

UN IN RUSSIA

Translating economic growth into sustainable human development with human rights

No. 1 (38)

January–February
2005



Published by
the United Nations Office
in the Russian Federation



Protection of Kamchatka's environment is one of the hundreds UN projects in Russia. Stefan Vassilev, UN Resident Coordinator in the Russian Federation, portrays his colleagues' activities /3

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"Stasik, what are you dreaming of?" we asked the boy. He lowered his head and said something in reply that we could not hear. "To eat a chocolate," his granny, Zoya Mikhailovna Bulaeva, 78, clarified. She survived through the two Chechen wars in Grozny

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"The most difficult part of my work is to observe when the Heads of children's institutions tolerate the situation when children's rights are violated", says Tatiana Alekseeva, the Ombudsperson for Children's Rights for Volgograd oblast

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The HIV/AIDS epidemic is rapidly evolving in the Russian Federation. What does UN do to stop the epidemic? What problems do outreach workers face?

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High Commissioner for Human Rights Ends Visit to the Russian Federation

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise
Arbour announced Sunday she had been invited by Russian
authorities to visit Chechnya and that her Office would establish a
presence in Russia.

Speaking at the end of a four-day visit to Moscow, Mrs. Arbour
said President Vladimir Putin had invited her to visit the Northern
Caucasus, including Chechnya, during her next visit to Russia,
which she hoped to make "in the near future".

The High Commissioner said a solid platform to enhance coopera-
tion with the Russian Government had been achieved, citing an
agreement with authorities to introduce a presence of her Office
within the United Nations Country Team in Russia.

"Through our now closer contact with the Government of Russia,
we hope to work on developing a series of concrete, practical pro-
grammes designed to bring about tangible benefits to the enjoy-
ment of human rights in this country", she said. "Such programmes
will need to focus on the whole range of human rights: not simply
the civil and political but also the economic, social and cultural".

The High Commissioner added that she had also had extensive dis-
cussions related to counter-terrorism. "The people of Russia have
suffered acutely from terrorist acts and they deserve both sympathy
and support in addressing this problem", she said. "They have

the right to expect from their Government legitimate and effective
action in confronting this threat. But she said action ceases to be
legitimate, and often becomes ineffective, when it steps over the
clearly articulated bounds set by international human rights law.

"When law enforcement officers abuse their powers with impuni-
ty and when civilians have no true remedies for violations of their
rights by state agents, society is doubly victimized", she said.

The High Commissioner reiterated her willingness to support initia-
tives aimed at strengthening respect for human rights in the area
of law enforcement and in social and economic rights. "The recon-
struction of such regions as Chechnya will be critical both in restor-
ing the dignity of its people and also in ending the violence", she
said, adding her Office was stood ready to help and that she hoped
to pursue those discussions in greater detail in the future.

In addition to the situation in Chechnya, Mrs. Arbour said she had dis-
cussed a wide range of pressing economic and social challenges fac-
ing Russians. We talked of the HIV/AIDS crisis facing the world and
from which Russia is not exempt. We spoke, in particular, of the dis-
turbingly increase in rates of infection among women - a consequence,
in part, of the continuing subordination of women in many parts of
the world, both in the home and in society at large", she said.

UN Information Centre in Moscow

UN in Russia

Published once in two months

Circulation: 2,000 copies

www.unrussia.ru

www.undp.ru

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in the Russian Federation

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UN Development Programme

Interview

Stefan Vassilev: "Helping Russia Is Our Goal"

Stefan Vassilev, United Nations Resident Coordinator and UN Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative in the Russian Federation, gave an interview to Vladimir Sadakov, Editor of the "UN in Russia".

– *What is the UN system in Russia?*

– It comprises 22 specialized UN institutions, programmes, foundations and agencies, such as the World Health Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UNESCO – in Moscow, St. Petersburg and other cities. They currently employ over 1000 staff members, mostly Russian nationals.

– *What can you say about the relationships between the UN organizations and the country's authorities?*

– We are guests here, and our relations are regulated by an agreement between the UN and the Russian Federation as well as by a number of cooperation agreements signed by the Government of Russia and UN agencies. We act in a mode agreed with the Russian Government.

– *If we start from your training at MGIMO, you are a guest of long standing. And have been familiar with this country for years. What can you say about the present-day Russia?*

– I would describe Russia as a traveler in a difficult journey. Its economy is in transition. One of the adverse outcomes of economic reforms has been the growing scale of poverty: leaders of the country admit that nearly 30 million people live below the poverty line, with half of the poor being the working people. Even more disconcerting is the fact that the most likely risk of finding themselves among the poorest is facing families with children. Families themselves grow increasingly smaller in size: 1.3 children per family. Children are becoming the most indigent group of the country's population. According to official statistics, 800 thousand children live outside their families, the number of "street children" is growing. In some regions, children are devoid of primary education because they live too far from school. Come to think of it, the children are the future of this country! Another

misfortune is the HIV/AIDS: 300 thousand infected, according to official statistics. Other estimates indicate a different number – around 1 million. Due to the high mortality in active working age, we are faced with a situation where men do not live to the age of 60, i.e. to their pension. It hurts to realize this, because the consequences are easily predictable. These adverse consequences ultimately may result in a drastic decrease of the population: from more than 140 million to 100 million and even fewer.

At the same time, Russia is a member of G8 – "the big eight", a group of the world's most advanced countries, permanent member of the UN Security Council, nuclear power, whose gold and foreign exchange reserves are in excess of USD 120 billion, and a country of no small budget profit. To put it in a nutshell, resources are plentiful, but they are managed poorly. As a result, the bitter paradox: the country is rich, but its population is destitute.

– *Hence, the primeval Russian question: what's to be done?*

– At this very moment, while the prices for oil are still high, there is a real chance to overcome purposefully the dependence on the "oil needle". And invest the oil-generated money in human resources, in sustainable human development, education, science-intensive technologies, environment.

– *You've mentioned sustainable human development. Let us explain to the readers what this is.*

– According to the UN methodology, such development is measured by three indicators: per capita income, educational level and life expectancy. Together, they constitute the human development index. UNDP has, for the last fifteen years, been calculating this index in 160 countries, for 10 years – in Russia. At present, Russia



Stefan Vassilev was born in Sofia in 1963. He graduated from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), Sofia State University, Harvard. He is master of international law and has the diplomatic rank of an ambassador. Mr Vassilev speaks Russian, English, French, Macedonian, Serbian, and Croatian languages. He worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, at the National Security Council of the Bulgarian President, UN organizations, and the CSCE. Since 2003 – UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in the Russian Federation.

ranks 57th: It is being held up by low incomes and short life expectancy.

– *One may get an impression that these studies and the UN activities are far from the specific problems that you've referred to.*

– I'll give you a few examples of our activities, and may people decide themselves. In Kamchatka, UNDP is implementing a large project toward the development of protected natural areas and conserving unique ecosystems. We provide grants and microloans to the local population for setting up small businesses. People get a legitimate stable income and do not have to engage in poaching. As for USD 6

million, the cost of the project, this is a contribution not only in nature conservation, but in decreasing the poverty in the region, which is far from being a leader in terms of incomes level.

Next comes HIV/AIDS. The plague of the 20th century and now of the 21st century, is now dealt with by UNAIDS, a specially instituted agency to combat it, by WHO, and other UN organizations. Since last year UNDP has launched the project "Leadership in action: for a Russia without AIDS". The idea is to attract prominent personalities from the world of culture, arts, well-known journalists and others, who would speak to their compatriots about the real dangers of the epidemic, thus far incurable. The latest example: in December, one of the events devoted to World AIDS Day was a charity performance of the Russian version of the "We Will Rock You" musical, organized in cooperation with producers of the musical and its director Dmitry Astrakhan. All proceeds from the show will be used to support the fight against the epidemic.

Next come "street children". The UN Children's Fund deals with this problem, but not only it. How to put on trial a homeless and hungry teenager for pick-pocketing? Until recently, the same courts determined the destiny of such teenagers and of adult offenders. As a result, "minors" would be placed in a colony, whereupon, naturally, they hardly ever got corrected. In St. Petersburg and Rostov, UNDP implemented pilot projects of "Juvenile Justice". It comes down to the following: minors are tried by special courts, and if the offence is negligible, they are assigned a penalty without confinement. To prevent second offence, there are social workers whose job is to help the teenager to become a normal, full-fledged person. The statistics show: previously, in 16 out of 18 cases, teenagers

broke the law a second time, while now second offence happens only in 1 case out of 18! A draft law on juvenile courts has been submitted to the State Duma for consideration. Recently, the Chairperson of Council of the President of the Russian Federation on Assistance to Development of Civil Society Institutions and Human Rights Ella Pamfilova told President Putin about positive experience of introducing some elements of juvenile justice in Rostov Region.

– *You've mentioned Kamchatka, Petersburg, Rostov... This is only some of destinations where UN agencies operate. How much do they spend on projects in Russia and which regions get more?*

– In practice, the situation is often the following: the poorer the area, the more likely it is that a new project will be launched there. At present, for this and other reasons, the priority area is the North Caucasus. Humanitarian aid to the local population alone amounted to USD 70 million in 2004. It benefited 1,200,000 people; and the aid was distributed strictly according to the lists of those needy. By and large, over the last 2 years, the volume of resources that we have attracted for programs in Russia has increased from US \$150–180 million to US \$300–400 million.

– *Suppose, I am the head of the region. What should I do to channel part of these millions to my native land?*

– The amounts in question have long been distributed among specific projects. Each of them starts with an idea, or concept, which includes a brief description of a problem, possible ways to resolve it, required financial and administrative support and expected results. This done, the concept is considered by a UN Agency, assessed from the standpoint of its mandate, priorities of the Government of the Russian Federation and, of course, general expediency. The destiny of each proposal depends largely on the possibility of finding the resources for the future project in the UN agency's budget or of attracting donors. We are particularly interested in concepts offering potential sources of co-financing (this is a mandatory rule for all projects), and which are supported at the state level. Which means that if a concept speaks of an urgent problem that may be solved, and if donors are willing to respond positively, we work on it further: a project document is prepared, agreements with donors and partners are concluded, the document is agreed with the

Government, and the project gets off the ground. Sometimes, we offer whatever we can do ourselves. However, we never impose our point of view.

Here is a recent example: last autumn, we concluded an agreement with the governor of Tver Region. We arranged to work out together a concept of socioeconomic development of the region, prepare key draft laws for attracting investment, diminishing poverty, and combating HIV/AIDS on the basis of the world experience.

– *Imagine, a young girl or a young man, having read this interview, would desire to work for the United Nations. What would you recommend?*



– The essential minimum is a good knowledge of English, better still – of two foreign languages, plus higher education, humanities required more often.. However, people should bear in mind that all UN institutions that exist virtually in each country employ around 100,000 people. It is simply impossible to give jobs to all who apply. There is a more realistic alternative: with a background like this, one is sure to find a job, no matter where – in Russia or abroad.

– *What is the main goal of the UN in Russia?*

– To help the country pool all its resources for the sake of human development, raising the peoples's quality of life. I recall the line of Alexander Block addressed to Russia a century ago and vital today as never before:

*"...May it lure and deceive you, –
You won't be done for or vanish,
And your beautiful features will only be
dimmed By concern..."*

We work here for these features to become clearer – for the citizens of Russia and the world.





UN Development Programme

The Millennium Development Goals in CIS and Russia's Context

Discussing UN Millennium Project Report

On 14 February in Moscow, the United Nations Office in the Russian Federation and the Centre of Strategic Research organized a round-table on Socio-Economic Development Goals for the Russian Federation in the Context of Internationally Adopted Millennium Development Goals (MDGs.) The discussion was launched in connection with the presentation on Moscow of the global report *Investing in Development: a Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, which had been initiated by the United Nations.

The participants included Mr Alexei Golovkov, Head of Secretariat of the Deputy Prime Minister A. Zhukov, Mr Kalman Mizsei, UN Assistant Secretary-General, Mr Stefan Vassilev, UN Resident Coordinator in the Russian Federation, Ms Elvira Nabiullina, President of the Centre of Strategic Research, Dr Vladimir Mau, Rector of the Academy of Public Economy, Government and Ministerial officials, as well as Russian and international experts and researchers.

The round-table provided an overview of the main conclusions of the

Millennium Project report and stimulated discussion about the relevance of MDGs – the global development goals – in the Russian and CIS context. The participants analyzed the link between the global MDGs and medium and long term national development planning. The round table highlighted Russia's capabilities in supporting international development as an emerging donor and provider of technical assistance to CIS and developing countries. In addition, the forum set a starting point for the preparation of the first ever Russian report on MDGs in the framework of the annual national Human Development report 2005 (produced with UN support).

MDGs must be tailored to national circumstances, Mr Mizsei stated, explaining that, for instance, "literacy, primary education is not an issue for CIS countries, but educational quality and relevance are." In Russia, the adult mortality rate is very disturbing, in particular that of the male population, which lives only 56 years on an average. In many CIS countries, strong economic growth is apparent, but growth is not the only condition for poverty reduction. These countries, including Russia,



register huge regional variations and rural-urban disparities in poverty rates. Poor targeting of social assistance is also a problem as it tends to benefit the already well-to-do.

Commenting on the report's conclusions that state investments and assistance on the part of richer countries are indispensable for achieving MDGs, Mr Mau noted that "in addition to investments, democratic institutions are necessary", which would provide for the efficient and targeted use of these investments. It is critical to guarantee the security of both investments and investors, and of recipients. Moreover, a basic economic legislation and political institutions should exist (legal, law enforcement bodies, etc.)

Mr Golovkov described the discussion as topical for the Government, especially while it is working on the methodology of mid term result-oriented budget planning. It is necessary to identify coordinates and to formulate goals and indicators. "We are interested in using the report in our current planning process, and we welcome this discussion," Mr Golovkov continued. We successfully cooperate with the World Bank and with UNDP in terms of attracting international expertise."



Left to right: Kalman Mizsei, Alexei Golovkov and Andrey Markov (World Bank)

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Kasidis Rochanakorn : Humanitarian Operations in North Caucasus Require High Security Measures



Kasidis Rochanakorn

– *Mr. Rochanakorn, what are the main directions of UNHCR's activities in the Russian Federation in 2005?*

– One of the main objectives of the UNHCR Representation in the Russian Federation is to support the development of an asylum system in the country that meets international standards. In 2005, we'll continue to co-operate with our partners to advocate for proper implementation of refugee legislation in Russia, including local integration of refugees, resettlement to third countries of certain categories of vulnerable refugees and voluntary repatriation for those who can and wish to return home.

For example in Moscow and in St. Petersburg access to the refugee status determination procedure continued to be problematic for asylum-seekers. According to our estimate at the end of 2004, there were some five thousand refugees and asylum-seekers in Moscow and in Moscow region, originating from Afghanistan, the Middle East and various African countries.

Voluntary repatriation is the best durable solution for refugees. Last year UNHCR assisted 340 individuals to return to their home countries. Refugees and asylum-seekers from Afghanistan made up the majority of them. Since June 2003 a total of 318 asylum-seekers and refugees have returned to Afghanistan from Russia with UNHCR's assistance.

UN in Russia acquaints readers with the interview of the UNHCR Representative and the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in the Russian Federation Kasidis Rochanakorn to the Russian Information Agency INTERFAX.

In North Ossetia substantial progress has been achieved in securing citizenship and forced migrant status for refugees from Georgia. In close co-operation with the Government of North-Ossetia, UNHCR has implemented a housing programme for them with a financial contribution over 31 million Rubles recorded to date. From 2005 onwards, the integration programme for the benefit of refugees from Georgia will be executed jointly with UNDP, with participation of other international organizations.

In 2005 we'll also continue providing legal counseling to stateless persons in the Russian Federation.

Within the UN humanitarian programme in the North Caucasus for the benefit of displaced populations due to the hostility in the Republic of Chechnya, UNHCR will maintain its coordination role in the protection and shelter sectors.

– *How do you assess the situation in the North Caucasus?*

– My impression about the humanitarian situation in the North Caucasus is that although so much has been accomplished by the humanitarian community in recent years, the humanitarian needs in Chechnya and the neighboring republics remain large.

It must however be recognized that the humanitarian assistance is meant to address people's immediate needs such as food, health care, protection, water and sanitation, shelter and education. In itself it is not a solution to the various problems that create the needs. It cannot stop hostility, eliminate poverty, control prejudice and animosity, or directly tackle any of the root causes of human suffering. As we continue to strive to meet the humanitar-

ian needs of the affected population of the North Caucasus, it is important that we seek also to forge a closer link between the humanitarian work with the longer-term efforts towards recovery and development assistance of the Government.

– *How do you assess the situation of Chechen IDPs residing in Ingushetia after they were resettled from the tented camps?*

– During the course of last year, we observed that the pace of IDPs returning to Chechnya proceeded much faster than we had anticipated. Despite some difficulties associated with the final stage of the last camp's closure activities, we are generally satisfied that the principle of voluntary return has by and large been upheld.

During the closure of the tented camps IDPs were offered an alternative shelter to move in case they chose not to return to Chechnya. After closure the camps approximately 23% of IDPs indeed opted to relocate to alternative shelters in Ingushetia, and UNHCR and its partners were heavily engaged in ensuring that IDPs were made aware of options without undue pressure.

At the end of December 2004, 35,170 Chechen IDPs were still registered in Ingushetia for assistance in the database



Blacksmith's house at the Komsomolskoe settlement in North Ossetia is one of the UNHCR quick impact projects carried out for refugees from Georgia

Photo by V. Sokolova, UNHCR



Chechen internally displaced family in one of the temporary settlements in Ingushetia

of the Danish Refugee Council, UNHCR partner. Therefore part of the humanitarian assistance will be directed to assist these IDPs while they remain there as well as to assist those wishing to remain permanently in Ingushetia.

As of today, the major part of the assistance is already provided inside Chechnya as mentioned earlier. For 2005, the UN and international non-governmental organizations are seeking about US \$ 60 million to continue providing humanitarian assistance in the region. These funds will be used, first of all, to protect in Chechnya and neighboring republics the affected civilian population, in particular, children, handicapped and women; to meet the most basic social and physical needs like education, shelter, health; to support the capacity of local governments and NGOs to provide needed public services. But I should mention that our assistance is meant to complement the government's efforts.

– *What is the security situation of UN staff working in the North Caucasus?*

– The security situation in the North Caucasus remains complex and volatile, despite marked improvement in terms of access to the Republic of Chechnya by the humanitarian organizations during the course of 2004.

The safety of humanitarian workers remains however the principle operational concern for all of us operating in

the North Caucasus. Under the current operational modalities, security requirements still constrain the reach of the humanitarian operation and absorb large programming resources.

It may be reminded that for the UN, key operational areas in the North Caucasus remain designated as high-risk, requiring one of the most stringent security



Asylum-seekers are waiting for a legal consultation at the UNHCR Refugee Reception Centre

regimes to be applied by the UN for the safety and security of its staff anywhere in the world. We are however hopeful that in 2005 the security situation will improve further, allowing humanitarian workers better access to people needing assistance.

– *How do you evaluate co-operation between UN agencies and Russian bodies, EMERCOM in particular?*

– The UN agencies have enjoyed very good co-operation with federal agencies as well as local authorities in the North Caucasus.

This is quite a long history of co-operation between EMERCOM and UN agencies, both inside the Russian Federation in case of natural disasters as well as in the international humanitarian assistance extended globally by Russia, as in the case of the emergency response to the tsunami catastrophe in South Asia. In December last year, with a view to strengthening this long established cooperation, UNHCR in close collaboration with other UN agencies and EMERCOM organized an emergency management training workshop at the EMERCOM training centre in Noginsk near Moscow. This 6-day joint training exercise was participated by some 30 staff members drawn from EMERCOM, local government entities of the North Caucasus, NGOs and UN agencies.

– *How on-the-fly, from your point of view, the international community has reacted to consequences of tsunami in the regions of Southeast Asia?*

– The expression of international solidarity and support to the victims of the tsunami has been most unprecedented. We have been so impressed by the outpour of generous contributions by members of the international community, including the Russian Government.

As you may know, in response to this disaster, the Russian Federation has flown over 20 emergency missions to the affected countries and pledged 22 million US dollars more assistance during the major donor conference on 11th January.

In general, the tsunami response has been timely, large and effective. As for UNHCR, we began the round-the-clock assistance operation immediately and continue providing to tsunami victims shelter relief, non-food aid and logistic support in Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

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People

A Clean, Well-lighted Place

Zoya Mikhailovna Bulaeva, 78, survived through the two Chechen wars in Grozny. Every day she comes to the dining hall in the centre of the city. WFP's implementing partner "Caritas Internationalis" arranged this canteen for the most vulnerable and poor. WFP provides basic food commodities for the canteen. She usually comes with her five-year-old grandson, Stasik (Stanislav). It is the only place for them to have a hot and nourishing meal each day.

When WFP staff arrived at the canteen on a cold December day Zoya Mikhailovna and Stasik had already had their meal and were resting before the long – particularly for the elderly grandmother – trek home. We started to talk to them. Zoya Mikhailovna explained that she had worked as a sorter in one of Grozny's post offices before she retired in 1989. Having two grown up children – a daughter and a son – she was dreaming of becoming a granny. The only thing she was praying for was that she would still be healthy and strong when her grandchildren would arrive so that she could care for them.

She turned out to be much stronger than she expected. She survived through the devastation wrought by the first Chechen war in Grozny when

her son became disabled. Her daughter got married just before the second war to a Chechen who was killed later in the fighting. In 1999 her daughter gave birth to Stasik in Grozny when the city was being severely shelled. In the middle of this chaos, Zoya Mikhailovna recalls becoming a grandmother, though at the time she did not know if it made her happy or not. She was not sure that the three of them would have



enough food to survive. "Thank God, there are so many kind people here," she said. "I am Russian and my Chechen neighbours provided a lot of support. They brought food and clothes and shared what little they had. Sometimes when we had nothing to eat I went into a street and just begged as my daughter is too weak to do anything"



Their lives changed for the better when the canteen was opened. "Now we know for sure that at least once a day we will have a meal. Stasik and I love the food they cook here. Sometimes he eats my portion as well, particularly when they serve meatballs and I am only too happy to give them to him," she said smiling. "You know", she added after a while, "it is not only the food that matters, but the fact that someone cares. Sometimes we just like to sit here as the place is clean and the people are friendly."

"Stasik, what are you dreaming of?" we asked to somehow involve the boy into the conversation. He lowered his head and said something in reply that we could not hear. "To eat a chocolate," his granny clarified. We started praying that we would find it in our bags and, luckily having discovered a candy bar, gave it to him. His face began to shine. "Any other dreams?" we asked. "No", he assured us, shaking his head. He was so happy, that he could think of nothing else.

Leaving the canteen we thought that the elderly woman and the child as well as hundreds of other people like them in Grozny, have a vital need for just that: "a clean, well-lighted place" where they can eat and feel cared for.



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For Restoration of Education System in the Chechen Republic

UNESCO and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation signed two Protocols on co-operation in implementing the project "Support for Rehabilitation and Improvement of Education System of the Chechen Republic." Mr. V. Fridlianov, Deputy Minister of Education and Science, and Mr. P. Queau, Director of UNESCO Moscow Office, signed both Protocols for the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and for UNESCO.

On December 7, 2004 signing of Protocol on co-operation in implementing the subproject "Support for Upgrading the Capacity of the Chechen Institute for Teacher Retraining" took place in the Ministry. Norwegian Government supports this subproject with 100,000 Euro. The Protocol was signed in part of the subproject related to modernization of school curricula of the

Chechen Republic to the ethno-cultural context. Guidelines on curricula renewal for faculty of Chechen Institute for Teacher Retraining (CITR), Chechen school principals and teachers will be developed by the specialists of Academy for Teacher Retraining and Qualification Improvement at the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation within this subproject. Besides, there will be special training sessions on guidelines organized for the specialists of CITR, Chechen school principals, and teachers in 2005. Activities on curricula modernization will also include development and publication of textbooks in Chechen language for realization of national and regional components of curricula.

Government of Japan contributed with USD 283,121 for the subproject "Support for Upgrading of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Chechen



Republic Staff, Local Educational Authorities and Educational Institutions." The activities under this subproject particularly are associated with upgrading staff of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Chechen Republic, local educational authorities and educational institutions in the field of planning, monitoring, evaluation, reporting, ICT in education management as well as education legislation and regulations. The Protocol was signed on January 25, 2005.

25 Countries Discuss the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Regional Seminar on the Promotion of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage for Europe and North America was held on December 15–17, 2004 in Kazan, Russian Federation.

That was the fifth Regional meeting of a series of eight organized by UNESCO in different regions of the world in order to promote the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted by the Organization's General Conference in October 2003.

The tentative schedule of the meetings is as follows:

1. West and Central Africa (Dakar, Senegal): 8–10 June 2004;
2. Latin America and Cuba (Paraty, Brazil): 28–30 June 2004;
3. Asia (New Delhi, India): 20–22 September 2004;

4. Eastern and Southern Africa (Nairobi, Kenya): 22–24 November 2004;
5. Europe and North America (Kazan, Russia): 15–17 December 2004;
6. Arab States (Alger, Algeria): 5–7 January 2005;
7. Pacific States (Suva, Fiji): 2005, 14 February 2005;
8. Caribbean States (Roseau, Dominica): 17–19 February 2005.

The main aim of this regional meeting in Kazan was not only to encourage Member States to ratify the Convention, but also to recognize the importance of the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage that is particularly vulnerable and requires special attention and care and to create an opportunity to exchange views and experiences in relationship to the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage.

The representatives of Ministries of Culture and Ministries of Foreign Affairs of 25 countries of Europe and North America participated in this three-day seminar.

The meeting was opened by a welcome speech pronounced by Mr Kamil Iskhakov, Mayor of the City of Kazan, who chaired the opening session. His speech was followed by contributions by Ms Zilia Valeeva, Vice Prime Minister of the Republic of Tatarstan on behalf of Mr Shaimiev, President of the Republic of Tatarstan; by Ms Mehriban Aliyeva, First Lady of Azerbaijan and Goodwill Ambassador of UNESCO for oral and musical traditions; by Mr Grigori Ordzhonikidze, Secretary-General of the National Commission for UNESCO of the Russian Federation; by Mr Polad Biul-Biulogly, Director-General of TURKSOI and Minister of Culture of Azerbaijan; and by

Ms Elena Drapeko, Deputy Chair of the Committee on Culture of the State Duma of the Russian Federation. On UNESCO side, introductory speeches were delivered by Mr Philippe Queau, Director of the UNESCO Office in Moscow, by Mr Riëks Smeets, Chief of the Intangible Heritage Section and by Mr Guido Carducci, Chief of the International Standards Section.

The meeting was composed of four sessions:

1. Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, where Mr Riëks Smeets, Chief of the Intangible Heritage Section presented the definition of ICH as used for the purposes of the 2003 Convention.

2. Contribution of experts, where the Professor Christoph Wulf (Germany) and Professor Adrienne Kaeppler (USA) International Experts spoke.

3. The state of protection of the intangible cultural heritage in Europe and Northern America, during which, the participants presented the state-of-the-art concerning the safeguarding of ICH in 25 countries.

4. Legal aspects of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, during which Mr Guido Carducci, Chief of the



International Standards Section covered numerous legal issues related to the Convention: the definition of H developed for the purpose of this Convention; the position taken vis-à-vis copyright law issues; balance between national and international safeguarding; the two lists system; the reasons why and the ways how to ratify.

During the closing session the Final Report with the Recommendations to all relevant institutions in Europe and North America was presented and adopted.

The participants were given the opportunity to see the sights of Kazan as well as to take part in specially organized cultural programme "Russian Winter" with driving Troika (three horses harnessed abreast) and other Russian traditional fun.

It was nonrandom, that Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan, the city of ancient history and the crossroad of culture diversity became a place of holding of such an important International meeting.

The participants appreciated very much the high level of organizing the event and the warm hospitality of the Administration of Kazan City. The UNESCO representatives expressed their gratitude to Mr. Kamil Iskhakov, Mayor of the City of Kazan as well as Mr. Rasih Sagitov, Ms Liudmila Andreeva, Mr Suleiman Rakhimov and Ms Anna Romanova, the members of the Administration of Kazan staff.

Leaving Kazan the participant took with them the warmest remembrance on Kazan and its people.

More information on the event is available at the UNESCO Moscow website: www.unesco.ru

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On February 16, a press conference was held in the Central House of Journalists on the UNDP/GEF (Global Environment Facility) project "Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wild Salmonid Biological Diversity in Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula", launched in Russia in September 2003.

Answering the journalists' questions were E. Armand, Head of the UNDP Environment Department; E. Svyazhin, Project Manager; V. Pishchelyov, Deputy National Project Director; S. Boblyov, Professor at the Moscow State University; and B. Kokotov, Director General for the Legal Center on Nature Management. V. Bogdanov, Chairman of Russia's Union of Journalists, took an active part in the event.

Regions

How to Save the Salmon?

The speakers described the successes and prospects of the project development. One of its important achievements is the incorporation of the basic principles underlying the legal framework for preservation of the wild Kamchatka salmonids in the Federal Law "On fishery and preservation of aquatic biological resources". The law establishes the priority of preservation of valuable biological resources, participatory involvement of citizens and public associations in the decision-making on the issues of fishery and preservation of aquatic biological resources, due consideration of the interests of the population of coastal areas, including native minorities, and allocation of biological resources in an open and public manner as the main principle of the fishery legislation.

UNDP participation in the development of an economic mechanism for sustainable Kamchatka salmon fishery while preserving the biodiversity aroused a keen interest of the journalists. In the coming months, the project staff will present a scientific substantiation of the actual value of wild salmonids, which will enable to make reasonable policy decisions on economic development options for the peninsula. According to a tentative economic evaluation, the total value of the "capital" represented by the still available Kamchatka salmon biodiversity amounts to 20 billion US dollars.

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Human Rights as a Basis for Another World Order?

Discussion of a new world order – or disorder – has been going on, with varying intensity, since late 1980s, when the period of confrontation in international relations started drawing to an end. Seeking to make a modest contribution to this debate, the UN Information Centre in Moscow and the Institute of Human Rights organized on 31 January an expert round table on “Human Rights and World Order: New Threats and New Paradigms.”

The originality of the idea consisted in attempting to view the changes in the world politics through the prism of human rights values, as well as to contribute to a more substantive dialogue among Russian NGOs, academic circles and government structures.

Opening the discussion, the UNIC Director Alexandre Gorelik has singled out a major dilemma faced by the international community and reflected in the UN Charter – the state sovereignty as a traditional priority in international law versus respect for human rights as a relatively new concept.

In this context he emphasized that the modern interpretation of the sovereignty principle includes an obligation to protect human rights. As the most recent example of grasping this dynamic equation, he referred to the Report by the High-Level Panel entitled “A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility,” which was commissioned by the Secretary-General and released last December.

Building on this premise, Director of the Institute of Human Rights Valentin Gefter made an outline of mostly diverging views on the evolution of the international law advocated by the state and the civil society actors, first of all, its human rights segment. He emphasized that the rule of law in international affairs is in jeopardy and referred in this context to the Secretary-General’s address at the opening session of the 59th General Assembly. In his comments, Mr. Gefter also outlined pros and cons of humanitarian intervention and spoke in favour of incorporating into the core principles of

the UN system not only inter-governmental cooperation, but also contribution by experts and civil society organizations to the process of decision-making.

The resulting lively and highly intellectual discussion greatly benefited from inputs by prominent human rights activist Sergei Kovalev; Professor of Moscow State University Apollon Davidson; Vice-President of the Russian Chamber of Trade and Industry Vladimir

issues was diminishing and predicted further marginalization of the world body. Others disagreed, pointing out that, despite all its imperfection, the UN remains an indispensable multilateral instrument which, in the present-day world, performs some unique functions, including global negotiations, provision of humanitarian assistance, fostering international cooperation and addressing the problems of economic backwardness, protection of natural environment, etc.

The speakers pointed out in particular that the paradigm of international law should be changed in such a way as to reflect a more pronounced respect for human rights. Despite the fact that their viewpoints are sometimes differing, most members of the international community agree that external pressure could and should be put on the states that tolerate flagrant human rights abuses at home. The participants cited «the responsibility to protect» as an example of the currently most developed concept. However, it was noted with regret that in many cases the UN and, more precisely, the international community itself, was late in reacting to severe humanitarian crises and crimes against humanity. The situation in the Sudanese province of Darfur was cited as the most recent example.

The discussion specifically focused on the role of civil society at the national level and globally. The shared vision was that the public opinion’s influence will continue to grow. That said, as far as the UN is concerned, the knowledge, expertise and energy accumulated by the non-governmental sector should be utilized to furthering participatory democracy.

As to the idea of a «public chamber» at the UN – this is a matter for the future.



Isakov, Director of the Institute of European Law Marc Entin, President of the Institute for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights Georgy Dzhibladze, Ambassador Vladimir Shustov, Member of the UN Commission for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Alexei Avtonomov, and other participants. They touched upon a range of barely explored or contentious aspects of human rights issues in the context of major global problems.

Specifically, some of them said that the UN, the organization established under very different historical conditions in the immediate aftermath of World War Two, in today’s world has come under enormous pressure. Some speakers alleged that the authority of the United Nations in the most important global

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UNICEF

United Nations Children's Fund

Society

Children's Defenders

The institute of Ombudspersons for Children in the Russian Federation was initiated by UNICEF in the close co-operation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Development about seven years ago. The first five «pioneers» courageously volunteered and were delegated to the position, which never existed in this country before. The main objective of the Ombudspersons is to control the execution of children's rights and to carry on an investigation from the position of legality, effectiveness, expediency, conscientiousness and justice. Today Ombudspersons for Children work in sixteen regions of Russia.

“We need to expand the network of the Ombudspersons, – says Carel De Rooy, UNICEF Representative for the Russian Federation and Belarus. – Today we need to strive to have Ombudspersons for Children in every Federal district. In Russia UNICEF works in close co-operation with the civil society and non-governmental organizations. We work hard to develop co-operation with the Russian Federation Ministry of Health and Social Development and State Duma committees, we have good working relations with 40 regions, in which we operate. In UNICEF we are convinced that family, state and civil society should be equally responsible for children.”

The role of the Ombudspersons for Children is crucially important in connection with that. The personality of the Ombudsperson for Children is one of the keys to success. People who are indifferent, who mechanically perform their duties

can not work in this field. The Ombudspersons constantly deal with grief, misfortune and violation of laws. Very often they are the last resort for people who don't have any hope that the situation can be changed and laws be executed....

Tatiana Alekseeva works in the capacity of an Ombudsperson for Children for Volgograd and Volgograd oblast for six years. Having technical background, she got her second degree from the law faculty, specialising in social work and had worked in the Regional Centre for Social Aid to Family and Children before she was appointed to this position. Today she has become a well-known and respected person both in the city and region. Law enforcement offices, child welfare agencies, education and health care institutions, all got accustomed to her activities. Tatiana managed to bring voluntary assistant lawyers on board and teach executive and legislative bodies not to solve any disputable or problem case, which affects children, without the participation of the Ombudsperson for Children.

“The most difficult part of my work, – says Tatiana, – is to observe when the Heads of children's institutions tolerate the situation when children's rights are violated. That actually means that the people whose duty is to guarantee and execute children's rights, violate them themselves.”

Alexey Golovan, Moscow Ombudsperson for Children, totally agrees with her. Alexei is a graduate of Moscow Engineering and Physics Institute, but later



Tatiana Alekseeva

his interest in social problems made him “put physics aside”. He became a professional in social work and also graduated from Moscow State Law Academy with the specialisation in jurisprudence. Golovan' was appointed «the main defender» of Moscow children in February 2002.

“The most difficult for me, – he says, – is to hear that people are deceived and betrayed by the officials and agencies, which, on the contrary, could provide necessary support to these people. But instead of the support they see indifferent and aggressive unwillingness to help. Children and adults, who have already seen this indifference and aggression, come to see us and it is painful to observe that they don't trust us as well. For instance, alumni of orphanages, who have visited all possible agencies and were numerously deceived.... “

What do Ombudspersons for Children fight against? It is the violation of child's housing rights, violation of children's rights by their parents, violation of children's rights by the government agencies, violation of child's property rights, and other violations of children's rights.

“I perform the role of a social moderator, – says Tatiana Alekseeva. – People do not come to us with easy problems. They



bring us a bunch of problems and to solve them we need both persistence and the knowledge of laws and decrees and callidity. I need to make an official to make the decision in child's favour. For instance, I was able to secure a decision that the boy, who was kept in a juvenile correctional facility for a shop theft, was taken to hospital for the medical treatment...."

According to their mandate Ombudspersons for Children have a free access to custodial institutions. Alekseeva once had to investigate the conflict with the school administration at the school for children with hearing impediment, at the special boarding school; she is a frequent visitor of the specialised school for boys and Kamishinsk juvenile correctional facility. Children's Ombudsman office organised regular free of charge trips for parents, visiting their children who are currently imprisoned – social ties should not come loose or disappear, children should not be completely isolated from their relatives, if we want their future rehabilitation and return to normal life.

At the same time they organise prevention workshops for teenagers at the orphanages and boarding schools in the framework of the project «Children's right». The children learn to understand their rights and duties, study Family Code, in other words by all possible means they are trained for their responsible life after their graduation from the orphanage. The workshops are conducted in the form of role-playing and aim to develop responsible mentality and the ability to make decisions. Such workshops took place in Urupinsk boarding school and Volzhskiy boarding school for the orphanages.

Alexey Golovan and Tatiana Alekseeva often represent minors' interests in the court. Today in Volgograd not a single



case, which affects the interests of the minors, is up before the court without the participation of the so-called «children» judge. It is also the achievement of the Ombudsperson for Children.

Annually «children's defenders» receive more than 1,000 appeals for help. But the Ombudspersons for Children are sure that it is not the number that matters but the quality of the assistance provided.

"I remember one case, – Alexey says, – when the court was handling the case of the child, who was not appointed a guardian at the proper time. And the child lived with his older sister, who had just turned sixteen herself, without any support from the state. And that aid should have been provided by operation of law. We managed to win the case and make them pay the cash allowance worth of two years."

Housing problem is one of the most common in the practice of the Ombudspersons for Children. The adults divest children of their housing ownership right by right or wrong, turning to account gaps in the law or sometimes dishonesty of the officials.

"It is important not only to help an unfair offended person, – Alexey Golovan states, – but to prevent the possibility of these cases. Recently we were able to return to the minors' more than 200 apartments. Although there are many cases when we were not able to redress an injustice. There is a big necessity in reviewing current regulations. We need to withdraw some powers from the jurisdiction of children welfare agencies. Every fifth complaint received by the office of the Ombudsperson for Children is about the performance of children welfare agencies.

I think that this system must be reformed, particularly, it is crucially important to reinforce control and improve the legislation. The same as one doctor can't treat all the people, one Ombudsperson for Children can not protect the rights of all the children. The whole system should work to meet this objective – children welfare agencies, prosecutor's offices, courts and, finally, the attorneys, who are paid for doing that. Only then we will be able to achieve something. But if things remain the same, like these people have missed something, those haven't done something, these



Alexey Golovan

haven't fulfilled and all needy come to see the Ombudsperson, then he or she will never have neither time nor staff, even when it will be hired, to serve everyone. "

"The development of the institute of Ombudspersons for Children should go through 7 Federal districts, – says Tatiana Alekseeva. – Now there are three possible ways of introducing this position: by adopting the law on Ombudsperson for Children (in the city, region), within the structure of the Executive power and within the structure of the Ombudsperson for human rights. It is not really very important how the status of the Ombudsperson for Children is legalised; the important thing is that the network of Children's ombudsmen grow both qualitatively and quantitatively. We have enough children's problems... Thus, in Volgograd region only 32 per cent of school children can be referred as relatively healthy."

Today Russian Ombudspersons for Children discuss the possibility of establishing their Association. Unifying Children's ombudsmen in a professional union strives to improve the protection of children's rights in Russia. UNICEF fully supports this initiative and will provide all possible assistance to the development of the institute of the Ombudsperson for Children.

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Highlight

Joint UN Action to Improve Coordination of Russian Response to AIDS



'Coordination in Action' project promoting the 'Three Ones' Principles to fight HIV/AIDS started in the Russian Federation with a duration of 2 years. The official launch is planned for late March 2005.

The project is financed by DfID and SIDA and is implemented by UNAIDS Co-sponsoring agencies with coordination and support provided by the UNAIDS secretariat in Moscow.

It is obvious that new but still limited resources to respond to the growing AIDS epidemic will be utilized most efficiently if there is maximum coordination within the international community.

The concept of the three principles was discussed for the first time at the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA) held in Nairobi, Kenya, in September 2003, where officials from national coordinating bodies and relevant ministries, major funding mechanisms, multilateral and bilateral agencies, NGOs and the private sector gathered for a consultation to review principles for national-level coordination of the HIV/AIDS response.



1 December 2004. Authorized demonstration in front of the White House, Moscow, by people living with HIV/AIDS. Commitment of the top officials is vital to stop the spread of AIDS epidemic

The principles were identified through a preparatory process at global and country levels, initiated by UNAIDS in cooperation with the World Bank and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and have been further refined in dialogue with other key donor partners.

After the development of the 'Three Ones', UNAIDS engaged with major donor partners to build greater awareness of and adherence to the principles. On 25 April 2004, participants at a high-level meeting in Washington, DC, affirmed the 'Three Ones' principles. Many donors, among them the Department for International Development (DfID) and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), incorporated the 'Three Ones' into their policies.

The 'Three Ones' are:

- One agreed HIV and AIDS action framework that can coordinate all work;
- One national AIDS coordinating authority with a broad based multi-sector mandate;
- One agreed country level monitoring and evaluation system.

There is no universal recipe to overcome all the obstacles in fighting AIDS, but international experience shows that countries are more successful in hampering the epidemic when these principles are applied,

The initiative to promote the 'Three Ones' Principles in the Russian Federation is very timely for Russia, since Russia has one of the fastest growing HIV epidemics in the world. Both the Russian Government and the international donor community have strengthened their response to the epidemic with the Russian government showing increasing readiness to collaborate with the NGO sector. However neither a national strategy, nor a high-level national coordinating mechanism nor a national monitoring

and evaluation system have been established. Combined with the unprecedented influx of funding, and the capacity and resources available, the project will strengthen the response to the epidemic.

The 'Three Ones' aim at strengthened and coordinated national response to HIV/AIDS.

Initial steps have already been taken within the framework of the project. On January 17, 2005, Dr. Gennady Onischenko, Head of the Federal Service for Protection of Consumer Rights and Human Wellbeing, lead the establishment of an Analytical Group on Monitoring and Evaluation within the Federal Service.

The project was presented at the Strategic Planning Meeting for USAID-funded HIV/AIDS Treatment, Care and Support Project which on 26-28 January (St-Petersburg). The meeting was organised by the American International Health Alliance (AIHA) and the University Research Co., LLC. (URC).

During the Inception Phase technical consultations will be held with a wide variety of Russian and international partners, involving the Federal Service for Protection of Consumer Rights and Human Wellbeing, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, USAID and a number of co-sponsoring UN agencies. This will form a basis of a detailed plan of activities in each of the 'Three Ones' areas.

The UN Working Group on HIV/AIDS decided to finalise the development of the project framework by the end of March 2005.

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World Health Organization

HIV/AIDS Control in Russia: the Importance of Expanding Harm Reduction



The WHO European Region registers the world's fastest growing HIV infection rates. The 52 Member States in the Region reported a total of almost 810 000 new HIV cases by the end of October 2004; 290 000 AIDS cases and 167 000 AIDS deaths since the beginning of the epidemic. This year, for the first time, the number of reported HIV cases in eastern Europe (390 000) surpassed that in western Europe (389 000).

Within the European Region, the epidemic is worst in the Russian Federation, where 860 000 people were estimated to be living with HIV at the end of 2003. In addition, fewer than 3000 people in the country are receiving antiretroviral (ARV) treatment, although an estimated 70 000 need it. The epidemic's most striking feature is the age of the people infected: over 80% are under 29 years old.

The sharing of drug-injection equipment contaminated with HIV remains one of the critical activities fuelling the epidemic among drug users and others in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The most recent epidemiological data on HIV/AIDS in the WHO European Region show that drug injection remains the principal mode of transmission, but sexual transmission is becoming increasingly common, especially among injecting drug users and their partners.

The countries most affected are in eastern Europe: Estonia, Latvia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. In the Russian Federation alone, 70% of registered HIV/AIDS cases are attributed to injecting illegal drugs. Experts estimate that there are 1.5–3 million injecting drug users in the Russian Federation alone. The corresponding figures for Ukraine and Kazakhstan are 600 000 and up to 200 000, respectively. In Latvia and Estonia, 1% of the adult population is estimated to inject drugs. Most of these drug users are male.

Interventions to reduce harm from injecting drug use have been proved to comprise the most effective strategy to prevent HIV transmission. The

harm-reduction package includes such activities as providing information and education, needle and syringe exchange, condoms, substitution treatment and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, as well as demand-reduction activities, which try to dissuade people from using drugs in the first place.

The provision of free or affordable sterile needles to injecting drug users is aimed at reducing transmission of HIV by reducing sharing of equipment with others, by reducing circulation time of used needles and syringes and by ensuring adequately safe disposal of used equipment.

There is compelling evidence that increasing the availability and utilization of sterile injecting equipment for injecting drug users (IDU) contributes substantially to reductions in the rate of HIV transmission. At the same time, there is no convincing evidence of major unintended negative consequences of programs providing sterile injecting equipment to IDU, such as initiation of injecting habits among people who have not previously injected or an increase in the duration or frequency of illicit drug use or drug injection.

Needle and syringe programs on their own are not enough to control HIV

infection among IDU. They should be supported by a range of complementary activities and a supportive legal, socio-cultural and economic environment which avoids stigmatizing marginalized groups affected by HIV/AIDS. Complementary activities that reinforce needle exchange include risk-reduction education, introduction of and referral of IDU to drug-dependence treatment and referral to other primary health care services. Evidence exists in support of the fact that effective drug dependence treatment (e.g. substitution treatment) can increase the reliability and stability of the IDU making them more adherent to both anti-retroviral therapy (ART) as well as reducing the personal dysfunction and negative socio-economic consequences of their drug habit.

Legislation related to needles and syringes, such as laws which criminalize small possession of drugs, criminalize health and outreach workers who distribute the needles represent a key barrier to HIV control among IDU and, by extension, HIV/AIDS control efforts in general.

Dr. Akram A. Eltom, MPH
Country Programme Officer,
3x5 HIV/AIDS Initiative,
World Health Organization





WHO Project on Harm Reduction on HIV/AIDS Control in Altai Region



The project “Comprehensive strategies for the prevention of HIV/STI (sexually transmitted infections) dissemination among youth in the Russian Federation” was launched in the Altai region in 2004. The harm reduction programme, supported by the World Health Organization (WHO), has been implemented in three cities of the Altai region: Barnaul, Biysk and Rubtsovsk.

For the first time a staff psychologist and social worker have started working in the harm reduction project, which became possible owing to WHO and which has significantly improved the work of the project. Currently there are 25 staff members working in this programme.

In order to ensure successful implementation, staff workers were involved in the programme who have access to the focus groups of injecting drug users (IDUs) and commercial sex workers; also activities have been planned to train them in the necessary skills. The staff underwent the first module of training before beginning work in the project. It was done in the course of a two-day workshop which involved healthcare specialists from the Altai regional centre of AIDS prevention and control, staff members from the organization “Protection and support of civil rights and initiatives” and from the State narcological control organization.

With a view of increasing the interaction with other harm reduction programmes in the Russian Federation

and in order to exchange the existing experience, it is planned to organize training for outreach workers on the basis of the harm reduction project in Balakovo.

The city of Balakovo has been chosen because of a certain similarity of the situation with Barnaul. First of all, the programme in Balakovo started working



in a location with low HIV incidence rates. Secondly, among injecting drug users the most common drug is opium, to be more exact – raw material (‘khanka’). Thirdly, there exists a positive experience of work within the harm reduction project in Balakovo.

Training and professional development of outreach workers enables to achieve a decrease in staff turnover, as the staff members feel that the organization values their contribution to the programme; they also realize the importance of their activities which promote the prevention of spreading HIV.

One of the main negative factors regarding outreach work is the constant danger of encounters with representatives of the law-enforcement organs, who may detain the outreach workers at the local militia department for up to 24 hours for clarification of the circumstances. The outreach workers are in a permanent state of tenseness and watchfulness, as raids are possible in the ‘cooking apartments’ where they work. Another peculiar feature of working with clients who are in a state of narcotic intoxication is the danger of physical

violence and strong psychological pressure from the injecting drug users on the staff workers of the harm reduction programme. Besides that, it is very hard to carry over information to such clients.

This is why safety of the staff workers is a very important aspect of our activity. Despite of the recommendation for outreach workers to work in pairs, it is not always possible and they work alone. In order to prevent and solve difficult situations, outreach workers are supplied with cell phone connection – owing to the WHO project each outreach worker gets a card to pay for communication over cell phones for up to 10 US Dollars per month. During the working day the outreach workers are in touch with the project managers, informing about their location. If outreach workers happen to find themselves in a non-standard situation, they inform the project manager or coordinator. As a rule, conflicts with the militia happen among outreach workers who deal with commercial sex workers, and then cell communication helps to solve promptly such conflicts.

Another important aspect of the work within the harm reduction programme is the prevention of various communicable diseases. With this in view, all the new staff workers study literature on issues dealing with HIV/AIDS and STIs, and they have to pass a mandatory exam on safety measures with subsequent re-certification every 6 months. This enables not only the manager to check the knowledge of the outreach workers, but the outreach workers themselves in emergency situations (for example, a skin injury with a contaminated needle) can perform correctly the preventive measures related to infection with HIV/AIDS, hepatitis or syphilis.

N.S. Chukmasova
Coordinator, “Harm reduction programme” in Barnaul





World Health Organization

TB Control Programme: Results and Priorities

The WHO TB Control Programme in the Russian Federation had a marathon of significant gatherings back in December 2004, among which was CTRI/WHO Training Seminar, **“Microbiological Methods for Tuberculosis Detection. Standardization of Approaches to Training in the Russian Federation”**, Golitsyno, Moscow region, 13–18 December 2004.

WHO and the Central TB Research Institute of the Russian Academy of Medical Science (CTRI RAMS) jointly organized this training session to unify approaches to training in microbiological methods of TB diagnosis, i.e. smear microscopy, culture and drug susceptibility testing (DST).

The training seminar will allow 22 laboratory specialists to train their colleagues in the framework of the implementation of the World Bank loan project.

Students of the course agreed on:

- standard curriculum for laboratory trainings;
- unified approaches to training;
- unified approaches to such problematic issues of TB microbiological diagnosis as i.e. reversion of resistance patterns during therapy; number of drug sensitivity tests required for diagnosis and follow-up.

According to the students' evaluation this training session was a success though some aspects need improvement.



All recommendations were analyzed and will be taken into account in future.

The training session was a step towards strengthening relations between bacteriologists from different regions thus reinforcing capacity of the Russian TB laboratory network and establishing a “core team” of trainers in laboratory related issues at the federal level.

Priorities for the WHO TB Control Programme in the Russian Federation for 2005

Year 2005 will be full of various events though priorities for the WHO TB Control Programme in Russia are:

1. Further revision of the TB control strategy in the Russian Federation through the HLWG activities;
2. Assistance to the Russian Federation in the implementation of the World Bank

loan project on AIDS and TB Control in terms of training and external evaluation;

3. Assistance to the Russian Federation in working on TB component with the Global Fund to Fight against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM);
4. Development of guidelines on expansion of DOTS Plus strategy in Russia;
5. Strengthening TB/HIV control and cooperation between TB and HIV services;
6. Improvement of TB laboratory network;
7. Strengthening information, education, communication and advocacy, including launch of TB News Bulletin.



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

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New Information Bulletin for Health Care Managers in Russia

Through the auspices of the WHO/CIDA Health Care Policy and Stewardship in Russia Programme, a new monthly Information Bulletin for Health Care Managers was launched in December 2004. This electronic Bulletin, which is only published in Russian, provides summaries of articles, books and other publications of interest to health care managers and policy makers.

Through this Bulletin, current information about health care and health care systems, much of it available only in

English, will be made available to a broader audience in Russia. Where there is considerable demand, it may be possible to provide more extensive translations of the most popular or relevant materials.

Each month a specific theme is selected for the Bulletin. In January 2005, the topic is Financing of Health Care Systems and the Bulletin contains references to sixteen books and articles.

The Bulletin is being prepared by the Central Institute of Organization and

Informatization of Health Care Systems attached to the Russian Ministry of Health and Social Development and the WHO Documentation Centre in Russia.

To be added to the electronic mailing list, please send your email contact information to: bulletin@zdravinform.ru

Mary Collins

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Regions

Social Integration of Disabled People

On 15–18 December 2004 the United Nations Association of Russia and administration of Samara region held the International Conference "Social Integration of disabled people. International and Russian practice".

Among the participants of the Conference were Galina Svetkina, Minister of Labour and Social Development of Samara region, Arkady Nekrasov, Chairman of the Social Commission of the UNA–Russia, Galina Churbanova, Director of the Department of Social Protection in

Novokuibyshevsk, foreign specialists, representatives of social development organizations from different regions of Russia, representatives of UN Children's Fund. The participants of the Conference discussed the project of the Overall International Convention on protection and encouragement of rights and merits of disabled people. Main goal of the Convention is to guarantee profound, effective and equal realization of human rights by disabled people. The Conference provided the participants with the opportunity to get accustomed with Russian practice as well as foreign



experience of supporting the disabled people, underline common trends in the social development and outline the further steps in this direction.

Welcome to XVI Moscow International Model UN

On 11–15 April 2005 Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) will host annual Moscow International Model UN organized by the United Nations Association of Russia in cooperation with MGIMO under the aegis of World Federation of United Nations Associations.

These are some of the issues included into the Agenda 2005: General Assembly will discuss Integration of the transit economy countries into the world economy, Security Council – the issue

concerning operations on peace maintenance, Economic and Social Council – the UN High Commissioner's report on the issue of refugees, problems of refugees, returnees and also humanitarian issues, International Court of Justice – "Criminal procedure in France", Commission on Human Rights will focus on slavery issues.

Everyone can take part in the Model UN 2005. Please, find the whole information on www.modelun.ru (Russian and English versions) and contact Secretariat:

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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 /Stefan Vassilev "Helping Russia Is Our Goal"

Stefan Vassilev, UN Resident Coordinator and UN Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative in the Russian Federation, gave an interview to "UN in Russia" on United Nations objectives and activities in Russia.

UNDP /The Millennium Development Goals in CIS and Russia's Context

The Global UN Millennium Project report was launched in Moscow on 14 February

UNDP /How to Save the Salmon?

On February 16, a press conference was held in the Central House of Journalists on the UNDP/GEF project "Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wild Salmonid Biological Diversity in Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula." UNDP participation in the development of an economic mechanism for sustainable Kamchatka salmon fishery while preserving the biodiversity aroused a keen interest of the journalists.

UNAIDS /Joint UN Action to Improve Coordination of Russian Response to AIDS

The limited resources to respond to the growing AIDS epidemic will be utilized most efficiently if there is maximum coordination within the international community. This is to be achieved through a UNAIDS project, based on the concept of the Three Ones principles.

UNA /Welcome to XVI Moscow International Model UN

From 11-15 April 2005, the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) will host XVI annual Moscow International Model UN organized by the United Nations Association of Russia in cooperation with MGIMO under the aegis of World Federation of United Nations Associations. Every year more and more young people from all over Russia and other countries gather to discuss topical questions on the agenda of the UN.

UNA /Social Integration of Disabled People

From 15-18 December 2004, the United Nations Association of Russia and administration of Samara region held the International Conference "Social Integration of disabled people. International and Russian practice". The participants discussed a draft of the Overall International Convention on protection and encouragement of rights and merits of disabled people.

UNESCO /25 Countries Discuss the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Regional Seminar on the Promotion of the Convention was held on December 15-17, 2004 in Kazan, Russia. That was the 5th Regional meeting of a series of eight organized by UNESCO in different regions of the world.

UNESCO /For Restoration of Education System in the Chechen Republic

UNESCO and the Ministry of Education and Science of the RF signed two Protocols on co-operation in implementing the project "Support for Rehabilitation and Improvement of Education System of the Chechen Republic."

UNHCR /Kasidis Rochanakorn: Humanitarian Operations in North Caucasus Require High Security Measures

In an interview to Interfax information agency, the UNHCR Representative and the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in the RF Kasidis Rochanakorn spoke about the main directions of UNHCR's activities in the RF in 2005, humanitarian situation in the North Caucasus, security situation of UN staff in the region, co-operation between UN agencies and Russian bodies, and other issues.

UNICEF /Children's Defenders

The Institute of Ombudspersons for Children's Rights in the RF was initiated by UNICEF in close co-operation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Development about seven years ago to control the execution of children's rights and to carry on an investigation of violations.

UNIC /Human Rights as a Basis for a New World Order?

Discussion on a new world order – or disorder – has been going on, with varying intensity, since late 1980s. Seeking to make a modest contribution to this debate, the UNIC in Moscow and the Institute of Human Rights organized on 31 January an expert round table on "Human Rights and World Order: New Threats and New Paradigms."

WFP /A Clean, Well-lighted Place

Zoya Bulaeva, 78, survived two Chechen wars in Grozny. Every day she and her five-year-old grandson Stasik come to a canteen in the centre of the city, organised by WFP's implementing partner "Caritas Internationalis" for the most vulnerable and poor.

WHO /HIV/AIDS Control in Russia: the Importance of Expanding Harm Reduction

The European Region registers the world's fastest growing HIV infection rates. The epidemic is worst in the Russian Federation, where 860 000 people were estimated to be living with HIV at the end of 2003. The sharing of drug-injection equipment contaminated with HIV remains one of the critical activities fuelling the epidemic.

WHO /HIV/AIDS: WHO Project on Harm Reduction in Altai Region

The project "Comprehensive strategies for the prevention of HIV/STI dissemination among youth in the RF" was launched in the Altai region in 2004. For the first time, a staff psychologist and a social worker have started working in the harm reduction project, targeted at injecting drug users and commercial sex workers.

WHO /TB Control Programme: Results and Priorities

The WHO TB Control Programme in the RF had a marathon of significant gatherings in December 2004. In 2005, various events are planned though priorities for the WHO TB Control Programme in Russia, such as development of guidelines on expansion of DOTS Plus strategy.

WHO /New Information Bulletin for Health Care Managers in Russia

WHO launched a new monthly electronic Information Bulletin for Health Care Managers in December 2004. It provides summaries of articles, books and other publications of interest to health care managers and policy makers.



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:

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|---------------|--|
| 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 |

