Georgia (Region of Abkhazia)

As a result of continuous isolation and the sensitive political context, children in Abkhazia today receive a version of basic services inferior to the one their parents’ generation received a few decades ago. The quality of maternal and child health care is low, mainly due to inadequate infrastructure, especially at the primary health-care level, and the inadequate capacity of medical staff. A recent UNICEF-facilitated assessment revealed that one in five mothers never breastfed their child and that three out of five women did not go for a routine health exam for their child or for themselves after delivery. The indicators for returning internally displaced persons (IDPs) are much worse. Immunization coverage is very low, as low as 40 per cent in some districts for the combined diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus vaccine (DPT3). Access to safe drinking water and sanitation is particularly problematic in rural schools, exposing children to a high risk of outbreaks of waterborne diseases. Children with disabilities live in isolation within their families, lacking opportunities for integration, social inclusion and inclusive education programmes. There are no programmes or initiatives at any level to detect or respond to violence, abuse or exploitation of children. Reportedly, the prevalence of HIV and AIDS in Abkhazia is higher than in the rest of Georgia, whereas the level of information about the issue is very low. The above situation can only be exacerbated by the community’s low resilience to shocks such as possible floods, landslides or earthquakes.

Planned Results for 2013

UNICEF needs to increase humanitarian assistance to Abkhazia’s conflict-affected children in 2013. To address the multiple negative effects of protracted conflict and an uncertain future for isolated rural poor and returnee communities, UNICEF will work with partners to respond to the needs of 40,000 children. Support will focus on strengthening delivery of basic services.

Within the health and nutrition sector, UNICEF will work to secure a coordinated response to child survival by ensuring safe delivery, newborn care and promotion of breastfeeding. UNICEF will also work on improving access to and uptake of HIV testing and counselling, and on strengthening the capacity of three voluntary testing centres. Provision of vaccines and essential medical supplies, as well as the delivery of training and information, education and communication (IEC) materials will benefit 70,000 women and children.

Reliable access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene facilities for children in up to 30 rural communities will be provided through small-scale infrastructure rehabilitation and hygiene promotion in schools and primary health facilities.

Utilizing the network of 42 social community centres, child protection and education activities will focus on raising community awareness and building capacity to prevent, address and monitor the negative impact of violence, sexual exploitation and abuse of children and women; on extending child care and support interventions for children living with disabilities; and on improving access to quality education for conflict-affected children.

Results from 2012

For 2012, UNICEF Georgia appealed for US$1,965,000 through the regional office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS). As of 31 October, US$315,816, or 16 per cent of the requirement, had been received, enabling the office mainly to strengthen the immunization programme in Abkhazia, while using other programme budgets to address other needs. In 2012, UNICEF is engaging with de facto authorities and local partners in a multi-sector, community-based effort to enhance social and health outcomes for 40,000 Abkhaz children. Thus, during 2012, UNICEF focused on strengthening immunization practice in maternal and child health care. Routine immunization infrastructure in the

2013 programme targets

Health and nutrition
- 38,000 children immunized for measles, mumps, rubella, poliomyelitis, pertussis, diphtheria, tetanus, hepatitis B and tuberculosis.
- 300 medical professionals receive training in Immunization in Practice (including mid-level and cold store management) and in Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI).
- Breastfeeding promotion campaign developed and launched.

HIV and AIDS
- 100 men and women living with HIV, including their families, receive support through the community support centre within the Sukhumi AIDS Centre.
- 1,200 women of reproductive age and 300 young parents receive counselling on HIV and AIDS.
- 3 voluntary testing centres expand their outreach to an additional 10 communities each.

WASH
- 6,500 children in most-affected rural schools have access to safe water and adequate sanitation.
- 26,000 schoolchildren benefiting from hygiene and sanitation promotion messages.
region has been strengthened through the establishment of a registry database, the procurement of database and cold-chain equipment, and capacity development activities for medical professionals. UNICEF has been supporting the establishment of a community support centre within the Sukhumi AIDS Centre, as well as the community outreach activities of three voluntary testing centres in Abkhazia, including information and education sessions for young people in social community centres. Given the lack of many basic services in Abkhazia, as well as political constraints limiting the ability to support formal institutions, UNICEF has been focusing on strengthening the resilience and capacity of communities directly through support for a network of 42 such social community centres, providing 10,000 children and their families with basic protection, psychosocial, health and education services.

UNICEF is also supporting the provision of essential services for children with disabilities and their families. Four specialized daycare centres were established and supplied with special equipment and materials, and physical rehabilitation and social inclusion activities for 600 children living with disabilities and their caregivers have been organized. After conducting a baseline study on the situation, UNICEF has also initiated a WASH in Schools programme after conducting a baseline study on the situation. Existing UN coordination mechanisms – established specifically for the region of Abkhazia – have not been able to establish targets due to scarcity of data and political context limiting space for humanitarian actors’ scope of intervention (including assessments and data collection).

UNICEF funding requirements for 2013
Building on the Basic Social Services Assessment conducted by UNICEF and its recommended priority actions, UNICEF is requesting a total of US$2,310,000 for humanitarian action in the region of Abkhazia, in addition to the resources available within the UNICEF Rolling Work Plan for 2011–2012. Contributions to UNICEF activities in the region during 2013 will enhance the capacity to respond to the effects of the protracted conflict on the well-being of children in Abkhazia, especially those in the isolated rural and returnee areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>HAC 2013 requirements (US$)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health and nutrition</td>
<td>890,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV and AIDS</td>
<td>230,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water, sanitation and hygiene</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>70,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,310,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Photo caption: Children in the Tskhiri secondary school of the Gali Region of Abkhazia, Georgia. The school building was renovated and canteen and medical units established. Thanks to UNICEF kids now have proper classrooms and they can benefit from the medical unit and various educational activities.

1Humanitarian Action Priorities in Abkhazia, Basic Social Services internal UNICEF document for the Basic Social Services Group, 2012.