



UN in RUSSIA

Activities for Sustainable Human Development

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UN Under-Secretary General and UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown Visits Russia



Mr Mark Malloch Brown

From February 15th through 18, UN Under-Secretary General and UNDP Administrator Mark Mal-

loch Brown undertook an official visit of Russia. He was accompanied by UNDP Director for Europe and the CIS Kalman Mizsei.

In the first leg of his trip, Mr Malloch Brown visited Bryansk in the Chernobyl-affected region of Russia. Mr Mark Malloch Brown met with the Bryansk Oblast's governor Mr Yuri Lodkin and with representatives of civil society to discuss several initiatives of the Chernobyl recovery programme.

"We welcome UNDP's assistance not only as a donor but especially as a provider of knowledge and advice on economic development, and as a partner in attracting international investments to the area", said the

Oblast's governor Yuri Lodkin after the visit.

In Moscow, Mr Malloch Brown met with State Duma Speaker Boris Gryzlov, Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov, Minister of Foreign Affairs Igor Ivanov, other top officials, as well as representatives of civil society and the business community.

During these meetings, Mr Mark Malloch Brown discussed Russia's increasing role as a full-fledged partner in developmental assistance around the world, encouraged the active participation of civil society in the policy dialogue, and advocated for a multi-sectoral approach in response to HIV/AIDS.

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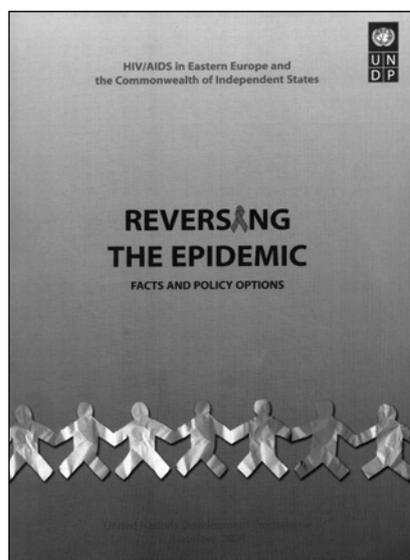
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New UNDP Report Warns about the Risks of a Generalized HIV/AIDS Epidemic

By 2015 all United Nations Member States have pledged to halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

(from UN Millennium Development Goals)



A Televised debate, dedicated to presentation of a new United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Report “Reversing the Epidemic: Facts and Policy Options” was held at the Russian Information Agency “Novosti” on 17 February. The Report offers the first comprehensive profile of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 28 countries of East and South Eastern Europe, the Baltics and the CIS.

as well as experts, representatives of NGO and mass media took part in the debates followed by press conference.

The participants, responding to the Report, expressed their alarm: Eastern Europe has some of the fastest growing rates of HIV/AIDS in the world. The impact is compounded by still insufficient public awareness, frequent stigmatization and lack of adequate policy instruments to cope with the disease. Nonetheless, the region also has success stories, from which valuable lessons should be taken.

The Report offers HIV/AIDS profiles for the countries of the region, describes high-risks groups and the behaviours that make them vulnerable to infection, and discusses why

human rights is an essential ingredient for fighting the epidemic. The Report also touches upon the issues of decriminalising injecting drug use and undertaking comprehensive prison reform. The inclusion of marginalized groups in policy processes is also considered a key element in the response to HIV/AIDS.

Despite a comparatively low prevalence

in the region, the growth in new HIV infections reported over the last several years in Estonia, Russia and Ukraine are among the world’s highest. Upwards of one out of every one hundred adults living in these three countries is now estimated to be carrying the virus – a threshold above which efforts to turn back the epidemic have failed in many other countries. Also, if not curbed, the disease will threaten development prospects in Eastern Europe and the CIS.

Data from the region unambiguously points to the socio-economic and governance dimensions of the epidemic. Members of at-risk groups are often subject to social exclusion, poverty, stigmatisation, or incarceration. Also, the above-average prevalence of HIV in the region’s overcrowded penal institutions – which the Report calls “real HIV incubators” – is a serious cause for concern.

According to the Report, the disease threatens to affect the region’s prospects for economic growth and human development. The epidemic will put new strains on already overburdened social protection systems. If the epidemic generalizes premature morbidity and mortality in age cohorts with high productive capacities could reduce annual GDP growth by one full percentage point, a tremendous impact for any country. Increased health expenditures associated with treating people living with AIDS

The panel discussion was moderated by Vladimir Pozner, a well-known journalist from Russian TV Channel One – the main state channel. UN Under-Secretary General Mark Malloch Brown, who undertook an official visit of Russia, Director of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS Kalman Mizsei, Director of UNDP Regional Centre in Bratislava Ben Slay, Special Representative of the WHO Director General in Russia Dr Mikko Viononen



Vladimir Pozner moderates the panel discussion at the Russian Information Agency “Novosti”



Mark Malloch Brown: *"This report does not simply analyse the problems: it offers concrete solutions. Drawing on best practices and on the proven experience of countries and communities where HIV/AIDS prevention and care have produce results, it sets out a series of recommendations for policy makers, government institutions, business and civil society actors on exactly how that can be done. A product of the joint efforts of a team of researchers drawn from UN agencies, civil society organisations and other partners, it is a powerful call to action"*

could consume one to three percentage points of annual GDP. These figures represent particular challenges for the poorest CIS countries.

The growing socio-economic threat posed by HIV/AIDS places increased pressure on policy makers – particularly in the Western CIS and the Baltic states – to avert what is becoming a devastating public health problem. The Report supports a better policy balance between criminalisation and exclusion on the one hand, and tolerance, inclusion, and treatment on the other. Policy makers are also called to carefully consider the evidence-base for harm-reduction approaches as an effective means for reversing the spread of HIV among injecting drug users. In addressing HIV/AIDS, good governance includes expanding access to information, protecting the human rights of vulnerable groups, increasing the participation of civil society in decision-making processes and establishing partnerships between public authorities and civil society groups. For instance,

the Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS at the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation, comprised of government and civil society leaders, and supported by UNDP, represents a successful example of such a partnership.

Of the 80,000 people in the entire region who, according to WHO guidelines, currently require treatment for AIDS, only 7,000 now receive it. This comes despite dramatically expanded access to treatment and new initiatives to lower the costs of antiretroviral therapy. Some 70 percent of the approximately 3,000 people in CIS countries who are receiving antiretroviral therapy live in Russia. According to the Report, extensive use of monotherapeutic antiretroviral regimens in this region increases the risk of generating a drug-resistant strain of HIV. This risk needs to be closely monitored by the appropriate authorities.

A number of countries in Central and South-Eastern Europe, such as Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia have recorded important successes in halting or reversing the



Director of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS Kalman Mizsei

spread of the epidemic. They have been able to leverage progress in building social tolerance into effective responses to HIV/AIDS. At the same time, a relatively successful transition outcome does not in itself guarantee an effective response, as



Director of UNDP Regional Centre in Bratislava Ben Slay

is apparent in the case of Estonia, which combines one of the region's successful transitions with some of its highest HIV prevalence rates.

"All experts concur that delays are disastrous when dealing with HIV/AIDS. Just as in some CIS countries today, only twelve years ago South Africa too saw less than 1% of its adult population infected – now that rate is twenty times higher. It is already too late to speak of avoiding a crisis in Eastern Europe and the CIS. Nevertheless, there is still much that governments and civil societies can do to reduce the social, demographic and economic consequences of HIV/AIDS and even reverse the epidemic", said Director of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS Kalman Mizsei.

The televised debate concluded with a lively Q&A session involving the participants and the mass media.

For more information, please contact Mr Shombi Sharp, Assistant Resident Representative + (7095) 787-2164, e-mail: shombi.sharp@undp.org



Jan Egeland, UN Under-Secretary-General Visits the Russian Federation

From 25–29 January, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr Jan Egeland, undertook an official visit to the Russian Federation, which included high-level meetings in Moscow and a mission to Chechnya and Ingushetia.

He met Russian officials including the Federal Minister for Chechnya, Mr Stanislav Ilyasov, the Minister for Civil Defence, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters, Mr Sergei Shoigu, President of the Republic of Ingushetia Mr Murat Zyazikov, the Deputy Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation, Ms Galina Karelova, the Deputy Chairman of the State Duma, Mr Georgy Boos, the Head of the Migration Service, Mr Alexandre Checkalin, President of the Chechen Republic Mr Akhmat Kadyrov, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Igor Ivanov. Mr Egeland discussed a broad range of issues related to cooperation between the United Nations and the Russian Federation in the North Caucasus and elsewhere. In addition, the sides considered the feasibility of a more active participation of the

Russian Federation in international humanitarian operations by involving its logistic, transportation and human resources.

In Chechnya, the Under-Secretary-General met government officials and discussed coordination issues. He visited three sites in Grozny: a temporary accommodation center for returnees, a childcare center that provides psychological assistance to disabled children and mine victims, and a maternity hospital. Mr Egeland noted that substantial numbers of people are now returning from Ingushetia to Chechnya and that the United Nations stood ready to increase its work in Chechnya. “This is a decisive hour for humanitarian work and the future of internally displaced persons in Ingushetia”, Mr Egeland said. Humanitarian conditions in Chechnya, he noted, are precarious, and the security environment difficult. There is more-over a major lack of housing for those who return. Authorities in Chechnya told the UN Under-Secretary-General that they would ensure that conditions are adequate for people to return.

Mr Egeland then traveled to Nazran, Ingushetia, where he met President

Murat Zyazikov. He emphasized that all returns from Ingushetia to Chechnya be voluntary. For his part, President of Ingushetia offered his assurances that involuntary return would not occur and that no camps would be forcibly closed. The Under-Secretary-General visited three tent camps for internally displaced persons in Ingushe-

tia. He expressed concern that according to some displaced, they feel pressure to return to Chechnya.

Mr Egeland received assurances from both federal and local authorities that the operational environment and security conditions for the humanitarian community would be improved, and that the principle of voluntary return for displaced persons to Chechnya from Ingushetia would be observed. However, conflicting statements regarding the deadline for the closure of tent camps in Ingushetia on 1 March persisted throughout the visit.

On behalf of the humanitarian community, Mr Egeland stressed the need to secure the earliest release of Mr Arjan Erkel, a Médecins Sans Frontières worker, abducted in the North Caucasus 18 months ago.

To get the full picture of the humanitarian situation in the North Caucasus and the humanitarian community’s work there, Mr Egeland met members of the UN Humanitarian Coordination Group and the UN Country Team in Moscow as well as representatives of the international humanitarian community in Nazran.

Mr. Egeland also discussed with the Russian government the response to the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. He suggested that a new policy forum be established for discussing cooperation between Russian and the UN counterparts related to Chernobyl, and Russian officials expressed support of the UN’s intention to shift from relief to development in working with Chernobyl-affected population. From Moscow, the UN Under-Secretary-General left for Ukraine and Belarus, countries that also suffer the effects of the Chernobyl disaster, to continue discussions of the issue.



The United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mr Jan Egeland in a tent camp in Ingushetia



Visit of WFP Executive Director, James Morris, to Russia



World Food Programme Executive Director Mr James Morris (centre) in WFP Moscow Office

Mr James T. Morris visited Russian Federation on 7–11 December 2003 under an official invitation of Mr Igor Ivanov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia. This was preceded by a preparatory visit to Russia by Mr John Powell, Assistant Executive Director and Head of Fundraising and Communications Department of WFP. Mr Powell met with Deputy Minister of Agriculture Mr Anatolii Mikhalev and Deputy Minister of EMERCOM of Russia Mr Yuri Brazhnikov, World Bank Representative in Russia Mr Julian Schweizer, Vice-President of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs Mr Igor Urgens and other officials to discuss various issues linked with the visit of the Executive Director to Russia.

This was the second time that Mr Morris visited Russia (after his first visit in October 2002). The aim of the present visit was to thank the Russian Federation officials for the first donation of US\$ 11 million for WFP humanitarian operations in DPRK and Angola and to evaluate its implementation. By the time of Mr Morris' visit to Russia, distribution of 1,880 mt of maize purchased out of US\$ 1 million donated by Russia for WFP operation in Angola had already been started. As to implementation of DPRK part of contri-

bution, some technical details were still to be finalized on shipment of approximately 35,000 mt of Russian wheat.

During his visit, Mr Morris had meetings with Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Igor Ivanov and Deputy Minister Mr Yuri Fedotov, Minister of EMERCOM Mr Sergei Shoigu and Deputy Minister Mr

Yury Brazhnikov, Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church His Excellency Alexii II, Vice President Mr Boris Pastukhov and members of the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, President Mr Arkady Vol'sky and a group of prominent businessmen – members of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, and UNCT in Russia.

A wide range of questions pertinent to development of WFP cooperation with the Russian government structures, WFP and EMERCOM of Russia joint humanitarian assistance on provision of food aid in emergency regions of the world, future cooperation in light of the recently signed Stand-by Agreement with EMERCOM of Russia, were discussed at the meetings with the se-

nior government officials. Discussions of possibilities of WFP cooperation with large Russian companies who can become corporate partners to WFP and contribute to its humanitarian operations worldwide, revealed profound interest on behalf of representatives of Russian business community.

Mr Morris informed the Russian and international colleagues that in 2003 WFP provided food assistance to over 110 million hungry people from 83 countries of the world, including 50 million people in Africa, 9.2 million people in Afghanistan and 6.4 million people in DPRK, mainly women and children. For the next two years WFP budget will amount to US\$ 8.4 billion. Mr Morris also singled out the invaluable support on behalf of WFP corporate partners, who have gained recognition all over the world thanks to their cooperation with WFP.

Mr Morris also briefed the participants of the meetings about the new WFP emergency operation in the North Caucasus for the next 18 months, under which 259,000 beneficiaries will receive food assistance, including 78,000 primary and pre-school children in targeted districts of Chechnya and 8,000 primary and pre-school children enrolled in schools established for displaced children in Ingushetia.

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



High Commissioner for Refugees Ruud Lubbers Meets with President of the Republic of Ingushetia Murat Zyazikov

High Commissioner for Refugees Ruud Lubbers met on 19 January 2004 with President Murat Zyazikov of the Republic of Ingushetia. President Zyazikov was accompanied by Mr Stefan Vassilev, the UN Resident Coordinator and acting Humanitarian Coordinator in RF on a visit to Humanitarian Agencies based in Geneva.

The discussion focused on the issue of the remaining almost 66 thousand displaced people from Chechnya benefiting from safe haven in the neighboring Republic of Ingushetia. The High Commissioner expressed concern over a recent announcement by Russian officials that the three remaining tented camps in Ingushetia, where several thousand IDPs are still sheltered, will be closed prior to presidential elections in the Russian Federation in March. If this happens without a realistic provision of any alternative shelter, then the principle of safe haven would be seriously jeopardized. Mr Lubbers was reassured by President Zyazikov, who

said he was personally committed to respecting the principle of voluntary return.

The High Commissioner reiterated his wish to promote a positive engagement of the international humanitarian community through a two-pronged approach in which safe haven would be guaranteed in Ingushetia for those not wishing to return, while those returning to Chechnya of their own free choice would be supported by greater involvement and presence in Chechnya by humanitarian agencies.

The High Commissioner also raised the issue of the abduction of Arjan Erkel of Medecins Sans Frontieres in Dagestan. He stated that the abduction overshadows the image of the North Caucasus region to which Ingushetia belongs and requested any possible intervention from the Ingush President.

As of 31 January 2004, a total of 65,799 internally displaced persons from Chechnya were registered for assistance in Ingushetia in the database of UNHCR's implementing partner, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). Of this total, 5,978 people were registered in three tented camps, another 23,897 persons in temporary settlements and 35,924 persons in private accommodation.



High Commissioner for Refugees Ruud Lubbers (left) meets with President of the Republic of Ingushetia Murat Zyazikov

UNHCR/S.Hopper

Angelina Jolie Releases a New Online Journal on Her Trip to Russia

The UN refugee agency's Goodwill Ambassador, Angelina Jolie, released on 26 January a new online journal documenting her mission to the Russian Federation, where she met displaced Chechens as well as refugees in Moscow and North Ossetia.

During her four-day mission from August 21-24 last year, Jolie travelled to the republic of Ingushetia in the North Caucasus, meeting Ingush President Murat Zyazikov and displaced Chechens in Bella and Sputnik camps. Her journal

shows both sides of the picture, reflecting the displaced people's fears about security in Chechnya alongside the authorities' view of the situation.

In North Ossetia, a republic bordering Georgia, the Goodwill Ambassador visited the Gizel collective centre, where she spoke to elderly Georgian refugees, many of whom had lost loved ones and were living alone. At a housing project in Komsomolskoe, she was welcomed by a traditional dance and refugees grateful for their new homes.

In Moscow, Jolie was invited into the homes of African refugees, where she heard their problems ranging from xenophobic attacks to a lack of status. She also met an Afghan women's support group, as well as a group of African refugees who had set up a non-governmental organisation with help from UNHCR.

Jolie's journal recorded more than her experiences with displaced populations. It also reflected her concern for humanitarian workers working in the field – from a long list of aid workers attacked in the Caucasus



region, to those killed when the UN headquarters in Baghdad was bombed just days before the start of her mission. The Goodwill Ambassador also mourned the deaths of UNHCR's friend and 2003 Nansen Refugee Award winner Annalena Tonelli in Somalia and aid worker Bettina Goislard in Afghanistan.

"I know that if thousands of people were dying every day... in California, London or New York, it would be very different. But most of these people are in places like Africa, Chechnya, the Balkans, Central Asia and Colombia, and maybe the world is used to hearing about their deaths?

Is it old news? Are they too many? Or is it that they have nothing we feel to give to us in return? Which is of course wrong because they have everything to offer," concluded the journal.

"At the end of the day, what should that matter, we are equal. They are families like us. And they need our help, our support. And in areas like Chechnya, they need us



During her trip to Russia Angelina Jolie (left) dialogues an IDP woman from Chechnya

not to forget." (for details refer to www.unhcr.ru)

**UNSECOORD**

United Nations Security Coordinator
in the Russian Federation

Meeting Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator in the Russian Federation

Four years ago in January 2000, the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD) established its presence in the Russian Federation to support the UN Designated Official for Security and the Security Management Team, by developing, managing, coordinating and facilitating systems, practices, policies and procedures that are necessary for the safety and security of UN staff and property located throughout the Russian Federation. To achieve this, UNSECOORD maintains an office in Moscow, and sub-offices in the North Caucasus – in Nazran (Republic of Ingushetia) and Vladikavkaz (Republic of North Ossetia-Alania).

The primary geographic area of concern within the Russian Federation with respect to UN security is the North Caucasus and there are six UN agencies as well as other UN staff on mission, the ICRC, and approximately forty local and international NGOs currently providing humanitarian assistance in the region. The UN presence in the North Caucasus is expected to expand in 2004 with more agencies implementing programmes. Additionally, the focus of operations is shifting more to the Republic of Chechnya. The primary risk to aid workers in the region is assessed as being derived from three main sources of threat:

kidnapping and abduction; targeting by militants and criminal gangs; and mines and unexploded ordnance.

To provide a relatively safe living environment for UN staff operating in the North Caucasus, UNSECOORD has introduced, and continues to apply, stringent preventive security strategies. The UN offices and staff member private accommodation is equipped with modern security technologies. Regular liaison and close contact between UNSECOORD and local law enforcement, militia and security officials has further supported the UN and

its partners' ability to move around the region safely.

The role of UNSECOORD extends beyond security coordination and management. The office has become a source of independent security expertise providing information, guidance, support and advice to the humanitarian community at large. UNSECOORD disseminates threat assessments and security and travel advisories and daily security reports. It also offers professional security expertise to all humanitarian aid agencies present in the North Caucasus.

(To be continued on p. 8)



(Continued from p. 7)

UNSECOORD's current two international professional Field Security Coordination Officers in the Russian Federation, (one for Russian Federation as a whole and the other for North Caucasus), are supported by a team of locally recruited Security Assistants, Transport Coordinators, Radio Operators and other support staff. While the primary responsibility for the safety and security of UN and humanitarian aid workers rests with the host government, UNSECOORD contributes to creating a secure environment for the humanitarian community by:

- acting as the UN's primary liaison with the Russian Government on staff safety and security matters;

- managing the UN's entire staff safety and security system, including

- preparing security and contingency plans and coordinating staff safety programmes;

- supervising the various organisations that provide armed static and mobile security escort services;



- providing personalised security training for UN staff and partners;

- conducting security, threat and risk assessments and vulnerability reviews;

- providing security briefings and specialised security advice to the UN and humanitarian aid communities;

- coordinating medical evacuation arrangements and facilitating first-aid training and stress counseling ;

- organizing security escorts for assessments, programme implementation, monitoring and special missions and visits;

- providing transport coordination services and management of the UN's armoured vehicle fleet;

- providing incident analysis and database management; and

- managing the UN's radio communication network in the North Caucasus.

UNSECOORD addresses and contact details in the Russian Federation

Mr. John Schot, Field Security Coordination Officer, RF

E-mail: schot@un.org

Mr. Stanislaw Sliwak, Deputy Field Security Coordination, North Caucasus

E-mail: sliwak@un.org

Moscow

Address: Obukha Per, 6. Moscow, 103064 **Tel:** +7 - 095 - 231-3307 **Fax:** +7 - 095 - 231-3308

Moussa Arsabiev, Field Security Coordination Assistant

E-mail: arsabiev@unsecooord.ru

Ekaterina Gershenson, Administrative Assistant

E-mail: gershenson@unsecooord.ru

Olga Komarova, Database Coordinator

E-mail: komarova@unsecooord.ru

Nazran (Republic of Ingushetia)

Address: 28, Naberezhnaya Street, (Targim), Nazran **Tel:** + 7 - 8732 -26-49-(96 -99);

or Moscow line: +7 (095) 787-9279 **Fax:** +7 - 8732 - 22 - 15 37

Ruslan Elmurzaev, Field Security Coordination Assistant

E-mail: elmurzaev@unsecooord.ru

Alan Kaloyev, Field Security Coordination Assistant

E-mail: kaloyev@unsecooord.ru

Khamzat Yasaev, Field Security Coordination Assistant

E-mail: yasaev@unsecooord.ru

UNSECOORD radio room Nazran

E-mail: nazran@unsecooord.ru

Vladikavkaz (Republic of North Ossetia-Alania)

Address: 4, Tkhapsaeva Street, Vladikavkaz, 362040 **Tel:** +7- 8672 - 54 - 6095 **Fax:** +7 - 8672 - 54 - 6097

Vladimir Petrov, Field Security Coordination Assistant

E-mail: petrov@unsecooord.ru

UNSECOORD radio room, Vladikavkaz

E-mail: vladikavkaz@unsecooord.ru

For Restoration of the Education System in the Chechen Republic

A presentation of the UNESCO Project on Restoration of the Education System in the Chechen Republic took place at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 22 January 2004. The Project was developed in accordance with the agreement that had been reached at the meeting between Mr Vladimir Putin - President of the Russian Federation and Mr Koichiro Matsuura - Director-General of UNESCO.

This initiative envisages the implementation of a number of large-scale measures to upgrade the qualifications of educators in the Republic, to introduce up-to-date information technologies in the teaching process and to assist the organization of the psychosocial rehabilitation of school age children.

Mr Igor Ivanov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation chaired the presentation and in his opening remarks emphasized that the project meets the immediate needs of the education system of the Chechen Republic. Mr Ivanov declared the Foreign Ministry's readiness to make full use of its capacities to enlist the international community in restoring a peaceful life in the Republic.

Mr Stany Kol, Deputy Assistant Director General of UNESCO, stated that the organization of this presentation is a direct response to the deep concern of the international community with regard to the socio-educational situation in Chechnya. By bringing together the national authorities and the representatives of the

international community, this event will allow to have a better understanding of the situation and to facilitate finding solutions. Funding was not the only objective of this meeting. In fact, it was about sensitising and informing the technical and financial partners on the necessity to participate in the consolidation of the peace in this Republic by joining efforts for its effective development.

Federal Education Minister Vladimir Filippov recognized a fruitful cooperation between the Ministry of Education and UNESCO in developing the Assessment report and Project documents on Restoration of Education System in the Chechen Republic.

Speaking at the presentation, President of the Chechen Republic Akhmad Kadyrov expressed profound gratitude to President of Russia and to the leaders of UNESCO, as well as to the Russian Ministries and Departments for their contribution in assisting the rehabilitation of Chechnya's education system and providing its young generation with opportunities to get a quality education and be



The participants of the presentation (left to right): Akhmad Kadyrov, Igor Ivanov, Vladimir Filippov

brought up in the spirit of peace and mutual understanding.

At the presentation were invited Ms Dzhakhan Pollyyeva – Deputy Head of the Russian President's Administration; Mr Stanislav Ilyasov – Russian Federal Minister for Chechen Affairs; Mr Murat Zyazikov – President of the Republic of Ingushetia; Mr Vladimir Fortov – Chairman of the Russian Federation Commission for UNESCO; Ambassadors of a number of countries accredited to Moscow, as well as representatives of international organizations and concerned agencies of the Russian Federation.

On the conclusion of the formal part the Zia Bazhayev Children's Choreographic Ensemble successfully performed before the guests.

UNESCO Awaits Full Report on Lake Baikal

During several meetings of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, issues have been raised about the integrity of the Lake Baikal World Heritage site.

The "Pearl of Siberia", as Lake Baikal is known in the Russian Federation, was nominated for World Heritage by the Russian authorities in 1995 as the most outstanding example of a freshwater ecosystem, as the oldest and deepest of the world's lakes containing nearly 20% of the world's unfrozen freshwater reserve. During the 20th session of the World Heritage Committee in 1996 Lake Baikal was inscribed into this prestigious list. How-

ever, the Committee mentioned several issues of concern for the safeguarding of this unique ecosystem, e.g. legal aspects, pollution and funding of the protected areas surrounding the lake.

Recently, the Russian authorities invited a delegation from the World Heritage Centre and from the World Conservation Union (IUCN), to meet with the relevant authorities in Moscow and to review in detail issues concerning the state of conservation of Lake Baikal. Upon the invitation of Mr K. Jankov, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Mr Francesco Bandarin, Director of the World Heritage Centre and Mr

Achim Steiner, Director-General of IUCN met with representatives of the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation.

This meeting was generally judged as very fruitful and substantive. The Ministry presented comprehensive information on issues related to the current state of conservation of the site, as well as measures undertaken by the Russian authorities to address these issues. During this event, the Russian side confirmed its preparedness to present a full and detailed report by February 2004, in line with the requests of the 26th and 27th sessions of the World Heritage Committee.

Welcome to My Family, Yura!

Today, almost half a million Russian children live in different children's homes and boarding schools. Most of them are so-called social orphans whose mothers and fathers have lost their parental rights. A large number of them are also doomed to grow up and live in these bleak surroundings until they are of age, and their chances of ever being adopted are very slim. In some parts of Russia, alternative programmes are successfully working to look after children who have been deprived of parental care. One of these is UNICEF's programme in Kaliningrad for the support and development of the fostering system.

It costs the state 7,300 rubles a month to support a child at the Kaliningrad city shelter. Of this, only one-fifth is spent on food. The rest goes to pay for communal expenses, minimal clothing, and the salaries of the child care workers. In no respect does life in the shelter compare to living in a family.

Life in a foster home offers a child a normal home life and a stable income for the foster parents. In such cases, the state pays only 4,000 rubles a month to support the foster family. Those who wish to become foster parents sign an agreement with the appropriate state agencies to care for a child from a shelter, children's home, or boarding school for a period of one year or more. The agreement can be dissolved at any time. The child's living conditions in such a family are regularly monitored by social workers.

There are now seven children aged 7 to 17 living in Nadezhda Tkachenko's family. The five girls and two boys weren't wanted by their parents, but they've become very important to

Nadezhda, who was once nothing but a stranger to them.

Ms Tkachenko described the reaction of the children when they first enter her modest two-room apartment: "The kids who were 12, 13 – they just had no idea of what it's like to have a home, live in an apartment, have their own place to sleep..."

All of the children have had a difficult life. For some of them, the past included life on the streets, living in a shelter, missed schooling, poor health. Family warmth, routine, and mutual support have worked wonders over time. The children have begun to attend school regularly, get involved in sports, write poetry, and more. At family meetings, they decide how to distribute their overall budget. Everything is completely above board and out in the open.

Last year, Yura Parfenov came to live in Nadezhda's family. For almost a year, he had squatted with his mother in one abandoned building after another, and was compelled to live in basements with

his permanently drunken mother. He then found himself living in a shelter, where he was happy that he could now attend school. When Nadezhda suggested that he come and live in her apartment, and that she would look after him, Yura agreed at once. He's had no reason to regret it. He still hasn't gotten used to the fact that, in the family, they use words like "please" and "what do you think about this..."? Earlier, he'd never heard anything of the sort. When they gave him a wristwatch for his birthday and baked him a birthday cake, he cried silently.

Yura remembers the nightmare that was his previous life: "The worst thing of all? When you're all alone. I used to wander the streets at night, and my mom would show up drunk just before sunrise. That's what I hated the most. There was never anything to eat. Now, that's all in the past. I've started doing well in school, my health is okay, I'm on a track and field team, and I'm taking computer courses. I don't want to compare it to living at the shelter, or with my mom and stepdad. Of course, living in a family is best. As far as I'm concerned, Nadezhda is now my mom. Now, I always have someone to talk to, who I know will always help me out".

In Kaliningrad today, 191 children are living in foster homes. This experiment isn't catching on as quickly or as easily as one might like. There aren't that many families willing to assume responsibility for someone else's child, even when they realize that, unlike adoption, it doesn't have to be forever.

Natalia Benni has a daughter, a son, and another daughter: six-year-old Sasha, to whom she became a foster



This photograph could not include all members of the family of Nadezhda Tkachenko (centre)

mother three years ago. People responded in different ways when Natalia, who teaches music, and her husband, a driver with the transport police, made the decision to take Sasha from the children's home. "Different people feel differently about our decision," says Natalia. "We've run into some major difficulties, especially at my husband's place of work. We had a really unpleasant situation when one of my husband's superiors told him, so, you've assumed responsibility for somebody else's child, and now you want certain benefits. As a result, my husband had to quit his job. Every cloud has a silver lining; he now has a great boss, and everyone helps."

Once she became a foster mother, Natalia Benni, teacher of music, was able to give up the two outside jobs that she had earlier been forced to take in order for her family to make ends meet. Natalia now spends her free time with Sasha and the other children. Sasha is studying music, drawing and painting; learning to read, and getting ready to start school.

Nadezhda Tkachenko takes stock of the changes in her life: "Being a foster parent solves the problem of social employment. It gives you the chance to help out not just with the fate of a child, but your own as well: to build a normal life, feel that you're needed, and to have a guaranteed income. I now feel that I have some social security".

Nina Vorontsova is the director of the Kaliningrad Centre of Social Support to Family and Children, a long-time and reliable partner of UNICEF. She says: "Thanks to the work of our foster families, we're able to avoid the post-institutional syndrome. It's no secret that those who come from children's homes leave them little prepared for the realities of life. They don't know how to spend money, to make decisions on their own, or how to carry them out. This is why children often become the victims of con artists and lose their place to live, try to make their lives easier with alcohol and

drugs, and often end up repeating the fate of their parents. Children from foster homes, even if they live in a family situation for only a few years, are able to avoid such a fate".

The workers at the Centre deal with one of the most difficult problems of contemporary society: families in crisis. Psychologists and social workers try to expose the problem at the very start, promptly offer the women and children the help they need, and to prevent the collapse of the family. They set up psychological counseling, help place children in day care centers, and help the women cope with such matters as alcoholism. In the most extreme cases, they take steps to have the children removed from the family and then do their best to have them placed in foster homes.

The Centre operates in close cooperation with the city administration and with its support. In the opinion of Kaliningrad's vice-mayor, Tatiana Morozova: "Unfortunately, the state's policy over the last ten years has led to such things as social orphanage. There are some parents who don't loom after their children, and don't assume any social responsibility for the fate of



Three in a walk, except the dog: Natalia Benni, Sasha and Natalia's husband Ivan

their children. There are around 2,000 such asocial families in our city. We can't take the parents' place, but we can in any case decide children's fate, find them social support, and provide them with a dignified existence. We must and we will. Foster care is, in my view, one of the best ways of channeling such assistance".

With UNICEF's help, the Kaliningrad Centre of Social Support to Family and Children is sharing its accumulated experience, and the methods it has developed for working with problem families, with other regions of Russia. "Leave No Child Out" – this is the principle that guides the people who are working to implement the foster care programme and support UNICEF's efforts to see that as few children as possible remain in state children's institutions, and that as many as possible live in families.

For your UN file



International Days

- 8 March** International Women's Day
- 21 March** International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- Beginning**
- 21 March** Week of Solidarity with the Peoples Straggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination
- 22 March** World Day for Water
- 23 March** World Meteorological Day
- 24 March** World TB day
- 7 April** World Health Day
- 23 April** World Book and Copyright Day

The International Festival of TV Programmes for Children and Youth

In Moscow, the "Up to Sixteen and Older" XIV International Festival of TV Programmes for Children and Young Adults has come to an end. Previous festivals were hosted by Yekaterinburg, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Pyatigorsk, Kaliningrad, Orenburg, Astrakhan, and Moscow. UNICEF was one of the festival's founders, along with the Moscow city government, the Association for Children's and Young Adults' Television, the Department of Journalism at Moscow State University, the Russian Union of Journalists, *et al.* Among the purposes of the festival were shaping a policy and philosophy of TV for

children and young adults, revealing the trends and prospects for its development, summarizing and making known the experience of professionals, raising their qualifications, and discovering new talent for children's TV. Young viewers came from more than 40 of Russia's regions to attend the festival. The works they presented were judged under the categories of "Best Children's Educational Programme", "Best Children's Informational Programme", Best Children's Entertainment Programme", "Best Children's News Programme", and "Best Educational Programme for Teenagers", and

"Best Entertainment Programme for Teenagers". As part of the theme of International Children's Day of Broadcasting, traditionally supported by UNICEF, a special category was instituted: "Get Ahold of Yourselves, Friends!" This included brief stories about the positive experiences, initiatives, and leaders of the children's movement. The Grand Prix went to Novosibirsk's TV station. After a week of intensive viewing and discussions, the children went back to their homes. They took with them prizes and videotapes of brief scenes that give one a taste of future TV shows and other works.

Appointment

Mr Carel De Rooy Appointed UNICEF Representative for the Russian Federation and Belarus



Mr Carel De Rooy was appointed UNICEF Representative for the Russian Federation and Belarus from the position of UNICEF Representative for Iraq, where he had been responsible for planning, coordination and realization of a wide spectrum of UNICEF programmes to the interest of Iraqi children and women during 2001–2003.

Mr Carel De Rooy began his work in UNICEF as Coordinator of Water and Sanitation Programmes in Nigeria in 1984. He headed Water and Sanitation Section in 1987, being responsible for managing and coordination of a multi-disciplinary water and sanitation programme.

Carel De Rooy was appointed Senior Project Officer to Water and Sanitation Department in UNICEF headquarters in New York in 1989. Mr De Rooy was appointed Regional Planning Adviser in Abidjan, Ivory Coast in 1993, where he was responsible for planning, coordinating, strategy development and technical support to the preparation of country programmes as well as understanding and updating the situation of children in 23 countries of the West and Central Africa Region. Mr Carel De Rooy was appointed UNICEF Area Representative for Colombia and Venezuela in 1998, where he worked till his appointment for Iraq in 2001.

Carel De Rooy worked as Geophysics technician, then Specialized geologist with Multitron SA and with COPASAMG in Brazil in 1973–1978. He worked as Visiting professor of geophysics and aerial interpretation at Federal University of

Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil in 1981–1983.

Mr De Rooy obtained a Bachelor's degree in Geology at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro in 1975. He obtained a Master's degree in Hydrology/Hydrogeology from the International Institute of Aerial Survey and Earth Sciences, Enschede, The Netherlands in 1981. Carel De Rooy speaks English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch languages.

Mr Carel De Rooy has citizenship of the Netherlands Kingdom. He was born in the Netherlands on 5th January 1952.



Mr Carel De Rooy meets Russian children at the centre "Broken Flower"



Road Safety Is No Accident

The World Health Organization has chosen road safety as the topic for World Health Day held on 7 April this year. "UN in Russia" asked Special Representative of the WHO Director General in Russia Dr Mikko Vienonen to comment this decision.



Each year road traffic injuries take the lives of 1.2 million men, women and children around the world, and seriously injure millions more.

The death toll is highest and still growing in low and middle-income countries (as in the Russian Federation), where pedestrians, motorcyclists, cyclists and passengers are especially vulnerable.

In addition to human suffering, estimated costs of road traffic injuries are between 1% and 2% of GNP per annum in these countries. This represents a loss approximately US\$ 65 billion every year; almost twice the total development assistance received worldwide by developing countries.

Yet, road traffic accidents can be prevented. Addressing issues such as speeding and driving under the influence of alcohol; promoting the use of helmets, seat belts and other restraints; ensuring that people walking and cycling are more easily visible; enforcing road safety regulations; and improving emergency response services has demonstrated that the needless deaths and disabilities caused by road traffic collisions can be prevented.

On the release his report in August 2003 on "Road Safety", the UN Secretary-General Mr Kofi Annan declared that "Improving road safety requires strong political will on the part of governments. Countries should aim to ensure that sufficient

resources are available, commensurate with the size of the road safety problem in their country". The UN General Assembly has agreed in connection to the World Health Day to launch on 14 April the World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention.

Is this at all relevant to Russia? Now that Russians finally can freely buy cars, new and old, fast and slow, should we just let people to decide by themselves, what they want to do with them? But a car is not only a useful means of transportation. It can be turned into a killer weapon in less than a second. And it is not just the drivers' own life and health at stake, but often totally innocent bystanders are hit.

The Russian road accident figures reveal that there is a full epidemic of deaths in the streets going on, largely unnoticed and unrecognised. In 2002 the total number of killed was 33,234 and last year the figure was 35,605. The numbers of injured was about 7 times higher. The incidence is about one death per 4,000 people or 25 traffic deaths per 100.000 population per year. The



same figure for instance for neighbouring country Finland with similar climatic conditions was 5.2 per 100.000 population in 2003. Russian figure is 3.4 times higher! One could say that the excess mortality in traffic accidents in Russia is at least 25,000. It means that some 70 or more Russians die every day in vain just because safety belts are not used, the driver goes too fast or is drunk or talks to a mobile telephone, has received his/her drivers license without proper training, the brakes and tires are in bad condition, the road markings are not properly maintained, etc. etc.

Looked through the eyes of a foreigner, in Moscow the traffic culture is really something very wild. One can only wonder, how is it possible that some people can still stay alive in the "jungle". Probably it is only the number of cars and ever worsening traffic jams that have prevented a total catastrophe from taking place.

When you take a car in Moscow and try to touch a safety belt, which symbolically still hangs on the wall, the driver gets very upset and tells you that "it is only to be used at the time of an accident". If there is no "probka" that would slow down your speed to walking level, the car will dash like a rocket through the streets, and every hole in the street will shake you and the poor little Zhiguli so that you think your or-

(To be continued on p. 14)



(Continued from p. 13)

gans will fall off together with any vital parts of the car itself. When you get to where you wanted (if you ever do), you are sweaty, shaky and with a pulse over 150. I have witnessed more serious car accidents during my 5 years in Moscow than during my 53 years of life before that.

Everybody tells me that Russians like to drive fast and they like dan-

ger and taking risks and they hate regulations after getting enough of them during Soviet Union. Therefore, nothing could be done about road accidents except to build more hospitals to take care of the victims, and more cemeteries to bury the dead. I say: NONSENSE! I have seen many Russian taxi- and bus drivers in other countries who are excellent chauffeurs and obedient to safety regulations. By their natural sense of rhythm and fast reflexes they have actually better prerequi-

sites to make Russian roads the safest in the world.

WHO has started in 2003 a collaborative programme together with the Ministry of Health to focus on road safety. The World Health Day is an excellent way to boost up interest towards this important problem at all levels.

*Dr Mikko Vienonen
Special Representative of the WHO
Director General in Russia*

Health Sector Coordination in Russia

In February 2004, the fiftieth Inter-agency Meeting on Health Sector Coordination in Russia was held under the guidance of WHO office in Moscow. Since its inception over four years ago, the Interagency meetings have included representatives of the United Nations and other international agencies, national development agencies and international non-government organizations, all of whom are involved in either funding or executing health projects in Russia. Over 60 agencies are now on the mailing list and at-

tendance at monthly meetings varies from 15–40.

These monthly meetings provide an opportunity to share information and updates on the many activities taking place in donor funded health care projects in Russia. As well, each meeting focuses on either a specific project or theme for presentation and discussion.

Among recent topics have been donor funded health education programs in Russia, HIV/Aids programs

in Russia, TACIS primary health care projects in Russia, and CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) health projects in Russia.

One of the important goals of this Interagency coordination activity has been to reduce duplication of effort and ultimately to improve the results and effectiveness of international donor health projects in Russia. Another outcome has been the development of a comprehensive list of current donor funded health projects in Russia and the development of an electronic roster of such projects, past and present. The latter activity which is now known as the “Zdravinform” library is developed and maintained by the Central Scientific Research Institute for Organization and Informatization of the Health Care. It was initiated with TACIS funding and is now being supported with assistance from the WHO/CIDA HCPSR Programme. Over 85 projects have been entered into the data base and the information is available at website: <http://zdravinform.ru>



The participants of the fiftieth Interagency Meeting on Health Sector Coordination in Russia

For further information about the Interagency meetings, please e-mail m.collins@who.org.ru or v.benediktova@who.org.ru



Launch of the Health Care Systems in Transition Profile on the Russian Federation

Deep concern over the inefficiencies of the health care system and the need to confront its severe funding shortage prompted the Russian Federation to embark on radical reforms. The latter were drawn up with the clear aim of preserving access to a basic benefit package for the whole population. The keystone

HiT profile on the Russian Federation.

The Observatory's HiT series is a collection of analytical country based profiles, which can be used as comparative tools of evidence-based health systems policy across the European region. The HiT on the Rus-

health system's design, organization, management and financing. Furthermore, the HiT describes accurately the process and content of reform programmes and their implementation. Thereby the HiT highlights challenges and areas that require further in-depth analysis.

The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies

The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies is a unique partnership between the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, the Governments of Greece, Norway and Spain, the European Investment Bank, the Open Society Institute, the World Bank as well as the London School of Economics and Political Science and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. It aims to advance evidence-based health policy making in Europe.

of the reform, the introduction of national, mandatory health insurance to supplement tax-based funding was intended to link the issues funding, efficiency and decentralization. There has been a major decentralization of power with the consequent withdrawal of the Ministry of Health from planning, regulation and management. Experience to date however shows that the reform has been at best only partially successful: not all regions and districts are able to meet the responsibilities devolved to them. A huge challenge is the level of state commitments to health care benefits in view of dire financial constraints faced by budgetary and health insurance funding sources. There are serious threats to equity due to growing differences in economic performance and capability across regions as well as the deterioration of formal cost-sharing mechanisms. These are some of the main conclusions arising from the latest addition to the European Observatory on Health Systems & Policies' Health Care Systems in Transition (HiT) series, the update of the

sian Federation allows to benchmark the country's health system performance against the performance of other regional countries. Policy makers, analysts and academics on the national as well as the international level will appreciate the HiT on the Russian Federation to provide a wealth of knowledge of the

In cooperation with the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation the World Health Organization, the World Bank and the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies will be officially launching the HiT for the Russian Federation on 24 February 2003 in Moscow.

The first HiT on the Russian Federation was published in 1998, its update was finalized in December 2003. English and Russian language versions of the profile are available in hard copy as well as for download from the Observatory's website at <http://www.observatory.dk> On the website summaries of the HiT profile in Russian and English can also be found.

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

www.who.int and www.who.dk (European Region)
WHO office in Russia: 28, Ostozhenka 119034 Moscow
Tel: +7 095 787 21 17 Fax: +7 095 787 21 19
e-mail: m.vienonen@who.org.ru
Special Representative of the Director – General in Russia –
Dr. Mikko Vienonen.



The UN and International Law's Future: A Look from Moscow

“UN in Russia” presents the final part of the address made by Alexandre Gorelik, Director of the UN Information Centre in Moscow, to the International Conference “The Future of the UN and International Law”, held in Bonn. The beginning of the address was published in No.6, 2003.

Those measures were meant to reestablish the Council as an indispensable mechanism that reconciles national interests with the international rules of the game provided mainly by the UN Charter. But all too often the Security Council is involved in working out patchy compromises that leave the UN in a quicksand of vague mandates. Kosovo and Iraq showed how harmful ambiguity may be.

In today's post-cold-war world the Council acts at times more like a body of multilateral damage-control than an ultimate decision-maker in critical issues of war and peace. This means that the SC's political role has to be re-asserted to match its statutory legal prerogatives.

Probably, this is the main lesson learned of the last year: there is no rationale for a major state to seek a UN blessing unless it is ready to recognize the outcome of the negotiations process and reflect in its poli-

cy-making the interests of other states as they have been expressed. But to be able to engage all of its members, the Council, among other things, has to have a record of saying no to impossible missions and poorly drafted mandates.

To change the status quo in the Council implies to find a golden mean between the imperatives of greater representativeness and efficiency with an emphasis on the latter. The decision on an expansion formula is still elusive after ten years of laborious discussions in the so-called working group at the UN. On the face of it, this might be seen as a paradox since practically all states agree that changes in the Council's composition are necessary. But, when specific talks start, vested interests quickly emerge.

The fact that a number of the working group members have chosen not to choose is disappointing. It is to be hoped that an agreement on increas-

ing the number of both permanent and non-permanent members is possible in a not so distant future. Probably, the main precondition for such an important shift would be for the current permanent members to resolve to take the lead in the reform effort instead of staying on the sidelines. Paradoxical, as it may seem, the P5's fortunes can really benefit from the expansion exercise provided its members keep their current prerogatives.

The saga of reforms at the UN proves that there are always excuses for inaction. But now, amid the uncertainties of the globalizing world, those excuses are less and less valid.

The Security Council as the backbone of the whole UN structure ought to be fully empowered as a body with unique legitimacy, experience and potential. This is not a counsel of perfection for the Security Council. This is the way forward.

UNA – Russia

United Nations Association of Russia



The Youth Learn to Elect

The School of Parliamentarianism attached to Chita branch of UN Association of Russia was among organizers of SUPER ELECTIONS-2003 political game. The game was held at Zabaikalsky State Pedagogic University named after N.G. Chernyshevsky in Chita. The participants presented programmes

of candidates for deputies, answered questions, and asked questions to the rivals. The organizers are deeply convinced that such

games will contribute to raise level of political culture, which is pledge of strengthening the bases of democratic society and tolerance.

ANNOUNCEMENT: *From April 5 through the 9th, the UN Association of Russia together with Moscow State Institute of International Relations and under the aegis of World Federation of UN Associations will organize Moscow International Model UN.*

UNDP – (095) 787-21-00, fax: (095) 787-21-01

e-mail: office@undp.ru; <http://www.undp.ru>

UNFPA – (095) 787-21-13, 787-21-38 fax: (095) 787-21-37

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UNIC – (095) 241-25-37, fax: (095) 230-21-38

WFP – (095) 232-30-11, fax: (095) 232-30-17

UNA-Russia – (095) 200-42-50, 280-80-67, fax: (095) 280-33-58

e-mail: office@una.ru; <http://www.una.ru>