



# **Reflecting on Capacities for Child Centred Disaster Response in South Eastern Europe Region**

**Presenter:**

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# 'UNICEF CCCs'

## Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action



**20**  
years  
THE CONVENTION ON  
THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

unicef 

# Session outline

1. Overview of major risks faced by children in emergencies
2. Notes on health risks to children in South Eastern Europe
3. Common challenges faced by national disaster management authorities in Europe and Central Asia region
4. Possible options for moving forward

# Part 1. Risks to children in disasters (UNICEF CCCs)

- Girls and women are more affected by disasters
- Following the impact of destruction and accidents in disasters, most child mortality is attributable to malnutrition, pneumonia, diarrhoea, measles, malaria (in malaria-endemic areas) and neonatal causes.
- Almost 90 per cent of diarrhoeal cases are preventable through safe drinking water, basic sanitation and appropriate hygiene behavior.
- Maternal health is critical in ensuring healthy babies and children.
- Because HIV infection is irreversible, it is critical that adequate preventive measures be undertaken in all situations, including humanitarian situations.

## Risks to children in disasters (Continued)

- For young children, micronutrient deficiency increases the risk of death due to infectious disease and impaired physical and mental development.
- Because breastfed children are at least six times more likely to survive in the early months, the support, promotion and protection of breastfeeding is fundamental to preventing undernutrition and its consequences among infants
- Education mitigates the psychosocial impact of conflict and disasters by giving a sense of normalcy, structure and hope for the future; it provides essential building blocks for future economic stability.
- Education can save lives by protecting against exploitation and harm, by providing the knowledge and skills to survive a crisis through the dissemination of life-saving messages.

## Risks to children in disasters (Continued)

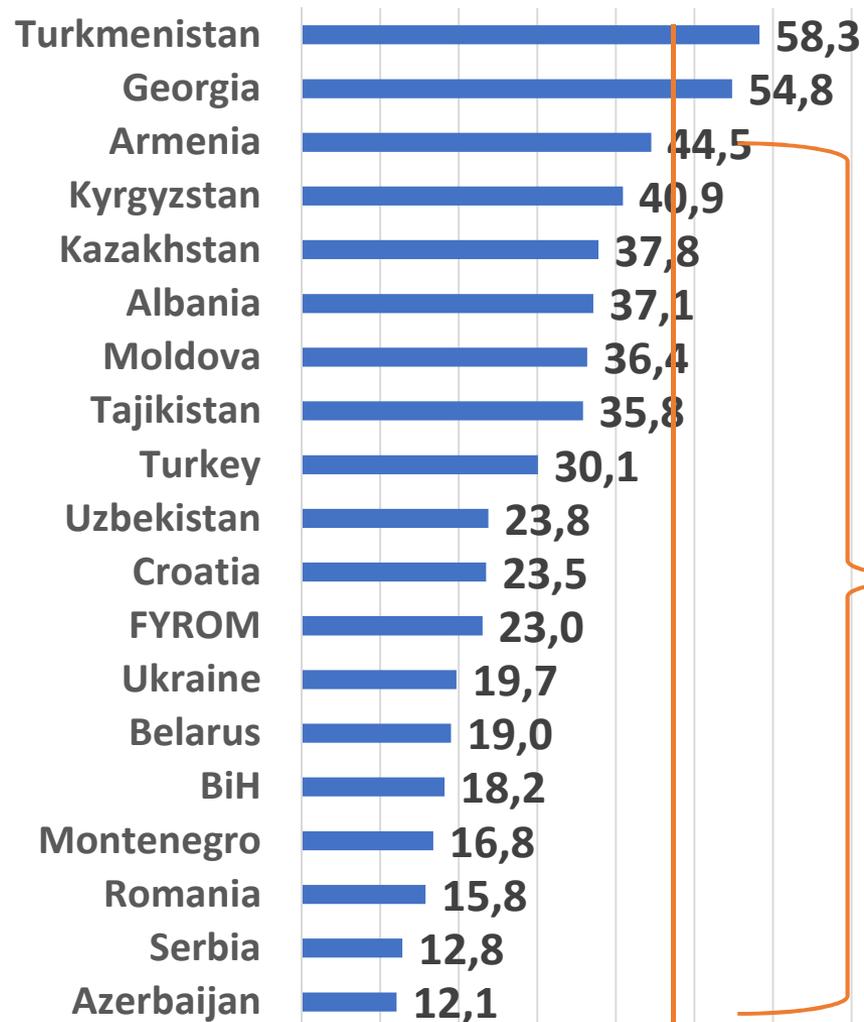
- Experience demonstrates that humanitarian situations both exacerbate existing protection risks and create new ones.
- For children, boys and girls, this includes the increased risk of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- The psychological stress experienced by children in emergencies can retard mental, physical and emotional development for which early screening, referral, care and therapeutic services are required.

## Part 2. Health risks to children in South Eastern Europe (Western Balkans)

- Most countries in SEE have surpassed global progress on child mortality, more than halving the U5MR since 1990. 84% of U5 deaths occurs in the first year of life, over 7% of births are LBW and hence provision of developmental care for premature babies is a challenge.
- The mortality in this sub-region are exactly half the same values in the Caucasus.
- However, IYCF and breast-feeding practices are very poor mainly due to absence of national legislation to regulate the marketing of formula milk, lack of enforcement of such laws and absence of quality integrated services to promote BF in the PHC.

## Health risks (continued)

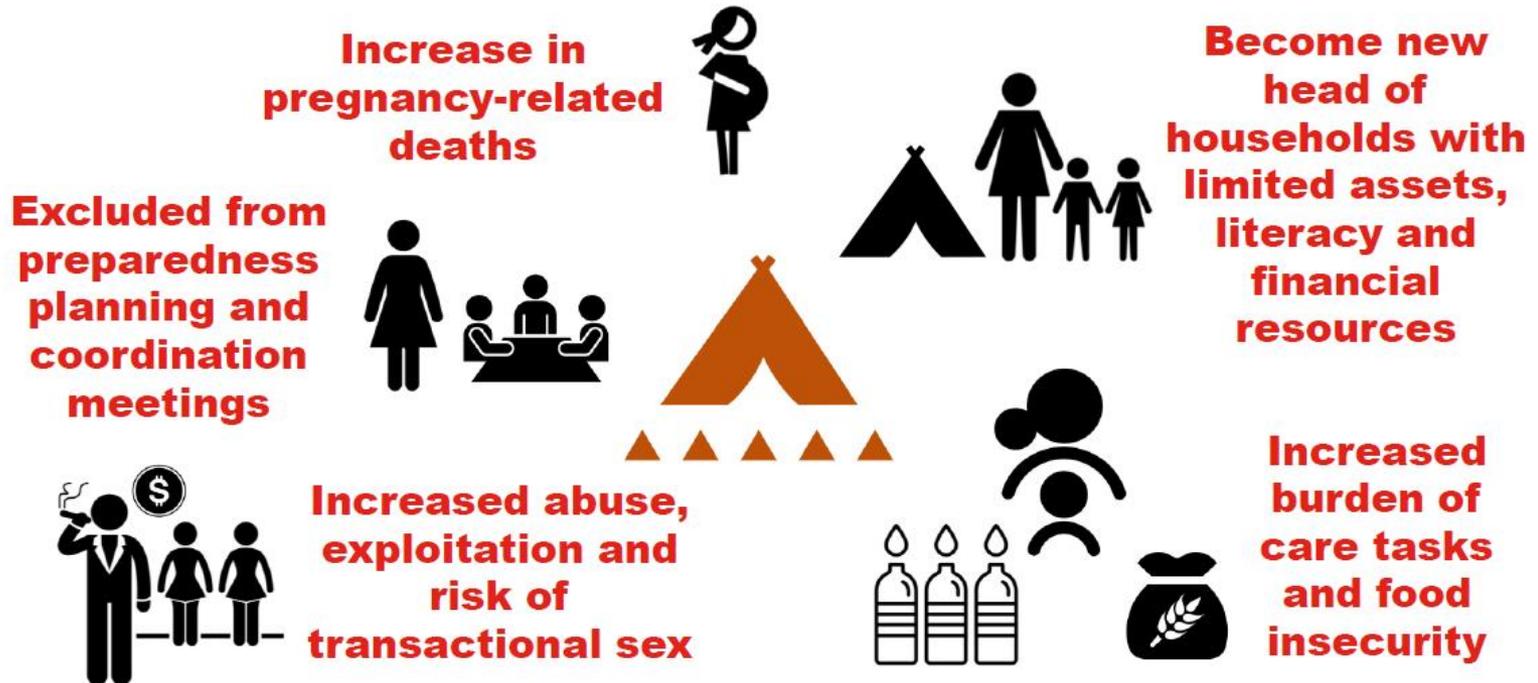
- There is a decrease of immunization coverage: B&H DTP3 from 95% in 2007 to 75% in 2017; RNM from 98% in 2012 to 91% in 2017
- In some countries, a significant proportion of districts with suboptimal (below 80%) coverage (B&H and RNM)



## Rates of Exclusive Breast Feeding in a number of countries in ECAR, SOWC 2018

Less than 50% in almost all countries

## WHAT ISSUES DO WOMEN AND GIRLS FACE IN CRISES?



### 3. Common challenges faced by national disaster management authorities in Europe and Central Asia region

The need to ensure national laws (civil protection) are sensitive to the common issues facing children and women in emergencies

Limited, often insufficient recognition and actions taken relative to the need for psycho-social care

Technical involvement, ownership, applied expertise by line ministries (Health, Education, Child Welfare) – often peripheral to child and women's risks

### 3. Common challenges (continued)

National DM systems insufficiently de-centralized, accountable to community levels

Emergency response typically focused to short-term interventions; less sensitive to potential longer-term response needs and community impact, i.e. earthquake, conflict

Risk to the continuity of service delivery in times of political crisis (Armenia, April 2018)

# Possible options for moving forward

1. UNICEF offer of support in desk review exercises to identify existing gaps towards strengthening child-centred approaches
2. To be based on UNICEF global and regional experience, the CRC and Sendai Framework
3. To be advanced within the wider context of the regional DRR agenda and CADRI support mechanism supported by UN agencies, i.e. UNISDR, UNDP, etc,
4. Additional tools include child-focused risk analysis for resilient development—climate landscape assessment for children, social cohesion and peacebuilding, and support to national shock responsive social protection systems

Thank you

Questions?

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