



Introductory Letter

Introduction

Georgia has implemented wide-ranging reforms and achieved significant progress since the Rose Revolution. These efforts were translated into encouraging developments with regard to reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Positive trends are especially noticeable in achieving the universal primary education, improving maternal and child health, as well as in combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

There were also two positive developments in the area of Gender in December 2011: (1) The adoption of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and, (2) The adoption by the Parliament of an amendment to the Election Code – now all the parties that take part in elections will receive 10% increase in their state funding if they have overcome the 5% electoral barrier and if they have 20% candidates of different sex among each ten candidates (i.e. 2 out of each 10).

Despite these achievements, Georgia still has more to do in strengthening its democratic credentials. Real decision-making remained very centralized and preferable constitutional changes and a new electoral code were adopted. With Parliamentary and Presidential elections due by 2012 and 2013 respectively, when current President's final term ends, constitutional amendments were made transferring significant powers from Presidency to Prime Minister. At the same time, in December the Parliament approved new election code, which considered many of the Council of Europe's Venice Commission and the OSCE/ODIHR recommendations, but fell short of addressing some key concerns including about inequality of suffrage, established new regulations limiting political party and campaign financing, shortcomings in the electoral complaints and appeals procedures and issues related to the use of administrative resources during campaign.

The sudden entry into politics in October by Bidzina Ivanishvili, Georgian multi-billionaire and prominent philanthropist, significantly changed the situation, effectively creating a bipolar political landscape. By end-2011, both the Government and the opposition were in an unofficial pre-electoral campaign, which will increasingly affect policy and development issues next year.

Media remains polarized and biased. However, in 2011, the Parliament adopted the law regarding transparency of media ownership banning ownership of media outlets by offshore companies and obliging public exposure of owners. The law also established requirements of officially declaring sources of owner's income. The package of further amendments to media legislation was developed by local experts and will be discussed during 2012.

Courts are still perceived to lack independence. 2011 has seen a willingness of judiciary to work towards increased transparency and trust. A working group including decision-making organ of the judiciary - High Council of Justice (HCJ) - and influential international and local organizations has already agreed on a number of legislative changes to be finally adopted by the Parliament in 2012.

Political stalemate over status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia kept the operational context “frozen”. Developments were overshadowed by elections, albeit with different dynamics and outcomes. In Abkhazia, the sudden death in May of de facto President Bagapsh prompted snap Presidential elections on 26 August, won by the de facto Vice-President, Alexander Ankvab. Despite international non-recognition, this was arguably the most competitive election in the region. By contrast, the de facto Presidential elections in South Ossetia (SO), where the incumbent Kokoity was prevented by the constitution from running for a third term, threatened to erupt in social violence when the opposition candidate unexpectedly won in both rounds. Despite the CEC confirmation of the result, the de facto High Court invalidated the election results and disqualified the opposition candidate from taking part in fresh elections scheduled for March 2012. SO remains inaccessible and it is difficult to assess the current situation and the real likelihood of social unrest.

The Geneva International Discussions, co-chaired by the EU, UN and OSCE, remained the only forum where Georgian, Russian, Abkhaz and South Ossetian participants gathered in two parallel working groups (WG). In WG1 dealing with security issues, participants noted the improved overall security environment and the effective work of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms, which continue to meet on a regular basis. However, progress on the key issues on the agenda – a Non-Use of Force agreement and International Security Arrangements – remained elusive due to diametrically opposed political positions. WG2, dealing with humanitarian issues and the needs of displaced persons and vulnerable populations, also remained hostage to status-related issues, although a series of informal information sessions on important issues such as human security, human rights and missing persons helped to create greater awareness of obligations and practices that could be applied to improve the situation of conflict-affected communities.

Summary on progress towards UNDAF outcomes

2011 was the first year of new 2011-2015 UNDAF implementation. Four UNDAF Thematic Groups (1. Poverty Reduction; 2. Democratic Development; 3. Disaster Risk Reduction; and 4. Monitoring and Evaluation) are actively working now to review the first year of UNDAF implementation. This is of utmost importance to ensure accountability and transparency of the UNCT’s work.

Monitoring and Evaluation workshop was organized by UNFPA [Chair of M&E Theme Group] for the entire UNCT and facilitated by an external Consultant. Main objective of the workshop was to refine indicators and prepare ground for the Annual Review.

The Annual Review is scheduled for the 2nd quarter of 2012. It was decided at the UNCT meeting of 27 February 2012 that the Annual Review will be held as three separate expanded UNDAF TG meetings involving key high-level interlocutors (including from the government).

Main focus of the expanded TG meetings will be on refining UNDAF’s Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and initiating preparations for the forthcoming UNDAF mid-term review.

Summary on progress in UN Reform

The UNCT Retreat was held in February 2011 to review the past year inter-agency activities, finalize 2010 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 [vehicle maintenance, travel services and purchase of fuel] were introduced.

During 2011, the Security Risk Assessment (SRA) was conducted for the entire country and specific areas depending on the prevailing security situation in the area. The SRAs for Security Level Area 3 or above were conducted twice during 2011 and for Security Level Areas 1 and 2 once. Based on the SRA mitigation measures were identified and implemented through formal MOSS and MORSS process. Given the improved security situation in several areas, several MORSS measures were assessed outdated and therefore discontinued. However additional MOSS and MORSS measures were implemented in Abkhazia and areas close to the Administrative Border. Formal update of security plan for Georgia was conducted twice during 2011. Area specific security plan for Abkhazia and Zugdidi district was updated simultaneously with the country wide plan. Security Management Team meetings were held monthly in Tbilisi and Area Security Management Team meetings were held monthly in Gali.

During 2011 security trainings for staff were provided for staff on various topics, including communications, TRIP, arrival briefs, guard force, earthquake response and fire safety. In addition in October 2011 Safe and Secure Approaches to Field Environment (SSAFE) training was conducted for 19 UN A/P/F and INGO staff

Humanitarian Coordination Group (HCG) continued functioning and was facilitated directly by the UN RC. The HCG met regularly throughout the year focusing its attention primarily on breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. 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 issues and was also actively involved in Geneva Internal Discussions on behalf of the UNCT. The RC participated in 4 meetings in Geneva during 2011.

2011 was an important year for the UNCT collaboration and cooperation on joint communication initiatives. Considerable strides have been made towards broadening understanding of and support for the work of the United Nations on priority thematic issues. UNCT Communication Strategy for 2010-2011 was refined with the focus on the MDG advocacy and UNDAF objectives. A number of joint public information/advocacy campaigns and activities were organized to promote the MDGs and also to mark the following joint UN observances together with national partners: Earth Hour, Gender Week, European Immunization Week, World Environment Day, the 16 Days Activism Against Gender Violence, UN Day, World Refugee Day, Human Rights Day, World Food Day and World AIDS Day.

UN Joint Team on HIV/AIDS functioned productively in 2011. The Team continued supporting National AIDS Authority in taking new commitments through the 2011 political declaration and the High Level Meeting (HLM) targets to be achieved by 2015

2011 was very fruitful as far as the Joint Programmes are concerned. Four new Joint Programmes were established and one continued functioning and one was finalized.

The following New Joint Programmes were established in 2011:

Joint Initiative in support of the MDG Parliamentary Group (MDGPG)

The primary purpose of this consultancy is the provision of analytical and technical support to effective functioning and outreach of the MDGPG as well as the collection of data and information on the progress of attaining the Goals in Georgia.

Participating Agencies: UNDP (\$16,700), UNFPA (\$13,700), UNICEF (\$16,700) Duration: January 2011 – December 2012, Total Budget: \$50,100

Livelihood Development of Vulnerable Communities in the Shida Kartli Region

The programme assists the displaced and host communities in the Shida Kartli region through promoting small-scale farming and raising household income of farming families. The project will establish a value chain linking up farmers, the farmers' associations, food processing facilities and service providers with each other, and strengthening their capacity through trainings, extension support and access to markets.

Participating Agencies: UNDP (\$80,000) and UNHCR (TBD)

Duration: 1 November 2011 – 31 October 2013, Total Budget: \$300,000

Integrated Socio-economic development of Pankisi Valley

The initiative is designed to: (1) Assist transitional strategy from direct individual humanitarian assistance to sustainable human development for all communities, including refugees in Pankisi Valley, and (2) Strengthen the national system of protection of refugees in a broader context of democratic governance, addressing poverty and promoting sustainable human development in Pankisi Valley. The immediate objective of the project is to ensure integrated local development and improve the lives of people in the Pankisi Valley through enhanced employment and economic opportunities, better provision of social services, and safe and secure environment.

Participating Agencies: UNDP (\$420,000) and UNHCR (\$200,000)

Duration: 1 February 2011 – 31 January 2013, External donor: SDC, Total Budget: \$620,000

UN Joint Programme to Enhance Gender Equality in Georgia

The overall goal of the programme is to promote gender equality and women's empowerment through strengthening capacities in the government, civil society and communities. The overall goal will be achieved by realization of the following outcomes: (1) Enhanced women's political and economic empowerment; (2) Creating an enabling environment to eliminate violence against women, especially domestic violence (DV); and (3) Gender Equality advanced by creating enabling environment to realize Sexual and Reproductive Rights of population

The joint programme will directly support further realization of the women's rights and gender equality commitments undertaken by Georgia at international as well as national levels and will upscale results achieved by the country with the support of the international community, including UN agencies, in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment through innovative initiatives. Furthermore, it contributes and responds to United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF's) stated goals on enhanced protection and promotion of human rights, access to justice and gender equality and of improved access to quality health, education, legal aid, justice and other essential social services.. The proposed programme is directly linked to national priorities it closely follows and derives from the aims, objectives and priorities of the draft National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2011-2013).

Participating Agencies: UNDP (\$1,913,153), UN Women (\$1,935,679) and UNFPA (\$733,049)

Donor: SIDA, Duration: 2011 – 2014, Total Budget: \$4,581,881

The following Joint Project was continued from 2010:

UN Joint Project "Georgia Reproductive Health Survey

A third round population-based household probability survey of women of childbearing age was conducted in 2010 and a preliminary report was disseminated in 2011 within the frames of the UNICEF-UNFPA UN Joint Project through the pooled fund modality with UNFPA as a Managing Agent. The 2010 Reproductive Health Survey in Georgia (GERHS2010) covers a broad array of reproductive health topics, including a pregnancy history, abortion, childbearing, contraceptive use, maternal and child health, health behaviors, attitudes toward contraception. It also includes information on key MDG indicators (Education & Water & Sanitation). In addition, the questionnaire will include information needed to evaluate IEC efforts, youth health programs, knowledge on STDs, including HIV/AIDS. The full report of the survey will be published in 2012.

Participating Agencies: UNFPA (\$147,000) and UNICEF (\$123,426)

Duration: 2010-2012, Total Budget: \$270,426

Key aspects of the proposed 2012 workplan

In 2012, the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Georgia will focus its efforts on 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 like to get clarity on future HQ/DOCO funding for RC Office. It would be good to know in advance what the situation is going to be in 2013 and beyond in order to employ proper fundraising mechanisms to ensure smooth functioning of the RC Office and efficient coordination support to the RC and the UN Country Team.