UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS

Knowledge product

Recovery from Chernobyl & other Nuclear Emergencies: Experiences and Lessons Learnt

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ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

ABD	Area-based Development
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CORE	Cooperation for Rehabilitation
CRDP	Chernobyl Recovery & Development Programme
CTBTO	Commission for the comprehensive nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation
ENVSEC	Environment & Security initiative
FAO	Food & Agricultural Organisation
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IATF	United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force
ICRIN	International Chernobyl Research & Information Network
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IPHECA	International Programme on the Health Effects of the Chernobyl Accident
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPP	Nuclear Power Plant
NTI	Nuclear Threat Initiative
OBLAST	Province
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD/NEA	Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development / Nuclear Energy Agency
OSCE	Organisation for Security & Cooperation in Europe
RAYON	District
RBEC	Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS
SMHF	Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNTFHS	United Nations Human Security Trust Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSCEAR	United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organisation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The nuclear accident at the Fukushima nuclear plant has given renewed prominence to the subject of recovery from nuclear emergencies, and the issues associated with sustainable development prospects in areas with a nuclear legacy. Aspiring to meet the increased interest in the subject, this report presents the UNDP experience and lessons learnt in tackling the **human consequences of "nuclear legacies" in Europe and the CIS region.**

UNDP gained unique knowledge and experience in recovering from the human consequences of nuclear emergencies. UNDP in RBEC region works in **Chernobyl-affected regions of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine**, and in the communities affected by nuclear tests in **Semipalatinsk (Kazakhstan).** Its efforts aim at providing information, targeted assistance to the most vulnerable groups, advancing social and economic development, improving living standards, as well as restoring community self-reliance and self-sufficiency of the affected population. UNDP is also involved in the international initiative set to structure the **uranium tailings remediation projects in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.**

Implementation of recovery and development projects have highlighted **some distinct features in addressing the human dimensions of nuclear emergencies**. First, **in the short term**, the need to provide the population with **information** on the risks and impacts as well as **psychological support** and **counselling** aiming to ease fears of radiation, anxiety, helplessness and a feeling of abandonment. Second, **in the longer term**, the needs of individuals and communities are best addressed through a **developmental approach**, providing modalities for generating **economic and social opportunities**. In this context, community-based initiatives are most effective in promoting a spirit of activism, assisting in the restoration of **self-confidence**, adoption of a **forward-looking mentality** and reinforcing partnerships between the communities, civil society, and local authorities. Third, providing **policy advice** and strengthening the **capacities of national and local institutions** are also key factors for successful programming in recovery from nuclear legacy. Finally, the effectiveness of **coordination mechanisms among the UN agencies** involved in the recovery effort, according to their distinct mandates, is critical for success of the efforts.

Experience in tacking the **human consequences of nuclear emergencies** suggests the following general **principles to guide the recovery programming**. Human consequences of nuclear emergencies can be deep-rooted and long-lasting; the "victim mentality" and culture of dependency are best tackled by promoting the spirit of activism and initiatives of self-help; the affected territories may become stigmatized and treated as "dirty and contaminated", and thus require additional efforts, such as support to marketing the products, keeping young people in the region, etc.; assistance should be targeted and concentrate on the most vulnerable; nuclear legacy-specific needs must be addressed in the framework of a holistic view encompassing all needs of individuals and communities.

INTRODUCTION

The nuclear accident at the Fukushima/Daichi nuclear plant has given new momentum to the issue of sustainable development prospects in areas with a nuclear legacy. Experience gained by UNDP in Europe and the CIS region in tackling the human consequences of nuclear disasters has become salient and relevant again. It provides valuable knowledge, information and experiences which may serve as a guide in dealing with similar emergencies in the future.

The accident at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in April 1986 caused widespread radioactive contamination in large areas of Belarus, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine. Hundreds of thousands were uprooted, and millions in the region were left psychologically traumatised by lingering fears about their health, and their livelihood prospects. The economy, primarily the agricultural sector, was worst hit by the accident effects. Restrictions on production crippled the market for foodstuffs and other products from the affected areas. Government policies of resettlement and limitations on production - aimed at protecting the population from radiation exposure – also had a negative impact on the economy. In sum, the accident was an immense human tragedy and had a significantly long lasting environmental, public health, and social and economic adverse impact.

Decades of nuclear testing at Semipalatinsk in Eastern Kazakhstan, have had severe humanitarian, social, economic, and environmental effects with wide-ranging and complex consequences. These are exacerbated by the remaining, to this day, uncertainties about the impact of testing, and a profound concern about the negative effects of the testing on the region's eco system and about the presence of radioactive substances in the soil.

Also in Central Asia, uranium tailings originating from abandoned uranium mines and radioactive waste products damps, are often situated close to densely populated areas in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The sites are located in seismically active environments, combining the technological threats with those to people's health, economy, and the environment. The mine environs are contaminated by both radioactive and non-radioactive mineral species, associated with the mining and minerals processing activities and present hazards to the local communities from contamination of both soil and water. Such threats are widely discussed at various levels of government and by expert groups in international organisations. However, it is only lately that systematic efforts are undertaken to prioritise and tackle potential problems stemming from this situation.

Thus, a number of areas in Europe and Central Asia region are facing the human consequences of "nuclear legacy". In part, they are related to the branding problems and fears associated with radioactive fallout; and in part – to the prevailing low living and health standards, sub-optimal economic activity, and heightened unemployment, resulting to a higher risk of poverty than elsewhere. Some of the challenges are unique to the "nuclear legacy" situation, and thus require a tailor-made programming and partnerships.

Currently, UNDP is working in Chernobyl-affected regions of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine and in communities affected by nuclear tests in Semipalatinsk (Kazakhstan). The efforts are aimed at information dissemination, advancing sustainable social and economic development, targeted assistance to the most vulnerable groups, improvement of the living standards, and restoration of the community self-reliance and self-sufficiency.

UNDP is also involved in the international initiative concerned with achieving the resolution to the uranium tailings problem in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. This initiative is set to structure remediation projects for the affected areas to ameliorate the environmental impact, along with projects addressing the social and economic problems arising from the collapse of the mining and minerals processing industry.

Concerted efforts of UNDP and other UN Agencies, together with the governments of the affected countries, are yielding encouraging results. The programmatic approaches that address unique human dimensions of the "nuclear legacy" challenges proved to be effective, and worth to be codified and institutionalized for future replication.

EXPERIENCES & LESSONS LEARNT

A broad range of UNDP-led initiatives has assisted in the recovery of communities with a nuclear legacy in the RBEC region. Lack of social and economic opportunities is one of the major challenges that they face. In seeking appropriate solutions, it is important to keep in mind that addressing the human dimensions of nuclear emergencies has some very distinct features, quite different from natural and other types of disasters. Several important elements, which crystallized during the successful implementation of recovery projects in Europe and CIS region, will be presented below.

Information provision

One of the biggest challenges that people face in the aftermath of a nuclear emergency is lack of reliable, accurate, and credible information or the risks and scale of the accident. Such information has to be provided on a continuous basis, give a reassuring message about the future, and come from a reliable, trustworthy source. If information needs are not adequately met, the repercussions will be long lasting. For instance, the information was withheld from the population during the first week of Chernobyl disaster, and as a result, mistrust remains a major challenge in the Chernobyl-affected communities to this very day.

Quite often, people that live in the affected communities are lacking essential information on how to lead a healthy, productive lives, and how to live safely with low-dose radiation. However, information itself is usually not in short supply. What is missing are creative ways of disseminating information in a form that induces people to change their behaviour. Creative ways of disseminating information should dispel the likely misconceptions surrounding exposure to radiation, improve population's mentality, ease fears associated with radioactivity and help people to re-energize, re-direct their lives. Such information has to come in an easy to understand, non-technical language, be linked to the day-to-day life, and give practical advice. Any information strategy should embrace a comprehensive approach to promoting healthy lifestyles, besides focusing on radiation hazards.

Furthermore, this information should be delivered through the channels that people trust, i.e. local authorities, local teachers, health workers, and local media. Thus, special attention should be given to capacity development of local stakeholders in order to efficiently and effectively deliver relevant information to the people.

The developmental approach

A consensus was reached by the governments of the affected countries and UN Agencies that human consequences of nuclear disasters should be addressed through the "*developmental approach*". This approach is well supported by scientific studies – including the 2005 findings of the UN Chernobyl Forum[1] -which clearly demonstrated that, the vast majority of people living in "contaminated" areas still suffered from social and economic hardship. Furthermore, investment is scarce, infrastructure is often lacking or neglected, and young people left the region to seek better opportunities elsewhere. Thus, what people needed most were better economic opportunities and actions aimed at restoration of community self-reliance and self-sufficiency. With the adoption of the developmental approach, most projects get re-oriented toward enhancement of economic and social conditions in the region, building capacities for entrepreneurship and business skills, as well as assisting self-mobilisation of communities through the direct support to NGOs and CBOs. This approach has begun to yield some important results. Experience drawn from Chernobyl and Semipalatinsk indicates that promotion of local economic development offers prospects for sustained recovery as a viable solution for communities with a nuclear legacy.

The developmental approach on Chernobyl was adopted sixteen years after the disaster. In retrospect, this should have been done much earlier, with some developmental assistance being provided in parallel with humanitarian, and gradually replacing it with projects aimed at the social, economic, and environmental rehabilitation. In other words, while radiation monitoring and focused health care programmes are needed in the immediate aftermath of nuclear disaster, assistance to all affected population should also start early, with the goal of minimizing the disruption of their normal lives as much as possible. In part, this is because the issues of the lack of information, resettlement, social benefits, etc. come into play immediately after the nuclear disaster occurs. A number of long-term challenges, such as psychological impacts, stigma of the territory, restoration of livelihoods and re-branding can be avoided or at least minimized, if the appropriate action is undertaken in the period of early recovery.

UNDP is well positioned to lead the work in these areas. Working together with national governments, affected communities, other UN agencies and international organisations, it can offer the knowledge, experience, and tested solutions to the development challenges of nuclear disasters.

The "victim syndrome"

The majority of human consequences following a nuclear emergency, are not readily visible to people, due primarily to the elusiveness of the dangers associated with radioactivity and its effects on humans. It has been observed that nuclear disasters have a profound psychological impact on people, since the affected communities experience deeply rooted and lingering fears of radiation, anxiety, helplessness, despair and a strong feeling of abandonment and victimisation.

This phenomenon has been dubbed by sociologists as the "*victim syndrome*". For instance, in the aftermath of Chernobyl nuclear accident, many affected communities fell into a state

[1] For Chernobyl Forum summary findings, see: http://chernobyl.undp.org/english/docs/chernobyl.pdf. This approach is also well described in the "*The Human Consequences of the Chernobyl Nuclear Accident: A Strategy for Recovery*", a study commissioned in 2002 by UNDP and UNICEF, in cooperation with UN-OCHA and WHO (see: http://chernobyl.undp.org/english/docs/Strategy%20for%20Recovery.pdf for more details.

of passivity, sparked by widespread (and often unfounded) fears about the health impact of radiation. A significant part of the population developed an inadequate perception of radiation risk, which caused psychological problems, and as a consequence, a very evident deterioration in public health and quality of life. The negative impact was compounded by stigma of the territory whereby the affected areas were often treated as "*contaminated*". This prevented the local people, in particular, from marketing their products, attracting investors, and keeping young people in the region.

As result, people who live in the affected communities, tend to blame all their problems, including health-related, on the accident, and with time develop a low self-esteem and negative outlook on life. Experience demonstrates that the "victim mentality" can be lessened through provision of a timely psychological support and counselling. Otherwise, fears associated with the effects of exposure to radiation become deeply rooted and rather difficult to eradicate later on.

Forward-looking mentality can also be restored through a set of measures, e.g. offering reassuring messages, involving people in decision-making process at the local level, reviving the spirit of activism, and undertaking initiatives of self-help. It is important to keep in mind that activities aimed at overcoming "victim mentality" require a longer-term engagement, in order to have a lasting influence on people's attitudes and mentality change.

The "culture of dependency"

Following the nuclear accidents (Chernobyl in particular), a system of benefits for the people and zoning for the territories was put in place. Consequently, even today around five million people in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine have a status of those affected by the disaster. However, many of the entitlements are not directly linked to health impacts of radiation, but are mainly socio-economic in nature and correlated with residing on a particular territory, rather than a demonstrated need.

Analysis has revealed that, over time, this system of benefits designed to assist people in adjusting their lives to new conditions created a culture of dependency among its recipients. The affected communities expect governments to provide them indefinitely with health, education and other benefits and social allowances. The same stands for the multiple zoning that include vast areas of land, and with time eternalize disincentives for the regions' development.

In this context, it is important to advocate as soon as possible for the assistance to be targeted, and directed only toward the most vulnerable and needy. This action should be coupled with a set of measures aimed at helping individuals and communities to take control of their own future, by shifting away from those policies that create a dependency mentality to those that support opportunity, promote local initiatives, involve the people, and boost their confidence. If the system of benefits to a wide group of people has already been in place for some time, there are ways to streamline it. A consideration can be given to a "buy-out" plan for benefits, which would exchange benefit entitlements for an optional one-time pay to an individual or a family.

Community-based social & economic development

Experience has revealed that through implementation of community-based social and economic development initiatives the affected communities are gradually regaining a

sense of self-reliance. A new forward-looking mentality is emerging, as people succeed in mobilising local resources for their community-based projects and restore a spirit of activism. People hold the key to their own recovery, whether in health, employment, or provision of local services. Experience indicates that even the most depressed communities become highly motivated when they actively participate in project design and implementation, and feel the true ownership of their local initiatives. These community-based projects may have different focus, but because of this local ownership, their biggest impact is the restoration of self-confidence and strong partnership between the communities, civil society, and local authorities.

It is particularly important to rebuild community structures that were lost during the emergency phase and as result of resettlement. Strengthening of social interactions and community mobilisation have a positive effect on the community dynamics and promote a new forward-looking mentality among the community members. Experience has shown that establishing or revitilizing local structures, such as youth centres, community organizations, information centres, etc. contributes immensely to sustaining long-term social interactions.

Experience has shown that resettlement can be very traumatic for people and entire communities. The stress from moving to a new location and distortion of an established community life at times is more disruptive that the effects of radiation. Therefore, it is important to weigh all pros and cons at the time when decision on resettlement is made, and make sure that social factors are taken into consideration, along with the dosimetry.

Capacity building of government and non-government institutions

Strengthening the capacities of governments and other local institutions is the key factor for successful programming in recovery from "nuclear legacy". In many countries, the local institutions are responsible for citizens' protection, and yet their capacity and even knowledge of responsibilities and available resources is often limited.

In this context, capacity of local authorities and other stakeholders at the local level need to be built for providing information to the people on avoiding risks, to reduce their psychological and social stress, to offer them guidance and enhance their knowledge for appropriate actions to be taken.

Policy advice

Immense resources are needed to undertake a full economic and social recovery in affected communities. Thus, policies contributing to the advancement of economic self-sufficiency and community-based self-reliance will free up large national resources. Thus, a proactive approach to stimulating economic development at the regional and local levels needs to be supplemented by appropriate national policies. Experience indicates that close cooperation with the governments of the affected territories and provision of policy advice at the national level is critical and they should be combined.

In this context, the UNDP Office in Ukraine provides on-going advisory support to the Government and is assisting in formulating forward-looking developmental strategies for Chernobyl-affected regions. For example, assistance in preparing a comprehensive legal framework in aligning zoning boundaries with current radiation levels in Ukraine is a priority task, since it will help lift the current restrictions on economic and other activities and will, hopefully, encourage new investment. Overall, zones with mild radiation levels

can be made fit for habitation and cultivation with limited, cost-effective measures to reduce radiation exposure. Only areas with higher levels of contamination require a different strategy focused on greater monitoring, restrictions, etc.

The UNDP Office in Kazakhstan through active cooperation with the Government has developed a programme of assistance to deal more effectively with the "nuclear legacy" of Semipalatinsk. It includes actions on improving national capacity, and drafting national programmes to deal effectively with large-scale ecological, social, economic, and humanitarian problems. Along similar lines, the UNDP Office in Kyrgyzstan, in collaboration with the relevant Governments and international organisations, have worked on assessing the potential dangers of uranium tailings on environment and the social fabric of affected population, and producing recommendations related to disaster prevention.

Thus, UNDP has an advanced experience in policy advice on the issues of the overall strategic planning and disaster response in the areas recovering from "nuclear legacy". Specifically, policy advice was provided on the issues of de-zoning, improving benefits targeting, and streamlining the government programmes and public spending.

COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The governments and populations of the affected regions of Europe and the CIS have enjoyed support of a broad range of United Nations initiatives. They are chronicled, in particular, in the regular UN Secretary-General's reports on Chernobyl and Semipalatinsk. In recognition of the fact that, with time, the affected communities are facing mostly developmental challenges related to recovery from nuclear legacy, UNDP is requested to lead the UN system-wide recovery and development efforts.

Thus, the strategic decision to transfer the UN system-wide coordinative function on Chernobyl from UN-OCHA to UNDP took place in 2004. The Secretary-General designated the Administrator of UNDP as the UN Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl. In 2005, UNDP established the Office of UN Coordination of International Cooperation on Chernobyl, situated in RBEC, to manage the coordination responsibilities.

The UN's new strategy on Chernobyl aimed to shift the emphasis of international assistance efforts from emergency relief to self-sustaining economic recovery and development. It has also given new impetus and ensured a forward-looking approach to addressing the remaining challenges by the UN system.

UNDP is now at the heart of Chernobyl-related work at the UN system level. UN agencies and organizations involved in Chernobyl recovery include: FAO, IAEA, IFRC, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNSCEAR, UNV, World Bank, and WHO. UNDP coordinates the work of these organizations through the Chernobyl Inter-Agency Task Force, which is chaired by UNDP Administrator and meets regularly to review progress on UN initiatives and opportunities for cooperation on Chernobyl.

In each of the three most affected countries, United Nations country teams have been pursuing Chernobyl programmes based on the developmental approach. Activities fall into eight main categories: community-based development; policy advice; infrastructure, health, radiation mitigation and standard setting, reactor safety and nuclear waste management, emergency preparedness, and environmental security. While a number of agencies working on Chernobyl-related project have a technical entry point, the focus of UNDP activities is first and foremost on the people and communities. It is of utmost

importance that the needs of the person, human consequences of the disaster are addressed in parallel with the issues related, e.g. to radiation mitigation, food safety, etc.
A UN General Assembly resolution designated 2006-2016 as a "Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development for Chernobyl-affected Regions." The Office of UN Coordination of International Cooperation on Chernobyl has led the drafting of a UN Action Plan on Chernobyl until 2016, which provides a framework for implementing the Chernobyl Recovery Decade, and is now monitoring implementation by all the agencies involved in Chernobyl recovery. Drafting and implementation of the UN Action Plan on Chernobyl proved an effective tool for the UN Agencies developing a common vision and a strategy for moving forward.
In the framework of the UN Action Plan, a highly successful programme of ICRIN (International Chernobyl Research and Information Network) has started in 2009. A joint initiative by the IAEA, UNDP, UNICEF and WHO, it focuses on dissemination of information of the consequences of Chernobyl nuclear accident, including practical advice on healthy and productive lifestyles to the residents of Chernobyl-affected areas of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Dissemination of the latest scientific knowledge in an easy-to-understand language helps dispel misconceptions and empower the communities to maximize social and economic recovery of the region.
Overall, the experience of UNDP leading the UN system-wide effort on Chernobyl, high-level coordinative and advocacy efforts and joint initiatives at the field level with involvement of the agencies according to their distinct mandates, presents a good model, the elements of which can be replicated elsewhere under similar circumstances. This experience is particularly relevant to the situations of nuclear emergencies or man-inflicted disasters where multiple governments and UN agencies (both resident and non-resident) are involved, and sophisticated mechanisms are necessary for ensuring coordination, consensus building, information exchange and joint sub-regional programming. This experience can also be adopted with regard to project management. Sub-regional multi-agency programmes, coordinated by UNDP, have been recognized as best practice of "Delivering as One" at the project level.
In Semipalatinsk, there were no similar coordinating mechanisms at UN level and the Government of Kazakhstan was successfully taking the lead on coordinating the technical assistance projects. Only at the 2010 international conference[2] in Astana, some key problems[3] with coordination mechanisms were identified. It was then decided that further support to the region should focus on development, and ensure improved coordination, cooperation, and monitoring of the progress achieved. The on-going joint initiative of the Government of Kazakhstan and UN family builds on the strategic development plan of Kazakhstan and other national programme documents, and aims at better coordination of assistance programmes, and their alignment with national priorities.

Similarly, the UNDP Country Offices in Central Asia coordinate successfully at the project level. UNDP in Kyrgyzstan has introduced an effective clearing mechanism for uranium tailings-related project proposals, in order to capture the needs and vulnerabilities of the

[2] The International Conference "Semipalatinsk – from recovery to development", dedicated to the International Day Against Nuclear Tests was organised on 26 August 2010 in Astana at the initiative of the Government of Kazakhstan, together with the United Nations organisations, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organisation, and the International Atomic Energy Agency. The conference reviewed the agreements that were achieved during the Tokyo conference in 1999, aimed at accelerating the support to the region and discussed the support that has been provided in the period 1999-2010, through programmes and actions of the Government of Kazakhstan and the international community.
[3] These were: [a] insufficient coordination and lack of a single approach to the projects implementation, [b] weak involvement of local communities in the region's problems, [c] lack of prioritisation of the donor assistance objectives, and [d] insufficient monitoring of international assistance efficiency.

most affected populations and communities. Significant efforts were undertaken by the countries to address this legacy, and several international organizations, including the IAEA, made their contributions to assessing the nature and extent of the problem, and in some cases to assist with remediation work. Despite these efforts, much remains to be done in finding sustainable solutions to the remaining problems.

Twenty years after many mining and minerals processing operations ceased in the Central Asia region, the legacy of uranium mining remains a big concern. The UNDP Offices in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan – together with ENVSEC[4], have embarked upon an international project aimed at achieving a final and lasting resolution to the uranium tailings problem, and for sustainable radioactive waste management in Central Asia. Since May 2010, a regional action plan has been drawn up, a number of high-level coordination events held, and the structure for remediation projects set up.

The experience with coordination mechanisms shows that UNDP is uniquely positioned to coordinate UN efforts at the development stage of recovery from nuclear emergencies. Its presence on the ground and close partnership with national, regional and local governments in programme countries ensures close dialogue and effective implementation. Past experience has also demonstrated that the "human consequences" were not always addressed, especially in the early phases of recovery from nuclear emergencies. In recognition of this shortcoming, designing of the future activities on preparedness and response to nuclear emergencies should involve UNDP, with strong experience and knowledge in dealing with the human consequences of nuclear emergencies.

[4] ENVSEC is an environment and security initiative representing a consortium of international Agencies concerned with environmental safety and security in the region

GUIDING PRINCIPLES & PROGRAMMATIC PRIORITIES

Experience of UNDP in Europe and the CIS region in tackling the human consequences of nuclear emergencies suggests five general principles to be followed in developmental programming:

- Human consequences of nuclear emergencies can be deep-rooted and long-lasting. Recovery activities should include psychological support, information provision and counselling in order to ease fears and promote forward-looking attitudes of affected individuals and communities;

- In order to overcome the "victim mentality" and culture of dependency, the focus should be on promoting the spirit of activism, helping people take control of their lives and undertake initiatives of self-help;

- Following nuclear disaster, the affected territories may become stigmatized, treated as "contaminated". This negative impact on the livelihoods of the people may require additional efforts, including support to marketing the products, attracting investors, keeping young people in the region, etc.;

- Priority should be given to involvement of communities in decision-making process, community-based social and economic development, supporting initiatives aimed at improving welfare and encouraging self-reliance;

- Assistance should be targeted and concentrate on the most affected/vulnerable individuals, communities and territories;

- Nuclear incident related needs must be addressed in the framework of a holistic view of the needs of the individuals and communities concerned;

- International efforts can only be effective if they support, amplify, and act as levers of change in the far larger efforts made by local, regional and national government agencies in cooperation with civil society and with participation of communities;

- High-level coordinative efforts by the relevant UN agencies as well as joint initiatives on the ground according to the UN agencies' distinct mandates are of the utmost importance. At the development stage, the UN system-wide coordinative function on the recovery efforts from nuclear disaster can be effectively performed by UNDP.

UNDP programmes designed and implemented in the areas of recovery from a nuclear legacy may be distinguished in two ways: actions taken in the immediate aftermath of a nuclear incident, and actions that take a long-term view.

In the short term, besides any humanitarian assistance programmes, it is vital that the affected population gets access to information on the risks and the scale of accident. Such information should be accompanied by reliable data, delivered through trustworthy local

sources, and in the easy-to-understand form. Thus, activities should be undertaken with the mass media to ensure an accurate reporting on the situation, and eschew alarmist reports on radiation.

At this stage, and if necessary, policy advice can be provided to the governments on the issues of social benefits, zoning and resettlement of the people from affected areas.

In the longer term, it is essential that affected communities be supported in their economic, social and livelihoods recovery. The repercussions of a nuclear incident can be contamination of soil, and thus prevent people from returning to their usual employment activities. Thus, the forward-looking initiatives should aim at creating new livelihoods, favourable climate for business, and private sector development as well as reducing vulnerability, improving delivery of social services, strengthening civil society participation, and improving the institutional capacity of the national and local governments involved in the recovery efforts.

Application of the community-based approach is most promising. Communities in the affected areas should be encouraged to implement small-scale initiatives, which improve their living conditions, but, even more importantly, reduce their apathy and dependence, and embrace the principle of voluntary action to address local challenges. This approach aimed at empowering local communities and enhancing their mobilization should be harmonized with activities to strengthen the local government capacity in coordination and planning of public spending and service delivery.

At this stage, it will be particularly important to rebuild community structures that were lost in the process of evacuation/resettlement and strengthen social interactions.

CONCLUSION

UNDP in Europe and the CIS region gained unique knowledge and experience in recovering from the human consequences of nuclear emergencies. It leaves us with an important lesson that if nuclear energy is to be a potent source of development and wellbeing, it must be accompanied by significant investments in safety, protection, and disaster response measures.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: PROJECT INVENTORY

A narrative presentation of completed and on-going UNDP projects dealing with the human consequences of nuclear emergencies in the RBEC region.

Completed Projects in the RBEC region

Strategic Support to Semipalatinsk (1998-03)

This project assisted the Government of Kazakhstan in assembling existing information, assessing the social, economic, and environmental priorities, and developing a prioritised action plan to deal more effectively with the nuclear disaster of Semipalatinsk. The assembled information proved rather useful in assembling the Secretary-General's report to General Assembly in order to mobilise development and humanitarian support.

Results of this project also included improvement in national capacity, as civil society and various government ministries were directly involved with international experts in drafting national programmes to deal effectively with large-scale ecological, social, economic, and humanitarian problems.

Semipalatinsk Micro-credit Scheme (1999-02)

This project was the second phase of micro-credit activities for women in Semipalatinsk. It built on a first pilot phase wherein activities were successfully established and managed to consolidate the successful methodologies while at the same time expanded the programme into such a volume, which became self-sustainable.

Extension of Small Grants to NGOs and CBOs in Semipalatinsk Region (2002-03)

The main objective of the project was to alleviate social suffering of the most vulnerable groups of population in the Semipalatinsk region. Its goal was achieved through providing local people with opportunities to articulate their needs, initiate their own sustainable development initiatives, and enhance their implementation capacities. A transparent mechanism for awarding small grants to NGO/CBO was established, and the capacity of local NGOs and CBOs to understand their social mandate and fully utilise their potential in social service delivery was enhanced. It also promoted the establishment of networks of local NGOs-CBOs and effective partnerships with local authorities.

Microcredit Schemes supporting women of the Semipalatinsk region (2002-05)

The purpose of this project was to support women through the provision of microcredit schemes. Its primary objective was to empower women of the region and to alleviate poverty by providing access to micro credits and small loans to women entrepreneurs, who do not have access to traditional sources of financing. Through the project activities, the women were also provided with business related training and support.

Business skills training and small grant programme to NGOs (2002-05)

The business skills training projects provided support for creating a dynamic and efficient small and medium-sized enterprises sector that can contribute to equitable economic growth, job creation, and income generation in the Semipalatinsk region. The objective of the project providing small grants to non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations was to reduce social suffering and the humanitarian crisis in the Semipalatinsk region by improving the quality of social services delivered by local non-governmental and community-based organisations.

Chernobyl Recovery & Development Programme (2002-05)

The Chernobyl Recovery & Development Programme, implemented in Ukraine, encompassed three major components. First, policy advice and development, by supporting policy and institutional change to promote the development of Chernobyl-affected areas in accordance with government priorities and the UN "Strategy for Recovery" report findings at the central and local levels in partnership with the Ministry of Emergencies, as well as oblast, rayon and municipal authorities. Second, community self-governance and development, where the programme supported affected communities, by assisting community members in villages and towns to organise into self-governing institutions with the aim to enhance their institutional capacities to taking the lead and managing their own efforts for social, economic and environmental rehabilitation and development. And third, institutional support systems, through which institutional capacities of support organisations, such as community development centres, local authorities, non-governmental organisations, research institutions, and other organisations were further enhanced to partner with the affected communities in promoting social, economic and ecological development.

By the end of 2005, the Chernobyl Recovery & Development Programme had assisted communities in planning and executing projects aiming at creating jobs and meeting priority community needs. More specifically, the programme had helped more than 200,000 people in 174 villages. An important aspect of this initiative has been the fact that once projects were under way in cooperation with community organisations, such organisations would take full responsibility for their implementation as well as their operation and maintenance beyond the scheduled date of completion.

Cooperation for Rehabilitation Programme (2003-06)

In Belarus, UNDP worked through the mechanism of the Cooperation for Rehabilitation (CORE) programme with the goal of improving the living conditions of the affected territories as well as restore a sense of community self-reliance and self-sufficiency. The programme administered 116 projects aimed at creating new livelihoods. In particular, it focused on health care, social, and economic development in rural areas, and on culture and education for youth.

The CORE Programme was a joint initiative of local, national, and international partners focusing on four priority areas: healthcare and surveillance; economic and social development in the rural contaminated areas; culture and education of children and youth, transmission of the memory of the Chernobyl disaster; and radiological quality. The Programme was successful in providing an opportunity for local communities to contribute directly to the development of their villages and towns supporting development, approval, and implementation of specific projects. It also provided trainings, organisational support, and start-up business assistance to Chernobyl-affected communities, falling within the project.

UNDP/GEF Small Grants Programme (2005-08)

The UNDP Small Grants Programme together with the Global Environmental Facility provided finance to local non-governmental organisations for various projects on environmental issues, including parallel improvements in the social and economic conditions of local communities in Semipalatinsk.

UNDO micro finance project in the Bryansk region (2007-08)

In the Russian Federation, UNDP implemented the local economic development project in the Chernobyl-affected Bryansk oblast. In particular, it supported the elaboration of a local economic development strategy and a Business Centre, which supports small- and medium-sized enterprises in the Bryansk oblast.

At the same time, a micro-credit fund, aiming to micro-finance local business projects in the Bryansk region was launched by UNDP. In 2007, the programme made over sixty loans serving as a growth point for recovery of the area by contributing to the success of several business enterprises in the region, and making a profound impact on community attitudes, helping to transform a deep-seated helplessness into a spirit of activism. Following completion of financing in 2008, the project proved its sustainability as the Federal and Regional authorities decided to develop the initiative further[5]. The authorities allocated 5 million roubles with additional financing allocated by the Ministry of Economic Development.

There is no doubt that this programme of micro financing and investment from the Federal and Regional budgets for development of small business helped in resolving the problem of self-employment in the Bryansk region. Furthermore, the micro financing programme helped in increasing economic activity in the region, and enhancing consumer opportunities of local residents, improving at the same time personal and family incomes for those involved.

Maria Sharapova Foundation Youth programme in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine (2007-10)

Maria Sharapova Foundation supported eight community-based initiatives in the three Chernobyl-affected countries - Belarus, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine. UNDP took the lead in implementing these initiatives, and worked in partnership with local and regional authorities, community organisations, and youth groups. Although the objectives of these interventions varied, they shared a common focus on youth, and an overarching intention to support the return to normalcy and prosperity for the people and communities most affected by the Chernobyl accident[6].

UNDP Belarus Area Based Development Programme (2008-10)

This project took an integrated approach in following up on the Chernobyl Forum recommendations. It addressed the issues of safe agricultural production by small private farms, promoting the rebuilding of community structures, advocating healthy life styles, and improving access to and quality of primary health care services while specifically targeting high-risk populations and providing practical information and advice to various community groups on living conditions of continuous low-dose radiation exposure.

[5] For more information on the project, see: http://www.business32.ru/

[6] [1] Children from Chechersk city in the Gomel region of Belarus helped spruce up public spaces planting shrubbery and tending flowerbeds. [2] Communications facilities at the Chechersk Central Rayon Hospital were renovated and upgraded, and a newly established "Fairytale Room" now offers therapy to children in the form of interactive games, and other healing and inspirational activities. [3] In the Bragin region of Belarus, the Foundation supported the opening of a number of music schools in isolated rural areas. [6] In the Bryansk region of the Russian Federation, the Foundation supported the construction of a new sports field and wooden structure for the summer camp[8] In Ukraine, a network of three youth centres was established to bring computer knowledge and skills to rural teenagers.

Family Health Project (2007-09)

The objective of this project was to improve the health of the populations living in the Chernobyl-affected communities of the Stolin District in Belarus by establishing a sustainable framework and mechanisms for education of target groups[7] on the issues of healthy parenthood, upbringing, and developing healthy children, as well as safe living in the Chernobyl-affected regions of Belarus. The project was implemented by UNDP, and funded by UNDP and USAID.

The project main tasks were first to establish a sustainable framework and mechanisms of education of medical and pedagogical professionals on healthy maternity, paternity and childhood, radiation safe living and practicing healthy lifestyles in Chernobyl-affected areas. Also to improve the level of radiological knowledge of the target population living in radiation contaminated areas; and to develop information material and produce recommendations on healthy living under the conditions of radiation exposure risk, and of teaching secondary school children, who live in the affected communities, healthy lifestyles and radiation safety skills.

Enhancing Human Security in the Former Nuclear Test Site of Semipalatinsk (2008-11)

UNDP together with UNICEF, UNV, and UNFPA implemented the joint three-year programme addressing some of the root causes of the development problems of the Semipalatinsk area, taking a long-term development approach, which complimented other urgent environmental and medical interventions; namely: capacity, public service delivery, business initiative, community mobilisation, and resources.

The overall goal of the project was to alleviate social suffering among the vulnerable groups in the Semipalatinsk region in order to overcome the ecological, health, psychological, and humanitarian effects of the Cold War. The project attempted to enhance the economic, health, environmental and community security as well as reduce social tensions to prevent potential conflicts. In particular, the economic component of the project dealt with building capacities for entrepreneurship and business skills, and providing modalities for generating economic and employment opportunities. In addition, the social component dealt with the mobilisation of communities and support to NGOs and CBOs in providing community services and in acting as agents of change within society. The project also intended to ensure the adequate quality of basic health services in the region, encourage the local economic development, and greatly improve the social engineering of the locality left behind the general economic growth of the country.

International Scientific & Practical Centre of Thyroid Disease (2009-10)

The Centre addressed the need of populations suffering from thyroid diseases and associated endocrinological illnesses caused by the Chernobyl disaster. The main objective of the project was to provide the lacking scientific background, infrastructure, and expertise for further advancement of thyroid diseases diagnosis and treatment leading to sustainable improvements in the health of the Chernobyl-affected population.

The project involved scientific and research work in advancing the knowledge about radiation and thyroid diseases. It also involved the establishment and equipping of an international scientific and practical Centre for thyroid-related diseases – in Minsk, Belarus - focusing on diagnosis, treatment, and monitoring of patients; as well as

[7] Healthcare professionals, pregnant women, and nursing mothers, "reproductive reserve women", future fathers, secondary school teachers and schoolchildren

dissemination of relevant knowledge and information to medical professionals and patients.

Area Based Development of the Chernobyl-affected Areas of Belarus (2009-10)

The aim of this UNDP-implemented project was to promote the enhancement of the livelihoods of rural residents in the Chernobyl-affected areas of Belarus through community mobilisation, development of participatory planning and improved social delivery, as well as through provision of economic development opportunities for the most vulnerable groups of the local population.

The major output of the project was a working model of interaction and cooperation among the rural residents, the local authorities, and other local organisations and institutions. It aimed at the resolution of specific social and economic problems in the target settlements and the region through participatory community development and implementation of specific community projects, including those related to employment and income generation. It also promoted a participatory community development approach to other Chernobyl-affected regions of Belarus with similar development challenges and characteristics.

Promoting economic and social integration of Oralman (2009-11)

This joint UNDP and UNV programme enhanced the social inclusion and access of ethnic Kazakh repatriates to social services in the Semey region. The programme established a centre for adaptation and social integration, and promoted community mobilisations through volunteer action.

On-going projects in the RBEC region

International Chernobyl Research and Information Network (2009-13)

The project, known as the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network (ICRIN) draws on the findings of the UN Chernobyl Forum and disseminates scientific findings in the language that non-specialists understand. The project's activities help dispel widespread misconceptions about the effects of the Chernobyl nuclear accident on the people, fight the stigma that still afflicts the region, and provide local residents with practical advice on health risks and healthy lifestyles such as where to plant potatoes, or where not to collect wood. This sub-regional project is a joint effort by IAEA, UNDP, UNICEF, and WHO and it is implemented in the three most affected areas of Belarus, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine.

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

ENVSEC: Strengthen coordination of sustainable radioactive waste management (2010-12)

This project was designed to assist in transforming scientific knowledge and political will into development and implementation of prioritised interventions providing sustainable solutions and making their implementation possible in the four countries of the region - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan – together with ENVSEC.

The project aims at strengthening coordination on project formulation and mobilisation of resources for sustainable radioactive waste management in Central Asia. It is set to

structure remediation projects for all affected sites to ameliorate the environmental impact, also supported by projects addressing the social and economic problems, which arose from the collapse of the mining and minerals processing industries in these countries.

A regional action plan has been drawn up by the partners and a number of high-level regional coordination events have been held. Other interventions include the strengthening of regulatory and legal frameworks and capacities for sustainable management of radioactive waste; as well as the undertaking of specific initiatives on cleaning up and re-cultivation of selected sites. They also include the implementation of initiatives on community development, such as raising the awareness of the population and attracting social, environmental, and economic investment; and forging partnerships between the public and the private sectors for the secondary processing of uranium tailings.

Enhancing Human Security in the Chernobyl-affected Areas of Belarus (2010-13)

The aim of this project is to enhance human security in five Chernobyl-affected districts of Belarus comprehensively. In line with the project's vision, residents of the target districts are provided with the necessary means to improve income security, minimise radiation exposure and practice healthy lifestyles. The project focuses on specific communities to develop and test new approaches, which may be later extended to cover other Chernobyl-affected areas of Belarus.

Maria Sharapova Scholarship Programme (2010-15)

This project aspires to provide gifted and talented but economically disadvantaged youth from the Chernobyl-affected areas of Belarus with the financial means to pursue studies in the fields of fine arts at the Belarus State University and the Belarus State Academy of Arts.

Radiation monitoring for rehabilitated radioactive waste sites (2011-2015)

The project proposal envisages the development of a programme of radiation monitoring that will serve a number of purposes. Its prime purpose will be to confirm the adequacy and effectiveness of the remediation work and to ensure that regulatory criteria have been complied with. This will also provide an assurance of safety to members of the public. Furthermore, it will enable the collection of data for use in assessing radiation exposure of members of the public from remediated sites, un-remediated sites and will identify, if, and when, remediation work may be needed, as well as if regulatory criteria are being met.

In other words, the main objective of the project is to develop the necessary measurement techniques, technologies, and skills for assessing the degree of negative impact of remediated uranium facilities and radio geochemical zones on the population and the environment. The data will also provide an input to safety assessment studies. Implementation of the planned activities will not only enable the prevention of a future negative impact on the environment and the population but it will also contribute to reducing the radiation phobia of the population over past uranium facilities.

Raising competitiveness of the region through innovative approaches to regional planning and services (2011-15)

This programme is jointly funded by the Government of Kazakhstan and the United Nations Agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, and UNV). It builds on the success of a previous inter-agency programme in the same area, funded by UNTFHS. It aims at accelerating the progress of human development indicators and supporting sustainable development of the East Kazakhstan region. The joint programme consists of five components covering

social and economic development and health-related issues. The programme addresses in particular the needs of vulnerable people in the cities of Semey, Kurchatov, and Ust-Kamenogorsk, as well as other affected areas of East Kazakhstan Oblast.

The overarching goal of this project is to assist Kazakhstan in the formulation and implementation of specialized programmes and projects targeting the affected population and well as to support economic growth, sustainable development, and to enhance human security in the former nuclear sites areas. The programme aspires to improve the quality of life of the population, and advance progress towards Millennium Development Goals achievement in Eastern Kazakhstan, in particular in the districts severely hit by nuclear tests at the former Semey nuclear site.

The programme covers the following cooperation areas:

- Increase efficiency of planning and state resources usage in socio-economic programmes at the local level for more efficient protection of vulnerable people;
- Capacity development of the population to scale up their wellbeing and to further develop local governance;
- Enhancing access to quality social and economic services for vulnerable groups of population, including woman and children; and
- Provide population with the quality information on wellbeing, health, goals, and objectives of this programme.

Mainstreaming Environment in the Local Strategies in Chernobyl-Affected Areas of Ukraine (2012-14)

This project[8] is based on the premise that environmental mainstreaming is important since economic and social development and the environment are fundamentally interdependent. In other words, the way the economy and political and social institutions are managed have critical impacts on the environment, while environmental quality and sustainability, in turn, are vital for the performance of the economy and social well-being.

The primary goals of the project are to raise awareness on local environmental challenges and opportunities including results of the latest radiological monitoring (2011-12); and to strengthen the capacity of targeted local authorities and local communities in Ukraine to manage and participate in long-term sustainable environmental planning and the management process.

Sports Recovery Project in the Chernobyl-Affected Regions of Belarus and the Russian Federation (2012-14)

The project will provide sports and physical activities for youth in the areas affected by the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster. It will help promoting healthy lifestyles through creating lawn tennis infrastructure in 12 schools in Zhitkovichi area and expand sport infrastructure in a rural school in Khoiniki area (Belarus) and help rehabilitate the main sports facility in the Zlynka area (the Russian Federation).

[8] For more information: http://www.undp.org.ua/en/projects-list-all/35-energy-and-environment-/1311-mainstreaming-environment-in-the-local-strategies-in-chernobyl-affected-areas

Poverty reduction Programme in Kyrgyzstan (2012-16)

This Programme will actively assist the government at national and local levels in the creation of favourable conditions for vulnerable groups of the population (women, youth, and poor) and in improving access to main resources of income generating activities (financial, employment, informational). The Programme will actively contribute to increasing the sustainability of economic activities of poor population at the local level through improving access to various financial services and to mechanisms for development of small and medium enterprises.