



Humanitarian Action for Children

unicef 

Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

In 2016, a rising number of children in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS) will face humanitarian risks as a result of increasing economic, political and social instability. Economic activities in the Caucasus and in Central Asian states are expected to continue to decelerate due to lower commodity prices and spill over from the Russian slowdown. Levels of remittances, for example, are expected to decline.¹ The year 2015 saw the continuing effects of climate change in the region, with melt-water floods and landslides occurring in mountainous areas in Central Asia.² The self-declared separatist regions of eastern Ukraine added to an existing caseload of non-recognized entities in the region, where child services are already under-funded, capacity is lacking and limited humanitarian access is an ongoing constraint.³ There is increasing alarm over the threat posed by non-state armed groups in countries in the Central Asian and South Caucasus sub-regions, a situation that has been exacerbated by high unemployment rates among youth.⁴ Continuing high HIV prevalence, risk of infectious disease outbreaks (such as polio and measles), inadequate access to safe water and challenges related to child development and protection are also contributing to vulnerability, which is in turn heightened during periods of crisis and displacement.⁵

Regional Humanitarian Strategy

To respond to these challenges in 2016, the CEE/CIS Regional Office will guide and strengthen country office capacity for predictable early action in new emergencies, enhanced standards for emergency preparedness, and consistent risk-informed programming, especially in regards to disaster risk reduction (DRR). UNICEF programmes in high- and medium-risk countries will undergo updated training activities linked to critical 'early action' measures at the onset of new emergencies. Emergency preparedness standards will be developed through training and region-wide orientation on the UNICEF online preparedness platform. The Regional Office's staffing capacities in DRR, nutrition and education will be strengthened with a stronger gender focus. With support from the global Supply Division, the regional emergency supplies pre-positioning strategy, in particular for the Central Asian countries, will be reviewed for greater predictability. The regional emergency human resource roster will be regularly updated and maintained in coordination with global surge facilities. UNICEF will also strengthen its DRR programming through country-level interventions, focusing on safe schools and undertaking disaster risk analysis as a programming determinant. Emphasis will be placed on child vulnerability assessments, as well as key country programme planning and review milestones. Related analysis and consultation will focus not only on high-risk countries but also on the situation of children and women in areas controlled by non-state (or non-recognized) entities. Drawing on 2015 experiences and documented lessons learned from the Syrian refugee crisis, the Ukraine crisis response and the refugee and migrant crisis in Europe, a knowledge management strategy will be implemented to build greater staff awareness and readiness to engage proactively on issues related to humanitarian action. These strategies will be informed by closer engagement with regional humanitarian actors, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), with whom UNICEF will support country-level humanitarian trainings and simulation exercises. Other key partners include the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Given the multi-country crises impacting the region, including spill over from other regions, the Regional Office will strengthen information sharing and coordination approaches with UNICEF regional offices for the Middle East and North Africa and South Asia. In addition to the establishment of an out-posted regional emergency specialist in Istanbul, Turkey in 2015, a newly recruited DRR/emergency specialist will be posted in Almaty, Kazakhstan in the first quarter 2016 to provide regional support.

2015 Results

As of 31 October 2015, UNICEF had received 15 per cent (US\$936,912) of the US\$6.24 million 2015 appeal, in addition to US\$2.1 million carried forward from 2014. In 2015, the CEE/CIS Regional Office facilitated the expansion of UNICEF capacities and operational systems in the Ukraine to support a protracted, complex emergency response. Three multi-sectoral technical support missions were undertaken and led to key actions that bolstered country-level humanitarian action. These included the establishment of dedicated emergency coordination capacity and a humanitarian performance monitoring system, the recruitment of dedicated cluster coordinators and the expansion of the UNICEF field presence, including in non-government controlled areas. In Turkey, the Regional Office provided technical assistance to the refugee response and conducted a multi-sector evaluation. In September 2015, the Regional Office supported UNICEF country offices responding to the refugee and migrant crisis in Europe and continued to provide remote support to country offices responding to smaller-scale emergencies, such as landslides and earthquakes in Tajikistan and floods in Georgia. The Regional Office also strengthened emergency readiness in the region, including through a regional humanitarian evaluation training involving child rights

monitoring staff and country emergency focal points. The First Line Responders Roster, a critical regional surge mechanism, was updated to allow for the rapid deployment of emergency-experienced staff within the region. Given the heightened emergencies and risks in CEE/CIS, dedicated emergency meetings focused on lessons learned, and review and planning were organized for country representatives, deputy representatives and operations managers in the region. In October 2015, UNICEF and OCHA hosted a training in Minsk to introduce the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Emergency Response Preparedness approach in the region and plan for 2016-2017. Regional staff continued to provide coordination and leadership to countries in the Central Asian and South Caucasus sub-regions implementing the multi-country DRR programme, which is co-funded by the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO). Regional staff also supported national education counterparts from Kyrgyzstan and Armenia to present their best practices at global meetings.

Funding Requirements

For 2016, UNICEF is requesting US\$2.6 million to support emergency preparedness and response, DRR and related knowledge management initiatives in CEE/CIS. Funding may also be used to respond to situations in the region that are not specifically included in *Humanitarian Action for Children 2016* and may not benefit from inter-agency flash appeals to respond to small- or medium-scale emergencies.

| CEE/CIS Regional Office | 2016 requirements (US\$) |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Emergency preparedness and response | 1,300,000 |
| Disaster risk reduction | 1,200,000 |
| Knowledge management | 100,000 |
| Total | 2,600,000 |

¹ International Monetary Fund, *Regional economic outlook: Middle East and Central Asia*, IMF, Washington, D.C., October 2015.

² University of California, Los Angeles, Asian Institute, Central Asia Institute, November 2015.

³ Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2015.

⁴ International Crisis Group, 'Syria Calling: Radicalisation in Central Asia', Europe and Central Asia Briefing No. 72, Bishkek/Brussels, 20 January 2015.

⁵ Rechel, Bernd et al., eds., *Trends in health systems in the former Soviet countries*, Observatory Studies Series 35, World Health Organization, United Kingdom, 2014.

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