

UN IN RUSSIA

No. 3 (46)

May-June
2006



Translating economic growth into sustainable human development with human rights

Published by
the United Nations Office
in the Russian Federation



Russia
Marching Against Hunger /4

Society /6

I think I have the obligation to use my experience and numerous contacts around the world to the benefit of those that are in great need, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres said during his first visit to Russia

People /9

"People live here and will live here because it's their home," said Viktoria proudly about her neighbours, who have not left their village after Chernobyl disaster. "We survived so many other catastrophes in our history, and we will survive this one as well"

Highlights /15

Some 270,000 new HIV cases were registered in Eastern Europe and Central Asia in 2005 only, and a total of 1.6 million people live with HIV. These alarming figures were announced at the first international Eastern European and Central Asian AIDS conference

Contents

UN

Letter to the Heads of State and Government of the 'Group of Eight' **2**

WFP /Events

Russia Marching Against Hunger **4**

UNDSS /Appointments

New Chief Security Adviser in the Russian Federation **5**

UNHCR /Society

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Visits Russia **6**

UNDP /Regions

North Caucasus: More Jobs, Less Poverty **8**

UNICEF /People

Chernobyl in the Eyes of Its Children **9**

UNESCO

UNESCO Welcomes Decision to Secure Lake Baikal **12**
Press Freedom Helps to Fight Poverty, Says UNESCO **12**

OCHA

A Fund to Save Lives **13**

UNIC

Moscow Middle East Seminar Provides Impetus for Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue **14**

UNAIDS /Highlights

HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia **15**

WHO

HIV/AIDS Challenges in Siberia **16**
World No Tobacco Day Unites Doctors **17**
TB Assistance Administration at the Municipal Level **18**

UNA-Russia

Congratulations to Winners of the Essay Contest 2006 **18**

Letter to the Heads of State and Government of the "Group of Eight"

Excellencies,

As you and your colleagues in the Group of Eight prepare for your meeting in St. Petersburg, I would like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention a few issues that, I hope, will feature prominently in your discussions.

Since your last Summit, significant progress has been made in the area of development cooperation, partly thanks to your leadership. The 2005 World Summit triggered positive steps on aid, debt relief and other matters that we had been seeking for many years. World leaders reaffirmed support for the Global Partnership for Development, as embodied in the Monterrey Consensus. Official Development Assistance (ODA) topped \$100 billion in 2005, and as a share of Gross National Income reached a level not seen since 1992. And ODA is expected to increase by another \$50 billion by 2010.

Moreover, debt servicing by the heavily indebted poor countries has declined, and further progress is expected now that the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, which was proposed by your Summit last year, is being implemented by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.



But the lack of significant progress on trade is conspicuous, even perilous. At the World Summit, leaders pledged to work quickly, and at last December's World Trade Organization ministerial meeting, ambitious deadlines were set. The challenge now is to deliver.

I urge you to take the lead and adopt bold liberalization measures that will lead to a successful conclusion of the Doha round. Developing countries need genuine market access opportunities for their goods and services, and the least developed countries should enjoy duty-free and quota-free access for theirs. It is also time for all trade-distorting subsidies for agriculture to be eliminated, and to do so rapidly for sensitive products such as cotton. We must deal effectively with the costs that arise from adjustment and the erosion of current prefer-

ences. And many countries will need assistance in order to benefit from current and newly created opportunities. That is why I have welcomed the Aid for Trade initiative, which should be promptly and fully funded and implemented. (Continued on page 3)

UN in Russia

Published once in two months

Circulation: 2,000 copies

www.unrussia.ru
www.undp.ru

Founder:

United Nations Office
in the Russian Federation

Editor-in-Chief: Victoria Zotikova

Editor: Vladimir Sadakov

Address:

119034, Moscow,
Ostozhenka St., 28
Tel. 787-21-00

Fax: 787-21-01

E-mail: vladimir.sadakov@undp.ru



United Nations Association of Russia

Letter to the Heads of State and Government of the 'Group of Eight'



These are just some of the many sensible steps which, while fostering prosperity and opportunity for people everywhere, would allow poor and marginalized people, especially in the least developed countries, to lift themselves out of poverty. Yet I fear that the difficulties the negotiations have encountered have led some participants to contemplate settling for something less than a true development round. That must not be allowed to happen. We must maintain our ambition, sustain the drive, and demonstrate the political courage needed to conclude the talks by the end of this year.

I am pleased that energy security is among the main topics of your Summit this year, and I would urge you to focus especially on two aspects of this – aspects whose implications go far beyond the boundaries of each of your countries.

First, we should not lose sight of what energy security means to people living in developing countries. 1.6 billion of them live with no electricity at all. And many of those who do have access to electricity have to live with frequent power outages due to inadequate generating capacity and faulty grid lines.

The lack of access to modern energy services is a formidable barrier to poverty reduction. Indoor air pollution, resulting for example from burning traditional biomass, contributes significantly to respiratory infections in children under five years of age, which kill almost two million of them, according to the World Health Organization estimates. Moreover, developing countries will need to nearly double their electrical generating capacity over the coming years to support industrial and broad economic development, and to reach the Millennium Development Goals.

Second, energy security can not be reached if the environmental consequences of energy consumption, and especially of our present overwhelming and deeply entrenched reliance on fossil fuels, are not addressed. This reliance puts the very future of humanity at risk, since these fuels produce greenhouse gases and other pollutants, which affect the sustainability of life itself.

Burning fossil fuels causes air pollution, which triggers an estimated 800,000 premature deaths every year. And it generates greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to climate change. Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time. The scientific consensus is overwhelmingly clear: climate change is happening, and humans are contributing to

it. And while almost all of us will suffer, poor people above all are vulnerable and will bear the brunt of the damage, especially in terms of rising sea levels and more frequent extreme weather events. For someone living in one of the low-lying areas of the developing world, energy security is inseparably linked to the environmental consequences of energy consumption.

These two points are, of course, intertwined. The need for energy in the fight against poverty could entail a vicious circle through worsening effects on health and the environment. But that does not need to happen. Fossil fuels can become cleaner, or even clean. Energy efficiency can be significantly further increased, in transport, buildings, appliances and manufacturing. Renewable sources of energy remain woefully underutilized. And all this would have significant economic, health and environmental benefits.

That was the basis of the Gleneagles Plan of Action on climate change, clean energy and sustainable development, which you adopted last year. Indeed, developed countries, and the largest among them in particular, have a special responsibility. They are the largest consumers of fossil fuels and the largest emitters of greenhouse gases, and have the most resources to support research and development.

Collectively, we do have the knowledge and resources to conquer the poverty that blights so many lives, and to safeguard our planet and its climate. Your decisions have critical implications for people all over the world, and for generations to come.

Please accept, Excellencies, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Kofi A. Annan

May 2006



Constantine Palace is ready to welcome the Summit participants



World Food Programme

People

Russia Marching Against Hunger

Walk the World is an annual global walk to raise awareness and funds and encourage action to end child hunger. The event provides an opportunity to various groups to come together once a year for a public manifestation of support for the cause of eliminating child hunger.

In 2006, Moscow became one of 10 major cities of the world selected for Walk the World march, as this summer Russia hosts the G8 Summit, and eliminating poverty is one of the items on the agenda.

WFP staff undertook active efforts to look for partner organizations interested in supporting the movement against hunger in Russia. The Russian Union of Youth, Movement of Young



Young peacemakers provide valuable support, ensuring order during the march



Peace-makers, UN Association of Russia, Moscow State University of International Relations (MGIMO), and Russian State Humanitarian University (RGGU) were selected to be WFP partners. TNT and Rostik's companies sponsored the Walk, while Moscow Sports Club helped to organize the Walk in Moscow, produced T-shirts for the walkers, and ensured security during the event. The Club also arranged a concert by children's dancing and singing groups from all over Russia. Pop singer Vlad Stashevski took part in the concert. Young peacemakers provided valuable support, ensuring order during the march. A group of students from Russian State Humanitarian University also helped to organize the event.

Ella Pamfilova, Chairperson of the Civil Society Institutions and Human Rights Council under the President of the Russian Federation, helped a lot to ensure the Walk takes place in the centre of Moscow. She welcomed the Walk the World participants and called upon those gathered to think about children suffering from hunger. Olympic champion and Chairperson of the Olympic Movement of Russia Anatoly Starostin, General Director of the Russian branch of TNT Harro von Graafeiland, Deputy



Ella Pamfilova (centre) among the march participants

Director of the Walk the World Unit in WFP HQ in Rome Matt Keller, and WFP Country Director and Representative in Russia Chris Czerwinski greeted the participants.

Speaking to the people who gathered near the Red Square to support the movement against child hunger Chris Czerwinski said: "Why are we here today? We, young and old, women and men, girls and boys are here today because we are against the injustice of hunger around the world. We want to put an end to premature deaths of thousands of children from hunger every day and to the sufferings of parents who find themselves unable to feed their families and themselves... You may ask yourselves:



“What can I as an individual do to help in the fight against hunger?” Well, you have already made the first step, you have joined in solidarity with your fellow citizens in this humanitarian cause. After the march you can tell about hunger to your friends and family, remind about

this problem to political leaders by writing a newspaper article. You can tell them that hunger can be stopped.”

After a short meeting, thousands of walkers moved to Saint Basil cathedral along the Moskvaketskaya embankment. The Walk was widely covered by mass media – five Russian and four foreign TV channels broadcasted the march. The TV transmission on Eurovision was ensured by satellite TV communication facilities sponsored by TNT.

In Russia, Walk the World was held simultaneously in Moscow, Saint Petersburg and Samara. About 200 people came to support the event in Saint Petersburg. Among them, there were schoolchildren, students, representa-

tives of business and public organizations, young and old, people of various background, age and religion.

The march started from the Baltic Square and proceeded through the Lermontov Avenue to ‘Rekord’ house of youth where speeches were delivered by representatives of WFP, Russian Union of Youth, TNT, Shelter NGO and others. The meeting ended with children’s folk music performance ‘Zhaleika’, a prize-winner of many international festivals.

WFP

Tel.: (7 495) 956-49-68
 Fax: (7 495) 956-49-89
www.wfp.org



Appointments

New Chief Security Adviser in the Russian Federation



Mr. Kovvuri C. Reddy

On 20 March 2006, Mr. Kovvuri C. Reddy, an Indian national, assumed responsibilities of Chief Security Adviser of the UN Department of Safety and Security in the Russian Federation.

Before his assignment to Russia Mr. B.K.C. Reddy had worked as Chief Security Officer in Liberia. Mr. Reddy

joined the UN security system in 1998 and has a broad experience in security management issues. His first appointment in the UN system was in the capacity of the UN Chief Security Officer in Tajikistan. Since then he had subsequently worked as Chief Security Officer for UN Security in East Timor, and briefly in Haiti to set up the security management structures. He had also worked as Chief Security Officer in Sudan and Burundi. Mr. Reddy started his career as a Security Manager in the Indian Police service in 1974. Before joining the United Nations in 1998, he coordinated the Security Forces of the Indian President and Prime Minister from 1993 to 1998.

The Department of Safety and Security is comprised of all security elements of the United Nations system, including those formerly known as the Office of the UN Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD), the Security and Safety Services (SSS), and the DPKO security elements responsible for civilian personnel in DPKO missions.

The main objective of UNDSS is to ensure the safety and security of the

personnel and property of the UN agencies and their implementing partners operating in the area. UNDSS’s role is to support and enable the humanitarian, development and recovery operations undertaken by various UN agencies and their implementing partners.

UNDSS (formerly UNSECOORD) has been operating in Russia since 2000. In the Russian Federation UNDSS currently maintains an office in Moscow and sub-offices in the North Caucasus in Nazran (Republic of Ingushetia) and Vladikavkaz (Republic of North Ossetia-Alania).

The North Caucasus remains the primary geographic area of concern in the Russian Federation with respect to security of UN operations. The security situation in this region requires application of one of the most stringent UN security regimes.

UNDSS Office in Moscow
 6, Obukha Pereulok,
 Moscow, 103064
 Tel: +7 (495) 231-3307
 Fax: +7(495) 231-3308

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Visits Russia



Mr. Antonio Guterres (second from the left) at the State Duma

On 5-11 April 2006, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres visited the Russian Federation. It was his first visit to Russia in the capacity of the High Commissioner after his appointment in June 2005. Before joining UNHCR, Mr. Guterres spent more than 20 years in government and public service. He served as Prime Minister of Portugal from 1996 to 2002. In an interview to



The High Commissioner talks to IDPs from the Chechen Republic living in the Republic of Ingushetia

Russian media Antonio Guterres said: "After finishing political activity in my country, I think I have the obligation to use my experience and numerous contacts around the world to the benefit of those, who are in need."

The aim of the visit was to establish a platform for increased cooperation between the Russian Federation and UNHCR. During his one week mission Mr. Guterres met with senior government officials from a number of ministries, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the EMERCOM and the Federal Migration Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as parliamentarians, the Human Rights Ombudsman, Chairperson of the Civil Society Institutions and Human Rights Council under the President of the Russian Federation, NGOs and members of the UN Country Team to discuss, inter alia, global cooperation, the asylum system, and the situation with statelessness and internal displacement in the Russian Federation. Mr. Guterres also travelled to Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia and St. Petersburg to meet senior government officials, civil society representatives, refugees and displaced persons.

The discussions at the Federal Migration Service, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, relevant committees of the RF State Duma, and the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman in the Russian Federation focused on the development of

an effective asylum system in Russia. The High Commissioner expressed readiness on behalf of UNHCR to actively cooperate



The High Commissioner talks to refugees from Georgia living in the North Ossetia - Alania

with all Russian stakeholders in the process of development of the draft of a new Russian law on refugees in order to ensure its full compliance with the 1951 UN Convention and best international standards.

By decision of the UN General Assembly, the UNHCR mandate now includes protection of stateless persons and reduction of statelessness around the world. Taking into consideration the growing cooperation between the Russian Federation and UNHCR, the High Commissioner presented in the RF State



Beslan. At the former school No.1 building

Duma the Russian version of the Handbook for Parliamentarians on Nationality and Statelessness, published jointly by UNHCR and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 2005. The High Commissioner called upon the Russian Government to ratify two UN conventions adopted by the international community and expressed hope that the Handbook would encourage advocacy towards solving the problem of statelessness, "as most of these people were forgotten." He also noted that UNHCR is ready to provide the necessary expert support. The State Duma deputies said that Russia seriously considers accession to the two conventions.

The meeting with Mr. Sergei Shoigu, Minister for Civil Defence, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters of the Russian Federation (EMERCOM), resulted in signing the Joint Declaration of Intent between EMERCOM and UNHCR. Both parties stated their intention for a more efficient cooperation in future. Commending on the capacity of EMERCOM as "probably one of the best, if not the best in the world" and on the EMERCOM's successful experience of participation in UNHCR's operations, the High Commissioner suggested developing a stand-by agreement between UNHCR and EMERCOM to ensure fast emergency response. Mr. Shoigu assured the High Commissioner that the Ministry was open for future cooperation.

During the meeting with local NGOs (UNHCR implementing partners) the High Commissioner spoke highly about NGO activities and highlighted the importance of their advocacy and assistance efforts at the time when asylum institutions are being developed in Russia.

In St. Petersburg, the High Commissioner visited the 'Refugee

House' launched this year with the support of the European Commission and the Government of St. Petersburg, where he met with asylum-seekers and refugees. The 'Refugee House' is run by the local office of the Russian Red Cross, a long-term partner of UNHCR. During the discussion of the problems of asylum-seekers and refugees with city officials the High Commissioner commended the tolerance campaign initiated by the St. Petersburg Government and reiterated that in 2006 UNHCR focused on tolerance issues, as tolerance is an instrument not only for protection of asylum-seekers, but also for promotion of public unity.

The High Commissioner's visit to the North Caucasus started in Beslan. "First of all, I want to pay tribute to the victims of Beslan and thereby to demonstrate my complete solidarity with the people of North Ossetia," Guterres said upon arrival in Vladikavkaz. The delegation then laid wreaths to the monument commemorating the victims of the Beslan school siege.

Mr. Guterres met with the presidents and government officials of the republics of Chechnya, Ingushetia and



Mr. Antonio Guterres meets Sergei Shoigu, EMERCOM Minister

North Ossetia, and conducted open discussions on the best ways to meet the needs of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the North Caucasus. "The remaining problems in the North Caucasus can only be solved first by the efforts of the federal authorities, and then by the authorities of each republic, as well as the international community," he said. Guterres highlighted some key challenges in providing protection and durable solutions for refugees and the internally displaced persons in the North Caucasus. "The development of a true system of law and order is the basis for more effective solu-



Mr. Guterres after visiting a temporary accommodation centre for Chechen returnees in Grozny

tions to the problems of refugees and IDPs", he explained. The High Commissioner pointed out the vast needs for recovery in Chechnya and indicated that UNHCR was ready to advocate within the UN system and with other organizations for transition from humanitarian assistance to recovery.

In North Ossetia, the High Commissioner visited the refugee settlement of Tsalik that houses some 400 refugees from South Ossetia. He also visited a collective centre, one of 50 in North Ossetia, where refugees have lived in extremely difficult conditions for over a decade. Guterres commended North Ossetia for hospitality to refugees.

In Chechnya, Mr. Guterres visited a temporary accommodation centre for Chechen returnees from Georgia and Ingushetia. The residents shared their concerns related to obtaining documents and compensations for lost property and jobs. The High Commissioner also met with local NGOs, UNHCR's partners, involved in protection of returnees. After visiting Chechnya A. Guterres announced that UNHCR would open an office in the republic as soon as security conditions allowed.

In Ingushetia, Guterres visited the IBERD-YURT settlement in the Sunzha district, where 100 IDP families from Chechnya, who decided to remain in Ingushetia, reside in new houses built with UNHCR's assistance.

UNHCR

Tel.: (7 495) 232-30-11

Fax: (7 495) 232-30-17/16

E-mail: rusmo@unhcr.org

www.unhcr.ru



UN Development Programme

Regions

North Caucasus: More Jobs, Less Poverty



On 18-19 May 2006, a two days conference Microfinance Needs and Options in the North Caucasus, organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), was held in Kislovodsk. Representatives of governments and private business of Ingushetia, North Ossetia-Alania and Chechnya, regional branches of Sberbank of Russia, Russian microfinance organizations, including FORA Fund, the Russian Microfinance Centre, donors (the United States Agency for International

Caucasus. In 2004, 73 percent of the population of Ingushetia lived below the poverty line, while the unemployment level reached 46 percent. In the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania these figures are lower, but are still critical. The income of 18 percent of the population is lower than the subsistence level, and 14 percent of the economically active population cannot find employment.

In terms of the Human Development Index, calculated by UNDP experts on a regular basis, these republics are among the last in the list of Russian regions.

The discussions held at the conference were aimed at finding out how micro-financing can support economic growth in the regions affected by conflicts, what the demand for microfinancing services in the republics of the North Caucasus is, and in what ways and forms they can be provided, particularly in rural areas. In this connection, the discussion of terms and conditions of providing microfinance services in the North Caucasus, current legislation, as well as the results and lessons learned during implemented and ongoing programmes in this area, including state, partially state and nongovernmental, seems very timely.

One of the interesting components of the conference was a discussion of several studies initiated by UNDP, includ-

ing a recent study of demand for microfinance services, conducted by the Russian Microfinance Centre in Ingushetia and North Ossetia-Alania.

According to this study, small business is well developed in these republics, but mainly due to limited access to sources of financing it has low level of effectiveness and inadequate material and technological resources. This prevents businesses from solving social problems. Development of microfinancing sphere can help change the situation for the better.

The decision to launch microfinance projects in the republics of the North Caucasus is one of the first initiatives of UNDP. In future these initiatives will form an integral recovery plan for the region, which will include a wide range of economic tools. This work is carried out within the framework of the Reintegration and Recovery Programme in the North Caucasus, launched by UNDP in November 2004 and aimed at jobs creation and fighting poverty in Ingushetia, North Ossetia-Alania, and Chechnya.



Development and the European Union), as well as UN agencies took part in the conference.

The discussed subject was a very important one, as the problems of socio-economic development, including poverty, unemployment, the need for integration of refugees and displaced people are among the most acute in the North

UNDP

Tel.: (7 495) 787-21-00

Fax: (7 495) 787-21-01

E-mail: office@undp.ru

www.undp.ru

Chernobyl in the Eyes of its Children



Tina. Belarus: My pre-school

“Chernobyl... but that was 20 years ago,” remarked Irina, a young woman in St. Petersburg upon hearing of UNICEF's recent photo workshop for children from the affected area,



Tina. Belarus: 'Echo of Chernobyl' classes in a pre-school

which is home to nearly six million people in Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia's Bryansk region. “Why would UNICEF possibly be concerned with Chernobyl today? It's all in the past.”

If only Irina's words were true. Unfortunately, her opinion is all too common today in Russia whose Bryansk region was hit hard by fallout from a radioactive cloud. The cloud rained down after an accident on 26

April 1986 blew apart Reactor No. 4 at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine, then a Soviet republic.

That explosion and the ensuing fire that raged for ten days spewed radiation over a territory the size of Germany, forcing the abandonment of 400 settlements in this formerly fertile agricultural region. Hundreds of thousands of people were relocated, and nearly 600,000 so-called ‘liquidators’, many working with no protection, sacrificed their health to contain and seal the fiery reactor, as well as clean the contaminated area.

Today, the plight of most of six million people who live in or near contaminated areas is not considered dire enough to warrant evacuation. That describes most of the Bryansk region, where only a few dozen villages are sealed off. While hundreds of towns and villages are deemed habitable, the surrounding areas that provide them with food and water remain polluted. Fields, lake bottoms, and forest floors are home to an invisible nemesis, radioactive Cesium-137, whose half-life is 30 years.

“Everyone here has a tragedy to tell,” said Anna Kotikova, an official at the city education committee in the Bryansk region city of Novozibkov, who admitted that in December 1986 her first pregnancy ended suddenly in its seventh month. “Our way of life has been destroyed.”

Nearly all Bryansk residents suffer health problems. Cancer rates are higher than the national averages, birth defects have soared by as much as 250 percent, problems with thyroid glands effect nearly all, bones are reported to break easily and frequently, and many complain of headaches after walking in the forest. Children are most vulnerable. The greatest source of apprehension, however, remains genetic defects that might effect future generations.

Young people, especially those planning to have children, try to get as far away as possible, but for economic reasons many do not have that option. Strapped by economic difficulties, in recent years many returned to traditional ways of living that put them at great risk of radiation poisoning – gathering mushrooms and berries from the dense forests, eating meat and dairy products from animals that graze in local fields, and swimming and fishing in lakes and rivers.

“Adults think that after 20 years have passed the problem is over,” said Lubov Olefirenko, head of the Russian Children's Fund in Bryansk. “So it's up to children to keep the fight alive, and to continue to remind the public that the problems here are only starting.”

Sergei Kravchenko

Like everyone in his class in the village of Novy Bobovich, Sergei Kravchenko, 14, only knows about Chernobyl from what his parents and other adults remember. For five years after the blast, his parents continued to live in a small village in Russia's Bryansk region on the border of Belarus. The area was hard hit by the



Sergei, Russia: This is a 'small reactor' in the house of my granddad

Chernobyl fallout, but it was not until 1991 that the village was deemed unsuitable for human habitation.

Sergei's parents moved about 30 kilometers to Novy Bobovichi, and one year later he was born, suffering from congenital heart defects. Sergei says little about his health. He would rather show off his recent photos of Novy Bobovichi after returning home from the UNICEF photo seminar in Minsk during the first week of March.

Sergei's photos are packed with emotion. Most show ruined brick factories, derelict huts at a tourist resort that ironically was completed in early spring 1986, and rows of abandoned village houses. Among the more ominous is a shot of jarred mushrooms.

"We still eat them even though they tell us mushrooms easily absorb radiation," says Sergei nonchalantly, as he flashes to the next photo, which shows seven ten-ruble banknotes neatly laid in a semi-circle.

"I like this photo because it shows what the government thinks of us," he says grimly. "These 70 rubles (just under \$3) a month which my parents get as compensation can't buy you anything."

As they say in Russian, however, all bad things have a positive side. To discourage locals from burning wood from contaminated trees, Novy Bobovichi and other villages are now supplied with natural gas for heating. Asphalt roads are laid to keep radioactive dust from kicking into the air.

Previously, Sergei gave little thought to such things. The UNICEF photo seminar taught him a number of valuable lessons.

"Before the seminar, I had no idea of the scale of the Chernobyl accident and how many lives it affected in all three countries," said Sergei, sitting in his school that now has 77 students, down from 200 in the late 1980s. "Now that I can better use a camera I have a strong desire to use my photos to explain to the world how we live, and that 20 years later the problem of Chernobyl still exists."

Elena Kovaleva

Elena Kovaleva, aged 15, powers up her computer, eager to show her recent Chernobyl zone photos taken as part of a UNICEF-sponsored photo seminar.

Elena, her tightly braided blond pony-tail draping across her shoulder, brings her first photo up on the screen. A cow. Next, the cow being milked. Then, more cow shots. In an era where jaded audiences are hungry for ever more graphic and horrifying images from disaster areas, Elena's images might seem disappointing. Her photos, however, are more a testimony of the power and truth of the sublime, and the knowledge it has to offer. Perhaps it is no surprise that only a child is capable of such perception.

"We've long been warned not to drink the milk, not even today," said Elena, as we sat in her school in the Bryansk region village of



Lena, Russia: A cow called Vetka and its calf

Vereshchaki. "They say there's still a lot of radiation in the soil, and that this gets into the food chain when cows eat the grass."

Local authorities say leukaemia is a major problem among cows, and the animals are placed under vigilant veterinary control. Radiation testing of milk and frequent blood tests on the cows is highly recommended by local health officials. Despite the risks, most locals continue to consume dairy products, as well as many other risky



Lena, Russia: This is Zinaida Dmitrievna, a 'liquidator' from Belarus

natural food items, such as mushrooms and berries. In this poor region, where salaries rarely exceed US \$100 a month, many must choose between going hungry and the risk of radiation poisoning.

"The cow in the photo belongs to my family, and since we watch him carefully and get him checked, we're not afraid to drink the milk," continued Elena, confident that such measures are adequate.

Like most residents of the Chernobyl zone, Elena has absorbed the disaster and its consequences into her every day life, and is not jarred by things that would shock and worry an outsider. Her village is all she has ever known. She has grown used to it, has adapted accordingly, and remains optimistic about the future.

Her photos, however, have succeeded in eliciting a torrent of emotions and thoughts that previously might not have touched her. Take her next batch of photos, a number of portraits of an unassuming middle-aged woman.

"Zinaida Dmitrievna is a 'liquidator' from Belarus," says Elena. "I was fascinated by her stories and previously had no idea even what a 'liquidator' was."

Viktorija Prishep

With her face partially hidden behind her long dark hair, it is easy not to notice 17-year old high school student, Viktorija Prishep. She seems to prefer it that way. While waiting at her school in the Bryansk region's village of Novy Bobovich, Viktorija sits unobtrusively, hardly making a sound, as if afraid to disturb those around her.

Born two years after Chernobyl, Viktorija is plagued by heart defects and poor vision, and is not allowed to play sports. No wonder that she does not seem anxious to speak about the disaster's effects 20 years later. The conversation is a tough start, but as it moves along, it is hard to stop her. Her face suddenly becomes radiant and



Maxim, Ukraine: I study at school.
Luninets, Belarus

beaming, revealing a young woman with a deep and intriguing inner world.

Viktorija begins to show photos of an abandoned village, Novaya Katichi, just a few kilometres from her own village, that she took during UNICEF's Chernobyl youth photo project. Her shots show both horror and fascination with the physical devastation of the Chernobyl disaster.

"It was really scary to walk around Novaya Katichi," said Viktorija, drinking tea in her school cafeteria, her eyes open wide as she pushed back the hair from her face. "Everything there has died or gone away, the houses are boarded up; it's like being on a different planet."

On her computer at school Viktorija quickly goes through several dozen graphic photos from the abandoned village, which despite its proximity to her house she had never visited before. Then a photo of a well flashes up on Viktorija's screen.

"People used to take water from this well," said Viktorija, who aspires to be either a songwriter, or film director. "It's a symbol of life, but for this village, not anymore."

Indeed, the theme of life and death, felt quite sharply in this contaminated region, intrigues Viktorija. Her readiness to discuss death is a little unsettling, but understandable. Still, like many in her region, beliefs in the future continue to sustain and nourish. "People live here and will live here because it's their home," said Viktorija proudly, affirming her village's will to live. "We survived so many other catastrophes in our history, and we will survive this as well."

Vitaly Sigaev

Galina Sigaeva is a local tour guide in the city of Klintsi. With her son Vitaly, aged 13, by her side, Galina recalls the first days after the explosion at Chernobyl. "We heard there was an accident at the Chernobyl plant, but no one even told us about the extent of it," said Galina. "We thought it was just a small mishap, and so as usual everyone went to the 1 May parade. Many people who went out that day later went bald."

Even though born seven years after the Chernobyl meltdown, Vitaly suffers from poor health – a compromised immune system, frequent headaches, and like many other children, brittle bones. He broke his arm four times in the same place in the past four years. "Vitaly's generation is already suffering,



Anton, Belarus: A boy suffering from cancer. When he saw a digital camera, he got interested – it is like a new toy!

but those who are born even now will also suffer from radiation poisoning," exclaims Galina. "Scientists believe that gene mutation will continue to afflict future generations."



Andrei, Belarus: We play football also in winter!

UNICEF's photo seminar held in Minsk in early March gave Vitaly and other children a rare chance to see the extent of the Chernobyl disaster; that it goes far beyond their towns and villages, and into neighbouring countries of Ukraine and Belarus. The most jarring moment came when Vitaly and his group visited a children's cancer hospital in Minsk.

"I felt sorry for these children, and realized we have to help them," said Vitaly, who despite his own ailments, realized he is still more fortunate than others. "I was really taken by one boy, Dima, who though very sick, is very friendly and keeps fighting his illness."

Vitaly's photos show very well how the experience touched him. Many of his images have a subtle but strong dose of hope and faith. Others have also noticed the dramatic change in Vitaly's behaviour after the UNICEF seminar. "Even the teachers at school have noticed the difference, and asked what happened to him," said Galina. "Before he was rather grim, but he came back from Minsk inspired, and now smiles more."

By John Varoli,
Freelance journalist

UNICEF

Tel.: (7 495) 933-88-18
Fax: (7 495) 933-88-19
www.unicef.org/russia



UN Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization

UNESCO Welcomes Decision to Secure Lake Baikal

UNESCO Director-General, Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, and Chair of the World Heritage Committee, Ms. Ina Marčiulionytė, welcomed the decision by Russian President Vladimir Putin to change the route of an oil pipeline built across Siberia to eliminate potential risk to the World Heritage site of Lake Baikal.

“I congratulate President Putin on his decision,” the Director-General declared. “By altering the course of the oil pipeline, the Russian Federation shows its commitment to international efforts in protecting the common heritage of humanity to pro-



mote sustainable development. UNESCO and its World Heritage Centre appreciate the spirit of cooperation shown by the Russian Federation in seeking to protect its natural environment and fresh water resources.”

The Chair of the World Heritage Committee, Ina Marčiulionytė, also welcomed President Putin’s decision: “President Putin’s decision regarding the World Heritage site of Baikal is extremely important and very positive. I wish to thank the Russian Federation for its contribution to the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.”

On 26 April, President Putin announced the decision to move the pipeline that will run from the oil fields of Siberia to the Pacific coast north of Lake Baikal’s watershed to avoid the site included in the World Heritage List in 1996.



First prize: Yuri Dyachishkin, photographer, all-Ukrainian newspaper ‘Express’ (Lvov, Ukraine).

On World Press Freedom Day the UN reminds the world about the importance of protecting the fundamental human rights of freedom of expression and freedom of press, enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Freedom of expression and freedom of press are essential for building strong democracy, promoting civic participation, rule of law, and

Press Freedom Helps to Fight Poverty, Says UNESCO

enhanced security. This year, World Press Freedom Day is dedicated to the ways freedom of press can help ensure another human right – the right to be free from poverty. Today, more than one billion people live on less than US \$1 per day. Another 2.7 billion live on less than US \$2 per day. UNESCO is confident that free and independent media should be recognized as a key precondition to eradicate poverty. It is obvious that protection of one of the basic human rights – freedom of expression – can ensure protection of other rights, in particular, the right not to live in poverty.

On 3 May 2006, World Press Freedom Day was celebrated in most countries of the world. From West Samoa to Panama, and from Bangkok to Rabat journalists and media professionals held seminars, discussions, round tables and forums focusing on the theme of the day – assistance of mass media in poverty eradication. At the international conference in Sri-Lanka, a key event of World Press Freedom Day organized by UNESCO, Lebanese journalist May Chidiac received the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press

Freedom Prize 2006 from UNESCO Director-General Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura.

On 4-14 May 2006, ‘Eurasia. Social Portrait’ photo exhibition was held in the Photo centre in Moscow. Best photos of the international photo contest for journalists, organized by the Eurasia Media Centre and the International Confederation of Journalists’ Unions with the support of UNESCO, were presented at the exhibition. The photos reflect today’s reality and focus on acute social problems – poverty, life of marginalized groups of population, including street children, drug addicts, and prostitutes. Over 1,000 photos by professional photo-journalists from 17 Eurasian countries participated in the contest. The selection panel chose 200 photos to present them to the grand jury, chaired by famous Russian journalists Yuri Rost.

UNESCO

Tel.: (7 495) 230-05-54

Fax: (7 495) 238-60-85

www.unesco.ru



A Fund to Save Lives

In an emergency, be it a disease outbreak, a natural disaster or violence, immediate humanitarian response is critical for saving lives. However, humanitarian response depends on donor funds. The UN and NGO humanitarian programme in the North Caucasus was based on this principle for the last six years. The CAP funding for the North Caucasus ranged from 67% to 92% of total budgets requested, while on average, globally only 16% of total requested funds are provided for “flash” appeals during the critical first month of a crisis. In Guyana and the Philippines, for example, it took donors six months to provide 20% of the funding needed to assist nearly four million people suffering from floods in 2005.

On 15 December 2005, the General Assembly adopted, by consensus, a resolution upgrading the former Central Emergency Revolving Fund to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). This Fund will ensure a more predictable and timely response to humanitarian crises. The new CERF, which is a concrete outcome of the Secretary-General’s reform process and the Millennium Summit, was launched on 8 March 2006. It ensures that emergency assistance is available when it is most necessary, in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. The Fund’s purpose is simple: provide aid workers with sufficient funding to start lifesaving relief operations within 72 hours after a disaster, the period when people are most at risk. The CERF aims to distribute up to US \$500 million yearly, out of which US \$450 million will be provided as grants and US \$50 million as loans. It is funded by voluntary contributions from member-states of the United Nations, private businesses, foundations and individuals. It is expected that the Fund will be fully utilized each year, with a minimum of US \$30 million in reserve.

The first two CERF disbursements went to WHO: US \$200,000 to Cote d’Ivoire for immunization and primary

	Name	Pledges (US\$)	Commitments/ Contributions (US\$)
Governments			
1	United Kingdom		69,928,000.00
2	Sweden		41,093,249.80
3	Norway		29,993,971.19
4	Netherlands	23,867,200.00	
5	Canada	17,240,000.00	
6	Ireland	11,903,360.00	
7	Spain	10,000,000.00	
8	United States	10,000,000.00	
9	Denmark	8,100,000.00	
10	Japan	7,500,000.00	
11	Australia	7,142,857.14	
12	Republic of Korea		5,000,000.00
13	Finland		4,739,336.49
14	Switzerland	1,524,842.18	2,263,036.61
15	Luxembourg		4,000,000.00

The major CERF donors as of 23 May 2006

health care programmes and over US \$1.7 million for urgent life-saving programmes in the Horn of Africa. Margareta Wahlstrom, Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, said that “in major emergencies such as the drought now affecting East Africa, diseases that cost less than one dollar to prevent, people die. Immediate funding for immunization and surveillance will help us prevent unnecessary deaths.”

A recent US \$32 million CERF allocation will be used for ten most under-funded emergencies in the world in compliance with the commitment to allocate one-third of the CERF funds for dealing with such emergencies.

Apart from providing additional opportunities to save lives, the new Fund also saves money, as prevention is cheaper than the cure. US \$9 million would have been sufficient to spray locust larvae and prevent them from hatching, thereby averting the 2004 locust crisis in the Sahel region. As no funds were provided, the United Nations then had to launch a US \$100 million appeal to pay for food aid in 12 African countries.

As of May 23, 41 countries and two

other donors pledged to allocate US \$262 million. Most of these pledges are in addition to their contributions to the UN annual humanitarian appeal. Kazakhstan, Estonia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia became CERF donors among the countries neighbouring to Russia. Russia has not contributed to the Fund so far. There is no doubt, however, that Russia’s decision on joining the club of CERF donors is a matter of time, given the country’s role in the UN and its growing involvement in international humanitarian assistance.

Encouraging the UN member states, as well as the private sector, to support this Fund, Jan Egeland, United Nations Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, said: “The need is urgent; the plan, feasible; the results – invaluable. We have no excuses: We know what needs to be done to save lives. We need this Fund. It is our common responsibility. And it will benefit all.”

OCHA

Tel.: (7 495) 956-64-05
Fax: (7 495) 956-63-55
www.ocha.ru



Moscow Middle East Seminar Provides Impetus for Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue

As long as wars and conflicts arise first and foremost in the minds of people, it is also in the minds of people that foundations of durable peace should be laid. The decision of the General Assembly to conduct on a regular basis media seminars on the Middle East peace process, adopted in the early nineties, was a wise undertaking: it called upon media professionals, who have an immediate influence on the shaping of public opinion, to take responsibility for cultivating the ideas of peace in the minds of their audience. The latest, fourteenth seminar in the series, 'New Challenges in the Middle East Peace Process and Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue', was held in Moscow on June 8-9.

The meeting, organized by the United Nations Department of Public Information in cooperation with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with substantial support from the United Nations Information Centre in Moscow, was intended to both help people around the world better understand the problems surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and to give an impetus to the dialogue between the two peoples, strengthen their hopes for the future and, possibly, contribute to making these hopes a reality. In his message addressed to the seminar participants, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan pointed out that the event took place at a time when potentially breakthrough decisions – which could affect the lives of Palestinians and Israelis and peace prospects for many years to come – were being considered.

In his address, Deputy Russian Foreign Minister Alexander Saltanov noted that a political solution was at the heart of Russia's position on the Middle East issues. Mr. Saltanov said Russia strongly believed that the creation of a firm foundation based on international law for a lasting solution in the region was a feasible task; moreover, it was the only path to durable peace in the Middle East. Mr. Saltanov further pointed out that no

unilateral measures – whether terrorist acts, blockages or the construction of a separation wall – could contribute to the peace process, instead they only made people suffer more.

Mr. Shashi Tharoor, UN Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, who chaired the meeting, praised Russia's efforts in the Middle East process. He said that the organization of the seminar in Moscow was a sign of Russian leaders' readiness to continue efforts, aimed at finding a peaceful solution for the Middle East. Evidently, changes in the region have an impact on the peace process between Israel and Palestine: some give grounds for new hopes, other cause concern, added Mr. Tharoor. Commenting further on this point, Yuli Vorontsov, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Iraq-Kuwait issues, noted that the US active



involvement in Iraq had led to a sharp decline in Washington involvement in Israeli-Palestinian matters.

Mr. Paul Badji, Permanent Representative of Senegal to the UN and Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, characterized the Moscow event as a telling manifestation of the constructive position of the international community. At the same time, a number of participants, especially UN officials, pointed to the fact that often distorted information about the events, open and tacit lies disseminated through the media, obscured an adequate vision of the situation by the international community. According to Ambassador Badji, every effort must be taken to counter biased coverage of Middle East events in the media.



Mr. Alvaro de Soto, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, mentioned two points which in his view could serve as a basis for changes for the better: first, the prevailing support – both in the Israeli and Palestinian public opinion – for the idea of two states living side-by-side; and second, the readiness, expressed by both Israeli prime-minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, to maintain dialogue with a partner willing and capable of delivering on his promises.

Another major point made at the seminar related to the importance of involving civil society organizations in the process of cultivating and strengthening the idea of peace in the public opinion of Israelis and Palestinians. As Mr. Dani Ben-Abu, member of the Ashdod municipal council, put it, "Egyptian pyramids were built from bottom up." If politicians are unable to reach agreement, this is where people's diplomacy should step in.

The seminar is particularly relevant today, when there are only few international fora for official representatives of Israel and Palestine to discuss current issues. Many participants expressed hopes that a positive intellectual momentum, generated at the Moscow meeting, would encourage the development of the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

UNIC

Tel.: (7 495) 241-28-01 (Library),
241-28-94
Fax (7 495) 230-21-38
E-mail: dpi-moscow@unic.ru
www.unic.ru



Highlights

HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia



On 15-17 May 2006, the first international Eastern European and Central Asian AIDS conference took place in Moscow.

Federal Service of the Russian Federation for Surveillance in Consumer Rights Protection and Human Welfare together with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and International AIDS Society were the main organizers of the forum. The conference was supported by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), European Commission, AIDS Foundation East-West, the World Bank, the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) and other international organizations. Regional public organization AIDS Infoshare in cooperation with other partners provided information and technical support.

In the opening speech Mr. Mikhail Zurabov, Minister of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation, stated that last year was critical in combating HIV/AIDS. "The statement made by the President of the Russian Federation at the G8 summit in Gleneagles was the momentum for this critical change. Vladimir Putin announced the three main issues for Russia's G8 presidency for 2006 and fighting infectious diseases was among them," highlighted Mr. Zurabov. He reported that the following year the Government of the Russian Federation would allocate US \$285 million (compared to US \$110 million allocated in 2005) for HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment and the number of people who receive free medications would grow tremendously.

Today, AIDS poses one of the most serious threats for Eastern Europe and Central Asia. According to the UNAIDS/WHO data, 270,000 new HIV cases were registered in the region in 2005 only and a total of 1.6 million people live with HIV.

"The subject of this conference 'Facing the Challenge' is an acute one, as now we can observe distinct signs of commitment to fight AIDS all over the world," declared Peter Piot, UNAIDS Executive Director. "It is necessary to assist countries in scaling up HIV prevention, treatment, care and support programmes. Certainly, nothing can be done without money, but above all a national strategy for a comprehensive response is essential to make progress," Peter Piot said.

"We still have a chance to avert the epidemic in this region, to prevent a catastrophe," Richard Fitchem, Executive Director of the Global Fund to



Dr. Peter Piot

fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM) noted. He said that the Global Fund allocated significant resources to assist the region in combating HIV/AIDS. Also, Mr. Fitchem declared that it is very important to draw attention to the issue of fighting HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis during the G8 Summit in Saint Petersburg this summer. "It is important that leaders of these countries take the responsibility to do more to combat these diseases and ensure sustainable support. These measures should be taken immediately," he emphasized.

The conference became a milestone event on the way to three global actions to fight HIV epidemic. In June, the United Nations General Assembly reviewed the Declaration of Commitment to Fight HIV/AIDS, adopted in 2001. Infectious diseases were

included in the G8 Summit agenda in Saint Petersburg. In August 2006, XVI International AIDS Conference will take place in Toronto (Canada).

Following the results of the conference, a joint statement was adopted. Conference delegates welcomed positive tendencies in the region, including increase of funding and strengthening international cooperation. At the same time participants expressed their concerns about growing number of HIV cases registered among women and children. Delegates confirmed principles of the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment and reaffirmed the need to meet targets set in the Programme of High Priority Measures to Fight HIV/AIDS in CIS Countries (2002) and the Dublin Declaration on Partnership to Fight HIV/AIDS in Europe and Central Asia (2004).

At the closing session Dr. Gennadiy Onishenko, Chief State Sanitary Doctor of the Russian Federation, Head of the Federal Service Federal Service of the Russian Federation for Surveillance in Consumer Rights Protection and Human Welfare, informed that 1600 delegates from 49 countries took part in the conference and 148 presentations were made during 32 sessions. Gennadiy Onishenko highlighted that "the main outcome of the conference is the understanding that more active cooperation with civil society is needed."

On 16 May, the delegates took part in an action to mark World AIDS Memorial Day. They exchanged candles with names of victims and released white balloons in the sky.

Alexander Levin,
UNAIDS

UNAIDS
Tel.: (7 095) 232 55 99
Fax: (7 095) 232 92 45
www.unaids.ru



World Health Organization

HIV/AIDS Challenges in Siberia



Alexander Dzizinsky, Rector of the Irkutsk State Institute for Doctors' Advance Training, opens the workshop

On 24-25 May 2006, Irkutsk hosted the workshop 'Upgrading HIV/AIDS Skills and Qualifications of the Medical Personnel in the Siberian Federal District'. The workshop was organized by the Irkutsk State Institute for Medical Doctors' Advance Training with the support of the World Health Organization project 'HIV/AIDS Control and Prevention in the Russian Federation – Phase II'. Representatives of 10 medical educational institutions and 13 AIDS centres of the Siberian Federal District (SFD) participated in the workshop. It was an unprecedented event that brought together representatives of higher educational institutions and staff of the AIDS centres, i.e. academic institutions and organizations that directly work with patients.

The situation with the spread of HIV-infection in the Siberian

Federal District remains complex. The number of people living with HIV ranges from 9.5 persons per 100,000 population in the Republic of Tyva to 805.5 per 100,000 population in the Irkutsk Oblast. As of 1 January 2006, over 2,500 people died of HIV-infection or co-infections. The number of officially registered people living with AIDS exceeds 150. At the same time, there are approximately 1,250 officially registered HIV-positive patients who currently need treatment. The number of people living with HIV who will require treatment in the nearest future exceeds 7,000. Approximately 2,000 cases of HIV/TB co-infection and 12,000 cases of HIV and hepatitis C are registered in the Siberian Federal District. Currently, approximately 600 people living with HIV in the regions of the Siberian Federal District receive treatment. This number includes about 400 people who receive active anti-retroviral therapy.

Dr. Corinna Reinicke, WHO Project Manager, presented a project that places a significant focus on training Russian healthcare personnel in the area of HIV/AIDS in four regions of the Russian Federation, namely, in the Irkutsk Oblast, the Leningrad Oblast, the Kaliningrad Oblast and the Krasnodar Kray. In her presentation Dr. Ute Enderlein, WHO Public Health Project Officer, spoke about WHO approaches to training in the sphere of HIV/AIDS. Dr. Enderlein presented a

review of the existing guidelines, methodological recommendations, and WHO protocols in this area.

The participants noted that the current situation in the region, as well as in Russia at large, requires providing training in HIV/AIDS not only to infec-



Dr. Corinna Reinicke (right) and Dr. Ute Enderlein make a presentation

tious disease doctors, but also to a broad range of medical personnel, including physicians, surgeons and paediatricians. Only in five regions of the Siberian Federal District advance professional training is regulated by relevant decrees. Also, the participants of the meeting raised the problem of donor blood safety, an issue that is directly related to the HIV epidemic, and the need to upgrade skills and qualifications of doctors working in this field.

The participants agreed to develop specific recommendations for advance professional training of medical personnel and to coordinate all efforts in this area. These recommendations will be submitted for consideration to the Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation as part of the process of developing Russian national training standards in the area of HIV/AIDS.



Participants of the workshop

World No Tobacco Day Unites Doctors



On 31 March 2006 the second Russian conference 'Doctors Against Tobacco' was held to mark World No Tobacco Day. This year it was a teleconference that brought together 9 Russian cities: Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Nizhniy Novgorod, Vladimir, Rostov-on-Don, Saratov, Ekaterinburg, Krasnoyarsk and Novosibirsk. The participants included A.G. Chuchalin, Russian Chief Therapist, Academician of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences; N. N. Volodin, Academician of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences, Director of the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Human Welfare, Science and Education of the Ministry of Education and Social Development of the Russian Federation; Academician M. I. Davydov, President of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences; Ms. Mary Collins, Head of WHO Country Office in the Russian Federation a.i.; A.A. Khadartsev, Representative of the Public Chamber under the President of the Russian Federation; Professor M.M.

Ilkovich, Chief Pulmonologist of Saint Petersburg, and T.E. Romanova, Chief Therapist of the Nizhegorodskaya Oblast'.

It is critical that Russian doctors join their efforts to fight negative impact of tobacco on active and passive smokers' health as in Russia there are no legal acts adopted at the national level to address the tobacco epidemic. Russia is one of the few countries that did not join the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Yet, tobacco use in Russia is increasing and doctors are the first to face severe consequences of tobacco use as the tobacco-induced morbidity rate is constantly growing.

The goal of World No Tobacco Day 2006 is to raise public awareness of a broad range of deadly tobacco products, facilitate public access to accurate information, as well as to unmask traditional, new and future tobacco products. The motto of World No Tobacco Day is "Tobacco: deadly in any form or disguise". A national campaign 'Are You a Smoker? Check Your Lungs' was held in the cities participating in the teleconference. Every smoker had an opportunity to check his or her lungs, to have the air exhaled tested for CO and to receive a doctor's consultation. The results of this campaign were presented at the end of the teleconference. They were shocking: up to 80 percent of smokers manifested visible signs of obstructive lung disease while only 15-20 percent of people tested had reported lung problems prior to testing.

Therefore, in order to ensure a more effective response to tobacco use and to improve global public health it is crucial that both doctors and the public have a better awareness of various tobacco products and modern ways of treating tobacco dependency. To this end, in the framework of this conference G.M. Sakharova M.D. and N.S. Antonov M.D. delivered a workshop on smokers' treatment. It is noteworthy that several years ago on-going efforts to involve doctors of all specializations into fighting against tobacco were initiated with the support of the Ministry of Health and Social Development of the RF. As a result of this initiative doctors



developed a shared attitude to tobacco use. During an interactive survey held in the framework of the teleconference the participants were asked: "Doctors of what specializations should be responsible for helping people to give up smoking?" They gave a unanimous answer: "Doctors of all specializations." The attitude towards smoking medical staff is also changing. Eighty six percent of the participants gave a negative answer to the question "Can medical staff use tobacco products?" Clearly, we still have a long way to go to reach 100 percent; however, there is an obvious progress.

The support of the government is crucial to ensure effective fight against tobacco use. The participants of the conference agreed that it is absolutely necessary that Russia joins WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control as the age of initiation of tobacco use in Russia is 10, and nearly 60 percent of the population are smokers. Therefore, on behalf of Russian doctors the participants of the conference asked the Government of the Russian Federation and personally Prime Minister M.E. Fradkov to address a possibility of Russia's joining the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control as soon as possible. This will mark a step towards protecting the population against tobacco and improving the nation's health.

Galina Sakharova,
M.D., Deputy Director,
Research Institute of Pulmonology,
National Coordinator of the European
Anti-Tobacco Strategy



TB Assistance Administration at the Municipal Level



Participants working on their lecturing skills

On 3-7 April 2006, the first workshop on the methodology of training of trainers for the 'Organization of TB



Participants practicing role play skills

Assistance at the Municipal Level' course was held. It was organized by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Russian Medical Academy of Post-Graduate Education (RMAPE), Tuberculosis

Research Institute of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences (WHO Collaborating Centre) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Specialists from five specialized federal research institutes took part in the workshop. After completing the course, the participants, who represent research institutes responsible for TB prevention and treatment in each particular region of the Russian Federation, will conduct training for heads and chiefs of organizational and methodical units of TB prophylactic centres in their regions. They will instruct phthisiatricians how to organize TB treatment at the municipal level. This work is supported within the framework of the World Bank loan on TB and HIV/AIDS control.

The training course was conducted by the specialists of US CDC and Russian experts, who presented the basics of training, including the principles of training, interactive approaches in training as well as the methodology of 'feedback training'. The 'feedback training' gives the participants an opportunity to deliver part of the course and then get feedback on their training skills to improve performance.

Ninety six percent of the participants rated this course as highly effective and reported improved skills and expert-

ise in the following areas:

- methodology of conducting foundation trainings;
- quality and delivery of lectures; teamwork and role play;
- evaluation and feedback on the trainees' training skills;
- hands-on training experience;
- training programme development.

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

WHO, Russia

Tel.: (7 495) 787-21-17

Fax: (7 495) 787-21-19

E-mail: whorus@who.org.ru

Web sites:

www.who.int and www.who.dk



Congratulations to Winners of the Essay Contest 2006



On 23 May 2006, the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) hosted the final round of the annual essay contest organized together with the United Nations Association of Russia. In this year's essay contest the participants were asked to present their vision of the UN

reform in a form of a letter to the President of the Russian Federation. Students wrote about the most important aspects of the UN reform and the position the Russian Government should take on this issue.

The jury, which included experts in international relations from MGIMO and the United Nations Association of Russia, processed over 1,000 essays. Evgeniy Isayev (Novorossiysk), Sabina Tairova (Zheleznodorogny), Danil Garifullin (Tolyatti) became the winners of the essay contest 2006. Chairman of the jury Anatoly Torkunov, Corresponding Member of the

Russian Academy of Sciences, Rector of the Moscow State University of International Relations and Chairman of UNA-Russia, congratulated the winners and thanked all participants for their interest in the UN reform. The winners can enter the Moscow State Institute of International Relations hors concours.

UNA-Russia

Tel.: (7 095) 680-80-67

Fax: (7 095) 680-33-58

una@una.ru

www.uma.ru

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 / Letter to the Heads of State and Government of the 'Group of Eight'

"Collectively, we do have the knowledge and a resource to conquer the poverty," the UN Secretary-General wrote to the G8 leaders on the threshold of the Summit in St. Petersburg. "Your decisions have critical implications for people all over the world, and for generations to come."

WFP / Russia Marching Against Hunger

Walk the World, a global march against child hunger organized by WFP, brought together thousands in Russia in 2006.

UNDSS / New Chief Security Adviser in the Russian Federation

In March 2006, Mr. Kovvuri C. Reddy assumed responsibilities of Chief Security Adviser at the UN Department of Safety and Security in the Russian Federation.

UNHCR / UN High Commissioner for Refugees Visits Russia

On 5 -11 April 2006, Mr. Antonio Guterres for the first time visited Russia in his capacity of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Mr. Guterres had a series of high-level meetings and travelled to Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, and St. Petersburg.

UNDP / North Caucasus: More Jobs, Less Poverty

On 18-19 May 2006 in Kislovodsk, UNDP conducted the conference 'Microfinance Needs and Options in the North Caucasus' to promote microfinance as a way to fight poverty and unemployment.

UNICEF / Chernobyl in the Eyes of Its Children

UNICEF photo workshop held in March helped children from Chernobyl-affected areas to learn more about the scale and consequences of the accident.

UNESCO / UNESCO Welcomes Decision to Secure Lake Baikal

UNESCO Director-General welcomed the decision by Russian President Vladimir Putin to change the route of an oil pipeline built across Siberia to eliminate potential risk to the World Heritage site of Lake Baikal.

UNESCO / Press Freedom Helps to Fight Poverty, Says UNESCO

On the occasion of the World Free Press Day on 3 May, UNESCO exhibited in Moscow the best works of the 'Eurasia. Social Portrait' international photo contest.

OCHA / A Fund to Save Lives

On 8 March 2006, the Central Emergency Response Fund was launched to replace the Central Emergency Revolving Fund. This Fund will ensure a more predictable and timely response to humanitarian crises.

UNIC / Moscow Middle East Seminar Provides Impetus for Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue

On 8-9 June 2006 in Moscow, the UN Department of Public Information together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RF, organised the fourteenth media seminar on the Middle East peace process. The series was initiated by the UN General Assembly.

UNAIDS / HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

On 15-17 May 2006, the first International Eastern European and Central Asian AIDS Conference took place in Moscow, which brought together 1,600 participants from 49 countries.

WHO / HIV/AIDS Challenges in Siberia

On 24-25 May 2006, Irkutsk hosted the workshop 'Upgrading HIV/AIDS Skills and Qualifications of the Medical Personnel in the Siberian Federal District', supported by the World Health Organization.

WHO / World No Tobacco Day Unites Doctors

On 31 March 2006, the second Russian conference 'Doctors Against Tobacco' was held in Moscow to mark World No Tobacco Day. This year the conference was designed as a teleconference that brought together nine Russian cities: Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod, Vladimir, Rostov-on-Don, Saratov, Ekaterinburg, Krasnoyarsk and Novosibirsk.

WHO / TB Assistance Administration at the Municipal Level

The World Health Organization, in cooperation with its Russian partners, launched a series of workshops for TB specialists to train them in distributing knowledge on organising TB assistance at the municipal level.

UNA-Russia / Congratulations to Winners of the Essay Contest 2006

The Moscow State Institute of International Relations hosted an award ceremony for winners of the annual essay contest held in cooperation with the United Nations Association of Russia. This year the contest was devoted to UN reform.

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 |