

2006 Annual Report on UN Chernobyl Coordination

**Office of UN Coordination of International Cooperation
on Chernobyl**

UNDP/Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (RBEC)

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***Summary:** 2006 was an exceptionally eventful and productive year for the Office of UN Coordination of International Cooperation on Chernobyl. Efforts focused on commemorations of the Chernobyl 20th anniversary; completing the transfer of responsibility for Chernobyl-related matters from UN-OCHA to UNDP; and re-introducing the practice of regular Quadripartite Coordination Committee and Inter-Agency Task Force meetings. An innovative partnership was forged with tennis star Maria Sharapova, who has agreed to become a UNDP Goodwill Ambassador with a focus on Chernobyl. Ms. Sharapova also offered to contribute funding, through her newly-established Maria Sharapova Foundation, to a number of UNDP community projects in the Chernobyl region. Programming synergies were promoted through new ventures in cross-border cooperation, and funding was sought for a \$2.4 million sub-regional project to provide the public in Chernobyl-affected regions with accurate and up-to-date information.*

A meeting of the UN **Inter-Agency Task Force meeting** on Chernobyl took place on 13 January 2006. This was the first time the IATF had been held since March 2004, and the first meeting held under UNDP auspices. More than 50 people participated from seven locations (New York, Kyiv, Minsk, Moscow, Geneva, Paris, and Vienna), with the aim of sharing updates on UN involvement in Chernobyl recovery efforts. Participants were briefed on the handover of responsibility from UN-OCHA to UNDP and agencies' future plans, particularly those for commemorations of the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl accident in 1986. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Kemal Dervis, UNDP Administrator and UN Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl. The IATF meeting helped to strengthen communication, coordination, and cooperation among the many agencies involved in Chernobyl recovery efforts.

Such collaboration helped to finalize the **Chernobyl Forum Digest** (an outcome document of the UN Chernobyl Forum), after Government comments were reflected in the document. Thousands of copies of the digest were distributed in time for the 20th anniversary.

20th anniversary of Chernobyl commemorative events.

Commemorations of the 20th anniversary reached a peak in April 2006, drawing keen media attention. UN agencies worked closely with the Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine to mark the anniversary, organizing high-level commemorative events in the field as well as at Headquarters. These events provided an ideal opportunity to showcase cooperation among UN agencies on Chernobyl, and to convey key shared messages.

An international conference – “**20 Years after Chernobyl: Strategy for Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Territories**” – took place in **Minsk and Gomel, Belarus** on 19-21 April 2006. Speakers included Mr. Ad Melkert, UN Under-Secretary General and UNDP Associate Administrator; Mr. Kalman Mizsei, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS; Mr. Kul Gautam, Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF, Mr. Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); and Mr. Markku Tapani Niskala, Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Commemorative events in the capital city of Minsk were accompanied by a Project Fair, scientific panels and an NGO round table in Gomel, the oblast center in Belarus that was most affected by Chernobyl.

A Quadripartite Coordination Committee meeting on Chernobyl took place in Minsk on 19 April 2006. This meeting was held on the margins of the 20th anniversary conference and was chaired by Mr. Kalman Mizsei. It was attended by Deputy Ministers from the relevant agencies of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine and UN Resident Coordinators/UNDP Resident

Representatives in the three most affected countries. The Quadripartite meeting provided an opportunity to share views on what is needed and expected from the UN system in Chernobyl recovery efforts as well as what coordination mechanisms would prove most effective.

Given that the last Quadripartite Coordination Committee/QCC meeting was held in 1999, and that UNDP assumed responsibility for UN Chernobyl Coordination in 2004, the UN Coordinator decided to modify the composition of this QCC to make possible a more results-oriented discussion. The streamlined QCC now includes 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. The Governments of the three most affected countries supported this change.

The Belarus conference was followed by a second international conference - **“Twenty Years after the Chernobyl Accident: Future Outlook”** – which took place in **Kyiv, Ukraine** on 24-26 April 2006. Mr. Kalman Mizsei was the first speaker at the opening ceremony of the conference, followed by statements from Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Tomihiro Taniguchi, Deputy Director General of IAEA, Mr. Victor Yushchenko, the President of Ukraine, and others. The agenda of the commemorative conference in Ukraine included a review of scientific reports and presentations, a roundtable discussion on the conclusions of UN Chernobyl Forum as well as a Humanitarian Forum entitled “Rebirth, Renewal, and Human Development.” The outcome document of the Chernobyl 20th anniversary conference in Ukraine is currently being finalized by the stakeholders. A drafting group met in Kyiv on 24 April and again in Berlin in June 2006.

Most importantly, the commemorative events showed that the **UN and the Governments of the Chernobyl-affected countries share a common approach to Chernobyl**, one that focuses on the long-term social and economic development of the affected territories.

The 2005 General Assembly Resolution on Chernobyl requested the UN Secretary General to convene a **special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly** in April 2006. This event provided an opportunity to draw international attention to the needs of the affected population and emphasize the transition from relief to development. This event took place on 28 April 2006 at UN Headquarters in New York. Mr. Kemal Dervis, the UNDP Administrator, addressed the General Assembly in his capacity as Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl and emphasized efforts by the UN system to support the transition from relief to development. Ms. Ann Veneman, UNICEF Executive Director, made an address on the issue of UNICEF’s field involvement in Chernobyl recovery as well as the future outlook. These speakers were followed by representatives of the most affected countries; a minute of silence for the victims of the Chernobyl nuclear accident; statements by the Regional Group chairs; the host country (USA), as well as other member states and observers (Austria for the EU, Japan, China, Switzerland, Kazakhstan, Argentina, Cuba, the European Commission, and the IFRC).

In partnership and close cooperation with the Missions of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine to the UN, UNDP/RBEC also prepared a **Chernobyl photo exhibition** that was officially inaugurated in the UN main Visitor’s Lobby immediately after completion of the special meeting of the General Assembly on 28 April. The inauguration was attended by the Permanent Representatives of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine to the UN. The exhibition included some 65 powerful pictures from the three most affected countries.

In the evening of 28 April 2006 a **screening of “Chernobyl Cross,” a film from Belarus**, took place at the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium of the UN Headquarters. The new film takes stock of the existing Chernobyl-related problems and looks into the future. It was introduced by

Mr. Kalman Mizsei. The commentary to the film was provided by Mr. Burton Bennett, a well-known world expert on radiation and Chairman of the UN Chernobyl Forum.

A Statement Attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on the 20th Anniversary of the Chernobyl Disaster was released by the Secretary General's office on 25 April 2006 and widely circulated in its English as well as Russian versions.

A number of other commemorative events took place in New York. On 19-20 April 2006 a **conference on "Living with Radiation in the Modern World: Commemorating Chernobyl, Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki"** was organized by World Information Transfer at UN Headquarters. It was co-sponsored by Ukraine, Croatia, and the Permanent Mission of Japan. Ms. Marta Ruedas, UNDP Deputy Regional Director for Europe and the CIS, addressed the gathering with a presentation called "From Rehabilitation to Recovery: The UN and Chernobyl."

On 27 April 2006 a **Congressional briefing** on Chernobyl organized by the Ukrainian Caucus was held in the **US Capitol Building in Washington**. Statements were made by Congressmen Curt Weldon, Marcy Kaptur, Sander Levin, and Roscoe Bartlett as well as by the Ambassadors of Ukraine and Belarus to the United States and the Senior Counselor of the Embassy of the Russian Federation. Mr. Kalman Mizsei addressed the gathering on the issues of the history of UN involvement in Chernobyl, the UN-wide shift to a developmental approach on Chernobyl, the significance of the UN Chernobyl Forum and UNDP priorities on the "way forward."

Partnership with Maria Sharapova, advocacy and a awareness.

Negotiations were initiated in early 2006 with women's tennis star **Maria Sharapova regarding her becoming a Global UNDP Goodwill Ambassador with a special focus on Chernobyl**. UNDP's efforts in tackling the developmental challenges of Chernobyl and forward-looking solutions were highly appreciated by Ms. Sharapova and her team, as well as UNDP's coordinating role among the UN agencies on Chernobyl. As result, Ms. Sharapova has agreed both to take on the role of UNDP Goodwill Ambassador and to partner with RBEC in Chernobyl recovery efforts. **The official nomination of Ms. Sharapova as UNDP Goodwill Ambassador is scheduled for 14 February 2007 and will take place at UNDP Headquarters in New York.**

A range of activities is under discussion as ways in which Ms. Sharapova might draw attention to the needs of Chernobyl communities and serve as a role model for young people in affected areas, particularly on such relevant topics as healthy lifestyles and community self-reliance.

In October 2006 Ms. Sharapova established the **Maria Sharapova Foundation**. A first round of project proposals covering UNDP-led projects in Belarus, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine was provisionally accepted for financing in November 2006. These community-based initiatives emphasize youth involvement in recovery efforts at the local level. **The budget of the projects to be funded by the newly-established Maria Sharapova Foundation is US\$ 100,000.**

UNDP has produced a series of outreach materials in 2006 to raise awareness on efforts by UN family to tackle Chernobyl's developmental challenges. A **brochure on "The United Nations and Chernobyl"** was published in December 2006 for distribution among UN agencies, Government counterparts, and other stakeholders. Poster- and pocket-size 2007 **calendars** highlight the UN's forward-looking approach by using photos of successful projects.

An article has been prepared on **"UNDP and Chernobyl Recovery" and accepted for publication** by the **World Information Transfer** (a non-profit NGO in General Consultative Status with the UN) in its **"World Ecology Report"**. The article will be featured in the two

issues of the publication in the spring of 2007. It spotlight some important results of UNDP's new developmental approach to Chernobyl and showcase concrete success stories from the affected communities in Belarus, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine.

Programme development and resource mobilization.

A proposal from the UNDP Belarus **Cooperation for Rehabilitation Project (CORE)** was submitted to the UN Human Security Trust Fund in 2006 and the concept note was approved by the Human Security Unit of OCHA and the Government of Japan. The full-fledged project document is currently being prepared by UNDP Belarus. This CORE proposal (US\$ 1.5 million) would support activities in the agricultural and economic development of the rural population; training for pregnant women and young mothers, screening for breast cancer, ensuring radiological quality through risk reduction of radiation exposure, and educating students and young people about the memory about accident and its consequences.

Progress has been made in the proposed project to create an **International Chernobyl Research and Information Network (ICRIN)**. The proposed budget for the sub-regional project has been increased from US\$ 1 million to US\$ 2.4 million. The concept note was officially submitted to the Government of Japan for funding through UN Human Security Trust Fund in September 2006. Feedback is expected shortly. The project will support information dissemination to the affected population in Belarus, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine through trustworthy sources and implementation of community-based projects by recipients of newly obtained information.

Discussions have been initiated with the **Human Security Unit of UN-OCHA** about featuring the UNDP sub-regional Chernobyl project in a **mobile photo exhibition** that will be displayed in Tokyo and Geneva in the course of 2007.

Within the framework of the **Environment and Security initiative (ENVSEC)** organized by UNDP, UNEP, the OSCE, and NATO, an Assessment for Eastern Europe has been completed and a draft report prepared at the end of 2006. This report identified Chernobyl as one of the priority areas for future ENVSEC work in the sub-region. In particular, the focus will be on mapping the contaminated areas in Belarus and Ukraine.

Sub-regional cooperation on Chernobyl.

Sub-regional cooperation between UNDP Chernobyl teams on the ground in the three most-affected countries and RBEC/NY is on the rise. Following a sub-regional study tour to the Chernobyl Recovery and Development Programme run by UNDP Ukraine, sub-regional working groups started building linkages in programming around the sub-regional priority areas for Chernobyl programming: Information Provision, Policy Change and Area-Based Development.

A **UNDP/RBEC sub-regional project** to support UN Chernobyl Coordination was approved for 2006-2008. This project reflects the designation of **Chernobyl as a priority area in the UNDP Regional Programme** that was approved by the Executive Board for the 2006-2010 period. Some funding is earmarked for supporting the work of the Chernobyl Coordinator in efforts to mobilize further resources, promote synergies in UNDP field work on Chernobyl, and build productive relationships with the Governments of the three most-affected countries.

The network of UNDP Chernobyl teams from the three Country Offices and Headquarters participated in the **international exhibition and scientific seminar "Chernobyl: Ecology, Human Being, Health"** that took place in Moscow on 5-8 December 2006. At a strategy

meeting of the Chernobyl sub-regional network during the exhibition, participants agreed to draft a joint **10-year Chernobyl Action Plan**. This issue will be discussed in more detail at the forthcoming UNDP sub-regional Chernobyl conference in January 2007.

A Chernobyl sub-regional concept note has been prepared for the **first international conference on local approach to development**, which UNDP is organizing in partnership with the European Association of Regions. This will take place in **Marseille in March 2007**. The presentation will focus on UNDP's on-going work to bring normalcy and prosperity to Chernobyl-affected regions through building partnerships between the local authorities in Poland and Ukraine aimed at promoting local self-governance and regional development. The presentation will also elaborate on how these new partnerships and cross-border linkages have re-energized community-based recovery efforts in Chernobyl-affected communities of Ukraine and how Polish models have been transferred and implemented in Ukrainian localities.

Finalizing the transfer of UN-wide responsibility on Chernobyl from UN-OCHA to UNDP.

In 2006 the final elements of the transfer of responsibility on Chernobyl from UN-OCHA to UNDP have been completed.

The **UN Chernobyl website** has been transferred to UNDP and is now hosted on the server of the RBEC Bratislava Regional Centre. Regular updates are made by UNDP through productive cooperation between RBEC/NY and RBEC/Bratislava teams.

All **UN files on Chernobyl** have been transferred from UN-OCHA to UNDP and **properly archived** at UNDP/RBEC. A database on Chernobyl programming and UN Coordination on Chernobyl is also archived at UNDP/RBEC.

Finally, the **UN Chernobyl Trust Fund** is in the final stages of transfer from UN-OCHA to UNDP.

Looking into the future

In 2007 another UNDP will draft the Secretary-General's biennial report to the General Assembly on Chernobyl activities. With UNDP support, the three most-affected countries will draft a new resolution on Chernobyl for adoption by the General Assembly. The opportunity will be used once again to focus on positive messages and forward-looking solutions.

Maria Sharapova's appointment as UNDP Goodwill Ambassador with a special focus on Chernobyl is scheduled to take place at a press conference on 14 February in New York.

A UN Inter-Agency Task Force meeting on Chernobyl will be held on 24 January 2007. A Quadripartite Coordination Committee meeting will be held later in 2007.

A sub-regional conference of UNDP/RBEC and UNDP Chernobyl teams from Belarus, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine Country Offices will take place on 16-18 January 2007 in Ukraine. It will focus on achievements along the main priority areas of Chernobyl sub-regional programming as identified by UNDP, partnerships and resource mobilization efforts, synergies in Chernobyl recovery efforts as well as best practices replication, and information circulation and knowledge management.

Commemorative events will be organized at UN Headquarters in New York in April 2007 to mark the 21st anniversary of the Chernobyl accident.

A presentation will be delivered by the Office of UN Coordination of International Cooperation on Chernobyl at the annual international conference on Health and Environment organized by the World Information Transfer in April 2007. The focus of the forthcoming conference has been agreed to be on issues related to the new Chernobyl “shelter.”

The US\$ 2.4 million sub-regional ICRIN project on information dissemination to the affected population in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine funded by the Government of Japan is expected to be launched in 2007. High visibility for the official launch at Headquarters and in the field will be insured in partnership with the Government of Japan representatives.

UNDP will continue developing sub-regional Chernobyl programming in four priority areas: community-driven development projects; policy advice; information provision; and giving the issue a high profile at UN Headquarters. In all four priority areas, UNDP will work on drawing experiences from the COs. In the framework of cross-border cooperation it will continue to promote synergies and share good practices.

The UNDP Chernobyl sub-regional network will be present at the pan-European Ministerial conference “Environment for Europe” in Belgrade (October 2007). A side event on Chernobyl is planned to be organized during the conference as well as a booth with information materials on UNDP Chernobyl recovery and development efforts.

Negotiations have started with the UNDP Human Development Office and Bratislava Regional Center regarding a preparation of a sub-regional Human Development Report devoted to Chernobyl recovery efforts. Work on this project will be initiated in 2007.