

Press Release on Bowden's Visit to Somaliland

Saturday, 30 May 2009

Mark Bowden announced Cabdiqadir Nuur Xuseen as the winner of the UN Media Awards 2008 for Somaliland. Mr Xuseen won the prize for best feature, in the print category. The winning article was printed in the Geeska Afrika Newspaper in Hargeisa, Somaliland.

Hargeisa 27 MAY 2009- Mark Bowden, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator made a 3 days trip to Somaliland to visit various UN projects in Hargeisa and Berbera.

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The UN media awards recognize the work of Somali journalists across Somalia and cover print media, broadcast media and online media. The initiative seeks to encourage the production of features on development and humanitarian issues and recognizes the contribution of Somali journalists in putting those issues on the public agenda. It also aims to improve the overall standard of journalism on these issues, in a country where there is limited access to formal journalist training.

Mr Bowden then visited the Jamalaaye settlement of internally displaced people, in Berbera where UNICEF has three projects; a mother and child health centre, a primary school for the IDPS mostly and a piped water facility. The projects are centered around the community, their needs and requirements in terms of development. UNICEF support to the community includes the provision of a primary school, piped water and a maternal and health clinic.

The Hassan Ali Henry School, which is supported by UNICEF, is another project that Mr Bowden visited in Berbera. Before the construction of this school most children in the Jamalaaye area of Berbera could not get an education or had to walk a minimum of two kilometers in 40 degree weather to the nearest school. Only over a third of the children aged 6-13 years in Somaliland (i.e. approximately 150,000) are estimated to be in school. The school is named after Hassan Ali Henry, a Somali philanthropist who used to assist Berbera children in 1930s.

While in the Jamalaaye district of Berbera, Mark Bowden also saw the Jamalaaye Maternal and Child Health Clinic (MCH) which serves a very poor community with limited access to other health facilities. The MCH provides much needed immunization, an under five clinic, growth monitoring, outpatient feeding, and antenatal services. UNICEF provides the MCH with drug kits, vaccines and vaccines supplies. The MCH also distributes 'Plumpy doz', a ready to use food supplement to reduce the incidence of acute malnutrition to 9,500 children under three for eight months and will treat 6,000 severely malnourished children this year alone.

Mr Bowden also visited the Berbera port to see the operation being carried out by the World Food Programme (WFP) which has generated over 300 additional jobs. He also visited two other WFP warehouses storage facilities which have created additional 60 jobs.

The last stop of the trip involved a visit to the Local Economic Development and Appropriate Technology (LEDAT) Resource Centre in Hargeisa. LEDAT was established in 2004 to support economic development in Somaliland by providing local entrepreneurs and those involved in poverty alleviation with access to quality information, research and training materials. It is run by the International Labour Organization (ILO) with support from Italian government and

UNDP.