



## **INFLUENCE OF RISK FACTORS ON THE HEALTH OF SCHOOLCHILDREN IN HOT CLIMATES OF SURKHANDARYA REGION**

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### **Annotation**

Since 2016, the Republic of Uzbekistan has initiated a reform process that encompasses all social sectors, defines a new standard for government accountability to citizens and redefines the prospects for fulfilling children's rights in Uzbekistan. These reforms take place in a challenging context. Changes in social policy and social services require innovation and learning, significant capacity building and investment to fill the remaining gaps and inequitable realization of rights of children in Uzbekistan. Like other Central Asian countries, Uzbekistan is significantly impacted by climate change and experiences risks of natural hazards, especially earthquakes, landslides and droughts. The ecological catastrophe

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### **Introduction**

In the Aral Sea region in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, remains a major challenge for the entire Central Asia region. As a result of climate change and exacerbated by the Aral Sea disaster, Uzbekistan faces problems of water scarcity with the prospect of potentially leading to food insecurity in some regions<sup>1</sup>. Although GDP growth is forecast for the future<sup>2</sup>, in 2017, Uzbekistan experienced a budget deficit that represented 0.1% of GDP<sup>3</sup> and the public external debt rose by more than 100% between 2016 and 2019<sup>4</sup>. It is against this backdrop that UNICEF in Uzbekistan is undertaking an analysis of the situation of children. This report is an update of the 2016 report «Situation Analysis of children and women in Uzbekistan» and is the first in a series of UNICEF's "New Generation Situation Analysis" (SitAn), which aim to be a flagship product presenting an analytical narrative on children's rights and wellbeing. The rights-based analysis looks at the progress, challenges and opportunities in implementing children's rights, the wellbeing and patterns of





deprivation that children experience. It analyses the immediate, underlying and structural causes of these deprivations that serve as barriers to the fulfilment of children's rights. It examines the unequal realization of rights and the extent and depth of disparities between boys, girls, urban/rural areas, regions, and various groups of children. It highlights the situation of children left behind and those most at risk of being left behind. The situation analysis also includes gender and risk lenses in its analysis. In the area of gender, the analysis consistently attempts to identify inequalities and differences in the realization of the rights of boys and girls. The analysis examines to what extent these differences are caused by specific deprivations and unequal treatment of boys and girls, men and women at a more structural level. The analysis of structural causes identifies deeply rooted political, economic, social and technical factors that influence deprivations and inequitable realization of children's rights in Uzbekistan. In the area of risk analysis, the situation analysis looks at the risk landscape in Uzbekistan and takes into account how the existing situation, causal factors, strengths and weaknesses of the various responsible parties deal with the risks. Analysis of the data reveals the differences and challenges in the implementation of children's rights in different areas, and how these are influenced by geographical location and the hazards present in some places. The Situation Analysis is intended to be used by a wide range of stakeholders, including UNICEF, other international organisations, civil society, the private sector, the government and other stakeholders which might have an impact on the progressive fulfilment of children's rights in the country. This analysis furthermore feeds into the process of developing UNICEF's new 5-year country programme with the government of Uzbekistan. The process will help to distil the priorities and emerging issues for children that can be addressed by UNICEF and partners in the coming years. The report consists of seven chapters. The overview section provides a general background. This by a substantial chapter on the progress and deprivations in the progressive realization of children's rights in the areas of survival and development, education and development, social security, protection from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect, and the participation of children in matters and decisions that affect them. For each area there is also a discussion on the immediate and underlying causes that prevent further progress. Uzbekistan is witnessing climate change effects, such as higher temperatures, divergent precipitation regimes, droughts and decrease in water availability. The average warming is projected to 2-3°C over the next 50 years that is significantly higher than 1.5°C registered over the last 50 years<sup>2</sup>. As a result of





climate change, aridity is expected to increase, especially in western Uzbekistan. According to projections, water in two major rivers of Uzbekistan – Syrdarya and Amudarya is expected to decrease by 2-5% and 10-15% respectively by 2050. This will have strident effects on access to water for irrigation and will adversely affect the entire agricultural sector. In addition to the direct health and immunization-related causes of survival and development deprivations and risks, there are also environmental underlying causes leading to injuries, accidents and non-communicable diseases. This includes, but is not limited to, the organization of public spaces, such as roads, which do not always divide the driveways and footpaths in such a way that accidents are avoided. Public policies that regulates the marketing of unhealthy foods, and that enforces food packaging to identify sugary foods are additional underlying causes that can contribute to better health of mothers and children. The climate is continental, with mild wet winters and hot dry summers. The southern part of the region is in the Badkiz-Karabil semi-desert ecoregion (PA0808), characterized by a savanna of pistachio and desert sedge. The northern portion is characterized by open woodlands (Gissaro-Alai open woodlands ecoregion, PA1306), with characteristic plants being pistachio, almond, walnut, apple, and juniper. Sagebrush is common at lower elevations.

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