

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

NORTH CAUCASUS

DONOR UPDATE

13 JULY 2006

UNICEF STILL SEEKS OVER \$ 2,330,000 TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF 300,000 CHILDREN AND MOTHERS IN THE REGION

- An increase in the number of security incidents has been observed across the region over the past few months
- While socio-economic recovery priorities are increasingly relevant, humanitarian needs remain considerable
- Almost 66% of UNICEF's revised financial requirements for 2006 have been met so far. Additional funds will soon be required to ensure the smooth continuation of key projects



1. ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

During the first half of 2006, the overall situation in the North Caucasus has not changed significantly, although a few developments and trends deserve to be highlighted. The improved security environment in the Chechen Republic would seem to make an increased UN presence in the republic possible. A UN inter-agency security assessment mission, conducted in March, confirmed the feasibility of modifying the current UN security measures, which would greatly expand access opportunities. On the other hand, there continue to be major concerns about violence and insecurity in the region; fighting, human rights abuses, and abductions still occur, particularly in Chechnya, Dagestan and Ingushetia. In the latter two republics, and to a lesser extent more widely, state security forces have cautioned the public about the possibility of new attacks by armed groups against civilian targets.

Signs of physical reconstruction in Chechnya, and particularly in Grozny, have become increasingly visible. At the same time, local and federal authorities recognize that rebuilding will be a long, complex process, which will require a significant increase in the governmental resources available. Meanwhile, humanitarian needs, stemming from two military campaigns conducted over the past decade and severe economic underdevelopment, remain considerable: much of the population of Chechnya continues to depend on humanitarian aid for survival and a significant reduction in needs appears to be several years away. Access to basic social services – particularly in the water, education and health sectors – remains problematic for most civilians in Chechnya, especially women and children. IDPs, estimated at over 160,000 in Chechnya and up to 10,000 in Dagestan, continue to comprise a large portion of the vulnerable population. In Ingushetia, as of 31 May 2006, a total of 23,475 IDPs (5,364 families) were still registered for assistance.

In the field of education, some progress has been observed in the availability of education materials and in the provision of training to teachers, particularly in Chechnya. Some steps forward have also been made in the rehabilitation of the education infrastructure in the republic. According to the local Ministry of Education, some 98% of primary and secondary school-age children (212,000 pupils) are currently enrolled in 456 schools in the republic. The overall situation, however, remains precarious, starting with the persisting shortage of adequate education facilities (many, particularly in remote areas, remain severely damaged or dilapidated). As a result, in more than 340 schools classes are organized on the basis of 2 shifts per day, while in more than 90 schoolchildren attend classes on a 3-shift per day basis, with negative consequences on the quality of the education provided. The pre-school education sector is of particular concern, as not more than 10% of all children aged 3-6 have access to state kindergartens. In Ingushetia, over 1,500 IDP children in temporary settlements continue to rely on the education services provided by UNICEF and NGO partners. The availability of textbooks, stationery, school furniture and other educational materials also remains insufficient. Similar gaps affect the education systems in Ingushetia and Dagestan.

The general health status in Ingushetia and Chechnya still compares unfavorably to the national average. Physical destruction, coupled with years of neglect and lack of maintenance, have left many structures in a dysfunctional state. The 2006 republican budget of Chechnya allocates significant funds for the health sector development and the implementation of the national health priority plan, which focuses on strengthening primary health care. This is an exceptional opportunity for a health care system that is badly in need of restructuring – and something that is being made even more urgent by the worrying deterioration of some key health indicators such as maternal mortality, which, according to the Chechen Ministry of Health, has risen from 48.6/100,000 births in 2005 to 88.6/100,000 in the first quarter of 2006 (a level almost four times higher than the national average). Essential medical diagnostic and laboratory equipment as well as physical rehabilitation of primary health facilities continue to be high on the list of needs. Communicable and vaccine preventable disease are common and the prevalence of chronic disease is rising, with little capacity for sustained treatment. The vaccination coverage of children, especially of those displaced, remains insufficient. A growing number of infants face lifelong disease and disability, as a result of unhealthy pregnancies and disease transmission from their mothers. The persistent inefficiency of the public health system also pose specific threats to the health and well-being of adolescents and youth.

Water and sanitation continue to pose a major problem in Chechnya, and particularly in Grozny. Despite the local authorities' efforts to slowly rehabilitate parts of Grozny's water system, the city water networks remain in critical condition, so that more than 133,000 people (over 60% of the city's population), including patients at hospitals and students in schools, still rely on the water delivered by UNICEF and other agencies. The lack of a strong monitoring and reporting system on the violations of children's rights is also a matter of concern, as is the low level of awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) among children and youth as well as among the professionals who work with/for children. The provision of policy support to the authorities, so as to improve the quality of social services for the most vulnerable children, is also

required. Meanwhile, the presence of landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) continues to pose a serious threat to civilians in Chechnya. According to the UNICEF-managed IMSMA (Information Management System for Mine Action) database, 3,047 civilians (including 747 children) have been killed or injured by mines/ERW since 1995. Despite the fact that the number of mine/UXO-related casualties in Chechnya has been significantly decreasing over the last three years, the total number of incidents recorded thus far in 2006 (January-May) has remained at the same level as in 2005.

2. UNICEF RESPONSE: ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

UNICEF's Programme for the NC, which is part of the 2006-2010 UNICEF's Country Programme in the RF, is fully integrated in the 2006 Inter-agency Transitional Workplan (TWP) for the NC. The latter presents an expanded framework for the humanitarian operation that had been previously coordinated under the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal Process (CAP). In 2006 UNICEF is committed to maintain its primary focus on children – with a particular emphasis on vulnerable groups – and strive to address both immediate needs as well as mid- and long-term recovery priorities. In doing so, the organization will focus on fostering capacities at three mutually reinforcing levels: physical rehabilitation; provision of equipment/supplies; training and technical support.

UNICEF continues to act as focal point for Education, Mine Action, Peace & Tolerance as well as Water and Sanitation sectors. UNICEF maintains solid partnerships with other UN agencies, the ICRC, international and – increasingly – local NGOs. By the end of 2006, the organization plans to have exhausted almost completely its partnerships with international NGOs. In addition, cooperation is steadily being expanded with republican governments and other public institutions in the NC.

The UN continues to designate Chechnya a phase V security area, which precludes extended access to the republic. On the other hand, the March 2006 inter-agency security mission returned with the recommendation that Chechnya, in its entirety, be reclassified as Security Phase IV. This recommendation has been approved by the UN Security Management Team in Moscow and forwarded to the UN HQs in New York, where it awaits approval by the Secretary-General. The UN Country Team in Russia is confident that reclassification will be achieved shortly.

Health

UNICEF continues to focus its action on four main areas, so as to reach some 285,000 beneficiaries. In the field of Child Immunization, following the assessment conducted in Chechnya and Ingushetia in late 2005, UNICEF is supporting the rehabilitation of the cold-chain infrastructure, with a special focus on primary and secondary health care facilities, through the provision of basic supplies and equipment. UNICEF is also providing training support, in close coordination with the local Ministries of Health and WHO, to health workers involved in child immunization. Families and communities will also be targeted through educational and awareness-raising campaigns promoting the benefits of child immunization. Meanwhile, UNICEF's Mother Empowerment Programme will, availability of resources permitting, continue to provide information on child health care and parenting practices to 20,000 vulnerable mothers, particularly among IDP communities living in settlements and Temporary Accommodation Centres (TACs) in Chechnya and Ingushetia. Within the framework of its Young People's Health and Development and HIV/AIDS programme, UNICEF is strengthening access for young people and adolescents to youth-friendly services and consolidating – through the provision of equipment, furniture and training – the capacity of 3 Youth Friendly Clinics and 3 Youth Information Centers operating in Chechnya and Ingushetia. Communication and social mobilization activities and information campaigns will hopefully also be conducted, in partnership with government counterparts and local NGOs.

In the area of Psychosocial Rehabilitation, UNICEF continues, in partnership with the local MoE, to support the provision of assistance to some 3,000 crisis-affected children and adults in Beslan (North Ossetia). In Chechnya, UNICEF completed the second and final phase of its Psychosocial Baseline Study, so as to obtain an accurate mapping of the existing response and outstanding needs. UNICEF's overall goal, availability of resources permitting, is to support the establishment of a multi-faceted psychosocial response system that would be in charge of developing overall guidelines and standards. UNICEF has also facilitated the establishment of a Government-led Steering Committee on Psychosocial Rehabilitation. The aim is to upgrade the knowledge and skills of some 100 professionals (psychologists, teachers, social workers) in providing psychosocial support, with a view to creating two mutually reinforcing small networks: one consisting of 7 school-based centres and another comprising 7 psychosocial centres. Information campaigns

will also be launched to raise the population's awareness on the availability and relevance of such services.

Water and Sanitation

UNICEF continues, in cooperation with the Polish Humanitarian Organization (PHO), to manage its water production and distribution project in Grozny, with a daily target of 117,000 beneficiaries. About 600,000 liters of water are being purified and distributed on a daily basis through some 250 distribution points located in the city, with a special focus on school and kindergarten and hospital patients. UNICEF is also sustaining its efforts to promote appropriate hygienic practices and the careful consumption of potable water among schoolchildren and the general population. In parallel, and in partnership with PHO and the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO), UNICEF has engaged the Chechen authorities in finalizing an agreement for the gradual hand-over of the water programme to the local public provider (Grozvodokanal) by early 2007. Furthermore, UNICEF will continue to advocate for federal authorities to address in a structural manner the persistently critical situation in Grozny and undertake the comprehensive rehabilitation of the local water, sewage and waste management system.

Education

UNICEF continues to manage 12 'parallel' schools hosting over 1,500 IDP children – as well as 4 Children's Centres providing education and health care to 590 IDP children (aged 4-6) – in Ingushetia, while promoting their gradual integration, to be accomplished over the coming months, into the regular education system. UNICEF is also supporting a network of 25 community-based Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres providing basic pre-school education and care to 1,250 children in Chechnya, with the active involvement of their parents. UNICEF is also promoting vocational training and catch-up classes for 240 vulnerable adolescents in Chechnya. In addition, the organization is supporting the professional training and/or re-qualification of teachers, Ministry of Education officials and school methodologists in the region, as well as providing schools and kindergartens with education materials (78,000 Russian and Chechen textbooks, 1,500 sets of furniture, 100 blackboards, 450,000 pieces of stationery, 7,000 school bags), so as to benefit some 80,000 pre-school and schoolchildren. In the area of Peace & Tolerance Education, UNICEF has organized several events with the participation/involvement of children, youth, educators and government staff from 7 republics/regions – including a children's summer camp that is planned for end-July in Dagestan.

Child Protection/Mine Action

UNICEF continues to support the upgrading of the IMSMA database and to strengthen the professional capacity of the staff managing it. The surveillance system created in 2005 through the designation of 'letter boxes' for mine/UXO incidents in each district of Chechnya is being further consolidated. In the area of Mine Risk Education (MRE), and in partnership with local NGOs and authorities, UNICEF is: establishing 8 additional MRE working groups in affected villages in Chechnya; supporting and monitoring the MRE basic school course (targeting 180,000 students); conducting MRE presentations for some 75,000 children through the State Chechen Drama Theatre, Voice of the Mountains and the State Chechen Youth Committee; designing and disseminating new MRE materials (T-shirts, leaflets, posters, etc.); and training 250 teachers from secondary schools. In the area of survivor assistance, UNICEF provides prosthetic/orthopedic support and physical rehabilitation, as well as supportive devices (wheelchairs, crutches, stumps) to over 400 child survivors and other disabled children. UNICEF also continues to provide psychosocial support and vocational training to over 200 mine/UXO survivors and other disabled children.

In the area of Child Protection, UNICEF continues to support 23 leisure centers providing, on a daily basis, a safe environment to some 700 children in Chechnya, as well as promote the awareness on children's rights and the CRC, with a special focus on teachers, schoolchildren and government officials. In addition, support will be provided to the establishment and/or capacity-building of Child Rights Ombudspersons in the region. Moreover, training will be offered to local NGOs in the area of collection and analysis of information (disaggregated by gender and age), with a view to establishing a solid monitoring and reporting system on violations of children's rights.

3. 2006 TRANSITIONAL WORKPLAN: REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIPTS

In the framework of the Mid-Term Review of the 2006 Inter-Agency Transitional Workplan for the NC, and following a minor revision of its yearly work plan, UNICEF has slightly decreased its financial requirements for 2006: from US\$7,470,000 to US\$6,830,000. The response from the donor community, which was exceptionally positive in 2005 (when all UNICEF's requirements were met), has so far been quite encouraging, although still not sufficient, with almost US\$4,500,000 received to date.

Table 1: Funds Received against the 2006 TWP (as of 5 July 2006)

Appeal Sector	Revised Requirements by Sector	Funds Received (US\$)	Unmet requirements (US\$)	% Unfunded
Education	2,410,000	1,606,990.5	803,009.5	33.3
Health	2,490,000	1,580,847.0	909,153.0	36.5
Mine Action/ Child Protection	1,020,000	991,848.5	28,151.5	2.8
Water and Sanitation	910,000	320,000.0	690,000.0	75.8
Total	6,830,000	4,499,686.0	2,330,314.0	34.1

Table 2: Funds received by Donor

Donor	Funds Received (US\$)	Sector
ECHO	177,514.5	Mine Action
ECHO	906,892.5	Education
ECHO	126,965.0	Water & Sanitation
Netherlands	600,000.0	Unearmarked
US/BPRM	600,000	Unearmarked
Sweden	501,882.0	Unearmarked
USAID	400,000.0	Health
USAID	100,000.0	Mine Action
Switzerland	330,580.0	Mine Action
Germany	300,000.0	Mine Action
German NatCom for UNICEF	372,098.0	Education
Dutch NatCom for UNICEF	83,754.0	Mine Action
Total	4,499,686.0	

4. IMPACT OF UNDER-FUNDING AND CURRENT PRIORITIES

Almost 2/3 of UNICEF's 2006 revised financial requirements for the North Caucasus have been met. Some \$2,330,000 are still required to ensure that some of the projects outlined in the Inter-Agency Transitional Workplan (such as the physical rehabilitation of schools) do not remain on hold, due to the shortage of funds. Should additional contributions fail to materialize in the coming months, UNICEF will have to further revise the size and scope of its planned activities. UNICEF expresses its gratitude to the donors who have thus far contributed generously to its 2006 programme in the North Caucasus and hopes that other donors will soon extend their support as well.

Details of UNICEF's North Caucasus programme can be obtained from:

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