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IN RUSSIA

Translating economic growth into sustainable human development with human rights

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60th Anniversary
of the Universal Declaration
of Human Rights



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1948. Alexei Pavlov, left, presents the USSR's views on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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"When I first saw Marina, she seemed to be a very warm and kind-hearted person," Tatiana Kozlova, Child Rights Ombudsperson in the Samara region, said. "I was shocked by her sad story and all the misfortune, and hardships that she had to go through. I sincerely wanted to help her in such a difficult situation."

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Having become a new donor to the World Food Programme in 2003, Russia allocated US \$62 million for the implementation of its humanitarian operations worldwide. Russia's contributions helped WFP mobilize 91,000 MT of food aid to assist vulnerable populations around the globe

UNIC / 12

More than 130 states have signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and over 40 – have ratified it. Russia signed the Convention in September 2008, but it is by no means the end of the road, Alexandre Gorelik, Director of the UN Information Centre in Moscow, notes

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Message of the UN Secretary-General on Human Rights Day

On this Human Rights Day, we also celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Drafted amid utter destruction and destitution following the Second World War, the Declaration reflects humanity's aspirations for a future of prosperity, dignity and peaceful coexistence.

Its adoption was a landmark. Today, the Declaration remains a core part of the UN's very identity.

The challenges we face today are as daunting as those that confronted the Declaration's drafters.

We face a food emergency and a global financial crisis.

Humankind's assault on the natural environment continues.

There is political repression in too many countries.



And as ever, the most vulnerable continue to be on the frontlines of hardship and abuse.

The luckiest among us, those who are spared the most negative effects of disaster, poverty or instability, cannot turn a blind eye. The cascading effects of abuse and indifference can eventually engulf the entire planet.

Rights, and especially their violation, must hold the whole world in solidarity.

On this Human Rights Day, it is my hope that we will all act on our collective responsibility to uphold the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration.

We can only honour the towering vision of that inspiring document when its principles are fully applied everywhere, for everyone.

Ban Ki-moon

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United Nations
Human Rights

Office of High Commissioner
for Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights Turns 60!

On 10 December 2008, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) turns 60. The Declaration was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948. The date has since served to mark Human Rights Day worldwide.

The Declaration consists of a preamble and 30 articles, setting out a broad range of fundamental human rights and freedoms, to which all men and women everywhere in the world are entitled, without any distinction.

The UDHR is the first international recognition that fundamental rights and freedoms are inalienable and inherent to all human beings, that every one of us is born free and equal. The UDHR is a living document that matters not only in times of conflict and in societies suffering repression, but also in addressing social injustice and achieving human dignity in times of peace in established democracies.

Non-discrimination, equality and fairness – key components of justice form the foundation of the UDHR. And no matter where you live, how much money you have, what faith you practice or political views you hold, all the human rights in the Declaration apply to you everywhere and always.

Indeed, the UDHR has inspired more than 80 international human rights treaties and declarations, a great number of regional human rights conventions, domestic human rights bills, and constitutional provisions, which together constitute a comprehensive legally binding system for the promotion and protection of human rights. Building on the achievements of the UDHR, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and

Cultural Rights entered into force in 1976. Together with the UDHR, the Covenants comprise the International Bill of Human Rights.

Today, all United Nations member states have ratified at least one of the nine core international human rights treaties, and 80 percent have ra-

and red symbol represents liberation and equality. The yellow is a sign of peace and warmth. The symbol is set on a solid block which represents the foundation of human rights. The earthy red colour of the block reinforces human rights as a foundation stone and as humankind's common heritage. The UDHR60 logo comes

with words that encapsulate the promise of the Declaration: "Dignity and justice for all of us". It reinforces the vision of the UDHR as the first international recognition that fundamental rights and freedoms are inalienable and inherent to all human beings, that every one of us is born free and equal. The phrase also serves as a rallying call, for the promise of dignity and justice is far from realized for everyone.



tified four or more, giving concrete expression to the universality of the UDHR and international human rights.

The UDHR is the most translated document in the world. It was translated into more than 330 languages: from the six UN official languages -Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish spoken by billions of people, to Pipil, spoken by some 50 people in El Salvador and Honduras.

The anniversary campaign is symbolized by the UDHR60 logo, which depicts a human shape standing with arms wide open. The yellow



Professor Vladimir M. Koretsky, USSR representative (left), greets Dr. Charles Malik, Rapporteur of the Drafting Committee of UDHR

Do You Know Your Rights?

1. Non-discrimination.
2. Life.
3. Liberty and security of the person.
4. Protection against slavery and servitude.
5. Protection against torture.
6. Legal personality.
7. Equal protection of the law.
8. Legal remedy.
9. Protection against arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile.
10. Access to independent and impartial tribunal.
11. Presumption of innocence.
12. Protection against ex post facto laws.
13. Privacy, family, home and correspondence.
14. Freedom of movement and residence.
15. Nationality.
16. Marry and found a family.
17. Protection and assistance of families.
18. Marriage only with free consent of spouses.
19. Equal rights of men and women in marriage.
20. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
21. Freedom of opinion and expression.
22. Freedom of the press.
23. Freedom of assembly.
24. Freedom of association.
25. Participation in government.
26. Social security.
27. Work.
28. No compulsory or forced labour.
29. Just and favourable conditions of work.
30. Trade unions.
31. Rest, leisure and paid holidays.
32. Adequate standard of living.
33. Education.
34. Participation in cultural life.
35. Self-determination.
36. Protection of and assistance to children.
37. Freedom from hunger.
38. Health.
39. Asylum.
40. Property.
41. Compulsory primary education.
42. Humane treatment when deprived of liberty.
43. Protection against imprisonment for debt.
44. Expulsion of aliens only by law.
45. Prohibition of war propaganda and incitement to discrimination.
46. Minority culture.
47. No imprisonment for breach of civil obligations.
48. Protection of children.
49. Access to public service.
50. Democracy.
51. Participation in cultural and scientific life.
52. Protection of intellectual property rights.
53. International and social order for realizing rights.
54. Political self-determination.
55. Economic self-determination.
56. Women's rights.
57. Prohibition of the death penalty.
58. Prohibition of apartheid.

Human Rights Is an Important Area of Cooperation between UN and Russia



On the eve of the 60-th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Dirk Hebecker, Senior Human Rights Adviser of the UN Country team in RF, Representative of the United

Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, gave an exclusive interview to UN in Russia.

– Mr. Hebecker, let us introduce the organization you work for to our readers.

– The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) helps protect and promote all human rights around the world. The Office, with headquarters in Geneva, is also present in over 40 countries. OHCHR works to ensure the enforcement of universally recognized human rights norms, including through promoting both the universal ratification and implementation of human rights treaties and respect for the rule of law. It also aims to remove obstacles to the full realization of all human rights and to prevent or stop human rights abuses.

You can learn much more about it on www.ohchr.org

– The OHCHR Office has started working in Russia rather recently. How did this come about?

– Following the agreement between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Government of the Russian Federation, a human rights presence was established within the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in the Russian Federation in January 2006. The High Commissioner's two visits to the Russian Federation in 2005 and 2006 provided opportunities for the consolidation and strengthening of cooperation with national partners. Throughout the year 2007, comprehensive consultations concerning the content and forms of longer-

term cooperation to promote human rights in the Russian Federation took place with OHCHR's counterparts in Moscow. As a result, a "Framework for Cooperation with the Russian Federation for 2007 and beyond" was elaborated and approved through an exchange of letters between the High Commissioner and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in August 2007. Finally, the Senior Human Rights Advisor to represent OHCHR in the UN Country Team and in the Russian Federation arrived in Moscow in March 2008.

– *Could you say a few words about this document, please. And what is the overall purpose of the OHCHR's presence in Russia?*

– The Framework for Cooperation clusters around four areas:

- rule of law;
- equality and tolerance;
- education and information on human rights;
- and mainstreaming human rights within the UN Country Team in the Russian Federation.

Based on the Framework of Cooperation, OHCHR's presence in Moscow is aimed at providing an added value to the efforts of different stakeholders in the promotion of human rights at the national level, with a particular view to ensure coherence, sustainability, creativity, and effectiveness, through better articulation of human rights dimensions, complementarities, and coordination with various UN agencies, government institutions, and civil society.

– *You started working in Moscow in March 2008. What has been achieved since then?*

– We have managed to establish close working relations and partnerships with government institutions at the federal and regional levels, UN agencies, and with the civil society, including NGOs, academia and other parties interested in putting the Framework of Cooperation into practice. We have studied the situation in the field and presented our work during our multiple trips to Russia's regions. In addition, we have participated in many events dedicated to human rights, which were organized by government bodies, United Nations, and the civil society. For example, a lot of efforts have been exerted into the promotion of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which the Russian Federation



The Moscow International Book Fair – 2008: the materials on human rights at the UN exposition

signed last September. We have also dealt with issues related to the rights of indigenous communities; education in the area of human rights; preparations for the 60-th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and strengthening of the institute of the Ombudsman on human rights at the federal and regional levels.

– *Could you, please, tell us about your plans for the nearest future?*

– We have planned a lot for the next two years:

We are going to assist in the establishment of a human rights internet resource for judges. It will be intended for a wide dissemination of human rights information and exchange of experience and best practices among national judges.

An important priority for us is the promotion of administrative justice through, inter alia, an international seminar on the role of administrative justice in the protection of human rights.

We intend to support, together with other UN agencies, national efforts aimed at strengthening the administration of justice towards juvenile offenders, in accordance with the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child relating to juvenile justice.

We will work with higher education and academic institutions for the support of the Russian-speaking component of the OHCHR fellowship programme for representatives of indigenous peoples to enhance their knowledge of human

rights, particularly in relation to indigenous peoples, and of the work of UN human rights protection mechanisms.

We welcome the fact that the Russian Federation signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities last September, and we will support the national efforts aimed at promoting and building consensus around the eventual ratification of this Convention.

Promotion of a culture of tolerance and non-discrimination to prevent xenophobia and related intolerance, gender discrimination, and violence against women is also among our priorities.

We have already started working towards improving the education of human rights professionals by facilitating the establishment of a human rights master's programme (M.A.) in partnership with leading Russian universities.

Through dissemination of documents on international human rights mechanisms and procedures we hope to promote access to human rights information.

And finally, we will contribute to the mainstreaming of human rights and promotion of a human-rights based approach to programming within the UN Country Team in the Russian Federation.

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The Last Resort

"Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection."

(Article 25.2 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights)



There are 27 million children under 18 in Russia, a little less than 20 percent of the total population. More than a half of Russian families with two or more children live below poverty line. Over 700,000 children are deprived of parental care. A network of ombudsmen for children successfully developing in Russia with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is designed to help these children.

Marina was thirty years old, when she was released from jail and came to Samara. It used to be her home town, but now, upon her arrival, the city was cold and hostile. Not long before Marina was imprisoned she had to move out from her apartment as a result of a fraud. It was when she got back to Samara she found out that she was pregnant.

Marina told her story to Tatiana Kozlova, Child Rights Ombudsman in the Samara region. The father of Marina's baby had also been recently released from imprisonment, and the young family had neither income nor a place to live.

"When I first saw Marina, she seemed to be a very warm and kind-hearted person," Tatiana said. "I was shocked by her sad story and all the misfortune, and hardships that she had to go through. I sincerely wanted to help her in such a difficult situation."

Three crisis centres operate in Samara and the Samara region providing care and support to mothers with young children and pregnant women, who are in need of shelter and medical care. Marina came to live in one of the centres. When she gave birth to her son Sasha both of them stayed at the crisis centre for several months. Finally, with Tatiana's assistance they moved to a room in a hostel, where Sasha's father joined them, and the entire family was reunited.

"When speaking about the protection of the rights of a child, one shouldn't forget about the protection of his or her family's rights. Another important consideration is that a child can be



happy only when he or she lives in a happy family environment," Tatiana argued. She also helped Marina's family with residence registration, badly needed medical assistance, and child benefits.

This year, the institution of ombudspersons for children marks its 10th anniversary in Russia. Today, children's ombudspersons operate in every fourth Russian region (both at the regional and municipal levels). In 2005, the Association of Ombudspersons for

Children was established in the Russian Federation under the auspices of UNICEF to further develop and support the activities in this area.

Children's ombudspersons in Russian regions help families in a socially dangerous situation, protect children from violence and abuse, ensure the implementation of children's right to education and protect the rights of children with disabilities. They work closely with local and federal authorities carrying out an independent assessment of the situation as regards the observance of children's rights, represent their interests in court, and assist in the development of the relevant legislation.

According to Tatiana Kozlova, Children's Ombudsman in the Samara region, people mostly approach her with requests related to housing problems. "Families with children often have poor living conditions, and in some cases, they just have no place to live. We help families in such critical situations, providing mothers with children, who have no living premises, with temporary accommodation in crisis centres", she said.

Sometimes Tatiana is approached with requests to address problems relating to child benefits. Often parents do not reside at the same place, where they are formally registered; sometimes they do not have any residence registration. "It is in such situations that we turn out to be their last resort in terms of the possibility for them to get material assistance from the government," Tatiana told us.

The Children's Ombudsman also provides assistance in addressing organizational issues. For instance, some time ago Tatiana arranged a regular transportation to a rural school. "Before children had to walk several kilometres to get to their school and back," Tatiana explained.

Tatiana and her colleagues pay regular visits to the Zhigulevsk juvenile correctional facility to meet with young people serving their term and provide whatever help is needed. The assistance is not necessarily of a legal or administrative nature; it may be just offering a helping hand. "Recently, one of young people at the facility turned to us with a request to find his brother, and, just imagine, we have indeed found him!" Tatiana recalls with a smile.

Ombudspersons for children have a lot of work to do, and their workload is unlikely to decrease in the near future. These highly-skilled experts manage to address issues that sometimes seem impossible to resolve; they help children to grow up and develop in a more friendly and supportive social environment. It is for this reason that UNICEF has no intention to give up its support for the institution of children's ombudspersons in Russia and intends to

further promote the development of their network.

Yelena Andreeva, Anna Kochineva

More information is available
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World Food Programme

Russia Saves Millions from Hunger

"Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality."

(Article 22 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

Over fifty years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 923 million people on the planet suffer from hunger, including 820 million in the developing world, 25 million in countries in transition, and 9 million in developed states. Today, death from hunger threatens every seventh person in the world, which makes hunger and mal-

nutrition a major threat to people, more dangerous than AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis.

The mankind does not turn a cold shoulder on those starving – they get help from individuals, NGOs, private companies, and most of all from states. For several years now, the Russian

Federation has been in this honourable list of donors.

In 2008, the Federal Law on the State Budget for 2008 and for the Planned Period of 2009 and 2010 stipulated a US \$11 million contribution to the World Food Programme (WFP) in 2008, US \$15 million – in 2009, and US \$15 million – in 2010.



Arrival of the Russian donation to WFP for humanitarian aid to Azerbaijan. December 2007.

"The relationship between WFP and the Russian Federation has grown ever stronger over the past few years, and I would like to thank Russia for the generous support," said Ms Josette Sheeran, WFP Executive Director, after learning about Russia's planned contributions for the next three years.

"The role of Russia as a donor is increasing in view of food prices growth that entails a global food crisis," said Ms Inge Breuer, WFP Representative and Country Director in the Russian Federation, who participated in the work of a group of experts on developing UN strategies in response to the global food crisis in New York in June.

According to recent forecasts, the number of people in the world in need of food aid will increase by 100,000



Taking advantage of Russia's growing emergency response capacity WFP engaged in a solid partnership with the Ministry for Emergency Situations and Emercom agency to mobilize within the framework of agreements between WFP and the Russian government large amounts of food on the Russian markets and ship them to warehouses in recipient countries.

It should be noted that, for example, in 2007, WFP purchased from various suppliers in Russia 81,000 tons of food commodities (or 48 percent) worth US \$31,000 out of the total of 167,000 tons of food purchased in Europe.

and in the near future will reach 1 billion. In view of this, WFP plans to double its budget.

As part from the three-year commitment to WFP, the Russian Federation already confirmed additional contributions to the agency in 2007-2008 in the amount of six million dollars for operations in several countries, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), making Russia the second largest donor to WFP's operations in this country. "The contribution clearly illustrates Russia's important role in the interna-

tional humanitarian arena," said Ms Sheeran.

Having become a new donor to WFP in 2003, Russia allocated US \$62 million for the implementation of its humanitarian operations worldwide. The table below illustrates Russia's donations to the agency.

Russia's contributions helped WFP mobilize 91,000 MT of food aid to assist vulnerable populations around the globe. This assistance has been provided both in emergency situations and within the framework of WFP projects aimed at development, such as Food for Education.

Here are concrete examples:

- 35,000 tons of Russian wheat worth US \$10 million helped millions of malnourished women and children in DPRK;
- 4,205 tons of wheat donated by Russia helped to feed 284,000 schoolchildren and women in DPRK;
- 4,322 tons of wheat flour, beans, and vegetable oil purchased with the Russian contribution were distributed among 550,000 beneficiaries within the Food for Education and TB projects as well as to those who suffered from the severe weather conditions in Sudan;
- 3,150 tons of wheat were provided by Russia to support WFP projects in Ethiopia aimed at restoration of arable land and environment as well as at ensuring long-term food security.

The food commodities purchased in Russia are used for both WFP humanitarian programmes implemented worldwide within the agreements concluded between WFP and the Russian Federation, and for the emergency operation in the North Caucasus. The international donor community has provided more than US \$101 million for this operation to support over 350,000 people.

Following positive developments in the Chechen Republic, WFP took a decision to wrap up its activities in the region. Presently the last food distribution is being conducted within the framework of the Food for Education programme in Chechnya and will be completed by the end of 2008.

Thus, starting from 2009, Russia will cease to receive food aid in the North Caucasus, and WFP is looking forward to continuously growing contributions from Russia aimed at providing humanitarian food aid to the needy people worldwide.

Country	US \$ mln
DPRK	18
Tajikistan	13
Armenia	6
Ethiopia	4
Kenya	4
Afghanistan	3
Cuba	3
Azerbaijan	2.5
Indonesia	2
Sudan	2
Bangladesh	1.5
Somalia	1
Angola	1
Guinea	1
Total	62

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International
Labour
Organization

ILO and Human Rights at Work

We tend nowadays to take it for granted that human rights are at the core of the mandate of the International Labour Organization, but the very notion had not yet found its way into positive international law, when the organization was founded in 1919 with a view to develop international regulation of conditions of employment and work. Instead, its Constitution referred to the pursuit of social justice as its driving prin-

Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which states that Members of the ILO, even if they have not ratified the relevant Conventions, have an obligation arising from their very membership to respect, promote, and realize the principles of freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; the effective abolition of child

instrument, as it mainly provides for the protection of that freedom against potential restrictions or infringements by the State. It equally protects the right of both workers and employers to set up and join organizations of their own choosing, as well as the right of these organizations to freely decide on their internal matters without interference from public authorities. It was supplemented one year later by the Right to Organize and Collective



ciple. This does not prevent ILO standards from being closely related to the universal values of freedom, equality, and dignity laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and many provisions of the subsequently adopted International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights coincide with ILO standards in the same areas that had already been adopted.

The year of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights also saw the adoption by the International Labour Conference of the

labour; and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. These four principles are expressed and developed in the form of specific rights and obligations in eight Conventions recognized as fundamental both inside and outside the ILO.

Adopted a few months before the Universal Declaration proclaimed the right to freedom of association and to form and join trade unions, the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87), can be seen as a 'classic' human rights

Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), which is a more typical ILO instrument addressing relations between employers and workers. Convention No. 98 aims at ensuring the protection of workers against anti-union discrimination and the independence of workers' and employers' organizations against interference by each other. It also provides for the promotion of collective bargaining.

The fundamental principle of elimination of forced or compulsory labour is set out in two different Conventions, which were adopted in different contexts. The



adoption of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) followed the 1926 Slavery Convention of the League of Nations, with the main purpose at that time of putting an end to the practice of compulsory labour used by colonial powers in their colonies. However, it remains fully valid for independent countries. The Convention provides in particular a definition of forced labour, which needs to be suppressed as “all work or service, which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily”. It includes a limitative list of circumstances in which work can nonetheless be imposed, such as compulsory military service, as a consequence of conviction in a court of law or in cases of emergency.

The Abolition of the Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), does not revise but supplement Convention No. 29. Following the experience of massive recourse to forced labour during World War II, it was adopted in 1957 to combat emerging new forms of forced or compulsory labour that were witnessed at that time. In particular, it further protects the right to freedom of opinion and expression consecrated in the Universal Declaration by prohibiting the use of any form of forced labour “as a means of political coercion or education, or as a punishment for holding or expressing political views, or views ideologically opposed to the established political, social or economic system.” It also prohibits forced labour as a method of labour mobilisation for economic development.

Equality of opportunity and treatment at work is also supported by two conventions. The Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), has the limited although important objective of

achieving equal remuneration between men and women for work of equal value. It is worth noting that the principle does not only apply to the salary or wage but also to any additional payment in cash or kind arising from the worker’s employment and also that it refers to work of equal value rather than equal work.

The Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) was adopted with the broader objective of elimination of all discriminations in all aspects of employment and occupation. It defines discrimination as any distinction, exclusion or preference made on certain grounds, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity, or treatment. The Convention lists seven grounds of prohibited discrimination – race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, and social origin – but leaves the possibility to ratify-



ing States of extending the protection afforded by the Convention to other grounds of discrimination.

The Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), is a consolidation of previous instruments adopted by the ILO since 1919 to regulate minimum age of admission to employment or work in various sectors, and it applies to all sectors of economic activity, whether or not children are employed for wages. It requires a minimum age to be specified and raised progressively, which cannot be less than the age of compulsory schooling and normally 15 years of age. A higher minimum age of no less than 18 years must be set for employment or work likely to jeopardize the health, safety, or morals of young persons while light work of children of 13 to 15 years can be authorized provided such work does not prejudice their schooling.

The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), does not revise or replace in any way Convention No. 138. It was adopted in recognition of the fact that, if the ultimate objective of the effective elimination of child labour depends on economic factors and may take time to be accomplished, there are certain forms of child labour that cannot be tolerated and subject to progressive elimination. Therefore, Convention No. 182 calls for immediate action to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, irrespective of the level of development or economic situation of the country. These worst forms against which all persons under the age of 18 must be protected comprise: all forms of slavery or similar practices, such as sale and trafficking, debt bondage, serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including the use of children in armed conflicts; the use of a child for prostitution or pornography; the use of a child for illicit activities such as drug trafficking; and work likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children, as determined at the national level.

Universal ratification of these fundamental conventions is now within reach, as suggested by a current global ratification rate of about 90% among ILO Member States. For these countries, this does not only mean a legal commitment to ensure full respect for human rights in the world of work, but also accepting that their compliance be subject to the scrutiny by tripartite bodies with participation of governments, employers, and workers representatives. This will allow the ILO unique structure and procedures to continue assisting the international community in overcoming the ever renewed challenges to the effective observance of rights proclaimed sixty years ago.

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A Right to Charity

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”

(Article 25 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

On 13 October 2008 in the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, the award ceremony of the ‘Corporate Donor of Russia 2008’ competition took place. The Donors Forum organized this competition for businesses, involved in charitable and social responsibility projects for the third time in a row. A representative team of organizers included both government structures and civil society institutions. For the first time, the United Nations Office in the Russian Federation joined them, proposing the nomination, ‘Best programme, contributing to the creation of favourable environment for life and work of disabled people – support to people with disabilities to ensure their equal participation in the life of the society’.

Two years ago, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The document determined new approaches to this large issue, Alexandre Gorelik, Director of the UN Information Centre in Moscow, reminded the participants. “This approach means that disabled people are no longer perceived as an object of care, protection, and social help alone,” Mr. Gorelik explained. “The focus is on viewing them as members of the society the same all

everybody else and on the promotion of their full integration through the implementation of their rights. The good news was that Russia signed the Convention at the end of September.”

Ensuring equal rights and opportunities for people with disabilities in the Russian Federation is a major issue today. According to official data, over 14 million people in Russia have a disability, and less than 15 percent of disabled people have a permanent job. Their access to education is limited, too.

‘Inclusive Education’ project presented by Amway company met all criteria for the award and became the winner in the United Nations nomination. This trading company organized the collection of charity funds among its customers, employees, and distributors. The money was raised to create inclusive schools in Ulan-Ude, in which children with disabilities would study together with their mates. The initiators aimed at attracting the society’s attention to the problems of children with disabilities, to give them a chance to get education, to overcome social isolation, and to become equal members of the society.

Amway’s partners in the project were the UN Children Fund (UNICEF) and the regional public organization of the disabled, ‘Perspektiva’, which were responsible for creating the inclusive schools. Meanwhile the company started collecting money, as the first stage of the project. Thanks to donations and sales of some special goods, 2.5 million roubles were raised during seven months of 2007. The second stage included preparation of a social environment – the pupils, their parents, and teachers – for the inclusive education. The third stage of the programme requires the establishment of a non-barrier environment at schools. In



2008, the installation of special equipment has started, including ramps and elevators.

As a result, the schools No. 4 and No. 65 of Ulan-Ude welcomed the children with disabilities in September 2008.

“The UN Office plans to support this nomination in the future as well,” Alexandre Gorelik underlined at the end of his remarks, “and we do hope that the number of philanthropists and do-gooders, who will compete for it, will increase.”

These hopes have some real grounds, judging from the general results of the ‘Corporate Donor of Russia 2008’ competition. This year, the competition brought together 26 companies with their joint expenditures for charity accounting for 13.8 billion roubles. According to expert estimates, some 70% of companies in Russia donate money for charity purposes, and their number grows steadily.



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ICT Accessibility to Disabled: Working In-depth



As is known, the Convention on the Rights of the disabled was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2006. By now, more than 130 countries have signed it, and over 40 states have ratified it. On 24 September, Russia signed the Convention, although this is by no means, the end of the road. Now, a complex process of inter-agency coordination lays ahead, which precedes the ratification of the Convention by the Duma. The civil society organizations, UN representatives, and all the advocates of the full inclusion of the disabled people need to put into it a lot of energy and persistent efforts.

One of the innovative elements in the Convention are its provisions relating to information and communications technologies (ICT) – both from the point of view of the “digital access” and assistive technological solutions. As a matter of fact, it is for the first time ever, that the access to ICT has been declared a human right, along with the access to physical environment and means of transportation.

Not surprisingly, 14 of 32 substantive provisions of the Convention deal with the states’ obligations in the field of

ICT. The cross-cutting theme in the document is the cost-related availability of possible technological solutions, so that these would not be beyond the reach of many people, first of all, in poor countries or lower social strata in the industrialized states.

In implementing the provisions of the Convention, the member states will need to amend their domestic legislation, instructions, and programs of action in three large areas:

1. Norms, specifically, in such areas as “electronic government,” employment, education, mass media and Internet, trade and services, freedom of speech, mobility, standards of living, culture and leisure.
2. Introduction of assistive technologies, including in the field of education, designed to assist the disabled people in emergency situations and provide for their mobility and autonomy.
3. Support of R&D and efforts by industrial and commercial entities promoting ICT, including through state-private partnerships.

The UN endeavors to play the role of a locomotive in raising the issue at the political level. The General Assembly referred to this theme in a number of its resolutions. An ever greater number of UN websites are becoming fully accessible to disabled people, in line with the globally recognized standard, “Web Content Accessibility Guidelines” (WCAG-1).

In addition, the UN has been doing a lot to bring together government authorities, business and the civil society. Thus, the Global Alliance for ICT and Development, created by the UN jointly with the Secretariat of the Convention, has launched “The Global Initiative for Inclusive ICT” or G3ict. This effort aims at achieving the following objectives: promoting optimal practical solutions, implementing the best standards, evaluating the achievements of individual countries in the field of ICT availability using

special “digital accessibility and inclusion index,” and developing interactive instruments for officials and politicians.

A prototype set of instruments has already been developed. It includes detailed statistics that describe the situation in the field of ICT accessibility, evaluation of progress in the elaboration of advanced products, government procurement policies, promotion of assistive technologies, international cooperation, the role of local authorities, etc. All these aspects are reflected in the aforementioned “digital accessibility and inclusion index.”

An online set of tools is expected to be launched in March 2009. Its interactive nature will enable all the stakeholders to take part in the discussion and improve this original and timely developed “barometer” of ICT accessibility.

This year, surveys (defining the index) are expected to be prepared for 37 countries, which have already ratified the Convention, as well as for three countries, which have gained significant progress on their way to ensuring ICT accessibility. The reason for the latter is that the most advanced countries, from the point of



view of accessibility, have not necessarily been among the first to join the Convention.

It is clear that, at this stage, Russia is not well placed to become one of the leaders in the field of accessibility and inclusion. And, obviously, one cannot sit back and wait for good laws and modern state programmes to be adopted, and entrepreneurs sensitive to the needs of the disabled to emerge. Work is already under way on many fronts, albeit not as fast and concerted as one may wish.

The UN Office in Russia, in partnership with UsabilityLab, has succeeded in adapting its website (<http://www.unrussia.ru>), which now complies with the strictest accessibility standard AAA.



At the same time, there has been no progress in establishing an inter-departmental working group on this issue under the auspices of the Ministry of Telecommunications. The efforts to build

a thematic portal embracing the major projects and events in the field of ICT accessibility have not yet bear result either.

We should be ready for more challenges in 2009. One of them is to work to ensure that the websites of the Russian ministries and other government agencies are more accessible for people with disabilities.

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What is Family for Russian Students?

“The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.”

(Article 16.3 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

In November 2008, the UN Theme Group on Gender in the RF announced the outcomes of the study entitled ‘Family Strategies of Today’s Students in Russia’. The Gender Theme group brings together a number of UN agencies and supports the initiatives of the Russian Government and civil society aimed at improvement of the situation of women and attainment of gender equality.

The Russian government proclaimed 2008 as The Year of Family. A lot is said today about family issues not only by experts, but also by politicians and government officials. This demonstrates the need for a wide public discussion of the notion of family in modern Russia, its structure, and prospects. This comprehensive discussion will help form a new modality of relations between family, state, and society.

Experts in the area of population, lecturers of Russian Public Service Academy under the President of the RF,



and journalists took part in the discussion of the results of the study. According to the authors, a study of family behaviour strategies among young people in general and students in particular has gained importance because of the aggravating demographic situation in the country, as

well as the role of young people in replacing older generations and the social structure of the society as a whole. The research initiated by the UN can be viewed as one of the first steps in this direction following the adoption by Russia in 2007 of a new Concept of

Demographic Development and the introduction by the government of a number of legislative measures aimed at increasing the birth rate.

This work does not represent a completed portrait of students; it is rather a sketch that will help see a full picture. At the same time, it includes several sections, which provide an insight into various aspects of the subject. They include family models in the developing Russian society, family in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods; gender aspects of research in the field; a review of studies on various aspects of family, birth rate, and demographic issues conducted with support of the United Nations Development Programme in Russia; a study of family strategies among students on the basis of pilot projects implemented in Moscow and Irkutsk; results of the Internet survey conducted by FINAM investment holding.

The study is focused on students in Russia, their attitude to family, demographic problems, marriage, and state demographic policy, development of family strategies in society, personal values, and motivations in the implementation of their plans in life.

Some of their quotes read: "In the market economy, to be able to sell yourself at the labour market one should be single and have no family commitments in order to take risks". "We should find a place in life to be able to provide for our-



selves in future, however, making a career and having children should not be opposed, it is really important to have an opportunity to combine family and work. Although at the moment I do not see any."

At the presentation of the study, Moscow State University lecturer, Dr. Natalia Grigorieva, noted among other conclusions that students have a difficulty in giving a definition of a family. There are considerable variations in their understanding of a family. Also, speaking about success in life students mostly mention career and money related factors. Today, having a family and children is not among socially significant priorities in their values system. Although it is still there, it has lost its prominence.



It is important for the state to view students as an active subject of demographic behaviour and to take it into account in a demographic policy.

Education and further employment are viewed by the majority of students as an indicator of current situation and the basis for further career growth. Students are important for the state as subjects of the demographic policy. They count on themselves in family strategies and consider education to be essential for an interesting and well paid job in future, as well as a prerequisite for providing for themselves. However this position is supported mainly by students of leading educational establishments, who are in high demand in the Russian labour market today.

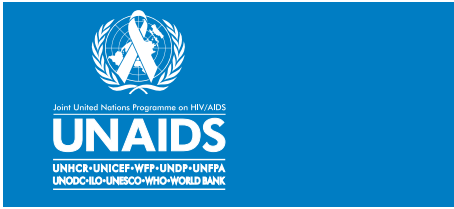
The majority of students would like to receive housing support from the government. At the same time, there is no dependency attitude as they do not expect to get free housing. The main conclusion on the basis of their answers is that it is essential for the state to implement effective housing policy for young families to help them acquire housing at an early stage. Therefore, the development of mechanisms stipulating guaranteed allocation of loans and allowances, as well as favourable mortgages without complicated bureaucratic procedures for students, young professionals and future young parents should become a priority.

Results of pilot surveys conducted in the framework of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF projects, as well as other recent studies and reports by Russian experts were used in the project. In particular, outcomes of the pilot projects implemented in Moscow and Irkutsk, as well as results of an Internet survey, were presented at the event.

Full text of the study is available on the website:

[http://www.undp.ru/index.phtml?iso=R
U&lid=2&cmd=news&id=523](http://www.undp.ru/index.phtml?iso=R&U&lid=2&cmd=news&id=523)

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'Stars against AIDS' in Rostov-on-Don

"All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination."

(Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

The UNAIDS project Stars against AIDS was launched in early spring 2008. The goal of the initiative is to attract attention to HIV-related issues, in particular the stigma of and discrimination against people living with HIV. Famous Russian and Ukrainian actresses, television anchors, Olympic champions, State Duma deputies, members of the Public Chamber, and other well-known women took part in the project. An exhibition of 25 panoramic portraits by Serge Golovach, a celebrated photographer, was open to the public for one and a half months from September to the end of October at Don State Public Library in Rostov-on-Don.

The Don State Public Library is the largest book repository in the Rostov Oblast, as well as the most visited. The overwhelming majority of library patrons are young people. Hundreds of students from local institutions of higher education and public schools come here every day. Guided tours of the library are arranged for

first-year students and their senior classmates from institutes and universities in Rostov-on-Don. The exhibition, therefore, was attended by thousands of young men and women, for whom knowledge about the HIV epidemic, prevention of HIV infection, and the need for tolerance towards people living with HIV is critical.

Fortunately, many girls and boys in Rostov-on-Don moved from understanding the problem to action. One of them, Roman Polikarpov, is head of the regional social organisation 'Young Doctors of Don'. This alliance became one of the primary UNAIDS partners involved in organizing the exhibition in Rostov-on-Don.

"HIV has changed the world," Roman explains. "The youth are in grave danger; however, information and some elementary rules can help anyone stay safe. The 'Stars against AIDS' project attracts attention to the HIV problem and highlights the importance of univer-

sal involvement in combatting the epidemic. This is a good example for fans of famous people to follow. The 'Stars Against AIDS' photo exhibition is a unique project for Rostov-on-Don. For the first time, celebrities openly demonstrate their concern for the HIV/AIDS problem. Everybody needs to listen to and think about what they have to say."

'Young Doctors of Don' uses a wide variety of means to combat the epidemic. Volunteers conduct lectures and trainings. During the exhibition, members of the organisation presented the 'Dance for Life' project to students from Rostov-on-Don.

Tatyana Bykovskaya, Minister of Healthcare for the Rostov Oblast, addressed the youth, in particular the young women, during the opening of the exhibition: "It is very important for us to speak openly about the problem of HIV infection, and particularly now, when the number of women infected with HIV is growing. We are



Actress Dina Korzun



TV anchor Elena Khanga

faced with the feminization of the epidemic, and must therefore consider this new situation by updating our approach.” Bykovskaya noted that over the past few years, the funds allocated for HIV prevention and programmes aimed at addressing this issue increased considerably in the Rostov Oblast.

The issue brought up by Tatyana Bykovskaya was further developed by Elena Beketova, head doctor of the Centre for Combating and Preventing AIDS and Communicable Diseases in the Rostov Oblast, at the round table ‘Feminization of the HIV Epidemic’.

“Fifty one percent of those living with HIV in the Rostov Oblast are women,” Elena Beketova explains. “The majority of them are young and include future mothers. We provide them with everything they need for treatment and care. The prevention of HIV infection remains a critically important part of our work. In the area of prevention, we work together with mass media and non-commercial organisations. It is obvious that we can ensure competent and effective measures to combat the epidemic only through comprehensive and close partnership.”

Irina Moiseeva, chair of the ‘Nadezhda’ club for women, and Ivan Dmitriev, head of the Prosperity of Generations Foundation for Social Initiatives, took part in the discussion.

Irina Moiseeva works with HIV-infected women and children, as well as infants born to HIV-positive mothers. One of the principal goals of ‘Nadezhda’ is to provide continual psychological support to people living with HIV. Sessions are organized at weekly meetings and over the telephone. The advice given to people living with HIV is practical; ‘Nadezhda’ employees know the issues from personal experience, and are called ‘peer consultants’.

“Peer consultants play a central role in our work,” Irina Moiseeva emphasizes. “They help people cope with psychological burden, and adjust and get accustomed to normal life under new circumstances. Observations show that it is considerably more difficult for women to cope with the emotional and psychological aspects of the issue than for men. Specifically, it is associated with giving birth and taking care of children. This is why we are currently planning to open a kid’s room in our club. Our club is a friendly place and is specially intended for people who do not always feel confident and fear not to be accepted as equal members of society.”

Vadim Izvozchikov, student of Don State Technical University, liked almost everything about the exhibition. “The project is very bright, but one could argue about the title, ‘Stars against AIDS.’ We should fight for some-

thing, not against. Only then we will see results.”

Elena Bezdeleva, student of Southern Federal University, had her own opinion: “The exhibit draws attention to the problem. And at the round table, I learned firsthand from doctors and people living with HIV.”

One of the organizers, Mikhail Mun, Deputy Director of the Don State Public Library, shares his impressions: “We organize a lot of exhibitions; however, the project ‘Stars Against AIDS’ has attracted more attention because of the importance of this topic and the efforts of our young people to stay on the right path. We often hear visitors ask for directions to the exhibition upon entering the library, which is why we have decided to extend it.”

Towards the end of the year, the exhibition will travel to the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature. Its opening is scheduled for 1 December, World AIDS Day.

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Everyone Has the Right to Seek Asylum...

"Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution."

(Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)



Dietrun Gunther

On 10 December 2008, the world will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration originated from the recognition of the dignity and worth of a human being and in a determination to promote justice, social progress and peace. The philosophy and standards of the Universal Declaration are integral to international protection efforts on behalf of refugees. Human rights considerations help to explain international concern as well as to find solutions to refugee problems.

Sixty years ago, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights offered a code of individual rights, against which the conduct of a government towards its citizens could be measured. Today, it has become clear that the strength of the Universal Declaration extends far beyond its strict legal form and proves its value as an authoritative statement of inalienable rights.

The safeguarding of refugee rights is a non-ideological and non-political undertaking, equally applicable in all regions and all countries of asylum. It is also a very pragmatic and operational activity, ranging from the issuance of travel documents, in one instance, to the prevention of rape and violence against women and children in small boats on the high seas, in another. International monitoring of respect for the basic rights of refugees is a direct, day-to-day activity for UNHCR. In this respect, the increasing preparedness of governments to implement restrictive or discriminatory measures, which under-

mine the institution of asylum, a cornerstone of international protection efforts on behalf of refugees and specifically provided for in Article 14 of the Universal Declaration, is a fundamental challenge to the established responsibilities of UNHCR.

Registration and provision of documentation (1951 Convention, Articles 27 and 28) remain key tools for securing the enjoyment of asylum, including access to rights and services and to family reunification, identifying those at risk, quantifying and assessing needs, and implementing solutions. In the Russian Federation today, the authorities issue certificates to all asylum-seekers ensuring their legal status as their claims are assessed.

The Declaration's core principles of freedom, equality and non-discrimination (UDHR, Articles 1 and 2) are universal, indivisible, interdependent, mutually reinforcing. The right to seek asylum is also linked to the right to leave any country including one's own (UDHR, Article 13(2)). The right to life, liberty and security of person (UDHR, Article 3) is central to the enjoyment of asylum. In searching for a definition of 'persecution', it is important to start with the human rights standards contained in the three instruments known collectively as the UN Bill of Human Rights – the Universal Declaration, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (and its two Optional Protocols), and the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Freedom from persecution and the right not to be discriminated on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, social origin or political opinion are not only basic tenets of the Universal Declaration (UDHR Article 7, Art. 26 (2)), but are also the essence of the refugee definition. In

addition, UNHCR also works to protect persons of concern from becoming victims of trafficking. Many women and girls are often exposed to rape, attack, abduction, honor killings, female genital mutilation, child marriage, and sexual harassment. The right not to be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (UDHR Art. 5), the right not to be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile (UDHR Art. 9), and the right to an effective remedy and impartial tribunal (UDHR, Article 6-8, Article 10) are also important. Continuing difficulties in securing access to the right to work for asylum-seekers and refugees (UDHR, Article 23; 1951 Convention, Articles 17–19), reflects many States' reluctance to allow foreigners access to national labour markets. The right to adequate food (UDHR, Article 25) is critical to the enjoyment of all other human rights. Securing durable solutions for displaced persons of concern involves States, UNHCR and its partners. This has traditionally involved voluntary repatriation, thus exercising the right to return to one's country (UDHR, Article 13(2)), local integration or resettlement.

Violations of internationally recognized human rights, including in armed conflict situations, are among the principal causes of refugee movements, whether people flee persecution directed at them as individuals, or they flee en masse. Violations of basic economic, social and cultural rights often lead to political instability and violence, which in turn, can cause forced displacement. The voluntary return of refugees in conditions of safety and dignity to countries of origin is increasingly recognized as the most desirable, long-term solution to any refugee problem. Restoration of acceptable human rights standards in countries of origin is, therefore, in many refugee situations, the key to any successful reso-

lution of the problem. Equally important, major protection problems are posed by violations of the safety, security and fundamental rights of the refugees in countries of refuge.

At the start of this year, there were over 37 million people who had been forced from their homes around the world by war and persecution. Nearly one third (11.4 million) were refugees, and more than two-thirds (26 million) were displaced within the borders of their own countries. Iran and Pakistan are two countries that alone have hosted millions of Afghan refugees for decades, and continue to do so despite dwindling international assistance. In Georgia and in the Russian Federation, UNHCR assists tens of thousands of newly displaced people – a stark reminder that Europe is not spared problems of forced displacement.

The preamble to the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees refers to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). In the following decades, international refugee law continued to evolve, drawing on universal human rights values and principles. These have found expression in additional refugee instruments or texts which provide further support for the international refugee protection structures. The OAU Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa is based on the Universal Declaration and is explicit in regard to responsibilities of States to facilitate or grant asylum. The Cartagena Declaration for the Latin American Region is particularly interesting in the present context for its recognition throughout the complementarity between human rights instruments, their implementation mechanisms, and the protection of refugees. In the European context, the EU asylum acquis on law and practice are most relevant. During the Ministerial Conference "Building a Europe of Asylum" (Paris, 8-9 September 2008), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, welcomed the reiteration of the "commitment of the European Union to the protection of people whose lives and freedom are at risk in their own countries" in the proposed Pact on Immigration and Asylum, put forward by the French Presidency.

Particular categories of refugees and displaced persons like women and children do receive particular attention through special human rights treaties, such as the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), as well as the 1950 European Convention for the Protection of

"60 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration, and 57 years after the adoption of the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees, the institution of asylum remains as necessary as ever."

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres at the Ministerial Conference "Building a Europe of Asylum", Paris, 8 & 9 September 2008

Human Rights protect the right to be free from torture and cruel treatment. This right also includes prohibition of forced return of refugees (refoulement) and applies to asylum-seekers, who might otherwise face deportation to places, where they fear torture.

UNHCR as a rights-based agency, together with other UN agencies, has been taking part in the UDHR 60th anniversary campaign launched on 10 December 2007. The refugee agency is committed to human rights, which are an inherent part of its mandate of ensuring that refugees, stateless persons, and others of concern to the organization have all of their rights respected, protected, and fulfilled. Article 15 of the Declaration affirms everyone's right to a nationality and that no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of their nationality or denied the right to change their nationality. This right nevertheless remains only an aspiration for millions, many belonging to minority populations and/or stateless for years. UNHCR's work focuses on the identification and

protection of stateless persons and the prevention and reduction of statelessness. IDPs constitute a population of growing concern to UNHCR.

What distinguishes the many millions of refugees from other victimized groups in the world today is their inability, be it temporary or otherwise, to return to their countries in security and their resulting dependence on international protection. The provision of this protection requires a co-operative effort by States, carried out through UNHCR and within the framework of agreed international commitments. Beyond these commitments, however, there is a moral dimension to refugee protection, which States have explicitly recognized. Ultimately, the protection of refugees is not as much dependent on international conventions as on the collective conscience of nations. The first and most enduring international expression of this collective conscience was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

International human rights law and international refugee law are to be used in complementary ways. The further mainstreaming of human rights throughout the United Nations system, including UNHCR, and strengthened cooperation between relevant United Nations bodies, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as the systematic integration of issues relevant to persons of concern into the work of the human rights mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review, affirms the applicability of that framework to their protection. It also helps clarify how human rights standards apply in practice to specific categories of people in the humanitarian context and how they help strengthen the legal framework underpinning the protection of persons of concern.

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World Health Organization

A Long Road to Safe Injection

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”

(Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

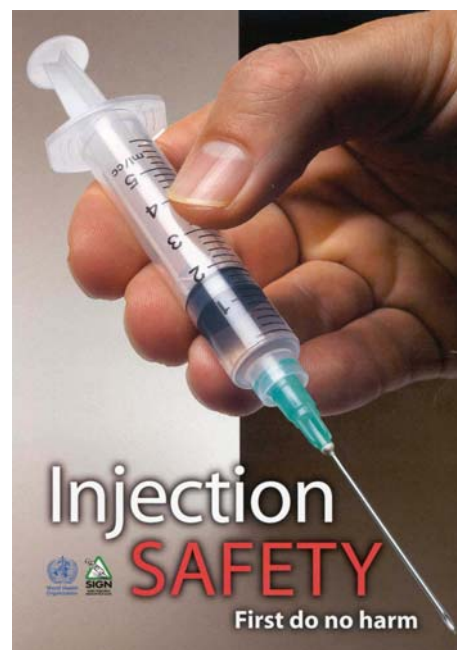
The glass syringe was first used in 1853 for administration of pain killers, – opioids. This led to a common belief that injected drugs are much faster and more effective than pills. First syringes had multiple uses and were sterilized with an imminent risk of transmission of blood-borne pathogens. Only a century later, the first disposable syringe was invented, and this substantially reduced the risk of transmission.

Safe injection relates to the safety of a patient/recipient, medical professional, and the community at large, and ensures the right to the highest attainable standard of health. With some 16 billion injections administered in developing and transitional countries, the issue has a large global scale. In some countries, use of injections by far exceeds the real needs (up to 70% of medications are administered without indications or could be given as an oral formulation). A break in the infection control practices can result in the transmission of hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), and

human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Because infection with these viruses initially presents no symptoms, it is often referred to as ‘a silent epidemic’. However, they can cause chronic infections leading to disease, disability, and death. A recent study indicated that each year, unsafe injections cause an estimated 1.3 million early deaths, a loss of 26 million years of life, and an annual burden of US\$ 535 million in direct medical costs (WHO bulletin 77/no.10).

Other unsafe practices, such as poor collection and disposal of used injection equipment, expose healthcare workers and the community to the risk of needle stick injuries. Numerous injections are administered at home, and then the used syringes are disposed off into regular garbage. Injecting drug users throw away used syringes without any control, posing the risk to general population and children in particular.

Unsafe injection practices are often viewed as a chronic problem with



no easy solution. However, safe and appropriate use of injections can be achieved through changing behaviour of health care workers and patients. HIV awareness among patients and health care workers drives consumer demand for safe injection equipment and substantially improves injection practices. Availability of safe injection equipment, including special containers for collection and disposal of used syringes and needles, determines the ability of healthcare system to ensure the safety standards. Safe injection technique (avoiding recapping of the needle and manipulations after the injection) is critical for minimizing the risk of occupational needle stick injuries. Waste disposal is one of the most complex issues in the safety of injections and is often overlooked in health care planning. It requires a national policy and a comprehensive system of implementation. Most countries struggle to find appropriate and affordable local solutions for the management of sharp waste.



The implementation of safe injection strategies requires an inter-sectoral approach and involvement of the civil society. The Safe Injection Global Network (SIGN) was established in 1999 with a view to facilitate the coordination and collaboration of various stakeholders. SIGN is a voluntary coalition of stakeholders aiming to achieve safe and appropriate use of injections throughout the world that includes UN agencies (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA), governments, ministries of health and manufacturers. WHO provides the secretariat for the network.

The annual SIGN meeting held in Moscow on 13-15 October aimed to review common progress and to decide on action points for the members of the SIGN alliance. It gathered some 120 participants from all over the world. At the opening ceremony of the meeting, Dr Nata Menabde, WHO EURO Deputy Regional Director, noted that injection safety needs coordinated interventions bridging together various technical pro-

grammes and multiple stakeholders. Only integrated approach within the health system framework can result in the sustainable change.

Reducing the overall number of injections requires combined efforts of treatment and prevention services of the health sector. A video story of a young woman from Uzbekistan, where she spoke about wide spread of injections as home-based treatment, spurred intense discussions. She sincerely believed that every woman should be taught to make injections to save the costs of visit to a doctor. Presentations at the meeting touched upon various aspects of injection safety – from the rights of patient and care providers to new technologies on medical waste management. The Russian Federation conducted three studies on injection safety and health care waste management; the results suggested almost negligible risk to patients, and limited risk to health care workers and the population. National guidelines on injection safety

have recently been changed with a major shift from chemical disinfection to disposal in microwaves and high temperature incineration. The participants of the meeting come up with a number of recommendations that are to be implemented before the next SIGN meeting, which will mark ten years of the establishment of the network.

More information on injection safety and SIGN is available at the WHO website:
www.who.int/injection_safety/sign/en/

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Bioethics and Human Rights

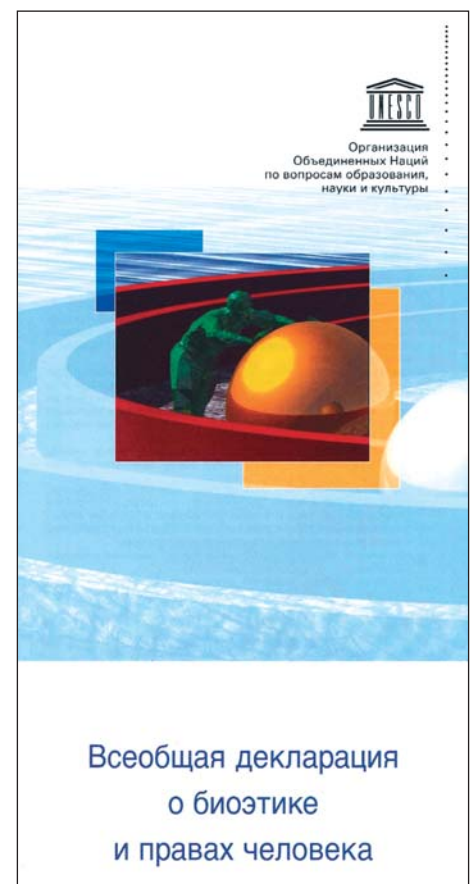
“Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.”
 (Article 3 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

In the modern world, scientific and technical progress creates new potential threats to this fundamental right. According to UNESCO Director-General, KoXchiro Matsuura, “with such a rapid scientific development come reflection and often concern about the proper use of the results.” UNESCO's specific mandate in the area of ethics, unique within the UN system, has gained significance in light of recent scientific developments and their far-reaching implications for the society.

Bioethics is an interdisciplinary knowledge area, covering a wide range of ethical and philosophical issues, which are brought about by the advances in medicine, biology, and healthcare. They include the ethical questions that arise in relation to abor-

tion; contraception and new reproductive technologies (e.g. artificial insemination, in vitro fertilization, surrogate motherhood); animals and human testing; ensuring patients' rights (including those of children and people with mental disorders); criteria of death; suicide; euthanasia; attitude to terminal patients; vaccination; HIV and AIDS; demographic policy and family planning; genetic engineering and genome research; transplantology; social justice and healthcare; ecology, etc. This definition of bioethics demonstrates its clear connection with human rights.

Various bioethical issues were addressed at a major event held in September 2008 in Kazan with the support of the UNESCO Moscow Office. ‘Bioethics and Human Rights’, the first

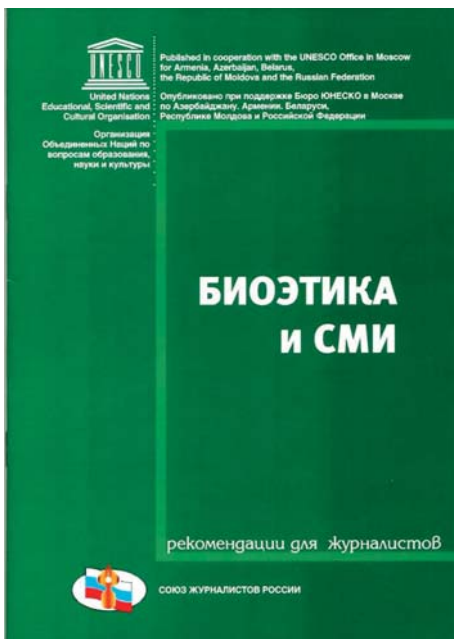




Mr. Henk ten Have addresses the Congress

Russian Congress with international participation, was organized by Kazan Medical State University in cooperation with the Russian National Bioethics Committee of the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO and the Secretariat of the Forum for Ethics Committees in the CIS (FECCIS).

In the framework of the congress, the general assembly of the Forum for Ethics Committees in the CIS States was held. One of the key issues on the agenda was enlargement of the scope of activities of national ethics committees

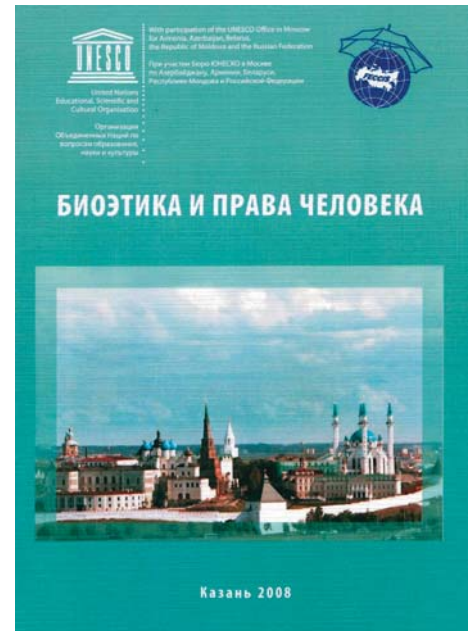


at all levels, national, regional, local or institutional. Mr. Henk ten Have, Director of the Department of Ethics of Science and Technology, UNESCO, stressed that “the purpose of these committees is to foster the exchange of ideas and information, support decision-making, develop tools for standard-setting, and strengthen coordination and contacts among experts and institutions (e.g. through databases).”

Discussions held at plenary sessions and round tables touched upon various issues including principles of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights and its implementation in Russia and CIS; the role of national bioethics committees in execution of UNESCO normative documents on bioethics; bioethics issues in mass media and the need to encourage public debate; bioethics, sports and doping; social justice and equal access to quality medical care; education in the field of bioethics...

Answering the question of who and when should be taught bioethics, Mr. Bannih from Kemerovo State Medical Academy noted that “bioethics education should start as early as school education, with elements of bioethics incorporated into school curriculum.” In his opinion, the importance of teaching bioethics in medical schools is obvious. CIS countries demonstrate different attitudes to the issue: bioethics is included in the state standard for medicine graduate studies programme only in Russia and Uzbekistan while there are neither post-graduate, nor doctoral courses in this area, and related theses are presented within different professional specializations. In general, there is no continuity of bioethics education within medicine studies, pointed out a report presented by a group of experts, which included Ms. Mikirtichan, Ms. Nikitina, and Ms. Koubar from the Forum for Ethics Committees in the CIS.

The UNESCO Moscow Office supported a series of events devoted to raising awareness on human rights as part of the year-long celebration of the 60th



anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In particular, in May, Moscow hosted the Subregional Experts' Meeting on Human Rights within UNESCO's Competence (see the previous issue of *UN in Russia*). In October, a training workshop and a series of round tables entitled 'Bioethics, Human Rights and Mass Media' were held in Armenia, one of the cluster countries of the UNESCO Moscow Office. It has been a year rich in events – the way a year dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should be.



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United Nations Association of Russia

Youth Pondering over 'Foundation of the World'

"Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace."

(Article 26 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

It has been already several years since the United Nations Association of Russia, jointly with the UNESCO department of Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University), held the first all-Russia essay contest, where thousands of school students from all over the country have participated. Topics of these essays, which are free in form and genre, vary from year to year always

expressing their thoughts in a form of a letter to the President of the Russian Federation. Authors of the best essays were invited to Moscow to present their work.

The contest participants generally gave their views on what should be done in the country and in the framework of international cooperation to

Authors of some essays, received in the first round of the competition, interpreted ensuring human rights as an abstract utopia, but it was the originality of their approach, that won them the jury's attention. Later, during oral discussions, the participants and members of the jury agreed on a more pragmatic approach to the human rights issue viewing it not as a myth or reality, but as a "vector towards establishing a democratic state in Russian."



Authors of the best essays were invited to Moscow to present their work

reflecting current foreign affairs or social issues. It seems, conditions and requirements of the civil society development, such as legal literacy, and equal civil participation in a political process - turn us back to the fundamental question of a balance of private and civil freedoms, rights and obligations to the state. Russian academician Sakharov called human rights "a foundation of the world": "Recognition and observation of human rights is a foundation of security, stable relations, both in individual countries and in the world; therefore, human rights are a foundation of the world." In 2008, the young participants were offered a topic related to foundations of democracy 'Ensuring human rights - myth or reality'.

The competition participants were invited to give their opinion on better ways to ensure human rights in Russia

prevent violations of human rights, but the subjects varied from the right to education - close to students - to labour rights. In the context of developments in Kosovo, a nation's right to self-determination - one of the corner stones of international law - was put on the agenda. Answering the key question of the contest young people underlined that the perception of human rights as mythical actually serves as an all-clear signal for extremist organizations.

UNA-Russia office received over 400 works from various, even most distant corners of Russia. Competent experts from MGIMO University and members of the UNA Russia commissions, such as professor Aslan Abashidze from International Law Department, professor Pavel Savaskov and Alexei Borisov, Head of UNESCO Department, examined them.

In the last round of the competition, an oral presentation, that took place on 27 June 2008 at MGIMO premises, the competent jury decided on three winners. An expert commission chaired by academician Anatoly Torkunov, noted a high level of interest and profound knowledge of human rights-related material by most of the participants. Works of Dmitry Yasnovsky, Sandra Zhernovaya and Dmitry Novikov were awarded special recognition.

Deputy head of the jury, Alexei Bogaturov, MGIMO Pro-Rector for Programme Development, congratulated the winners and thanked everyone who expressed their interest in this competition. Three winners won the right to enter Moscow State International Relations University on privileged terms.

The Russian UN Association hopes that the human rights discussion provoked by this year competition will spread beyond its framework, and this topic will remain interesting to the young generation of Russians.

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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 / The Secretary General Message on Human Rights Day

In his message, the Secretary-General speaks about the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and calls on all countries to act on collective responsibility to uphold the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration.

OHCHR / Universal Declaration of Human Rights Turns 60!

On this Human Rights Day, we also celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948. The Declaration is the foundation of international human rights law, the first universal statement on the basic principles of inalienable human rights.

OHCHR / Do You Know Your Rights?

UN in Russia presents a list of 58 human rights referring to various sides of human life.

OHCHR / Human Rights Is an Important Area of Cooperation between UN and Russia

Dirk Hebecker, Senior Human Rights Adviser of the UN Country Team in RF, Representative of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, gave an exclusive interview to *UN in Russia* on the current priorities of his office's work in the country and plans for the future.

UNICEF / The Last Resort

A Network of Ombudsmen for Children, which is successfully developing in Russia with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), is aimed at helping children from families, living below poverty line, or who are deprived of parental care.

WFP / Russia Saves Millions from Hunger

Russia is one of important donors of the World Food Programme: since 2003, it has provided US \$62 million for the implementation of WFP humanitarian operations worldwide. Russia plans to make contributions to WFP programmes in the amount US \$11 million in 2008, US \$15 million in 2009, and US \$15 million in 2010.

ILO / ILO and Human Rights at Work

When International Labour Organization was founded in 1919 with a view to develop international regulation of conditions of employment and work, the notion of human rights was not in place yet and its Constitution referred to the pursuit of social justice as its driving principle. However, ILO standards are closely related to universal values of freedom, equality and dignity established by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

UN / A Right to Charity

On 13 October 2008 in the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, the award ceremony of the 'Corporate Donor of Russia 2008' competition took place. The Donors Forum organised this competition for businesses, involved in charitable and social responsibility projects. For the first time, on the initiative of the UN Office in the RF, it included a nomination for the 'Best programme, contributing to the creation of favourable environment for life and work of disabled people – support to people with disabilities to ensure their equal participation in the life of the society'.

UNIC / ICT Accessibility to Disabled: Working In-depth

One of the novelties of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities are its provisions referring to ICT – information and communication technologies – from the angle of their accessibility to disabled people. This has become particularly important for the Russian Federation, which signed the Convention in September 2008.

UNDP / What Is Family for Russian Students

In November 2008, the UN Theme Group on Gender in the RF published the results of the survey entitled 'Family Strategies of Students in Russia'. The research looks at the attitude of Russian students to the issues of child birth and marriage, demographic policy of the government, development of personal family strategies, identifying values and motivations for their future.

UNAIDS / 'Stars against AIDS' in Rostov-on-Don

The UNAIDS project 'Stars against AIDS' is designed to attract attention to HIV-related issues, in particular discrimination against people living with HIV. The project launched in early spring 2008, features photographic portraits of famous women from Russia and Ukraine by a well-known photographer Serge Golovach. In September- October 2008, the exhibition was successfully held in Rostov-on-Don.

UNHCR / Everyone Has the Right to Seek Asylum...

Dietrun Gunther, UNHCR Senior Protection Officer in Russia, writes about the work of the agency aimed at implementing values established by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The refugee agency is committed to human rights, which are an inherent part of its mandate of ensuring that refugees, stateless persons and others of concern to the organization have all of their rights respected, protected and fulfilled.

WHO / A Long Road to Safe Injection

Safe injection relates to the safety of patient/recipient, medical professional, and the community at large and ensures the right to the highest attainable standard of health. With some 16 billion injections administered in developing and transitional countries, the issue has a large global scale. Implementation of the safe injection strategies requires an inter-sectoral approach and involvement of the civil society.

UNESCO / Bioethics and Human Rights

UNESCO's ethical watch mandate, unique within the UN system, has become increasingly important in the light of recent scientific developments and their broad implications for the society. Issues related to bioethics were discussed at the first Russian congress 'Bioethics and Human Rights' organized in Kazan in September.

UNA Russia / Youth Pondering over 'Foundation of the World'

In this year's essay contest held jointly by the United Nations Association of Russia and the UNESCO Department of Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), young participants were invited to give their thoughts on the topic 'Ensuring Human Rights – Myth or Reality'. Authors of the best essays came to Moscow to present their work, and the winners received the right to enter MGIMO on privileged terms.



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