

UNICEF Georgia

Response to the needs of children and women affected by the conflict in and around South Ossetia, Georgia

15 August 2008

1. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

On August 7, an armed conflict erupted in South Ossetia, Georgia, affecting large numbers of people in and around the region. The military actions have caused damage and destruction in the South Ossetia, especially in the capital Tskhinvali, and caused large population displacements in and around South Ossetia on both sides of the Russian and Georgian border.

Women and children represent a majority of those caught in the conflict and seeking safety. As of 15 August 2008, According to statistics provided by local officials to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees,(UNHCR), around 115,000 people have been displaced.



The boundaries and names shown on this map are approximate and do not imply official endorsement/acceptance by the United Nations.

According to initial estimates, nearly 40% of the displaced in Georgia are children under 16 years of age. Some children have been separated from their families. There are pregnant women and women with newly born children amongst the displaced. Many internally displaced persons (IDPs) are staying with friends and families, however a significant proportion, particularly from Georgian villages in South Ossetia have been accommodated in temporary accommodation facilities, mainly in the capital Tbilisi.

An estimated 45,000 people fled Gori, which was damaged by the conflict, towards Tbilisi. The facilities accommodating IDPs in Tbilisi and surrounding areas are reported to be in a poor condition. Many of those affected were already very poor. They have few assets to support themselves in this displaced situation and will therefore rely on government and international assistance for their survival and wellbeing.

On the Russian side and according to federal authorities, 30,000 people have crossed the border, seeking refuge in the Russian Federation, of which 80 per cent are women

and children. Many of them have been temporarily accommodated in collection centres and with families in North Ossetia and other southern regions of Russia. The Russian Emergency Response Ministry, EMERCOM, has been supporting the emergency needs of the displaced in 51 centres. Though displaced families are safe from the conflict, they are living in difficult conditions.

To date humanitarian access to South Ossetia is not available to UN agencies. The assessment of the situation and extent of damage has not been possible.

2. UNICEF'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN GEORGIA: ISSUES & ACTIONS

UNICEF addresses the needs of all children affected by the conflict and who have been displaced in Georgia and those who have moved to North Ossetia, Russian Federation. This document focuses on the humanitarian needs in Georgia.

Since the outbreak of the crisis, UNICEF has been coordinating its response to the needs of affected children and women with the government authorities, UN agencies, NGOs and donors in Georgia

UNICEF is closely working with partner agencies such as UNHCR, WFP and ICRC in monitoring the situation and responding to the humanitarian needs in the affected areas. In order to facilitate coordination emergency response, the UN Country Team (UNCT) facilitated the establishment of a Humanitarian Coordination Group which is chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and includes participation of the Government, UN agencies, NGOs and donors. The Government of Georgia has appointed the Minister of Health, Labour and Social Affairs as the focal point for coordination of humanitarian assistance. The following coordination roles and responsibilities have been agreed:

- Food (led by WFP),
- Protection (UNHCR),
- Water and Sanitation (UNICEF),
- Shelter and non-food items (NFIs) (UNHCR),
- Logistics (WFP)
- Health and Nutrition (USAID)

Apart from being the lead agency in water and sanitation, UNICEF is playing a key role in the sectors of health, nutrition and protection.

The following interventions have been identified for priority support:

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

- Water trucking from local water supply companies and provision of bottled water for IDPs
- Distribution of water purification tablets
- Distribution of locally procured tailor-made hygiene kits
- Safe disposal of excreta and solid waste including through local companies
- Repairs and construction of water and sanitation facilities

UNICEF has the cluster lead role for coordination of the water and sanitation sector. In collaboration with the Government authorities and partners, UNICEF will continue assessing the damage to the water and sanitation infrastructure so as to determine long term actions that may be necessary. UNICEF will also work to strengthen capacity of government and local partners to restore water and sanitation services.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

- Distribution of supplementary feeding for children and mothers – in cooperation with WFP and WHO.
- Distribution of emergency health-kits
- Distribution of family kits and other survival items

EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

- Provision of teaching, learning and recreational materials through delivery of schools-in-a-box, including materials like chalk, workbooks, pencils, knapsacks as well as school furniture (blackboard; tables; chairs; benches etc...);
- Provision of teacher training and capacity building of school staff
- Rehabilitation of schools and pre-schools
- Provision of tents for temporary schools so as to ensure minimum interruption to children's classes until the school rehabilitation work is completed

Ensuring opening of schools in September will be a key priority. In close collaboration with Government authorities and partners, UNICEF will participate in assessment missions to establish affected children's educational needs and plan future interventions.

CHILD PROTECTION AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

- Establishment of psycho-social support and establishment of recreational spaces for IDPs
- Distribution of recreational and didactic materials
- Training and capacity building of national counterparts
- Dissemination of guidelines and international standards on child protection
- Mine awareness and risk education

MONITORING & EVALUATION

UNICEF Georgia will monitor the use and impact of provided humanitarian assistance through extensive field visits and reporting from implementing partners. The office will liaise with local authorities for the facilitation of the process, assessment of the overall situation on the ground and programme adjustments as required.

3. ESTIMATED FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR PLANNED ACTION

This proposal is for immediate rapid humanitarian response for displaced communities within Georgia. When access to South Ossetia, Georgia, is secured, UNICEF will be ready to mobilize and implement humanitarian and recovery activities for the affected population. At that point, UNICEF may have to revise the current proposal.

In addition, UNICEF Armenia and Azerbaijan have played a major part in responding to this crisis, utilizing Regional Office Surge Capacity, whereby key programme and operations staff and supplies and equipment were immediately sent to support the country office in Georgia. These offices are also implementing contingency plans for potential incoming refugees from Georgia. The UNICEF and UNCT are identifying stocks and human resources should such a development occur over the next few months. UNICEF may appeal for additional funds to accelerate pre-positioning of supplies and staff.

UNICEF has been working with the UNCT and Humanitarian Coordination Group on fielding rapid assessment teams (depending on the security conditions and as the situation allows) and on the development of an inter-agency Flash Appeal that will be issued in the next few days. The requirements in this Immediate Needs Document will be then be integrated into the Flash Appeal and be updated according to the developments on the ground.

UNICEF is requesting an initial funding of US\$ 3.2 million to meet the immediate and urgent needs of the affected children and women in Georgia. A breakdown of the funding requirement is provided in the table below:

| Sector | US\$ |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Health and Nutrition | 750,000 |
| Water and Environmental Sanitation | 1,300,000 |
| Education and ECD | 600,000 |
| Child Protection and Mine Action | 550,000 |
| Total* | 3,200,000 |

*The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 7%. The actual recovery rate on contributions will be calculated in accordance with UNICEF's Executive Board Decision 2006/7 dated 9 June 2006.

**Funds received against this appeal will be used to respond to both the immediate and medium-term needs of children and women as outlined above. If UNICEF should receive funds in excess of the medium-term funding requirements for this emergency, UNICEF will use those funds to support other, under-funded emergencies.

Further information on the UNICEF emergency programme can be obtained from:

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Giovanna Barberis Representative UNICEF Georgia Tel: +995 32 232 388 Fax: +995 32 251 236 Email: gbarberis@unicef.org | Dermot Carty Chief, IAHP EMOPS UNICEF Geneva Tel: + 4122 909 5629 Fax: + 4122 909 5902 E-mail: dcarty@unicef.org | Gary Stahl Deputy Director PARMO UNICEF New York Tel: + 1212 326 7009 Fax: + 1212 326 7165 Email: gstahl@unicef.org |
|--|--|---|