

# U N IN RUSSIA

No. 1 (50)  
January-February  
2007



Translating economic growth into sustainable human development with human rights

Published by  
the United Nations Office  
in the Russian Federation



**Just being appointed UNDP  
Goodwill Ambassador Maria Sharapova  
donated US\$ 100,000 to Chernobyl children /3**

## People /11

"Psychological problems are often much worse than physical ones," says Aida Ailarova, manager of the UNICEF Psychosocial Rehabilitation Programme in the North Caucasus. "Sixteen year old Malika, who lost her leg as a result of a mine explosion, was one of the most severe cases"

## Society /13

Over 80,000 Afghans living in the Russian Federation constitute the largest group of asylum-seekers from far abroad. As a democratic society, Russia cannot afford to have so many undocumented people, who are unable to enjoy their human and civil rights

## Interview /17

At times of crises, it is organizations of ingenious people that play a key role in redressing the situation, but at various international forums they would most probably be made to appear as mere victims, while any progress in resolving problems is mainly interpreted as a result of external intervention

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## New UN Secretary-General

The new Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, took office on 1 January 2007. He succeeds Koffi Annan, who occupied this post since 1997. His predecessors as Secretary-General were: Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1992 - 1996), Javier Pèrez de Cuèllar (1982-1991), Kurt Waldheim (1972 -1981), U Thant (1961-1971), Dag Hammarskjöld (1953 - 1961), and Trygve Lie (1946-1952).

Ban Ki-moon of the Republic of Korea, the eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations, brings to his post 37 years of service both in government and on the global stage.

At the time of his election as Secretary-General, Mr. Ban was his country's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Throughout this service, his guiding vision was that of a peaceful Korean peninsula, playing an expanding role for peace and prosperity in the region and the wider world.

Mr. Ban has longstanding ties with the United Nations, dating back to 1975, when he worked for the Foreign Ministry's United Nations division. That work expanded over the years, with assignments as First Secretary at the ROK's Permanent Mission to the UN in New York, Director of the UN Division at the ministry's headquarters in Seoul, and Ambassador to Vienna, during which time, in 1999, he served as Chairman of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization. In 2001-2002, as Chef-de-Cabinet during the ROK's Presidency of the General Assembly, he facili-



tated the prompt adoption of the first resolution of the session, condemning the terrorist attacks of 11 September, and undertook a number of initiatives aimed at strengthening the Assembly's functioning, thereby helping to turn a session that started out in crisis and confusion into one in which a number of important reforms were adopted.

Mr. Ban has also been actively involved in issues relating to inter-Korean relations. In 1992, as Special Advisor to the Foreign Minister, he served as Vice Chair of the South-North Joint Nuclear Control Commission following the adoption of the historic Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. In September 2005, as Foreign Minister, he played a leading role in bringing about another landmark agreement aimed at promoting peace and stability on the Korean peninsula with the adoption at the Six Party Talks of the Joint Statement on resolving the North Korean nuclear issue.

Education: Mr. Ban received a bachelor's degree in international relations from Seoul National University in 1970. In 1985, he earned a master's degree in public administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Mr. Ban has received numerous national and international prizes, medals and honours.

Mr. Ban was born on 13 June 1944. He and his wife have one son and two daughters. In addition to Korean, Mr. Ban speaks English and French.

UN in Russia  
Published once in two months  
Circulation: 2,000 copies

[www.unrussia.ru](http://www.unrussia.ru)  
[www.undp.ru](http://www.undp.ru)

Founder:  
United Nations Office  
in the Russian Federation

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# Maria Sharapova Is Appointed UNDP Goodwill Ambassador

Tennis star donates US\$ 100,000 to eight Chernobyl recovery projects in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine



At a ceremony on 14 February 2007 at United Nations headquarters in New York, the world's top-ranked women's tennis player, Maria Sharapova, was appointed a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). At the same time, Sharapova announced a donation of US \$100,000 to UNDP Chernobyl-recovery projects.

"UNDP works around the world making a positive difference in people's lives, and I am proud to add my personal commitment to its work," said Sharapova, who will serve in her new role to rally support for the global campaign against poverty. "UNDP's efforts in the fight against poverty are crucial for young people everywhere to achieve their potential. I am looking forward to working with UNDP."

Sharapova's work with UNDP will include promoting international efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Adopted by 189 countries in 2000, the Goals are clear, time-bound targets for achieving measurable improvements in the lives of the world's poorest people. They aim at eradicating poverty, putting children in schools, promoting women's rights, fighting killer diseases, and providing access to safe drinking water. UNDP is working to

help countries around the world achieve these goals by 2015.

"UNDP is very proud to welcome Ms. Sharapova as our Goodwill Ambassador," said Ad Melkert, UNDP's Associate Administrator and UN's Under-Secretary-General. "She is a role model for young people who face challenging conditions in life. She is already building on her success as a top athlete to create concrete opportunities for disadvantaged young people to improve their lives."

At the ceremony, Sharapova announced a US \$100,000 contribution to eight youth-oriented projects in rural communities in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine that still suffer the after-effects of the Chernobyl disaster of 1986.



Created Maria Sharapova Foundation will fund projects aimed at improving computer access, promoting ecological awareness, and restoring sports facilities and hospitals in the three countries most affected by Chernobyl. These projects complement a broad portfolio of UN work helping Chernobyl-affected communities regain a sense of self-sufficiency, build new livelihoods, and bring a once-blighted region back to life.

"My first step is to focus on the Chernobyl-affected region, where my family has roots," said Sharapova. "Today, it is poverty and lack of opportunities that pose the greatest threat for young people in the Chernobyl region."

"UNDP is especially pleased that Ms. Sharapova is targeting a region that is often overlooked by donors," concluded Melkert. "We know that community-recovery projects of the sort that she has targeted for her generous donation hold great promise."

Maria Sharapova joins an elite group of UNDP Goodwill Ambassadors, which includes soccer stars Ronaldo of Brazil, Zinedine Zidane of France, and newly appointed Didier Drogba of Cote d'Ivoire; Japanese actress Misako Konno; and Crown Prince Haakon Magnus of Norway.

She was born on 19 April, 1987 in Nyagan, Siberia, after her family fled the city of Gomel in Belarus in the wake of the Chernobyl accident. The family lived in Nyagan for 2 years and then moved to the Black Sea town of Sochi. In 1995, Sharapova left Russia and became a full-time student at IMG's Nick Bolletieri Tennis Academy. She made her first WTA tournament appearance in 2002. In 2004 she won her first Grand Slam title at Wimbledon and was named WTA player of the year. In 2006 she won the U.S. Open. She is currently ranked No. 1 in the world.

## From Maria with Love

The Maria Sharapova Foundation will support eight community-based initiatives in the three Chernobyl-affected countries, Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. UNDP will take the lead in implementing these initiatives, and work in partnership with local and regional authorities, community organizations and youth groups. Though they have a variety of specific objectives, the projects share a common focus on youth, and an overarching intent to support a return to normalcy and prosperity for the people and communities most affected by Chernobyl. In addition to the US \$100,000 donated by the Foundation, the local communities and authorities will contribute US \$84,000 in co-funding, bringing the total value of the projects to US \$184,000.

In the Gomel region of Belarus, children from the city of Chechersk will help spruce up public spaces, planting shrubbery and tending flower beds. Communications facilities at the Chechersk Central District Hospital will be renovated and upgraded, and a newly established 'Fairytale Room' will provide therapy to children in the form of interactive games, mini-circuses and other healing and inspirational activities. Also in the Chechersk region, a multifunctional learning centre will ensure wide access to computer education for rural youths. In the Bragin region, the Foundation will support the opening of a number of music schools in isolated rural areas. A series of concerts, lectures and workshops will focus on developing children's creative abilities.



In the Bryansk region of the Russian Federation, the Foundation will support the construction of a new sports field and a modern wooden residence building with disabled access for the Novocamp summer camp. The project will also support an international Children's Art Festival at Novocamp and a series of workshops for young teachers and ICT trainers.

In Ukraine, a network of youth centres will be established to bring computer knowledge and skills to rural teenagers. The centre in the Zhytomyr region will provide computer literacy training, ensure access to information and communications technology (ICT), and empower young people to implement

and contribute to socio-economic recovery efforts in their communities. The ICT centre in the Chernihiv region will provide local youth with information on healthy lifestyles and offer training on web-site design and Internet use. The centre in the Kyiv region will be equipped with modern sports facilities, and recreational and educational services to boost the physical and mental wellbeing of local children and teenagers.

Through these projects, the Maria Sharapova Foundation and UNDP will help young people overcome the 'Chernobyl victim syndrome', take greater control over their lives and lay the foundations for future success.

## A Small Loan Can Make a Difference



Do you know who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006? It was Muhammad Yunus, an entrepreneur from Bangladesh, for saving lives of his poor and starving countrymen and – in recent 30 years – millions of people all over the world. How did he do that? He did not give away money to poor families. Instead, he offered micro credits without deposits, references or credit history. It is not accidental that we use the prefix 'micro' here. In our microfinance programme in Russia loans worth US \$100, 200, 500 or even US \$1,000 are rare. However, these microscopic

amounts literally saved lives of millions of deprived families in the late 20th – early 21st century.

In Russia, microfinancing has just started gaining recognition as an emerging instrument of poverty reduction. Several years ago, these ideas were mainly promoted by foreign companies. However, their practices were not always suitable for Russian regions. Today, national centres and funds for support of small business, credit cooperatives and associations operate in Russia.

We already devoted an article in UN in Russia to the microfinance programme in Kamchatka (#2, 2006), where we mentioned that UNDP hoped that this mechanism would further develop in the Far East, the North Caucasus and in the Russian regions affected by the Chernobyl accident. In early 2006, a similar programme was launched in the Bryansk Oblast where now entrepreneurs, households and individuals have the opportunity to receive micro credits. Compared to our first experience in Kamchatka the resources we had were much more limited. However, with the support of the regional administration the centre for support of small business in the areas affected by the Chernobyl accident and migrant districts was established. By the way, at first, the proposed amounts of credits aroused doubts in the administration as people there were used to working with much bigger funds. However, they agreed to give it a try.

Many of Bryansk Oblast residents who moved from the areas covered by the Chernobyl cloud 20 years ago still failed to return to normal life and get rid of the psychology of a victim. Quite a lot of people wish to overcome this barrier, but they have no money to buy equipment (sometimes, even a spade) and seed material. In the past 20 years, the unemployment rate here has exceeded by far the national level. Until recently nobody has heard about banks offering consumer credits to people, and even those banks that have started working in the region lately, are not interested in individuals, as they have enough clients among established businessmen with some kind of credit history and business management skills.

'Novy Mir' Foundation established within the UNDP project decided to help those who have neither experience nor resources to start their own business in rural areas and, therefore, no credit history but have one important thing – a strong desire to acquire all mentioned above. When the project was launched, we asked more experienced colleagues from Kamchatka, who had been working in the area of microfinance for about four years, to come to Bryansk as a support team in order to help staff of the 'Novy Mir' Foundation.

Half a year later, the first 13 micro credits were already approved, issued and paid off, thus dispelling the doubts that sceptics could have regarding the idea of a microfinancing facility. Local residents bor-

rowed small amounts from 10,000 to 30,000 roubles for several months to buy, for instance, pedigree rabbits or chicken, install a digital incubator, cultivate mushrooms and vegetables, or breed fish. In other words, the resources were used to support small households in rural areas, which experts consider to be one of the most vulnerable segments of economy, and the economic strength is a key indicator of the overall country's well-being.

Encouraged by the first success, in mid-2006, UNDP allocated additional funds for the programme, and in October 2006, the supervisory committee approved the expansion of the foundation activities both geographically and financially. The Bryansk Oblast administration also believed in success and decided to unite the efforts of the UNDP project and a business incubator being established by the oblast budget mainly for urban residents. This is how an idea of a media project 'My Business' emerged. At the first stage, the project stipulates issuing of a periodical for small



entrepreneurs, both rural and urban, as all of them always complain about lack of information. It is expected that the new periodical will include regulatory documents with comments of qualified lawyers and accountants, success stories of business projects, and help motivate those who have reservations about credits. The project team was right to think that after joining efforts with the administration it will be possible not only to disseminate information about the 'Novy Mir' Foundation but potentially attract new clients and partners, maybe even donors, among local banks.

So, the first 13 credits were paid off just on time. By the way, a lot of analysts of this emerging market note that 100 per cent micro credits repayment is a common practice representing an interesting phenomenon. Banks constantly fight with

non-payers, while the majority of microfinance funds do not have these problems. Most likely, this is due to social reasons and the psychology of poor people. It was noted that people who take micro credits use them, and money in general, with great responsibility. It is a matter of honour for them to return this small amount by all means, although for many borrowers this is a big sum.

What is the connection between sustainable development and micro credits received by rural residents for their households? There is a direct link. We can try to achieve sustainable development in many ways, for instance, by means of government resolutions, laws and codes, but nobody really knows when they will work. Another way is to do it at the local level through creation and development of points of growth. According to the findings of the National Human Development Report 2005, there are only two ways to fight poverty in Russia: to increase minimum wages in the non-market sector and increase legitimate employment in the market sector. So, microfinance mechanisms employed by UNDP contribute to development of legitimate and transparent employment of the most deprived section of the rural population. The more people are employed in such a way in a district, the more developed the district is. The more such districts are in any oblast, the more dynamic is its development. The more oblasts develop dynamically in Russia, the stronger is the country's economy. The logic is as simple as that.

Certainly, other areas than those affected by Chernobyl need recovery activities. There are many more places in Russia, including former conflict areas of the North Caucasus, that should be converted into 'points of growth'. In any region people taking part in a microfinance programme contribute to sustainable development of the country without even knowing it.

I am sure that we must support such undertakings together. It is great that the work of a Bangladeshi millionaire who helped the deprived people of his country was recognized by the Nobel Committee, and that this practice is now being widely adopted in Russia.

**Elena Armand, PhD**  
Head of Environment Unit  
UNDP

## Kori Udovicki Joins UNDP as Director of Bureau for Europe and CIS



“Kori Udovicki is bringing to UNDP an impressive blend of work experience from the non-governmental sector, government institutions, and from the International Monetary Fund,” said Kemal Dervis, UNDP Administrator.

**M**s. Udovicki has held several senior management positions in the Government of the Republic of Serbia. From July 2003 to March 2004, she served as Governor of the National Bank of Serbia. Before that, from June 2002 to July 2003, she was the country’s Minister of Energy and Mines. Prior to those appointments, from 2001, Ms. Udovicki worked as a Special Adviser to the Minister of Finance and Economy.

“I cherish the challenge of joining the United Nations system at a time when the organization is working to re-craft and realign itself to a new and evolving global order,” said Ms. Udovicki of her appointment. “UNDP in Europe and the CIS is well positioned to help the less advanced countries learn from the complex experiences of the ones more advanced in the transition process. Our aim is to put the lessons we learn in the region to use in enhancing the world’s capacity to accelerate development.”

**M**ost recently, Kori Udovicki has been serving as President of the Center for Advanced Economic Studies, a Belgrade-based non-governmental organization working to advance economic knowledge in Southeast Europe.

**O**n 1 February 2007, Kori Udovicki assumed her responsibilities as an Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator of UNDP and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

**K**ori Udovicki also has strong international experience, including work as an International Monetary Fund economist focusing on the former Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

**M**s. Udovicki holds a Ph.D. and a M.Phil. in Economics, both from Yale University. In her new position, she succeeds Kalman Mizsei, who served as the Regional Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS between 2001 and 2006.

### Regions

## The North Caucasus: from Relief to Recovery and Development

**T**he North Caucasus is home to around 5 million people and 300 ethnic groups, belonging to different confessions (Christians, Muslims, others). The North Caucasus has been affected by armed clashes and ethnic conflicts for some 15 years; UN agencies and international NGOs have been implementing humanitarian operations since 1991.

**H**umanitarian and recovery activities in the North Caucasus are on-going in five republics: Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia-Alania, Dagestan, and Kabardino-Balkaria. Although humani-

tarian assistance has been mainly focused on Chechnya, the problems of Chechnya can only be effectively addressed in the wider North Caucasus context. (For instance, in January 2000, the number of displaced persons from Chechnya, who found shelter in the neighbouring Ingushetia amounted to 240,000) This is especially relevant from the recovery and development perspective.

**D**espite geographic proximity and many cultural similarities, the North Caucasus republics differ significantly in their socio-economic development and security situations. This

requires addressing the needs of each particular republic individually. Since, in emergency situations, the term “transition” refers to processes of transition from conflict/war to peace, it is clearly relevant only to Chechnya; while other republics have experienced terrorist attacks and ethnic conflicts, they have not had military activities on their territory. Since 1999, the United Nations and its NGO partners have provided assistance and protection to the civilian population of Chechnya and neighbouring republics via so-called annual CAPs (Consolidated Appeals Process),



*This family sheep farm was organized in Ingushetia thanks to UNDP support*

appeals for donors funding of concrete joint humanitarian action plans.

However, by 2004-2005, the political, socio-economic, and military/security situation in Chechnya and in the North Caucasus had changed to the point that the Russian Government, donors, UN agencies and NGOs acknowledged the need for durable, post-conflict solutions, thus signalling the transition from relief to recovery and development. The main prerequisites for this transition included:

- the end of the military campaign;
- the Russian government's recognition of the need for this transition;
- the recognition that poverty is the biggest obstacle to stability;
- established working relations between the local and federal governments;
- donor interest in supporting recovery and development;
- an agreement between UN, government agencies, donors, and NGOs on coordination mechanisms for planning and implementing the transitional programme; and
- the start of the process of return of internally displaced persons (IDPs);

The the first and second transitional workplans for the North Caucasus<sup>1</sup> (which replaced the CAPs) in 2006 and 2007 respectively, provide for a continuing emphasis on meeting humanitarian needs, since the long-term benefits of recovery and reconstruction can not yet be fully realized. Capturing these benefits requires that the government and civil society take fuller ownership of the recovery and development agenda, which is still driven by external actors to a significant extent. UN and other international organizations now undertake projects in such areas as economic growth, governance, and peace and tolerance—in addition to continuing humanitarian activities in education, food security and agriculture, health, mine action, protection, shelter, and water and sanitation.

To what extent do humanitarian and development activities interact and overlap?

Although there are signs of socio-economic recovery, the North Caucasus remains one of the poorest regions in the Russian Federation. Nearly 80% of the population in the region is estimated to be living below the national poverty level. Unemployment rates are well above

national averages: youth unemployment in Ingushetia is estimated to be above 90%. The North Caucasus will need to simultaneously conduct a range of relief and development projects for several years. Careful planning and close cooperation between UN agencies, NGOs, and the local and federal authorities are vital in preventing the appearance of 'gaps' while scaling down humanitarian aid and introducing recovery and development projects. Such UN agencies as UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, WFP will continue to play a role as humanitarian actors, while UNDP, FAO, ILO and government agencies in the region will increasingly focus on recovery and development. Some projects implemented by humanitarian agencies now contain recovery components, thus complementing the activities of the development agencies.

**UNDP** in 2004 launched a three-year area-based development programme entitled 'Sustainable Reintegration and Recovery in the North Caucasus'. The programme focuses on supporting economic growth and employment creation through the development of small and medium-size enterprises, business education and training, the creation of business incubators and business centres, supporting microfinance and other forms of local entrepreneurship. Income generation activities are based on agricultural development, which is one of the most important sectors of the local economy. Another priority area is supporting good governance, which includes supporting the implementation of the public administration reforms ongoing in the Russian Federation. Last but not the least, there is also a peace building and tolerance component.

**Kaarina Immonen**

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<sup>1</sup> [www.ocha.ru](http://www.ocha.ru) Inter-Agency Transitional Workplans for the North Caucasus developed by Humanitarian and Development community in the Russian Federation in close consultation with government counterparts.



UN World Food Programme

# Hundred Thousand Hot Meals



## An Award Ceremony in Pobedinskaya School

A plate of cereal-based hot meal – a usual lunch served under the school feeding programme of the World Food Organization (WFP) – unites many countries of the world. That is how Abdurakhman Uspanov, a school boy from Grozny, described his picture presented to the international Children's Art Competition 2006, an annual event organized by WFP.

Eight years old Abdurakhman Uspanov, together with a schoolgirl from Grozny, Tanzila Dakhieva, were among 29 finalists of the competition out of 180 participants from 36 countries of the world.

All participants attend schools covered by WFP worldwide school feeding programmes designed to both strengthen the health of primary school children and keep them in classroom. Participating students receive a daily morning snack of biscuits enriched by essential vitamins and minerals and hot porridge, rice or buckwheat for lunch.

Abdurakhman Uspanov is fond of reading and playing computer games. He hates it when the strong hurt the weak. In the future, he would like to become a theologian. Tanzila Dakhieva also likes playing computer games and dreams of having a computer of her own and also of the world free from violence and wars.

An awards ceremony for the competition was held in Pobedinskaya school in Grozny. Mr. Lemma Dadaev, Chechen Minister of Education, and Ms. Inge Breuer, WFP Representative and Country Director in the Russian Federation, and other representatives of government bodies and the district administration came to congratulate the winners and to hand in certificates, presents and money awards to the young artists and the schools they represent. At the ceremony, children sang songs and danced.

"WFP helps us educate a decent generation, and we are very grateful for that," said Lemma Dadaev, the Minister of Education of Chechnya, who took a very active part in the ceremony.

"A republic that has so many talented, strong and proud young people is guaranteed a very bright future. The assistance we provide to schools comes from many European countries, which care for you. While helping you, we hope that one day in the future when you grow up you will help younger generations in your republic," said Inge Breuer, WFP Representative and Country Director in the Russian Federation, addressing the schoolchildren at the awards ceremony. "On behalf of WFP, I would like to congratulate the young and talented artists," she added.

The drawings from the WFP's global competition were used for the production of a WFP calendar for 2006, as well as greeting cards that are available for sale on WFP website.



## Hundred Thousand Hot Meals

The cooperation between the European Commission and WFP in the North Caucasus started in 1996 when the European Commission Humanitarian Aid department, together with other donors, allocated funds for the WFP emergency operation to supply food to Chechnya. In 2001, after WFP returned to the region, the European Commission resumed its support by funding the distribution of basic commodities, such as flour, sugar, salt and biscuits rich in essential vitamins and minerals. WFP purchases most of the



food locally thus contributing to the development of local economy. The programme targets people who fled Chechnya to Ingushetia and most vulnerable population groups within the republic.

As the situation in Chechnya gradually improves, the European Commission will progressively reduce its emergency programmes and redirect its assistance towards activities aimed at sustainable development. Currently, the European Commission supports WFP general food distribution and food for education (or school feeding) programmes.

The food distribution programme targets over 75,000 beneficiaries in Chechnya and around 12,000 - in Ingushetia. This is about 47 per cent less than in previous years. The food for education programme targets around 111,000 children from 7 to 11 years old





in 425 schools of 11 districts of Chechnya. The programme aims to provide food to children from vulnerable families. It also helps to increase the number of children attending school. The focus of humanitarian assistance provided by the European Commission is on food security, including distribution of seeds, greenhouses construction and livestock breeding or other income-generating activities.

The European Commission, through its Humanitarian Aid Department, supports relief operations, benefitting

millions of victims of natural disasters and conflicts outside the European Union. It has been providing humanitarian assistance to the population affected by armed clashes in Chechnya since autumn 1999.

More information on the EC humanitarian assistance:

<http://www.delrus.ec.europa.eu/>  
<http://ec.europa.eu/echo>

## Blood Diamond

WFP, the world's largest humanitarian agency, hopes that the exposure generated by the Warner Bros. Pictures film 'Blood Diamond' will help raise much needed awareness of hunger and poverty that stalk over 850 million people globally. The film includes scenes depicting real aid operations as undertaken by WFP in the 1990s while feeding thousands of war victims who fled within Sierra Leone and to neighbouring countries. At the time, WFP aid workers witnessed acute humanitarian needs and untold levels of violence and cruelty, similar to those depicted in the movie.

"Hunger is bad governance, hunger is need, hunger is poverty, hunger is any number of things," said Edward Zwick, the director of 'Blood Diamond'. "It's the outgrowth of something that is systemic, and when you have in place some system that is not enriching the lives of people whose country is being exploited, that leads to hunger. I think it exists in many areas of Africa, and in other parts of the world."

"As filmmakers, we want to be accurate and, in so many circumstances, the World Food Programme has been at the centre of refugee camps and present in countries in distress – in Sierra Leone and in other places. So if we, in the context of a movie, can put that image and the knowledge in front of a whole host of people who don't know about it, then we're hopefully doing well by them," Zwick added.

### WFP

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A shot from film 'Blood Diamond' illustrates the acute humanitarian crisis



# Strengthening Humanitarian Response Capacity

While in many cases the coordination of international responses to humanitarian crises has worked well, like in the North Caucasus, there have also been complex emergencies where humanitarian aid was untimely or inadequate, with gaps in capacity and response in some sectors. This was partially due to the fact that while in some areas of work there were clearly mandated lead agencies, in others there were not. In a situation where myriads of organizations, big or small, specializing in a particular issue (e.g. World Health Organization) or focusing on a certain type of beneficiaries (e.g. UN High Commissioner for Refugees), are engaged in disaster relief and humanitarian activities around the world, efficient coordination and accountability for providing adequate response within a particular area of responsibility are essential.

It is for this reason that the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator launched a comprehensive humanitarian reform process in 2005. The reform programme includes three inter-related components, which should be seen as a whole: strengthening humanitarian response capacity, strengthening the Humanitarian Coordinator system and ensuring predictable funding. These components are meant to mutually reinforce each other and ensure that situations such as the slow humanitarian response in Darfur (Sudan) will be avoided in the future.

Last year, in the article ‘Fund for Saving Lives’ in the May-June issue of the UN in Russia bulletin, we informed our readers about the reform efforts aimed at ensuring predictable funding. Today, we shall speak about another pillar of the reform, the so-called ‘cluster approach’.

## Cluster Approach: Strengthening Humanitarian Response Capacity

The cluster approach is an effort to fill identified gaps in humanitarian response, to ensure accountability, and to improve coordination. Clusters (or working groups) have been set up in nine specific areas of work (sectors):

Sectors and areas of population where leadership and accountability amongst international humanitarian actors are already clearly established are not included in the list of nine clusters at the global level. These include agriculture (led by FAO), food (led by WFP), refugees (led by UNHCR), and education (led by UNICEF).

At the request of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, different organi-

Sector or area of activity:	Beneficiaries	Global cluster lead
<i>Technical areas:</i>		
Nutrition		UNICEF
Health		WHO
Water/sanitation		UNICEF
Emergency shelter:	IDPs (from conflict) Victims of disaster situations	UNHCR IFRC
<i>Cross-cutting areas:</i>		
Camp coordination/management	IDPs (from conflict) Victims of disaster situations	UNHCR IOM
Protection	IDPs (from conflict) Victims of disasters/civilians affected by conflict (other than IDPs)	UNHCR  UNHCR/OHCHR/
Early recovery		UNICEF/UNDP
<i>Common service areas:</i>		
Logistics		WFP
Emergency telecommunications		OCHA/UNICEF/WFP

zations have taken on the role of global cluster leads and are now accountable for providing an effective inter-agency response within their particular areas of responsibility. For example, UNHCR as the Protection cluster lead is expected to bring together humanitarian organizations with expertise and capacity in protection of conflict-generated IDPs. Together, they will assess the needs, the overall capacity of the group to respond to them and decide what additional capacity might be needed. Where capacity gaps exist in the cluster as a whole and where no other actors can respond, UNHCR will have to be prepared to act as a 'provider of last resort' and to carry out priority activities, seeking funds accordingly.

The cluster approach has already been applied in several emergency situations, including those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Somalia, Uganda, Pakistan, Indonesia and Lebanon. One of the lessons that have already emerged from the application of the cluster approach is the importance of flexibility at the country level. Country level clusters may not necessarily replicate the global cluster arrangements, but need to be tailored to specific country circumstances. There may be cases where particular clusters are not needed. Or it may be appropriate for NGOs or other humanitarian partners to act as sector focal points in parts of the country where they have a comparative advan-

tage or where the cluster lead has no presence.

More information on the humanitarian reform can be found on Relief Web and OCHA on-line web sites:

[www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int),  
<http://ochaonline.un.org>

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## People

# Children of Chechnya: to Heal Psychological Scars

The military conflict and loss of relatives have inflicted deep psychological scars on the people of the North Caucasus, which are often more harmful than the physical ones, especially at young age.

Research conducted by UNICEF in Chechnya shows how seriously children are affected by the conflict:

- 73 per cent of children have experienced traumatizing events
- 62 per cent of children often recollect war
- 59 per cent of children often start when they hear sudden noise

“Psychological problems are often much worse than physical ones,” said Aida Ailarova, manager of the UNICEF Psychosocial Rehabilitation Programme in the North Caucasus. “Sixteen year old Malika, who suffered from a mine explosion, was one of the most severe cases. This girl lost her leg and for several years lived under terrible stress. When she



(C) UNICEF/Prozzi

received her prosthetics, we were all hoping that she would come back to normal life. But the psychological shock from the trauma was so strong, that the girl, despite of the help she had received, could not cope with the stress, and after a while her heart stopped beating... We need to be aware that psychosocial consequences of a conflict should be properly taken care of. It is an issue that must be immediately and continually addressed.”

In late 2005, UNICEF started a large-scale psychosocial rehabilitation programme for Chechen children. In the framework of the programme, 14 psychosocial rehabilitation centres were established in seven districts of the republic. By the end of 2007, such centres will operate in all of Chechnya’s 17 districts.

Two centres complementing each other will be opened in each district: a school centre and a rehabilitation centre. The school centre will focus on methodological work with psychologists, monitoring of children’s psychological state on a day-to-day basis and referring children with acute problems for specialized assistance in rehabilitation centres.



UNICEF supports several psychosocial programmes in the North Caucasus such as this family rehabilitation centre 'Binonte' in Beslan

“The lack of qualified professionals is a major issue”, said Ms. Ailarova. “For example, many children in Grozny suffer from stuttering or other speech disorders, but there is only one speech therapist in town.” Training of psychologists

and other specialists is the most urgent task. To address this issue UNICEF engages leading psychotherapists from Israel and Saint-Petersburg, who already provided training to 50 local specialists.

The UNICEF programme in the Chechen Republic builds on the experience of a psychosocial recovery programme for those affected by the Beslan tragedy.

On the UNICEF initiative, an Expert Council on Psychosocial Assistance was established in Chechnya. Currently, a psychosocial assistance plan for 2008-2012 is being prepared. It will help reduce negative impact of the conflict on local children.

“The project has shown the vital importance of this work and has enlisted the support of the government and specialists in the republic. This gives us hope that we will be able to help the children of Chechnya overcome grave consequences of the conflict and come back to normal life,” said Aida Ailarova.

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## Afghans in Russia Need Durable Solutions

Over 80,000 Afghans living in Russia<sup>1</sup> constitute the largest group of asylum-seekers from far abroad. Some of the factors that have contributed to this trend are common to all refugee groups: continuing human rights violations and political instability in their country of origin, the fluidity of Russian borders and Russia's proximity to Western Europe, which makes it an attractive transit point for refugees trying to get to the West. However, for some Afghan refugees, there is an additional factor that attracts them to Russia – it is the hope of receiving assistance from the successor government of the country whose foreign policy they had supported and helped to promote.

Many Afghans, depending on the degree of their political involvement, are still at risk of returning. In addition to the political differences, there is also a cultural component contributing to this antagonism. On an average, the supporters of the communist regime tended to be more educated and far less religious than the general population. Many were educated in the Soviet Union and acquired 'western' customs and the way of dressing. The latter was especially problematic for young women who, having experienced gender equality and relative independence in the USSR, were unwilling to return to the overly male-dominated Afghan society.

With the coming of Taliban, the number of Afghan refugees in Russia increased even further. Even during the bleakest years of the Taliban regime, very few Afghans managed to receive a refugee status in Russia. The highest asylum granting rate was only 10 per cent and 11 per cent in 1999-2000. After 2001, the approval rate steadily declined, reaching the 2 per cent low in 2004 and 2005. Contributing to the high rejection rate was the fact that many Afghans had entered Russia through Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and there-

fore were not admitted into the status determination procedure based on the application of the 'safe third country' rule.

For those of its beneficiaries who have not been granted refugee status in the Russian Federation, UNHCR has had to look for other durable solutions, such as resettlement or voluntary repatriation. Although a preferred durable

dren have spent most of their formative years in Russia, or were not even born in Afghanistan, and have little familiarity with Afghan culture and traditions. After adaptation to the Russian education system, these children, especially girls, would face many difficulties adapting to life in Afghanistan. The fate of their children is a very important factor preventing Afghans in a protracted refugee situation from repatriating.



*Afghan and Russian children celebrate the World Refugee Day. Moscow, 20 June 2006*

solution under favourable conditions, voluntary repatriation was almost never an option for Afghans when the Taliban controlled Afghanistan, and is still not an option for most of those who left before 1996. In addition to whatever political or military activities they may have had under the communist regime, ten or more years in Russia created other problems. Over the years, they may have lost contact with relatives and now lack the support of the social network, which is so important in Afghanistan. Their property was either sold to finance their trip abroad or destroyed in the fighting, and now they have no home to return to. Their chil-

Even those who left Afghanistan more recently are reluctant to return because of a deteriorating security situation.

Unable to return to Afghanistan and having been denied a refugee status in Russia Afghan refugees were left with resettlement as their only hope for a durable solution. From the beginning of the resettlement programme in 2000, over 1,200 Afghan cases (approximately 3,000 people) were submitted for resettlement, mostly to the United States and Canada, with the overall approval rate of over 60 per cent. The Canadian initiative launched in December 2005

<sup>1</sup> According to the data produced by Inter-departmental Working Group (MWG), there are over 80 thousand Afghans living in the Russian Federation.

appears to be particularly promising. It projects to accept up to 1,000 cases annually. Just in the month of September 2006 alone, 70 persons departed within the programme.

The scope of this programme, however, is limited to cases active with UNHCR as of December 2005. In addition, under the Canadian refugee law, former (Afghan) military officers, members of the intelligence service or the police force and high ranking government or party officials are not eligible for a refugee status. In effect, this disqualifies Afghans who would be most at risk upon return.

Among the people who cannot be resettled are those who have entirely exhausted the Russian asylum procedure. They are in a desperate situation. Some opt to divorce their wives to give their families a chance to be resettled separately though they realize that they may never be able to reunite with them. Others let their adult children be resettled. These are not ideal solutions, and UNHCR does not encourage its beneficiaries to take such steps. The durable solu-

tion UNCHR would advocate is for the Russian authorities to grant such people a refugee status or a residence permit.

Another category of people for whom asylum is a better durable solution is the so-called group of 'Afghan orphans'. These are individuals who were brought from Afghanistan to the Soviet Union at young age pursuant to an agreement between the two countries. Some were orphans, while others came from large families or single parent homes. Fathers of many were high ranking government officials, military officers or members of security forces. All of them speak Russian better than their native language and know more about Russia than Afghanistan. For them resettlement is tantamount to another displacement. Nevertheless, very few of them have been granted a refugee status. Many of these 'Afghan orphans,' are married to Russian citizens and their children have Russian citizenship, too. However, due to various obstacles in the established procedure for obtaining residency permits even they have been unable to legalize their status.

It will probably take many years for the human rights situation in Afghanistan to improve to an extent that would allow Afghans who have stayed in Russia for a decade to return in safety and dignity. Meanwhile, a solution is needed for these Afghans to remain in Russia even after the final rejection from the Migration Service and after all the attempts at resettlement have failed. This is the reality the Russian authorities should not fail to consider not only for humanitarian reasons, but also because, as a democratic society, Russia cannot afford to have so many undocumented people, who are unable to enjoy their human and civil rights.

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## Avian Flu: before Migration Starts

Currently, there are 277 confirmed cases of Avian Flu worldwide, including 167 lethal, most of them registered in Southeast Asia. After the first case was registered in January 2004 following a large-scale spread of the H5N1 virus among poultry in Vietnam and Thailand, UN health specialists warned about the pandemic in case the virus mutates and becomes easily transmissible among humans.

In spring, there is a danger of spreading of Avian Flu in the European region, including the Russian Federation. Therefore one of the main activities within the WHO project 'Strengthening Capacity for Avian Flu (AF) Prevention among People in the Russian Federation' is the improvement of laboratory diagnostics of infection caused by virus A (H5N1). Within the framework of the above project an





international workshop on molecular diagnostics of Avian Flu was conducted from 30 January to 2 February 2007 at the premises of the Federal Centre of Hygiene and Epidemiology. The workshop was organized by the World Health Organization in cooperation with Central Research Institute of Epidemiology. This workshop was a preparatory stage in organization of a series of three-week training cycles on methods of PCR (polymerase chain reaction) diagnostics of Avian Flu virus A (H5N1) for lab specialists. The first cycle of training started on 19 February 2007.

Representatives of WHO Regional Office for Europe, WHO Collaborating Centre on Influenza (London, Great Britain), Central Research Institute of Epidemiology of



Rospotrebnadzor (Moscow), Federal Centre of Hygiene and Epidemiology of Rospotrebnadzor (Moscow), Russian National Influenza Centres working on the basis of Research Institute of Influenza of RAMS (St-Petersburg), RAMS Research Institute of Virology named after D.I.Ivanovsky (Moscow) and Rospotrebnadzor State Research Centre of Virology and Biotechnology 'Vector' (Novosibirsk) participated in the event.

During the workshop the participants discussed the curriculum and conducted lectures and practical training in the test mode. The latest WHO recommendations in conjunction with the experience gained by Russian specialists in study of seasonal influenza, taking preventive measures in Avian Flu A (H5N1) outbreaks and elaboration of modern methods of molecular diagnostics of infectious diseases were included into the training guidelines. The participants discussed epidemiological and epizootic aspects of Avian Flu, indications for research and requirements for selection of clinical tests and their transportation to laboratory, technology of conducting research, bio-safety insurance when working with Avian Flu pathogen and other issues. Practical training was conducted on modern equipment designed for research based on real time PCR methods.

Introduction of modern molecular diagnostics methods in viral laboratories belonging to the Influenza Laboratory Network in the Russian Federation will help not only strengthen the quality of epidemiological surveillance over the dangerous infection that can lead to a pandemic if spread among humans, but also extend the possibilities for surveillance over the seasonal influenza and other viral infections.

**WHO** is a specialized agency of the United Nations with 192 Member States. It has four main functions: to give worldwide guidance in the field of health; to set global standards for health; to cooperate with governments in strengthening national health programmes; to develop and transfer appropriate health technology, information, and standards.

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## Highlights

# World AIDS Day: UNESCO Chronicles



The UNESCO Moscow Office actively participated in events dedicated to the World AIDS Day 2006. This time, the theme for World AIDS Day was accountability and the slogan was "Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise".

The Youth Wing of the United Nations Association of Russia (UNAR), in cooperation with the UNESCO Moscow Office and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), distributed brochures, posters and leaflets with information on healthy life style and against discrimination of HIV positive people. On 1 December, a conference with participation of experts and representatives of the community of people living with HIV was held in the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO).

On 1 December, the Stella Art Foundation, with the support of UNESCO, organized an unusual exhibition at the Stella Art Gallery in Moscow. Drawings by HIV-infected children from the Children's Republican Hospital in Ust-Izhora (St.Petersburg) made during a master class by the well-known Russian artist Alyona Kirtsova

were presented at the exhibition. A ten minute film demonstrated at the opening of the event gave the visitors an opportunity to get to know the artists. The film tells about one day in the life of young patients of the hospital and the drawing classes conducted by Alyona Kirtsova, whose works are on display in the Tretyakov Gallery. The aim of the

exhibition was to raise awareness of the problem of social integration of HIV infected children in Russia and of the importance of creating a better environment for their education and treatment.

The Russian version of the UNESCO/UNAIDS information kit 'HIV/AIDS & Human Rights: Young People in Action' was launched on the occasion of World's AIDS Day. The kit includes ideas for youth action on human rights and HIV/AIDS and specific examples of campaigns aimed at fighting discrimination of people living with HIV.

The information kit was prepared with participation of young people working in youth NGOs around the world. The adaptation of the kit for Russian readers was an inclusive and participatory process with the involvement of experts from the Moscow Helsinki Group, AIDS-service organizations, Central and Eastern European Harm Reduction Network /CEEHRN and Regional Public Organization 'Community of People Living with HIV/AIDS'.



## How to Conserve the Look of Historic Cities?

More than 200 cities are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. On 29 January-2 February, one of them, St. Petersburg, hosted the International Conference of Eastern and Central European Countries 'Application of Scientific and Technological Achievements in Management and Preservation of Historic Cities Inscribed on the World Heritage List'.

The opening of the conference was marked by welcoming speeches of the Governor of St. Petersburg, Ms. Valentina Matviyenko, Director of the

World Heritage Centre, Mr. Francesco Bandarin, Director of the UNESCO Moscow Office, Mr. Dendev Badrach, and other officials.

Experts from the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) discussed the concept of the Historic Urban Landscape, its European context and new approaches towards safeguarding of historic cities in the XXI century.

The participants of the Conference from Eastern and Central Europe presented the experience of their countries in conservation of historic and cultural heritage of the cities inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, including Moscow, Prague, St. Petersburg, Vilnius, Warsaw, and others.

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UN Information Centre

Interview

# Speaking on Behalf of Indigenous Peoples



From its very inception, the UN has relied on the support of broad sections of the population of its member states, since that was the only way whereby it could implement one of the main provisions of its Charter – “to promote social progress and better life standards in larger freedom.” The UN Charter and its operational modalities envisage various forms of the Organization’s cooperation with the civil society entities. One of these forms is the associated status for non-governmental organizations with the Department of Public Information (DPI) of the UN Secretariat. Last summer this status was granted to ‘Lauravet’an’, an information and education network of indigenous people. We discussed the significance of this event with the organization’s Director Gulvaira Shermatova.

*- Gulvaira, could you briefly describe to our readers the goals of your organization?*

- ‘Lauravet’an’ is an interregional public organization, which brings together the communities and organizations of indigenous peoples of Karelia, Altay, Kuzbass, Khakassia and the Krasnoyarsk territory.

We serve as a bridge linking government structures with the rank-and-file people and grass-roots indigenous communities in Russia. The main problem here is the

lack of direct information channels. The country’s government and even local authorities frequently lack knowledge of the true situation in nomad camps, villages and settlements scattered over the immense territory of our homeland.

We have no political ambitions, and we do not pretend to speak on behalf of citizens representing the indigenous population and for them. We provide the indigenous population and their communities with an opportunity to speak out themselves about their problems and tasks.

*- What was the objective of ‘Lauravet’an’ as it sought for an associated status with the United Nations’ Department of Public Information?*

- It is directly linked to the principal goal of our organization – to offer Russia’s indigenous peoples an opportunity of an independent and equal dialogue with the government and international organizations.

Currently, the major political regulations affecting the situation of indigenous peoples both in Russia and in the world are elaborated with limited participation of traditional leaders of indigenous communities and often without any dialogue at all. Hence our aspiration to establish mechanisms for direct communication at all levels, and cooperation with DPI is a

unique opportunity to secure a stable two-way communication between traditional indigenous communities and the UN agencies.

*- Could you tell us about your participation in non-governmental forums under the UN auspices?*

- Last September, ‘Lauravet’an’ participated – for the first time ever! – in the annual DPI NGO conference in New York. On the whole, the conference was very interesting and useful. The participants discussed the ways to enhance the role of NGOs in addressing various issues at the global level and strengthening ties between the civil society and the UN. However, most of the proposals for the development of partnerships with indigenous peoples’ organizations seemed to us rather controversial. In particular, their emphasis would often be placed not on the interaction between indigenous organizations and political structures, but rather on strengthening cooperation between the organizations of indigenous people themselves, which is evidently not enough. In other words, the topic of indigenous population was present on the agenda but, unfortunately, not as a priority issue.

The problems faced by indigenous communities first and foremost – such as education, health care and infant mortality – were discussed not from the angle of identifying their origin, but rather in the context of programmes implemented by specific organizations. Moreover, indigenous communities appeared as ‘a field’ for programmes implementation, while little or no attempt were made to sum up the experience or analyze the potential of the indigenous organizations themselves.

One should agree that such an approach creates a one-sided vision of real problems of indigenous communities and does not allow for making a true assessment of their own potential. For example, at times of crises, it is the organizations of indigenous people and their traditional leadership that play a key role in redressing the situation, but at various international forums they would most probably appear as mere victims, while any progress in resolving problems is mainly

interpreted as a result of external interventions.

- *What are your plans for cooperation between 'Lauravet'lan' and DPI?*

- We decided to offer our cooperation to DPI in order to change the situation, at least partially. The Department supported our initiative and suggested that 'Lauravet'lan' participate in the work of the steering committee responsible for preparing next NGO conference in New York.

Our representative already takes an active part in the committee meetings. We assist in selecting the candidacies of leaders from indigenous communities with a view to establish a constructive dialogue with representatives of governments, academic community and international organizations. In addition, we are preparing a seminar, which will address the issue of preserving cultural heritage and, in particular, traditional knowledge. We expect that representatives of the academic community and the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues will participate in this seminar.

If this work is a success, we will contribute to the solution of a very important task of

promoting the awareness about the life and the concerns of numerically small peoples.

- *The work of NGO activists, in the long run, is always aimed at improving the life of an ordinary person. Could you give any example based on your organization's experience?*

- There is a territory of 286 hectares on the shores of Teletsky Lake, one of the most picturesque mountainous areas of Altay and Siberia, where since times immemorial numerous indigenous communities of Altay have conducted their traditional festivities. Due to the rapid development of tourism, the lake has become a tasty morsel for businessmen. In 2002, this territory was granted on lease to the 'Sibtrubovodstroy' Open Joint-Stock Company for construction of a holiday camp despite numerous protests of representatives of the indigenous population. Then the community of indigenous population 'Altyn Kohl' filed a suit to the Court of Arbitration of the Republic of Altay.

Two sessions of the Court of Arbitration in 2004 did not bring any positive result. At that time, our centre organized a training course on legal issues for a group of repre-

sentatives of the 'Altyn Kohl' community with a special emphasis on the protection of indigenous peoples' rights. At the third session of the Court of Arbitration our students made an excellent use of the knowledge acquired and managed to convince the court that the lease deal had been unlawful. That victory inspires the indigenous population of Altay to defend more actively their rights for the territories of cultural and socio-economic significance.

Of course, the situation with the territories where the traditional way of life and traditional land use are preserved is far from optimistic. However, owing to the efforts of 'Lauravet'lan', representatives of indigenous communities and local organizations have an opportunity to acquire knowledge that enables them to cooperate efficiently with state structures in creating conditions for a decent life.

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Thousands of Russian senior school students have already taken part in the annual essay contest held by the United Nations Association of Russia and MGIMO University since 1986.

In the essays, the teenagers write about topical global problems in a form of letters to the President of Russia or the United Nations Secretary-General. These issues include international safety, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, environmental protection and sustainable development, fighting poverty, infectious diseases and drugs spread.

For example, in 2006, the contest participants wrote letters to the Russian President on 'What the UN Should Be in the 21st Century', discussing issues related to the UN reform.

## Advice to the President: How to Increase Russia's Population?

The participants of the contest demonstrate an active civic position and as a rule a high level of knowledge. It is not surprising that after graduating from school the winners of the contest usually enter the leading national and foreign higher educational institutions and show excellent academic results.

Many of them graduated from MGIMO University and now work at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the United Nations or other international organizations.

According to the terms of the essay contest entitled 'How to Increase Russia's Population' (2007), the participants are to write a letter to the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin and express their personal opinion and recommendations on the possible ways of solving the demographic problem in the country.

The letter should be from five to seven typed pages long. It should be sent to the following address: 119454, Moscow, 76 Prospect Vernadskogo, MGIMO University, the UNESCO office, with a note 'Contest 2007' by 15 April 2007. For more information please visit UNA Russia website [www.una.ru](http://www.una.ru)

By 1 August 2007, participants should not be over 18 years old. The authors of the best works will be invited to Moscow to present their reports. The winners of the contest will have the right to enter MGIMO on a non-competitive basis.

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# Summary

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

## UN/ New Secretary-General

The new Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, took office on 1 January 2007, succeeding Kofi Annan. Ban Ki-moon, of the Republic of Korea, is the eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations, who brings to his post 37 years of service both in government and on the global stage.

## UNDP/ Maria Sharapova Appointed UNDP Goodwill Ambassador

On 14 February, a top-ranked tennis player, Maria Sharapova, was appointed a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). "UNDP works around the world making a positive difference in people's lives, and I am proud to add my personal commitment to its work," said Sharapova.

## UNDP/ From Maria with Love

The Maria Sharapova Foundation will support eight community-based initiatives in the three Chernobyl-affected countries, Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. It has already donated US\$ 100,000 to eight Chernobyl recovery projects in the three countries.

## UNDP/ A Small Loan Can Make a Difference

In Russia, microfinancing just started to gain recognition as an emerging instrument of poverty reduction. A new micro credit programme launched by UNDP in 2006 in the Bryansk Oblast, affected by the Chernobyl catastrophe, already proved to be a success.

## UNDP/ Kori Udovicki Joins UNDP as Director of Bureau for Europe and CIS

On 1 February 2007, Kori Udovicki assumed her responsibilities as an Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator of UNDP and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS.

## UNDP/ Transition from Humanitarian Support to Recovery and Development in the North Caucasus

In the past two years in the North Caucasus, like in many other conflict and post conflict situations in the world, there is a transition from emergency relief to recovery and development in the UN and NGO activities. In this connection, in 2004, UNDP launched a three-year programme 'Sustainable Reintegration and Recovery in the North Caucasus' focusing on support to economic growth and employment generation.

## WFP/ Hundred Thousand Hot Meals

WFP conducted a design competition at Chechen schools covered by the Food for Education programme and identified the winners. "WFP helps us to educate a worthy generation, and we are very grateful to WFP for it," said Lemma Dadayev, the Minister of Education of Chechnya. WFP humanitarian operations in another part of the world – Sierra Leone - are shown in 'The Blood Diamond' movie, which will help people understand why hunger and poverty still exist.

## OCHA/ Strengthening Humanitarian Response Capacity

In 2005, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator launched a comprehensive humanitarian reform process in order to ensure efficient coordination and accountability for providing adequate response within a particular area of responsibility.

## UNICEF/ Children of Chechnya: to Heal Psychological Scars

The military conflict and loss of relatives left deep psychological scars on the people of the North Caucasus, which are often more harmful than physical especially when inflicted in the young age. In late 2005, UNICEF started a large scale psychosocial rehabilitation programme for Chechen children.

## UNHCR/ Afghans in Russia Need Durable Solutions

UNHCR has to look for durable solutions, such as resettlement or voluntary repatriation, for Afghans who are not granted a refugee status in Russia.

## WHO/ Avian Flu: before Migration Starts

In view of the coming spring one of the main areas of WHO project 'Strengthening Capacity for Avian Flu Prevention Among People in the Russian Federation' is the improvement of laboratory diagnostics of the infection caused by H5N1 virus.

## UNESCO/ How to Conserve the Look of Historic Cities?

On 29 January-2 February, Saint Petersburg hosted an international conference 'Application of Scientific and Technological Achievements in Management and Preservation of Historic Cities Inscribed on the World Heritage List' with participation of Eastern and Central European countries.

## UNESCO/ World AIDS Day: UNESCO Chronicles

To mark the World AIDS Day 2006, the UNESCO Moscow Office supported an exhibition of paintings by HIV-infected children of the Children's Republican Hospital in Ust-Izhora and launched the Russian version of the UNESCO/UNAIDS information kit 'HIV/AIDS & Human Rights: Young People in Action'.

## UNIC/ Speaking on Behalf of Indigenous Peoples

One of the forms of UN cooperation with NGOs is granting of an associated status at the Public Information Department of the UN Secretariat. The article offers an interview with Director of 'Lyioravetlyan', an information and education network of indigenous people that received this status last year.

## UNA Russia/ Advice to President: How to Increase Russia's Population?

Every year, thousands of senior school students take part in an essay contest organized by UNA Russia and MGIMO since 1986. This year, participants were asked to write a letter to the President of the RF offering possible solutions to the demographic problem.

*United Nations*



## 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:

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