

Minutes

Quadripartite Coordination Committee Meeting on Chernobyl

16:45-18:15 pm, 19 April 2006

Minsk (Belarus), Premises of the Committee on the Problems of the Consequences of the Catastrophe at the Chernobyl NPP under the Council of Ministers

Given that the **last Quadripartite Coordination Committee meeting was held in 1999**, and that UNDP assumed responsibility for UN Chernobyl Coordination in 2004, the UN Coordinator has decided to modify **the composition** of this body to make possible a more results-oriented discussion. The streamlined Quadripartite Coordination Committee (QCC) will now include **representatives of the UN Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl and his Deputy; the responsible Ministries from Belarus, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine; and the three UN Resident Coordinators in the same countries.**

List of Participants:

Mr. Kalman Mizsei, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Europe and CIS; Deputy United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl;

Mr. Konstantin Anisimov, Head of the Department of Personnel Policy and Special Activities, Committee on the Problems of the Consequences of the Catastrophe at the Chernobyl NPP under the Council of Ministers of Belarus;

Ms. Nadezhda Gerasimova, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Civil Defence, Emergencies and Elimination of natural Disasters of the Russian Federation;

Mr. Volodymyr Kholosha, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Ukraine of Emergencies and Affairs of Population Protection from the Consequences of Chornobyl Catastrophe;

Ms. Cihan Sultanoglu, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Belarus;

Mr. Ercan Murat, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in the Russian Federation;

Mr. Frank O'Donnell, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Ukraine;

Ms. Louisa Vinton, Senior Programme Manager, Head of Western CIS and Caucasus Cluster, UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS;

Ms. Oksana Leshchenko, Chernobyl Coordinator, UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS

Mr. Kalman Mizsei chaired the meeting.

He introduced all participants of the Quadripartite Coordination Committee meeting and expressed his optimism about revival of this body and its relevance to Chernobyl-related efforts of UN family on the ground. He assured that cooperation among UN agencies and major donors on Chernobyl issues will continue to be maintained through regular meetings of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl.

Ms. Nadezhda Gerasimova emphasized that currently 1.5 million Russian citizens are recognized as those affected by Chernobyl accident, but out of those around 200,000 people are a really critical group due to the high levels of contamination on the territories where they reside, and other vulnerabilities.

She suggested that in the future Chernobyl-related projects should be targeted and focused on the above critical group of people that are at risk. Such initiatives can be mini-projects in the area of environmental monitoring (particularly soils), agriculture development, food processing, physical development of children, etc. Internet clubs where people can receive basic computer literacy courses and educate themselves are important as well as creation of small community-based mini-libraries to promote healthy lifestyles and cultural values among children and youth.

Mr. Volodymyr Kholosha made a reference to the National Programme of Ukraine which particularly envisaged recovery and development of Chernobyl-affected regions of the country. He recognized the good work of 5 centres for psycho-social rehabilitation which were established by UN in the affected regions as well as the more recent experience of UNDP Chornobyl Recovery and Development Programme. Of particular importance are efforts for empowering communities to undertake their own recovery and implement self-help projects in partnership with local authorities. In particular, local educational initiatives, those aimed at job creation and income generation, establishment of community centres and IT clubs proved very effective. This type of work should be continued.

Mr. Konstantin Anisimov expressed appreciation for the strong partnership developed in the framework of Cooperation for Rehabilitation (CORE) project in Belarus. The country suffered significantly from Chernobyl accident, around 1/3 of agricultural lands have been withdrawn from production. Currently the Government of Belarus has its priority in shifting policies from those promoting “victimization” of the population to social recovery and development. In particular, 8 rehabilitation centres have been established and now successfully function with support from the state. Big hospitals exist, but they need diagnostic services for people residing on contaminate territories. There also is a need in computer equipment as well as other cutting edge technology to serve the affected people.

Mr. Cihan Sultanoglu stressed the need in information sharing between the three affected countries as well as stronger cooperation between UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and other agencies. Chernobyl recovery and development is one of the priorities of the Country Programme; a theme group on Chernobyl is working very productively in

Belarus. There is a strong committed to scale-up the on-going CORE initiative. A mid-term evaluation will be very important. More partners joining CORE is critical for ensuring that the initiative is sustained in the future and has more impact on the ground. Looking into the future, the Area-based approaches will be incorporated in the work of CORE and new opportunities seized, involving local communities in implementation of the projects and increasing their capacities. Other projects will be brought to the Chernobyl areas, such as HIV/AIDS prevention, Environment protection, and SME development.

Mr. Frank O'Donnell elaborated on the priorities of UN system in Ukraine for the next 5-year period, namely: Institutional reform (particularly in relation to Chernobyl); Empowerment of civil society; Health Sector reform; and Local Economic Development (prosperity promotion).

UNDP Chornobyl Recovery and Development Programme is a very successful initiative which applies the Area-Based development approach. It creates highly positive, upbeat spirit in the affected communities. Once stimulated by the joint project implemented in partnership with UNDP, the motivated communities continue on their own.

20 companies signed the principles of Global Compact in Ukraine; it will be important to cooperate with them on the Chernobyl-affected territories so that they can practice their social responsibility at the local level. Information dissemination and awareness building is equally important. Effective communication mechanisms have been developed in Ukraine for avian flu awareness; same principles can be developed for Chernobyl. Cross-border cooperation needs to be promoted, networking of youth clubs, community centres, etc. On the policy side, the benefits system review has to be initiated to ensure better targeting. The overall issue of energy safety needs attention as well the recently released Greenpeace report on Chernobyl.

Mr. Ercan Murat supported the vision of Ms. Nadezhda Gerasimova for implementation of small, focused projects. The “Social Protection Programme” does not have a recovery aspect, this and other issues still need to be discussed in the future.

There is a need to revitalize Chernobyl coordination mechanism at the country level, and partnership with the Emercom is critical in this regard.

UNDP in the Russian Federation gives significance to Chernobyl-related initiatives. Some 50,000 of core resources have been utilized for seminars, consultations and awareness activities. Further work on the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network (ICRIN) is important so that following the needs assessment of the population the information materials start being disseminated. In the most affected by Chernobyl Bryansk oblast of Russia, economic revitalization and job creation project is under way. Allocation of some USD 130,000 for microcredits will help economic recovery of the region.

Mr. Kalman Mizsei acknowledged the dynamism of programmes in the three affected countries and wealth of ideas emerging from the Quadripartite Coordination Committee meeting. Availability of funds is not everything, it should also be smartly invested.

Ms. Louisa Vinton thanked the participants for their efficiency and observed that all members of the Quadripartite Coordination Committee meeting spoke the same language and principles. It seems that successful, focused pilots that can be replicated, is something that works on the ground. Projects in the area of IT, SME development can be applied across the board. Ms. Vinton elaborated on the benefits of regular information exchange. Thus, knowledge sharing have started between Ukraine's CRDP and CORE programme in Belarus through study tours that took place in February 2006 to the communities where UNDP/CRDP is working and achieving tangible results. Cross-border cooperation brings a lot of benefits and synergies to sub-regional programming on Chernobyl. Such practices should be developed further. There is also a need in having more of such practical and results-oriented meetings as the current QCC.

Mr. Kalman Mizsei suggested that a publication is produced and widely circulated capturing the positive results and projects that helped communities turn around and overcome the "victim syndrome".

Finally, the issue of **QCC frequency was discussed**. It was decided that during the forthcoming visit of UNDP Administrator Mr. Kemal Dervis to the Russian Federation the next QCC meeting can take place. In the future, the meetings can be conducted once a year.