On 26 February 2020, the first case of COVID-19 was identified in Georgia. In the following days, several more cases emerged, which prompted the Government to institute restrictions on land and air movement and closure of schools, effective 2 March. The Government mobilized hospitals for confirmed cases of COVID-19, as well as quarantine spaces for suspected cases in different regions of Georgia. Despite the early actions of the Government, the number of confirmed and suspected cases continued to grow triggering the Government to declare a state of emergency on 21 March – closing borders and airports, restricting movement inside the country, banning mass gatherings and maintaining closure of all schools, kindergartens, universities. Two regions, Bolnisi and Dmanisi, were declared as quarantine zones after detecting community spread on 22 March. More cases of community spread were detected on March 28 in Georgia proper, spurring the Government to introduce a curfew, halt movement of public transport and introduce checkpoints on city crossings administered by police and military units.
The first case of COVID-19 was identified in Abkhazia, Georgia on 30 March. Despite restrictions on land movement and closure of all schools, two additional cases have been identified, raising concerns of the further spread of the virus.

**Humanitarian Strategy and Response**

UNICEF continues to work closely with the Government, WHO and other United Nations and humanitarian team partners, to provide technical guidance and support. In line with WHO’s COVID-19 Strategic Response Plan, UNICEF is focusing on limiting human-to-human transmission and mitigating the impact of the outbreak on the health system and communities.

UNICEF’s mix of response and preparedness activities include:

1. Facilitating risk communication as well as learning, play, and positive parenting communications;
2. Provisioning critical hygiene and medical supplies for healthcare and education structures;
3. Ensuring children, pregnant, and lactating women are supported with adequate healthcare despite the outbreak;
4. Mitigating secondary effects of the outbreak by facilitating continued access to education, child protection needs, including prevention of violence against children, and advocating for continued access to social protection programmes.

**UNICEF’s Response**

- UNICEF is supporting COVID-19 coordination mechanisms nationally and in regions with technical expertise, planning, and communications.
- UNICEF, in partnership with the Prime Minister’s Office and the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, is delivering essential hygiene and non-perishable food items to 380 Roma families living in Gachiani, Vakhtangisi and Tetritskaro, as well as Tbilisi, Dedoplistskaro, Kuboleti and Kutaisi.

**Communication for Social Change (C4SC) and External Communications**

- UNICEF is carrying out an awareness-raising campaign for children and parents about the prevention of COVID-19 and its related risks through media and digital platforms.
- In partnership with WHO, UNICEF is supporting a study to monitor public knowledge, risk perceptions, behaviors and trust linked to COVID-19 outbreak and response activities.
- UNICEF provided 40,000 flyers on COVID-19 prevention measures to the Prime-Minister’s Office for further distribution. The same materials have also been prepared in Armenian and Azeri languages.
- A 15-day challenge was launched by UNICEF on 2 April on a major TV broadcaster’s (Rustavi2) most-watched programme the “Midday Show”. This challenge aims to help parents in the care and early learning opportunities of their children with associated hashtags #Learningathome #havefunathome. Throughout this period, Rustavi2 will be mentioning UNICEF’s challenge daily and integrating one of the activities – cooking with children – in the Midday Show’s cooking segment, where a country-famous chef will prepare easy recipes to be followed by parents and their children. UNICEF has already reached an estimated 34,000 people through the challenge and is actively engaging 5,567 people.
- UNICEF launched a video on its webpage and social media platforms highlighting the importance of reaching the most vulnerable groups of children, namely, children with disabilities, children in state care, and child victims of violence.

**Health, Nutrition and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)**

- UNICEF supported the procurement of emergency supplies for University Clinic in Tbilisi and 5 hospitals in Adjara Region.
- UNICEF initiated a partnership with the State Medical University to establish a telemedicine center at the University Hospital and enable remote referrals for antenatal and pediatric care.
- 40 liters of sanitizers and 5 electric thermometers have been provided to TSMU G. Zhvania Pediatric Academic Clinic.
**Child Protection**

- A needs assessment was completed to identify the most vulnerable groups of children. The action plan is being prepared.
- UNICEF developed communication materials for religious leaders focused on preventing violence against children.
- The NGO, Children of Georgia, has been contracted to provide psychological support to children in alternative care (small group homes, foster care and state institution) and their caregivers.
- The NGO, Initiative for Social Change, has been contracted to develop guidelines and provide supervision to social workers from child protection and justice system.
- UNICEF is partnering with a national TV broadcaster to feature a specialized TV programme to support children with disabilities and their parents.
- UNICEF is supporting Parliament and the Ministry of Health in the development of a child support hotline.
- Positive parenting videos were produced for the Abkhazia region and will be aired shortly.
- UNICEF-trained social workers are supporting vulnerable families in Abkhazia, Georgia, including through the hotline for providing psychosocial support.

**Education**

- UNICEF is supporting the development of response strategies in agreement and close coordination with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia.
- UNICEF is developing communication materials to support the cognitive, emotional, and motoric development of young children using various platforms (social media, TV, radio, preschools/municipalities).
- UNICEF is supporting the development of a brief teachers’ guide for organizing effective distant learning that considers the individual needs of children and their families.
- UNICEF is assisting the development of guidelines for caregivers on physical activities for children, given the temporary measures of social distancing.

**Social Protection**

- UNICEF is launching a Shock Responsive Social Protection Feasibility Assessment.
- UNICEF is launching the assessment regarding the potential impact of the COVID-19 on the most vulnerable groups, with special attention given to children.

**Partnerships**

- UNICEF is collaborating with the Prime Minister’s Office to provide needs-based support to the most vulnerable children and their families, including ethnic minorities, Roma communities and children with disabilities.
- UNICEF entered into a partnership with public broadcasting and other TV channels to further amplify risk communication messages and enhance home-based learning and education.
- Partnerships with religious leaders enabled the development of COVID-19 response plans with the Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church of Georgia and the Administration of All Muslims of Georgia.
- Partnerships with the Education for All Coalition, an alliance of CSOs working on education, and a network of organizations working with children with disabilities and their families, will contribute to distance learning efforts of the Government and provide needed support to families with CWDs.
Human Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNICEF Personnel in Georgia CO</th>
<th>Tbilisi</th>
<th>Abkhazia</th>
<th>Total Staff Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Staff</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Staff</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Staff</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Areas</th>
<th>Funding Needs</th>
<th>Funds Identified</th>
<th>Funding Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Protection</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>55,000</td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health, Nutrition and WASH</td>
<td>3,101,399</td>
<td>110,000</td>
<td>2,991,399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Policy</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>61,000</td>
<td>139,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Communication and Community Engagement</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>155,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grand Total (Fundraising efforts ongoing to bridge the funding gap)

|              | 3,741,399 | 421,000 | 3,320,399 |

Next Situation Report: 17 April 2020

Contacts for further information:

Ghassan Khalil, Representative
UNICEF Georgia
Mobile: +995 591 225 281
Email: gkhalil@unicef.org

Amy Clancy, Deputy Representative
UNICEF Georgia
Mobile: +995 551 548 170
Email: aclancy@unicef.org

Maya Kurtiskidze, Communications Officer
UNICEF Georgia
Mobile: +995 599 523 071
Email: mkurtiskidze@unicef.org

Andria Nadiradze, Emergency focal point
UNICEF Georgia
Mobile: +995 597 700 210
Email: anadiradze@unicef.org