



Introductory letter

Introduction

Georgia went some way towards stabilization during 2009, after the tumultuous events of the previous year. However the political and economic environment remained very uncertain. The post-conflict political environment, characterised by increased political polarisation between the ruling party and the opposition, decreased democratic tendencies, and calls for resignation of the President and new elections resulted in long-lasting and large scale protests of the opposition forces. After these protests the ruling party started to demonstrate readiness for cooperation and agreed to revision of the electoral code and constitution with an active involvement of opposition parties. A series of protests by the opposition parties during the year highlighted credibility and coherence issues with the public at large.

The August 2008 war and the subsequent developments have also dramatically affected the international context for Georgia. The Geneva “talks” process involving the de-facto South Ossetian and Abkhaz authorities continue to be burdened by hard line stances by stakeholders thereby hindering a constructive dialogue and resolution. Russia has vetoed the missions of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to Georgia and the UN Observer Mission to Georgia (UNOMIG). There were programmatic and operational gaps left after OSCE and UNOMIG missions departure. These developments are also hindering the UN access to the breakaway provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. While UN continues working in Abkhazia, the access to South Ossetia is currently not possible preventing humanitarian assistance from being delivered effectively to address the needs of the local population on the ground.

Georgia’s difficulties emerging from the impact of the 2008 war were compounded by the global financial crisis in 2009. The economy is still weighed down by drying up of investment and remittances, and the slow growth in the export market with a resulting overall economic decline rate at -2% (-4% according to unofficial IMF assessments).

Summary on Progress in UN Reform

UNCT Retreat was held in February 2009 to review the past year inter-agency activities, finalize 2009 RC Report and plan for the year ahead. The preparation of new UNDAF and OCHA exit strategy were discussed among other issues.

The new Resident Coordinator (RC) arrived in December 2009. The gap of approximately 5 months was covered by an interim RC.

UNCT meetings were held on average twice a month to discuss the issues of inter-agency nature. OMT met to discuss such common issues as premises, serviced and procurement. New common services [travel agency, express mail, printing] were introduced.

Regular SMT meetings were held to exchange information about security issues, strengthen UNCT security management and of address concerns UNCT staff members. The Head of UNHCR Gali assumed the responsibility of Area Security Coordinator for Abkhazia and Zugdidi districts (ex-UNOMIG AOR) in December 2009. UNHCR Gali now also provides logistical support for the Abkhazia Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) meetings held on average twice a month. The UNCT takes part in Geneva process through the Working Group II on IDP issues.

UNCT agencies worked jointly to address the needs of a population displaced as a result of 2008 War. One example of such work is joint cash assistance project by WFP, UNICEF and UNHCR addressing IDP clothing and supplementary food needs. It should also be noted that UNHCR and UNICEF reached an agreement to conduct vulnerability assessment in 2010.

Working towards enhanced coordination, the UN Resident Coordinator Office continued to facilitate the Donor Coordination Group (DCG). 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.

Following the tripartite agreement at the end of 2008, the regular consultation between the Government, the Georgian Trade Unions and Employers on labor issues took place. The round table on Labor Code and legislative issues was facilitated by a high level ILO Delegation that took place in Tbilisi on 20-21 September 2009. Following the round table, The Prime Minister of Georgia issued a Decree 335 institutionalizing Social Dialogue in Georgia.

2009 was an important year for the UNCTs collaboration and cooperation on joint communication initiatives. 2009 UN system-wide advocacy campaign was based on the UN Joint Communications Strategy and focused on promoting a coherent image of the United Nations in Georgia. Within the framework of the UN Week, the UNCG conducted a number of presentations about the UN and organized a wide range of outreach/awareness raising activities with general public and targeted initiatives for IDP and refugee children.

A 25-minute documentary about the United Nations in Georgia was filmed by Imedi TV and broadcast on the same TV channel in November 2009 covering the following areas: poverty eradication and economic growth, human rights, gender, health, trafficking, migration and labour issues, food security, and relief assistance. "UN in Georgia" Bulletin, posters, calendars were also produced and the UNCT web-site was upgraded. UN events and joint field visits were regularly covered in print and electronic media contributing to a consistent projection of the Organization's positive image and a steady level of visibility among partners.

RC Office organized Europe/CIS regional workshop for Coordination Officers in June 2009 in Tbilisi. DOCO and RDT colleagues participated in the workshop as well.

Summary on Progress Towards UNDAF Outcomes

The UNCT started the UNDAF formulation process in March 2009 with a concise review of the UNDAF 2006-2010 and a rapid country analysis, especially considering the 2008 Georgia – Joint Needs Assessment, and identified preliminary relevant clusters of challenges and priorities. During an UNDAF Design Workshop held in June 2009, the Government, UN and other stakeholders reached consensus on three strategic thematic areas for UN support in response to national challenges and policies being (1) Poverty Reduction (2) Democratic Development, and (3) Disaster Risk Reduction. Three Theme Groups (TGs) were formed: members of the TGs consisted of government representatives from numerous ministries and departments, key UN staff - including non-resident agencies - and international and civil society organisations. The work of the TGs was guided by the outputs of the Design Workshop and criteria, including: impact on national development; magnitude of the problem; inclusion, reduction of disparities and vulnerabilities; and UN comparative advantages. During the period July-December 2009 the TGs undertook substantive work in further in-depth situation analyses and delineating the thematic areas and corresponding strategies and outcomes. The TGs produced three draft UNDAF Results Frameworks. The non-resident UN agencies were actively participating and contributing to the UNDAF development process. A Peer Support Group (PSG), DOCO and the UN Staff College provided valuable support to the TGs and throughout the UNDAF formulation process. UNDAF Consultant was hired locally to advance the process and draft the document with the inputs from the TGs and the Task Force.

Donor conference to raise funds for the UN component of the Joint Needs Assessment (JNA) was organized by the RC Office in February 2009. The JNA is a post-August 2008 war needs assessment of the damage and economic loss resulting from the conflict and to develop estimates of the financial assistance required to address the losses and re-establish the conditions for a return to sustained growth. The needs assessment mission comprised of World Bank, European Commission and the UN worked on the basis of UNDG and WB joint methodology for post-conflict needs assessments (PCNA) and examined (i) the macro-economic and banking impact of the conflict; (ii) the impact on the social sectors and on the directly and indirectly affected population and (iii) infrastructure and environment. The UNCT contributed to the production of the 1st JNA Progress Report in June 2009. It should also be mentioned that the cluster system introduced after the August 2008 war has been de-activated in December 2009.

Georgian National Emergency Response Plan was developed and approved by the President of Georgia within the framework of the Disaster Risk Reduction project co-funded by the RC Office. The 1st draft of the UN Contingency Plan also covering pandemic preparedness was developed and approved by the UNCT. Disaster Risk Reduction Think Tank was established to collect, analyze and share information among different actors active in this field.

An important development within the Joint Initiative in Support of Greater Gender Equality was the preparation of a monitoring report of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Gender Equality. The drafting of a new 2010/2011 NAP was initiated based on the findings of this report.

Key Aspects of the Proposed 2009 Workplan

In 2010, the UN Country Team in Georgia will focus its efforts on finalizing the UNDAF document. Consultations are underway with the international community to expand the current UNCT to include donors, NGOs and international organizations to develop an inclusive platform for a wide range of issues. The UNCT will also continue strengthening its public information/advocacy efforts with the support from the UN Communications Group (UNCG).

Recommendations

The UN Country Team in Georgia would recommend 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.