

UN Development Programme showcases forward-looking solutions for Chernobyl-affected communities at international exhibition in Russia

Moscow, 5 December 2006 – International efforts aimed at mitigating the consequences of the Chernobyl accident and bringing normalcy and prosperity to the region are a focus of the international exhibition and scientific workshop “Chernobyl: Ecology, the Human Being and Health” organized in Moscow on 5-8 December 2006 by the Russian Ministry of Emergencies.

The United Nations adopted a new strategy for the rehabilitation and recovery of Chernobyl-affected areas in 2002, in a report entitled *The Human Consequences of the Chernobyl Nuclear Accident. A Strategy for Recovery*. The report recognized that the biggest challenge to the affected regions was not radiation, but rather a lack of social and economic opportunities. This conclusion was reinforced in 2005 by the UN Chernobyl Forum, which brought together eight UN agencies and the governments of the three most-affected countries to arrive at a scientific consensus on Chernobyl’s impact on health, the environment, and society.

In keeping with the new UN strategy, the socio-economic rehabilitation of Chernobyl-affected areas in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine is a priority for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). UNDP activities in the region target the most vulnerable groups and promote improved local living standards, through the creation of new jobs, investment and economic growth and the restoration of community self-reliance.

In facing Chernobyl challenges, UNDP has identified three priority areas: **information provision**, including promotion of healthy life-styles; **community-based social and economic development**, supporting initiatives aimed at improving welfare and encouraging self-reliance; and **policy advice**, aimed at helping governments rationalize Chernobyl spending.

In Belarus, the Cooperation and Rehabilitation (CORE) programme provides training, organizational support and start-up business assistance to affected communities.

In Russia, Chernobyl-affected territories are viewed as a model for piloting new regional and local mechanisms of economic recovery, investment promotion and employment generation. A business promotion center and micro-credit facility has been established in the Bryansk oblast.

And in Ukraine, the Chernobyl Recovery and Development Programme (CRDP) supports community-based self-help initiatives. So far, 207 community organizations have been formed in 139 villages, involving more than 20,000 community members. Each community organization takes full responsibility for the implementation and maintenance of projects such as improving water and gas supplies, building health clinics and renovating schools and youth centers.

“Our top priority is to deliver a message of hope to people affected by Chernobyl and showcase forward-looking solutions to problems faced by affected communities,” said Oksana Leshchenko, UNDP’s Chernobyl Coordinator, at the opening of the exhibition. “We will devote every effort to help transform a generation of defeated ‘victims’ into a generation of proud ‘survivors’.”

Representatives of state institutions, NGOs and enterprises dealing with Chernobyl issues from Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, as well as international organizations are participating in the event.