

U N I N R U S S I A

Translating economic growth into sustainable human development with human rights

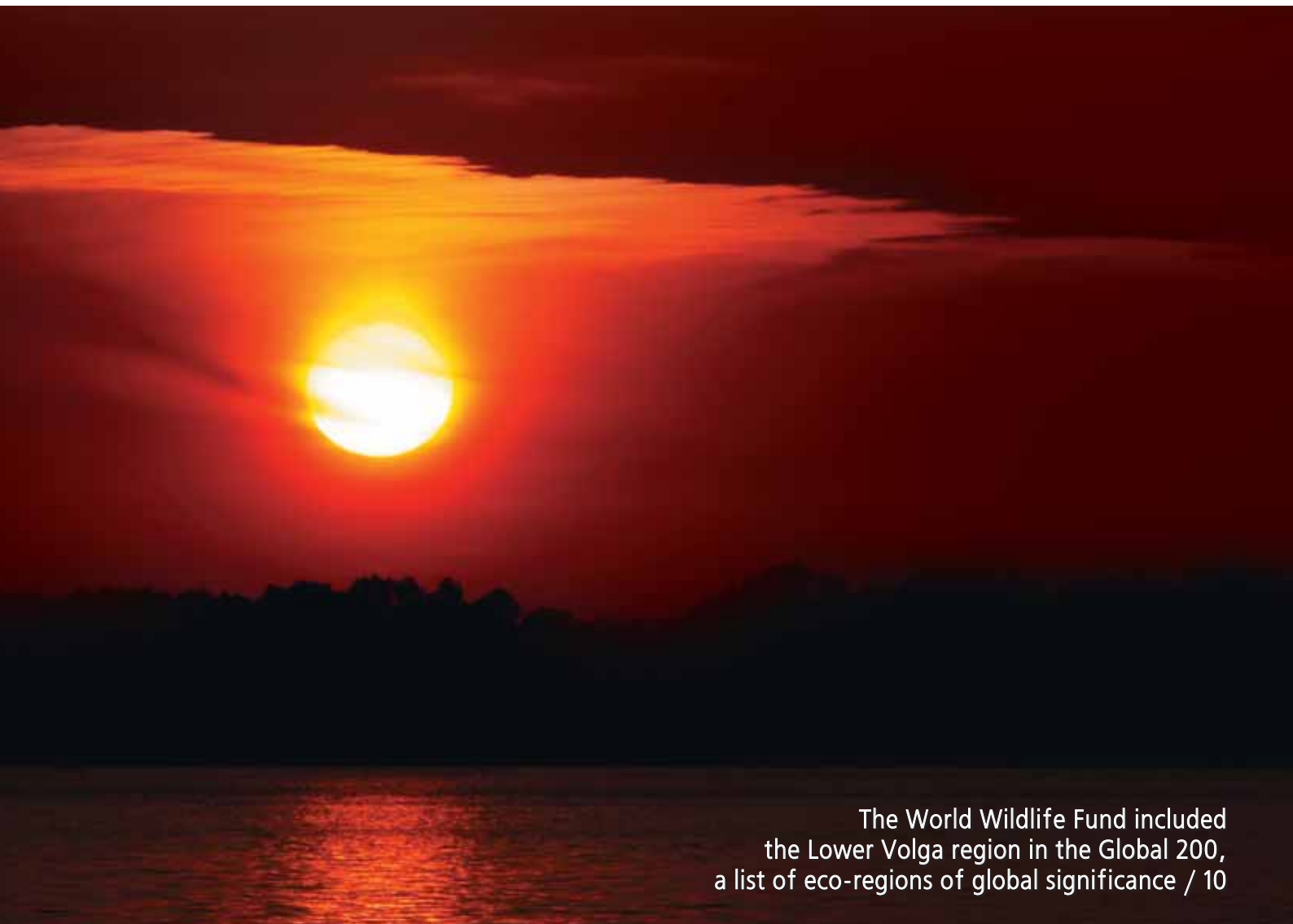
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The World Wildlife Fund included
the Lower Volga region in the Global 200,
a list of eco-regions of global significance / 10

Interview /6

The tentative figure of funding for the implementation of UN High Commissioner for Refugees programmes in Russia for 2009 is nearly US \$13 mln, says Ms. Gesche Karrenbrock, Representative of the UNHCR Office in the Russian Federation, in her interview to Interfax. Half of this money goes to solving problems of the internally displaced persons

Region /12

In April 2009, the World Food Programme carried out an assessment of its work in the North Caucasus from January 2000 to December 2008. During these years, over 200,000 MT of food was distributed to the internally displaced Chechen population in the Republics of Chechnya and Ingushetia

Opinions /14

Every year, over 5 million people die as a result of violence and injuries. Eight out of fifteen deaths among people aged 15-29 are caused by road traffic injuries, suicides, homicides, drowning, burns, war injuries, poisonings, and falls. Despite this horrible statistics the problem does not get due attention

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United Nations Secretary-General's Message on World Humanitarian Day

Today, 19 August, is the first World Humanitarian Day, proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly.

It is, above all, a day on which we renew our commitment to help vulnerable, voiceless and marginalized people wherever they may be. That is the abiding mission of the humanitarian community.

This is also a day on which we pay tribute to the legions of heroic humanitarian personnel. These men and women come from many backgrounds. But they share a conviction that one person's suffering is everyone's responsibility.

The date of this observance marks the anniversary of the attack on UN Headquarters in Baghdad, which killed 22 dedicated men and women, including the great humanitarian Sergio Vieira de Mello.

We continue to draw inspiration from their legacy, and remain determined to carry it forward. The Sergio Vieira de Mello Foundation is doing just



that by establishing an annual prize in his name that will recognize outstanding achievements in the peaceful reconciliation of conflict.

Like Sergio and the other brave colleagues who lost their lives that terrible day, humanitarian personnel venture to troubled regions to help others. For them, there can be no such thing as a forgotten conflict.

But to do that noble work – to face down threats amid disaster and war – they need our help. They need us to work tirelessly for their safety, security and independence.

World Humanitarian Day is meant to shine a spotlight on people in need, to ensure they receive the assistance they deserve. Let us redouble our efforts toward this goal. Let us fulfill our humanitarian imperative.

19 August 2009
Ban Ki-moon

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World Leaders Listen to Young Generation

On July 4-12 2009, the Junior 8 Summit was held in Rome parallel to the G8 meeting in L' Aquila. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) traditionally organises this important international youth event. St. Petersburg State University is in charge of selecting and training members of the Russian youth team on the instructions of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.

During the summit, teams of young people representing each of the G8 countries discuss their ideas and opinions on the topics included in the G8 agenda. As a result of their discussions, a joint final declaration is prepared reflecting common understanding of the global issues of all J8 participants. Later on, the young people present their statement at a face-to-face meeting with the heads of the G8 countries. It was in July 2006 during the G8 meeting in St. Petersburg that the youth summit participants had the opportunity to present their policy recommendations to the world leaders for the first time. Since then face-to-face meetings of the G8 leaders with J8 participants have been traditionally included in the agenda of both summits.

This year at the J8 Summit in Italy, Russia was represented by four senior school students from the Southern Federal District. To gain this honorary right, the young people had to go through several qualifying rounds of a contest that included writing an essay and participating in training sessions, group discussions, and interviews.

In late May 2009, following a lengthy and thorough selection procedure, the

Russian Federation Ministry of Education and Science announced the names of the four winners – Roman Chukov, Anzhelika Isayeva, Yulia Khulayeva, and Ksenia Kozhina. These four young people joined the J8 Summit in Rome to discuss with their peers from other coun-



tries the same global issues as those on the G8 Summit agenda, including global warming and climate change; child rights in the context of the global economic crisis and the development of corporate social responsibility; poverty and development in Africa; and education. Following their discussions, all youth teams drafted and adopted a final declaration, the main provisions of which were voiced at a meeting of the J8 representatives with the G8 leaders.

Anzhelika Isayeva, a high-school graduate from the city of Sochi, represented Russia at the meeting. "The heads of states did not treat us as children. On the contrary, they took our proposals quite seriously," Anzhelika said sharing her impressions of the meeting. "I hope the leaders will pay attention to our recommendations." These include the promotion of renewable energy resources, better access to free medication for those suffering from infectious diseases, expanding trade in ecologically safe goods, and development of corporate social responsibility.

The success of this year's and previous Junior 8 summits shows that the views and opinions of young people are gaining increased importance on a worldwide scale, including the highest level. The next Junior 8 summit is scheduled to be held in Canada in 2010.

Yana Negreeva

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Events

UNESCO Director-General's Ninth Visit to Russia

From 20 to 23 July 2009, Mr Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, paid his ninth official visit to the Russian Federation.

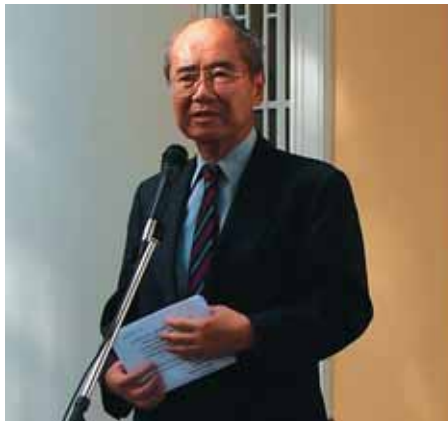
During his stay in Moscow, the Director-General met with President Medvedev and Foreign Minister Lavrov; Patriarch Kirill I of Moscow and All Russia; Mr Luzhkov, Mayor of Moscow; Mr Denisov, First Deputy Foreign Minister; Mr Yakovenko, Deputy Foreign Minister; Ms Shvetsova, First Deputy Mayor of Moscow; UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors Zurab Tsereteli, Ara Abramyan and Vitaly Ignatenko, as well as Mr Slutsky, President of the Russian Peace Foundation. Ambassador Eleonora Mitrofanova, Permanent Delegate of the Russian Federation to UNESCO, accompanied the Director-General throughout his visit.

At the meetings with government representatives, Mr. Matsuura expressed his satisfaction with strengthening of UNESCO bilateral relations with the Russian Federation, noting that the channels for effective dialogue established at the highest government level provided the bedrock for successful cooperation. In his meetings with senior officials, the Director-General praised the fact that UNESCO collaboration with the Russian Federation now covered the full spectrum of the Organization's competences and had a vast regional scope, extending from the city of Moscow to the remotest regions of the Russian Federation. President Medvedev paid tribute to Mr. Matsuura in this regard and commended his achievements at the helm of the Organization.

The Director-General's meeting with Kirill I, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, and other religious leaders in Svayto-Danilov Monastery on 22 July focused on the importance of considering the religious dimension in conflict prevention, on how to enhance dialogue between religious communities and international organizations, in particular UNESCO. Mr Matsuura gave an overview of UNESCO past and planned future activities aimed at promoting an inter-religious dialogue, including in the context of the International Year for

the Rapprochement of Cultures in 2010. In a communique adopted at the end of the meeting, the religious leaders announced the establishment, in consultation with the Director-General, of a high-level consultative group of religious leaders in partnership with UNESCO.

Later the same day, the Director-General gave a lecture on cultural diversity as part of a series of lectures entitled the 'Golden Collection' and dedicated to the



55th anniversary of the International Affairs magazine of the Russian Foreign Ministry. The Director-General welcomed the fact that after being consigned to the periphery of international relations for a long time, culture had found its "rightful place at the centre of international debates about the type of world we want to leave to future generations".

Reviewing the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed in November 2007, the Director-General and Mayor Luzhkov expressed their satisfaction at seeing this agreement bear fruit. In this context, the Mayor informed Mr Matsuura of the preparations underway for the organization of the World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education in Moscow in September 2010. The Director-General solicited the city authorities' cooperation in the organization of Philosophy Day in November 2010,

for which a series of events had been scheduled in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

Opening the 15th anniversary celebrations of the UNESCO Moscow Office, the Director-General expressed his appreciation to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the generous support provided to the Office since its establishment in 1994. Referring to a number of flagship projects implemented by the Office both in Russia and in its cluster countries, Mr. Matsuura extended his very best wishes and heartfelt appreciation to the director and the staff of the Moscow Office – to international civil servants and local staff members, who worked in the Office in the past and work there now.

One of the highlights of the Director-General's visit to Moscow was the presentation of the second collection of his speeches in Russian. The book *Changing World, New Challenges* covers the period from 2005 till 2008. Mr. Matsuura noted that he views his speeches as an important means of communication and appreciates the publication of the collection, which he said, "opened up a possibility of dialogue with some 300 million Russian-speaking people in over 80 countries."

In recognition of his contribution to the development of sciences, culture, and international relations, Mr. Matsuura was awarded the title of Doctor Honoris Causa of the Russian State University for the Humanities.

During his stay in Moscow, the Director-General attended a press presentation of the Children's and Youth Forum 'Olympic Friendship' programme.

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Opinions

To Become a Master in Human Rights

Three leading Russian universities and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' representative in Moscow initiated a new academic specialization at the masters' level – human rights studies. They founded a Consortium for introduction of a curriculum for this new course. The Rector of Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN), Academician Vladimir Filippov, the Rector of Russian State University of Humanities (RGGU), Efim Pivovarov, and the Vice-Rector of Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), Alexey Podberezkin signed a formal agreement to this effect in the presence of the Senior Human Rights Advisor to the UN Country Team in Russia, Dirk Hebecker. Mr. Hebecker agreed to comment on the event:

– The agreement is the result of OHCHR's work under the 2007 'Framework for Cooperation'. The creation of the master course in human rights is OHCHR Moscow's flagship project taking up more than half of its annual budget in 2009. It will be launched in Moscow first, but other regions will be able to join in the future.

The pilot phase of this programme will start this autumn. Each of the three universities is providing scholarships for up to five students. The Master programme is proposed to take four semesters. It will provide students with an opportunity to study abroad for one full semester in order to conduct field work for their Master's thesis, to broaden their cultural horizons, and to gain practical experience.

– *Why have these three universities been chosen?*

– Lengthy consultations were conducted with a number of universities and potential employers of the human rights professionals – state institutions and civil society. At the beginning, some ten universities were invited for participation. Then the discussions became more concrete, and only three universities remained. These universities have a good potential. They combined their resources and capacities to put together this new course of high quality in a relatively short time frame.

– *What kind of teaching material will be used?*

– We will provide a wide spectrum of publications at the beginning. One of them is the brand new *Handbook for Civil Society – Working with the United Nations Human Rights Programme*. The development of lectures, text books, and other teaching material for the students is envisaged during the pilot phase.

– *Who will give the lectures?*

– Teachers of participating and other universities, independent experts with whom we cooperate, and also professors from European partner universities. For this, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by RUDN, the lead university of the Russian consortium, and the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights



and Democratization in Venice in July. Professors from Europe will conduct trainings for their Russian counterparts and hold lectures and seminars in Moscow. Student exchanges are also envisaged under the Memorandum.

– *Who will be the students under this programme?*

– Bachelor programme graduates or those who obtained a diploma after 5 years of studies in any field. At MGIMO and RUDN, students will enroll to the department of Law, whereas at RGGU the students will join the department of political science. During the first semester, the students will take mandatory courses of the 'federal standard' in their core discipline, and from the second semester, they will go into detailed studies on human rights. Theoretical studies and research

will be combined with practical assignments, internships, fellowships, summer courses, etc.

– *Which foreign universities can admit Russian students?*

– In principle, each of the more than 40 universities participating in the 'Venice Centre' can admit students and cooperate with Russian universities. The exact list will be known by the end of 2009.

– *What will be the title of master degree – 'human rights'?*

– We would like that to be the case in the future, indeed. For the pilot phase, the degrees will be in law and political science respectively, with the specialization in human rights. Then the consortium will submit a proposal to the Ministry of Education and Science to include human rights as a separate entry in the registry of academic specializations.

– *Russia ranks first regarding the number of cases at the European Court of Human Rights. Isn't this a paradox: three Russian universities will prepare human rights professionals to put Russia and its alleged human rights abuses in the spotlight on the international arena even more?*

– We hope that the creation of a new generation of human rights professionals will help improve the human rights situation in Russia. More people in different positions and organizations and at various levels will know about human rights – not only in the government system but also in the civil society. Perhaps, the number of cases will go up in the beginning, but with increased legal literacy of people there will be fewer violations. The idea of the human rights master programme was generated by the understanding that knowledge on human rights among officials and within the population is still poor. There is a need for human rights professionals.

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"To Be Closer to the Persons We Assist"

On 20 June, the world marked World Refugee Day. On this occasion, Ms. Gesche Karrenbrock, Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in the Russian Federation, gave an interview to Interfax special reporters Olga Golovanova and Ekaterina Komissar. *UN in Russia* presents an abridged version of this interview.

– Ms. Karrenbrock, what are UNHCR priorities in Russia?

– UNHCR mandate includes assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees. We also assist the Russian authorities to further develop the asylum system.

Another part of our mandate relates to

we had every opportunity to contribute to resolving this problem, in particular, to support the natural course of events and to reduce the number of internally displaced persons.

As you know, the situation in the North Caucasus is quite contradictory. On the

– We certainly hope that our programmes will be out of demand in the near future. However, currently, in the North Caucasus we focus mostly on housing construction and on providing accommodation. We also place emphasis on creating social and economic conditions for people to begin their lives anew.

The second component of our activities in the North Caucasus is legal assistance. We offer legal consultations to help our persons of concern access government assistance programmes.

As for the duration of our presence in the North Caucasus, this is a good question. Earlier this year, I visited the North Caucasus for negotiations with the governments of three republics. The only republic I did not visit was Dagestan. I had an impression that governments are quite positive about our continued activities, because they supplement the efforts of local and federal authorities, while most funding comes from the federal budget. In other words, we share similar goals. We work in the same direction and hope to achieve what we planned within the next two years.



UNHCR assists families from Chechnya integrating in Ingushetia with materials for the construction of brick houses or through the 'turn-key' programme

the reduction of the number of stateless persons, and we give special consideration to the country's readiness to reduce statelessness and provide citizenship to those willing to acquire it.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation faced numerous problems in this sphere, and the efforts taken by the Russian authorities towards the reduction of the number of stateless persons deserve much respect. At that, there still exist a lot of problems, and our agency tries to make a certain contribution to their solution.

The third part of our mandate refers to internally displaced persons, many of whom reside in the North Caucasus. After the first Chechen conflict we tried to find a long-term solution to this problem. Our agency was present in the region, and by the start of the second Chechen conflict,

one hand, there are persons internally displaced inside the Russian Federation. On the other hand, Russia grants asylum to victims of the South Ossetian conflict – to both forced migrants who came to Russia after the 1992 conflict and to victims of the August 2008 conflict.

– How much funding does your agency need for implementing its programmes in Russia?

– The tentative figure for 2009 is nearly US \$13 million. Half of this money goes to solving problems in the North Caucasus I have described earlier; the second half is spent on activities towards the improvement of the asylum system.

– What programmes do you implement in the North Caucasus? For how long, in your opinion, will UNHCR assistance in the North Caucasus be needed?

– Could you, please, describe the security situation for the UN staff in the North Caucasus. Do you plan to reduce security phases?

– It would be too early for UN agencies to speak about reducing security phases in the North Caucasus. When the counter-terrorist regime in the North Caucasus was lifted, we discussed this issue repeatedly with UN agencies and with the authorities, also in the light of several incidents, which have taken place after that. The authorities recommend that we continue with current security measures, namely, the armed escort, at least till the end of the year.

This situation considerably complicates our activities in the North Caucasus and our interaction with the local population. It is difficult to talk to people when one comes accompanied by armed guards.

However, we have been working in these conditions for several years now, and I hope that internally displaced persons understand the reasons behind such precautions.

– *Has the UN given up the idea of opening a representative office in Chechnya?*

– Our offices are always located in the region where we operate, and in this sense, we have not rejected the idea. We want to stay closer to people we assist. At the same time, we need to be realistic. Considering the current security situation in the region, we consult with the authorities and try to reach a compromise.

– *What do you think about xenophobia in Russia?*

– When we speak about xenophobia in Russia, we also speak about xenophobia in other countries. Unfortunately, discrimination of foreigners is common for many European countries. Earlier this year, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said that UNHCR should encourage states to create favourable conditions for the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers, which means our closer cooperation with governments. The situation in the Russian Federation is complicated, and we work with the government on this issue. We also realize that the current economic crisis has considerably aggravated the situation, in particular that of migrants.

On the eve of World Refugee Day, the High Commissioner provided data on millions of displaced persons around the world. The UNHCR provides assistance to 34 million persons, nearly half of whom are internally displaced persons, while over 11 millions are refugees. The majority of them reside in developing countries, and approximately three or four thousand (by

UNHCR estimates) – in the Russian Federation. This is why developed countries have no social or economic reasons to discriminate against these persons.

They come to seek asylum, and we consider it necessary to work with local communities and to explain that refugees and asylum-seekers do not pose any threat to people's jobs. There are many educated persons among them. They are just looking for asylum. They were forced to leave their native states due to conflicts.

In this regard, I would like to say a few words about refugees, who have lived in the Russian Federation for a long time and have practically integrated here. For example, one of the groups of refugees that we take care of is Afghans. They came here many years ago, and the fact that your country accepted them was a positive humanitarian gesture. They included Afghan orphans. These children were educated in Russian schools, and they do not have any roots back in Afghanistan. In fact, they have integrated in the Russian society, but they still do not have any legal status. We stand for the resolution of the problem, and hope that all parties concerned will make certain efforts in this direction.

Another group of refugees that I would like to mention is refugees from South Ossetia, who have resided in North Ossetia since the first conflict. They have also well integrated here. Many of them are Russian citizens, but they still live in temporary accommodations. At some point, a law was adopted stipulating forced migrants' rights to housing certificates. However, the certificates are in short supply, and these persons have been unable to receive them for a long time. We assist them as much as we can, and assume that the government could help North Ossetia, which finds it hard to cope with these problems. However, there are some positive signs in

this area. Recently, the RF Ministry of Regional Development has promised to address this situation. We support their efforts and hope that in the next two years the problem will be resolved.

– *Could you, please, tell us about World Refugee Day.*

– On World Refugee Day, we both speak about statistics and also pay special attention to real people with real needs that need real solutions.

Going back to the question about xenophobia you asked earlier, we know of certain groups displaying hostile attitudes to our persons of concern. At the same time, the leaders of your country and respected politicians are sending certain positive messages, which is very important. Your President and Prime Minister have already made statements about the necessity of opposing xenophobia. Once these statements transform into certain activities, they may bring about very good results. With this in view, I would like to cite St. Petersburg as an example. The tolerance campaign is always under way in the city. Our partner in St. Petersburg – the Russian Red Cross – cooperates with local authorities also concerned about this problem. On Saturday 20 June, I participated in an event devoted to World Refugee Day in Moscow and on Sunday – in St. Petersburg. Both events targeted primarily children and young people. I believe, the most important thing is to unite people, especially young ones.

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Celebration of the World Refugee Day in Moscow



United Nations

Publications

Saint-Petersburg Discusses the Situation of People with Disabilities in Russia

On 6 August, A.I. Gertsen Russian State Pedagogical University Fundamental Library hosted a presentation of the analytical overview *Russia: on the Path to Equal Opportunities* organized jointly by UN agencies in Russia, St. Petersburg Humanities, and Political Studies 'Strategy' Centre and A.I.Gerzen Russian State Pedagogical University.

The President of the 'Strategy' Centre, A.Yu. Sungurov, who chaired the meeting, welcomed the audience. Further A.Yu. Kruglov, Director of the Institute of International Relations, A.I.Gerzen Russian State Pedagogical University, addressed the participants and noted that "the university has more than a century long history of training teachers to work with disabled people. One of the oldest at the university is the Correction Pedagogy Department established just after the October Revolution. However, this department has a longer history connected with the names of prominent Russian psychologists, doctors, physiologists, teachers, and linguists, who founded entire areas in working with disabled people – Feldberg, Belsky, Bekhterev, Griboyedov, Graborov, Aderaks."

Dirk Hebecker, Senior Human Rights Adviser, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in RF, who led the UN delegation in St. Petersburg, spoke about the process of signing and implementation by countries of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. According to Mr. Hebecker, there is a perception that the implementation of the Convention requires a lot of funds and is an unattainable ideal we can only strive to achieve. However, many countries have accumulated vast experience in this area; Russia can also offer a number of good examples. Thus, the analytical overview presents a combination of theory and practice.

Delivering a welcome message on behalf of the St. Petersburg Government, S.P. Litvinov, First Deputy Chair of the Committee for Social Policy, noted that even though a federal law on social security for people with disabilities was adopted in 1995, "the country has not

achieved international leadership status in this important area and is only working towards ensuring equal opportunities for all members of the society." Russia signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities last



year and is currently preparing for its ratification. In this context, St. Petersburg, the city, which to a great extent is oriented at European standards, is implementing active social policy to serve as an example for other regions of the Russian Federation. "Efforts of the St. Petersburg Government are aimed at the creation of an environment for people with disabilities equal to that of other people, as well as at the improvement of the St. Petersburg legislation to further develop social support measures funded from the city budget," Sergey Litvinov noted.

His colleague T.N. Shelomanova, Director of the Department for

Supervision of Disabled People Rehabilitation, St. Petersburg Committee for Social Policy, gave a comprehensive overview of the spheres, where the city authorities help improve the life of disabled people. This work is very important for the city as people with disabilities constitute 17 percent – a significant part of its population, more than in other Russian regions. This amounts to over 770,000 people, mainly senior pensioners. According to Tatiana Shelomanova, "the policy in relation to disabled people is implemented through a number of instruments, including about 30 laws stipulating social support measures." In addition to federal measures, the city provides free public transport, supplementary rehabilitation equipment, as well as individual transportation. A plan for the adaptation of the social infrastructure has been approved, an information service for people with disabilities is in place, and the city also offers support to NGOs working in this area.

Professor E.Sh. Gontmacher (PhD), the lead author of the UN publication, Deputy Director of the Institute of Global Economy and International Relations, Russian Academy of Sciences, and E.Yu. Shatalova, Senior Researcher of the Social Policy Centre, Institute of Economics, Russian Academy of Sciences, and Head of Social Psychology of the Clinical Psychology Department, Moscow Medical and Social Rehabilitation Institute, presented the UN publication *Russia: on the Path to Equal Opportunities*.

Professor Gontmacher expressed confidence that Russia would ratify the UN Convention. He believes that the ratification itself is not a complicated issue, while implementation of the Convention requires political will. He

emphasized that it is necessary to focus on fundamental aspects – an ideology to be established in Russia to ensure the implementation of the Convention. "Disability is not a medical problem; it is the barriers in our minds that we should overcome in everything we do," Evgeny Gontmacher concluded.

Presenting the main outcomes of the research, Elena Shatalova reminded the participants that if ratified, the Convention would be obligatory to implement. In particular, inclusive education is referred to as a right in the Convention, while implementation of inclusive education "is a complicated multistage process... A variety of forms should be offered... Parents should have an opportunity to decide what is best for their child." It is essential to form a positive public opinion; here media should play a major role. Employment problems are connected with education. In addition, current legislation, unfortunately, does not provide for positive dynamics in employment of disabled people. The quota system does not work, while, according to the authors, disabled people should have an opportunity to enter the open job market. Ms Shatalova noted that, as disabled people cannot compete with healthy people in the job market, it is necessary to support a number of employment opportunities, where the state would compensate the employer for possible loss, e.g. part-time

work of disabled employees. The expert underlined that we should move from charity and compassion, at times humiliating for people with disabilities, to equal partnership.

Further, M.B.Gorny, Executive Director of the Strategy Centre, spoke about the concept of cooperation between executive agencies and NGOs, one of the mechanisms for ensuring equal opportunities in the city. Valeriya Olshanskaya, TACIS-IBPP Project Coordinator in St Petersburg, informed the participants about the progress of the project 'Development of Partnerships: on the Way to Inclusive Education'.

A.S. Gorelik, Director of the UN Information Centre in Moscow and A.A.Demidov, Chairman of the Board, 'Information for All' MOO, and member of the Working Group on Information Society Development in Russia of the RF Public Chamber, spoke about efforts in various areas aimed at ensuring access to information for people with disabilities.

According to Alexandre Gorelik, "the UN views access to ICT as an instrument to promote human rights, an opportunity to overcome poverty in the broad sense of the word, ensure better access to education for all, stimulate employment, and contribute to inclusive socio-economic development in general."

Mr Gorelik noted that ensuring access to technology for people with disabilities has become a global trend in recent years. At the same time, according to the UN, the majority of websites are not adapted for blind, visually or hearing impaired people. It is obvious that ignoring problems of people with disabilities connected with ICT use demonstrates poor political judgement of the government, egocentric indifference of the society and, finally, short-sightedness of the business community. "The generally appalling situation is changing. However, we must work together to ensure that there are more changes to come. No pains, no gains," Mr. Gorelik concluded.

Executive Secretary of the St. Petersburg Human Rights Activists Union, N.L. Evdokimova, consultant on social and legal issues of the St Petersburg regional NGO 'Nochlezhka' (caring for homeless people), I.Z. Karlinsky, and others took part in the active discussion.

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UN Development Programme

Highlights

Saving Unique Nature of the Lower Volga

Since 2006, an international project aimed at conservation of wetland biodiversity of the Lower Volga region has been implemented in the Astrakhan and Volgograd regions, and the Republic of Kalmykia. UNDP, the Global Environment Fund (GEF), and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Russia support the project.

There is no need to explain what the Volga River means for Russia, its population, economy, environmental, and food security. The role of the river and its



unique nature complexes is no less important on a worldwide scale. The World Wildlife Fund included the Lower Volga region in the Global 200, a list of ecoregions of global significance. The delta of the Volga is one of the first wetlands in Russia to acquire international status in the framework of the Ramsar Convention (*Editor's note: The Convention on Wetlands of International Significance Primarily as Water Birds' Habitat was adopted in February 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar. It is the first global international treaty dealing with a particular ecosystem. Now 159 states are members of the Convention).*

crossroads of three migration routes, the Lower Volga is of strategic significance for the preservation of at least 15 rare birds, including white heron, ibis, swan and spoonbill. During the spring and autumn migration, about 10 million aquatic and semi-aquatic birds stop here. The wetland is home to various mammals, including such rare species as mottled polecat, desman, steppe wildcat, and rare plants listed in the Russian Red Book. The Caspian coast is famous for the largest lotus fields in the world extending for hundreds of thousands of hectares.

The Wetlands of the Volgo-Akhtubinsk valley and the delta of the Volga are among world centres of biodiversity and



fish abundance. These include sturgeon, listed in the Red Book as endangered species, in particular, Russian sturgeon,

beluga, starred sturgeon, sterlet, and barbel sturgeon. In fact, the Caspian Sea and the Lower Volga are the places on the planet where the natural breeding grounds of sturgeon are preserved.

In steppe climate subject to drought the role of wetland is particularly important. Draining, pollution or transformation of wetlands not only lead to water shortage and poor quality of water for drinking or irrigation, but also contribute to the destruction of habitats of various fauna or flora species, their reduction or even extinction. Numerous threats the ecosystems of the Volgo-Akhtubinsk valley and the delta of the Volga are facing are closely related to human activity. To protect valuable habitats in the Lower Volga, a number of specially protected natural areas have been established. However, the human presence can not be eliminated in all areas of value, and protected areas can not offer a comprehensive solution to the problem in all cases. The development of agriculture and industry, operation of upstream hydropower plants, and, of course, climate change affect the sustainability of vulnerable habitats.

It is no surprise that the issues of conservation and sustainable use of this unique region attracted the attention of the international community, in particular, the Global Environmental Fund, UNDP, UNESCO, and other organizations. The aim of the UNDP/GEF project is to contribute to the conservation of the most important habitats in the Lower Volga region in the dynamic environment determined by natural processes, human activity, and climate change. This complex task can be performed only through interregional adaptive approach; integration of the task of biodiversity conservation in the socio-economic development of the whole region; and active work in specially protected natural areas and beyond.



In June 2009, a regular meeting of the UN/GEF Coordination Committee and an extended session of the project partners were held in Astrakhan, with participation of the Ministry of Natural Resources representatives, UNDP, regional



authorities, specially protected natural areas, scientific, and non-governmental organizations. The participants discussed the first project results and plans for the coming years.

In June, UNDP specialists visited the Ikryaninsky and Yenotaevsky districts of the Astrakhan Region, where the GEF project is implemented. The Ilmenno-Bugrovoy nature reserve in the Ikryaninsky District is a unique and has no ana-

logue in the world. It is particularly noted for the combination of substeppe lakes (ilmens) and hillocks (Bear knolls) between hundreds of meters to 20 kilometres long. In the ilmens swans hide among snow-white water lilies, ducks stop for rest on their way to the north, herons walk proudly, and majestic sea-eagles wheel in the sky. Last year, the Ilmenno-Bugrovoy Reserve received technical support from the project, and the design and construction of a visitors' centre in the village of Ikryanoye are scheduled for this year.

It is planned to create a new Volgo-Akhtubinsk Valley natural park within the project. It is an agricultural area producing vegetables and cucurbitaceous plants, a heaven for fishermen and tourists. At a meeting with UNDP representatives, the local administration reiterated its support to the project plans to establish a natural park, which would help preserve the most valuable natural treasures of the district, attract more tourists and improve the quality of tourist services.

What are the main goals of the UNDP/GEF projects in the coming years? We plan to develop a strategy for biodiversity conservation in the Lower Volga and recovery of destroyed wetlands and breeding areas. We will also prepare recommendations and rules for regulation of land use (for agriculture and tourism), drainage and flush in water reservoirs. We will support the creation of a new natural park in the Volgo-Akhtubinsk valley, the development of management plans, security service enhancement, the construction of visitors' centres in existing natural areas, as well as efforts to attract additional funding for them. We



seek to inform local residents in detail about the uniqueness of their native land. Thus, we take an active part in the development of a regional school course on biodiversity of the Lower Volga. Within the framework of the project, a small grants programme for local population was launched, and a microfinancing programme for local entrepreneurs willing to develop environmentally friendly business will be soon implemented.

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World Food Programme

Regions

Daily Bread for the North Caucasus

The United Nations World Food Programme provided humanitarian food aid to internally displaced Chechen population in Chechnya and Ingushetia for about nine years.

From January 2000 to December 2008 WFP distributed over 200,000 MT of food in the North Caucasus working in close cooperation with the Government of the RF and the governments of Chechnya and Ingushetia as well as with other UN agencies and international and local NGOs operating in the region. Complementary food was provided by WFP in addition to their main food rations through a number of projects such as General Food Distribution, Food for Education, Food for Work/Training, Social Canteens, and Food Aid for TB and HIV/AIDS patients.

In April 2009, WFP undertook a post-operational review to look at developments in livelihoods from the point of view of their food security and coping mechanisms among ex-WFP beneficiaries. For this, WFP representatives met with ex-WFP beneficiaries, talked to implementing partners of the projects, including representatives of relevant local ministries and other institutions of Chechnya and Ingushetia.

Chechen Republic. The data collected during the review exercise showed considerable improvement in local livelihoods. Massive reconstruction



created temporary employment for the population, and government social transfer programmes are implemented on regular basis. The review observed positive coping strategies among ex-beneficiary population in a form of temporary employment, home-grown food production, and support extended by relatives/friends. The post-operation review found that within the same beneficiary group, vulnerability was reduced to 60 percent.

WFP drew the attention of the Chechen Government to these needs and requested to provide social support to these vulnerable groups of the population in addition to regular governmental social transfer programmes, particularly during the unfavourable months of the year (i.e. autumn and winter).

It should be emphasized that the Chechen Government has already undertaken measures to keep up the projects after WFP withdrawal from the region. The republican authorities have found resources to provide food and non-food assistance to the needy population including former WFP beneficiaries. According to the agreement reached between WFP, Caritas Internationalis and the Chechen Ministry of Labour and Social Development, the Canteen Project was continued in the city of Gozny with the same number of beneficiaries of 1,600 and increased budget per person per day. All interviewed beneficiaries presently covered by the Canteen Project were satisfied with the quality of the meals provided and the level of the canteen services. Based on the achievements, WFP requested the Chechen Government to facilitate the Canteen project extension by covering the most vulnerable population of Grozny City included into a 'waiting list'.

The Food for Work projects aimed at agricultural revitalization proved to be very successful in terms of providing sus-

World Food Programme Activities in the North Caucasus

WFP project	Number of beneficiaries ¹	Food distributed (MT)	Value (in US \$ mln)
General Food Distribution	203,046	176,867	87.256
Food for Education	137,500	15,600	7.696
Food for Work/Training	35,600	15,348	7.572
Social Canteens	1,600	1,020	0.503
TB programme	948	440	0.217
HIV/AIDS programme	100	62	0.030
	378,794	209,337	103.274

¹Maximum beneficiaries reached within the framework of each programme.

tainable assets and income opportunities to the rural population. The majority of WFP FFW projects were continued in various forms. The agricultural output remained at the same level and, in some cases, even increased, and the number of people involved was not reduced. The state farms managed to find alternative ways of compensations (when implemented jointly with WFP, the project participants received food for the work done) for the agricultural work implemented under the projects. The involvement in the WFP projects increased the participants' self-esteem. FFW participants reported the increased confidence in their skills and continued engagement in agricultural projects at their local or nearby farms. The success of the projects was mainly based on the effective cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture of the Chechen Republic at all the stages of their implementation.

WFP hopes that the Food for Education Programme will resume in September 2009. Alongside with the provision of the sufficient level of feeding among schoolchildren, the programme helped them concentrate during classes and improve their academic achievements. The programme continuation will contribute to a healthier generation in the future. The review contains a recommendation to draw special attention to school feeding for mountainous and rural areas of the republic where the living standards are much worse than among the urban population.

WFP TB programme implemented till June 2008 jointly with the ministries of health of Chechnya and Ingushetia, Medicins Sans Frontiers Holland (MSF-Holland), and WHO was successful in a sense that it effectively improved adherence to DOTS treatment. In Ingushetia, this programme was continued in 2008 with the support of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, while in Chechnya, they plan to do it during 2009. Food aid provided to HIV/AIDS patients and their families also proved effective – the number of people living with HIV who actively visited the Chechen HIV/AIDS Centre to receive ARV treatment and psychological counselling in Grozny increased. Unfortunately, since the cessation of the partnership with WFP the centre did not find any outside support to continue the programme in the same mode or provide the beneficiaries with alternative incentive, and the number of patients visiting the centre has decreased. WFP requested the



Chechen Government to find an alternative incentive for the patients to sustain the former level of attendance.

The Republic of Ingushetia. All IDP families interviewed during the assessment were defined as vulnerable. According to the collected data, IDP families residing in spontaneous settlements could be considered as extremely poor. Their meals are scantier compared to other IDPs

in Chechnya, and their incomes are much lower. All interviewed families indicated they would like to return to Chechnya, provided they were given adequate shelter back home. Comprehensive efforts are needed to provide shelter and employment to IDPs in spontaneous settlements.

The Federal Government as well as the governments of Chechnya and Ingushetia were informed about the post-operational review results. WFP hopes that they will do their best to continue support to the still needy population of the republics, which formerly received WFP humanitarian assistance.

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World Health Organization

Opinions

Injuries and Violence Prevention



Every year, over 5 million people die as a result of violence and injuries. Eight out of fifteen deaths among people aged 15-29 are caused by road traffic injuries, suicides, homicides, drowning, burns, war injuries, poisonings, and falls. Despite this horrible statistics, the problem does not get due attention.

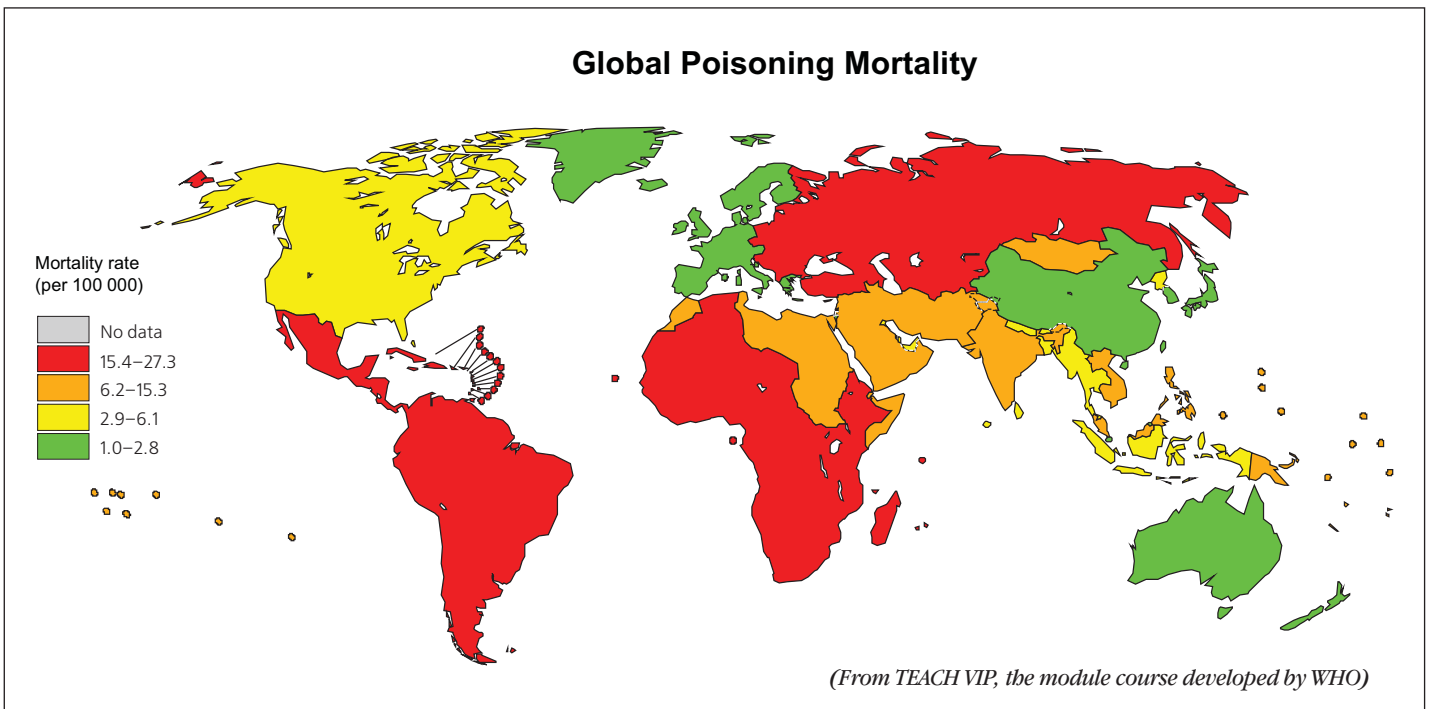
When it comes to violence and injury prevention, the main task of WHO is to assist member states in capacity

building. TEACH VIP, a module course developed by WHO, is an instrument designed to support countries in the implementation of the Resolution on Injuries Prevention in the European Region. The course was developed by a group of international experts in violence and injury prevention and can be adapted to various audiences.

After more than 20 successfully conducted courses, TEACH VIP came to

Russia. In June, teachers specializing in violence and injuries prevention from various Russian cities gathered at a seminar at the WHO Moscow office to improve skills and expand their knowledge in this area.

David Meddings from the Department of Violence and Injury Prevention at WHO Headquarters in Geneva, Professor Mark Bellis, Director of the Centre for Public Health at Liverpool John Moores University, and Hedda Bie, Technical Offi-



cer for Violence Prevention at the WHO European Regional Office in Copenhagen, came to Moscow to conduct the course. In addition, the Serbsky State Research Centre for Social and Forensic Psychiatry took part in organizing the seminar.

The Ministry of Health and Social Development of Russia has stressed the importance of building the national capacity to tackle the issue of violence and injury prevention. Hence, the main objective of the course is to complement the existing measures implemented by Russian healthcare professionals. The next important step is to effectively inte-

grate the course into the curriculum of higher education institutions with particular attention to public health and clinical medicine schools, as well as post-gra-



duate education programmes (e.g. Masters degrees), and programmes on emergency care and psychiatry.

In the course of the seminar, the participants learnt about the basic aspects of the TEACH VIP programme and the ways to adapt it to the local setting, diverse audiences, and institutional environments. We hope that the participants will be able to use the knowledge they have acquired in their own work and help Russia make the necessary progress in the field of violence and injury prevention.

Maria Charnaya

International Network Invites Young Journalists



After a half an hour drive from the International Airport Cologne-Bonn, our bus, hardly fitting the corners of narrow streets, stops in the centre of Bonn. I arrived from the City of Nizhny Novgorod to take part in the workshop of the members of the World Health Youth (WHY) Environment and Health Communication Network, together with young journalists from 18 countries. The World Health Organization (WHO) facilitates the WHY Communication Network on Environment and Health, and its second workshop took place in parallel with the last high-level preparatory meeting for the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health 2010 in the Italian city of Parma (for more information visit www.euro.who.int/parma2010).

The first WHY workshop was organized in Madrid last year. It was conducted in the framework of the conference 'Science for Policy, Policy for

Science: Bridging the Gap', where, among other issues, the question of how to involve mass media in the coverage of health and environment was discussed. A media school for young journalists organized by the Regional WHO Office for Europe and the World Health Communication Associates became the first step in this direction. All participants of the Madrid workshop became members of the WHY Communication Network, which aims to stimulate interest of young journalists from European countries and the USA in the problems of health and environmental protection. (For more details see UN in Russia No. 6, 2008).

The second workshop in Bonn gathered 23 journalists. This time, the conference of the WHO-experts from 53 states was held under the motto 'Protecting children's health in a changing environment'. The participants discussed efforts to develop healthcare systems in their respective countries, a response to emergency situations and minimization of their consequences, as well as the strengthening of cooperation between health and environment organizations, and government agencies.

While participants of the symposium worked in the conference-hall of the Maritim hotel, the media school was taking place a five minutes' walk from it in the premises of the Ministry of Environment of

Germany. Right after the arrival the young journalists half-jokingly questioned an employee of the ministry about the differences in attitude to environmental protection between the Ministry of Environment employees and other civil servants. We were surprised to learn that many employees of the department cycle to work, use energy saving lamps, and save water and electricity. It was a pleasure to see that all information brochures of the ministry were printed on 100 percent recycled paper. Perhaps, that is why Bonn had an honour to host the third preparatory WHO-conference before Parma. It is not only the home to federal ministries of environment and health of the country – the city has implemented real ideas on healthy and environmentally friendly lifestyle.

The workshop programme included participation of journalists in the



conference as observers and intensive media trainings with the discussion of issues well-known to every journalist: how to ensure truthful, competent, and exciting reporting on environment and health issues; how to find new topics and materials, both interesting and authentic. Alex Kirbi, a freelance jour-



nalist working on BBC, gave some advice to his young colleagues:

- remember that news is not only what someone would like to know. It is also what someone would NOT like to know;
- journalism is about making important things interesting and common things fascinating;
- if you want 'to sell' an article about environmental problems to your editor, call it a business, social or lifestyle article;
- do not be shy to write about health and environment for the hundredth time. Even when someone plays Beethoven's ninth symphony, there is always a person who hears it for the first time.

This sounded especially relevant in the city where the great composer was born, just like a motto of the whole media workshop.

Preparation and presentation of mini-projects in groups was part of the seminar: the journalists were asked to choose one of major ecological topics and to tell how they would work on it to make the material interesting and useful to readers or spectators. Our subgroup consisting of journalists from Iceland, Bulgaria, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Lithuania, chose the issue of food safety. We looked at the situation in the area of food safety in our countries, for example, the absence of 'bio' product labels in

Russia or products of doubtful quality like import chicken named "Bush legs"...

I would like to express special gratitude to the organizers for carrying out a professional excursion to the headquarters of the national German broadcaster Deutsche Welle ('The German Wave'). It was valuable for each participant to visit a mass-media company of such level and to speak with our German colleagues who report on ecological topics.

Certainly, the workshop would not have been so useful, if the discussions were limited only to journalistic topics. Three days of the seminar provided a lot of new information and knowledge on problems WHO actively works at. We discussed social and economic inequality, as well as climate change problems that can undermine the efficiency of measures aimed at mitigating the harmful effect of the environmental pollution on people's health, in particular, children's health. Dr. Paul Wilkinson from the London Institute of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and WHO expert Dr. Louise Newport confirmed that the world economic crisis aggravates this process. They called on all European and Central Asian countries including Russia to improve their healthcare systems and to invest in measures to protect children's health – that of the most vulnerable part of the population – from the growing danger of the polluted environment.

Ms. Francesca Racioppi discussed with journalists the issue of traumas and accidents prevention and drew their attention to WHO data showing that comprehensive work on trauma prevention in the European region could make it possible to save over 500 thousand people annually. The problem is really serious – even in developed European countries 28 thousand children die from traumas and accidents every year. And on the global scale, the unintentional traumatism leads to the death of 830 thousand children annually. Thus, five out of six cases of death from traumas occur in poor countries. However, in Russia, the level of children's traumatism has not decreased with the increasing incomes of its citizens. As Ms. Racioppi explained, it is connected with the proportional growth of the number of cars on the roads.

Together with expert Michal Kryzanowski, the journalists looked in detail at other topics including clean drinking water, hygiene, and air pollution.

As Managing Director of the World Health Communication Associates and a curator of the seminar, Dr. Franklin Apfel mentioned that the second workshop had considerably advanced the development of the WHY-network. A good understanding between the participants promoted effective training and exchange of experience. The membership in the network gave a chance to each journalist to take a closer look at the European process of environment and health protection, to improve the quality and to increase the number of articles on this topic, and to establish an active exchange of experience within the activities of the Regional WHO Office for Europe (see www.euro.who.int/eprise/main/WHO/Progs/EHE/media/20090324_1).

I think, such workshops are an excellent chance for young journalists to enrich their professional and personal experience, to exchange opinions with European colleagues. A lot of ideas and suggestions is a good incentive to speak more often and in a more interesting way about health and environment issues.

Journalists aged 18-30 can join the World Health Youth (WHY) Environment and Health Communication Network (please visit www.euro.who.int/envhealth/media/20080923_1) and take part in the competition of publications about health and environment till 17 July. Authors of the best works to be selected by the Regional WHO Office for Europe will be invited to the Conference in Parma in 2010.

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Birzha Plus Kariera Weekly

WHO Russia

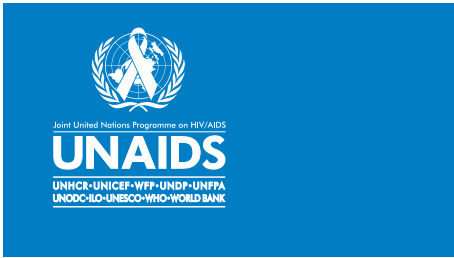
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Highlights

Together against AIDS: Universal Access and Human Rights



Ahead of this year's World AIDS Day, the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and representatives of the World AIDS Campaign and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) have come together to announce the theme of 'Universal Access and Human Rights'.

The theme has been chosen to address the critical need to protect



human rights and attain access for all to HIV prevention, treatment, care, and support. It also acts as a call to countries to remove laws that discriminate against people living with HIV, women and marginalized groups. Countries are also urged to realize the many commitments they made to protect human rights in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (2001) and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (2006).

World AIDS Day has been marked since 1 December 1988, when at a meeting of health ministers of all countries, a call for social tolerance and better information sharing on HIV/AIDS was voiced.

Speaking at the United Nations in New York, Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS, said: "Achieving universal access to prevention, treatment, care, and support is a human rights imperative. It is essential that the global response to the HIV epidemic is grounded in human rights and that discrimination and punitive laws against those most affected by HIV are removed."

Many countries still have laws and policies that impede access to HIV services and criminalize those most vulnerable to HIV. These include laws that criminalize men who have sex with men, transgendered people and lesbians; laws that criminalize sex workers; and laws criminalizing people who use drugs as well as the harm reduction measures and substitution therapy they need. Some 84 countries have reported that they have laws and policies that hinder effective HIV prevention, treatment, care, and support for vulnerable populations.

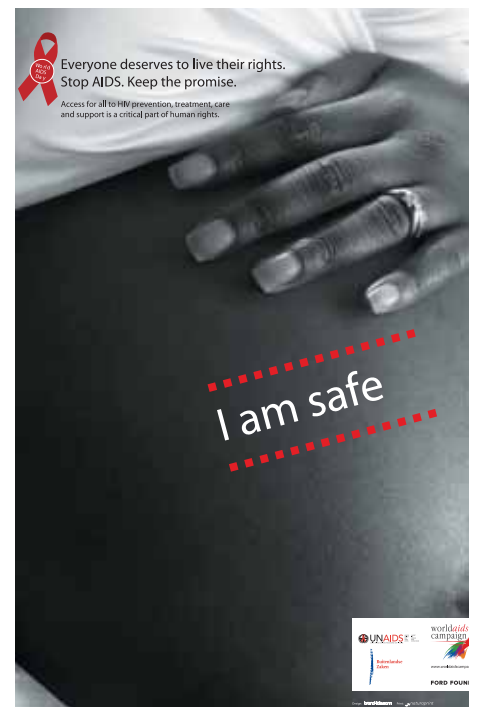
Speaking from Cape Town, South Africa, the World AIDS Campaign Executive Director Marcel van Soest said, "The epidemic has not gone away, tens of millions of people are still affected, but those hit the hardest, the poor and marginalized, often don't have a say when big decisions and laws are made. Their fundamental right to essential health care and life free from fear of stigma and discrimination must be enhanced."

Governments continue passing and enforcing overly-broad laws that criminalize the transmission of HIV and are in direct contradiction to their commitments to "promote... a social and legal environment that is supportive of safe and voluntary disclosure of HIV status." Some 59 countries still have laws that restrict the entry, stay, and residence of people living with HIV based on their positive HIV status only, discriminating against them in

their freedom of movement and right to work.

At the same time, laws and regulations protecting people with HIV from discrimination and women from gender inequality and sexual violence are not fully implemented or enforced.

In Russia, like in other countries, World AIDS Day contributes to increase of organized efforts in combating the HIV epidemic. These joint efforts are aimed at further involvement of the society in fighting HIV. In cooper-



ation with government partners and NGOs, UNAIDS has been consistently drawing the attention of the public to the issues of universal access, prevention, stigma, and discrimination towards people living with HIV.

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UN Information Centre

Society

Lost in Translation

On 9 July, the first-ever diploma awarding ceremony took place at St. Petersburg Graduate School of Interpretation and Translation – an event of local importance at first glance, yet in reality, a groundbreaking one.

This school is the first project of its kind in Russia implemented jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Commission, the UN Secretariat (on the basis of an MOU signed by USG Muhammad Shaaban in August 2008) and Gertsen State Pedagogical University. The MOU is being put into practice along the following lines: regular master-classes by experienced UN language professionals,

the graduates of the School's first course 2008-2009 will join UNIC Moscow as a translator next fall.

The School is currently a member of the consortium of UN graduate schools of interpretation and translation. Its teachers' limited exposure to specific features of UN texts and UN interpretation/translation standards is being addressed. In May

“Flows of information penetrate the environment, and for them to come together and share with each other, the key role is given to translation, or the translator, for that matter,” A. Gorelik said. “We are inclined to see translation not as a quality workmanship, but rather as a creative sphere. It is not only precision and correct terminology that matter, but also – to the extent conditions would allow – the abi-



UN assistance in providing information resources, and training at UN HQ in New York and UN Offices in Geneva and Vienna, including through video-conferences.

From the very inception, UNIC Moscow has maintained increasingly close ties with a group of enthusiasts from Gertsen University. In 2009, all the trainees participated in the remote translation practice at the Centre, and we could only commend them for a quality work. It was decided during UNIC Director Alexandre Gorelik's stay in St. Petersburg that one of

2009, the teachers took a test conducted by Verbatim Section of the UN Secretariat in New York. Currently, four graduates are taking tests at UN HQ for possible fixed term contracts with the UN Secretariat. Experienced UN language professionals, Kirill Speransky, Chief, Russian Translation Service, DGACM, and Sergei Mikhelev, Chief, Russian Booth Interpretation Section, UNOV, were among main guests at the diploma awarding ceremony. They also supervised the final examination and monitored entrance exams for the School's second year.

lity to express stylistic and emotional peculiarities of the translated texts. It is commendable when the translator is capable of relaying not only the essence of the message, but also its author's individuality, his pathos and drive,” he stressed.

The UNIC's practical interaction with the School and joint work on specific documents show that our partners tend to share our approach. We strongly hope, therefore, that such mutually beneficial ties are going to become even closer.

Vladimir Pavinsky



In his public remarks at the ceremony, Alexandre Gorelik put a stress on multilingualism as one of the core principles of the UN, and the importance of translation and interpretation functions for promotion of the information society.

He said in particular that “the more we live, the greater our existence is associated with the information society.”

UNIC

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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 / United Nations Secretary-General's Message on World Humanitarian Day

In his message on World Humanitarian Day, the Secretary-General calls to redouble the efforts of the humanitarian community to help vulnerable, voiceless, and marginalized people wherever they may be and ensure they receive the assistance they deserve.

UNICEF / Junior 8 Summit 2009: World Leaders Listen to Young Generation

This year, the Junior 8 Summit took place on 4-12 July in Rome, concurrently with the G8 Summit. Russia was represented at the summit by the best high school students of the Southern Federal District. Together with young people from other countries, they discussed the issues of climate change, economic crisis and children's rights, poverty and development in Africa, and education.

UNESCO / UNESCO Director-General's Ninth Visit to Russia

On 20-23 July, Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, UNESCO Director-General, paid his ninth official visit to the Russian Federation. During his stay in Moscow, Mr. Matsuura met with President Medvedev and Foreign Minister Lavrov, Patriarch Kirill I of Moscow and All Russia, Moscow mayor, as well as UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors in Russia.

OHCHR / Degree in Human Rights

Russian State Humanities University, Russian Peoples' Friendship University and Moscow State Institute of International Relations joined efforts with OHCHR Moscow office to create a new Master's course on human rights. According to Dirk Hebecker, Senior Human Rights Advisor of OHCHR Office in Moscow, the course with an intended duration of two academic years will provide students with an opportunity to study abroad for one semester and to complete their studies and present the Master's thesis based on their field work and research conducted.

UNHCR / "To Stay Closer to the Persons We Assist"

On 20 June, World Refugee Day is marked all over the world. UNHCR Representative in Russia, Ms. Gesche Karrenbrock, gave an interview to the Interfax news agency in this connection. *UN in Russia* publishes an abridged version of the interview.

UN / Saint-Petersburg Discusses the Situation of People with Disabilities in Russia

On 6 August, A.I. Gertsen Russian State Pedagogical University Fundamental Library in St Petersburg hosted a presentation of the analytical overview *Russia: on the Path to Equal Opportunities* commissioned by UNDP and dedicated to the problems of people with disabilities. The participants, representing the city government, local experts and NGOs, discussed Russia's preparation for the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, education, employment, and support for disabled people in particular in St. Petersburg.

UNDP / Saving Unique Nature of the Lower Volga

Since 2006, an international project aimed at conservation of wetland biodiversity of the Lower Volga region has been implemented in the Astrakhan and Volgograd regions, and the Republic of Kalmykia. UNDP, the Global Environment Fund, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Russia implement the project together. In June 2009, a regular meeting of the UN/GEF Coordination Committee and an extended session of the project partners were held in Astrakhan to discuss the project results and plans for the future.

WFP / Daily Bread for North Caucasus

For nine years, WFP has provided food for people who suffered from the military conflict in the North Caucasus. In April 2009, WFP carried out an assessment of its work in the region for the past years in order to review the sustainability of its programmes; to see how assistance is provided today for those who used to receive it from WFP; and how the living standards of the population have changed in terms of food security.

WHO / Injuries and Violence Prevention

Over five million people in the world die as result of violence and injuries every year. In June, TEACH VIP, a comprehensive injury prevention and control education programme designed by WHO, was launched in Moscow. The workshop with participation of WHO experts in injury and violence prevention brought together education specialists, working in this area from all over Russia, to acquaint them with the programme contents and see how it can be adapted for local needs.

WHO / International Network Invites Young Journalists

Journalist Valentina Perevedentseva writes about her participation in the workshop of the World Health Youth (WHY) Environment and Health Communication Network, conducted in Bonn with the World Health Organization's support. It was held in parallel to the final high-level preparatory meeting for the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health 2010.

UNAIDS / Together against AIDS: Universal Access and Human Rights

The World AIDS Day theme for 2009 is 'Universal Access and Human Rights'. The United Nations has chosen the theme to emphasize the need to protect human rights and attain access for all to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. It also urges countries to abolish laws that discriminate against people living with HIV, women and marginalized groups.

UNIC / Lost in Translation

On 9 July, the first-ever diploma awarding ceremony took place at St. Petersburg Graduate School of Interpretation and Translation. This school is the first project of its kind in Russia implemented jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Commission, the UN Secretariat and the Gertsen State Pedagogical University with the support of the UN Information Centre in Moscow.

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:

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