



## UN agencies mark Chernobyl anniversary with launch of US\$2.5-million project

*New York/Geneva/Vienna, 24 April 2009*—Four United Nations agencies marked today the 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear accident by launching a \$2.5 million programme designed to meet the priority information needs of affected communities in Belarus, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine. Funded by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security, this three-year initiative aims to translate the latest scientific information on the consequences of the accident into sound practical advice for residents of the affected territories. The project is a joint effort by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

“People need sound information to make good decisions,” said Helen Clark, the UNDP Administrator and UN Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl. “Translating science into accurate, practical advice will help people live safely and productively in Chernobyl-affected areas, ease their fears, and contribute to bringing this region back to normal.”

Providing scientifically sound information for Chernobyl-affected communities is a shared priority for UN work on Chernobyl. Supported by a 2007 UN General Assembly resolution, the project, known as the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network (ICRIN), is part of a larger effort to help local communities “return to normal” in the course of the decade that ends in 2016. The project will draw on the work of the UN Chernobyl Forum, a joint undertaking by eight UN agencies and the Governments of Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine that in 2005 issued authoritative scientific findings on the accident’s consequences for health and the environment. Dissemination of these findings in plain language accessible to non-specialists should help dispel widespread misconceptions and fight the stigma that still afflicts the region.

Activities planned under the ICRIN project include the dissemination of information, through education and training for teachers, medical professionals, community leaders, and the media; providing local residents with practical advice on health risks and healthy lifestyles; the creation of Internet-equipped information centers in rural areas; and small-scale community infrastructure projects aimed at improving living conditions and promoting self-reliance.

In a statement released to mark the Chernobyl anniversary, UNDP Goodwill Ambassador Maria Sharapova appealed to young people to seize their chance to shape the future. “Whatever obstacles you may have faced, you need to persevere in pursuing your dreams,” Sharapova said.

The accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant on 26 April 1986 was the worst in the history of the nuclear power industry. Explosions at the reactor released radioactive material that contaminated vast territories and prompted the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of people. After two decades, however, as the findings of the

UN Chernobyl Forum have shown, a return to normal life is a realistic prospect for people living in the affected region.

### **IAEA**

IAEA is the world's center of cooperation in the nuclear field. The Agency works with its Member States and multiple partners worldwide to promote safe, secure and peaceful nuclear technologies.

### **UNICEF**

UNICEF is the driving force that helps build a world where the rights of every child are realized. We work in 190 countries through country programmes and National Committees.

### **UNDP**

UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. The organization is on the ground in 166 countries.

### **WHO**

WHO is the directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations system. It is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends.

For further information, please contact:

#### **IAEA**

**Mr. Peter Rickwood**

[P.G.Rickwood@iaea.org](mailto:P.G.Rickwood@iaea.org)

Tel: +43 1 2600 22047

#### **UNICEF**

**Mr. Evgeny Stanislavov**

[estanislavov@unicef.org](mailto:estanislavov@unicef.org)

Tel: +4122-909-5436

#### **UNDP**

**Mr. Stanislav Saling**

[stanislav.saling@undp.org](mailto:stanislav.saling@undp.org)

Tel: + 1 212 906 5296

#### **WHO**

**Ms. Nada Osseiran**

[osseirann@who.int](mailto:osseirann@who.int)

Tel: +4122 7914475