**United Nations Trust Fund
for Human Security**

Armenia

Mainstreaming the Human Security Approach in Policy-making to Support the Recovery of Syunik Region Affected by Complex Challenges

Background information

Armenia has experienced notable transformations since 2018, marked by a thorough political reform agenda based on good governance, inclusive economic development, and the promotion of human rights. However, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 not only hindered Armenia's economic growth it also deepened existing inequalities and accelerated new vulnerabilities. In the same year, hostilities in the Nagorno-Karabakh region reemerged and led to the displacement of approximately 80,000 people into the bordering communities of the Syunik Region. Together with the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic, these challenges compounded insecurities in the region, decreasing livelihood opportunities, weakening food security, and contributing to rising crime rates. To prevent a vicious cycle of worsening human insecurity, it is vital to strengthen the region's risk-informed and resilient development, while also establishing inclusive public institutions that address the needs and vulnerabilities of all.

Goals and objectives

The programme aims to support the development of inclusive and risk-informed policymaking in the Syunik region through the application of the human security approach. To this end, the specific objectives of the programme are to: (i) mainstream the human security framework in the development plans of the Syunik Regional Government and the Sisian, Goris, Kapan, and Meghri communities; (ii) strengthen participatory public institutions, involving government officials, NGOs, private sector, and the local populations; and (iii) enhance economic security through the development of income-generating activities and the improvement of existing regional livelihood support schemes.

DURATION
February 2023 — December 2024

UN IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES
UNDP, ILO

OTHER KEY PARTNERS
Ministry of Territorial Development and Infrastructure, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Emergency Situations, Syunik regional government, local administrations of the Sisian, Goris, Kapan, and Meghri, local CSOs, and NGOs
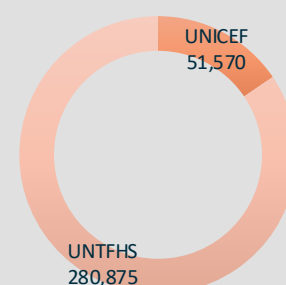
BENEFICIARIES
140,000

TOTAL BUDGET
US$ 332,445

POOLING OF RESOURCES

UNICEF
51,570

UNTFHS
280,875

Beneficiaries

The main participants of the programme are the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Regional Government of the Syunik Province, the Sisian, Goris, Kapan, and Meghri community administrations, CBOs, local producers, and micro- and small-sized enterprises that benefit from an enhanced understanding of the human security approach and citizen-centric policymaking. In total, over 140,000 people representing the population of Syunik province benefit from improved strategies and institutions that promote inclusive governance, economic empowerment, and human rights.

Applying the Human Security approach

For populations facing complex and intersecting challenges such as economic instability and the impacts of the pandemic and conflict in a neighboring province, it is necessary to take a comprehensive approach to development planning processes. Accordingly, the programme strengthens the capacity of the regional and local actors in the Syunik region to craft multisectoral policies and initiatives that enhance governance, social cohesion, and employment opportunities. Through the development of a digital tool, the programme undertakes a human security assessment to understand the needs as well as the capacities within communities and institutions. This provides the regional government with new mechanisms for identifying local needs and vulnerabilities as well as gaps at the institutional and policy level. Together, these activities guide the formulation of concrete, proactive, and comprehensive measures for building long-term resilience at the regional and local levels.

In parallel, leveraging partnerships with local institutions such as the Armenia National SDG Innovation Lab, the programme trains government authorities and civil society actors in the human security approach. Building on these capacity-building activities and the results of the needs assessment, the programme then establishes multistakeholder decision-making platforms bringing together the municipality, civil society stakeholders, young people, grassroots entities, and the private sector are empowered to co-formulate solutions. As a result, the programme guides integrated local action in sectors such as employment and income generation, climate change, public administration, and disaster risk reduction.

Using human security to guide more comprehensive and inclusive solutions to achieving economic growth and community resilience, the programme supports local stakeholders to become agents of change while strengthening the ties between the state and society. At the same time, by combining protection and empowerment mechanisms, these efforts generate long-lasting and sustainable improvements in the survival, livelihood, and dignity of the population.

Achievements

- The programme achieved notable progress in embedding the human security approach into Armenia's development planning processes at the community, regional, and national levels. Through participatory workshops involving 34 senior and mid-level representatives from five ministries, it developed a practical guidance note on *Community Development Planning Guided by the Human Security Approach*. At the request of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, the approach was integrated into the regional Community Development Planning methodology and the Draft Law on Local Self-Government. These recommendations are included in draft legislation for parliamentary consideration in 2025.

- To deepen the evidence base and strategic direction of the programme, a global review of 14 programmes worldwide generated country-specific insights and actionable recommendations, reinforcing the added value of human security for inclusive and risk-informed development planning.

- In support of economic security, the programme developed a methodology to strengthen social dialogue and promote green job creation. Value chain analyses conducted in four communities yielded concrete, locally tailored recommendations. These were validated in a high-level workshop with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Syunik regional authorities, laying the groundwork for participatory and sustainable economic strategies.