**Armenian community of Argentina and UNICEF launch a multi-sector programme to benefit children of Armenia**

With the support of the All-Armenia ‘Hayastan’ Fund in Argentina, UNICEF will improve early learning, general education, child protection and youth services in Armenia

**YEREVAN, BUENOS AIRES, 11 November 2022** – The Armenian community of Argentina and UNICEF unite again for the benefit of Armenia’s children, this time launching a multi-sector two-year programme targeting early learning, general education, child protection and youth services in Armenia. With the support of the All-Armenia ‘Hayastan’ Fund in Argentina, from 2022 to 2024, works are already underway to refurbish the family and child support center in Vanadzor (Lori marz), establish two youth houses in Verishen (Syunik marz) and Artik (Shirak), provide school furniture and learning materials for 15 classrooms in three schools in Syunik, as well as renovate and refurbish Goris kindergarten #5.

Thanks to the support of the Argentine community, these important projects are being executed jointly with UNICEF Armenia. Hayastan All Armenian Fund of Argentina is part of a global organization working since 1992 on the implementation projects with social impact in various areas, for the development and assistance of Armenians. We are particularly happy to know we can work jointly with UNICEF to support children in Armenia in the region of Syunik and displaced families that have suffered from Nagorno Karabagh conflict,” noted Mr Alex Kalpakian, President of Hayastan All Armenian Fund in Argentina.

“We are grateful to the Armenian community of Argentina for their generous support. Through this programme, UNICEF will be able to help improve the situation of hundreds of children and adolescents from Lori to Syunik and provide them with necessary services and conditions for their learning and development,” noted Christine Weigand, UNICEF Representative in Armenia.

Under the supervision of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the child and family support center will provide multidisciplinary services to children in difficult life circumstances, such as rehabilitation, case management, prevention of family separation, mental health and psychosocial services. UNICEF will also provide on-the-job training for the specialists of the center.

“This type of partnerships are truly important for us, as the improvement of conditions in child care institutions leaves a great impact on the quality of services, their regularity and effectiveness. The deinstitutionalisation of child-care institutions and investment in child-care services at marz level is a key priority for the Ministry. This process also greatly contributes to prevention of child abandonment and the need for night-care services,” said Mrs Tatevik Stepanyan, Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Affairs.

Through the newly established youth houses, about 300 adolescents and young people in Artik and Verishen, including those with disabilities, will be able to get non-formal education, acquire 21st century skills, such as problem solving, communication, leadership, IT skills, work on community projects, practice healthy lifestyle. Together with partners, UNICEF will train the future staff of these centers and provide them with necessary materials and equipment.

Schools #2 and #6 in Goris and Verishen school will be provided with new furniture and materials so that new classrooms can be opened and for students to learn in developmentally appropriate environment. Teachers in Syunik schools will also be supported to organize remedial classes for students to catch up on what they had missed academically due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. At Goris kindergarten #5, UNICEF is already in the process of renovation, ensuring safety standards and universal design for enhancing accessibility of the building for children with disabilities. The kindergarten will be provided with new furniture, didactic materials, toys and books, while staff will be trained on preschool education standards, including on safety and resilience, and psychological first aid in emergency situations.