

Helping Chernobyl survivors face the future



UNDP is bringing together governments, international experts and business to help residents of Chernobyl-hit regions break out of the dependency culture that continues to stunt development nearly two decades after the world's worst nuclear accident.

A recent regional conference in Chernihiv, organized by the UNDP Chernobyl Recovery and Development Programme with the Chernihiv Oblast State Administration, aimed to strengthen cross-border partnerships in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine--the three countries affected most by the blast--and spur discussion of economic and social

policies to drive growth in the impoverished region.

"We need to change priorities so that less attention is given to humanitarian aid and far more to provide solid foundations for economic recovery," said Jerzy Osiatynski, UNDP and World Bank expert.

The Chernihiv conference follows on the final meeting of the Chernobyl Forum in Vienna in September. The Chernobyl Forum--comprised of UNDP, IAEA, WHO and four other UN agencies as well as the governments of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia--released a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the disaster, based on the work of hundreds of scientists, economists and health experts.

They concluded that the health impact of the 1986 nuclear accident in the then-Soviet Union was far less than originally feared: 56 deaths have been directly attributed to the disaster to date, and scientists expect that no more than 4,000 people could eventually die from Chernobyl-related causes. The environmental effects have proved similarly muted.

However, the experts found that fear of radiation, rather than radiation itself, continues to poison the lives of many Chernobyl survivors. The resulting fatalism and over-reliance on state assistance has helped create a culture of dependency that has left affected communities mired in poverty.

In response to these communities' needs, the UN's [Human Consequences of the Chernobyl Nuclear Accident: A Strategy for Recovery](#) proposes a ten-year strategy to promote long-term recovery and identifies five key principles which underlie its recommendations for tackling the consequences of the accident:

- Chernobyl related needs should be addressed in the framework of a holistic view of the needs of the individuals and communities concerned and, increasingly, of the needs of society as a whole;
- the aim must be to help individuals to take control of their own lives and communities to take control of their own futures;
- efficient use of resources means focusing on the most affected people and communities, and on children. The response must be commensurate to the scale of the needs;
- the new approach should seek changes that are sustainable and long-term, and based on a developmental approach;
- the international effort can only be effective if it supports, amplifies and acts as a lever for change in the far larger efforts made by local and national government agencies and the voluntary sector in the three countries.

Conference delegates in Chernihiv, who included government representatives from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, diplomats, international experts and business executives, adopted a resolution that backed the Strategy for Recovery and underscored the "crucial necessity to review in detail the strategic approaches to solving problems with the mitigation of consequences of the accident".

The conference also marked the launch of the new Chernobyl Economic Development Forum. Comprising representatives of public authorities, businesses, international organizations and civil society, the forum aims to boost investment and assist the economic recovery of the Chernobyl-affected areas.

To view the UN report "The Human Impact of the Chernobyl Nuclear Accident: A Strategy for Recovery," please see: <http://www.undp.org/dpa/publications/chernobyl.pdf>

For more on the Chernobyl Forum and to view the digest report, "Chernobyl's Legacy: Health, Environmental and Socio-economic Impacts", please click [here](#).

For further information, please contact:

Mykola Movchan
UNDP/CRDP
+380 44 253 5068
Mykola.Movchan@undp.org.ua

Recent Articles

- [Arms control in the Western Balkans](#)
- [Youth taking Turkey by storm](#)
- [Partnerships and progress in living with HIV](#)
- [Demography and development in Russia](#)
- [UN Action Plan Prepared for Chernobyl Decade](#)

[[more](#)]

Copyright © 2008 United Nations Development Programme
Information Disclosure Policy

- [About us](#)
 - [Jobs in the Region](#)
 - [Jobs in the Bratislava Centre](#)
 - [Internship](#)
 - [Roster](#)
 - [Tenders](#)
- [What we do](#)
 - [Democratic Governance](#)
 - [Poverty Reduction](#)
 - [Crisis Prevention & Recovery](#)
 - [Environment & Energy](#)
 - [HIV/AIDS](#)
 - [Gender](#)
 - [Regional EU cooperation](#)
 - [Emerging Donors](#)