



Introductory letter

Introduction

Georgia has maintained political and economic stability despite the shock of the 2008 war with Russia, but the government needs to use the two years before the next Presidential elections in 2013 to strengthen public trust in democratic institutions further.

May 2010 local elections marked a step forward in Georgia's democratic progress. There were no claims of violence, far fewer claims of pressure and less procedural problems than in previous elections. Voters in Tbilisi appeared to have overwhelmingly endorsed President Saakashvili's ruling party in municipal elections, barely a year after opposition parties had thronged the streets vowing to force him from office. These elections also included the first direct election of a mayor in Georgia. Previously in Tbilisi, and currently in other Georgia cities, mayors were selected by local city councils. The incumbent mayor of the ruling party, Gigi Ugulava, won the Tbilisi mayoral race with 55% of the vote.

The generous \$4.5 billion Georgia received from international partners over three years to help post-war recovery is running out. With large repayments due in 2012-2013, Tbilisi is likely to face substantial challenges to cover the foreign debt and the trade deficit, just as the next election cycle begins, especially if there is no increase in foreign direct investment and exports.

Meanwhile, the EU signed a visa facilitation agreement with Georgia in June. The deal, agreed after over six months of negotiations, provides for a reduced visa fee for all Georgian citizens and a total exemption from the visa fee for certain categories of applicants. In July the EU and Georgia formally opened negotiations for an Association Agreement [that includes Free Trade Agreement] aimed at reinforcing links between Georgia and the EU. The EU's Association Agreements establish political and economic cooperation between the bloc and non-EU countries, based on joint commitments to a set of values and covering a range of areas including political dialogue, trade, sectoral and justice, freedom and security policies. In December 2010 Brussels and Tbilisi signed a common air space agreement.

The August 2008 war and the subsequent developments have also dramatically affected the international context for Georgia. The Geneva "talks" process involving the South Ossetian and Abkhaz breakaway regions continue to be burdened by hard line stances by stakeholders thereby hindering a constructive dialogue and resolution. While UN continues working in Abkhazia, the access to South Ossetia is currently being discussed with all partners to allow humanitarian assistance from being delivered effectively to address the needs of the local population on the ground.

Several government reshuffles also took place during the year resulting in changing of the counterparts and slowing down of the progress of certain activities/projects.

Highlights on progress in UN reform

The UNCT Retreat was held in January 2010 to review the past year inter-agency activities, finalize 2009 RC Report and plan for the year ahead.

UNCT meetings were held regularly to discuss the issues of inter-agency nature. OMT met to discuss such common issues as premises, services and procurement. New common services [cell communications, taxi, printing and photocopying] were introduced.

Regular SMT meetings were held to exchange information about security issues, strengthen UNCT security management and address concerns of UNCT staff members. The SMT continued to enhance the security in Abkhazia. The Area SMT for Abkhazia was established and the Area Security Coordinator and the relevant security professionals appointed. The Security phases were reviewed and new phases were established for Abkhazia, Upper Svaneti region and Kodori valley. Security briefing was provided for the newcomers to Georgia. First Aid training was conducted for around 70 security focal points, wardens and drivers in May. Radio communication training was conducted for around 35 persons [primarily wardens and drivers] in August-September 2010.

Working towards enhanced coordination, the Donor Coordination Group (DCG) was transformed into Humanitarian Coordination Group (HCG) that is facilitated directly by the UN RC. The group membership was widened to include donors, operational UN, NGOs and ICRC. The HCG met regularly throughout the year focusing its attention primarily on breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as well as the water issues along the Administrative Border Line (ABL). The UN has played a critical role in supporting a policy dialogue on a broad range of issues between the donor community and the government of Georgia.

RC led negotiations for operational UN, NGOs, ICRC and donors/member states with the Government Ministries on humanitarian access legislation and was also actively involved in Geneva process on behalf of the UNCT. The RC participated in 9 meetings in Geneva during 2010.

MDG Consultant was hired to support MDG Parliamentary Group in awareness raising, advocacy and measuring the progress of MDG attainment. The cost of the Consultant is shared by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF.

2010 was an important year for the UNCTs collaboration and cooperation on joint communication initiatives. UNCT Communication Strategy for 2010-2011 was developed with the focus on the MDGs and the new UNDAF. Joint UN calendar was created, disseminated widely and posted on the UNCT website. A number of public information/advocacy campaigns and activities were held to promote MDGs and mark the following joint UN observances: Gender Week, World Humanitarian Day, European Immunization Week, World Environment Day, the 16 Days Activism against Violence against Women, UN Week, Human Rights Day, and World AIDS Day. Joint field trips were undertaken to Pankisi, Shida Kartli and Abkhazia. UN website was regularly updated.

The implementation of the Joint Project, "UN Joint Initiative in Support of Greater Gender Equality in Georgia" continued successfully throughout 2010. The project supported the Georgian Government in promoting the gender equality in the country further through assisting the relevant national structures. The UN Joint Project in cooperation with the Parliamentary Gender Equality Council drafted the Gender Equality National Action Plan for 2011-2013. The UN agencies ensured the participatory approach by

actively involving the representatives of the civil society in the drafting process. Gender Equality Law was adopted by the Parliament of Georgia in March 2010 with big support and facilitation from UNDP, UNIFEM and UNFPA.

UN Joint Team on HIV/AIDS was established in April. The Team functioned productively and developed the Joint Programme of Support and workplan 2010-2011. With UNAIDS support The HIV/AIDS National Strategic Plan of Action (NSPA) 2011-16 was developed through broadly participatory, inclusive and interactive process. The final Strategy document was endorsed by the CCM (one National AIDS Coordinating Authority) in August 2010. Over 50 key national experts and policy makers were directly involved in the National Strategic Plan development. Broader civil society/community of national and international stakeholders of HIV/AIDS response in Georgia has also contributed to the strategic planning process. National HIV M&E Framework and Manual were also completed and presented on national consultations in October 2010. Plan of Operationalization of the M&E System is in progress and is to be completed till March 2011. Efforts to strengthen the capacity of CCM are in progress.

UNFPA and UNICEF established a joint programme for conducting 2010 Reproductive Health Survey (RHS). UNFPA serves as a managing agent. Field work for the RHS was conducted in 2010 and data will be analyzed and disseminated in 2011.

UN Cares Plan was implemented under UNFPA's leadership through conducting 14 HIV/AIDS training sessions for around 300 staff in Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Gori.

Training/simulation exercise aimed at the operationalization of the UN Contingency Plan was held in February 2010 with the participation of the UN, the government and other partners.

Joint UNDP/UNICEF/DSS Office was established in Sukhumi and another joint UNDP/UNHCR project Office was established in Akhmeta.

Summary on Progress Towards UNDAF Outcomes

Upon initiative of the UN Resident Coordinator, Georgia became one of the first countries adopting the new guidelines and deciding to produce "UNDAF light" with a simplified Results/M&E matrix. During January - February 2010 the UNDAF theme groups met regularly to finalize the contents of the document and the UN Country Team served as a Steering Committee for the process. DOCO, Regional Directors' Team (RDT) and the Peer Support Group (PSG) were involved at every stage of the document development. A Validation Workshop organized and facilitated using again an in-house resources was held in February 2010 and attended by the government, the UN, and other stakeholders who reviewed and endorsed the final version of the UNDAF 2011-2015 document. The UNDAF was signed and launched by the Government of Georgia and the United Nations system jointly in June 2010 and published in English and Georgian languages in September 2010. Georgia UNDAF process and document are regarded as the best practice by the Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO). A piece on Georgia UNDAF process is planned to be included in the forthcoming global RC Synthesis Report.

Along with coordinating the UNDAF process in Georgia, the UN Coordination Officer also supported the UNDAF processes in Kyrgyzstan and Montenegro. The support to Montenegro was provided as part of the UN Staff College facilitation team.

UNAIDS and the Joint Team on HIV/AIDS were instrumental in making sure that the HIV/AIDS issues and related priorities are properly reflected in the new 2011-2015 UNDAF.

Gender Theme Group ensured gender mainstreaming in the new UNDAF (2011-2015) document. The group used UNDG guide on UNCT Performance Indicators for Gender Equality to analyze the implementation of 2005-2010 UNDAF and mainstreamed gender in the new UNDAF document on the basis of the lessons learned from this analysis. In addition, with RC's initiative and leadership, and based on the new UNDAF document, Gender Theme Group elaborated draft UNCT Gender Equality Strategy that awaits endorsement from the UNCT, the Government and the civil society. Gender Theme Group is chaired by UNIFEM, part of UN Women in Georgia.

Key Aspects of the Proposed 2011 Workplan

In 2011, the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Georgia will focus its efforts on putting the systems in place for the proper monitoring and evaluation of the new 2011-2015 UNDAF. The UNCT will also continue engaging with the Government of Georgia on issues related to the MDG advocacy and measuring the Goals' attainment.

Recommendations

The UN Country Team in Georgia would, once again, recommend the further improvement of the RCAR online reporting format to make it more user-friendly including options for printing as well as for exporting of reports to the PDF format for distribution to the UNCT members by e-mail.