

UN IN RUSSIA

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Translating economic growth into sustainable human development with human rights

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**Dialogue on equal terms:
Junior 8 delegates meet G8 leaders /4**

Opinions /8

Russia is accelerating at an unbelievable pace, fuelled by its tremendous natural resources and driven by its leaders' determination and by its people's creativity and hard work. This is point of view expressed by Mr John Powell, Deputy Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme

Publications /12

The per-capita GDP of Tajikistan is lower than the per-capita GDPs of Rwanda. Uzbekistan's per-capita GDP is lower than Sudan's and Cameroon's. These facts are revealed in a new UNDP report "National Millennium Development Goals: A Framework for Action" concerning Eastern Europe and CIS

Highlights /16

Russia processes only 180 tons of plasma per year nowadays. Due to the current shortage of blood plasma-based medicines patients have to resort to much more expensive foreign products, was pointed out at the press conference dedicated to the World Blood Donor Day

Contents

UN /Events

"Time to Deliver" **2**

UN Priorities in the Context of G8 Agenda in 2006 **3**

UNICEF

Young People Meet with G8 Leaders **4**

UNESCO /Regions

Koichiro Matsuura:

to Support Education for All **6**

UNESCO Director-General Visited
the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) **6**

UNFPA

World Population Day **7**

WFP /Opinions

Optimism in the Fight against Hunger **8**

UNHCR /Society

Dialogue:

A Way to Understanding **10**

UNDP /Publications

Millennium Development Goals in Eastern Europe & the CIS **12**

Millennium Development Goals in CIS Countries **13**

Make People's Life Better **14**

Millennium Development Goals:

A View From the Regions **15**

WHO /Highlights

World Blood Donor Day **16**

TB Control in Russia:

Effectiveness of International Projects **17**

UNIC /People

Human Rights and Cultural Diversity **18**

"Time to Deliver"

UN Secretary-General's Message to the XVI International AIDS Conference

Toronto, Canada, 13 August 2006

[delivered by Dr. Peter Piot, Executive Director of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS]

On 2 June 2006, Governments injected new momentum into the fight against AIDS. At a High Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, they adopted a Political Declaration in which they committed themselves to a range of actions vital to our struggle. They pledged to tackle the causes and forces that propel this epidemic, most especially by promoting gender equality, the empowerment of women and the protection of girls. They also stressed the need to respect the full rights of people living with HIV. They called for strengthened protection for all vulnerable groups -- whether young people, sex workers, injecting drug users, or men who have sex with men. They called for provision of the full range of HIV prevention measures, including male and female condoms and sterile injection equipment. And they called for the full engagement of the private sector and civil society, including people living with HIV.

It is my hope that with the Declaration, world leaders have finally placed on record the personal commitment and leadership needed to win the fight against AIDS -- the greatest challenge of our generation, and of the next. Only if we meet this challenge can we succeed in our other efforts to build a humane, healthy and equitable world. Only if we win this fight can we reach the Millennium Development Goals, agreed by all the world's Governments as a blueprint for building a better world in the 21st century.

The task before us now is to sustain the momentum generated by the Declaration. We must hold leaders to their commitments. As the theme of this conference tells us: It's time to deliver.

It's time to deliver because this is a pivotal moment. After an unconscionably late start that cost tens of millions of lives and tore apart hundred of millions more, the world's response has finally gained real strength. In the past five years, we have rallied political leadership; mobilized financial and technical resources; brought lifesaving anti-retroviral treatment to people the world over; and even reversed the spread of HIV in some of the world's poorest nations. We need to accelerate this progress.

It's time to deliver because our opportunities to respond effectively are far greater today than they have been at any time in these 25 years of AIDS. Therefore, our responsibility to act and redress our past failures is even greater. And those with the greatest power to effect change must shoulder the greatest share.

It's time to deliver because at the High Level Meeting, Governments committed themselves to being as close as possible to universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010.

It's time to deliver because ultimately, the only acceptable outcome is to put an end to AIDS. May this conference be a milestone in our journey to get there.

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United Nations

Events

UN Priorities in the Context of G8 Agenda in 2006

G8 Summits provide a unique forum for discussion of the key trends in world politics and international relations. In what way the UN reacts to the most important problems of nowadays on the agenda of the Summit? And how the UN reform will reflect in solution of these problems? Ercan Murat, UN Resident Coordinator in the Russian Federation a.i., answers *Diplomat* magazine questions. *UN in Russia* publishes his interview.



As you know, the Outcome Document adopted by global leaders at the 2005 World Summit in New York calls for much stronger system-wide coherence across the various development-related agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations.

Opinions differ as to what is the main problem and where to focus the attention and the resources. Some say it is essential to create one or very few agencies instead of the many existing now. Others say that this goal in itself will take up too much time and resources, while UN presence and work at country level, for the benefit of concrete people, will suffer. There are those that strongly believe UN reform should not be so much about the architecture of the organization, but rather--about people who work in it.

This is just a fragment of a wide-ranging debate that pre-occupies the minds of UN top managers and many of the member-states, including Russia, at the current moment. Given the complexity of the

reform agenda and the need to take many divergent interests and positions into account, in February 2006, the Secretary-General commissioned a High Level Panel, which consists of the prominent politicians and experts and is co-chaired by prime-ministers of Pakistan, Norway, and Mozambique. The Panel, by August this year, is expected to review and recommend ways that the United Nations could be better organized in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and environment.

In the Russian context, we are already working to implement the main goal of the reform- increase the efficiency of UN agencies programs to the benefit of national priorities. For us, a unified office starts with common understanding among the Country Team members. And such factors as, for example, the already existent joint programs in the North Caucasus, and bringing UN agencies under one roof in a UN House in Moscow could contribute to the success of the reform. In the spirit of the reform we are putting national development priorities in the center for UN in Russia, making our contribution to the effective implementation of the President's Four National Projects. Finally, we are looking for ways to work in a team to help Russian population combat the acute social problems--such as HIV/AIDS and TB. And here our joint work with civil society is indeed a must.

- HIV/AIDS topic is high on the agenda of the G8 summit. What the United Nations is doing to help Russia to reverse the epidemic?

It may not surprise you to hear that HIV/AIDS is one the greatest threats to global human security. Over 40 million people in the world, including nearly 3 million children are living with HIV. And

over 3 million people died from AIDS last year alone.

The Russian Federation continues to experience one of the fastest growing epidemics in HIV/AIDS in the world. Currently there are more than 350,000 officially recorded HIV cases. Experts believe the total number to be much greater--and it is growing all the time. The epidemic in Russia is still concentrated among high risk populations, primarily injecting drug users; however the increasing proportion of reported infections among women and those transmitted via heterosexual contacts suggest that the HIV epidemic is generalizing. In addition to the dramatic human cost, several studies have demonstrated that the AIDS epidemic could begin in the near future to take a heavy toll even on economic growth and human development in Russia, diminishing population levels and life expectancy, draining government budgets and lowering economic growth.

The issue is now visible on the government agenda. President Putin, addressing a special State Council Presidium Meeting on HIV/AIDS in Russia in April stressed the importance of preventive measures to combat the spread of HIV infection.

To ensure a coordinated and effective response to the HIV-epidemic, including achievement of universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, the UN is promoting the so-called "Three Ones" principles. They include: one agreed AIDS action framework for coordinating the work of all partners; one national AIDS coordinating authority; and one agreed country level monitoring and evaluation system.

In 2005, all UN member countries, including Russia, committed themselves to put



these principles in place by 2010. The “Three Ones” also support country efforts to meet the AIDS related Millennium-Development Goal which calls for “halting and beginning to reverse the spread of AIDS by the year 2015.” The Russian Government, jointly with UNAIDS and its co-sponsors, launched the initiative “Coordination in Action: Applying the Three Ones Principles in the Russian Federation” to be implemented by 2007.

- How does the UN see problems of energy safety and energy efficiency in the Russian context?

Over 10 years ago experts first voiced the

necessity to convert the Russian economy into more energy effective and less resource consuming. These are interrelated issues that form the basis of any country’s energy strategy. And, in my opinion, it is not accidental that for the second year running, energy safety and related issues are included in the agenda of the G8 summit.

The UN Secretary General Kofi Annan paid special attention to this aspect in his recent open letter to the G8 leaders in which he urged them to think first of all about people of developing countries while discussing this issue. Russia is not a

developing country, but due to its geographical location and ongoing industrial growth the problems of energy and heat conservation are still vital issues. In my opinion, the most important task for this decade is to introduce new-more economical, but no less effective--technologies that will allow saving fossil fuel.

How can UN support Russia in tackling the issues of energy safety, energy efficiency and conservation? The United Nations Development Programme is currently implementing several programs in this sphere. Among these programs is a joint project with the Ministry of Education and Science stipulating introduction of a course in energy efficiency in higher education establishments and schools, because to solve the problem, we should make sure that future generations are aware of it. In addition, we are now discussing a number of interesting ideas with the Government of the Russian Federation, including a project on standards in energy efficiency and labelling of goods, and a project in the sphere of transportation flows management in middle-sized cities, aimed at fuel saving and reduction of harmful emissions. UNDP specialists work on a number of projects in the area of renewable energy, as well as a joint project with the World Bank on geothermal sources. I think that this problem can be solved with strong and long-term support of the state and investors. The United Nations is ready to provide funding, although quite modest on the scale of this country, and share expertise and practices from other countries and regions.



Young People Meet with G8 Leaders

History was made on 16 July at the Konstantin Palace in the St. Petersburg suburb of Strelna when the Junior 8 delegates met with their nation’s leaders.

What began a year ago as an UNICEF idea to have eight youth leaders from the Group of Eight spend five minutes with their leaders, turned into a 40-minute discussion where the group of 16 sat next to each other and discussed HIV, education, tolerance and violence, and energy security.



Photo by Sergei Kompaneichenko, www.G8RUSSIA.ru

“When we first had this idea after the Group of Eight meeting last year, our best hope was just to get our foot in the door with five minutes,” said Carel de Rooy, UNICEF’s chief representative in Russia. “We never expected that G8 leaders would spend 40 minutes with the youth.”

The day began with all 64 youth delegates travelling from their summit in the town of Pushkin to the Palace of Congresses complex built by President Vladimir Putin in 2002 on the ruins of an 18th century czar palace.

Only eight delegates, chosen by each national delegation, were allowed to meet with leaders in the palace’s ornate and grand hall. The session was carried live nationally on Russian TV, while the remaining 56 delegates could watch it via CCTV in the complex’s press centre.

The youth delegates had to wait nearly 45 minutes for the G8 leaders to enter the hall, and according to protocol, they went round the hall and shook the hands of every leader. After a photo-op, the doors were closed and they all took their seats next to their respective leaders.

“All our efforts are being done to guarantee the future potential of mankind,” said President Putin, opening the meeting. “And it must be done for those whom it will impact most of all – the youth of our world.”



Photo by Alena Spirid, UNICEF

UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, World Chess Champion Anatoly Karpov participates in a multi-board chess-play with the Junior 8 participants

While the J8 delegates were enthralled by this chance to meet their leaders and be heard, most later admitted having pre-event jitters.

“I was nervous, but I was very happy to express my opinion to my leader,” said Muneo Saito, the Japanese delegate, at the press conference after the meeting.

“It was like being in a movie,” added Janusch Krasberg, the German delegate.

The delegates who could not attend but watched the event via CCTV felt equally satisfied with the results.

“The presidents wouldn’t just meet with the youth for no reason at all, and so I’m sure they’ll listen to what we said,” said Kirill Levin, a Russian delegate. “But I think that next time we should propose more novel ideas.”

“I liked that the leaders appeared to take us seriously, and were listening attentively and taking notes,” said James Goodall, a UK delegate. “Children are not usually listened to, but I think they will take some of our ideas and use them.”

UNICEF jointly with the St. Petersburg State University supported the Ministry of Education and Science in organising the Junior 8. Children’s voices matter and UNICEF works to have young people’s voices heard by decision makers, the media and the rest of the world.

By John Varoli,
Freelance journalist



Photo by Sergei Bermeniev, www.G8RUSSIA.ru

President Vladimir Putin and the Russian team representative of Junior 8 Tatiana Ushakova

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UN Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization

Koïchiro Matsuura: to Support Education for All

UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura was invited to take part in the G8 Summit in St. Petersburg to discuss the introduction of education systems to meet the needs of global knowledge-based economy.

Speaking at the G8 Summit, Mr. Matsuura called for stronger support

of developing countries, especially in Africa, to help them achieve major goals in the area of basic education.

UNESCO Director-General stressed that first of all, developing countries should do their utmost to mobilize domestic resources, however, more external help is needed to achieve six

goals of the Education for All (EFA) programme by 2015.

G8 leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the EFA agenda, expressed readiness to cooperate to achieve high quality basic education and literacy and encourage investment in the 'knowledge triangle' – education, research, and innovation.

Regions

UNESCO Director-General Visited the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)

“Preserving cultural diversity at the time of advancing globalization is no less important than preserving biodiversity,” said UNESCO Director-General Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura at the opening of the International Forum Sustainable Development of the Arctic Countries and the Northern Regions of the Russian Federation in the Context of Education, Science and Culture in the City of Yakutsk on 24 July.

The UNESCO leader visited the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) from June 23 to 26 on the invitation of Yakutian President, Mr. Vyacheslav Shtyrov. The Forum, dedicated to the ways education, science and culture can help solve urgent sustainable development issues of Northern peoples at the time of globalization, gathered scientists, teachers, artists, and NGO representatives not only from Russian cities and regions, but also from Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Belgium, Holland, Japan, France, Germany, England, Poland, Moldova, and Kyrgyzstan. According to Mr. Matsuura, the meeting in Yakutsk was an excellent opportunity for establishing partner relations and for “using the collective wisdom of the humanity, surviving in the globalizing world.”

Welcoming Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura in Yakutia, Mr. Vyacheslav Shtyrov stressed the leading role of UNESCO in preserving the intangible culture monuments



of different peoples. A perfect example is the decision of UNESCO to proclaim the ancient epos Olonkho a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. The President mentioned that on the basis of the UNESCO decision a large cultural and educational programme for preserving this unique heritage of the Sakha people was adopted in the Republic.

President Shtyrov and UNESCO Director-General attended a presentation of the Mammoth Museum, an innovative project that received a preliminary positive assessment of UNESCO specialists, held in the Government House. The project stipulates the establishment of a scientific research and cultural-educational centre under the auspices of UNESCO. The complex will have several levels, some of them located within the permafrost. According to Mr. Ludovic Laine, the head of a French company that will implement the project, the construction of the Mammoth Museum is estimated at US \$18 mln, just over a half

of which will be paid by the Government of the Republic, with the rest financed by foreign investments. The project attracted the attention of many research organisations in France, Japan, and China. An international tender for the museum design will be announced soon.

The Minister of Education, Ms. Feodosiya Gabysheva, presented the UNESCO supported ‘Nomadic Schools’ project, essential not only for the indigenous peoples of the North, but also for the peoples of Asia and Africa.

At the International Forum opening ceremony, Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura presented UNESCO medals to Mr. Vyacheslav Shtyrov, Mr. Alexander Akimov, Yakutian Vice-President and President of the Olonkho Association, and Mr. Mikhail Nikolaev, the first President of the Republic. He also presented diplomas on awarding the UNESCO Associated School Status to a number of republican schools. Mr. Vyacheslav Shtyrov presented to Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura ‘The Polar Star’ Order, the highest award of the Republic for the contribution to the development of education, science and culture.

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World Population Day

11 July is World Population Day. The United Nations decided to celebrate this day on 11 July 1987, when the 5 billionth baby came into this world.

Every year on this day, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) draws the attention of people all over the world to population and development issues. This year, World Population Day is dedicated to young people.

In his message on the occasion of the World Population Day, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said:

“The theme for this year’s World Population Day, ‘Young People’, focuses attention on the unique challenges faced by the burgeoning ranks of the young in our societies. Today, nearly half the world’s population—more than 3 billion people—are under the age of 25.

No matter where they are born, the lives of young people are shaped by forces beyond their control—the prevalence of poverty, the incidence of crime,

the availability of education and training, opportunities for decent employment, and access to affordable health services.

Providing for youth is not just a moral obligation, it is a compelling economic necessity.

Study after study has shown the benefits—to the young and to their communities—of investing in education, reproductive health, job skills and employment opportunities for young people.

Sexual and reproductive health information and services are a particularly important—though often neglected—pillar of youth empowerment. Their availability can enable young men and women to make responsible and informed choices to protect themselves. It can help the global fight against AIDS, and it can allow the young to make better decisions about starting families. The decisions young people make will shape our world and the prospects of future generations.”



A UNFPA poster dedicated to World Population Day 2006

For the first time this year, events on the occasion of World Population Day were held at the regional level in Russia, in Saratov. Topics of interest to local residents, representatives of the local administration, expert community were selected for discussion at the round table. They included youth policy issues in the international context, challenges and prospects of youth policy, healthy lifestyles and HIV/AIDS prevention in the Saratov region.

Over 60 people took part in the round table, including Ms. Natalia Starshova, Deputy Chairperson of the Government of the Saratov region, Ms. Sietske Steneker, UNFPA Representative in Russia, Ms. Lidia Bardakova, UNFPA Assistant Representative, as well as journalists from Saratov and 15 regions of Russia.

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World food Programm

Opinions

Optimism in the Fight against Hunger

During his recent visit to the Russian Federation Mr John M. Powell, Deputy Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme addressed the students of Moscow State Institute of International Relations. *UN in Russia* publishes the text of his speech.

There can be no question, today, of Russia's pivotal role in the international community. It is a key member of the G8, a founding member of the UN Security Council, and a key player at the UN General Assembly. At a moment when many of the world's economies are grinding their gears, Russia is accelerating at an unbelievable pace, fuelled by its tremendous natural resources and driven by its leaders' determination and by its people's creativity and hard work.

Trade surplus, current account surplus, budget surplus, grain surplus ... the famous Russian bear has indeed become bullish. With economic growth at more than six percent, you are the envy of many countries.

This is remarkable, considering the difficulties that the country has overcome in the past decade or so, and astounding if we look at the more distant past. In particular, the progress made in food production is extraordinary. Since the time of the tsars, Russia has had to import food to feed its people. The Russian people experienced famine first hand after the civil war, and during the forced collectivization of the 1920s and 30s. Today, Russian grain silos are filled to the brim, and your wheat is competing very successfully on European and other markets. From the standpoint of the United Nations World Food Programme, that is truly an outstanding achievement.

International stature of this level brings with it not only prestige, but certain obligations.

A nation's greatness is measured not just by its economic strength, political power and military might. Great nations are also judged by how they respond to the needs of less fortunate peoples and nations.



Left to right: Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov, MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov, and John Powell

President Putin put it very succinctly to the General Assembly: "To be a truly strong and influential nation," he said, "is to see and solve the problems of peoples that are small in number and countries that are economically weak."

At a moment when UN reform is such a hot topic, that's a principle I think we could apply well to the United Nations too. A truly great United Nations isn't just measured in terms of the number of meetings it hosts, or the length of the documents it produces. The true worth of the United Nations can be judged by how much better it makes the lives of poor people in countries like Lesotho, Nepal and Guatemala.

I would like to share with you some statistics about the organization I represent: the United Nations World Food Programme. We are the world's largest humanitarian organization, and our task is to feed the hungry.

Every year, more than 90 million hungry people count on us to deliver food to

them on time, every time. In many cases, their very lives depend on it. Last year, we raised close to US\$3 billion to provide food to people in 80 different countries. At any time, we have 40 ships at sea, 80 aircraft in the sky and 5,000 trucks moving food and personnel to people in need. In many places, we provide logistic support to the entire humanitarian community – flying workers into disaster zones, coordinating relief cargo, making sure everyone gets enough fuel to run their vehicles and reach the people in need. We do all of this with a staff of roughly 10,000 people, many on short-term contracts, and an administrative budget that is just 7 percent of operational costs.

The World Food Programme is 100 percent voluntarily funded -- we receive no 'dues' or assessed contributions from donor governments. There is no reliable core budget. We need to constantly strive for efficiency, to deliver as much food as possible to our beneficiaries, at the lowest cost to our donors. The average cost of a WFP food ration – wheat, beans, vegetable oil, salt and

sugar – is just 29 cents. We deliver meals for school children at just 19 cents a day.

Those statistics don't do much, however, to convey the incredible impact of the World Food Programme's investment on the people we serve.

There are 300 million hungry children around the globe. That's roughly twice the population of the Russian Federation. One in four of the world's children is underweight – too skinny for their age. That means they're more likely to die from infectious diseases, their immune system is weak and their long-term physical and mental development is compromised. Their mothers were hungry, they are hungry, and if they live long enough they will have hungry children too. The world's poor simply pass their hunger from generation to generation.

One hundred million children don't attend school and don't have an opportunity to learn basic reading, writing and arithmetic. Two thirds of them are girls.

In simple terms, these poor and hungry children are never likely to have a chance to make the most of what the world has to offer. Millions of children who could go on to contribute to peace and prosperity are so hungry that they might never live beyond their fifth birthday, or complete elementary school, or go to university. Few of them will ever manage to get a decent job or be able to



A lively dialogue with students

offer their own children a better life than they had. Who knows how many scientists and statesmen and sports stars we have lost because their minds and bodies were dulled by malnutrition.

Hunger and malnutrition represent the biggest threat to health today. Every single day some 25,000 people die from causes related to hunger. That's five times the entire student population of this university, wiped out every single day.



Mr. Powell addresses the audience

At the turn of the century, nearly 200 world leaders pledged to halve the number of hungry people in the developing world by 2015. But, apart from progress made in China, the number of hungry people actually rose by 50 million people. The volume of food aid donated has plummeted and the portion of aid dedicated to agricultural development was cut by two thirds. With so few resources dedicated to fighting hunger, it is hard to be optimistic that we will be able to reach our goal of halving hunger.

But our organization tends to attract optimists. We are convinced that once people – like you – understand the need to help, you are willing to do so.

One way in which you can engage is by participating in Walk the World. This global event unites people from around the world who share our optimism that the battle against hunger can be won.

Over the past decade, the Russian Federation has been one of the major beneficiaries of food aid donated, in mostly government-to-government arrangements. That makes the Russian Government's recent decision to become a donor to the World Food Programme all the more significant. Just last month the first Russian donation to WFP's operation in Tajikistan arrived, certain to offer very welcome support to poor and hungry families there. Last year, a significant donation arrived in North Korea.

Russian assistance was also critical in our efforts to provide food to the people of Afghanistan in 2001. The Russian Federation helped WFP move more than 100,000 tons of food into Afghanistan in December 2001 – a record at the time.

The tradition of assisting neighbours is a strong one here in Russia. Some time ago I read a piece from the Financial Times that corporate philanthropy in Russia is rising as profit margins grow. That is very encouraging. As private enterprise in this country takes an increasingly important role in the international stage, I sincerely hope that it will match its economic leadership with compassion for those people with whom it has strong historic ties.

I am convinced that Russia is a great nation. Its greatness is not just reflected in its size and strength, but in the attention it is increasingly giving to helping less fortunate countries. Its leadership in this will be vital for ensuring that the same level of concern permeates the entire membership of the United Nations as it seeks to reassert its role in the new millennium.

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Dialogue: A Way To Understanding



Elena Omelchenko

There are one and a half million migrants living in Moscow, with children of 144 nationalities attending Moscow schools. Needless to say how important it is for children from different cultures to learn at a very young age to better understand each other and live in friendship. Helping them in this is one of the objectives pursued by Etnosphera Centre operating in the capital for about 10 years. Last year the Centre came out with an initiative to conduct among Russian schools a competition 'Dialogue: A Way to Understanding, Integration of Refugees and Other Categories of International Migrants Through Education'. The initiative was supported by the Moscow Department of Education, the RF Office of UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, and UNESCO Bureau in Moscow. Our Centre was entrusted with the task of organizing this competition.

The Moscow Department of Education, the RF Office of UNHCR and the Moscow Office of the British Council helped fund the competition.

It is symbolic that Competition Regulations were approved on 16 November 2005, on the International Tolerance Day. This decision was taken at the inter-regional informational and

methodological seminar 'Migration and Education. Experience of the Moscow Education System in Teaching and Socio-Cultural Adaptation of Migrant Children' held in the capital. The seminar participants established a steering committee of the competition that included specialists from the Ministry of Education and Science, the departments of education from Moscow, St.-Petersburg, Krasnodar and Stavropol regions, the Republic of Dagestan, as well as the UNHCR Office in Russia, Etnosphera Centre, and teachers from Moscow schools where children of forced migrants study.

The organizers sought to attract the attention of teachers, parents and students to the activities of Russian schools in the sphere of cultural, language, social and psychological integration of children from abroad. We intended to study and summarize the experience of those schools where such integration is being achieved through educational means. We wanted teachers, students and parents to learn more about the migration situation in the country, about ethnic and cultural diversity of foreign migrants. Our aim was to promote tolerance, the principles of non-violence, democracy, an emphasis on dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation among schoolchildren.

One of the main requirements for the participation in the competition was the joint development of projects by teachers and students and involvement of parents where possible. Indeed, the full integration of migrants into the environment of an educational establishment is possible only when all the participants of the educational process are determined to achieve this goal.

In autumn, invitations to participate in the competition were sent out to regions and in winter, the first project descriptions started pouring in. In all, 50 schools, over 130 teachers, and more than 350 students took part in the competition. Schools from Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, Krasnodar, and Stavropol

regions were the most active participants. Then the time came to assess the projects received. An expert commission of the competition was made up from educationalists with practical experience in migrant children integration projects, scientists, and consultants dealing with issues of regulating migration processes and interethnic relations.

The materials presented to the competition varied a lot and included author's projects of curricula and specific lessons like 'Speech Development in a Poly-Cultural Environment', 'Literature and Music of Peoples of the Black Sea Area', integrated programmes on history, literature, Russian language, regional studies with emphasis on students' ethno-cultural differences, including newly arrived migrants. Among the projects submitted to the competition were plans of work with parents and scenarios of teacher-parent meetings focusing on the subjects concerning integration of migrants and education of the rising generation in the spirit of tolerance and international friendship, as well as methodological bulletins on developing inter-ethnic harmony in schools for supervising instructors. Also, we



received scenarios of all-school activities – festivals of national cultures, celebrations, for instance 'Our Home is Russia', and 'I am a Tolerant Person'. Finally, there were essays and drawings by students, both migrants and local residents, reflecting culture of different peoples.

Eighteen schools were reached the competition's final that was held in Moscow. They presented their projects



Photo by the article's author

The contest participants present their projects to the Expert Commission

and took part in a round table for teachers on Integration of Refugees and Other Categories of Migrants Through Education. Both events were held in Moscow schools actively participating in the integration of migrants through education, so that delegates from the regions could see how migrant integration work is organized in Moscow schools. Thus, School 653 of the Moscow Southern Administrative Okrug has participated for four years in the international project 'Cultural, Language and Socio-Psychological Adaptation of Children of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers in Moscow' implemented jointly by the Moscow Department of Education, the RF Office of UN High Commissioner for Refugees and Etnosphera Centre for International Education. School 157 of the Northern Administrative Area with the Azerbaijani ethno-cultural educational component has been successfully implementing a programme of ethno-cultural education and through it, integrating foreign migrants into the educational environment.

Another interesting event within the final was a youth conference 'Migrants in Modern Society' held in the CIS College under the Russian New University. Apart from the finalists, activists of Etnosphera Youth Interclub

and representatives of national and cultural youth associations of Moscow took part in the conference. Young people discussed the impact of migration on the development of modern society, major migrant adaptation and integration factors, aid to refugees and other categories of forced migrants, stereotypes and prejudices with respect to migrants, ways of preventing conflicts between migrants and local population in modern society. Active information exchange helped young people learn more about the life of their peers in other Russian regions, while teachers had a chance to get acquainted with the methods of conducting thematic youth conferences developed by the Etnosphera Centre.

The final ceremony was held in the Moscow Nationalities House. Representatives of the leadership of UNHCR Office in Russia, the Etnosphera Centre, the Moscow Department of Education and the Centre for International Educational Programmes welcomed the delegations. The participants emphasized the pressing nature of the theme and timeliness of the competition. They agreed that the issues of migrant children integration and educating the young generation in the spirit of culture, peace and interethnic harmony should be included in the work of

educational establishments. A regular exchange of experience is needed in the spheres of intensive teaching of the Russian state language, fundamentals of Russian culture and history to migrant children, as well as in the field of their psychological and socio-cultural adaptation.

Based on the assessment of project presentations, the expert commission decided to award diplomas of finalists of the inter-regional competition to all the educational establishments that reached the final.

We believe that first inter-regional competition of projects for educational establishments 'Dialogue: A Way to Understanding. Integration of Refugees and Other Categories of International Migrants Through Education' was successful. With the support of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, the Moscow Department of Education and the RF Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees a similar competition could be held in 2006/2007 academic year, preferably with the geog-



The contest is over – long live the contest!

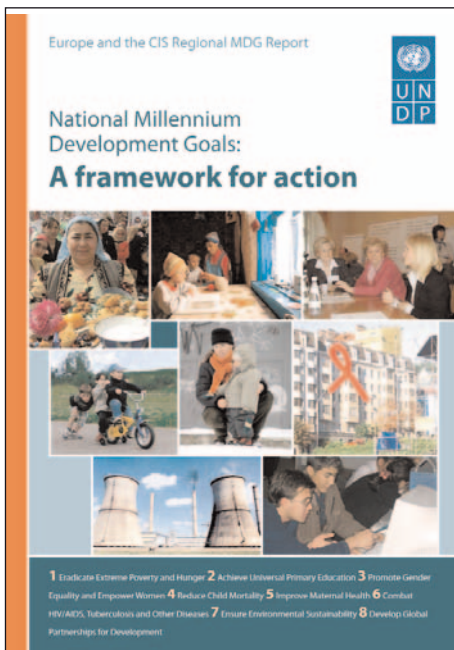
raphy of its participants extended. The same wish was expressed by the children and teachers who arrived to the final from different regions of Russia.

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Millennium Development Goals in Eastern Europe & the CIS

The new member states of the European Union are well on their way towards achieving their nationally adapted Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but some countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) suffer from the same levels of poverty found in Africa and thus deserve the same level of attention the world community accords to African countries, says a new report released in Vienna by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).



Africa and parts of Southeast Asia, the very different histories of underdevelopment in Eastern Europe and the CIS necessitated altering the goals to fit national circumstances.

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ranging from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015, form a blueprint agreed to by all UN member states at the Millennium Summit at the UN Headquarters in September 2000. They galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest.

The report is intended to serve as a platform for integrating the nationally adapted MDGs into country-level poverty alleviation frameworks. "The key question is how nationally adapted MDGs can be best used to promote sustainable development and eradicate inequalities in Eastern Europe and the CIS," said Jacek Cukrowski, the report's Lead Author.

The report emphasizes the need for partnerships between the public and private sectors to promote the region's development agenda. Experience of the new EU member states in particular shows that the private sector can be an important participant in alleviating many development problems.

Private companies increasingly see the opportunities associated with incorporating social concerns into business operations, in light of increased pressures from consumers and governments, but also in terms of securing access to new markets.

"Through a combination of philanthropic motives and self-interest, businesses are increasingly teaming up with governments and non-governmental organizations to form public-private partnerships that reach new markets and improve the quality of social services," said Mr. Mizsei.

In Kazakhstan Chevron Texaco, Citibank and UNDP formed a partnership to promote small- and medium-sized enterprise development. In Poland the oil refinery PKN teamed up with Levi Strauss, the local government and UNDP to fund projects promoting sustainable development.

The report paints a mixed picture of development trends in the region. Among the success stories are the Czech Republic and Slovenia, which eliminated absolute poverty altogether. For these and other Central European states the challenge is to overcome economic inequality and to integrate vulnerable groups such as the Roma.

Other countries face much starker challenges. The per-capita GDP (in purchasing power parity terms) of Tajikistan is lower than the per-capita GDPs of Rwanda, Uganda and Cote d'Ivoire. Uzbekistan's per-capita GDP is lower than Sudan's and Cameroon's.

Approximately half the population of Moldova and Georgia remain under the absolute poverty line of \$2.15 a day in PPP terms.

By the end of the 1990s, an estimated 23 million people (over 40 per cent of Central Asia's population) lived on less than \$4.30 (PPP) a day; 10

"In some countries of Central Asia, the challenges of meeting national MDG targets do not differ so dramatically from the development challenges facing low-income countries in Africa, South Asia or the Caribbean", said Kalman Mizsei, UN Assistant Secretary General and Regional Director for UNDP Bureau for Europe and the CIS. "The international community should seek to engage in these countries with the same intensity that is apparent in its concern for development prospects in Africa".

The new UNDP report 'National Millennium Development Goals: A Framework for Action', breaks ground by charting countries' progress towards achieving nationally adapted goals.

While the global MDGs were designed to tackle the kind of underdevelopment that characterizes

million suffered from extreme poverty (living on less than \$2.15 (PPP) a day).

Many countries of the region need to improve governance in order to deliver on the promise of the Millennium Development Goals.

The new EU member states, the countries that made the most progress in reducing poverty, ensuring gender equality, promoting better health and education, and combining economic growth with environmental sustainability also succeeded in imple-

menting economic, political and social reforms. On the other hand, the worst social and economic problems are often facing countries with underdeveloped democracy, suffering from high levels of corruption and inadequate state capacity.

Millennium Development Goals in CIS Countries

How are MDG realized in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine

Goal 1: Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger

- Absolute poverty is still a widespread phenomenon, although recent growth has helped to stop, and in some cases reverse, the growth in the ranks of the poor.
- Moldova's share of people living under PPP \$2.15 a day is still close to 43 per cent.
- 52 per cent of the residents of Georgia remain under the absolute poverty line of PPP \$2.15.
- Over 40 per cent of the 145 million residents of the Russian Federation (mainly in rural parts of the country) fell under the poverty line of PPP \$4.30 in 2002.
- Belarus is an exception: according to the Belarusian national MDG report, less than 1 per cent of the population is living on less than PPP \$2.15.

Goal 2: Achieving universal primary education

- The Russian Federation, Belarus and Ukraine have generally managed to keep 70-80 per cent of the 15- 18 year-old age group enrolled in secondary schools. (These numbers, however, are below pre-transition levels.)
- Particularly steep declines in secondary-school enrolment have occurred in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova, which enjoyed respectable pre-transition rates of nearly 60 per cent secondary-school enrolment. Currently, only one third of 15-18 year-olds attends school in Azerbaijan, and around 40 per cent of the age group attends school in Armenia and Moldova.

Goal 3: Promoting gender equality and empowering women

- There are more women enrolled in higher education institutions than men: the ratio of female-to-male university students ranges from 1.11 (in Ukraine) to 1.26 – 1.28 (in the Russian Federation and Belarus).

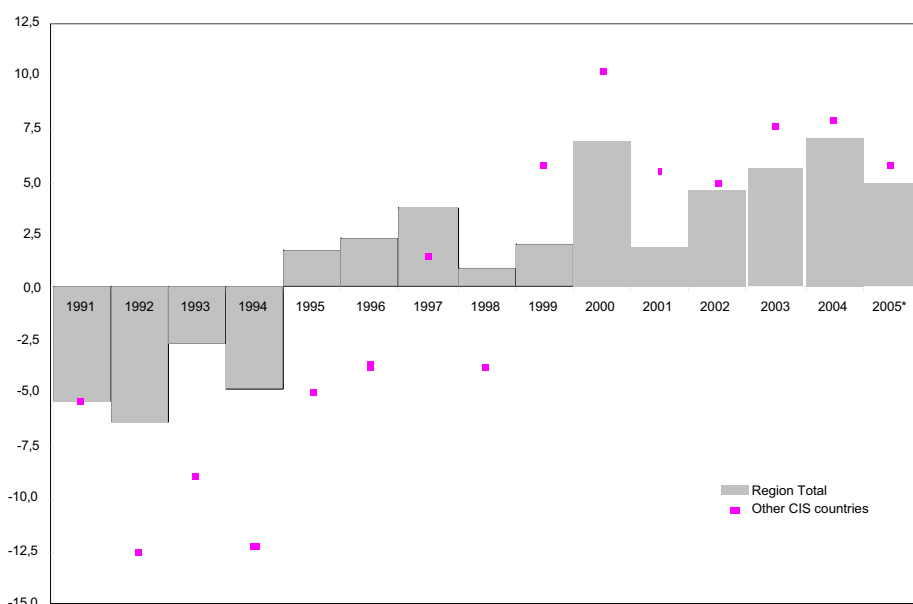
- Women's high education levels do not translate easily into upward career mobility and incomes that are commensurate with men's. Although women in 2002 accounted for 64 per cent of all professional and technical workers in Georgia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, they held only 37-38 per cent of top posts in the Russian Federation and Ukraine, and only 28 per cent in Georgia.
- Women's incomes as a share of men's are estimated to range from two thirds in Armenia and the Russian Federation to only 40 per cent in Georgia.
- Women make up 50-56 per cent of the non-agricultural labour force in the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova.
- Women typically are underrepresented in parliaments in the Commonwealth of Independent States. In 2003 women made up around 5 per cent of parliamentarians in Armenia and Ukraine, 9-10 per cent in

Georgia, the Russian Federation and Azerbaijan.

- Male mortality trends reported in the Western CIS countries are both unusual and disturbing: women outlive men by 11-13 years in the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and Belarus (compared to 4-5 years in the United States and Japan). Due to this fact rural areas in these countries are increasingly populated by female pensioners.

Goal 4: Reducing child mortality

- Child mortality poses a persistent problem in the Caucasus. Insufficient provision of qualified health care in the prenatal period and during delivery is a crucial factor, particularly in rural areas.
- Surveys indicate that as many as 55 per cent of pregnant women in Azerbaijan, 46 per cent in Armenia, and 37 per cent in Georgia do not receive prenatal care after their first trimester of pregnancy.



Real GDP Growth in the CIS (in per cent)

* Estimate

Source: Author's estimations based on IMF, World Economic Outlook 2005 data

- Too many births still occur outside medical facilities: the available data suggest that one child in eight is born in such conditions in Armenia and Georgia. In Azerbaijan, the figure is one child in four.

Goal 5: Improving maternal health

- The relatively high abortion rates reported in these countries suggest that access to modern contraception remains problematic.
- According to national data, the average woman undergoes 2.6 abortions in Armenia, 3.0 abortions in Azerbaijan, and 3.7 abortions in Georgia. According to one source, as many as 60 per cent of all pregnancies in these countries are unintended, as only 12 -22 per cent of married women use modern contraceptive methods.

Goal 6: Combating HIV/ AIDS, TB and other diseases

- The Russian Federation and Ukraine are among the countries where HIV prevalence is now thought to reach or exceed 1 per cent of the adult population.
- The Russian Federation and Ukraine have experienced a dramatic return of tuberculosis. Every year more than 40,000 people in these two states die as

a result of the illness, so that the incidence of TB-related fatalities in these countries is roughly triple the rates reported in the new EU member states as well as most of Southeast Europe.

- Malaria represents a significant public health threat for regions in a number of countries, particularly in the Caucasus. Over 500 persons had been diagnosed with malaria in Azerbaijan by 2002, and the numbers for Georgia exceeded 300 cases by 2003.

Goal 7: Ensuring environmental sustainability

- Environmental quality in most of the countries is equal to or slightly better than global averages.
- Countries continue to emit very large amounts of greenhouse gases per unit of GDP. Relatively small investments in energy-saving (and therefore greenhouse-gas-reducing) technologies in these countries can therefore have a disproportionately large impact, in terms of reducing greenhouse emissions.
- Prolonged underinvestment in countries' housing stock has left many apartment dwellers at physical risk. Communal service systems for heating, water supply and waste disposal are too often in need of urgent repair, particularly those outside of national capitals.

- The Chernobyl nuclear disaster site straddles the Ukrainian-Belarusian border, and symbolizes the legacies of Soviet environmental mismanagement.

- Access to safe water and sanitation facilities for many communities (particularly in rural areas) remains a concern, especially in the Caucasus and Moldova.

Goal 8: Developing a global partnership for development

- The Russian Federation is now re-establishing itself as a donor country that contributes significant amounts of ODA and technical assistance to developing and other transition economies.
- A member of the Paris Club of sovereign creditors since 1997, the Russian Federation held some \$300 billion in claims against the world's poorest African and Asian countries when it emerged as the creditor/successor of the Soviet Union.
- Since the early 1990s, the Russian Federation has forgiven some \$52 billion in claims on these countries, in addition to debt-for-equity swaps and other forms of creditor activity vis-à-vis CIS and developing countries.
- Armenia and Azerbaijan both provided financial assistance to the African and South Asian countries that were struck by the December 2005 tsunami.

Make People's Life Better



trates the activities of the leading international development agency in Russia.

“UNDP is all about helping people live better lives through supporting governments and civil society in key development areas” says Mr. Ercan Murat, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative a.i., in the address to the readers. “Russia offers a unique context for development work because of its current transitional stage.”

Mr. Murat believes that Russia may benefit from international support in the areas of sustainable economic development, education, healthcare, modern technologies and environmental protection. UNDP is in a position to help through analysis and policy advice and through sharing international experience and knowledge, adapted to Russia's unique requirements. UNDP works with the Russian authorities and a broad range

of partners in the five key areas, each covered by one section of the brochure. They include democratic governance – promoting the human development concept and supporting the local government reform; working to streamline the country's response to the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic; economic growth – supporting investment, export and business development; environmental protection – promoting careful use of natural resources; and recovery focusing on economic support and development in the post-conflict environment of the North Caucasus.

Special chapters describe UNDP activities in the field of human rights and gender equality within the main practice areas. The final chapter is dedicated to UNDP partners and donors. As a result of this cooperation, UNDP was able to spend on its projects in Russia in 1997-2005 around US \$90 million.

UNDP issued a new brochure ‘United Nations Development Programme in the Russian Federation’. The brochure illus-

Millennium Development Goals: A View from the Regions



In mid-July the third workshop of a series of UN workshops for regional journalists dedicated to the Millennium Development Goals was held in Saratov. This time the theme of the workshop was 'Topicality of Gender Issues in Modern Russia'. Let me remind you that one of the Millennium Development Goals is 'Promote gender equality and empower women'.

Gender problems in Russia are not that serious compared to many developing countries of Asia, Africa, America and some neighbouring countries, however, alarming tendencies remain. For instance, despite a higher average level of education among women their income and salaries are lower than those of men; women are underrepresented in the legislative organs and are not represented in the government at all; they face discrimination in employment related matters, including promotion. Another serious problem is decreasing life expectancy among men.

These questions were among those discussed during the workshop that gathered together journalists from leading printed media of Central Russia, the Volga and the Urals regions. The participants listened with interest to presentations by UN specialists, including Galina Kalinaeva representing UNDP and UNIFEM, who spoke about Russia's international commitments in the area of empowerment of women, as well as independent expert Elena Mezentseva, PhD, Associate Professor of the Economic Sociology Department, Higher School of Economics. Ms. Mezentseva, one of the authors of the last year's UNDP Human Development Report dedicated to development goals and priorities of Russia for the period till 2015, i.e. Russia's progress towards MDGs implementation, spoke about the gender aspect of the Report.

As expected, the issue provoked lively reaction among journalists. There

were a lot of questions and interesting comments; however, according to the participants, the best way to express their opinion and attitude to the problem in question was participation in business games Five Questions to the President and Gender Expertise. In the followup to the Internet conference, which President Putin had held shortly before the workshop, the journalists, divided into working groups, were asked to formulate five questions to the President related to gender issues and explain why they wanted to ask them. This helped the facilitators and the participants identify the most vital gender problems in specific regions and in the country in general. The Gender Expertise included an analysis of issues and related popular stereotypes, as well as gender components and possible scenarios of development of the issues discussed. The animated and sometimes even fierce debate included such topics as gender consequences of alcohol abuse and migration in Russia, gender aspect of violence in family and society, family crisis and gender problems of the senescent nation, the topics frequently covered by regional journalists in local media.

At previous workshops in Moscow and Barnaul journalists discussed the topicality of the Millennium Development Goals for Russia (UN in Russia, #2, 2006, p.17), as well as the goal related to HIV and AIDS threat in Russia. About 50 people took part in the workshops thus contributing to development of a regional network of journalists familiar with the MDGs and the UN activities in Russia. The workshops were organized by the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Russia and supported by other UN agencies and structures, primarily the United Nations Population Fund, as the areas covered at the workshops are included in the programmes of a number of UN agencies in Russia.



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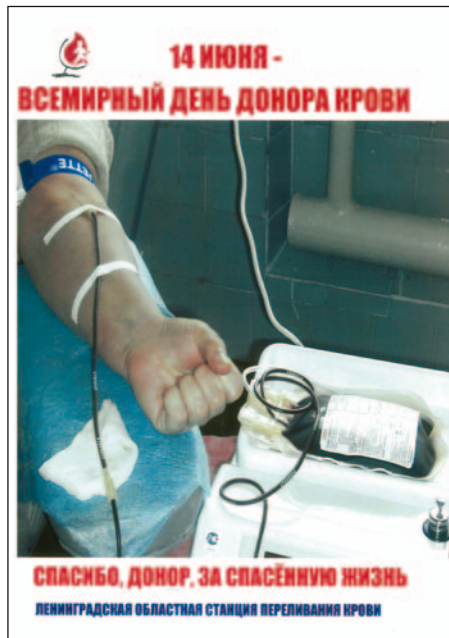
World Blood Donor Day

Every second someone in the world needs a blood transfusion to survive. This year on the occasion of the World Blood Donor Day, the World Health Organization (WHO) organized a press-conference focusing on blood transfusion safety within the framework of the project 'HIV/AIDS Prevention and Combating in the Russian Federation (Phase II), funded by the European Union.

The Blood Donor Day is an annual event marked around the world since 2004. Last year, over 90 countries took part in various activities at the national and community levels dedicated to the Blood Donor Day. This day is an opportunity to thank millions of people worldwide who donate blood on a voluntary basis making blood transfusion possible and to encourage current and potential donors to make regular voluntary blood donation. WHO stresses that only voluntary non-remunerated blood donation can ensure the minimum risk of getting infected with dangerous viruses, such as HIV and hepatitis.

“Although voluntary blood donation and blood transfusion safety are important issues all over the world, they are particularly important here because Russia has the fastest growing HIV epidemic in Europe. In addition, a lot of chronically ill individuals in Russia are dependent on regular transfusion therapy. Also, there is still a risk of getting transfusion-transmissible infections as a result of poor blood donor recruitment and the use of untested units of blood, so better standards are needed for handling blood products,” says Mary Collins, Acting Head of the WHO Office in the Russian Federation.

Professor Evgeniy Zhiburt, Chief Transfusiologist of the National Medical Surgical Centre, noted that two new blood plasma processing plants are built in Moscow and Kirov that would jointly process up to 800 tonnes of plasma per year compared to the current figure of just 180 tonnes. According to



A poster dedicated to the World Blood Donor Day

Prof. Zhiburt, due to current shortage of blood plasma based medicines produced in Russia the patients in need of such drugs have to resort to much more expensive foreign products.

Prof. Zhiburt encouraged healthy Russians to give blood on a voluntary basis to help those who need it. He also mentioned that there are 25 blood

donations per 1,000 population in Russia, while the European average is 40–60 donations, and in the USA this figure is even higher – 109.

Participants of the press-conference spoke about the way the World Health Organization contributes to better practices in blood donation and handling blood products in the Russian Federation, including through the above mentioned project, which is funded until 2007 with a EUR 4 million grant of the European Commission. The project is implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation in four pilot regions: the Kaliningrad Oblast, the Irkutsk Oblast, the Leningrad Oblast and the Krasnodar Krai. The project stipulates training of medical staff from blood centres and transfusion services in the four pilot regions and contribution to the development of national blood safety standards. Blood transfusion safety is one of the core project components. Various activities were organized in the four pilot regions of the project to mark the World Blood Donor Day, including distribution of posters and leaflets, installation of street banners, and promotion of blood donation on local TV channels.



TB Control in Russia: Effectiveness of International Projects



Every year tubercles bacillus (bacillus Kochi) kills 30,000 Russians. No wonder that the best Russian medical resources are focused on combating this infection. During a number of years, the efforts of Russian medical doctors have been supported by international organizations, working in the field of health care. Now time has come to evaluate the work.

This is how Russia's international partners explain their suggestion to conduct an evaluation mission to summarize the results of implementation of international projects on TB control in Russia during 10 years of cooperation. The High Level Working Group on TB Control in Russia (HLWG) supported the initiative at the end of the last year.

On 31 May 2006, HLWG Secretariat approved the draft Terms of Reference of the evaluation mission after preliminary agreement with the Ministry of Health and Social Development and the Federal Correctional Service. Finally, WHO and Open Health Institute, with support of international partners, organized the mission from 3 to 12 July.

Experts from international organizations, including USAID, KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation, New Jersey Medical School National TB Centre, Stop TB Partnership were invited to participate.

WHO was represented by experts from Stop TB Department, WHO Headquarters, and WHO Regional Office for Europe. Representatives of four Russian research



institutes working in the area of TB and the Federal Correctional Service participated in the mission as observers.

The experts had to complete a number of tasks within a very limited time-frame. First, they needed to consolidate the experience of TB control projects implementation with international participation during the period of 1994-2005. Second, to study the impact of international TB control projects on effectiveness of the national TB control programme. Third, to summarize best practices, lessons learned and methods for implementation of international TB control projects and to evaluate sustainability of the impact produced by interna-

tional projects. And finally, to develop recommendations for national and international partners based on the outcomes of the external review.

On 3-6 July, the mission visited five regions (Archangelsk, Vladimir, Tomsk, Samara oblasts and the Republic of Khakassia) in order to assess the effectiveness of internationally supported regional TB control projects. The experts met with representatives of regional administrations, health care departments, TB control service, and general medical network of civilian and prison TB services. At the meetings they carried out evaluation and surveys to collect qualitative and quantitative data.

At official meetings held on 10-12 July, the mission participants interviewed representatives of the Ministry of Health and Social Development of Russia, Federal Agency on Health Care and Social Development of Russia, Russian Federal Correctional Service, Russian Health Care Foundation and Federal System for External Assessment of Laboratory Testing. International partners and donor organizations, including the World Bank, Partners in Health, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Global Fund Against AIDS, TB and Malaria, also took part in the survey.

Currently the mission report is under preparation for presentation at the HLWG meeting tentatively scheduled for December 2006.

The preliminary results of the mission manifested themselves in a constructive and positive assessment of international TB control projects, and showed the importance of further extended international cooperation in this field.

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Human Rights and Cultural Diversity

We are publishing here excerpts from the speech of Mr. Alexandre Gorelik, Director of the United Nations Information Centre in Moscow, at the conference titled 'Preserving Ecological and Cultural Diversity in the Baikal Region,' which was held this summer in Ulan-Ude, the capital of the Republic of Buryatia:

“A series of lectures titled ‘Unlearning Intolerance’ was launched exactly two years ago at the UN Headquarters in New York.

In his first set of remarks back in June 2004, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said: “No Muslim, no Jew, no Christian, no Hindu, no Buddhist - no one who is true to the principles of any of the world's faiths, no one who claims a cultural, national or religious identity ... can be neutral in the fight against intolerance.”

The very substance of UN vision is directed against anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, all sorts of prejudices and antagonisms. It is, therefore, important to encourage voices of reason that support tolerance, and to react to the thoughts they carry with them. Otherwise, some discontent expressed in a peaceful tone, if ignored, may take a harsher direction and, in the long run, manifest itself through violence.

The United Nations itself was built on a premise that dialogue can prevail over discord, that diversity matters, and that the strength of human civilization rests on its ability to combine “one’s own” with “something different,” the ability to recognize otherness.

Human rights are universal and indivisible – that is the cornerstone of all UN conventions, declarations and resolutions. No state can declare itself faultless in this regard. Human rights are violated in both rich and poor countries – the UN has plenty of specific examples to illustrate this point. Irrespective of whether human rights violations have political, social, religious

or ethnic origins, they undermine human dignity and demand an appropriate response.

As Louise Arbour, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, put it, the right to be free from torture or cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment cannot be limited in one way or another. Yet, UN data shows that many states do not live up to this principle. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights keeps receiving numerous reports of authorities resorting to torture while persecuting petty criminals,



A Buddhist church in Buryatia

more and more often in connection with the “war against terror.” Lately, there have been reports of such “force-majeure” situations as the “rendition” of suspects to the countries where they risk facing cruel treatment, being kept in secret detention facilities.

Some governments argue that the existing norms no longer apply, since the world has changed and some sort of “new standards” has emerged. However, even recognizing the increased intensity of international terrorist activity, which has reached an unprecedented level, its true nature has not undergone any transformation. In this situation, UN officials keep repeating over and over again while debating with people blaming the UN for idealism: No one has, thus far, justified the need to renounce the rule of law; the fight against terrorism can only be won if international norms on the protection of human rights are fully respected.

A moral recognition of human rights in today’s world is also growing. The

opportunities associated with human rights have served as a basis for advancing public demands and collective action – for example, in support of minorities’ right to freely choose their lifestyles. The UN, for one, is actively involved in promoting human rights even in countries where domestic legislation still lags behind international legal norms.

Some argue that diversity is an obstacle to development. True, poverty is an undeniable reality in many multicultural societies. However, there is no evidence to support the claim that diversity is a cause of poor economic performance of, say, African countries. Diversity is not where the roots of the problem lie. Just the contrary, the aspect that should be scrutinized is a mechanism for adopting political decisions, which is often based on narrow ethnic, not all-inclusive, interests.

Multicultural countries have provided a number of economic success stories. Suffice it to mention such diverse countries as Malaysia, Mauritius or South Africa. Russia, despite all the risks and controversies it has witnessed during the current transition period, has demonstrated an impressive economic performance over the past several years. The voices of a new generation of leaders, managers and activists representing different ethnic groups become more and more upbeat.

Human development is about letting people choose who they would like to be and what they would like to do, in conformity with their values in life. Cultural freedom based on the promotion of human rights is, therefore, a key premise underlying social progress.”

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Summary

You can find the full version of the UN in Russia Bulletin in English at www.undp.ru or www.unrussia.ru (Documents)

UN / Time to Deliver

"We must hold leaders to their commitments. As the theme of this conference tells us: It's time to deliver," Kofi Annan wrote in his message to the XVI International AIDS Conference in Toronto.

UN / UN Priorities in the Context of G8 Agenda in 2006

In advance to the G8 Summit, Mr. Ercan Murat, UN Resident Coordinator in the Russian Federation a.i., gave an interview to Diplomat magazine on correlation of G8 agenda and some of the UN priorities.

UNICEF/ Young People Meet with G8 Leaders

In St. Petersburg at the G8 Summit, the unprecedented meeting of Junior 8 delegates with their nations' leaders came true.

UNESCO / Koichiro Matsuura: to Support Education for All

Speaking at the G8 Summit in Saint-Petersburg, Mr. Koichiro Matsuura called for stronger support to developing countries, especially in Africa, to help them achieve major goals in the area of basic education.

UNESCO / UNESCO Director-General Visited the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)

On 23-26 June, UNESCO Director-General Mr. Koichiro Matsuura visited the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) to take part in the international forum 'Sustainable Development of the Arctic Countries and the Northern Regions of the Russian Federation in the Context of Education, Science and Culture'.

UNFPA / World Population Day

This year, the World Population Day was focused on young people, who account for half of the world population. In Russia, the main UN event on this Day was organised outside Moscow – in Saratov.

WFP / Optimism in the Fight Against Hunger

At any time, WFP has 40 ships at sea, 80 aircraft in the sky and 5,000 trucks moving food and personnel to people in need, said John Powell, WFP Deputy Executive Director, addressing students in Moscow.

UNHCR / Dialogue: A Way to Understanding

UNHCR together with Etnosfera educational centre organized a schools contest 'Dialogue: A Way to Understanding. Integration of

Refugees and Other Categories of International Migrants Through Education' to facilitate the integration of children of different nationalities in Russia.

UNDP / Millennium Development Goals in Eastern Europe & the CIS

A new UNDP report National Millennium Development Goals: A Framework for Action reflecting the progress of the region towards MDGs was launched in Vienna.

UNDP / Millennium Development Goals in CIS Countries

Facts and figures on the progress towards the achievement of the MDGs in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine.

UNDP / Make People's Lives Better

UNDP Russia published a new brochure illustrating the activities of the leading international development agency in the Russian Federation.

UNDP / Millennium Development Goals: A View from the Regions

In mid-July, a third UN MDGs-related workshop for regional journalists was held in Saratov, this time devoted to 'Topicality of Gender Issues in Modern Russia'.

WHO / World Blood Donor Day

This year the Blood Donor Day activities focused on blood transfusion safety within the framework of the project HIV/AIDS Prevention and Combating in the Russian Federation.

WHO / Combating Tuberculosis in Russia: Effectiveness of International Projects

Russia's international partners initiated a mission to assess the results of joint projects in the area of TB combating implemented during the past decade.

UNIC / Human Rights and Cultural Diversity

Alexandre Gorelik, UNIC Director in Moscow, spoke on UN position on issues of human rights and cultural diversity at the conference 'Conservation of Biological and Cultural Diversity in the Baikal Region' held in Ulan-Ude.



Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals is a set of specific and measurable targets aimed at reducing poverty and raising living standards, which was adopted by 191 United Nations member-states, including the Russian Federation, at the Millennium Summit in 2000.

These Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to be reached by 2015 or earlier, are as follows:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Goal 1 | Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger |
| Goal 2 | Achieve universal primary education |
| Goal 3 | Promote gender equality and empower women |
| Goal 4 | Reduce child mortality |
| Goal 5 | Improve maternal health |
| Goal 6 | Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases |
| Goal 7 | Ensure environmental sustainability |
| Goal 8 | Develop a global partnership for development |