Highlights

- Internal displacement continues to increase in Ukraine, with 1,151,581 people having fled the eastern part of the country, of whom 147,339 are children (Source: Ministry of Social Policy).

- The humanitarian situation continues to be of concern in the east of the country. Travel restrictions have seriously delayed the delivery of humanitarian aid, food, and basic services, including medicines, to civilians in non-government-controlled areas.

- Director of UNICEF Office of Emergency Programmes Afshan Khan visited Ukraine as part of the Emergency Directors Group mission to Ukraine between 12 and 14 March.

- On 11 March, UNICEF Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS) Marie-Pierre Poirier visited Ukraine to assess the conditions of children in the eastern parts of the country.

- As of 18 March, 3,000 people have received 5,400 bottles of water in Luhansk region, distributed by a UNICEF implementing partner.

- Between 3 and 17 March, more than 4,000 internally displaced people (IDP), including over 2,000 children, received legal and psycho-social support and visited child-friendly spaces at the Community Protection Centres in Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhia regions.

20 March 2015

147,339
# of registered internally displaced children
(Ministry of Social Policy, 16 March 2015)

1,151,581
# of registered internally displaced people
(Ministry of Social Policy, 16 March 2015)

5 million
# of affected people
(OCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan, February 2015)

1.7 million
approx. # of affected children
(UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children 2015)

64 children
# of child casualties since March 2014
(WHO, 12 March 2015)

170 children
# of children wounded since March 2014
(WHO, 12 March 2015)

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Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

The ceasefire in eastern Ukraine remains fragile. While the number of attacks is decreasing, there have been reports of weapons fire in different locations. Heavy machine gun and light artillery fire hit Spartak district, Donetsk on 16 March following months of severe fighting for control of the airport. As a result, most of the houses and other infrastructure have been destroyed.

One of the provisions in the most recent ceasefire agreement is withdrawal of weapons from the frontlines. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) claimed that it could not fully verify the implementation of this part of the agreement due to a limited access to the locations that may be used as weapons deposits. The mandate for the OSCE special monitoring mission in Ukraine has been extended for additional 12 months.

According to the data available as at 12 March, 2015, the number of people killed in Ukraine since the onset of violence has reached 5,943, including 64 children. As of 16 March, the Ministry of Social Policy reported that there are 1,151,581 registered IDPs across the country, including 147,339 children.

The humanitarian situation in the east of the country remains of grave concern. Travel restrictions have seriously delayed the delivery of humanitarian aid, food, and basic services, particularly medicines and medical equipment, to civilians in non-government-controlled areas. Residents have endured disrupted services and benefits since the end of 2014. According to Human Rights Watch, the restrictions have seriously hindered access to health care for civilians in non-government-controlled areas who need state-funded medical services which are only available in government-controlled areas. Patients needing treatment for HIV, tuberculosis, and opioid substitution therapy are facing interruptions of life-saving treatment. There are also reports of disruption in the availability of HIV test kits, including rapid HIV tests for use during delivery by pregnant women with an unknown HIV status. Gains in reducing mother-to-child transmission of HIV are at risk of being reversed. HIV prevention, including skills building, should be an integral part of work on reducing gender-based violence.

In Debaltseve, the biggest urban settlement affected by the conflict, the humanitarian situation remains extremely serious. The landscape in the city is dominated by troops, tanks, and armoured vehicles. Continued fighting during the past weeks has resulted in many people reportedly being traumatized and/or lacking access to assistance or basic services for weeks. On 15 March a UNICEF mission to Debaltseve found that only three out of eight schools are functioning. The few remaining teachers have had to work multiple shifts in the three functioning schools. Many of 250 children living in the area have not attended schools for months, however, some have are gradually returning to attend the school classes. Debaltseve also reports a substantial number of unexploded ordnance/mines raising the need to implement mine risk education for children.

In other locations, both in government- and non-government-controlled areas, disrupted access to education has been reported. UNICEF field monitors report that some families with children plan to return home shortly therefore are not enrolling their children to schools in the places of their current residence. In some villages in Popasna district, Luhansk region, students are participating in distance learning programmes (online education), although not all of them have access to it due to damaged infrastructures. Several schools in non-government-controlled areas are reported as damaged. UNICEF has collected initial information about five schools reportedly damaged from Pervomaisk district, Luhansk region in non-government-controlled areas.

As of 3 March, the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) has reported that 79,217 IDP children have been registered in schools and kindergartens, with the majority concentrated in Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv,
Dnipropetrovsk regions and Kyiv. This represents an increase of almost 3,000 (from 76,217) since 16 February. The pressure on schools and pre-schools to accommodate additional children is increasing. Prior to the conflict, many kindergartens in Ukraine were closed due to the low birth rates, but with the increasing number of IDPs in government-controlled areas there is a need for and pressure for reopening of some those facilities. UNICEF in Kharkiv reports that there are not enough places in the existing kindergartens. Overcrowding in schools has also been reported in government-controlled areas of Donetsk region, especially in locations with high concentration of IDP families who have no intention to relocate further as they have access to free housing. For instance, there is between 10,000 and 12,000 IDPs in Sviatohirsk, where the local population is 3,000 inhabitants. Similar problems have been reported in Slovyansk, Krasnoarmiisk, and Mariupol. UNICEF is working with the local NGO, Ukrainian Frontier, and the Department of Education of Luhansk and Donetsk to assess the situation and identify the appropriate response.

As of 11 March, repairs to the Yenakiieve filter station in Debaltseve are ongoing. However, the water supply has been partially restored, covering 63 per cent of local population’s needs. The Siverskyi Donetsk-Donbass canal, damaged amid heavy fighting, has been repaired in the area of Horlivka, but the water supply has not been fully restored in Mariupol, Dymytrov, Ukrainsk, Novohrodovka, Krasnohorivka, and several other locations. Many pumping stations in the area are reportedly damaged, and the reconstruction process has been delayed amid disrupted power lines.

Humanitarian Leadership and Coordination

From 12 to 14 March, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Emergency Directors Group including the Director of UNICEF Office of Emergency Programmes Afshan Khan, travelled to eastern Ukraine to gain a deeper understanding of the situation of conflict-affected people, and the status of the humanitarian response in Donetsk and Dnipropetrovsk.

On 11 March, UNICEF Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, Marie-Pierre Poirier arrived in Ukraine for a monitoring visit to assess the conditions of children in the eastern parts of the country. During her stay she met representatives from OSCE, UN agencies, media, as well as the President’s Administration and Government of Ukraine representatives. The Regional Director visited schools attended by children affected by the crisis and distribution points for IDPs in Slovyansk and Kramatorsk. The Regional Director also met the Governor of Donetsk oblast, and the mayors of Volnovakha and Krasnohorivka. She handed over three water purification units which will cover the vital needs of 20,000 people in Krasnohorivka.

After a mission to Debaltseve, Makiivka, Torez, Nikishina, Yenakiieve, and Vhulehirsk, the UNICEF Emergency Coordinator highlighted a high level of destruction in the area following months of direct, heavy fighting. The Emergency Coordinator noted that people have started to return to those affected areas, but the level of disruption to basic services is serious, with difficult access to water and electricity. A high number of unexploded ordinances and mines were reported. During the mission, UNICEF distributed water and hygiene kits to affected local populations but there is a great need to scale-up the humanitarian response in the area. During the reporting period, UNICEF and international NGO People in Need have implemented the first psycho-social support programme in the city. The need for psycho-social support is enormous as all adults and children have been exposed to major levels of stress in the past few months.
Summary of Programme Response

**Education**

A local NGO, Human Home, based in Kharkiv has been providing psycho-social support to teachers, parents and school psychologists. The NGO has held eight round table meetings with school psychologists, teachers, parents, and the Department of Education to discuss the impact of the crisis on IDP and local students, build relationships between institutions, and establish referral mechanisms. Human Home reported that the high stress and anxiety levels affect boys and girls differently, and subsumes energy from education and learning.

UNICEF has procured 660 education kits for over 6,000 IDP children, mainly in Zaporizhzhia and distributed 10 early child development kits for 100 IDP children in Slovyansk and Kramatorsk.

As result of a meeting held with the Ministry of Education and Science, an inter-cluster task force has been established among Education, Protection, and Child Protection partners to address issues related to the final examination of students living in non-government-controlled areas.

**Water Sanitation and Hygiene**

In the reporting period, UNICEF partner, Ukrainian Frontiers distributed 421 hygiene kits in the cities of Sloviansk, Artemivsk, Kramatorsk, Kostiantynivka and Druzhkivka, reaching 1,200 people including 750 children. Additional distribution of 255 hygiene kits took place reaching over 500 people in Horlivka on 19 March.

UNICEF procured almost 13,000 bottles of water to be distributed by implementing partners in Luhansk region in the most affected areas. As of 18 March, 5,400 bottles have been distributed to 3,000 people in Stanytsia Luhanska, Popasna, Zolote, and Shchastia cities by UNICEF implementing partner Luhansk Regional Agency for Sustainable Development.

UNICEF is providing 150 baby hygiene kits and 80 family hygiene kits to be distributed in Donetsk city to address the needs of approximately 1,000 vulnerable people including 450 children. During the reporting period, UNICEF sent 15,000 Peepoo bags (disposable excreta/toilet bags) to Donetsk to address the sanitation needs of people in bomb shelters.

To raise hygiene awareness in Donetsk region, over 1,800 posters-calendars developed by UNICEF were included in the baby and family hygiene kits. UNICEF implementing partner Luhansk Regional Agency for Sustainable Development conducted hygiene educational sessions with 200 children from 20 schools in Sieverodonetsk, who received 300 UNICEF posters-calendars and brochures.

**Child Protection**

During the reporting period, the child hotline run by the NGO ‘La Strada’ and supported by UNICEF, received 1,332 calls. Of those, 56 per cent were from boys and 44 per cent from girls. All callers received support and referrals when needed.
Between 3 and 17 March, trained psychologists in Donetsk and Luhansk regions provided the following psychosocial services: 82 individual counselling sessions for children and their families and 104 group counselling sessions for children and their caregivers, reaching a total of 1,150 persons. Trained psychologists from Donetsk and Luhansk regions also provided outreach sessions and supervision to teachers and local psychologists.

Between 3 and 17 March, more than 4,113 IDPs, including over 2,149 children, received access to services, legal support, psycho-social support, and access to child-friendly spaces at the Community Protection Centres (CPCs) in Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhia regions. In addition, the centres offered different types of master classes and training for children and their caregivers (employment skills, developing small business, foreign language, art, handcraft). As reported by NGO partners, the most common legal requests from IDPs consist of how to receive registration cards and apply for social benefits. Over 1,018 children received access to child friendly spaces in one Kharkiv CPC in the past two weeks.

UNICEF supported its partners to identify pilot target beneficiaries and set up the first child friendly space for psycho-social intervention in Debaltseve, through a first training for professionals.

**Health and Nutrition**

UNICEF maintained regular contact with regional partners on the situation and needs of children, both IDP children, and those in conflict-affected area. The access to supplies and migration of health workers from a conflict-affected area needs to be closely monitored.

UNICEF voiced concerns on the shortage of vaccines for all children in Ukraine, particularly those affected by the emergency. UNICEF offers technical support and procurement services to the Government of Ukraine to procure vaccines and other life-saving supplies to children to overcome the current shortages of vaccines to ensure all children in Ukraine are protected against vaccine preventable diseases. UNICEF is taking active part in ad-hoc parliamentary discussions on a new law for procurement through international organisations. The country’s rapid inflation and devaluation of the hryvnia is affecting the supplier base and suppliers’ interest in the Ukraine pharmaceutical market, as well as the government budget available for procurement.

UNICEF and WHO are working with the National Polio Committee and the Ministry of Health on reviewing the immunisation programme management and the quality of acute flaccid paralysis surveillance in order to assess the risks of polio importation, particularly in areas affected by conflict. The assessment will be followed by the development of technical and communication plans to make sure that UNICEF-procured polio vaccines (in the pipeline) are used to minimise the risks of virus importation and increase the level of protection against polio.

The Report of the Global Nutrition Cluster Scoping Mission to Ukraine was published on 16 March 2015. The report outlines the current nutrition status and outlines priorities and guiding principles of nutrition in emergencies. The Nutrition Cluster Coordination meeting will start next week under UNICEF and WHO co-leadership. UNICEF Ukraine met with representatives of the Akhmetov Foundation to assist in revising the current food relief programme and aligning it with basic principles of infant feeding in emergencies. UNICEF has widely distributed information materials on breastfeeding in emergencies which includes contacts with a hotline with trained breastfeeding counsellors, available to mothers and health workers around the clock.
External Communication

Between 11 and 14 March, during her visit to Ukraine, UNICEF Regional Director for CEE/CIS Marie-Pierre Poirier was interviewed by BBC Ukraine, UA Today, the Kyiv Post, Den (The Day) newspaper and TV Hromadske. In addition, the visit was covered on social media as well as country and regional web-sites.

Euronews released a story on 16 March and AP published an article on 13 March quoting UNICEF on the number of children affected by the conflict in Ukraine. Furthermore, CNN published a story by UNICEF Ukraine Emergency Coordinator Radoslaw Rzehak on the plight of conflict-affected children in the country.

Funding and Planning

UNICEF has revised its appealed to US$55.8 million to provide emergency relief assistance to children affected by the conflict in eastern Ukraine. To date, just over US$12.3 million has been received, representing 22 per cent against the appealed amount. The committed funds have already been spent, illustrating the urgent need for additional funds to enable continued support to the affected children. The table below provides a detailed overview by sector:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appeal Sector</th>
<th>Requirements (US$)</th>
<th>Funds received (US$)*</th>
<th>Funding gap (US$)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>14,400,000</td>
<td>3,993,662</td>
<td>10,406,338</td>
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<td>Child Protection</td>
<td>2,600,000</td>
<td>1,050,120</td>
<td>1,549,880</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Nutrition</td>
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<td>4,550,387</td>
<td>7,749,613</td>
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<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
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<td>1,805,096</td>
<td>21,194,904</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sector Coordination, Field Support</td>
<td>3,500,000</td>
<td>945,065</td>
<td>2,554,935</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55,800,000</td>
<td>12,344,330</td>
<td>43,455,670</td>
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Next Sit Rep: 03/04/2015

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