

Tbilisi, 23 February, 2005



Project Brief-Abkhazia, Georgia Peace Building and Recovery Programme- Initial phase

Total Budget: \$500,000

Sector: Peace Building and Recovery

Duration: 12 months

Background:

The 1992 -1993 armed conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia led to the displacement of over 300,000 people, a significant part of the pre-war 525,000 population, and the destabilisation and devastation of this once economically prosperous region. In 1994, the Georgian and Abkhaz sides agreed on a cease-fire, the separation of forces and the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States Peace Keeping Force (CIS PKF) deployed in June 1994. In August 1993, the UN Security Council established the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG).

By 1996 and 1997, an increasing number of spontaneous returnees drew the support and assistance of international organisations. However, in May 1998 armed clashes broke out between the two sides and as a result, an estimated 30,000-40,000 people were once again driven out of the Gali district and much of the infrastructure previously restored by UNHCR was destroyed. Since then Gali district has remained an area of instability and insecurity and the social and economic situation for both those that fled and those who remained in Abkhazia is extremely poor.

As of 2003, over 40,000 IDPs are estimated to have spontaneously returned again or at least seasonally returned to farm their lands. However the implementation of both relief assistance and recovery activities has been limited by security concerns and these, along with a lack of a peace agreement and an agreement on the status of returnees, have been hampering a sustainable return of IDPs to Abkhazia.

Between 1 and 17 December 2003 UNDP led a mission to Abkhazia to look at the feasibility of building a sustainable recovery and rehabilitation process for IDPs, returnees and local communities focusing on the Gali, Ochamchira and Tkvarcheli Districts in the east of Abkhazia. The mission drew upon the findings of earlier UN missions to Abkhazia, including the February 1998 Needs Assessment Mission and the November 2000 Joint Assessment Mission. The UNDP-led Mission broadly concluded that recovery and rehabilitation work was possible.

Objective:

The UNDP-led Feasibility Mission developed an overall programme strategy and approach for UNDP. The three districts of Gali, Ochamchira and Tkvarcheli were selected on the basis of the level of conflict related damage and also as districts where both the returnee and non-displaced population suffered from severe socio-economic difficulties. It was also considered as an area to which further IDP returns could be expected. The mission's findings were based on the observation that fundamental changes in the environment of Gali, Ochamchira and Tkvarcheli districts since the fall of the Soviet Union have had a profound impact on infrastructure needs.

The initial programme focuses on four main areas: agricultural development and sustainable livelihoods, the provision of basic clean water in both urban and rural areas, the development of small business initiatives through microfinance/microcredit and the creation of a centralized information management system to facilitate data collection in Abkhazia. The programme will work towards creating and supporting an environment that facilitates economic and social growth. The programme will also aim to improve the capacity and effectiveness of village, town and municipal level structures and to develop a participatory, bottom-up approach to recovery that will enhance planning capabilities and promote local participation.

Outcomes:

- I. Immediate rehabilitation and recovery requirements are prioritised and documented.
- II. A pilot recovery program in selected communities of Gali, Tkvarcheli and Ochamchira Districts is initiated focusing on the promotion of sustainable livelihoods e.g., in agriculture, micro credit, and the provision of basic services such as health, water supply, sanitation, roads and education.
- III. The capacity of local institutions, local NGOs and local organisations in Abkhazia to effectively contribute to the recovery of their communities and to the peace building effort are strengthened.
- IV. Exchange of, storage of and access to information on Abkhazia is systematized and strengthened.

- V. A joint UN recovery and rehabilitation programme is planned and developed in the three districts.
- VI. Peace building efforts are strengthened, including the programs and efforts initiated by the United Nations Volunteer Programme, UNIFEM and others.

Intended Outputs:

- /// Established UNDP Programme presence in Abkhazia
- /// Assessment of agricultural/livelihoods potential in the three districts of Abkhazia (including agricultural production, potential for small business and micro credit and agricultural extension)
- /// Detailed assessment for urban and rural water supply and sanitation in Gali, Ochamchira and Tkvarcheli Districts
- /// Detailed assessment of the microfinance/microcredit sector in the three districts
- /// Design data template and information management system for Abkhazia
- /// Detailed conflict impact assessment of the three districts
- /// A full-scale project proposal for the UN joint Abkhazia Recovery Programme
- /// Mobilise resources for programme implementation.
- /// Identify programme-implementing partners.