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**Audrey Hepburn -- UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Press Conference in Nairobi 24/9/92.
Report filed by Ian Macleod, Information Officer in Somalia**

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The following report was filed by Ian Macleod, Information Officer in Somalia, on Audrey Hepburn's Press Conference in Nairobi following her recent visit there.

AUDREY HEPBURN
UNICEF GOODWILL AMBASSADOR
PRESS CONFERENCE IN NAIROBI 24/9/92

Miss Hepburn addressed a gathering of 25 media representatives, including the BBC, inter Press Service, ANSA, Reuters, and Visnews. In her introduction Miss Hepburn reminded the media that UNICEF warned of the impending disaster in Somalia and the Horn of Africa in February 1991.

"It was potentially the greatest catastrophe in living memory - and it happened, in the last four days I saw it..."

Miss Hepburn described where she had been and what she had seen...
Kismayo: "A displaced camp with over 10,000 people... and all the babies are gone..."

Mogadiscio: "Totally destroyed, no infrastructure. At Lafoole camp and feeding centre there were two teenaged girls tied loosely to a tree by their father. They were so traumatized by shells hitting their house in Mogadiscio that their father ties them up for love - otherwise they will wander off and may never return."

Baidoa: "Nothing could have prepared me for Baidoa - no matter how good the TV images. We arrived to see the truck loaded with over 100 bodies they had collected that morning - and most of them were very small bodies. Inside the feeding centre which is run by that wonderful agency Concern, with support from UNICEF. I walked into a nightmare that had haunted me for many months.

I saw hundreds of fragile little bodies sitting and waiting under a tree to receive food. And the silence...the terrible silence broken only by racking coughs as children with respiratory infections fight for breath."

Northeast Kenya: "The dimension of horror is nowhere more evident than in the displaced camps where tens of thousands of people are struggling each day to survive. It really is a slice of hell, where MSF (Belgium), CARE and other NGO's are working tirelessly to help some 50,000 Somalis, with support from UNICEF of UNIMIX, dry skim milk, transport and supplies."

Miss Hepburn reiterated UNICEF's message that there is hope, and it is not too late for massive amounts of relief assistance.

"Unfortunately, it is too late for many children and mothers, but for many more there is still time. I speak from my own experience in Holland after WWII. I, along with hundreds of thousands, waited and struggled through five years of repression, violence, concentration camps, horrors, and starvation. I survived those five years - many others did not - but those who survived never lost hope. And in the proud eyes of the Somalis I spoke to, I saw

that same hope..."

"With the help of the international community, the dedication of the relief workers from NGOs, the ICRC and UN agencies with airlifts into the central regions of Somalia, with the protection of the UN Security Guards... with all of these helping hands and the thousands of Somalis who work tirelessly to help their own people we can stop Somalia from falling off the end of the earth." Miss Hepburn was gently asked why the world had only just woken up to Somalia - and why the media were only now focussing on it. This question was combined with a question on why relief assistance was late. Miss Hepburn was able to remind those at the Press Conference that the media themselves had difficulties in getting back into Somalia during much of 1991. Many of the journalists who did manage to go into Somalia were more interested in covering the civil conflict than any potential humanitarian disaster. Miss Hepburn and Mr. Mark Stirling, UNICEF Somalia Representative, were able to briefly go through UNICEF's history in Somalia in 1991 and 1992. Miss Hepburn spoke of the frustration of the UN agencies who were told they had to leave Somalia, and how UNICEF had continued to channel millions of dollars of support into the country through NGOs.

The issue of toxic waste affecting the water situation in Mogadiscio was raised and Mr. Stirling was able to inform the media that UNICEF was currently conducting tests in shallow wells in Mogadiscio to ascertain if there was any change in toxicity levels in the water.

The important role of women in conflict resolution was raised, and Miss Hepburn agreed that the strength of the country was in the women's ability to resolve many of the complex social issues. The problems affecting the Kenyan population in the border areas was raised, and Miss Hepburn was asked by a local journalist whether she thought that more aid was justified to Kenya. She stated that in many areas of the world, just not enough assistance was being given by the international community, and Kenya was one example of this.

following the Press Conference, Miss Hepburn undertook four individual interviews: Christian Science Monitor (Bob Press), Le Monde (Jean Helene) and Epoca (Anna Cataldi) and local TV station KBC. Each of these journalists had attended the Press Conference, so that they had the necessary background material, and wouldn't have to repeat questions or issues raised at the Press Conference. In the afternoon, Miss Hepburn met with UNICEF representatives from the ESA region and ESARO, KCO and Somalia Liaison Office.

For further information, please contact:

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