



UN in RUSSIA

Activities for Sustainable Human Development

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The Message by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan for United Nations Day, 24 October 2004

Today is United Nations Day.

Fifty-nine years ago, the United Nations was founded as an instrument of peace, human rights and development.

The world is a better place because of the United Nations. But too many people are today the victims of violence, oppression, poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease.

We can and must do better. All people deserve to live free from fear and

want. They must have hope that tomorrow will be better than today. Our common humanity requires it. Our common security demands it.

Each nation needs a government that truly serves its people. And we all need an effective United Nations -- one that reflects the world we live in today, and can meet the challenges we will face tomorrow.

I believe we can build a better United Nations. That's why I will soon be putting before world leaders a

package of measures to renew the Organization. It will be up to your leaders to respond with vision and good will. They must find common ground at a historic meeting this time next year.

I ask you to encourage your leaders to give our world the United Nations it deserves. With your help, I know we can do it.

We are in a new era. We need a new United Nations. Let's make it happen.

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A Letter to UN Resident Coordinator in Russia

Dear Mr. Stefan Vassilev

On behalf of the people of the Chechen Republic and myself I would like to congratulate you and your colleagues on the occasion of the United Nations Day.

The relief offered by UNICEF, human rights non-governmental organizations and humanitarian organizations of UN-member-states is accepted with appreciation in the Chechen Republic.

I hereby would like to thank you for your involvement in the fate of the Chechen people and wish you every success in building peace and understanding in the world, as well as good health and happiness.

Yours faithfully, President of the Chechen Republic

A. D. Alkhanov

OCHA

United Nations Office for the
Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs



Beslan: Sorrow, Sympathy, Help



“With the deepest sorrow from the people of the United States”, says the wreath that US Congressman Tomas Toncredo is laying at the Beslan school No. 1

On September 1, more than 30 armed militants took about 1,200 hostages in a secondary school No. 1 of the Beslan town in the Republic of North Ossetia – Alania. The deadly crisis resulted in the deaths of hundreds and hundreds more wounded, many of them children. The period of mourning in North Ossetia – Alania is officially over but thousands of people in the region are still grieving for their beloved ones. As for those who survived, it will probably take a long time till the images of the endured tragedy stop being painfully vivid.

UN Agencies and their humanitarian partners in the North Caucasus provided relief items from available

stocks within hours after the deadly end of the hostage-taking. The inter-agency effort brought aid directly to hospitals and community centres where it was most needed. By the end of September, OCHA recorded total in-kind assistance from the International Committee of the Red Cross, United Nations, non-governmental organisations, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Coop-

eration/Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit amounting to approximately \$485,000. Bilateral, direct contributions from at least 17 donor countries may have well exceeded \$4 million. The international humanitarian community benefited substantially from the already established working relations with federal and local ministries. Logistical infrastructure of EMERCOM was made available to UN and NGOs, including air deliveries of supplies from Moscow to Beslan facilitated by EMERCOM planes.

UN agencies together with interested NGOs and donors are now considering projects and programmes for mid- and longer-term needs and

mitigation of the consequences of the crisis. Ad hoc coordination was initiated by the OCHA Sub-Office in the North Caucasus. Apart from the continuation of the current programmes on provision of assistance to existing functioning schools and hospitals and implementing psycho-social rehabilitation for the victims of the Beslan tragedy, the ICRC, UN agencies and their implementing partners plan to put into operation programmes and projects focusing on conflict prevention and tolerance-building in Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia – Alania. Parts of those programmes will be coordinated through the federal Ministry of Education.



UN aid prepared for delivery to Beslan

Carol Bellamy: "I Couldn't Imagine the Scale of Tragedy"



Flowers in memory of the victims

During her state visit to the Russian Federation, Carol Bellamy, UNICEF Executive Director, visited the Northern Caucasus.

UNICEF has been working at the Northern Caucasus since 1999 to provide aid to women and children, who had suffered from the armed



Carol Bellamy visited school No. 1

conflicts. UNICEF invested the total of 293,000 US dollars of financial aid to the victims of the Beslan terrorist attack (1–3 September, 2004, North Ossetia).

Medical and hospital equipment was purchased and delivered to the hospitals in Vladikavkaz and Beslan, including bed monitors, multifunctional beds, mattresses, as well as school equipment, stationery, computers, textbooks for 6 schools in Beslan.

Carol Bellamy put the flowers at the bases of the Memorial Stone, installed on the grave of people who died during the tragic events in Beslan. She visited school number 1. Carol Bellamy said that she was watching the development of the events on TV, but she couldn't imagine the scale of tragedy and destruction, until she saw it with her own eyes. Bullet marks, demolished walls, school photos and stands in brick debris – that is how Beslan school number 1 currently looks.

In the middle of October there were nearly no students from school number 1 in the classrooms. Some were at the health centre in Sochi, some in the Crimea at the international kids' health centre "Artek", some just didn't attend the classes. But schools are waiting for the children to come back. At Beslan school No. 6 Carol Bellamy met with some students and teachers. Both

boys and girls told that they were waiting for the new students from school No. 1 to join them, would treat them as their brothers and sisters and would do their best to make them feel comfortable at the new school.

According to UNICEF plan of actions on providing aid to Beslan victims, UNICEF started providing the psychological rehabilitation training. In co-operation with Vladikavkaz Republic Centre for psychological, pedagogical and medical and social aid UNICEF held a training workshop for teachers, psychologists, and doctors, who will be working with children and families from Beslan. Professionals from Moscow and St. Petersburg arrived to exchange their experience. It is very important to organise the activities in the way so that both children and their parents receive psychological support. Schools should play an important role in organising and controlling this process.



Carol Bellamy met with students at school No. 6

UNICEF Executive Director met with Aleksander Dzasokhov, the President of North Ossetia – Alania. During the meeting they discussed the possibilities of the cooperation between the Republic government and UN Children's Fund, the importance of peace and tolerance education at the North Caucasus.

In Moscow Carol Bellamy had meetings at the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Health and Social Development, RF State Duma.



World Food Programme Responds to Beslan Tragedy

After the terrorist attack on the school in Beslan 310 persons were admitted to the hospitals of North Ossetia. Of these there were 179 children including 64 in a critical condition. "What happened in Beslan is a terrible tragedy. WFP is determined to do all it can to alleviate the suffering of the victims," said Chris Czerwinski, Country Director for WFP's operations in the Russian Federation.

On 5 September, WFP conducted an assessment in the Children's Hospital and Clinical Hospital of Vladikavkaz's, as well as the Central Hospital of Beslan to assess the need for emergency food aid for the hospitalized victims.

Soon after the tragedy, WFP received various donations to ensure the continuation of assistance to the victims of Beslan over the weeks that followed. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC/SHA) rapidly responded with a donation of US\$8,000, while TNT, the Dutch mail express and logistics



company, immediately authorized the use of US\$3,000 which was partly raised by staff contributions in Moscow and used by WFP to purchase food in the local market in Vladikavkaz.

On 6 September, WFP carried out preparations, making all necessary inquiries with the wholesalers of

Vladikavkaz. On 7 September, WFP purchased food commodities including rice, pasta, buckwheat, milk, yoghurt, oil, jam, dried fruit and vitamin supplements, all worth over 86,000 rubles (about US\$2,800) and distributed them to the three hospitals. UNHCR kindly contributed their truck to deliver the commodities to the hospitals. The local population, including the relatives of the patients, assisted both in loading and off-loading.



The Nestlé corporation also confirmed a contribution of eight metric tons of chocolate bars, breakfast cereal and juice. On the morning of 9 September, an Ilyushin-76, owned by Emercom, Russia's emergency ministry, landed in Beslan Airport with about six tons (1,000 boxes) of Nestle commodities. These were delivered to Beslan victims by WFP. The UN agency received the consignment at the airport with the assistance of Emercom staff, who also helped to off-load the commodities onto the UNHCR truck. The food had been



transported in all parts of the plane, including the cockpit, as well as the main storage area.

The first portion of food aid was delivered to the Central Hospital of Beslan and unloaded in its storage facilities with the help of parents of the victims, hospital personnel and WFP staff and guards. The food was used by the children still undergoing treatment in the hospital and, on the initiative of the doctors, through parcels prepared at the hospital for the children who had already returned home from the various institutions.

Then the convoy headed to the Children's Hospital of Vladikavkaz, where unloading was undertaken by the hospital and WFP staff, who were later joined by soldiers undergoing military service in Vladikavkaz. The last distribution point was the Clinical Hospital of Emergency Relief, where the food aid was distributed with the help of doctors.

As of 28 September there were only 62 patients remaining in the three hospitals of Beslan and Vladikavkaz. The doctors said that on a daily basis these patients are provided with food rations consisting of among other things juice, biscuits, chocolate bars, caramel, condensed milk, buckwheat, jam, tea, mineral water and crisps.

On 13 October the food commodities were only needed for 16 patients at the Clinical Emergency Hospital, thereby completing the one-month WFP support for the victims of the Beslan tragedy in local hospitals. Commodities provided included wheat flour, sugar, buckwheat, milk (to be consumed with Nestlé's Fitness cereal), pasta, condensed milk and other foods, thanks to support from SDC/SHA.

To finalize using the SDC/SHA fund-

ing, WFP will make one more distribution of various types of commodities for the children in Beslan who are already at home. This will include another Nestle donation and will be carried out in partnership with the International Rescue Committee (IRC). In the package, WFP will provide all food commodities and IRC will provide the school items.

was partly due to the agency's existing capacity in the North Caucasus of southern Russia, where it has been providing emergency food assistance since January 2000 to 290,000 people affected by the conflict in and around Chechnya.

We hope that WFP's food aid, at least to some extent, facilitated the recov-



Doctors and patients have thanked WFP staff for the assistance. They were pleasantly surprised with the speed of WFP's response and the food commodities responding to the hospitals' requirements. WFP's ability to respond quickly to the crisis

ery of the patients in the hospitals and contributed to their quick return home. WFP would like to take the opportunity and express its gratitude to all those who helped us rapidly and efficiently deliver the food to the victims of the Beslan tragedy.

UN World Food Programme (WFP) Mission Statement

WFP provides emergency food assistance:

- to save lives of people in refugee and other emergency situations;
- to improve the nutrition and quality of life of the most vulnerable people at critical times of their lives;
- to help build assets and promote self-reliance of poor people and communities, particularly through labour-intensive works.

For more information on WFP and its activities,
visit our web site at www.wfp.org,
or contact WFP, Russia,
Tel: (7-095) 956-49-68, Fax: (7-095) 956-49-89

Art against Poverty



The UN Office in the Russian Federation, in cooperation with the International Charity Fund of Vladimir Spivakov and the State History and Culture Museum The Moscow Kremlin, organized a charity concert for orphans, disabled children, and children from poor families at the Kremlin Armory Museum. The concert was devoted to the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, which is observed on 17 October according to a United Nations decision.

In 2004, the theme of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty was Youth – a New Voice for the Millennium Development Goals. It made even more symbolic the participation in the concert of



young musicians supported by the International Charity Fund of Vladimir Spivakov as well as of the Natali Children Theatre of Historical Costume, which enrolls disabled children, orphans and children from vulnerable families.

“The eradication of poverty is one of the United Nations major goals because so many people in the world and here, in Russia, continue suffering from poverty and destitution. We think that the new generation – you in particular – will help your country and us to solve this problem in the future”, said the UNDP Deputy Resident Coordinator Kaarina Immonen, addressing the audience and the young performers.



Leadership in Action – For a Russia without AIDS

Drawing inspiration from the UN General Assembly Declaration of Commitment, which asserts “strong leadership at all levels of society is essential for an effective response to the epidemic” the new initiative ‘Leadership in Action – for A Russia Without AIDS’ recognizes that if the epidemic is to be reversed, it is necessary to foster personal commitment and action at all levels of Russian society. Leadership unleashes the courage to openly address and seek to transform those hidden factors – gender and social inequities, rights abuses, taboos and poverty – that fuel the spread of HIV. In the face of such a devastating epidemic, inspiring leaders are needed who can challenge misapprehensions about HIV/AIDS, generate hope where there is despair, and demonstrate that every individual, community and organization has a role to play.

A joint initiative between the Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Welfare and UNDP, with support from UNAIDS and the UN Theme Group on AIDS, Leadership in Action brings a unique approach aimed at transforming the norms, values and practices that fuel HIV/AIDS and fostering the leadership needed to address and contain the epidemic. Based on years of research and work in over 7 countries, the potential of cutting edge methodologies and tools from the corporate sector – such as emotional intelligence, reflective conversations, dynamic planning, and much more – are leveraged for the first time in the fight against AIDS.

The first of three seminars through which, over the course of a year, leaders learn how to better put their commitment in action, took place

September 15–18 at the Renaissance Hotel in Moscow. Over 100 representatives of government and non-government organizations from 6 regions, including business, media, the Russian Orthodox Church and people living with HIV, came together to share experiences and learn together.

In addition to practicing cutting-edge methodologies for leadership development, the participants began to translate this newfound potential into action through the development of ‘Breakthrough Initiatives’ or innovative approaches to fighting HIV/AIDS in small groups organized by themes and regions. Some examples of initial group work on ideas for breakthrough initiatives include:

- One of the Moscow groups will endeavor to establish a new, high-level national award and presentation ceremony annually to acknowledge the Russian organization and individual that contribute most to the fight against HIV/AIDS.

- A St. Petersburg group in partnership with St. Petersburg City Administration, plans to erect a highly visible electronic billboard that reflects to the hour the estimated number of St. Petersburg people living with HIV – bringing awareness about HIV/AIDS as a real and growing problem.

- Tver group will lobby for a formal budgetary programme to fight HIV/AIDS in Tver city, while utilising parliament’s on-air broadcasting time on radio and TV for mass media outreach.



A tribute to the unique opportunity offered by Leadership in Action, a few examples of comments from participants include:

“Participation in the seminar forced me to take a different look at myself and, to some extent, to re-evaluate my value system” – Moscow business representative.

“Thanks to the close interaction with non-government organizations, participation helped me to look at the problem of HIV/AIDS from a different point of view, and to broaden my understanding of my own resource base” – Federal Ministry representative.

“I unexpectedly became aware of causes of conflicts within my organization. Now I know how to resolve them” – St. Petersburg NGO representative.

The second seminar will take place in Moscow on December 13–15. It will build on the distinctions and methods already addressed, using examples that can be applied to work being done with HIV/AIDS, providing special focus on communication, cooperation and systematic approaches to problem solving.

The Annual International Scientific Conference on HIV/AIDS and Viral Hepatitis

The annual conference, organized by the Russian Federation Ministry of Health in Suzdal (29 September-1 October 2004), was attended by nearly 600 representatives of government, civil society, academia, people living with HIV, the Church and business. During the conference, UNDP, as lead agency for the joint UN initiative "Comprehensive Partnership Strategies for HIV/STI Prevention Among Young People in Russia", funded by DFID and the UN Foundation, was proud to organize together with UNAIDS a round table to stimulate a cross-regional discussion on key opportunities and challenges on the theme of regional and municipal comprehensive approaches to HIV/AIDS.

A number of key challenges were identified and discussed by the representatives of 8 regions of Russia and Ukraine as critical components for comprehensive responses at the regional and municipal levels:

- establishment/strengthening of government inter-departmental coordinating mechanisms within regional and municipal administrations;
- development/elaboration of evidence-based, comprehensive regional programmes on HIV/AIDS (as initiatives distinct from the broader regional programmes on preventing socially-determined diseases);
- expanding the funding base for HIV/AIDS activities (for both prevention and care), including regional and local budgetary funds and additional resources, such as the private sector;
- effective partnership between government and non-government entities at the regional and local levels, including legislatively provided financial support of NGOs via administrative budgets;
- enhancing the legislative and executive acts base for evidence-based responses, including a human-rights based approach to protecting the rights of people living with HIV;
- adapting the "Three Ones" principle, accepted at the national level, to the regional and local levels as well. The "Three Ones" principle includes the need for: 1) one agreed HIV/AIDS Action Framework that provides the basis for coordinating the work of all partners; 2) one AIDS Coordinating Authority, with a broad-based multisectoral mandate; 3) one agreed Monitoring and Evaluation System.

The organizers are proud to note that several outcomes of the round table were included in the final general resolution of the international conference. These include:

- commitment to elaborate training courses on the development of a comprehensive strategy of response to HIV/AIDS (this will be first enacted within the project on the basis of the Altai Territory AIDS Centre);
- to develop methodological materials targeting decision and policy makers, based on the project and experiences of other regions, for elaborating inter-sectoral strategies in the struggle against HIV/AIDS.



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

Russian Ombudsman Visits UNHCR Refugee Reception Centre

On 8 September Mr. Vladimir Loukin, the Human Rights Commissioner in the Russian Federation (Ombudsman), visited the UNHCR Refugees Reception Centre in Moscow and met with UNHCR staff, as well as with asylum-seekers and refugees. The Ombudsman and his colleagues held a meeting with the

UNHCR Representative in the Russian Federation. Kasidis Rochanakorn and UNHCR protection staff to discuss ways to improve the situation of asylum-seekers and refugees in Russia.

UNHCR Office in the Russian Federation has developed constructive

co-operation with the Ombudsman's Office for the last several years. On 19 October 2001, UNHCR signed the Memorandum on Interaction and Cooperation with the Human Rights Commissioner's Office in the Russian Federation. Since then both sides have held a fruitful co-operation and dialogue in the form of

**UNHCR****United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

UN in RUSSIA

meetings, joint round-tables, trainings and consideration of individual cases in need for rights protection. In December 2003, Sergio Viera de Mello received posthumous award in “recognition of his personal contribution to international efforts for the protection of human rights” from the Ombudsman’s Office in Russia. Sergio Viera de Mello who was UN staff for over 30 years including UNHCR became the victim of the unprecedented attack against the UN Office in Baghdad on 19 August 2003.

This was the first meeting of Mr. Loukin with UNHCR in his capacity of Ombudsman. He was elected by the State Duma of the RF (lower chamber of the Russian parliament) to this post on 13 February 2004.

The UNHCR Representative in Russia K. Rochanakorn shared with Ombudsman the main problems asylum seekers have to face in this country. “Russia has adopted Law on Refugees, which is up to the international standards, the issues of concern relates to the implementation of the national refugee law” – said Kasidis Rochanakorn, – “a good refugee protection system is to provide asylum seekers a speedy and quality assessment.” The main problem of asylum-seekers from and outside the CIS countries continues to be access to the refugee status determination procedure and lack of proper documentation during the “pre-registration” phase – a period between submission of the claim for refugee status and the first interview by the Migration Service. This waiting period could be from two to four years, while the applicant remains undocumented, and can be treated by the police as illegal migrant.

Also access to the procedure is very restricted; an applicant should submit a list of documents before being admitted to the procedure. This is the situation in Moscow and Moscow region. “In a bid to save own life, a

genuine refugee will come to the country anyway. Slow and complex procedure of refugee status determination will not deter him or her.” – Kasidis Rochanakorn stressed, based on his long-term international experience, – “Being refused of access to the procedure a genuine refugee will stay in Russia illegally in fear to return to his home land. More open access will only legalize people in need for international protection, and on the other hand will facilitate the prevention of abuse of the system”.

Vladimir Loukin in his turn agreed that lack of proper documentation during the “pre-registration” phase was an acute problem that needed to be solved by all the parties jointly with the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation.

The Ombudsman and his colleagues thanked UNHCR for the equipment assistance the Agency provided during earlier years. He also thanked UNHCR for its support to local NGOs protecting refugees’ rights in the country.

In the premises of the Refugee Reception Centre, which was founded in 1993 and since then had been providing free legal assistance to individuals claiming asylum in Russia, the Ombudsman and his colleagues met with the staff of the Centre and Resettlement Unit, as well as with asylum seekers and refugees visiting the Centre. Mr. Loukin appreciated the fact that

asylum seekers with valid claims for international protection are issued with a beneficiary registration card, which is primarily designed to help provide better protection until they complete refugee status determination procedure.

At the end of the meeting Mr. Loukin and his team expressed support towards continuation of cooperation between UNHCR and the Ombudsman’s Office, and also proposed concrete follow-up actions after this meeting, including visit to the transit zone in the airport and a round-table with various government parties to discuss the refugee and migration issues.

As of 30 June 2004, 5,567 persons were registered as persons of concern to UNHCR and referred to the competent migration authorities for the submission of their official asylum claims. UNHCR estimates 3,280 non-CIS asylum seekers awaiting access to the national refugee status determination procedure. During the first half of 2004, the Office assisted 105 Afghans and 5 persons from other non-CIS countries in voluntary repatriation. During the same period, UNHCR assisted to resettle (departed) 216 persons.



Photo by UNHCR/ Valerie Sokolova

The Russian Ombudsman Vladimir Loukin and his colleagues held a meeting with the UNHCR Representative in Russia Kasidis Rochanakorn and UNHCR protection staff to discuss ways to improve the situation of asylum seekers and refugees in Russia



The UNESCO Director-General and President Putin Open the World Congress of News Agencies in Moscow

On 23 September 2004, the Director-General of UNESCO, Koichiro Matsuura, opened with Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, and Vitaly Ignatenko, Director-General of ITAR-TASS, the World Congress of News Agencies entitled "Information: Challenge XXI".

This Congress was organized in Moscow on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of ITAR-TASS, the largest and oldest news agency in Russia. Some 120 news agencies from 99 countries were represented in the meeting.

After the opening address of President Putin, in which he elaborated on his new policy to fight terrorism and on the role of the media in the present international context, Mr Matsuura noted in his speech that this "gathering of news agencies at the global level might best be seen as a platform of dialogue and the exchange of ideas, information and experience among many of the world's leading news providers. This event provides a useful forum for conducting professional debate on issues of vital interest to news agencies. Freedom of expression and the free flow of information are two such issues in this globalizing era."

"It is an era in which the relation between media freedom and democracy has never been closer. Editorial independence, unfettered access to information and rigorous professional standards are especially important for news agencies since they provide the news material and foot-

age for so many other media outlets."

Referring to UNESCO as the United Nations agency with the responsibilities regarding mass communication and "the free flow of ideas by word and image", the Director-General outlined the Organization's engagement with

the process of the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS). The concept of "knowledge societies" that UNESCO promotes "should be conceived as plural, variable and open to democratic choice", the Director-General argued. Underpinning UNESCO's approach to the WSIS is a set of four inter-linked principles: freedom of expression; equal access to education; universal access to information, including a strong public domain of information; and the preservation and promotion of cultural diversity.

As the key role of these principles was recognized at the 1st phase of WSIS in Geneva, the "main task now... is to bring about the actual enjoyment of those basic freedoms and rights in practice" Mr Matsuura stated. "I firmly believe that the freedom of news media, including news agencies, as well as pluralism are vital in this matter. Their freedom cannot be left at an abstract level but must take concrete form in



*The Director-General of UNESCO
Koichiro Matsuura (centre) at the World Congress
of News Agencies*

the daily activities of media professionals and media organizations."

One of UNESCO's thematic meetings to be organized in the run-up to the second phase of the Summit in Tunis is an international conference "UNESCO between two phases of the World Summit of the Information Society", which will focus on the issue of cultural diversity in knowledge societies. Organized by the Russian National Committee for the Information for All Programme and the Ministry of Culture and Communication, the Conference will be convened in St. Petersburg in May 2005 under the auspices of President Putin and UNESCO Director-General.

During his visit to Moscow, the Director-General participated in several bilateral meetings and granted to the Director General of the State academic Bolshoi theatre of Russia, Mr. Anatoly Iksanov a special UNESCO medal for his contribution to World Culture.

Poverty Distorts Childhood

The regional launch of the Innocenti Social Monitor Report “Economic growth and child poverty in the CEE/CIS and the Baltic States” took place in Moscow.

The report analyses children's life conditions in 27 countries of the region. The researchers give a close examine to the following subjects “Economic growth and child poverty”, “Economic integration, labour market and children», “Migration trends and policy implications” “Young people and drugs: increasing health risks”.

The process of international integration in the region highlighted the growth of poverty level and inequality between the countries and inside the country. In 9 countries of CEE/CIS and the Baltic States, one third of children's population— 14 million out of 44 million, as of 2001–2002, live below their country poverty level. In some Caucasian, Central Asian and South-Eastern European countries, including Albania, Armenia and Tajikistan government expenditures on public health and education make about 4 percent out of GDP or less, which is very low according to the regional standards. Recently Russia in a way also has become the migration magnet – in 1989–2002 the net migration flow made 3,7 million people. Mostly migration processes are developing inside CEE/CIS region and in rare cases between CEE/CIS countries and the West, which potentially play a very important role in implementing children's rights.

“Children are being bypassed by economic progress in this region and poverty is distorting their childhood”, said UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy at the launch of the report in Moscow. “Poverty means poor nutrition and sick children. It means children unable to go to

school because they cannot afford books, uniforms or bus fares. At worst, poverty means violence and desperation, with more children in institutions and soaring drug and alcohol abuse among the young. Poverty is shredding the social fabric of these new societies.”

The report shows that economic growth in the region has rarely been accompanied by initiatives to tackle the serious social disparities affecting children.

“This raises two key questions. First, what is economic growth for if it does not benefit children?” Bellamy said. “And second, why are so many countries failing to measure child poverty? It's a critical indicator of the success or failure of their social and economic policies, as well as their prospects for the future.”

UNICEF works with the families and NGOs in the region to fight poverty consequences: children's institutionalization, children traffic, the consequences of alcohol and drug addiction, and especially HIV. Although the main component of UNICEF program is

the systematic changes in politics and legislative reforms, which aim to protect children and their rights, and show the ways to achieve “Millennium Development Goals” for each country.

Presentation of the monitoring report “Economic growth and children poverty in the CEE/CIS and the Baltic States” took place in the information agency ITAR-TASS conference hall and was simultaneously broadcasted to 10 Russian regions through the satellite and by Internet. During the conference there were questions from Moscow, Krasnoyarsk, Irkutsk, Barnaul, Chelyabinsk and Komi republic. Carol Bellamy, Maria Calivis, UNICEF Regional Director, Marta Santos Pais, Director of UNICEF Innocenti Research Center, and Carel de Rooy, UNICEF Representative for Russian Federation and Belarus answered the questions. A round-table discussion on the Social Monitor was held at the Economic faculty of the Moscow State University. It was attended by the key demographers, sociologists and economists.



The launch of the UNICEF Report “Economic growth and child poverty in the CEE/CIS and the Baltic States”

Population-2004: Russian Issues in the Global Context

Every year more than half a million women worldwide die during child-birth and from pregnancy-related complications.

Photo by Rodger Reed



Sietske Steneker and Anatoly Vishnevsky

This and other worrying facts were revealed at the presentation of the State of the World Population Report of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The meeting at the Moscow President Hotel attracted attention of scientists, representatives of government agencies, international and non-governmental organizations.

UNFPA Representative in Russia, Sietske Steneker reminded that ten years ago 179 nations reached agreement at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (ICPD) on a 20-year Programme of Action. Its aim is to advance human well-being through alleviation of poverty, empowerment of women and ensuring universal access to reproductive health services. "It's time to take stock", said Sietske Steneker. She emphasized the following positive shifts. Since 1994 99 per cent of the 151 developing countries surveyed have adopted measures to protect the rights of girls and women, including passing the national legislation on women's rights. 131 countries have changed national policies, laws or institutions to recognize reproductive rights. The use of modern contraception has increased from 55 per cent of couples in 1994 to 61 per cent today.

Three quarters of countries have adopted national strategies on HIV/AIDS.

At the same time, stressed Sietske Steneker, much more still needs to be done as the challenges we face are daunting. In 2003 worldwide some 3

million people died of AIDS and an estimated 5 million people, half of them female, were newly infected with HIV. Every minute one woman dies during delivery or from pregnancy-related complications – 592,000 women every year. But as Sietske Steneker said, the most disappointing conclusion of the Report is a lack of resources to meet reproductive health needs of developing countries: donor countries have given only about half the amount needed to implement the Program of Action. "This report is above all a call for countries to invest in the education, health and rights of young men and women to ensure a more equitable and sustainable world", pointed out Sietske Steneker. She concluded: "Above all, the Cairo Programme of Action has proved to be a realistic agenda that has not only withstood the test of time, but has become even more relevant with each passing day".

"The UNFPA Report allows us to see our problems in the global context", said Anatoly Vishnevsky, the Director of the Centre for Human Demography and Ecology. Under the Cairo Pro-

gramme of Action by 2015 life expectancy in all countries should be over 70 years. In the Russian Federation mortality rates are unacceptably high and the country has a wide gap between the male and female lifespan, of 13 years. The birth rate has been low since the mid-1980ies: and stands presently at 1,3 births per woman. By 2050 the population may decrease to 100 million. To stabilize the population at its present level, it would be necessary, first of all, to double the birth rate, and, second, to increase the intake of migrants, for which Russia may not be prepared, neither economically nor politically. "But we must remember that migration is a real resource which we can use", stressed Anatoly Vishnevsky

"We have excess mortality among men of working age and they are the foundation of the economy", said Inga Grebesheva, Director of the Russian Planning Association. "The paradox is that we are called to increase birth rates "for the sake of the Motherland" where there are an estimated 3 million "street children". Meanwhile the Draft Law on reproductive rights has been on hold at the State Duma for 6 years.

At the end of the press conference the participants answered journalists' numerous questions.



Photo by Rodger Reed



2nd All Russia Congress on General Practitioners

From September 28–30 2004, 41 Ministers of Health and 32 Deputy Ministers of the Health from regions throughout Russia joined 462 other delegates at the 2nd All Russia Congress on General Practitioners (GP) held in Cheboksary, Chuvashia.

At the opening of the Congress, all were welcomed by Nikolai Fedorov, President of the Chuvash Republic; Vladimir Starodubov, First Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Health and Social Development, Russian Federation; and by Mary Collins, Health Care Policy Advisor, WHO Russia representing the World Health Organization.

Dr Nina Souslonova, Minister of Health, Chuvash Republic outlined the significant work which has been undertaken in the Republic of Chuvashia to introduce general practitioners in the health care system. There are now 225 GPs working in Chuvashia in a number of health care settings including individual GP offices, rural health clinics, and urban polyclinics. Dr. Denisov, Vice Rector of the Moscow Medical Academy gave a comprehensive presentation on the current status of general practice throughout Russia, the progress which had been made since the First Congress held in 2000, as well as the issues and challenges ahead.

It was noted that in the past three years the number of GPs practicing in health care facilities in the Russian Federation has increased from 1375 to 3092. There are now 44 faculties of General Practice at the medical education facilities, an increase from only 25 four years ago. In November 2002, a section to study the issues of Family Medicine was organized at the Research Centre of the Moscow Medical Academy, which has assumed the role of a Federal Centre

Presentations from many regions about their current experiences in developing general practice were

made during the Congress. Sessions were also devoted to the education of general practitioners. The participants also had the opportunity to visit a number of general practices in the Chuvash Republic, both in cities and rural areas. Discussions were held with general practitioners about the enlarged role which they now play in primary health care, along with nurses who have been specially trained for general practice. Recognition was made of the support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in providing equipment for an initial eighteen GP offices in the Republic and for the ongoing activities being undertaken with the support of the WHO/CIDA Health Care Policy and Stewardship in Russia Program, focusing on the importance of GPs' role in health promotion including involvement with other sectors in the community.

On the final day of the Congress, a Resolution was agreed which calls for improvement in the provision of primary care to the population in Russia. Specific initiatives include

the improvement of payment schemes for personnel in general practice, elaboration of a strategic plan to reform primary health care, provision of regional training seminars on the practical aspects of organization of general practice as well as new programs for training and improvement of professional skills of general practitioners.

The resolution calls on the Association of General Practice to develop criteria to assess the effectiveness of general practitioners, elaborate tariffs for medical services provided by GPs, develop protocols for general practice, develop the criteria for performance quality of GPs and GP nurses, organize training for GPs and spread the experiences gained in various regions of Russia on general practice, throughout the Federation.

Following the successful Congress, it was agreed that next one will be organized in 2008.

Mary Collins
Health Care Policy Advisor,
WHO/Russia



At the opening of the 2nd All Russia Congress on General Practitioners, from right to the left: Professor Igor Denisov, Deputy Rector of the Moscow Medical Academy; Chuvash Republic President Nikolai Fyodorov and First Deputy Minister of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation Professor Vladimir Starodubov

Urban Transport and People's Health

The conference on "Implementing Sustainable Urban Travel Policies in Russia and other CIS Countries" took place in Moscow, on 30 September – 1 October 2004. The event was co-organized by the Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation, the Department of Transport and Communications of Moscow, the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) and the joint World Health Organization/United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (WHO/UNECE) secretariat of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP).

The event, which was opened by the Minister of Transport of the Russian Federation, Mr Igor Levitin, focused on how countries – in particular Russia and other countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States – are defining and moving towards the implementation of effective sustainable urban travel policies. With a special eye on Russian and CIS experience, participants from different parts of the world, reflected on and shared their national experiences in implementing strategies to improve sustainability of the urban travel policies, thereby contributing to reduce the unacceptable burden of diseases and injuries related to the dramatic and relentless growth of private motorization witnessed by large cities in the CIS countries over the past decade.

As a contribution to the Conference, the WHO/UNECE secretariat of THE PEP presented an overview of the environmental and health impacts of urban transport in the Russian Federation and the other countries in eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia (EECCA). The overview highlighted that every year more than 60,000 people are dying because of road traffic injuries, and more than 40,000 because of exposure to air pollution in large cities,

where transport is by far the largest source of emissions of air pollutants and noise. A disproportionate amount of this burden falls on children and vulnerable road users, in particular pedestrians. The growth of private motorization is also challenging the possibility for public transport to remain an attractive alternative for urban mobility, claims urban space to accommodate for new infrastructure and promotes urban sprawl, which in turns further prompts car dependency and sedentary life-styles.

The conference was an important step towards exchanging information between different levels of the national administration but also across different areas of expertise and sectors, including the health and environmental ones, and contributed to raise awareness about the effects of transport on the health of the citizens in the Russian Federation and CIS.

In his opening remarks, Dr Jaroslav Volf, chairman of THE PEP and director of the National Public Health Institute of the Czech Republic, highlighted how the event set an important precedent for a closer collaboration between national and international actors for reaching common goals. He also stressed that the promotion of urban mobility that is sustainable for health and the environment is possible only through collaboration and joint efforts of the relevant authorities and stakeholders. He, together with all the further speakers, highlighted the crucial importance of effective and sustainable public transport both for the functioning and economic development of the cities in the region as well as for the health and environment of present urban citizens and their future generations.

In his intervention Dr Mikko Vi-enonen, Special Representative of

the WHO Director General in the Russian Federation, reminded participants that failing to reduce the health and environmental burden of transport is also going to be detrimental for the development of these countries, where injuries alone are estimated to cost some 10 billion USD a year, or 1.5 % of the gross national product. He also expressed the hope that the workshop helped participants to start thinking that health and environmental concerns should become an integral part of policy making in the field of urban mobility and considering the health and environment sectors as useful partners for transport and urban developers, capable of providing compelling arguments in support of sustainable mobility and assessing the effects of possible interventions.

The Conference was attended by some 150 participants representing central and local governments of the ECMT as well as UNECE and WHO/Europe member Countries, city networks, relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, experts from the transport, health and environment sectors and the academic community, and by representatives of international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

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All background papers and presentations in English and/or Russian can be downloaded from the web sites http://www.thepep.org/en/workplan/urban/urban_implementation.htm and www.oecd.org/cem.



WHO Health Information Activities in Russia Presented at European Conference



Dr Tatyana Kaygorodova, Head of WHO Documentation Centre (Russia) and Dr Paivi Pekkarinen, Librarian at the WHO Documentation Centre (Finland) presented on current activities of WHO Documentation Centres during 9th European Conference of Medical and Health Libraries in Spain

Two representatives, Tatyana Kaygorodova, Head of the WHO Documentation Center for Russia, and Pavel Mikheev Head of the Library of Health Reform Projects in Russia, WHO Health Care Policy and Stewardship in Russia Project attended the 9th European Conference of Medical and Health Libraries held in Santander, Spain in September 2004. The Conference was organized as part of the work of the European Association of Health Information and Libraries (EAHIL).

During the Conference, Tatyana and Pavel were invited to make presentations about their projects and activities in Russia. Both Tatyana and Pavel work with the Central Research Institute on Health Care Organization and Informatization in Moscow where their activities are housed.

Tatyana described the work of the WHO Documentation Centre in Russia which contains more than 1700 WHO documents and provides these documents to decision makers at the federal and regional level. Recently the Centre has established a website which has significantly increased the number of users in the regions (<http://mednet.ru/whodc>). The main challenge has been

the difficulty in obtaining materials in the Russian language. When materials are only available in English, the Centre tries to prepare short summaries in Russian.

There was much interest among conference participants in Pavel's presentation on the Electronic Library of Health Reform Projects in Russia (Zdravinform – <http://zdravinform.ru>)

This Library provides a unified database with information about the most effective health reform projects and programs supported by international donor agencies in Russia. The database now includes more than 100 projects. The electronic library is available in Russian and English and enables decision makers and health care managers to learn about recently developed management technologies and methodologies to improve health care services. The newsletter of EAHIL is planning to publish this presentation in a future edition.

As well as providing an opportunity for information exchange among health information professionals in Europe, contacts were made and linkages strengthened between the Russian delegates and WHO Documentation Centres representatives from other countries attending the Conference.

One outcome is expected to be the establishment of EAHIL representation in Russia and the creation of a Russian version of the Association's website. EAHIL indicated its interest in sharing information among health information professionals in the Russian Federation and obtaining information and new experiences from Russian colleagues.

For further information please contact Pavel Mikheev, Head of Division for monitoring of international health projects, Central Research Institute on Health Care Organization and Informatization, info@zdravinform.ru or Tatyana Kaygorodova, Head, WHO Documentation Centre for Russia, kaidoc@mednet.ru

Mary Collins
WHO Health Care
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World Health Organization (WHO) works with others to improve the health of population, by helping Member States. WHO is a specialized agency of the United Nations with 192 Member States. WHO Headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland. The European Regional Bureau is in Copenhagen, Denmark.

WHO 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.

For further information please visit

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Protecting Environment: Expert Assessment and Politics

A conference “Environmental culture and information for sustainable development” was held in the city of Bryansk at the end of September. The following remarks were presented by Alexandre Gorelik, Head of the UN Information Centre in Moscow, at the conference.

There is a broadly shared opinion that information is the main value for a 21st century society. Some, while accepting the essence of this idea, would specify it by saying that information is the chief commodity of the present day. Yet, strictly speaking, there is nothing substantially new about that point: Francis Bacon’s famous formula “Knowledge is power” appeared almost four hundred years ago. But still, access to the environmental information means different things for different people. Adequate information is a cornerstone of public comprehension of the sustainable development; it also provides a basis for successful planning and decision-making. Any political move, if not backed by precise information, is no much better than taking shots in the dark. As far as the national economy or social situation are concerned, all the required data are normally available, mainly reliable and palatable. But the situation is different concerning the environmental data: obtaining precise information on those issues is time- and resource-consuming. A more “panoramic” and more reliable information support depends on the following elements: a well-established system of ecological monitoring and data collection, their correlation with the wealth of socio-economic information to ensure informed decision-making; presentation of trends in a user-friendly format to ensure that the society is able to take part in the dialogue, rather than watch the discussion from the sidelines. In this context, the State has a special role to play. It must guarantee the right to access to information for non-governmental organizations; protect of the society from

arbitrary actions by any authority; take into consideration experts’ opinion when making decisions; provide support, including financial one, for civil society groups that have demonstrated their competence and responsibility. From the mass media angle, the perception by the public of an environmental issue – say, air pollution in cities – depends, first, on the extent of its coverage in the press, second, by the journalists’ proficiency in the matter and their professional skills and, third, by the preparedness of society itself to get involved, to face challenges. Besides, an objective approach calls, among other things, for careful handling of stories about woes and problems. It does not necessarily have to be a self-censorship, but a journalist must always be acutely aware of the importance of repercussions that his or her word is likely to have. What we also need is positive news, “success stories.” It is not without purpose that international organizations, such as the United Nations or European Union have instituted a number of special awards to support innovations in the protection of environment. There are such success stories in Russia as well (good practices of Mosen- ergo being just one of the examples), and people should be kept abreast of these. Let’s look at perhaps the most controversial issue of today, the climate change. Here, science and quasi-science, professional knowledge and expediency, economic benefits and political considerations make such a tight knot that it is not easy for a layman to grasp the matter. But even for an unsophisticated person it is obvious that cacophonous statements by different Russian officials in 2002 – 2004 on



the Kyoto protocol could hardly be described as a coherent position. It is no secret that Minpromenergo and the Academy of Sciences, various branches of the experts community, as well as two groups of big businesses, hold diverging views on this matter. On the other hand, it is impossible not to see that the EU, while putting pressure on Russia on Kyoto, often acts “with its gloves off.” The Western Europe seems to run out of patience, but this can hardly justify the lack of consideration. I would like to quote Executive Director of the UN Environmental Programme Klaus Toepfer, who said about the Kyoto protocol: “It is the people with calculators counting euros, dollars, roubles, and yens who are putting brakes on this deal.” The problems of access to information on sustainable development and its dissemination cannot be viewed outside a specific context, without taking into account possible recurrence of incompetence and experts’ bias. The mankind has grown much more powerful since the times of Francis Bacon. This is why now, more than ever before, is it important to keep our knowledge in pace with this power and even overtake and direct it, for the sake of both nature and human beings.

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