

**UNICEF**  
**International Day of Peace**  
**21 September 2003**  
**Summary of Activities**  
**Received as of 14 Oct 2003**

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As of 14 October, the summary reports of the following Offices are available:

- UNICEF Headquarters
- Afghanistan
- Guinea
- Indonesia
- Kosovo
- Nepal
- Somalia
- Sudan

## **UNICEF Headquarters**

### **Launch of the Map of Programmes for Adolescent Participation During Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations**

On the occasion of the International Day of Peace UNICEF released a 'Map of Programmes for Adolescent Participation During Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations.' The 'Map' is an information sharing tool that documents the participation of adolescents in community development and peace-building activities during conflict and post-conflict situations. The 'Map' represents the work of a broad spectrum of partners, including NGO's, UN agencies, governments, community leaders, teachers, parents and most importantly, young people. Also included in the 'Map' is a list of youth groups and networks to engage young people in issues related to adolescent participation during conflict and post-conflict situations world-wide.

The 'Map' is intended to encourage networking, information sharing and collaboration among colleagues working with adolescents in war-affected countries, and to generate new activities promoting young people's participation. In addition to serving as an information-sharing tool, the 'Map' will inform and assist the development of "good practices" for adolescent involvement in community development and peace-building, by providing examples of successful programmes that may serve as role models for replication in other conflict situations.

The initiatives described in the 'Map of Programmes for Adolescent Participation During Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations' demonstrate how young people's participation in community life can develop their capacity and potential, especially during times of social conflict and crisis. A key element of adolescent participation is the provision of opportunities for young people to express themselves, contributing their voice, opinions and ideas to the social dialogue. With adult guidance and access to necessary resources, young people can become agents for change in their communities contributing to a more just and peaceful society.

Please note that the 'Map' will be updated periodically.

## **AFGHANISTAN**

### **UNICEF Welcomes Afghanistan's accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict**

**Kabul, 21 September 21**

In a well attended ceremony involving diplomats, UN agencies, human rights groups, humanitarian organizations, civil society groups and a representation of Afghan children, UNICEF joined the Government of Afghanistan in marking the country's full accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. The entry into force of this Optional Protocol, the final stage of which will formally take place at the United Nations in New York on 23 September, signifies the commitment of the Islamic Government of Afghanistan to the upholding of a core right of every child; that to protection from involvement of children in armed conflict. The proclamation of the OP by the Afghan government today is part of the celebration of the International Day of Peace.

The legislative provision as established in the Presidential Decree made in May 25, 2003 sets the age of voluntary recruitment into the Afghan National Army at 22 years is an essential step towards stopping child recruitment in Afghanistan. On behalf of the Afghan government, the Deputy Minister of Justice, Mr. Qasem Mohammed Hashim-Zai affirmed the Afghan government's commitment that children will not be recruited into the new Afghan National Army. He stated that "The age of recruitment into the Afghan National Army is 22 years and we will ensure that NO child will ever be recruited into our forces."

In his statement, the Acting UNICEF Representative, Dr. Waheed Hassan posited that "The use of children by fighting forces is a tragedy and moral dilemma. UNICEF condemns the use of children as soldiers by all armed groups and will urgently support the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan to demobilize an estimated 8,000 child soldiers and will ensure that all child soldiers will be provided with adequate support for their rehabilitation and reintegration into their communities."

In his closing statement, a 14 year Afghan child thanked the government for taking the bold step in legislating against the recruitment of children into the Afghan National Army. He made a passionate plea to all fighting forces for the guns to be silent in order to have PEACE in Afghanistan.

## GUINEA

In the Republic of Guinea the UNCT jointly developed the plan of action with the 4 major activities listed below. The Resident Coordinator (RC) OIC and the Representative met with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to request that the Government approve that from next year the 21 Sept will be an annual event in Guinea. The Secretary General agreed and informed the UNICEF Office that only a formal written request would be needed.

Regarding the activities listed below only activity 4 (the radio interview) did not take place because the UNICEF Office was unable to meet with the Secretary general prior to the 21 Sept.

Le CR/H/SNU souhaite donner à la célébration de cette journée un éclat particulier. Il nous demande de proposer à l'attention des Chefs d'agence un "programme vigoureux et réaliste" y afférent. Je me suis retrouvé avec John Brittain et, ensemble, nous en avons bâti un. Il s'articule autour des activités ci-après :

- 1) - Faire enregistrer par M. Amaning la Déclaration du SG/NU et procéder à sa diffusion multimédia les 20 et 21 courant ;
- 2) - Organiser, le 20 courant, une conférence de presse sur le thème central "SNU et consolidation de la paix dans la sous - région ouest africaine". Animation : les Chefs d'agence notamment le Resp Rep et Représentants UNICEF, HCR, PAM, OCHA ;
- 3) - Organiser un reportage multimédia sur le projet UNICEF basé à Kissidougou et intitulé "Démobilisation des enfants soldats". Résultats attendus : 6 articles de presse (+ photos); 2 compte rendus radio + TV (à publier dans la semaine du 15 septembre) ;
- 4) - Organiser dans l'émission radiophonique "TRIBUNE" un débat sur la Paix. Invités vedettes : Resp Rep et/ou Représentant UNICEF (enregistrement et première diffusion dans la semaine du 15 courant).

## **INDONESIA**

### **Letter Writing Competition and Children Dialogue**

Working closely with the National Library of Maluku Province, UNICEF organized a letter writing competition for elementary, junior and senior high school students from both Christian and Moslem communities in 23 villages surrounding Ambon City and Ambon Island. UNICEF-supported Mobile Library has been servicing these villages for almost a year as part of a peace building initiative in Maluku.

Students were requested to write letters on "Peace" to their village leaders, Mayor of Ambon, or the newly elected Governor of Maluku. 527 letters were received and a winner from each village was invited to attend a dialogue on 'Children's Participation in Strengthening the Role of the Library' on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2003. Three parallel dialogues were conducted for elementary, junior and senior high school students with a total number of seventy-five participants in each group. Interesting inputs are received from students including the suggestion to establish a 'Library Club' with activities such as book discussions and exchange visits between Moslems and Christians at each other's libraries.

When the conflict started over 3 years ago, the National Library was one of the few places that were declared a 'neutral zone', where both Moslem and Christian community members could meet as one, instead of the 2 segregated areas that demarcated community members from both religious groups.

Since the 21<sup>st</sup> of October falls on a Sunday, it was decided that the event was to be held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October where 225 students gathered in the national library with three winners reading their letters to the Secretary of the Governor of Maluku, who in turn gave an official speech from the Governor who could not attend the event. Overall, attending students voiced their wish that the government will be able to maintain peace in the region after two years of conflict that have caused so many casualties. The occasion had its emotional moments such as during the letter reading where many guests as well as the winners were in tears.

All letters received have been compiled by the Library and will be published as a book.

### **U-15 Mini Football Competition**

Using sport as media of peace, The Indonesian Football Association, in co-ordination with UNICEF, organized a mini football competition at Lapangan Merdeka (Freedom Field) in Ambon, Maluku. The field has also been functioning as one of the initial 'neutral' meeting points. Forty teams from villages surrounding Ambon City participated in the competition held on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September with the first match kicked off at 8am and the last one finished at 6pm.

All activities were covered by local newspapers (Suara Maluku, Siwalima, Ambon Express, Info Baru) national one (Kompas), the English daily newspaper Jakarta Post and also by state television (TVRI).

## NEPAL

### *“The day the bells tolled for peace....”*

For more than two minutes on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September, millions of Nepalis from the cities to the towns and villages were tied together in mind and spirit as they rang bells for peace. Across the country they rang from individual homes, temples, schools, offices, from the market place, from the streets, in the hills, plains and valleys. As soon as the national radio broadcast the cue—the midday chiming of the clock tower in central Kathmandu—they started ringing whatever they could lay their hands on. Grandmas went to rooms of worship and rang *pooja* bells chanting mantras for peace, while elderly men blew conch shells. Some went to their balconies and terraces to ring bells. Many people poured into the streets around noon, their ears glued to radios, waiting for the cue to start clamouring for peace.

Little boys and girls clanged the enormous temple bells. Some blew whistles, others jangled keys, and many others banged kitchen utensils. Many office-goers carried bells to work. Those who didn't rang the electric office bells and sirens. They rang up friends, sent SMS messages, or simply dialled # 163 to make their telephones ring automatically. Some used fountain pen caps as whistles, some tapped on cups and glasses with pencils or spoons.

In the streets, bicycles, motorbikes, rickshaws, cars, buses and other vehicles rang their bells or honked their horns continuously for two minutes. Farmers clanged their sickles to metal electric poles. Shopkeepers rattled the corrugated metal shutters of their shops. People blew, beat and shook traditional musical instruments - cymbals, drums, wind chimes, cow bells, or longhorns. And if they could not lay hands on anything, they clapped their hands, whistled or just shouted.

Whatever means they used, they made noise, at the same time. All people bound together in the same wavelength... all wishing for peace. Many people, moved by the spirit of the event, said that they had goose pimples while they were ringing the bells. Many, mostly schoolchildren, continued to ring bells for five minutes and more.

Media reports showed the massive participation of people in making their pleas for peace heard. But the poignancy of the campaign was the participation from nearly every hoe in the cities and towns at least. Solitary bells being rung from one home to the next, where yet another Nepali was fervently shaking a bell, trying to ring in peace.

Ringling Bells for Peace was a campaign proposed by the Steering Group of the National Coalition for Children as Zones of Peace to celebrate the International Day of Peace (UNICEF is supporting the Coalition by acting as the Secretariat at the central as well as regional levels). The Coalition was launched a month earlier, on 20 August, a day before the National Children's Day. The campaign gained more significance after the 7-month old ceasefire was broken. A symbolic action of trying to bind all Nepalis into the same wavelength by ringing bells was thought to have more significance in the country as Nepali cities and towns abound in temples and therefore bells. Bells are rung in homes during religious ceremonies to invoke the gods.

Anyone who heard of the campaign was captivated and excited by the novelty of the idea of getting as many Nepalis to ring bells at the same time.

An important factor for the Coalition was to maintain impartiality, of not being owned, coordinated or managed by the government or any one party. It was a challenge that curbed the reach of the campaign a bit, but the word spread nevertheless.

The way to get as many Nepalis to participate in the bell-ringing campaign was to spread the message over the radio waves, reinforced by messages through newspapers and television. The national Radio Nepal gave the campaign a head start by agreeing to beam the 12 o'clock chime as the cue to ring bells. Promotional spots (including 2-minute spot to be aired at 12 o'clock) were prepared and shared by the Coalition with the radio, urban and rural FM stations as well as TV stations. Advertisements were prepared for newspapers. Fliers were printed and dispatched to the regions for distribution. All this was supported by the countrywide networking of the 24 Coalition partners, who relied on their local partners, youth and child clubs, community organisations, local NGOs, local authorities, social workers and journalists to ensure that a maximum number of people were reached.

The cooperation from the media houses helped in making the campaign a success. While some offered to air the promotional activities free of cost, the rest gave massive discounts on advertisements. As September 21 drew near Coalition members were being interviewed over the FM stations, and radio and video jockeys added more mileage by talking about the event in their shows.

The three days of *bandh* (shutdown) called by the Maoists from 18-20<sup>th</sup> September, when the country virtually ground to a halt, put extra pressure on the team to deliver. However, with less events happening, the media could also afford to give more coverage about the bell-ringing campaign.

On September 21, most of the country woke up to a wet and overcast morning. However, as the morning wore on, the downpour stopped, and the sun shone through - setting the stage to help raise the sounds of the pealing bells to the heavens...

*rupa joshi*

## SOMALIA

UNICEF Somalia Representative Jesper Morch joined on September 21 with Somaliland administration officials to celebrate the International Day of Peace in Hargeisa, Northwest Somalia ('Somaliland'). The main festivities were held at Hargeisa stadium, which had previously been rehabilitated through a joint effort by UNICEF, the Somaliland administration, and community members who made financial contributions. To mark the Day sports tournaments were held and among activities were a regional football tournament, marathon and sprint races. Peace Day trophies were presented to the winners.

An evening reception was held at the Somaliland House of Elders at which Mr Morch, staff of UN partner agencies and donor representatives were present. The Hargeisa Voluntary Youth Committee (HAVOYOCO) circus group presented songs, poems, and Somali folklore dances and performed an acrobatic show.

Morch addressed the gathering and praised the people of Somaliland for their efforts in maintaining peace and stability. He said the challenge now was for Somaliland to ensure that children and women benefited from better education, water and health services, and that protection rights of vulnerable community members were recognized and respected. He called for more support to the youth, saying they should be given a hearing and opportunities to realise their dreams, since they provide energy, direction, purpose and idealism for society. During his visit Mr Morch had meetings with Somaliland President Dahir Rayale Kahin and members of his cabinet.

Elsewhere in Somalia, the Day was commemorated in Garowe and Bossaso, Northeast Somalia ('Puntland') and Jowhar and Mogadishu in Central/Southern Somalia. UNICEF collaborated with other UN agencies, local authorities and communities in these locations to organize sports competitions and provided uniforms to competing teams. In Bossaso, the Puntland Youth Association, with students, women and teachers participating, organized a peace march. Other activities in Bossaso included the performance of dramas and songs highlighting the theme of peace. In Garowe, local authorities and WHO organized a sports tournament with football for boys and volleyball for girls. A peace march by youth groups and school children drew some 500 people and later, local leaders addressed the gathering.

In Central/Southern Somalia UNICEF, in collaboration with the Somali Olympic Committee (SOC), local authorities and communities, had organized an inter-district football competition in Jowhar. The competition had teams from seven districts of Middle Shabelle and the final took place on September 21 in the presence of more than 2000 spectators. It was played between Jowhar and Bal'ad football teams.

Fans from Bal'ad had rented buses to come to Jowhar to cheer their team. During the game, supporters of both teams performed traditional dances and songs as they encouraged their teams, a scene which to observers was reminiscent of the atmosphere prevailing in the period prior to the civil war, the singing evoking evident nostalgia amongst the older people present.

In Mogadishu the finals of a football tournament that started on Saturday September 13 were held on the Day. This had drawn teams from the 16 districts of Banadir region. Also featured was a one-day athletic competition for 100 competitors. A cultural and arts exhibition during the day attracted a huge number of spectators. The football finals in Mogadishu were held between Abdiaziz and Daynile teams.

Peace Day was covered by local and national media including by BBC TV which featured a story on the how the Day was marked in Mogadishu.

As requested, please find attached a short summary of the events on the International Day of Peace.