12. The HPMS should be introduced into high-risk countries as part of UNICEF emergency preparedness. UNICEF should make every effort to avoid having to introduce the HPMS at the height of an emergency. Whether the system has been introduced to a country or not, when an L3 emergency begins, surge capacity to support the system should be automatically deployed to each country involved. In general, COs in high-risk countries need increased capacity for data management on an ongoing basis and access to surge resources during L2/L3.
13. If the HPMS is to become a standard part of UNICEF emergency response, (1) it needs to be officially launched via a programme instruction, once the pilot phase is deemed to be complete, and (2) it requires a medium-term investment plan to ensure successful roll-out and support between and during emergencies.

### **Situation monitoring**

14. Given its role as an advocate for children beyond its programme and cluster responsibilities, UNICEF should give serious consideration to separating situation monitoring from results and performance monitoring in emergencies, in recognition of their being very different processes, and to protect the integrity of each. UNICEF needs to clarify what situation monitoring in emergencies is, and what it requires.

### **Advocacy**

15. Advocacy should be an integral part of UNICEF emergency planning, with its own objectives, activities and indicators alongside the programme sector plans.

### **External communications**

16. UNICEF should continue to ensure that there is media presence on the spot as soon as possible after a major emergency begins. In doing so, every effort should be made to avoid any negative effect on programme effectiveness, and additional personnel should be provided not just for communications but to support the logistical needs of visitors. Where there are limitations, such as limited seats on internal flights, CO management will still need to make judgement calls on the movement of these resources.

### **Resilience**

17. UNICEF should engage with sympathetic donors to explain how it has already contributed to resilience in some of its programming in the HoA, and how further financing can reduce vulnerability (*see also under Resource Mobilization*). This includes engaging with the 'Resilience Champions' to explain how further financing and partnerships can reduce vulnerability.

### **Accountability to affected people**

18. UNICEF requires a plan and resources to meet its IASC commitments for accountability to affected people.

### **Response capacity**

19. In L3 responses UNICEF should strengthen its review of CO emergency response capacity at the outset of an L3 emergency, to make sure that capacity is increased according to the scale of the emergency response required and to ensure that gaps and weaknesses are addressed.

### **Process bottlenecks**

20. UNICEF must be ready to put resources into removing process bottlenecks, which will otherwise slow up emergency response. If UNICEF is not ready to simplify its bureaucratic systems further for emergencies, it must compensate with the necessary technical expertise to prevent procedures becoming obstacles.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Objectives and purpose of the lesson-learning exercise

In December 2011, UNICEF senior management agreed to conduct a Lesson-Learning Exercise (LLE) on UNICEF's response to the emergency in the Horn of Africa (HoA), with the Office of the Executive Director (OED) as the client. The Evaluation Office (EO) was asked to manage the exercise. According to the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the LLE (*see Annex 1* in the full report), the exercise aimed to provide a "structured corporate reflection," drawing out "major lessons and insights":

"...the objective of this review is to consider which aspects of UNICEF's corporate response to the HoA emergency worked well, which aspects worked less well, and why. The aim is to arrive at practical recommendations pinpointing concrete actions UNICEF might take to strengthen the operations supporting the on-going HoA response, and the UNICEF procedures for addressing future emergencies. At the corporate level, the exercise is intended to help inform decisions on necessary adjustments to the CEAP and SSOPs in the longer term."

While not a formal evaluation, it asked for the LLE to be "systematic and impartial," with a focus "mainly on **UNICEF's internal operations, processes and procedures**," with the differing context and response of each of the four countries taken into account. The period to be covered by the LLE was defined as follows: "The ... review will begin prior to the CEAP and SSOPs being set in motion and end with the data collection period of early 2012," in particular in its Level 3 (L3) corporate emergency response.

The purpose of this report is to extract lessons, rather than to provide a record of events or assess the results of the UNICEF response to the emergency in the HoA. The UNICEF Horn of Africa Emergency 180-day report provides a full description of UNICEF activities and the results achieved. Section 2 includes a two-page summary of results and Annex 5 (in the full report) includes a summary timeline of key events and decisions. The structure of the report follows a modified form of the Inception Report (*see Annex 2 in the full report*). Given the ToR emphasis on the review of systems, processes and procedures, individual programme sectors and their results receive little attention in the report.

### 1.2 Methodology

The LLE has drawn on:

- ◆ Extensive UNICEF documentation, including Situation Reports (SitReps), Emergency Regional Management Team (ERMT)/Emergency Management Team (EMT) minutes, country office (CO) response plans, policy papers, press releases, 90-day and 180-day donor reports, and many others (Annex 4 in the full report includes a summary of the documentation used).
- ◆ Various timeline exercises, stocktaking reports, reports on lessons learned and mission reports on the HoA response have been completed, including by the Division of Communication (DOC), the Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS), the Eastern and Southern Africa Office (ESARO), the Kenya Country Office (KCO), the Somalia Country Office (SCO), the Public Sector Alliances and Resources Mobilization Office (PARMO), the Programme Division (PD) and the Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division (PFP). These have provided valuable background and insights.

- ◆ Key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted between late January and late February 2012, with the ESAR Regional Office (RO), SCO, Ethiopia Country Office (ECO), KCO, Djibouti Country Office (DCO) and headquarters (HQ) divisions in Copenhagen, Geneva and New York. Forty KIIs were conducted at HQ, 13 at the RO, and 24 in COs, plus 15 focus groups at COs and 3 in the Supply Division (SD) with more than 120 participants. Once the CO/RO missions were completed, five thematic video teleconferences were conducted with HQ-RO-COs (against eight originally planned), with 50 participants in all.
- ◆ As the ToR called for the LLE to be as participative as possible to allow learning within and between offices, focus groups were used extensively with the COs, with a facilitator engaged for the purpose. Both section-based and topic-based discussions were held with COs. (While selected staff from the RO were interviewed, there was no group work, as the RO felt it had already put considerable effort into its own LLE.)
- ◆ An online survey targeting UNICEF COs, ROs and HQ divisions involved in the emergency response yielded 89 responses,<sup>2</sup> information from which has been used to supplement the interviews and focus groups. Selected, non-attributed comments from survey responses are used in the report, as are weighted 'approval' and 'agreement' rankings (explained in Annex 3, Methodology, in the full report).
- ◆ The team leader benefited from participation in two EMT and one ERMT meetings.

A Reference Group was formed to oversee the LLE, including the Global Emergency Coordinator (GEC) and members drawn from the EMT and ERMT. In early February, the Reference Group reviewed the Inception Report. At a second meeting, the Reference Group commented on a first report before the draft findings were presented to senior management at the Emergencies Meeting. The LLE team consisted of: Simon Lawry-White, UNICEF Senior Evaluation Officer and team leader; Cynthia de Windt, consultant facilitator; and Mari Denby, consultant analyst. The team received considerable support from Rob McCouch and Erica Mattellone from the Evaluation Office (EO).

## 2. BACKGROUND TO THE CRISIS AND UNICEF EARLY RESPONSE

Preceding the declaration of famine in Somalia in July 2011, the HoA had experienced two consecutive seasons of poor rainfall, a sharp rise in food and fuel prices, and the persistent effects of armed conflict in Somalia, where humanitarian access remains extremely limited in the southern and central regions of the country. There was a rapid increase in the total number of people in need of humanitarian assistance (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia) – 6.2 million in September 2010, 8.8 million in March 2011, 10 million in June 2011 and 11.5 million by 21 July 2011.

The Somalia 2011 Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) warned of worsening drought, but agencies had received limited funding for response activities, while the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit for Somalia (FSNAU) warned of a 20 per cent increase in the number of people in crisis as early as 28 January 2011. Based on these estimates, in December 2010 and January 2011, UNICEF and partners treated 11,000 severely malnourished and 10,000 moderately malnourished children, and also worked to rehabilitate wells and distribute water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) supplies. Beginning in February, the UNICEF Representative in Somalia began warning UNICEF internally that the humanitarian situation might deteriorate to conditions seen in 1992, the year of Somalia's last famine. By March, at the insistence of UNICEF, the Inter-Cluster Working Group prepared a

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<sup>2</sup> As UNICEF has no count of the number of staff directly involved in the emergency response, no response rate can be given for the survey.

comprehensive contingency plan to address the drought and conflict in the south-central region. In April, the CO requested support from HQ/RO for a contingency planning exercise in the event of a worst-case scenario.

In Ethiopia, the capacity of the country to cope with the effects of malnutrition had been boosted by a twentyfold increase in the number of outpatient therapeutic feeding (OPT) centres facilities in the previous three years. In November 2010, the Somali region of Ethiopia issued an emergency plan based on a UNICEF-supported emergency preparedness and response planning (EPRP) process. Water trucking began the same month. In the first quarter of 2011, ECO responded to an increase in admissions to therapeutic feeding centres in SNNPR, and ordered additional ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF). A donor meeting was organized with the World Food Programme (WFP) in March to alert the international community to the situation. A revised Humanitarian Requirements Document agreed to by the Government of Ethiopia was issued on 12 April for assistance to drought-affected populations.

In Kenya, disaster risk reduction (DRR) approaches had been adopted by partners, especially in WASH and nutrition, which meant that partners were relatively well placed when meteorological forecasts in September 2010 indicated depressed and poorly distributed rainfall. Emergency WASH supplies were pre-positioned in Turkana in October. By December 2010, the CO had raised the first alarms about deterioration in food security and the nutritional status of children in Northern Kenya. The CO scaled up nutrition interventions, stockpiled supplies and deployed 18 nutritionists to drought-affected areas to assist the government's monitoring of the situation. Education assessment missions were sent to Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps. Nutrition surveys in April and June revealed a rapid deterioration, and on 30 May, the President of Kenya declared the drought a national disaster.

In Djibouti, a July 2010 nutrition survey bulletin had confirmed that the nutrition situation of children under 5 was 'alarming'. By November 2010, a drought appeal was launched for 120,000 people in need and the CO sought support locally from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) for WASH and nutrition. In early December, an early warning alert highlighted that a potential emergency requiring RO and HQ support was likely within three months. DCO scaled up water trucking and community-based case management of malnutrition in early 2011.

At regional level, a side meeting on the HoA during the April regional management team (RMT) meeting alerted colleagues to a deepening humanitarian 'catastrophe' in Somalia and its regional implications (in Kenya and Ethiopia). In early June, the RO issued a press release on the worsening impact of the drought on children.

By mid-2011, the humanitarian community had not succeeded in getting adequate international attention for the situation in the Horn. All COs were diverting funds to their drought response activities, and some were successful in raising funds well before July.

## **2.1 Escalation: Lead-up to Level 3 declaration**

The plight of Somalia refugees arriving in Kenya worked its way to the top of the global media agenda from late June to mid-July, culminating in the BBC's week-long coverage from the Dadaab refugee camp in early July. Journalists passing through Nairobi on their way back from covering the 9 July inauguration of the newly formed Republic of South Sudan picked up on the Somalia story.

The Emergency Relief Coordinator's visit to Ethiopia on 8–9 July also raised the international profile of the emergency.

Famine was declared in parts of south Somalia (Lower Shabelle and parts of Bakool) on 20 July, with 1.85 million children in need of urgent humanitarian assistance in Somalia and 780,000 acutely malnourished children, an increase of more than half since the start of the year. Famine was declared in four additional areas in September. By October 2011, 13.3 million<sup>3</sup> people were in need of humanitarian assistance in the region, with 2.3 million children malnourished, including 500,000 suffering from severe acute malnutrition. In southern Somalia, global acute malnutrition (GAM) rates varied from 29 per cent to 54 per cent, and severe acute malnutrition (SAM) rates ranged from 12 per cent to 29 per cent.<sup>4</sup>

Malnutrition rates in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya reached alarming levels. In Turkana and Mandera districts of Kenya, GAM rates exceeded 30 per cent, and some 385,000 children and 90,000 pregnant or lactating women were suffering from acute malnutrition. In Ethiopia, an estimated 312,740 children were severely malnourished during 2011, with a peak from March to July. In Djibouti, 26,000 children were reported to be suffering from moderate acute malnutrition.<sup>5</sup> Internal displacement in Somalia was at 1.5 million by July, with 100,000 new internal displacements since January.<sup>6</sup>

Following UNICEF's declaration of an L3 emergency in the region, there was a major increase in the numbers needing humanitarian assistance in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya, but especially in Somalia, where a lack of pre-existing service delivery mechanisms and restricted humanitarian access impeded the humanitarian response. Ethiopia and Kenya also saw a quicker improvement in weather conditions and nutrition status compared with Somalia. These factors allowed for the removal of the L3 status for the three countries on 21 January 2012, although the situation of Somali refugees remains precarious. Throughout the emergency, the scale of the influx of Somali refugees into neighbouring countries strained the capacity of refugee camp services, which were already under-resourced.

## 2.2 Level 3 declaration and internal coordination

- ◆ On 1 July 2011, the Director of EMOPS issued a memo to the Executive Director (ED) alerting him to the escalating nutritional crisis linked to drought in East Africa. The emergency was designated Level 2 (L2), with high risk of deteriorating to L3.
- ◆ On 10 July, the Regional Director (RD) went to Dadaab, coinciding with the visit of the High Commissioner for Refugees.
- ◆ The ED visited Kenya from 14–17 July 2011. He travelled to Turkana and convened a meeting between UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to discuss options around a 'common platform' for the HoA crisis.
- ◆ On 17 July, the ED held a joint press conference with Andrew Mitchell, United Kingdom Secretary of State for International Development.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Horn of Africa: Humanitarian Snapshot', 20 September 2011.

<sup>4</sup> Global Nutrition Cluster presentation to the IASC weekly meeting in Geneva on 22 July 2011. On the same day, the Global Nutrition Cluster issued a "Call for Action for the Horn of Africa Food Security and Nutrition Crisis."

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'East & Horn of Africa Update Somali Displacement Crisis at a Glance', UNHCR, Nairobi, 20 July 2011.

- ◆ On 20 July, the United Nations declared famine in the Bakool and Lower Shabelle regions of southern Somalia. The Director of EMOPS, in consultation with the RD, recommended activation of the L3 Corporate Emergency Activation Procedures (CEAP) CF/EXD/2011-001, with an options paper prepared for the ED by EMOPS/ESARO for adapted management and coordination arrangements of the L3, taking into account the multi-country nature of the emergency and the strong capacity and experience of the COs concerned, and suggested the appointment of the ESARO RD as the GEC and partial deployment of the Immediate Response Team (IRT).
- ◆ On 21 July, declaration of the CEAP was issued by the ED via global broadcast message, covering Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Somalia for an initial period of three months.
- ◆ A set of principles were agreed for the management of the emergency, in particular the safeguarding and promoting of CO leadership of the humanitarian response, and RO coordination and management of the response across affected countries, with EMOPS mobilising, consolidating and streamlining HQ support.
- ◆ Following a subsequent visit by the Director of EMOPS to Ethiopia and Kenya, 'coordination modalities' for the emergency response were agreed to by the ED, namely:
  - ◆ 1) An HQ EMT to meet weekly with GEC participating from Nairobi (fortnightly from 28 October);
  - ◆ 2) The HoA emergency became a standing agenda item for the Senior Staff Meeting on Emergencies, with the GEC taking part;
  - ◆ 3) Somalia focus group (the ED, Deputy Executive Director, GEC, the Representative for Somalia, and the Director of EMOPS) (until 7 October);
  - ◆ 4) An ERMT met weekly from 23 July (fortnightly from 21 October); and
  - ◆ 5) ESARO's Emergency Core Group met daily from July to September, then once per week. At the same time, COs set or scaled up their own Humanitarian Crisis Teams/Emergency Coordination Teams/EMTs.
- The ED subsequently extended the CEAP on 22 October for an additional three months. On 21 January 2012, the CEAP was rescinded for all countries except Somalia, with a further review to be held on 21 May 2012.

### 2.3 Summary of UNICEF results

The table below summarises the programme results and operations achievements for the HoA emergency, as drawn from the UNICEF Horn of Africa Emergency 180-day report (March 2012).

#### Key programmatic achievements

**In Somalia, UNICEF and more than 140 mostly local non-governmental organisation (NGO) partners:**

- **treated over 224,000 acutely malnourished children;**
- **vaccinated more than 1 million children against measles (of a targeted 2.9 million; 34 per cent of target);**
- **provided safe water to 1.76 million people (of 1.5 million targeted; 117 per cent of target);**
- **reached 655 children (of a targeted 950 children) with reintegration programmes for children formerly associated with armed forces/groups or at risk of recruitment; and**
- **facilitated the enrolment of 420,271 children (42 per cent girls), exceeding the target of 300,000 children, across 2,230 schools in Central Southern Somalia.**

**In Kenya, UNICEF assistance to refugees and affected local populations:**

- **reached at least 34,482 severely malnourished children (142 per cent of the target) and 80,284 moderately malnourished children (102 per cent of the target) with nutrition programmes in drought-affected areas;**

- treated over 24,000 severely malnourished children in refugee camps;
- vaccinated more than 87,000 children in targeted campaigns, 67,800 children under 5 in Dadaab and 103,000 in host communities;
- provided access to safe water to 1.09 million people (654,000 children) in drought-affected areas, and to 10,000 refugees and 122,500 people in host communities;
- assisted 15,000 households with cash transfers in seven drought-affected districts, providing approximately US\$30 per family per month to protect children;
- reached 50,046 refugee children with child-friendly spaces in refugee camps;
- provided education and boarding-school supplies and mobile school kits for 105,100 drought-affected children; and
- supported education access by providing over 49,000 children with early childhood development materials in refugee camps.

**In Ethiopia, UNICEF assistance to refugees and affected populations:**

- admitted 164,785 severely malnourished children (103 per cent of target) into therapeutic feeding centres and targeted 440,629 moderately malnourished children with supplementary feeding programmes in drought-affected areas;
- supported the response to acute malnutrition in Dollo Ado by procuring and distributing essential nutrition supplies;
- immunized 6.7 million children against measles (97 per cent of target);
- vaccinated over 43,000 children in Dollo Ado;
- ensured a sustained water supply for an estimated 395,000 people (63,280 children under 5) in drought-affected areas and 25,831 people (4,109 children under 5) in refugee camps;
- assisted 2,204 separated or unaccompanied refugee children in reuniting with their families or receiving kinship care (118 per cent of target); and
- ensured the continued education of 91,000 children (183 per cent of target) in 7 drought-stricken regions and provided education supplies to support over 30,000 refugee children.

**In Djibouti, with 20 per cent of the population affected by drought, UNICEF:**

- supported the national nutritional programme in treating 17,581 children suffering from moderate acute malnutrition and 5,836 children for severe acute malnutrition (97 per cent and 128 per cent of respective targets);
- vaccinated over 3,000 children against measles;
- provided safe water to 110,700 people (93 per cent of target);
- reached 700 children with cash transfers and school kits to improve livelihood and increase school attendance.

**Key operational inputs**

**In addition to over 800 regular staff involved in the response, UNICEF:**

- mobilized 248 personnel to support the 4 COs – Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia – and the RO from July to December;
- facilitated the deployment of 44 staff members from the region and 41 additional staff members from around the world;
- deployed 42 personnel from standby partners and seconded 4 staff from UNICEF National Committees (NatComs); and
- coordinated the deployment of surge staff in just 19 days (median) from date of receipt of surge request.

**With regard to supply and logistics, UNICEF:**

- purchased US\$87.4 million worth of supplies (local and offshore);
- benefited from the donation in-kind flights from various airlines to a total value of US\$1.4 million; and

- spent US\$15.4 million on offshore freight (air and sea)

**In response to the growing emergency, UNICEF mobilized the following resources::**

- received US\$405.7 million (or 95 per cent of total requirements), of which 69 per cent came from government donors and 28 per cent came from the private sector; and
- facilitated the visit of 17 representatives of UNICEF NatComs, including 14 EDs.

### 3. LEVEL 3 CORPORATE EMERGENCY ACTIVATION PROCEDURE AND SIMPLIFIED STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

#### 3.1 Summary

The activation of the CEAP for L3 emergencies was successful in quickly mobilising substantial resources from across the organisation, as well as donors and NatComs. The personal involvement of the ED added credibility to the L3 activation. The appointment of the RD for ESARO as the GEC was seen as appropriate, and he was credited with having performed well in the role. The RO performed well in coordinating the COs and with HQ and managed the communications traffic between the offices well. Coordination between the GEC and the Director of EMOPS worked well after an initial period of uncertainty. Roles and 'accountabilities' between the CO, RO and HQ were not always clear. The IRT was not deployed, which the RO and COs were relieved about, although not everyone agrees that this was the right decision.

#### 3.2 What went well

- ◆ The L3 activation led to arguably the fastest and certainly one of the largest emergency operations UNICEF has ever mounted. Funding, supplies and human resources were all mobilized quickly. The L3 activation was successful in focusing the organisation's attention on the crisis in the HoA. This represents a major improvement over some previous responses before L3 was put in place.
- ◆ Declaration of the L3 very likely resulted in greater mobilization of the organisation than would have been the case without the L3. Country Representatives offered to release their staff for surge deployment. Donors saw the L3 declaration as a statement of intent by UNICEF and probably rallied more strongly to the support of the organisation than they would otherwise have done.
- ◆ The ED played an important part in the success of UNICEF's L3 mobilization for this emergency. There was general agreement that the ED's personal, regular engagement in the emergency, putting his reputation on the line, led staff to feel all the more committed to ensuring that the organisation responded well. The ED's July visit to the region motivated staff on the ground and was critical in raising the profile of the emergency. His personal advocacy and appeals for funds with key donors were also important.
- ◆ The COs credit the GEC with skilled leadership of the response, backed by RO oversight and coordination of the COs and with HQ. The GEC managed to balance the imperative for action with ensuring that CO leadership was protected, stepping in on occasion to press COs to take certain actions he considered necessary. The designation of the RD as the GEC allowed him ready access to resources from across the organisation and well beyond his normal span of control.

- ◆ The GEC made sure that, as far as possible, all of the UNICEF Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs) were funded. For example, education, often underfunded in emergencies, was relatively well resourced.
- ◆ Country Representatives appreciated the freedom they were given by the GEC, especially given that they had already mobilized to respond to the emergency before the L3 declaration. Keeping control at CO level was also seen as important, given the COs' detailed knowledge of the country operating context and key actors.
- ◆ The RO was seen to have performed well in its coordination with HQ and 'traffic control' in handling two-way information flow between COs and HQ. The RO was also seen to have managed regional thematic funds well. RO management oversight by the GEC, or the Deputy Regional Director (DRD) on his behalf, on the whole worked well from the COs' viewpoint.
- ◆ The communication between the GEC, or DRD on his behalf, and EMOPS was frequent and worked well after an initial transitional period of adjustment.
- ◆ EMOPS was very active throughout the emergency, remaining in close and regular touch with the RO and directly with COs. EMOPS liaised with HQ divisions, including the OED, and coordinated with the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and the IASC Principals.
- ◆ Both the EMT and the ERMT were seen as valuable forums for exchanging information and ideas and for coordination. Good links were forged between the ERMT with the HQ EMT through the participation of the GEC and the Director of EMOPS in respective meetings.

### **3.3 What went less well**

- ◆ The timing of the L3 declaration was driven more by media attention than by humanitarian needs in the countries concerned. If the L3 timing had been tied to events, it would have been more appropriately declared in February or March 2011.
- ◆ It is questionable whether the L3 declaration was needed for Ethiopia and Kenya, apart from responding to the refugee crisis in both countries, which required significant and unexpected resources that both COs would have struggled to meet without the additional corporate resources that accompanied the L3 declaration. At the same time, L3 also brought some drawbacks to COs in terms of coping with frequent HQ information demands and many visitors.
- ◆ EMOPS' role, including its clearinghouse function for communications, was unclear to COs and other divisions at HQ, and there appeared to be competition between the RO and EMOPS. Role delineation between the GEC and EMOPS Director, moreover, took time, as did EMOPS' adjustment to the new modified L3 arrangements, and particularly to the GEC not being located at HQ. Given that the 'ink was not dry' on the draft SSOPs, some confusion was hardly surprising. It was the first use of the L3, and many CO and RO staff were not even aware of the details of the CEAP or the provisions of the draft L3 SSOPs.
- ◆ Staff at all levels of the organisation considered that EMT meetings should have had a more strategic focus. The meetings were dominated, especially at the beginning, by practical discussions of staffing, funding and supplies, to the exclusion of debate over strategy. At HQ, this led to the Programme Division (PD) and Division of Policy and Practice (DPP) lowering their level and frequency of participation, unsure what value they could add, which in turn led to their losing influence in EMT strategy discussions.
- ◆ Information sharing on the results of EMT meetings was not always efficient.

### 3.4 Implications of the Horn of Africa emergency response for Level 3 response

#### *Where the CEAP applies*

During the LLE, it has been said by staff members at all levels that the current CEAP was not applicable to the HoA emergency response because:

- ◆ *The CEAP applies to a single country emergency response.* The CEAP makes one reference to 'multi-country emergency', but otherwise does not take account of a regional emergency.
- ◆ *The CEAP applies to sudden onset, not slow onset.* There is no reason conceptually why this should be true, given that the purpose is to ensure an effective response to any major emergency that requires corporate mobilization. However, the CEAP is not clear on this point. It "applies to sudden onset or significant and rapid deterioration of an on-going complex emergency." Somalia qualifies as a complex emergency, but Kenya and Ethiopia (or only parts of these countries) arguably do not. There is no mention of slow onset emergencies.

#### *Immediate Response Team*

Given that it was not used for the HoA emergency, the IRT occasioned a good deal of discussion during the LLE. The decision not to deploy the IRT was welcomed by the RO and the COs, as the IRT concept is seen as a form of 'take-over' by HQ, while the non-deployment of the IRT was criticised by others because it came without an assessment from outside the region of UNICEF's capacity to respond.<sup>7</sup>

Although in its current form the CEAP makes IRT deployment seem like a 'take-over', the revised approved SSOPs go some way to dispelling the idea that the IRT is to be used where CO control of the response is to be replaced, rather than strengthened. The CEAP itself is not clear on this point. The CEAP states that the IRT is deployed "to support the Country Representative and his/her team," but also that the IRT leader "reports to the GEC, keeping CR and RD informed" – i.e., initially at least, the IRT leader is not reporting to the Representative, but rather is acting 'in support of' the Representative and keeping him/her 'informed'. This may explain why in this emergency, all COs were relieved that the IRT was not deployed.

Also fundamental is that neither the CEAP nor the L3 SSOPs explain what the IRT is for, beyond comprising "5–7 experts." The newly agreed SSOPs also allow for the IRT to "review needs based on initial information received and country capacity." EMOPS is in the process of developing a standard ToR, which can then be tailored to fit each IRT deployment.

The IRT members should play a key role in supporting the regional director to make judgements about how the CO capacity and/or structure needs to be amended in order to manage the emergency. This is now taken into account in the agreed SSOPs.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> In the newly agreed SSOPs for L3 emergencies, the deployment of a core IRT has become non-negotiable.

<sup>8</sup> SSOPs for Level 3 Emergencies.

### *Selection of the GEC*

The majority of informants and survey respondents agreed that the RD was best-placed to play the role of GEC, given the co-location of much of Somalia and Kenya's operations in Nairobi. The strength of ESAR in human resource terms at RO and CO levels, moreover, meant that the RD could call on resources already under his line management. Under the guidelines, however, the EMOPS Director is the default GEC, with no criteria outlining when an alternate should be selected. This first application of an L3 declaration, then, raises questions about precedent. UNICEF could usefully clarify the basis for GEC selection, taking, for example, the relative emergency management experience of the EMOPS Director and the RD concerned, and the capacity of the RO to support a regionally based GEC, as possible criteria.

### *GEC Secretariat*

Once the RD was nominated as the GEC, the RO front office, including the DRD and the Regional Planning Officer, effectively became the secretariat to support the GEC and to organize the ERMT, while EMOPS New York continued to organize and chair the EMT. The SSOPs do not specify who serves as the secretariat to the GEC, but assign some responsibilities to EMOPS. It was not clear if the RO was playing a global role, or a regional one. While the RO and EMOPS made the coordination work between them in this case, if the RD is again to be appointed as the GEC, this matter could usefully be clarified.

### *Chain of command*

The CEAP Executive Directive refers to the "need for a clear chain of command" and again to the goal of achieving "a single chain of command with clear delegations of authority." The CEAP states that for L3, "[the GEC] has direct access to RDs, DED and ED to resolve any bottlenecks." In the HoA emergency, the L3 procedure ensured that the GEC had ready access to resources from across the organisation and may have given the GEC greater 'clout' in dealing with affected COs, as well as the rest of the organisation. Beyond this, however, it is not clear that the chain of command was different than normal, or indeed any clearer. The 'single chain of command' deserves further explanation in the SSOPs. If it applies to establishing a different chain of command for the period of the emergency because, for example, the UNICEF Representative is not normally in the management line of the Director of EMOPS, this should be clarified.

### *Role of EMOPS*

Whether or not the Director of EMOPS is designated as the GEC, the role of EMOPS in coordinating communications to and from HQ should be central, and the SSOPs should make this clear. In this emergency, the effectiveness of the response was challenged by multiple uncoordinated information requests from HQ to the ROs and COs, which in future should be coordinated by EMOPS. EMOPS is best placed to be the primary communication channel to and from the field, but the EMT decision that EMOPS be the "main mechanism for information sharing and channelling requests back to GEC" is unrealistic in regard to information sharing, as there are simply too many actors in HQ, RO and COs to allow information to flow through one point. For example, DOC, PFP and CO external communications/relations staff maintained a regular and effective teleconference network which enhanced the overall effectiveness of communications and advocacy messages. Such networks are useful but cannot be allowed to generate tasks for COs which are not being coordinated by EMOPS+RO or EMOPS+CO, and EMOPS should be kept in touch with the results of technical network meetings.

### *'Step aside'*

The 'step aside' provision for the temporary replacement of the Country Representative was not invoked for any of the countries involved and so has not been tested. All CRs were kept in place, a decision no one questioned during the LLE. All COs acknowledged gaps or weaknesses in capacity during the LLE, not at the Representative level, but elsewhere in the office. This raises the question of whether it is logical to have a step-aside arrangement just for a representative. Consideration should be given to inserting a "step aside" provision for section chiefs, whose role in response is critical. The RD and IRT leader should work with Representative to understand the origins of any capacity gaps and make 'step aside' provisions in such cases for the duration of the L3 emergency.

### *'No regrets'*

By 'no regrets' UNICEF means the automatic deployment of staff and/or financial resources, over-deploying if necessary and scaling back these deployments if part or all of those resources are subsequently found not to be needed. The term has entered common usage at HQ and in IASC circles, but CO/RO staff had differing interpretations or admitted they did not understand it because the term is not self-explanatory. UNICEF should consider either discontinuing the use of the term or more clearly explain it in advance of the next crisis.

### *'All hands on deck' versus maintaining the 'normal' programme*

Some in RO and HQ assumed that an L3 declaration meant that COs would devote whatever resources were required to make the emergency response work, i.e., 'all hands on deck', given that the HoA emergency had been made the corporate priority. For KCO and ECO, however, the development commitments agreed with government within the Country Programme could not be put aside because of the drought emergency. Some of the surge staff brought into KCO and ECO were there to manage the emergency so that others could continue the regular development programme. Similarly, the RO acted to 'protect' the countries not involved in the L3. With 20-plus countries in the region, it could not afford to give all its resources over to the L3 emergency. It concentrated the bulk of its effort on coordination of the L3 emergency in its front office, with the DRD and team carrying a very heavy load for day-to-day management at the regional level.

### *Oversight, accountability and added value*

In the HoA emergency, the RO was active in its oversight responsibility, by, for example, working with COs to assess their human resource needs, and by providing technical support. Regional and HQ advisers, as well as staff in PD, however, were not sure of their responsibilities with regard to programme quality, and their inputs and advice were sometimes used by COs, and sometimes not. PD struggled to gain traction with RO and CO counterparts, and to identify entry points to provide technical guidance on the response.

Much of the HQ-RO-CO interaction took place through technical networks, some of which were very active, for example, nutrition specialists, supply officers and communications staff, each holding weekly or periodic teleconferences or videoconferences. In many cases, this provided a measure of 'soft' oversight, arriving at solutions in a collegial way within the network. Given that HQ-RO-CO lines of authority have been reviewed before, a pragmatic approach is to oblige a collective accountability among technical disciplines through their networks. In this approach, it is up to the specialists on one hand, and managers on the other, at different levels of the organisation to agree on the most appropriate solutions. The GEC is still ultimately accountable, but can then make decisions based on the best advice from across the organisation.

From a CO perspective, as pressure on those managing the emergency response mounts, every hour not used directly on management of the emergency comes at a premium. In these circumstances, the costs of absorbing missions and visits can only be justified when there is a clear added value. As a result, COs only want the most qualified people, especially those who bring a depth of knowledge and experience that the CO does not have. Deployments from HQ were also seen to have added value where the staff member could connect with peers and improve coordination with HQ while satisfying HQ information demands.

## 4. PREPAREDNESS, EARLY WARNING, EARLY ACTION

### 4.1 Summary

For Kenya and Somalia, early warnings did not lead to adequate response by the United Nations system, including UNICEF. By revising its approach to Early Warning Early Action (EWEA), UNICEF can ensure that senior management is aware of, and responds to, growing threats. The current recognised triggers for nutrition emergencies did not work to protect children in the HoA, partly because the triggers are not adequately predictive of the situation children will face as a result of a coming nutrition crisis. By the time famine is declared, it is already too late for children.

### 4.2 Early warning

The HoA region benefits from some of most advanced international systems and in-country early warning systems anywhere, especially for drought (for a summary of pre-July 2011 early warning signals, see *Annex 4* in the full report). As early as late 2010, these systems generated increasingly worrisome signals of a growing crisis.

As a result of internal and external analysis, then, by early 2011, all COs had access to evidence of a deteriorating nutrition situation in the Horn. The speed at which malnutrition rates increased in the second quarter of 2011, however, seemingly took all COs by surprise – according to one staff member, “the figures just suddenly jumped.” Even by mid-year, despite sharply rising refugee and IDP arrivals in Kenya and Somalia camps, the true magnitude of the crisis was not evident, and humanitarian actors continued to underestimate affected populations. For example, both the mid-year review of the Somalia CAP and the mid-year UNICEF Humanitarian Action Update (HAU) needed to significantly upwardly revise their beneficiary numbers just one month after they had been completed.

### 4.3 Utilization of UNICEF early warning

- While **Somalia CO** did not engage the EWEA system, in the year leading up to L3 designation, the country had been flagged in various other early warning fora, including: a high risk rating in the EMOPS ‘Top 15’; within the UNICEF corporate EWEA system; and in IASC inter-agency EWEA reports to which UNICEF contributes. None of these triggered an adequate organizational increase in preparedness or early response.
- **Ethiopia CO** used the EWEA system, but assessed that the drought response was adequate and so did not raise an alert.
- **Kenya CO** and **Djibouti CO** did utilize the EWEA system and raised alerts. The organisation provided support to DCO preparedness measures in response to the alert, but did not take sufficient action on the Kenya EWEA alert.

#### 4.4 Emergency preparedness and response planning

EPRP preparedness exercises helped lay the groundwork for improved government capacity in advance of the crisis. As a result, UNICEF COs largely consider that repositioning of stocks and partnership with governments was fairly successful. Reasons for inadequate stocks of some essential supplies can be traced to relatively modest planning assumptions on the part of individual COs, which envisioned assisting 25,000–30,000 people. These figures appear low compared with the numbers of people affected by the emergency, but 1) Ethiopia and Kenya CO played a supporting/supplementing role to nationally-led responses, and 2) planning figures reflect CO response capacity, not the corporate UNICEF response capacity for a major emergency. In practice, UNICEF was successful in quickly augmenting the CO response capacity in this emergency, once the L3 was declared.

#### 4.5 Early action

**Financing:** Overall, CO management tends to the view that UNICEF did what it could with the resources available in the first half of 2011. Initially, COs diverted development funds to kick-start the emergency,<sup>9</sup> until April 2011, when all COs received emergency funding from donors.<sup>10</sup>

**Sector response:** As early as November 2010, UNICEF COs were responding to a deteriorating water and nutrition situation. Ethiopia started water trucking in November 2010 and by April had shifted into emergency mode, enabling fast-track procedures related to human resources, supplies and contracts. In December 2010 and January 2011, the Somalia programme provided supplementary feeding to more than 20,000 severely and moderately malnourished children.

For Kenya and Somalia there is a consensus that there should have been a major international response earlier, and that UNICEF should have scaled up more quickly.

#### 4.6 Discussion

##### *Was the food security crisis in Somalia predictable?*

Somalia has been heavily dependent on external food assistance for years. International agencies have been progressively banned from working in AS-controlled areas since 2010. A ban was imposed on WFP in 2010. Together with the on-going conflict and mass displacement within Somalia, food shortages were inevitable. Coupled with the failure of successive rains, a severe food security crisis was predictable. Meanwhile, at the global level, the political emergency in South Sudan diverted attention.

##### *Emergency preparedness for major emergencies*

Country-level preparedness is typically associated with little more than repositioning of supplies, and does not oblige COs to assess how they would reorganize in the event of an L2 or L3 emergency. The absence of standardized procedures for RO and HQ emergency preparedness

<sup>9</sup> The amount of funding that COs are able to assign from other budget lines to kick-start an emergency response before donor funding is available is an important determinant for early response. The information on the levels of such financing from CO budgets was not available.

<sup>10</sup> Many donors were reluctant to provide funds for Somalia and LLE discussions indicated that one possible factor inhibiting earlier action was political pressure on the organization to limit its response there.

support, however, inhibits CO planning and renders the designation of an L2 or L3 emergency out of sync with current emergency preparedness processes. All COs facing a high risk of L2 or L3 emergency should pro-actively work with ROs and HQ to determine how best to shift into emergency procedures that require the smooth coordination of all three.

UNICEF planning needs to account for the different needs and capacities of various emergency contexts, and in particular, whether UNICEF is supplementing or replacing national capacity.

### *Emergency thresholds*

There are two internationally recognised thresholds used to initiate response to a nutrition-related emergency, neither of which triggered action early enough in this case. The first are the World Health Organization's (WHO) 'emergency' thresholds of 10 per cent GAM, plus 1 per cent SAM. These levels are routinely reached in the HoA, prompting WHO to adopt twice these levels as its emergency threshold – i.e., 20 per cent GAM and 2 per cent SAM – in Somalia. Breaching of even these thresholds is common and did not evoke any special reaction from the international community or national governments.

The second system is the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, which includes Level 4 – Humanitarian Emergency and Level 5 – Famine. While parts of Somalia and Kenya had been in Phase 4 in the second quarter of 2011, with calls for an international humanitarian response, only the subsequent declaration of Level 5 excited sufficient attention to mobilize widespread support from public and private donors. The Phase 5 declaration of famine, however, depends on adult mortality rates, by which time the mortality rates for children will already have reached catastrophic levels, making the declaration of famine even more of a 'too late' trigger for children than for adults.

### *Can UNICEF expect to prevent acute malnutrition?*

Some UNICEF staff consider that earlier action by UNICEF could have prevented Somalia from descending into famine. If UNICEF had scaled up its response in Somalia earlier in 2011, more children may have been spared from severe acute malnutrition and death. Therapeutic feeding, however, is more curative than preventive. Preventing famine requires addressing food ration and other social safety net mechanisms, some of which go beyond UNICEF's mandate. UNICEF must be clear about actions it can take towards prevention, versus those actions for which others are accountable and for which UNICEF must advocate.

## 5. HUMAN RESOURCES

### 5.1 Summary

According to the Division of Human Resources (DHR), to end March 2012, there had been 250 deployments to the HoA emergency. Deployment duration averaged 124 days (compared with Pakistan, 92 days and Haiti, 61 days), with a median of 90 days, and ranging from 4 to 364 days. According to ESARO, the average time for surge deployment processing dropped from 27 days for Haiti in 2010 to 19.5 days. By comparison, total number of surge deployments to the 2010 Haiti earthquake and cholera crisis was 378, and to the 2010 Pakistan floods 157. The chart above indicates that very few deployments took place before the L3 declaration, followed by a dramatic increase in August. Deployments peaked in mid-August, with the bulk going to Somalia (in practice to Nairobi) and Kenya, and with the RO receiving the third most.

### 5.2 What went well

- ◆ UNICEF successfully mobilized some 250 staff in a six-month period, both from within and beyond ESAR, to support the L3 emergency response.<sup>11</sup> Personnel deployed under all categories were generally seen to be of high quality, and in general an improvement on previous emergencies. IRT members performed well as part of the surge capacity.
- ◆ Agreement of standard ToRs in advance meant that appropriate staff could be matched to requirements, and the staff concerned knew what was expected of them in advance.
- ◆ COs sometimes felt pressured to take the first person offered but worked with DHR to ensure the best candidate for the role was deployed, which helped to assure quality.
- ◆ Surge deployments from other COs was much appreciated, as staff “hit the ground running” thanks to their knowledge of UNICEF and UNICEF systems.
- ◆ Surge staff stayed longer than in previous emergencies – the target was three months, although on average it was longer.
- ◆ Deployments of surge staff and standby partners was often quick, sometimes so quick that they found COs unprepared for their arrival. The average deployment time was 19.5 days, a record for any UNICEF emergency response.
- ◆ Standby partnerships were valued as a quick and flexible mechanism for getting skilled personnel to the field, although sometimes their deployment was slowed down by consolidated human resource planning.
- ◆ The GEC experienced no difficulty in calling on assistance from within and beyond ESAR, at least in the early stages. If anything, there was a surfeit of offers in the first weeks. COs in ESAR were very responsive to requests for immediate surge support and provided most of the initial deployments. (In all, 47 surge deployments came from within ESAR.)
- ◆ The activation of the emergency fast-track procedure was seen as crucial to rapid recruitment. (Given the red tape and time saved, managers want to know why more types of recruitment cannot be done this way.)
- ◆ The performance of the DHR emergency recruitment team was much appreciated. The decision to re-establish this team following the UNICEF Haiti review, reversing its dismantling in 2009, was seen as crucial to quick recruitment.
- ◆ COs, RO and DHR worked well together in planning human resource needs, including planning ahead for replacements for initial deployments. Human resource planning began before the L3 declaration, with the Operating Staffing Matrix activated on 11 July.

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<sup>11</sup> The sending offices from which surge staff were deployed were not interviewed as part of the LLE, so any negative impact on the capacity of the sending offices through being called on to support the HoA emergency is not included here.

- ◆ Internal staff redeployments within countries to strengthen the response were few but important in each country. (These are not counted in the surge figures.)
- ◆ A high level of commitment and effort was reported, with staff putting in very long hours.

### 5.3 What went less well

- ◆ There were occasions of staff arriving without an agreed ToR. Sometimes COs were slow to specify exactly what was needed from the deployment.
- ◆ For RO and HQ staff deployed in surge, it was not always clear who they were reporting to. They were expected to report to both the CO and their sending office.
- ◆ While highly rated for their technical skills, COs reported some drawbacks in using standby partners, as they are not always familiar with UNICEF systems, they are not always confident in speaking on behalf of UNICEF, and they are not able to make financial commitments on behalf of UNICEF. All of these are manageable with adequate role definition and management.
- ◆ Briefings from the CO for standby partner and staff on surge were sometimes missed in the rush to get them into the field.
- ◆ While there is an SOP for fast-track recruitment for emergencies, there is no fast-track procedure for the deployment of staff. Clearances, obtaining visas, medicals, etc., all took time. While the recruitment process might be completed in a few days, deployments could be held up for 2–3 weeks before staff arrived in-country. A rapid deployment procedure is needed to augment the fast-track recruitment procedure.
- ◆ There were sometimes delays in getting staff from the CO to the site, as a result of a lack of basic equipment (computers, radios, transport, accommodations, sleeping bags). Even the slow assignment of an email address could find staff remaining in the capital city for days before going to the field. SOPs and emergency preparedness measures could be adjusted to remove these blockages.
- ◆ While some staff worked very long hours, others did not – it was demotivating to see staff not engaged with the emergency going home at the normal time while others worked late.
- ◆ For some disciplines, there are too few personnel with emergency experience available. This was the case for health personnel, which seem to be in short supply, resulting in recruitment delays.
- ◆ While average deployment time was much improved, there was a spread in these deployments, with some taking just a few days and others taking much longer, even 3–4 weeks. As one survey respondent commented: *“staff were qualified but they took forever to arrive.”*
- ◆ Colleagues worked long hours under significant pressure for months with little break. Greater attention was needed to staff welfare, including support for stress management, rest and recuperation. While the mission of the stress counsellor from HQ to RO was appreciated, it was not adequate. Similarly, the UNICEF system of peer support counsellors were not successfully activated.
- ◆ Some Nairobi-based staff found themselves working very long hours for an extended period, without being able to go on leave, given that Nairobi is a non R&R duty station.
- ◆ The L3 declaration happened during the holiday season, when many senior staff away from their duty stations. Some surge staff were not sure why they were being deployed to cover for staff who remained on annual leave. Some staff returned of their own volition and others postponed their leave, and some have not had any since. Why some staff were allowed to stay on leave during an L3 was not clear. Some managers did not return, but stayed closely in touch with developments from leave, while others did not. There does not seem to have been a rationale behind decisions on curtailing leave or not.

## 6. SUPPLY AND LOGISTICS

### 6.1 Overview

UNICEF has developed its supply capacity and network to the point where it can quickly mobilize on a large scale, including taking on supply of products with which it has little experience. Logistics and supply monitoring were identified as outstanding challenges, in part because of the very challenging circumstances.

### 6.2 What went well

- ◆ UNICEF supply capacity procures more than US\$2 billion in supplies annually. This gives the organisation a major competitive advantage in procuring large quantities of various supplies. This was clearly seen in the HoA emergency.
- ◆ UNICEF supplies were scaled up massively for Somalia, with 10,500 metric tonnes of life-saving supplies for Somalia delivered to warehouses by 31 October 2011. By end January 2012, there was a total of 21,000 metric tonnes of supplementary feeding material delivered to Somalia. UNICEF also provided more than 90 per cent of the health supplies for Somalia.
- ◆ All COs consider the pre-positioning of supplies one of their greatest strengths in being able to respond quickly and scale up. Pre-positioning in zonal/regional centres was seen as especially important, so that supplies would be closer to the point of need, and UNICEF's presence was also very important for the monitoring of supplies. COs made use of pre-positioned supplies in the months leading up to the L3 declaration.
- ◆ The scale of funding for the emergency allowed flexibility in the use of different logistics options (air, sea and road).
- ◆ The supply operation benefited from strong local markets in Ethiopia and Kenya. The SCO feels there is potential for more local purchasing inside Somalia.
- ◆ COs showed initiative in adopting simplified SOPs for supplies, including: waiving of competitive bidding for local purchases, fast-tracking Programme Cooperation Agreements, fast-tracking supply payments processes, releasing PCA supplies based on a Note for the record, impromptu committee meetings the Contracts Review Committee (CRC).
- ◆ UNICEF secured free cargo warehousing in Dubai, valued at US\$750,000, from the Kuehne Foundation. This allowed a switch away from Mombasa as the main point of entry for sea shipments for Somalia to delivery to Mogadishu directly from the Dubai warehouse.
- ◆ There was good cooperation with freight forwarders in Copenhagen, Dubai and Nairobi.
- ◆ UNICEF supplies were an important element in UNICEF visibility, as in previous emergencies. A communications officer provided up-to-date information allowing the DOC to communicate on UNICEF supplies and develop clear messaging.
- ◆ In Denmark, emergency items and packing were featured in a live national telethon that attracted US\$20 million in pledges to the Danish NatCom and other Danish charities.
- ◆ 'Infographics' proved a powerful way of communicating on supply inputs.
- ◆ UNICEF was successful in negotiating with WFP, which had booked global production of corn soya blend (CSB) to the end of 2011, to release some of its orders to allow UNICEF to provide the product as part of its substituting for WFP food distribution in southern Somalia.
- ◆ Support from the SD was important and much appreciated by RO/COs. Among other things, the SD:
  - Utilised its warehouse fund to frontload procurement before donors' funds became available, which was crucial for early mobilization of supplies;

- Prioritised orders from L3 countries;
- Provided on-going remote support from Copenhagen;
- Conducted missions to the region, including two visits by the Director of the SD in July and December, the first seen as crucial in assisting COs to develop supply strategies;
- Supported the SCO in the very large scale-up of supplies for Somalia, and worked with the SCO to consider supply scenarios after the AS ban on 28 November; and
- Shared shipping movement data with COs on a daily basis.
- ◆ COs, the SD, PARMO and NatComs cooperated to secure unprecedented levels of in-kind assistance, especially free air freight from transport companies, valued at US\$2.98 million.
- ◆ Supply and logistics personnel (surge, TA, SBP) were seen by COs as competent.
- ◆ UNICEF succeeded in providing large quantities of supplies – CSB, oil, pulses – with which it had limited prior experience.
- ◆ In a potentially important protection innovation, UNICEF supported the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in providing ‘dignity kits’ for women and girls in Dadaab refugee camp, including whistles, buckets and feminine hygiene items.
- ◆ All COs had long-term agreements (LTAs) with suppliers in place before the emergency, on which they were able to draw. Where necessary, unit costs were quickly renegotiated within these LTAs rather than starting new lengthy tendering processes. Uganda CO also offered assistance via its LTAs.
- ◆ Regular teleconferences between the SD and CO supply officers helped coordination.

### 6.3 What went less well

- ◆ While UNICEF was successful in delivering large stocks of supplementary feeding supplies, because of the AS ban on UNICEF activities in southern Somalia, the bulk of the 21,000 metric tonnes of CSB remains in warehouses in Somalia, with uncertain prospects of being able to deliver it before its 12-month shelf life expires. UNICEF is now negotiating with traders in an effort to have the supplies delivered.
- ◆ The lack of tripartite status (UNICEF-Kenya-Somalia) of the SCO (UNICEF Somalia Support Centre) in Kenya complicated the clearance of goods through to Somalia.
- ◆ UNICEF experienced major supply and logistics challenges in getting goods into Somalia, including: having to work remotely, procuring goods from Kenya and moving them to Somalia, dealing with Kenyan customs procedures, delays in cross-border road movement, limited infrastructure in Somalia, flooded roads, check points, inaccessible airstrips (limited to deliveries of 5 metric tonnes when available); having to work through one main port in Somalia – Mogadishu – where there were significant delays, and goods moved slowly from the warehouse.
- ◆ A two-month breakdown of the UNITRACK warehousing management system affected all COs, especially the SCO.
- ◆ SCO needed, and still needs, greater logistics capacity, which was not adequate to the scale and complexity of the operation. There was no overall logistics plan for Somalia and no surge capacity for logistics inside the country. Warehouse management remains an area of concern.
- ◆ Delivery through Mombasa port was challenging. The port was congested and the Government of Kenya was not initially ready to expedite procedures for the clearance of emergency supplies – this took until late August to negotiate.
- ◆ No CO was satisfied with its capacity to monitor supplies, and the speed or accuracy of partners’ reporting on the use of UNICEF supplies remains a major concern. In Somalia, access and security concerns further restricted supply monitoring.

- ◆ Partnerships with WFP and UNHCR proved challenging. Supplies that were provided to UNHCR as part of bridge-building, which not always successfully (see *Partnership*).
- ◆ A number of cases of slow delivery of supplies were raised by COs during the LLE. Examples included cold chain equipment, WASH supplies, school in a box and post-exposure prophylaxis kits (delayed by the SD not initially understanding the way KCO planned to use them). Dignity kits took months to assemble because torches/flashlights were not available and eventually went ahead without them.
- ◆ KCO reported instances of PCAs being used to obtain supplies because the UNICEF supply process is slower than that of the partner NGOs, which led to UNICEF and NGOs competing in the market for the same goods.
- ◆ SCO reported that, while NGO partners were flexible and willing to scale up with more supplies, their capacity to manage these supplies was sometimes overstretched.
- ◆ Tents for learning spaces provided to Ethiopia and Kenya from Uganda proved to be of an inappropriate design.
- ◆ In-kind donations were not always coordinated with the SD shipping team, which was itself short staffed.
- ◆ The implementation of VISION tied up the time of many experienced supply staff.
- ◆ Charter flights were costly, up to US\$340,000 each, the equivalent of 100 tonnes of CSB.

## 7. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

### 7.1 Summary

The first major step to accelerate resource mobilization for the emergency came before the L3 declaration, with the preparation of an HAU, issued on 8 July 2011, requesting US\$155 million for 2011, of which US\$32 million was needed for the period July to September for priority interventions. Following the designation of L2 on 1 July, Emergency Programme Funds (EPFs) were issued to COs in July to support initial scale-up until donor funds were forthcoming.

With the declaration of famine in Somalia, it was clear that initial scale-up plans needed to be revised and that the earlier revised funding projections were inadequate. On 24 July, the HAU was updated to a funding target for 2011 of US\$299 million – almost double the 8 July HAU figure. Somalia requirements accounted for the majority of this increase.

## 7.2 What went well

- ◆ UNICEF generated US\$396 million for the HoA emergency response in 2011, with more than US\$250 million raised in three months after the L3 declaration. This was all the more significant in the current environment of shrinking humanitarian aid budgets.<sup>12</sup>
- ◆ UNICEF has strong programmes in the region, and a good rapport with governments and local representatives of major donors. This all contributed to donor confidence. UNICEF's ongoing presence in south central Somalia was important to donors. Survey respondents gave an 80 per cent approval rating for management of relations with donors, the highest for any type of partnership. There was also an 80 per cent approval rating for UNICEF advocacy with donor governments.
- ◆ The ED's declaration of the L3 emergency response and his personal leadership showed donors that UNICEF was taking the crisis very seriously and was critical in mobilizing donor resources. His intervention with ministers of Australia, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States is reported to have had an impact on their funding decisions.
- ◆ UNICEF NatComs played a vital role in mobilising resources, raising US\$103 million of private funds from their constituencies by the end of October 2011 and US\$134 million by the end of 2011, or 34 per cent of the total funding. A total of 12 visits for NatComs and their partners were hosted by RO/COs between August and October.<sup>13</sup>
- ◆ UNICEF COs reallocated Regular Resources to emergency programmes; ECO and KCO used this as their first funding towards the emergency response. In Ethiopia, flexible CO funds and early donor support meant that early scale-up funding was adequate.
- ◆ COs appreciated the role that the RO played in the management of the Regional Thematic Funds. This un-earmarked funding was allocated in response to requests from COs and proved especially useful in meeting those commitments to the CCCs that are normally harder to fund, such as education and child protection (including gender-based violence). Cash transfer schemes were also partly funded with thematic funds.
- ◆ The introduction of a carefully planned cash assistance programme for Somalia generated new donor support.
- ◆ Regular briefings for donors in Nairobi and Addis Ababa helped to keep them informed of developments and provided an opportunity to discuss funding requirements. COs, in collaboration with PARMO, were also able to quickly produce quality information products tailored to donors' needs and perspectives.
- ◆ In cases where there was a high level of confidence that funds would be received, and with the agreement of the Comptroller, PARMO created a grant and record of contribution before funds were received. This speeded up cash flow to COs.
- ◆ The SD pre-financed initial CO supply procurements before donor funds became available (*see also under Supply and Logistics*).
- ◆ Operations Centre (OPSCEN) bundling of situation reports into one email message provides an efficient delivery method for distribution to donors, which donors appreciated.
- ◆ PARMO and EMOPS developed a system to reduce duplicate information requests for donors

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<sup>12</sup> It was not possible in the LLE to obtain figures for how much of the post-L3 declaration funding has been spent on the emergency because spending figures at country level do not distinguish funds from development and emergency budgets, and also take the whole of 2011 as the time frame (in line with the Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) Report and HAUs).

<sup>13</sup> Australia, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States Fund.

### 7.3 What went less well

- ◆ Only with the L3 declaration did resource mobilization start in earnest, when earlier emergency funding could have helped to reduce the impact of the emergency. COs diverting Regular Resources funds could not cover the funding gap.
- ◆ Donors were not always ready to provide funding on the basis of the CAP and HAC, but requested updated funding requirements and information to contribute funds.
- ◆ For Somalia, funding was delayed by concerns over funding “getting into the wrong hands.”
- ◆ Donors made frequent requests for information, particularly in regard to Somalia. Even when donors had a presence in the region, their capitals still made requests for information through New York, doubling the work for COs as the same request was sometimes coming through both channels.
- ◆ In retrospect, the initial HAU update of 8 July severely underestimated needs, and highlights that, even at that stage, the scale of the disaster was not understood. Within three weeks, UNICEF funding requirements were doubled.
- ◆ UNICEF put significant effort into fundraising with Gulf States, with assistance from a Deputy Executive Director, but with limited impact.
- ◆ WFP continued to raise funds for areas of Somalia where it did not have access, and where UNICEF was taking on responsibilities for blanket supplementary feeding, but UNICEF could not publicly declare that it was operating in WFP's stead because it was still trying to keep a low profile for security reasons.
- ◆ The 28 November AS ban on UNICEF and other aid agencies required UNICEF to approach donors to direct earmarked funds to other activities, or even to other countries.
- ◆ In Kenya, one donor's major funding to WASH could not be reallocated to the emergency, owing to the strict conditionality that these funds be earmarked solely for development projects rather than being used for the drought emergency.
- ◆ UNICEF's application for a US\$5 million loan from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) took so long to process that pledges had already been converted to income when it came through, reducing the benefit of the loan.
- ◆ While EPF loans were timely, having to then find donors willing to repay was a complication for the COs.

## 8. SECURITY

The emergency response in the Somali region of Ethiopia, northern Kenya, and especially in southern Somalia were constrained by poor security. UNICEF has been investing in additional security measures in the region. The security management environment has been changing as country UN Security Management Teams take a more proactive approach to enabling programming in high-risk areas.

### 8.1 What went well

- ◆ UNICEF surged additional personnel to support security management in Kenya and Somalia.
- ◆ In 2009, the UNICEF Executive Board had made a special allocation of funds to allow security measures to be strengthened in high-risk duty stations. Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia all benefited, with Somalia receiving the largest allocation of US\$2.8 million. The process of improving security measures and equipment was still in process when L3 was declared.

- ◆ In Somalia, UNICEF worked to avoid having to use assets from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) for movement within Mogadishu. Following a visit by the UNICEF Principal Security Officer, UNICEF purchased two B6 vehicles<sup>14</sup> to allow staff to travel in their own vehicles.
- ◆ UNICEF chose not to have its office be in the compound occupied by the United Nations political mission in Mogadishu to lower the risk of attack.
- ◆ According to the UNICEF Principal Security Officer, the United Nations Security Management Teams are taking a progressively more solution-oriented approach to addressing security problems, rather than suspending operations in the face of security threats as before.
- ◆ In southern Somalia, UNICEF relies on an acceptance approach to security aiming to keep the security threat as low as possible by sticking to a purely humanitarian mandate and maintaining communications with local authorities. Attacks on staff related to UNICEF presence have been minimal.

## 8.2 What went less well

- ◆ Initially, there was only one “slot” for UNICEF international staff in Mogadishu. This has since increased to four as the security environment has improved, but this clearly remains a limitation.
- ◆ Security in the Dadaab camps in Kenya deteriorated significantly midway through the L3 response. Before October there were many high-level and celebrity visits. The kidnapping of two Médecins Sans Frontières workers on 13 October, followed by terrorist activity within Kenya itself, caused the security environment to deteriorate quickly, with a negative impact on both UNICEF presence and programming.
- ◆ Security for Dollo Ado refugee camps was also a concern, with, reportedly, an inadequate security regime in the early response period.
- ◆ UNICEF staff were sometimes deployed without basic security equipment. Some did not take the training on safe and secure applications in field environments, although it was recommended by the United Nations Department of Safety and Security.

## 9. PARTNERSHIPS

### 9.1 Summary

UNICEF built on its existing partnerships and worked successfully with partners to scale up its emergency response. UNICEF also expanded and added NGO partnerships in all countries. The management of PCAs proved challenging, as in previous emergencies, although COs showed ingenuity and adopted a risk management approach to minimise delays. Relationships with WFP in Somalia and with UNHCR in Kenya and Ethiopia proved difficult and delayed UNICEF's full engagement in supplementary feeding in Somalia and its engagement with the refugee emergency. UNICEF provided surge capacity to strengthen the coordination of the clusters/sectors it leads.

### 9.2 Government partners

As a non-operational United Nations agency, UNICEF's entire emergency response was predicated on partnerships. In Ethiopia and Kenya, UNICEF works with and through government systems, and, through its long-term relationship of trust with government, has influence over how government

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<sup>14</sup> Able to withstand small arms fire.

systems develop. UNICEF's rapid scale-up for the HoA emergency was based on these existing partnerships. One of the main lessons from this emergency is that the strategies pursued in previous years paid off in terms of increased capacity for response and reduced the impact of the drought on the most vulnerable.

### 9.3 Non-governmental organisation partners

Local and international NGOs were vital to UNICEF's emergency response in different capacities across countries. In Somalia, where government capacity is minimal, partnerships with NGOs provide UNICEF with its implementation capacity. In Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya, local and international NGOs fill gaps in national systems, either for coverage or speed of response.

In all countries, existing NGO partnerships were expanded and new partners brought on to increase UNICEF's response capability. NGOs showed ingenuity in expanding into new areas of programming. At the same time, all COs report that many of these NGOs do not have strong management capacities, making it difficult to quickly reach clear agreements on results and budgets and to get rapid and reliable reporting from them. Moreover, lack of staff familiarity with streamlined PCA procedures slowed down the hiring of new partners or expansion of current work.

### 9.4 United Nations partners

#### *WFP*

Feedback from COs was mixed on UNICEF's working relationship with WFP. ECO reports that the partnership with WFP worked well, while in KCO there were some difficulties because WFP found it hard to maintain the food pipeline to northern Kenya. In Somalia, the relationship has been somewhat more difficult. WFP declared L3 at almost the same time as UNICEF and was trying to re-establish itself in southern Somalia from where it was expelled in 2010. SCO staff felt interaction at the managerial level could have been better in working with WFP, and that its nutrition response in Somalia was delayed as a result, even though there was some good cooperation at the technical level. UNICEF was keen to maintain good relationships with WFP and so did not move ahead as quickly with its nutrition response as it would otherwise have done.

#### *UNHCR*

The UNICEF working relationship with UNHCR was not straightforward and all COs agreed that UNICEF needs to review how it works with UNHCR in refugee situations. The lack of a clear understanding between the organisations delayed UNICEF's scaling up its response to the refugee emergency.

Though funded, managed and reported under the HoA emergency response, the refugee emergency and the drought emergency were seen as separate by ECO and KCO. UNICEF struggled initially to mobilize support for refugees effectively. Although there had reportedly been discussion of events in Somalia and their cross-border implications between the COs concerned, both ECO and KCO would have liked to see more intelligence and regional analysis coming from the RO on displacement patterns. Six months on, UNICEF has established its presence in and support to Somali refugee camps.

On 27 October 2011, the ED of UNICEF and the High Commissioner for Refugees signed a joint letter on Strengthened Cooperation between UNICEF and UNHCR. The respective COs in Ethiopia and

Kenya are making progress in working together and, as country-level cooperation improves, this will build confidence and trust and provide positive precedents on which to build a revised MoU.

UNICEF needs a strategy for how to maintain a longer-term presence in Ethiopian and Kenyan refugee camps for Somalis. The Programme and Budget Review (PBR) decision of August 2011 to re-establish the UNICEF office in Dadaab as “permanent” was said to have increased UNHCR’s confidence in UNICEF’s commitment, but the medium-term presence of UNICEF in the current refugee operations still needs to be financially assured.

Of the more than 10 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in the region (peaking at 13.3 million), the 200,000-plus new Somali refugees received proportionately more attention both in the media, and in financial and programming terms. ECO and KCO considered that the media attention on the refugees led to a distortion of UNICEF’s approach, with resources allocation no longer driven by data on humanitarian needs. The condition of host populations around Dadaab and Dollo Ado is equally bad, sometimes worse, than for the refugees. For example, according to KCO, while the school enrolment rate was only 30 per cent in the Dadaab camps, it was 13 per cent in the surrounding community. Where host communities saw preferential treatment for refugees, this led to resentment.

In both Ethiopia and Kenya, the governments were uncomfortable with UNICEF using its regular programme resources to assist Somali children and women. UNICEF should be clear in its negotiations with governments that its mandate is for the rights of children in a country, not of a country.

#### *UNICEF–UNHCR–WFP Tripartite Agreement*

At the earliest stages of the response, the Principals of WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF sought to coordinate their efforts and jointly mobilize their respective organizations. With the agreement of WFP and UNHCR at the Principals level, the ED launched an initiative to create an agreement for the HoA response between the ‘big three’ United Nations agencies. The ED met with the country/regional heads of WFP and UNHCR in the region during his July 2011 visit. Despite the fact that COs invested significant time and energy in this process in support of this initiative by the Principals,<sup>15</sup> no Tripartite Partnership Agreement was reached. Moreover, FAO, OCHA and WHO reportedly felt excluded from the process. The time taken in trying to reach an agreement delayed UNICEF’s own 180-day plan. However, some informants reported that although the immediate goal of reaching the agreement was not achieved, important side benefits from the process of trying to reach an agreement, such as: for KCO, negotiating with the two agencies helped to sharpen its own planning process and has brought it close to an agreement on a joint strategy with UNHCR on refugee education; in Ethiopia, the dialogue with UNHCR has led to a better understanding and the possible development of a long-term programme agreement.

### **9.5 Cluster coordination**

UNICEF appears to have taken its responsibility seriously for increasing the capacity of clusters for which it has lead responsibility. UNICEF deployed a total of 15 personnel to strengthen education, nutrition and WASH coordination, including 9 for information management.<sup>16</sup> CO management seemed mostly satisfied with the UNICEF cluster coordinators. The UNICEF-led nutrition cluster

<sup>15</sup> At the same time, a majority of survey respondents agree that a joint agreement between the three agencies would have improved the emergency response (73 per cent agreement ranking).

<sup>16</sup> It is not always clear from the operational staffing matrix which deployments were for cluster coordination.

was reported to be working well in all countries, while the WHO-led health clusters are underperforming. In all countries, UNICEF is supporting WHO in its leadership of the health sector/cluster. For the sub-clusters of child protection and GBV, UNICEF support seems to have been variable across the countries, and the UNHCR-led protection cluster was either new or not performing well. Lack of funding for education has limited cluster coordination.

In Ethiopia and Kenya, sectors are either led or co-led by government. For example, the nutrition sector in Ethiopia is jointly led by the Ministries of Agriculture and Health. This has both benefits and drawbacks. It is positive in terms of national ownership, and having government in the lead means that the coordination of the response uses the full extent of the government system with the support of partners. It also imposes some constraints, as UNICEF is not in control of the sectors which under the cluster system it leads. Even though UNICEF can and does push from behind, government-led sector coordination often does not move speedily enough during emergencies.

COs feel that the detail of how the cluster system operates in their countries is not well enough understood by HQ. For example, in Kenya, clusters were not activated in 2011, as they had already previously been 'handed back' to the government through the formation of a series of government co-led sectoral working groups. Institutionally, and in working with OCHA, guidance on the cluster system is not taking this type of reality into account. The Government of Ethiopia relies on staff supported by UNICEF and embedded in the government to support sector coordination, for example, in the Ethiopia Nutrition Coordination Unit, where UNICEF staff have been embedded for a decade.

An important development is the growing use of sub-clusters in regional or zonal centres in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, which UNICEF supports.

For Somalia, the effectiveness of cluster coordination has been limited by its largely taking place outside Somalia, in Nairobi. OCHA was seen by SCO as having been too slow to establish inter-agency coordination in Mogadishu and inflexible on change. Conditions in Somalia was further complicated by an influx of organisations outside the cluster system, especially in Mogadishu, including the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Turkish Red Crescent and Islamic NGOs, many of which UNICEF had no experience working with, and which set up their own coordination structures. For its part, the Transitional Federal Government set up at least five different coordination structures linked to separate ministries.

In the health sector, there was an active informal regional coordination network, well supported by UNICEF and led nominally by WHO, with participation from other agencies, and including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For other sectors, regional technical networks seem to have played a less important role.

A November 2011 PD synthesis of lessons learned on the cluster approach highlighted key aspects for UNICEF attention. While released after this emergency response began, UNICEF appears to have already taken some points into account:

- ◆ *Separating cluster coordination and programme functions.* The majority of clusters led by UNICEF have dedicated cluster or sector coordinators in addition to UNICEF section heads.
- ◆ *Decentralised cluster coordination.* UNICEF has played a prominent part in the sub-national coordination arrangements, either leading sub-clusters directly (Somalia) or supporting regional/district government structures. The existence of UNICEF sub-offices is key to this sub-national coordination working. SCO reported that sub-clusters were hard to supervise,

as they are inside Somalia, and it was hard to maintain continuity. In more remote areas of Kenya, e.g., Lodwar, local authorities require support to co-lead coordination mechanisms.

- ◆ *Information management (IM) is critical for effective cluster coordination.* UNICEF has dedicated IM capacity to the clusters it leads in several cases.

## 9.6 Integrated sector/cluster working

COs consider that there is potential for more UNICEF cross-sectoral coordination, which they saw as inadequate in this emergency response. COs were clear that there is no consistent approach to integrated working, even where disciplines are organized under child survival. COs generated separate sector plans in their 180-days plans, but without consideration for how to provide integrated delivery of services. No guidance was forthcoming from HQ or RO on this matter during the emergency, although PD considers that it could have provided such advice, if requested.<sup>17</sup>

For integration to work, it must be supported not only within UNICEF COs, but across clusters and sectors, within the Humanitarian Country Teams, as well as at ROs and HQ. Moreover, integration is likely easiest at the sub-national level, where inter-cluster work is closest to the point of delivery and where sub-national ministerial departments or local governments are not seen as entrenched in political divisions as in the capital.

## 10. PLANNING, MONITORING, REPORTING AND EVALUATION

### 10.1 Summary

For the HoA, UNICEF implemented a pilot version of the HPMS. This represents one of UNICEF's first attempts to implement such a system. A majority of informants consider that the HPMS has improved the quality of UNICEF reporting of programme results, though the introduction of the system during the emergency caused some disruption to COs. COs consider that the system was not well adapted and was too complicated and demanding initially, and that the intense work required to adapt to an evolving system impacted on the emergency response. Many partners have poor reporting systems and were not used to reporting on results, as opposed to activities. UNICEF should establish minimum standards for reasonable expectations of data for reporting and ensure that all COs in high-risk countries are 'data ready' for an L3 emergency.

### 10.2 Strategy development<sup>18</sup>

Countries have pursued a variety of programme strategies, depending on their context, and building on their country programmes and on existing networks of partnerships with government, national and international NGOs, using pre-positioned supplies, etc. The differing approaches can be summarised as follows:

- ◆ Displacement inside Somalia – rapid and massive scale-up of the existing emergency relief operation, including moving into programme areas which UNICEF is not familiar with, in particular blanket supplementary feeding, in order to cover for WFP not being able to operate in the south of the country.

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<sup>17</sup> The same argument applies across clusters. The IASC has yet to make practical progress at the inter-agency policy level with regard to sub-national coordination, where inter-cluster working has the most potential (although it was originally part of the ERC's transformative agenda from April 2011).

<sup>18</sup> During the LLE, staff were very keen to discuss the HPMS, situation reporting and information demands. As a result, strategy development, needs assessment have received a relatively light treatment.

- ◆ Refugees recently arrived in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya – a rapid scale-up of refugee programmes and/or new interventions and partners (shelter, protection, social services);
- ◆ Host communities around the refugee camps in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya – social service assistance, nutrition and social protection;
- ◆ Pastoralist communities living in arid and semi-arid lands across the region – immediate life-saving assistance plus an acceleration and diversification of ongoing longer-term developmental approaches to strengthen resilience, including mobile health, nutrition and water teams.

Of the four countries under review, Somalia presents the most complex and challenging operating environment. Somaliland and Puntland enjoy relative stability and can employ similar strategies to other countries in the region, while the south of the country, being worst affected by the crisis, presents severe challenges: limited government capacity and reach; uncertain access in AS-controlled areas; high insecurity, especially in Mogadishu; transport constraints; very limited numbers of United Nations internationals allowed in the country; and “remote management” of staff and NGO partners as the way of working. As a result of this shifting landscape, UNICEF is required to continuously re-evaluate and adjust strategies as the operating environment evolves.

### 10.3 Assessments

Discussions and documents make frequent reference to rapid assessments undertaken by UNICEF, often as part of a cluster assessment and sometimes undertaken with government. CO Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plans (IMEPs) also make frequent reference to rapid assessments. The Government of Ethiopia keeps strict control of assessments and their results, while the Government of Djibouti would not allow an assessment to take place at the start of the refugee emergency. Overall, COs expressed concern that neither numerators nor denominators in their surveys were very accurate. The IASC inter-agency multi-indicator rapid assessment had not been finalised and was not applied in any of the four countries.

### 10.4 Planning and performance monitoring

Early in this emergency EMOPS introduced to the COs the HPMS, which comprised four elements: UNICEF programme performance monitoring, with high-frequency monitoring through partners, based on recommended prioritized indicators (2–3 per sector) related to the CCCs; field monitoring on quality issues of programme implementation; cluster programme and coordination milestone performance monitoring; and input monitoring. The HPMS focused on UNICEF and implementing partners but proposed, at the same time, that high-frequency monitoring on few prioritized indicators could and should be pushed at the cluster level to feed cluster programme performance monitoring, and that UNICEF as cluster lead agency should report on cluster performance.

While the HPMS provides a performance monitoring toolkit, it also includes planning tools. The HPMS was developed based on testing of initial concepts and selected tools in Haiti, as a more completed toolkit and approach in the Pakistan floods of 2010, as well as in South Sudan in preparedness mode, and then refined further by HQ for general application in major emergencies.

The introduction of the HPMS proved controversial and challenging. At first, it was seen by COs as too complex, with too many indicators, and requiring reporting at too frequent an interval. EMOPS, RO and COs debate and agreement of formats and indicators consumed considerable energy.

## 10.5 What went well

- ◆ The HoA emergency is one of few occasions when UNICEF succeeded in implementing the elements of a performance monitoring system.
- ◆ After hard discussions, UNICEF succeeded in agreeing on just 14 CCC-related core indicators and associated targets, against which to assess UNICEF performance in the HoA response, which was consistent with the approach proposed by HPMS.
- ◆ A majority of staff considered that data on programme results have improved as a result of the introduction of HPMS.
- ◆ After some confusion over SitRep formats, COs found ways to streamline them. The KCO SitRep, seen as a model report, was initially very time-consuming to produce. In July, the KCO's SitReps ran to more than 20 pages, but in time the weekly report was reduced to 5–6 pages and the monthly version to 12–14 pages.
- ◆ In Somalia, third-party verification has been employed to carry out the monitoring, which UNICEF, with few staff on the ground, cannot do. This good-practice example builds on previous experiences in Pakistan and has been incorporated into the revised L3 SSOPs. (SCO does not claim great accuracy for the information that the third-party monitors provide).

## 10.6 What went less well

- ◆ COs were unanimous that the time used in introducing the HPMS weakened their capacity to respond to the emergency. COs did not appreciate that the system was presented as a 'must do', while it had not been formally endorsed by UNICEF senior management.
- ◆ COs considered that the initial version of the HPMS was not suited to their operating contexts, because it did not take into account that the CO had on-going programmes which themselves proved part of the response. While the HPMS guidance is designed to be flexible and to fit with COs ongoing activities, this is not how it was experienced by COs.
- ◆ It took several weeks after the L3 declaration to get the 180-day plans agreed. A number of challenges were cited, some related to the HPMS itself, but most not: getting access to quality baseline data; agreeing on plans with cluster partners; agreeing on plans with UNHCR; discussions with WFP (for Somalia); vigorous debate between HQ-RO-CO over what nutrition figures to use as the planning base; disagreement with the planning assumptions built into the systems spreadsheets; debate regarding planning formats; and multiple rounds of comments on the plans from HQ, most of which COs found unhelpful.
- ◆ Matching of indicators from a variety of systems proved a challenge: from the CAP, the HAC, the HAU and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which need to be harmonised.
- ◆ The RO struggled to devise a regional report which brought together information from COs because indicators did not match between the countries. Given this mismatch, the initiative was discontinued.
- ◆ Both COs and RO consider that it was not realistic to expect offices to absorb a new system at the height of the emergency, which they found hard to adapt to.
- ◆ At the same time, as COs felt that the RO was imposing the system on them, HQ felt that the RO was resisting its introduction into the region and could have made use of HQ-RO-CO discussions to smooth the system's introduction. Interviews with RO advisers indicated that the office itself was not agreed internally about the desirability of introducing the system.
- ◆ Getting regular results data from government and NGO partners has been challenging, especially in the time-frames expected. Government data systems are often slow, with data being released 4–6 weeks after the event, and data are sometimes manipulated before being

made public. COs also highlighted that many NGOs do not yet have quality reporting mechanisms.

- ◆ Requests from OCHA for results information were a challenge. COs found it difficult to generate results tables initially, while OCHA making its information requests at HQ rather than CO level proved a further complication.
- ◆ All COs were concerned about the accuracy of data they were reporting, especially when it had to be turned around quickly, which, in practice, led to the use of 'best estimates.'
- ◆ Frequent, uncoordinated requests from HQ and RO for information with very short timelines proved disruptive for COs. On several occasions, communications were not well coordinated between the levels of the organisation. At points, the number of requests for information overwhelmed COs, which sometimes received requests for the same information from more than one point at HQ, and also from RO.
- ◆ HQ did not manage to coordinate its information requests to the field. It was reported that OED opened more than one channel of communication at the same time in order to obtain information for the ED, which caused confusion at all levels, and a 'race' to be first to report back. For its part, OED was looking for quick answers to queries, and went to whatever contacts might quickly provide the data it was seeking. OED expected HQ divisions to have details which were only available at country level.
- ◆ All COs said that they were frustrated by the lack of feedback received on how the information they had provided was being used.
- ◆ It took some six weeks to resolve the design of SitReps and results tables. The first SitReps with results tables became available in mid-September. Initially it was not clear who was responsible for the clearance of SitReps.
- ◆ COs struggled with the production of weekly SitReps. This meant that one report was just completed when it was time to start demanding information from partners for the next week's reporting, which highlighted the low state of data-readiness of the partners which could not generate basic results information (rather than input/output data).
- ◆ Where programme progress was not gradual but proceeded in bursts, such as with immunisation campaigns, staff felt under pressure that there appeared to be no progress between successive weeks' reporting.
- ◆ The 90-day report proved challenging on several counts: (1) In practice, the insistence on issuing the report within 90 days meant using data from 60 days after the L3 declaration, given the time required to compile the report and the lead time needed to receive data from partners, thus making it appear that less had been achieved than in fact had been. (2) There was considerable debate between CO-RO-HQ on the contents of the report, in particular the data included, which caused delays. (3) COs were not convinced that the 90-day report was being used: the report was not issued before later SitReps with more up-to-date information became available.

## 10.7 Discussion

### *Added value of HPMS*

Despite strong consensus at all levels on the need for a system to monitor performance and report on results, the way that HPMS was introduced undermined CO confidence in its benefits. While a sizeable minority of CO staff remain unconvinced of the HPMS' utility, EMOPS has been working hard to make the system more responsive to individual country contexts without compromising the need for the reporting of results on key indicators. So, while a reporting system is necessary, there is still work to be done to instil confidence in HPMS.

HPMS aims to make the best use of the data already available in-country. Agreeing upon which indicators are most relevant, matching data from government and partner sources, and filling data gaps takes precious time that is not available once a crisis strikes. High-risk countries, then, are urged to adopt the system *before* an emergency takes place. If UNICEF wants the HPMS to succeed, it will need to regard it as an organisational change initiative, with the concomitant attention and long-term investment required for such change. COs in chronic emergency-prone countries will likely need to implement HPMS on a permanent basis.

### *'Reasonable' expectations for information*

Soon after the L3 declaration, the ED outlined specific kinds of information about the effectiveness of UNICEF's response that he would like to receive on a regular basis, requests which required data that is reasonable for senior management to expect from any UNICEF emergency response. That some COs were not 'data-ready' points to how much better prepared COs in high-risk countries need to be for reasonable information requests from senior management – the same information which COs themselves should have on hand to manage the response.

There should also be a definition of the minimum data required, and at what intervals, for all L3 emergencies. COs should assess, ideally as part of preparedness planning, whether they can meet this minimum requirement and how they can close any data gaps.

As noted above, communication of results and data requests should be channelled through one clearinghouse. In the Horn of Africa response, EMOPS was designated this role, but felt undermined by other HQ divisions opening up separate channels of communication with affected COs and RO.

### *UNICEF Situation Reports*

While COs understood, in principle, the need for information to be shared across the organisation and with partners, staff in all COs questioned the value of SitReps, which largely were not used as a management tool in the COs. Lack of feedback from HQ or from donors on the reports further discouraged COs from ensuring their quality.

### *OCHA Situation Reports*

According to PARMO, donors rely on OCHA SitReps, which highlight cluster, rather than UNICEF results. In the LLE, there was some discussion around influencing OCHA to highlight UNICEF achievements in its reports. This is not realistic. It is OCHA's role to generalize results across sectors/clusters, and this is unlikely to change. UNICEF could more usefully lobby OCHA to pay more attention to children's rights in its SitReps, and provide OCHA with information on the overall

situation of children for OCHA to draw from. OCHA might be encouraged to acknowledge sources of data through footnotes as another means of recognising agency contributions to their SitReps.

### *Performance monitoring and the L3 SSOPs*

The revised L3 SSOPs includes points on performance monitoring:

- ◆ The SSOPs call for a “PCA for field monitoring,” in recognition that L3 emergencies typically instigate a need for additional UNICEF monitoring capacity.
- ◆ The L3 SSOPs also calls for the “realignment of Country Programme results framework,” by which the CO tailors separate Programme Component Results and Intermediate Results to the emergency response, which could then be reflected in any subsequent UNICEF appeal documents.

### *Evaluation and lesson learning*

The IASC inter-agency real-time evaluation (RTE) was on-going during the same period as the LLE, one of many evaluative exercises that SCO and RO in particular have been asked to take part in. KCO commissioned an ‘on-time’ evaluation from the University of Mount Kenya, now complete, and is in the process of evaluating its assistance to boarding schools. SCO is planning a review of its cash-based assistance. According to the HoA Drought Response IMEP, the centrepiece of the review and evaluation effort will be a “CO-led effort to assess its own progress during the response.” The five COs were committed to review emergency response timeline exercises “in real time” – completed so far by SCO and RO, while KCO held a Stock-Taking Meeting. On the planned “in-house performance reviews” allowing “immediate adjustments,” it is not clear whether this progressed.

For a planned after-action review, the RO substituted a regional timeline and lesson-learning exercise. This and other timeline exercises and LLEs conducted by HQ divisions provided important source material for this review, although the Reference Group for the LLE agreed that in future, lesson-learning exercises should be pre-planned and better coordinated.

Given the scale of investment in this emergency and the recurrent nature of the conditions which gave rise to it, the decision of the UNICEF Evaluation Committee not to commission a full evaluation of the programmatic results from this emergency is open to question.

### *Performance versus situation monitoring*

The UNICEF Haiti review (p. 25) noted a progressive “shift in focus from programme monitoring to situation monitoring,” and from this infers that managers were not being held accountable for reporting on results. In the HoA emergency, if anything, there was a tendency of the opposite. Once the performance monitoring systems were up and running, the reporting of results tended to dominate over situation monitoring and analysis, including regional analysis.

The organisation cannot choose between performance and situation monitoring. Performance monitoring is the basis for *accountability* and for *management*, while situation monitoring provides information on the status of children, as the basis for *advocacy*.

The monitoring and analysis carried out by UNICEF, UNICEF partners and by clusters provide important inputs to situation monitoring, but situation monitoring is outside and above the UNICEF programme and beyond the plans or performance of clusters. The idea raised during the LLE that clusters should do situation monitoring is flawed, at least from a child rights viewpoint, for two reasons: (1) there is no guarantee that all clusters will focus on children’s rights; and (2) the cluster response seldom represents the totality of humanitarian assistance, as there are other actors

outside the cluster, plus clusters often do not target all of the needs for that sector. There were cases in this emergency where, for example, a nutrition cluster was targeting a much lower number of SAM cases than the total in need. Unless the total need and the cluster target are not clearly delineated, it becomes impossible to communicate total needs versus cluster performance.

It is UNICEF's job to understand the total needs of children, the total provision available, and to advocate for closing any gap between the two. To perform this role, UNICEF needs to engage in both situation and performance monitoring, as separate but related functions.

### *Results*

Not all staff or partners understand the meaning of results orientation. All COs had data on admissions, but obtaining information on how many children had recovered – the short-term result of the feeding programme – proved much more difficult. The introduction of the HPMS is part of a broader transformation through which UNICEF seeks to manage emergency response not on the basis of activities but on the basis of results.

### *Data for accountability and for management?*

The large scales of funding that accompany L3 disasters require regular reporting on sound and timely data to ensure accountability to UNICEF's donors and effectiveness of UNICEF's response. In emergencies, however, UNICEF has not yet become an effective data provider, in part because of partners' limitations to providing quality and timely data in a crisis. The piloting of HPMS has helped to identify further ways of adapting the system to identify data needs and improve data flow.

## **11. ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **11.1 Summary**

UNICEF successfully positioned the emergency as a “crisis for children.” UNICEF had no advocacy plan for the HoA emergency, and is yet to integrate advocacy into its emergency response planning.

### **11.2 What went well**

- ◆ UNICEF did not create the awareness of the crisis but rode the wave of attention created by the international media very well. Despite media focus on the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya, UNICEF was able to take journalists into southern Somalia in the early weeks of the L3 response.
- ◆ While late to react, UNICEF started scaling up its public communications effort at least six weeks before the L3 declaration.
- ◆ From July to December 2011, 29 per cent of UNICEF's coverage to traditional media outlets was on HoA, to which the media monitoring and analysis company, CARMA, gave a “highly favourable” rating.
- ◆ In terms of communications, the L3 declaration helped to demonstrate how seriously UNICEF was treating the emergency.
- ◆ External communications were well coordinated between offices and divisions across the organization through an active network of CO and RO communications officers, together with DOC, PFP, SD and PARMO.

- ◆ While ECO was constrained in what it could communicate externally, the RO was able to act as 'spokesperson' on behalf of ECO.
- ◆ Surge staff was seen to have performed well, with many having previous experience in the region while others had been involved with the 2010 emergency in Haiti. Initial surge staff was replaced by a second wave of surge capacity to ensure no gaps.
- ◆ The ED's July 2011 visit to the region was key to raising UNICEF's profile and underscoring that the emergency was not just about Somali refugees. The ED's high-level, behind-the-scenes advocacy with key donors was seen to have influenced both their policy in the region and their financial contributions.
- ◆ UNICEF COs were able to influence governments to keep government schools in drought-affected areas of Kenya open during August 2011, for service provision and protection of children.
- ◆ As a result of the Government of Ethiopia's sensitivities about the word 'famine', ECO was limited in what it could say publicly about the emergency. Still, ECO was effective in its advocacy with ministries with regard to the use of mobile health and nutrition teams and community-based treatment of acute malnutrition, and persuading the Government to allow supplies originally designated for the regular programme to be diverted to Somali refugees.
- ◆ In all countries, UNICEF actively lobbied RC/HCs and HCTs to pay more attention to the emergency, in some cases months before the L3 declaration.
- ◆ For Somalia, UNICEF held a principled line within the HCT with regard to the use of AMISOM assets, based on a position paper it authored on the use of Military and Civil Defence Assets as a last resort.
- ◆ The 18 August Livechat and Livestream on Facebook and Twitter were seen by DOC as positive initiatives.
- ◆ NatCom communications staff was surged to a UNICEF office (SCO), an arrangement which worked well and which PFP is keen to replicate for future emergencies.
- ◆ PFP was successful in coordinating NatCom communications needs and ensuring that materials were quickly generated for them. In particular, PFP's coordination of 12 visits by individual and groups of NatCom directors was appreciated by RO and COs.
- ◆ The first UNICEF flight to Baidoa in Somalia, delivering supplementary feeding supplies (the first in two years), was seen by communications staff as an important public relations success, showing clearly that UNICEF was able to operate inside Somalia.

### 11.3 What went less well

- ◆ Neither UNICEF nor its UN partners were successful in convincing donors or the public of the seriousness of the growing emergency in the HoA until the crisis became a severe life-threatening emergency.
- ◆ In an effort to keep messages straightforward, the complexity of different country contexts was lost and more sophisticated messages about building community resilience to crisis was downplayed.
- ◆ COs struggled to accommodate donors, NatCom directors, journalists and celebrity visitors, which diverted attention and transportation/logistics resources away from the response effort. Donor visits were sometimes organized at the last minute, causing further logistical challenges. For their part, NatComs were reportedly frustrated at having to wait some weeks before visiting the emergency sites.<sup>19</sup>
- ◆ A deteriorating security situation negatively impacted SCO's ability to provide sufficient, quality and timely communications materials from within Somalia.

<sup>19</sup> NatCom directors were not interviewed as part of the Lesson-Learning Exercise.

- ◆ In the initial months, the corporate advocacy agenda was not well developed, leading to missed opportunities such as UNICEF's absence at a GA side meeting on HoA in October 2011 at which OCHA and WFP were present.
- ◆ ECO was not automatically involved in the final clearance of audio-visual materials that had been revised by DOC in a way that the Ethiopian government would find objectionable. COs must be included in clearance of statements and other materials that have direct bearing on their operations and relationships.
- ◆ Political and security sensitivities in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia mandated a lower UNICEF profile, and thus lower visibility of UNICEF's contribution.

## 11.4 Discussion

### *Long-term advocacy forms basis of influence*

The foundation of UNICEF's influence with governments in the region is its support of governments' long-term development. Governments in the region, however, tend not to prioritize marginalized communities. UNICEF needs to continue advocating for their social protection, while supporting emergency response capacity in marginal areas.

### *Managing visits*

At CO management level, the need for donor, NatCom, journalist and other visits to raise the profile of the programme and provide the necessary communications materials is well understood. Such visits, however, strain resources and systems at a time when focus needs to be on response. The management of these visits was one of the most hotly discussed subjects in the LLE.

Communications staff pointed out that media will continue to interview those humanitarian organizations with which it establishes contact first. Given the clear benefits in coverage, visibility and fundraising, UNICEF must ensure that communications staff are on the scene as early as possible, but in a way that does not disrupt the launch of emergency operations.

### *UNICEF communication on child mortality*

Early on, UNICEF issued bold statements on the potential scale of risks to children from the HoA crisis, but has since been silent on the question of how many children died as a result of the emergency. When USAID made a statement of its estimate of the number of people who had died in Somalia, UNICEF and other agencies reacted, saying that it was not possible to estimate the number of deaths.<sup>20</sup> UNICEF has also been silent on the number of children 'saved' by its own interventions or those of governments and humanitarian actors together. Does UNICEF not consider it part of its accountability to have a clearer idea of the scale of lives lost and deaths prevented, not to mention lives of children impacted through malnutrition, disease, displacement, and vulnerability leading to abuse or separation? Is the scale of lives lost and saved not part of UNICEF's advocacy for ensuring such a crisis does not recur?

### *Integrating advocacy*

While UNICEF was effective in several aspects of its advocacy, as noted above, there does not seem to have been any organized or structured advocacy plan for the HoA emergency. EMOPS proposed the use of the Advocacy Toolkit and introduced the Humanitarian Advocacy Template, partly in

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<sup>20</sup> The Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia estimated the numbers of deaths at "tens of thousands" – Press conference, United Nations, New York, 20 July 2011.

response to missed opportunities. The template, which may have steered UNICEF toward a structured and strategic approach, however, was never utilized.

### *For children, or for UNICEF?*

During the various interviews, there was no clear sense of the difference between UNICEF advocating for the rights of children and UNICEF raising its own profile and raising funds. This issue was also raised in ODI's Analytical Review. Advocacy, external communications and fund-raising all overlapped, and were intentionally and closely coordinated. This is efficient for UNICEF, but blurring of these lines runs the risk of promoting the idea that what is good for UNICEF is good for children – which could in turn undermine the organisation's integrity as a champion of children's rights.

### *Social media*

PFM and DOC report both successes and challenges in the use of social media during this emergency. UNICEF would benefit from a corporate plan for the use of social media in emergencies, and DOC is aware of the need to develop normative guidance.

## **12. LONG TERM VIEW: DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND THE RESILIENCE AGENDA**

### **12.1 Summary**

UNICEF's long-term investments in building the capacity of national systems to respond to shocks, such as strengthened social protection and the extension of health and nutrition services into vulnerable areas in Kenya and Ethiopia, helped to reduce the impact of the drought in those countries. UNICEF needs to build partnerships with organisations which are influential in the domains of risk reduction and resilience so that its programmes can have maximum impact in concert with others. UNICEF will need to continue to advocate for the establishment of these services in the most vulnerable areas, whose populations are typically also the least powerful.

### **12.2 Risk reduction: Emergency response vs. development programming**

COs perceive their longer-term development strategies – not their interventions in response to the L3 emergency – as more effective in bolstering national capacity for emergency preparedness and reducing the impact of future emergencies. KCO in particular noted the link between national capacity development and the capacity of communities to resist the impact of the drought as an important factor in staving off famine despite the worst drought in 60 years. On the other hand, the fact that GAM rates reached 30 per cent in the area and that special measures were required to shore up these systems shows that they are not yet strong enough to prevent another crisis from occurring. Some areas for suggested improvement include increased local procurement of supplies to bolster local markets, as well as more effective and relevant capacity building interventions for NGO partners.

### 12.3 UNICEF's emerging resilience agenda

The increased corporate focus on building resilience translated into deployment of dedicated experts on DRR, capacity development and peace-building to contribute to a water and sanitation project in Kenya. In Ethiopia, building capacity to address malnutrition at national and sub-national levels is already combined with UNICEF-sponsored mobile health/nutrition units and the government-led Health Extension Programme to deal with immediate hazards. These multidisciplinary and integrated approaches may offer models for good practices as they begin to show impact.

Until recently, UNICEF has not been a thought or practice leader on building resilience but is now helping to lead the United Nations approach to resilience. UNICEF needs to connect to other actors and partnerships to exert influence. Reducing risks for children will require a multi-stakeholder approach. UNICEF can support government DRR and other resilience measures, but only in association with FAO, UNDP, the World Bank, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) system.

In the LLE inter-office/division video teleconference on this subject, staff considered that the organisation already has enough analytical frameworks and does not need to develop another in order to 'build resilience'. However, the resilience agenda was seen as providing an opportunity to bring together existing development and humanitarian frameworks. UNICEF's approach to 'risk-informed programming' will require multi-hazard risk assessment as part of UNICEF situation analysis. In the case of HoA L3 countries, however, the risks are already well understood and the issue is more one of turning concepts into implementation with partners.

Where conflict dynamics are present, UNICEF's growing investment in conflict sensitivity and peace-building will be important ingredients in its resilience-building approach. Here, different partners with conflict expertise will be important, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), IRC and International Alert.

As the LLE shows, UNICEF has its own good practice in building resilience on which to draw. UNICEF has recently drafted a paper, "Building Resilience for Children" (undated), which focuses on strengthening governance, adapting basic social services and strengthening social protection, as three areas of intervention it is already supporting and can support further. FAO, WFP and UNICEF have also jointly drafted a resilience strategy for Somalia, along similar lines but also including the "strengthening of productive sectors for different livelihoods."

## 13. FURTHER OBSERVATIONS

### 13.1 Summary

UNICEF did not appear to have any concerted strategy for communicating with people affected by the HoA emergency. UNICEF needs a strategy to allow it to fulfil its IASC commitments to accountability to affected people. UNICEF needs to recognise the limits of subsidiarity in ensuring that UNICEF COs are properly equipped to respond to emergencies. UNICEF still suffers from bureaucratic systems that constrain emergency response and should ensure that adequate technical support is available to prevent procedures from slowing the response. UNICEF does not have an understanding of the cost-effectiveness of its emergency programmes, or any way of analysing it.

### 13.2 Communication with and accountability to affected people

Much as in past emergency responses, community participation and feedback within the response appears to have been largely overlooked. This is notable given the efforts being made by other agencies to use radio communications in Dadaab camp and given NGO efforts, some of them UNICEF partners, to put in place mechanisms for accountability to affected people. If UNICEF is engaged with these initiatives, it was not raised during the LLE. Rather, accountability to beneficiaries was discussed very little during the LLE, either as a success or a challenge. In the survey, “consulting affected people/communities” received a 65 per cent approval rating, the lowest of the 24 functions surveyed. There were no reports of COs having instituted mechanisms, systematic or otherwise, to listen to feedback from affected people; C4D seems to be an underdeveloped area for all COs.

A task team of the IASC Sub-Working Group on the Cluster Approach is developing practical measures for the implementation of the five commitments via an Operational Framework. Adopting such measures will require extra resources but, equally, will bring benefits in UNICEF being able to further implement its human rights-based approach through stronger communication to and from affected people. It also has the potential to significantly improve programme performance using inputs and feedback from the community itself.

### 13.3 Limits of subsidiarity

In this emergency, management of the emergency was left to the COs, with oversight by the RO. In every CO, staff spoke about one or more capacity gap in the emergency response. Offices raised gaps in external communications, WASH, logistics, child protection and operations, due to vacant posts, insufficient capacity, staff at too junior a level, and, in all COs visited, at least one team that was underperforming in the emergency. In all offices, there was a middle-management position remaining unfilled through a medium-term recruitment ‘blockage’, which was not being resolved. These examples show that subsidiarity has its limits. The CO has not plugged these gaps, or asked for them to be filled. Nor has the RO succeeded in remedying them. Therefore there is a role for a third party, for example the IRT leader, to work with the RD and Representative to make a staffing plan which gives the offices the best chance of meeting all of the CCCs. A reliable L3 response depends on ensuring that the appropriate level of skilled human resources are in place, however awkward this might be for individual offices or teams.

### 13.4 UNICEF bureaucracy

Both in interviews and in the survey, the challenges of working with UNICEF bureaucracy were highlighted, as in previous emergencies. Nevertheless, in practice, UNICEF staff found ways to streamline the UNICEF bureaucracy, especially in supply, PCAs, CRCs, etc. These practices deserve careful documenting and review so that other emergency responses can benefit. Not all of these 'work arounds' represent good practice. Both COs and HQ mentioned the use of PCAs in place of SSAs as a means of contracting services using a single source. Not only does this compromise contractual procedure, but it can also increase costs through the addition of indirect and direct support costs. As long as COs feel they lack streamlined ways of concluding SSAs, they will be tempted to use the PCA option.

In this emergency, the lead-up to the implementation of, and the switch to, the UNICEF VISION ERP system took many experienced staff away from programme implementation over a long period (not just the emergency programme). This should not be required again with regard to VISION, but UNICEF should ensure that such disruption does not happen in future to offices implementing an L3 emergency response.

UNICEF should ensure that in an L3, it properly resources the bottlenecks identified in this report so that unnecessary delays in the emergency response do not occur. In the HoA emergency, the management of performance data and reporting, the processing of PCAs, support to donor and other high-level visits, the management of meetings, logistics, handling HQ queries, and coping with evaluation and related exercises, were all identified as bottlenecks. In response, some of these challenges have already been addressed in the SSOPs approved in March 2012.

As the Somalia case has shown, when lives are at stake, risks have to be taken. Faced with a similar crisis, UNICEF offices will again have to find creative ways to minimise delays and move materials into the field, whether the organization has further streamlined its emergency procedures or not.

### 13.5 Cost-effectiveness

While performance monitoring was much discussed in the LLE, the monitoring of cost-effectiveness came up very little. Two examples were cited:

- ◆ There was concern over the very high costs of air freight for shipments to Somalia – the cost of delivery equalling the cost of the supplies – but it was seen as the only way to get supplies in quickly, and was gradually phased out through a planned and conscious move to road and sea transport.
- ◆ A second area where costs caused concern was water trucking, seen as both very costly and not sustainable. Again, however, in the acute phase of the emergency, there was seen to be no immediate alternative. The only alternative would have been an earlier investment in water systems to prevent or reduce water shortages.

UNICEF has no model for understanding or improving the cost-effectiveness of its emergency interventions. As financial resource constraints for emergency response and donor scrutiny increase, this could become a strategic weakness for the organization.

UNICEF uses its tendering processes and power in the market for certain products to make cost-effective purchases, including the use of local purchasing where cost-effective. Otherwise the organization does not seem to be explicitly considering cost-effectiveness or to have instituted a

review of cost-effectiveness in its monitoring systems. In theory, an earlier emergency response would have been a lower-cost one.

Controlling the costs of inputs is as much a matter of efficiency, which requires instead consideration of *alternative means* of delivery, as anything else. Clearly, there are pros and cons to be weighed in all of cases. On the macro scale, emergency preparedness is significantly more cost-effective than emergency response – over and above being more effective in saving more lives.

## 14. CONCLUSION

This Lesson-Learning Exercise has been able to document what went well, and what went less well in UNICEF's response to the HoA emergency, based on the input, reflections and discussion between the UNICEF staff involved. From the consultations, it has been possible to draw together lessons learned. The limited time frame and small team assigned to the task has set limits to the report's information gathering and analysis. However, should the organization choose to accept and act on them, the recommendations offered provide opportunities for improvement in: (1) UNICEF's systems, processes and procedures for its preparedness and response to major emergencies; (2) its approach to the chronic emergency conditions prevalent in the HoA; (3) coherence and efficiency through inter-sector coordination; and (4) improved cooperation and engagement between COs and ROs, and with HQ.

