

# SPCP Southern Caucasus

## Azerbaijan Update

### June 2008

#### Background

In July 2007 UNHCR introduced the Strengthening Protection Capacity Project in the Southern Caucasus (SPCP-SC) to help strengthen protection responses to forced displacement in the region.

In Azerbaijan the project focuses on strengthening state and community capacities to protect refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

To date, the SPCP-SC initiative in Azerbaijan has been supported by the European Commission and the Danish Refugee Council. Its goals complement the strategic objectives of cooperation between Azerbaijan and the European Union set out in the 2007 European Neighbourhood Policy, including strengthening migration and asylum systems in a manner that meets international standards.

#### Methodology

The Strengthening Protection Capacity Project in Azerbaijan focuses on the identification of protection gaps facing refugees and IDPs in order to plan comprehensively to remedy them. It builds on the considerable commitment and work already undertaken by the Government of Azerbaijan to alleviate the plight of displaced persons particularly as part of State Programmes for the improvement of living conditions.

In line with the long standing cooperation between UNHCR and the Government of Azerbaijan, ongoing consultations are held to address identified protection issues facing IDPs and refugees in Azerbaijan and to agree on means to address them. Specific project interventions have been developed

and incorporated as possible into existing State Programmes and Action Plans.

#### Activities

##### Gaps analysis and consultation

An analysis of gaps in IDP protection has been conducted by UNHCR Azerbaijan to identify existing challenges drawing upon participatory interviews with internally displaced men, women, boys and girls of different ages and backgrounds as well as relevant documentary materials. It is expected to be published in July.

The IDP Protection Gaps Analysis complements a previous exercise on IDP Age, Gender, and Diversity Mainstreaming that resulted in a broadly attended conference and recommendations to the Government on their IDP policy.

A parallel analysis is underway of gaps in refugee protection and will also form the basis of collaborative work with the



Governmental, national partners and communities to address problems faced by asylum seekers and refugees in accessing rights and solutions.

##### Expanding self reliance in displaced communities



*UNHCR acknowledges the generous support of the European Union for this project. The contents of this update do not reflect the views of the European Union.*

Despite Azerbaijan's growing economy, national unemployment remains a concern particularly in rural areas, impacting on the ability of IDPs and refugees to find employment and to generate sufficient income to live in dignity. Lack of adequate income can contribute to poor health, low school retention rates and other protection risks associated with insufficient food and non food items. Displaced women and youth are the most affected.

and modalities of future cooperation are underway.

More information on the Strengthening Protection Capacity Project, including the Southern Caucasus initiative can be found at [www.unhcr.org/spcp](http://www.unhcr.org/spcp)



In March-April 2008 a survey of IDP and refugee livelihoods in Azerbaijan was conducted with the support of the Danish Refugee Council, to identify challenges and opportunities to increase self-reliance among the displaced population.

The main conclusions of the livelihood survey will help UNHCR and the Government of Azerbaijan to develop strategies to expand IDP and refugee livelihoods and identify avenues as well as suitable partners for their implementation, particularly in the field of agriculture.

### **Expanding reception centre capacity for asylum seekers**

One of the main objectives of SPCP-SC is to enhance Government capacity to receive refugees, by supporting the establishment of a reception centre for asylum seekers as well delivering training to government officials who will work in the reception centre. Discussions with the newly formed State Migration Service on the identification of a suitable site for the reception centre