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UN in Uzbekistan

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Making a difference in the lives of individuals and families across the world



UN Resident Coordinator **Anita Nirody**: “The UN has a long-standing partnership with Uzbekistan”

In an interview to our newsletter, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative Anita Nirody speaks about the UN's role and its major achievements in the country and highlights new priority areas of the UN's development cooperation with Uzbekistan. Read the full interview on pages 2-3.



Uzbekistan joined the United Nations in 1992 as a new sovereign and independent state. The United Nations Office opened in Tashkent the following year. Today, there are eight UN programmes, funds and agencies operating in the country: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), and the World Bank Group. The UN system in Uzbekistan works as one, collaborating to support the national reform efforts.

Interview with Anita Nirody, UN Resident Coordinator in Uzbekistan

What are the key development challenges in Uzbekistan?

The country has implemented a number of reforms in the economic, social and environmental areas. In this regard, Uzbekistan has seen many achievements over the last few years. In broad terms, the growth rate has been fairly high averaging around 7.5% per year and the Government is keen to sustain this rate of growth in the coming years. A wide range of economic reforms have been implemented.

In the area of basic social services, there has been good progress in terms of better provision of essential services in the areas of education, health and child protection. Considerable reforms were made in the education sector, and government expenditure on education is high. The strategic approach adopted by the Government of preventive health care, promoting healthy lifestyles and improving the quality of health care services has been an important step in the right direction. Some progress in addressing gender equality and the advancement of women has been made - the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is currently under implementation. Gender parity has been achieved in primary, basic and vocational education. There has been some success in improving access to HIV prevention, treatment and care services. The country ratified a number of important conventions and protocols to protect the rule of law and to harmonize legal practices with international standards – such as the National Action Plan on Combating Torture. Uzbekistan acceded to the UN Convention against Corruption and in 2008, the Parliament adopted a law on child rights.

The country's Welfare Improvement Strategy (WIS) provides the framework for accelerating economic growth and enhancing the living standards of the population.

Despite the above, a number of challenges remain. The benefits of growth are not always reaching the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the population – mostly in the rural areas. The financial crisis is reducing the inflow of foreign currency due to decreasing prices for and revenues from major export commodities, lower inflow of foreign investments and loans and decrease in remittances from migrant workers mainly from Russia and Kazakhstan thereby impacting the social safety nets of the most vulnerable – the majority of whom rely on remittances as a critical source of income.

More needs to be done to further empower women and promote gender equality - issues such as lower representation of women in decision-making, economic empowerment of women in rural areas, family conflicts, as well as traditional attitudes and stereotypes about the roles of women and men remain a challenge.

In the sphere of education, concerns with regards to quality and access continue and in the health sector, child and maternal mortality indicators need to be further reduced. While continued increase in the number of HIV-infected people in Uzbekistan is due to injecting drug use – a sharp increase in the number of sexually transmitted diseases and more infections among women has also been noted. While some progress has been made in the area of service delivery, further capacity development is required before universal access can be achieved.

Any efforts to address the vast environmental challenges (which are particularly acute in the Aral Sea basin) will require the need for strengthening the overall framework of environment governance. In the water sector it will be essential to address issues related to water use, management, efficiency and the quality of drinking water. The need to address energy inefficiencies will be critical. A large part of Uzbekistan's economy and

population are at a risk of earthquakes, floods and droughts, with the poor being much more vulnerable.

All of these challenges therefore require critical attention and will be an important step in progressing towards the MDGs.

What do you see as the UN's role in addressing these challenges?

The United Nations approach in supporting Uzbekistan is articulated in our UNDAF (2010-2015). Our main emphasis will be in the three broad areas of economic well being, social services (education, health, nutrition, STI/HIV drug use prevention, social protection of children and early childhood development), environment (integrating sustainable development principles into country policies and plans) and governance (to enhance effectiveness, accountability and inclusivity).

Our focus will be on the most vulnerable groups and our approach will be anchored in human rights norms. In all of the areas of our work, we will strive for inclusiveness and broad-based partnerships with a range of actors including civil society. It is important to mention that the UN has a long-standing partnership and track-record working in Uzbekistan. The UN's mandate in supporting the implementation and monitoring of the MDGs at the country level is a substantial comparative advantage in assisting the Government to enhance living standards and achieve higher levels of human development. As a credible and trusted partner of the Government, we provide policy advice, technical assistance and programmatic support, drawing on global best practices.



Could you please cite the main accomplishments of the UN in Uzbekistan?

The UN has played a key role in the formulation of the Welfare Improvement Strategy (WIS) – which was endorsed by the Government as a medium term development plan for the country in 2007 and is currently supporting its implementation. The UN has been assisting the Government in enhancing its statistical capacity to nationalize the MDGs. A number of statistical bulletins on health-care, education and gender equality were published as well as the first MDG report. Very importantly, helping “localize” the MDGs constitutes an important area of UN support. Increasing attention has been paid to rural development, given the widening gap in living standards between urban and rural areas and projects dealing with the rights of women migrant workers and improving the livelihoods of people with disabilities have helped raise awareness and promote better protection of vulnerable groups.

In the area of education, regulations on Basic Education were revised and the UN provided assistance in developing the National Programme for the Quality and Efficiency of Education for 2008-2012. A multi-sectoral approach has been adopted with regards to quality with child friendly schools packages currently applied in 750 schools addressing a number of issues including water, sanitation, hygiene as well as inclusive education. UN advocacy and support has resulted in a national concept of Preschool Education that will be transformed into a national programme.

In the health sector, critical assistance has been provided at the policy level for the preparation of the third state of the nation-wide health care reform programme and the national Nutrition Improvement Strategy. The Theme Groups on Health, Nutrition and HIV/AIDS have proven to be efficient coordination mechanisms between UN agencies, donors and the Government – demonstrated through the introduction of new vaccines in child immunization, assistance to the country in applying for external funding for health programmes etc. Key support has been provided for building capacities to enhance delivery of services and in building the institutional and technical capacities of key institutions. The UN support to drug demand reduction through awareness raising of key actors to promote healthy lifestyles has been a key area of our work as well support to reduce drug trafficking.

The UNCT has played a key role in supporting the harmonization of domestic laws with key UN legal instruments including human rights and environmental conventions so as to facilitate their monitoring and implementation.



A number of partnerships were undertaken with civil society partners who have been involved in various activities dealing with protecting the rights of people with disabilities, women and children, labour migrants and people living with HIV. The UN Country Team has contributed to building the capacities of sub-national government in developing regional integrated plans for the implementation of the WIS and the National Programme of Action for Children.

The above are just a few examples of what we have achieved.

In your view how does Uzbekistan stand with regards to the MDGs?

Overall, I would say that the progress towards MDG advancement has been mixed. General trends show that progress has been made towards achieving the MDGs in Uzbekistan in the broad areas of education and health. Progress has also been made in addressing gender equality and advancement of women. Gender parity was achieved in primary basic and secondary vocational education earlier than the MDG target date of 2015. The MDG Report of 2006 showed that despite some progress, some targets are only potentially achievable such as in the areas of living standards and malnutrition, access to water and sanitation, child mortality, maternal health, TB and malaria and in achieving environmental sustainability. Targets related to HIV/AIDS are seen as unlikely to be achieved. The MDG report for 2008 is currently being worked on and will highlight further progress in this area. It will be important to have a mechanism for ongoing monitoring of the MDGs and very importantly in developing analytical and monitoring capacity at regional levels. Work will also need to be stepped up in the areas of MDG advocacy at the central and regional levels.

Does the UN system here intend to launch new projects with regards to the MDGs?

If we look at the UN's ongoing initiatives as well as those proposed under the new UNDAF, all of our efforts are focused on supporting the advancement of one or more of the MDGs. In that sense our work is fully aligned with the MDGs. In addition to our existing and proposed initiatives in advancing the MDGs, the UN is also working on building statistical capacities for MDG monitoring and reporting. The main objective of this initiative is to make MDG-related data more accessible by developing a database and by ensuring the production of qualitative data that is tailored to the needs of the policy-



makers, business people, civil society and the general population. Through closely linked and interdependent components, this initiative assists the Government of Uzbekistan in improving the quality and availability of statistics to monitor outcomes and impacts of policies (development strategies), and to track progress towards achievement of the MDGs and WIS targets.

Do you see any new areas for cooperation between the UN and Uzbekistan that are not explored but could be given priority in the future?

Our (the RC and the UNCT) workplan for this year highlights a few strategic areas where we need to deepen our efforts, sharpen our focus or engage in new initiatives. Let me give you a few examples where I believe we need to engage: Support to aid coordination is an important area where the UN can engage. The recently established institution on aid coordination within the Ministry of Finance provides a good opportunity for the UN to engage on the issue of aid coordination and management. The formulation of an “anti-crisis” programme through a Presidential Decree to mitigate impacts of the financial crisis provides an important window for UN to provide support especially on issues related to social protection of the most vulnerable groups, delivery of essential services, employment policy and micro-finance.

The recent Presidential Decree and Cabinet of Minister's Resolution on HIV/AIDS as well as the establishment of a National Commission on HIV/AIDS provides an important platform for the UN to step up its engagement in this area especially with regards to the implementation of the National Action Plan on HIV/AIDS and a joint Programme on HIV/AIDS. I believe that the UN has much value to add in this area.

The recent creation of two institutes (Institute for Macro Economic Forecasting and the Institute for Social Research) by the Ministry of Economy is another good opportunity for the UN to provide policy advice to strengthen the country's macroeconomic analytical capacity. 2009 has been declared by the President of Uzbekistan as the year of rural development. This provides an opportunity for the UN to further step up its engagement in the rural areas, where the bulk of the most vulnerable and poor live. It will also be very important for us to work with the Government and civil society partners in the area of humanitarian coordination, and disaster risk reduction.



Unity of Equal – Unity of Different

Promoting Accessibility,
Employment and
Development Opportunities
for People with Disabilities
in Uzbekistan



The official statistics indicate that they number 780,000, of whom 52% are women and 48% are men. But you hardly see them on the streets, schools, parks or shopping areas. People with disabilities, they remain invisible for the public in Uzbekistan, sometimes by choice, sometimes, as imposed by others. What are the causes that lead them to seemingly inhabit a parallel world? What has to be changed so that these valuable members of our society can emerge and fulfill their potential?

The UN Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPWD) put into effect last May gave basis for development of the RBEC Action Plan that was meant to promote initiatives and legislations in support of people with disabilities. Along with the UN Action Plan, Uzbekistan has made amendments to the “Law on Social Protection of People with Disabilities”, and subsequently signed the Convention on February 27, 2009. This Convention protects interests of over 650 million people with disabilities and marks a “paradigm shift” from viewing people with disabilities as objects of charity to recognizing them as citizens with equal rights.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of Uzbekistan believes that to achieve this goal, a number of steps have to be taken in raising awareness of the government and civil society, and creating accessible environment in Uzbekistan, as well as finding ways to greatly enhance education and employment opportunities.

To this end, on the World Day of People with Disabilities, a public awareness raising campaign under the catchy slogan “Unity of Different, Unity of Equal” was officially launched. The campaign focuses on four aspects of life and fundamental rights: education, family environment, accessibility, and employment for people with disabilities. Ninety thematic billboards have been posted in the capital and three other major cities of Uzbekistan, namely Samarkand, Bukhara and Karshi, and 30,000 posters will be disseminated

throughout the country. The 80 colorful and vivid billboards in Russian and Uzbek languages became popular among companies owning billboards and have been approved by hokimiyat (local authority) to be regularly re-posted free of charge throughout the capital. The posters and banners were developed in partnership with UNICEF, JICA and other government and international donors.

As part of this effort to support people with disabilities, UNDP in Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population jointly launched a project, ACCESS - Accessibility, Civic Consciousness, Employment, and Social Support for people with disabilities. This initiative

aims at improving the social status and opportunities for people with disabilities in Uzbekistan. One of its main goals is to form a positive image among the public of disability and raise public awareness about the hurdles people with disabilities face. The project is also actively engaged in promoting accessible environment and creating a system of social support to employment of people with disabilities in the country.

“I have developed blindness when I was fifteen years old”, says Rihsivoy, a lawyer and at the same time, an expert in printing Braille books for visually impaired people, “and I know what equal access means for a person with a disability. I am happy that the new ACCESS project has a component that aims to promote understanding and implementation of existing legislation in the area of the rights of, and accessibility for, people with disabilities”.

31% of the total number of people with disabilities receive social benefits, and only about 30% are employed. To enhance employment of people with disabilities, the Government has approved special legislation that envisages specific measures aimed at creating jobs for this group of people. At the same time, it undertakes district and city level job-fairs for populations that face difficulties in the labor market, including people with disabilities. A first job-fair that was supported by the ACCESS project, took place last November, in the ancient Samarkand city. According to the Samarkand City Employment Centre, 105 people, including 41 people with disabilities, got jobs, and the total number of job-fair participants exceeded





2000. In the long term, these fairs are expected to promote not only the increase of economic and social well-being of people with disabilities, but also to facilitate full social integration that will benefit the society as a whole.

Another dimension of the project focuses on strengthening coordination and capacity of various state and non-governmental agencies in implementing new legislation in the field of disability. A countrywide capacity building training of trainers on understanding the issues of disability was organized for government and NGO representatives. Trainers in the regions have already started running their own trainings among local authorities and specialists of state social agencies, as well as advocate equal rights and accessibility for people with disabilities.

"My perceptions of disability issues were quite one-sided" says Ms M. Akhunova, the head of the Rehabilitation and Social Protection Sector at the Ministry of Public Education and member of the Inter-agency Coordinating Council of the project ACCESS. "The training gave me an opportunity to look at the issue from another angle, indeed to place myself into a disabled person's shoes. In my view, it is necessary to work in a comprehensive way to raise social awareness of disability issues and to fight stereotypes, which prevent people with disabilities from realizing their potential fully, and often simply do not allow them to exercise their legitimate rights". A newly established Inter-agency Coordinating Council facilitates the implementation of the project and provides ACCESS with the necessary institutional support.

The ACCESS team seeks to ensure equal participatory approach and involves all stakeholders in project activities. Thus, people with disabilities have become both beneficiaries and active participants at all stages of project implementation.

Further ahead there are many challenges that the project will encounter on its way to bringing access and improvement to the lives of people with disabilities. There are also many new ideas and initiatives that are yet to be implemented. Among them are filming a documentary, reconstructing major public buildings, and developing an online City Accessibility Map, which will give contact details of key education, healthcare and other public and social protection agencies.



UNDP and President's Academy of State and Social Construction Enter New Phase of Cooperation

UNDP signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Academy of State and Social Construction under the President of Uzbekistan (ASSC), thereby paving the way to teaching "Human Development" academic courses at the Academy.

The major challenge of an academic course on human development is to complement theory with an applied aspect. Practically applied aspects of this learning discipline are manifested in two ways: first, by analyzing trends in human development based on a system of socio-economic indicators and human development indices; and second, through the provision of issues of particular importance to the sustained growth in Uzbekistan.

The memorandum will enable to develop human development teaching modules in Uzbek adapted to the needs and interests of the Academy. The provisional course will primarily concentrate on the issues of effective governance and institutional aspects in the context of Human Development. It will cover such topics as roles of state and civil society in the development of human potential, decentralization, and efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The memorandum will also serve as a platform for promoting the human development concept at the regional level and fostering cooperation in the core areas of priority directions of the National Programme for Training Personnel.



Getting ready to Clean Development Mechanism implementation

UNDP conducted series of workshops at chemical plants "Navoiyazot", "Maxam - Chirchik" and "Ferganaazot" to build their capacity to implement Clean Development Mechanism projects.

The training aimed at raising awareness of plants' personnel on Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects, improving their personal attitude and responsibility to the implementation of these projects. The readiness of the chemical plants to start up the commercial stage of CDM projects and applicability of existing CDM procedures to each chemical plant were also addressed. Control equipment workers, shop personnel and managerial staff who are directly involved in the implementation of CDM attended the training.

Currently six CDM projects on nitrous oxide (N_2O) emission reduction are to be registered by the Executive Board on CDM and will be approved later this year. The workshop was organized by the UNDP project on CDM capacity building in cooperation with Mitsubishi Corporation – the major foreign partner of all chemical projects - and SJC "Uzkimyosanoat".

Experience from other countries showed that human factor greatly influences the projects' ultimate goal - gaining Certified Emission Reduction (CER). Due to mistakes in monitoring process a CDM project can lose dozens, and sometimes hundreds of tons of CER, leading to the losses in income from sale of the CERs. Thus, the main goal of the workshops was to bring to personnel's mind that the project's outputs depend to a large extent on their attitude.





Uzbekistan Adopts National Nutrition Investment Plan

The Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan recently signed off a landmark nutrition investment plan (NIP) that will see malnutrition and other malnutrition related diseases drop and health and productivity rise. UNICEF and the World Bank supported the programmes development and will support its implementation.

“Healthy people make a healthy nation. This is a major investment in our people and clearly demonstrates the Government’s commitment to their wellbeing. The NIP is the first comprehensive plan to meet the nutritional needs of the most vulnerable in the CIS”, said Mr. R. Kasymov, Deputy Prime Minister of Republic of Uzbekistan, on behalf of the Cabinet of Ministers.

The approach is unique in that it’s based on a range of proven successes and brings them together into one larger package. The Government, the private sector, community groups and the media will work together get key nutrients and key messages out to the most needy. The programme is being led by the Cabinet of Ministers, with a steering committee chaired by a Government leading specialist, Tanzilya Norbeava.

Over three years NIP will support primary healthcare staff efforts to help women and children meet their nutritional needs. Micronutrient supplements will be delivered through existing public health services.

The NIP package will support private businesses fortify staple foods with key nutrients. Salt fortified with iodine will virtually wipe out damaging Iodine Deficiency Disorder in Uzbekistan. Flour fortified with multivitamins and iron will cut rates of some

serious birth defects by half and reduce anemia in women and children by nearly a quarter. Cotton oil fortified with Vitamin A will reduce vitamin A deficiency and exclusive breastfeeding protects against a range of illnesses.

National media and community organizations have key roles to play in promoting healthy eating, exclusive breastfeeding and raising awareness on the necessity of good micronutrient consumption among families.

“The NIP goes a long way in meeting children and women’s basic rights. Every child has the right to the nutrients they need to survive, thrive and develop their full potential”, said Mahboob Shareef, UNICEF Representative in Uzbekistan. Preliminary studies indicate significant funds will be saved through reduced healthcare costs over the next six years as a direct result of the NIP.

“Today’s children will be tomorrow’s healthier adults. Our cost benefit analysis shows that the higher productivity and increasing wages of these adults will total up to \$274 million, that means 25US\$ will be returned on every dollar invested in the NIP.” Said Loup Brefort, World Bank country Director in Uzbekistan.

People and nutrition in Uzbekistan

The populations’ nutrition status has improved dramatically over the past five years. Yet a range of nutrition indicators continue to show that over half of Uzbek women and children suffer malnutrition and associated health threats. Malnutrition is responsible approximately 1/3rd of deaths of children under 5 years of age and burdens the national economy with about \$1 billion a year in excess health care costs.

The NIP will protect the gains of the past 5 years as well as promises significant additional improvements in population-wide nutrition status.

UZBEK WOMEN AND CHILDREN TO BE BETTER PROTECTED FROM DISASTERS

UNICEF, Uzbekistan’s Ministry of Emergency situations (MoES) with financial support from the European Commissions (EC) department of humanitarian aid are protecting the most vulnerable people from natural and man-made disasters where they need it most; in schools, kindergartens, clinics and in their communities.

“Women and children are the most vulnerable in any disaster. We are helping people help themselves in some of the most remote communities and are boosting the Governments’ solid disaster preparedness plans”, said Mahboob Shareef, UNICEF Representative in Uzbekistan.

The work to prepare for and respond to disasters began in April 2007 and a formal Memorandum of Understanding was signed between UNICEF and the MoES in May 2008. The EC’s humanitarian aid department is supporting the project through its Disaster Preparedness in Central Asia (DIPECHO V) Programme for the period of October 2008 – December 2009. The total budget is nearly 340,000 Euros.

Knowing what to do before, during and after an emergency saves lives, so a key project element is teaching tried and tested disaster drills to vulnerable communities that are based on solid risk assessments and planning. Project staff are working closely with the national and regional governments to meet these aims.



The programme also brings together Government emergency, education, health departments, community leaders and activists for in service training. Training is being administered through a network of regional training centres.

Global initiative

Uzbekistan’s efforts are part of the international strategy for disaster risk reduction that was agreed in the shadow of the Indian Ocean tsunami in January 2005 and major earthquake in Kobe, Japan. The global Hyogo Framework for 2005-15 promotes beefing up National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction and national disaster preparedness plans, supporting emergency, health and education departments and lights the way for the projects work.

New kit to save lives

UNICEF recently handed over nine minivans to the Civil Protection Training Centers of Nine Regional Departments of MoES. These follow a full set of training equipment delivered earlier. Getting the right kit to the frontline response agency, the Ministry of Emergency Situations, is crucial in preparing for disasters to minimize the impact on children.

Speaking at the ceremony to mark the handing over, UNICEF Representative Mahboob Shareef said the vans would ‘help save lives by making sure the trainers reach their audiences, the most vulnerable people.’

Mr. Khakimjon Abdulazizov, Deputy Minister of Emergency Situations gave a presentation on achievements on the joint Project and its impact in schools, kindergartens, and makhallas to date. The focus, he said, was training specialists from 36 kindergartens and 220 schools, 36 rural medical centers and over 300 representatives of regional and district hospitals in six pilot provinces.

UNICEF and the MoES reiterated their solid commitment to putting the pieces in place to save lives in disasters and to further raise public awareness on the issue by introducing sound disaster risk management mechanisms aimed at the disaster prevention focusing on women and children during the period of 2010-2015 under the new joint Country Programme of Cooperation.



UNDP, UNFPA and the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan launched a nation-wide media campaign to promote gender equality

Gender equality implies a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. Equality between women and men exists when both sexes are able to share equally in the distribution of power and influence; have equal opportunities for financial independence through work or through setting up businesses; enjoy equal access to education and the opportunity to develop personal ambitions.

Yet despite many international agreements affirming women's rights, progress on gender equality is uneven. Women in many parts of the world are still much more likely than men to be poor and illiterate. They have less access to medical care, property, credit, training and jobs. They are also far less likely than men to be politically active and far more likely to become victims of domestic violence.

A critical aspect of promoting gender equality is the empowerment of women. The UN's world-wide experience reveals that empowered women not only take charge of their own lives, but also contribute to the health and productivity of their families and communities, thus improving prospects for next generations.

The gender profile in Uzbekistan is influenced by many factors, but three dominate: the Soviet inheritance, the social and economic difficulties of the transition period, and the traditional Uzbek values and cultural beliefs.

Uzbekistan inherited from the Soviet times aspects of nominal gender equality that were more advanced than in many other countries. Women and men had equal access to education, health care, and employment. Literacy rates were—and still are—high, and social protection benefits were provided equally to men and women. Women's representation in top political and economic positions was lower compared to that of men, but there their presence was real. However, the predominant share of unpaid work, mainly home and child care responsibilities was taken on by women. The fact that women had to combine employment with child care responsibility led in practice to their concentration in the lower-pay and lower-status sectors and jobs.

Although Uzbekistan avoided some of the more drastic collapses in social and economic indicators experienced by other countries in transition, strains on the budget for health and education have affected men and women's access to basic social services and the quality of these services. Employment is no longer guaranteed for men and women; most public kindergartens have disappeared, adding to the traditional time burden of women; and equality in access to productive work and to assets is less prevalent. Despite Government efforts to protect the vulnerable sections of the population, new forms of vulnerability have emerged for men and women.

Uzbekistan has retained throughout the Soviet and transition periods its own strong cultural traditions. These place a high value on community and the family, as well as the primary role of a woman as a mother, and have in some ways been reinforced in the transition period.



UNDP and UNFPA have been supporting gender equality and women's empowerment in Uzbekistan through various development projects. Working with mass media also proved beneficial, given their role in raising awareness on gender issues and eliminating stereotypes about the roles of women and men in society.

The campaign launched under the slogan, "Woman. Born to be Happy" is intended to further promote gender equality principles in all spheres of life. It targets various population groups through a series of TV and radio PSAs,

Woman. Born to be happy

posters and leaflets on such topics as equal access to education and profession, participation in decision-making, shared parenting and family relations, human trafficking and abuse prevention, combating discrimination and other critical issues. The campaign organizers also sought to create an inspiring image of a modern woman of Uzbekistan and an Uzbek family of the 21st century.

The campaign focuses on women empowerment and reinforces the idea that women can and should take an equal part in decision-making and public life, and walk hand in hand with men in achieving common goals and aspirations. In this regard, Ms. Aziza Umarova, Head of UNDP Good Governance Unit says: "Our campaign will help women realize they have a great potential within. Unfortunately, many women of Uzbekistan underestimate their abilities. It is traditionally considered that daughters are raised to get married and take care of families, although women can be as equally good professionals as men working in any sphere. Thus, one of our goals is to increase women's self-esteem and provide them with tools to make free choices with regard to all matters in life".

Most PSAs are based on real life stories and feature real women, adding credibility to the campaign. For example, Nargiz Mirzaahmedova, Chairperson of Tashkent City Branch of the Business Women Association, served as a role model of the contemporary Uzbek woman. "Thanks to this campaign each woman will be able to learn more about her opportunities. I believe that a modern woman should be financially independent, free to choose her views and beliefs, love her family and receive support from a loving and caring husband. She should believe in her abilities, and all her wishes will come true," she said.

A number of renowned public figures, including the famous singer and songwriter Sevara Nazarkhan, supported the campaign and helped get its messages across to a wide range of publics. It was on this occasion that Ms. Nazarkhan composed the song entitled "O'zbek Ayoli" (the Uzbek Woman), using lyrics of Mukhammad Yusuf, the late popular poet of Uzbekistan.

In the coming months the PSAs will be aired on a number of TV and radio stations, and thousands of posters and leaflets will be disseminated throughout the country so as to reach out as many audiences as possible with vital social messages on gender equality.

Source: ADB Country Gender Assessment 2005



Together We Can

Community Contribution to Tuberculosis Prevention and Care



There is a long history of documented linkages between tuberculosis (TB) and low living standards. Reducing TB in a community is an essential measure to improve the socio-economic situation and livelihoods. However, most interventions have so far focused only on the health aspect of the problem rather than a combination of socio-economic and health approaches involving the communities themselves.



To further address this pressing concern and to strengthen the community involvement in their socio economic development, UNV in Uzbekistan jointly with UNDP and WHO have launched a new project. It will support the communities to report cases of early symptoms of TB, disseminate information on TB, conduct advocacy activities, e.g. against discrimination towards TB patients, and undertake small-scale project initiatives to address living standards. All this will be achieved through mobilizing local volunteers at district and village levels in five districts in Karakalpakstan.



The TB project action plan will be developed in coordination with national and local stakeholders and will include baseline and target setting, addressing stigma and gender equity and setting up community-based TB care systems. As a result of the TB programme, more than 3,000 local volunteers will be trained to support their communities in addressing TB. It is also planned to rehabilitate primary healthcare and basic service infrastructures with support of local volunteers and donors.

The project will work with existing indigenous organizations, such as the Mahalla Committees. Thus the communities will work together to identify why TB is a problem and come up with their own solutions. Through community outreach activities the project will contribute to achieve trust in the communities and ensure a better understanding among the people about the importance of preventive measures as well as treatment of TB. There is a growing interest to support the project nationwide as it fits-in well with an emerging national vision of working with local community-based organizations (Mahalla) through volunteers.

This will be a unique project in Uzbekistan and the experience and lessons learned will be important for all those working in community development for poverty reduction and innovative systems of TB management and care in the country. In this way, TB prevention and care serves as an entry point, with the potential to expand the community mobilization approach to tackle other development issues. Because of its volunteer focus and community involvement, the project will offer a good platform for UN agencies and other interested donors to gather efforts and bring several advocacy activities at the community level, such as good nutrition, reproductive health, environmental education, and prevention of HIV/AIDS. It provides a forum for donors' coordination and exchange with UN agencies and has a potential for joint UN programming.



WHO organizes
Near Miss Case
Review Workshops for
regional health workers

MAKING MOTHERHOOD SAFER

This workshop was organized at a request of the Ministry of Health and supported by the Asian Development Bank. It was designed for specialists from referral centres in maternal healthcare in four regions of Uzbekistan: Tashkent, Namangan, Khorezm and Djizzah. Each region was represented by a multidisciplinary team, including oblast chief obstetrician-gynecologist, heads of maternities, leading obstetricians, anesthesiologists and midwives.

The workshop served as a follow-up to a national seminar on Near Miss Case Review (NMCR) and Confidential Enquiry into Maternal Deaths (CEMD) that took place in Tashkent last May.

Near Miss Case Review and Confidential Enquiry into Maternal Deaths are tools of the Beyond the Numbers approach, which was developed by

leading WHO international experts as a practical guide for reviewing cases of maternal death or morbidity and identifying proper counter-strategies. This approach stresses that it is not enough to know the rates to find the right solutions and effective interventions for making pregnancy safer. It is also essential to understand which factors led to those accidents.

All participants came with collected data and interviews, which were used at the workshop for 'mock audits' to help them learn this new assessment methodology. They also took an active part in developing standards of management of severe complications, guidelines for NMCR and forms for documentation.

During the workshop, the Ministry of Health selected four new facilities where Near Miss Case Review should be implemented: Tashkent

City Perinatal Centre, Namangan branch of obstetrician-gynecologist Institute, Khorezm Perinatal Centre and Djizzah branch of obstetrician-gynecologist Institute. The specialists involved in these reviews will use standards of management, guidelines for near miss case audits and forms for documentations elaborated at the workshop. Besides, they will also make use of new and more appropriate definitions of "near miss cases" in accordance with the number of deliveries and frequency of severe obstetrical complications taking place at these healthcare places.

Members of new Near Miss Case Review Committees were proposed to assist other audit sessions in pilot facilities and thus to gain more practical experience. For the same reason, a number of facilitators from the pilot institutions were nominated.

IMPROVING FEEDING PRACTICES OF INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN



Development of an integrated strategy on healthy and safe nutrition, with a particular focus on improving feeding practices of infants and young children, is one of the priority areas of WHO's work worldwide and in Uzbekistan.

Last year's mission from WHO HQ revealed the need to address the issue of complementary feeding in the country. In a response, the WHO Country Office developed a project on complementary feeding, which was supported by the Ministry of Health and other partners, such as UNICEF, UNDP and USAID funded ZdravPlus-2 Project.

The main objective of the project is to assess the current feeding practices in Uzbekistan, the availability and affordability of complementary foods, and develop recommendations on sound feeding of infants and children.



Within the project, a survey was conducted in Samarkand, Bukhara and Ferghana regions to evaluate the types and quality of the food given to children aged from 6 to 24 months, and to test the level of knowledge and skills of health-care workers about complementary feeding. The results of this study will be presented and discussed at a national meeting to be organized in Tashkent this month. The workshop will also focus on developing a set of recommendations on complementary feeding and devising joint activities to implement them across the country.



Regional HIV/AIDS Project Under Review



In the framework of the OPEC-funded, 4-year Regional Project *Effective HIV prevention and care for vulnerable populations in Central Asia and Azerbaijan (2006-2009)*, the UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia initiated and conducted a mid-term review meeting that took place in Tashkent, Uzbekistan recently.

This event was designed with the purpose of discussing the main outcomes of the mid-term project evaluation conducted by an independent evaluator and identifying ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its implementation by the end of the project term.

More than 60 participants from the six participating countries (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) represented by the key project partners from the government agencies such as Ministries of Health, Interior and Penitentiary system, representatives

of UN sister agencies, Embassies of the OPEC-member countries in Uzbekistan, international and bilateral organizations, as well as UNODC/ROCA project staff attended the meeting.

Ms. Matluba Alimova from the Ministry of Health of Uzbekistan and Mr. James Callahan, the Regional Representative of UNODC/ROCA opened the meeting with greetings and wishes for fruitful discussions. In his speech, Mr. Callahan emphasized the importance of the preceding two years of the project implementation in the region that proved to be challenging and rewarding at the same time. He said that the project was a catalyst in promoting the human rights of vulnerable populations by assisting countries in updating their legislative and normative frameworks to remove barriers to introducing and scaling up effective and comprehensive HIV interventions specifically tailored to suit the needs and fulfill the rights of drug users and prisoners.

The national counterparts appointed by each country presented the key results of project implementation during 2006-2008 by sharing the main achievements and the lessons learned. Ms. Nina Kerimi, the Regional Project Coordinator, made a brief presentation on the major results

of the mid-term project evaluation conducted in December 2008. The main conclusions extracted from the presentation were the following:

- Design of the project was context appropriate for Central Asia and Azerbaijan;
- Project progress is on schedule having implemented 50% of planned outputs spending about 52% of the budget;
- The project can make a significant and long lasting impact by creating conducive legal/regulatory environments for universal access to HIV related services;
- Project “products” suggest an updating of vast regulatory field (laws, bylaws, ministerial orders, instructions, occupational standards, curricula) is underway;
- The project has been a catalyst in initiating national inter-sectoral synergies.

In addition, Ms. Kerimi highlighted the main recommendations to further improve effectiveness in project implementation and ensure sustainability beyond the project term. These recommendations include prioritizing activities by concentrating on those that feasible and likely to make the greatest impact (*i.e.*, introducing and scaling-up opioid substitution treatment); proceeding with institutionalization of proposed changes in legislation/regulation; improving the communication strategy in order to make the “products” widely known and strengthen advocacy for change; and extending the project cycle so that the “products” start working for the end users (service providers and clients). The majority of participants actively contributed to the discussions of the evaluation findings and interjected their own recommendations and suggestions on further implementation of the project.

The second part of the meeting was devoted to discussion of the main directions of project implementation and presentation of the integrated and country annual workplans for 2009. Six country working groups reviewed their own plans for 2009 and provided input on the inclusion of country-specific activities they deemed necessary in their countries. The mid-term review meeting concluded with consensus on the main activities of the project plans for 2009. It is expected that the countries will follow-up on the project objectives taking into account the recommendations agreed upon at the meeting.

TRAINING OF TRAINERS



A train-the-trainer workshop for law enforcement trainers and candidate trainers in the field of combating drug trafficking and organized crime was held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on 23-27 March.

18 candidates from the Central Asian countries were selected from the stock of current trainers, program planners and capacity builders with relevant experience in the field of law enforcement. Three facilitators from the Turkish Academy on Drugs and Organized Crime (TADOC) were invited to facilitate the workshop aimed to equip participants with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to design and deliver effective, efficient and engaging learning sessions.

The performance of participants was observed and evaluated by facilitators. All participants were awarded certificates.



High level World Bank officials visit Uzbekistan

Mr. Shigeo Katsu, World Bank Vice-President for Europe and Central Asia and Ms. Annette Dixon, former Country Director for Central Asia visited Tashkent on February 26 and 27, 2009 to introduce to the Uzbek authorities Mr. Motoo Konishi, the World Bank's newly appointed Regional Director for Central Asia. The programme of the visit also included meetings with Government officials and other counterparts to discuss progress in the Bank's engagement since the approval of the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) in June 2007 and recommendations for the future, as well as the course of implementation of ongoing investment projects.

At the meeting with the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan bilateral relations between the World Bank and Uzbekistan were discussed. President Karimov noted that the Bank and Uzbekistan established close partnership in economic reforms and fruitful cooperation in improving people's livelihoods. World Bank commitments to Uzbekistan totaled to US\$ 722 million. At the meeting the issues of regional cooperation also were discussed.

The high level World Bank team met with Rustam Azimov, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, and Fayzulla Mulladjanov, Chairman of the Central Bank of Uzbekistan, World Bank Governor. Two parties discussed ongoing projects and programmes that the Bank was currently supporting in Uzbekistan, water and energy aspect of regional cooperation in Central Asia. They also touched upon the issues of global financial crisis, its impact on Uzbek economy and preventive measures envisaged in the Government's anti-crisis programme. The World Bank management team also met with a number of development partners from the UN, ADB, EBRD, SECO, JICA, GTZ, KFW, USAID, KDB, British Council, Europa House, US and French Embassies. The outcomes of the meetings with the Government and other partners were then discussed at a World Bank staff meeting.

On February 27 Mr. Motoo Konishi, the World Bank's newly appointed Regional Director for Central Asia, and Mr. Loup Brefort, Country Manager for Uzbekistan, officially launched the



second phase of the US \$67.96 million Uzbekistan Rural Enterprise Support Project. They greeted 150 participants of the launch seminar brought together to the conference hall of the Tashkent Regional Governor's office.

The visit ended with the dinner hosted by the Uzbek Government.



World Crisis: Expect a Slow Recovery

"World Crisis: Expect a Slow Recovery" - this is how Loup Brefort, Country Manager for Uzbekistan, entitled his lecture delivered on February 23 in the Banking and Finance Academy of Uzbek capital city. Over 100 students and professors of the Academy gathered in a conference hall for his lecture on the global financial crisis. The lecturer explained the causes and evolution of the crisis at the global level, its impact on the world economy and implications for developing countries.

Analyzing situation in Europe and Central Asia, the World Bank Country Manager indicated the linkage of countries of the region to global markets. He pointed out at Capital market, Product market and Labor market as the main three channels through which European and Central Asian countries, including Uzbekistan, are connected to the global market. Despite the fact that Uzbekistan had rather strong fiscal and external pre-crisis position, a world crisis of this magnitude could not completely spare Uzbekistan.

During a question-and-answer session, Loup Brefort was asked about the recommendation the World Bank could give to the Uzbek government. He commended the government for a timely developed anti-crisis programme and assured that the investment programme of the World Bank would serve as one of the ways to mitigate the effect of the crisis on businesses and the population.



Matthew Kahane, UNFPA Representative a.i. in Uzbekistan, shares his insights about UNFPA's work in Central Asia and across the globe



Mr. Kahane, just a few days ago you have spoken at the Launch of the Joint National Media Campaign on Gender developed by UNDP, Women's Committee and UNFPA. What are the main specific points and messages UNFPA would like to disseminate through this Campaign and who the major target audiences are in your view?

That women and men are equal in rights and duties, and that they, their families and children – and thus society as a whole – benefit and prosper when this equality is put into practice in everyday life. Mutual respect between generations within the family; husband and wife sharing household tasks such as shopping, cleaning, cooking, and looking after children; understanding each other's point of view and resolving differences by discussion so that neither feels hurt; and recognizing that, with the single difference of men's inability to gestate, bear and nurse a child, both women and men are equally capable of taking on any studies, any work, any responsibility in social, economic and political life. I think that the major target audience must be men, who still tend to think they are superior – but really all people, women and men, rural and urban, young and old.



BALANCING STABILITY AND CHANGE

You have a wealth of international experience working with the UN in different parts of the world. Could you tell us about the major highlights of your past endeavors?

I have had the opportunity to work in a number of countries undergoing great political and social changes – for example Iran, Viet Nam, Sri Lanka, Belarus, Poland, Tajikistan and Nepal. Tunisia and Western Samoa (in the eastern Pacific) were also undergoing social changes, fortunately not accompanied by political upheavals. I have found myself working on technical issues of economic development – how to grow trees which will yield more apricots, almonds, or pistachios, how to farm fish or shrimps without ruining the surrounding water, how to control air traffic to allow more planes to fly in the same areas of sky in safety. Sometimes the countries in which I worked were faced with hurricanes or earthquakes, doing huge damage in a few seconds or hours and setting ordinary families back years – and we had to switch to providing immediate humanitarian aid, and to thinking how the country could limit the damage when the next natural disaster struck. And sometimes it was clear that, to the people of the country, what mattered most was a major change in the way they governed themselves, when other issues simply became secondary.

In all these circumstances, it is most important for almost all people that the basic everyday services continue to function: markets, water and electricity supplies, transport, ordinary safety, law and order, schools, health services, religious institutions, so they can carry on with their lives. And yet, there is a natural human tendency for the younger generation to want to change the ways things are done (and change is indeed inevitable – we see it all round us), and for the older generation to think that the established ways are just fine (and humankind has built up a certain wisdom and experience which it is terribly wasteful and destructive to throw away). Each country I have worked in has adopted its own way of balancing stability and change, established

ways with opportunities, the wisdom of parents with the desire of children to make their own way – and my impression is that openness to change and new opportunities, and trusting and empowering the younger members of society to try out new ways, has been most beneficial.

Several of these countries experienced rapid population growth (think of Iran, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, and Viet Nam) and introduced national population and family planning policies and programmes to ensure that each pregnancy was the deliberate choice of the mother and father, that each child was born safely and with good perspectives of health, education, and employment. The first such programme I was familiar with was in Tunisia, a largely Sunni Islamic country, in the early 1970s, which made great efforts to promote equality between girls and boys, between women and men, and to spread widely knowledge of family planning and contraception – I believe with great success. In fact, I helped set up UNFPA Field Office in Tunisia in 1972.

Over a period of many years, successive governments of Nepal have pursued programmes to empower the poorest, the most neglected and discriminated groups throughout the country, with the long-term support of donors and UN agencies. I have a particularly vivid memory of visiting a village in the Terai, in my capacity as UN Resident Coordinator, only a few kilometers from the main east-west highway, for what is known in Nepal as an “interaction programme” with the community organization which had been set up in the village. I was met and garlanded by the leading members of the community, welcoming speeches were made, the programme was announced, and the leaders started explaining the religious, linguistic and social groups in the community, the mutual savings groups, the funds mobilized, the public works carried out, etc. But fairly soon a number of women who had been seated several rows back got on their feet to interrupt the official proceedings and say that they wanted to tell me what was really



important: when the programme started, their husbands would not have let them out of the house to attend such a meeting. But, through their mutual self-help activities, they had built up skills and self-confidence, and now they managed their own time and activities – and knew that their daughters did not have to marry at 12 or 13 to an older man chosen by their father, leave school, have their first baby at 14, and one every year thereafter, as they themselves had. I have been fortunate to have experienced many such highlights – which I think can apply to the work of UNFPA in this region.

You are very well acquainted with the scope of issues faced by the Central Asian region. How would you prioritize them through the lens of UNFPA mandate?

One thinks generally of the Central Asian countries being faced with major issues of management of water resources, especially trans-boundary water resources, energy, agricultural production, a change from cotton monoculture to private farmers producing food crops needed by their own people – and generally adapting to the opportunities and challenges which come with breaking free from the confines of the Soviet political, social, and economic system, and joining the global society and economy. This is not something new for Uzbekistan – when Samarkand and Bukhara were among the greatest cities of Eurasia, they were at the centre of a global trading system which we know as the “Silk Road” – and along which silk was only one of many different goods traded along sections of the route, in both directions.

All the constitutions of the Central Asian states and Kazakhstan put the well-being of individual human beings at the centre of their concerns. And therefore we in UNFPA say that a high priority is a full and detailed knowledge and analysis of population numbers, trends and movements. This means not only summary figures such as how many people are in there in each country, and then within each administrative region or geographic area. But – how do today's figures compare with those of the last census, or the last intercensal survey? Have men's and women's ages at first marriage and birth of first child changed? How are total fertility rates changing? Are improvements in roads, in public transport by bus, train and air, in the flow of consumer goods to smaller and remoter towns and villages, in the postal service, in internet access and mobile telephone networks, bringing the quality of life in rural and remote areas up to the level of the bigger cities and national capitals? This means

regular censuses, and demographic and social research, with the results rapidly analyzed and brought into the discussion of basic social and economic development. How many homes will be needed? How many teachers of what subjects? How many schoolrooms and toilets? How many primary health posts? How much drinking water? What public transport? Where? When – in 5 years, in 10 years, in 20 years?

People all over the world have always moved from home in search of work and opportunities, for instance to the growing cities during the Industrial Revolution in Europe, to new agricultural and mining areas in North and South America, in Australia, in Southern Africa, in the USSR. In the 1980s and 1990s we saw great changes in employment in Western and Central Europe, as traditional heavy industries ceased to be productive or competitive – and in many countries, including my own home country, the United Kingdom, there were difficulties in ensuring that people could and would move from their traditional home areas to other parts of the country where new jobs were being created.

In Central Asia we have been seeing very large migration flows – within countries, within the countries of the region, and from the region to labour markets in Russia and Eastern Europe. When I first came to Central Asia, these flows were not usually seen by Governments as economically important. This has changed, I believe – I see that remittances now account for 45% of Tajikistan's GNP, for instance. What is most important, in my view, is that these remittances tend to go to families in the poorest and most remote parts of the countries, enabling them to maintain a minimum standard of living, educating children, affording medical care, having a more nutritious and balanced diet – according to the priorities of the family itself.

I believe that countries whose citizens travel abroad to work should support such flows, by providing public information about opportunities, dangers, and conditions in labour markets abroad; by regulating employment agencies to reduce their exploitation of migrant workers; by simplifying the issuance of passports; by reaching bilateral agreements with recipient countries on conditions of employment; by simplifying the flow of remittances through the banking system and in the hands of returning workers; by substantially expanding their consular presence in the main cities and towns of recipient countries, to support and defend their citizens; and by emphasizing the national importance of migrant workers and reducing the hassles to which they are often subject.

A healthy and well-educated population starts with safe motherhood, a safe birth and early childhood. This requires, first and foremost, that women be themselves healthy, well-educated, and respected by the men in their families and society. And, secondly, that they have access, as and when they require, to what we call “reproductive health” – family planning, contraception, and medical care during pregnancy, at delivery and afterwards. Throughout Central Asia, there needs to be an emphasis, especially at the primary health care level in the remoter and poorer areas, on properly-trained, experienced and supportive doctors, midwives, and nurses; on clean and hygienic health centres, with clean water, clean sanitation and sewers, and reliable electricity; and on a reliable supply of contraceptives. This is, of course, an area in which UNFPA has traditionally supported national efforts, which we will continue to do.

On a fairly different note, today, we hear a lot about the concept of “sustainable development”. In your view, why is this concept important when it comes to reproductive health, gender equality, HIV prevention and other health and population issues addressed by your agency's mandate?

While there are official definitions of “sustainable development”, which I am sure our readers know, I have always thought of it in common-sense terms of managing the earth's resources to pass on to the next generations – our children and their children – at least as many resources as we inherited from our parents' generation. I am thinking particularly of the natural environment – the water we drink, the soil in which we grow crops, the forest and grasslands which influence our climate and keep erosion in check, the seas we sail over and which provide so much of our food, and the magnificence of mountains and wildlife which inspire us and, I hope, remind us to be humble. For UNFPA, I think that means ensuring that people can enjoy a healthy life and bring into the world, if and when they want, children whom they have the emotional and material means to bring up in health, happiness and dignity.





UN Cares Programme in Uzbekistan

HIV is having a serious impact not just on our work, but also in our workplace. Since 1991, the UN has had a system-wide HIV workplace policy to equip all UN staff and their dependents with necessary knowledge and skills and ensure their access to prevention education, voluntary counseling and testing services, and HIV treatment. All efforts towards this have now fallen under the banner of UN Cares – an inter-agency programme designed to reduce the impact of HIV on the UN workplace. The Secretary-General has made UN Cares a priority, stating his determination “to make the UN a model of how the workplace should respond to HIV.” The ten minimum standards spelt out in UN Cares, range from having access to and knowledge of information about UN policies and benefits, to ensuring there is a managerial commitment to implementing the HIV workplace policy.

The UN staff in Uzbekistan: Step by step

As a step towards the implementation of UN Cares in Uzbekistan a survey was carried out in the summer of 2008 among the UN system staff in Uzbekistan in order to assess their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours related to HIV. Around 50% of the UN staff completed and returned the questionnaires.

Findings from the survey were mixed. Whilst a great number of respondents were familiar with the overall risks of HIV, major gaps in knowledge were identified, predominantly surrounding mother-to-child HIV transmission. A number of respondents stated they protected themselves and others by getting tested and regularly using condoms. At the same time, only 60% of the total respondents reported having been tested for HIV, and at least 11% of those stated they had not received the test results. Besides, the reported numbers of condom use with casual partners was relatively low, and a great disparity emerged between genders: only 53.7% of men and as low as 13% of women affirmed using condoms with casual partners. Finally, a worrying total of 16% of respondents claimed they were not sure whether people living with HIV should restrict their roles in society, or deserve to suffer due to immorality.

Making HIV personally relevant to UN personnel

On February 16th 2009, a presentation introducing UNAIDS to UN staff was given as part of a UN Resident Coordinator initiative to improve and increase interagency awareness. The outstanding turn out of participants to the presentation conveyed people's interest in knowing more about HIV in this country context, as well as on a personal level. The presentation talked about what role UN staff could and should play in implementing and supporting HIV responses. Moreover, the presentation challenged participants' conceptions of what HIV is and of how it is transmitted. Participants took part in a condom selection exercise that fuelled constructive debate about the safety and use of condoms. It was an ideal platform to preliminarily address gaps of knowledge identified through the survey and launch the Learning Sessions for UN staff on HIV to be facilitated by UNFPA and UNAIDS.



Learning Sessions to UN staff on HIV/AIDS:

The introductory Learning Sessions started in mid-March 2009. They will not only build basic knowledge of UN staff on HIV – but will also tackle issues of stigma and discrimination and raise awareness about voluntary counseling and testing, treatment, HIV in the UN workplace, the availability of pep kits and the UN health insurance plan.

So that all UN staff is encouraged to take part in these sessions, half of these will be delivered in Russian and the rest, in English.

For more information on UN Cares please visit the website: www.uncares.org.

For more information on the Learning Sessions, please contact Feruza Fazilova (fazilova@unfpa.org) or Charlene Gordon (cme.gordon@gmail.com).





The State of the World's Children 2009: Maternal and Newborn Health

Published by UNICEF

The State of the World's Children 2009 examines critical issues in maternal and newborn health, underscoring the need to establish a comprehensive continuum of care for mothers, newborns and children. The report outlines the latest paradigms in health programming and policies for mothers and newborns, and explores policies, programmes and partnerships aimed at improving maternal and neonatal health. Africa and Asia are a key focus for this report, which complements the previous year's issue on child survival.



Who Answers to Women? Gender & Accountability - Progress of the World's Women 2008/2009

Published by UNIFEM

The report focuses on five key areas where the need to strengthen accountability to women is urgent: politics and governance, access to public services, economic opportunities, justice, and finally the distribution of international assistance for development and security.



Review of information and communication technologies development in Uzbekistan for 2006-2008

Published by: UNDP, January 2009

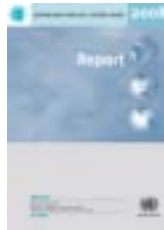
Review of information and communication technologies development in Uzbekistan for 2006-2008 is published within the framework of the UNDP ICT Policy project. The Review provides assessment of various factors impacting ICT development, as well as identifies development trends in the ICT area.



Franchising Guide for Entrepreneurs of Uzbekistan

Published by: UNDP/Chamber of Commerce and Industry, December 2008

The main idea of developing the guide is to introduce local businesses with the concept of franchising in conditions of Uzbekistan, to provide specific recommendations for existing and potential participants of franchising relationships. The content includes issues like organizing business in Uzbekistan by applying franchising scheme, legal and financial aspects of franchising, special agreement terms of franchising package, ensuring the quality of the product/services and etc.



Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2008

Published by INCB

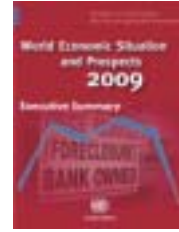
The INCB reviews the achievements and presents challenges, including the threats posed by the unregulated sale of internationally controlled substances over the Internet.



Labor Migration in Uzbekistan: Social, Legal and Gender Aspects

Published by: UNDP/Gender Programme of Swiss Embassy, December 2008

The book includes articles and research works on the issues related to external and internal labour migration in Uzbekistan, accomplished by leading specialists in this field. The majority of articles summarize the results of sociological surveys held in Uzbekistan in the period from 2006 to 2007 dealing with external and internal migration as well as recommendations on modifying regulations of migration processes and ensuring the rights of labour migrants.



World Economic Situation and Prospects 2009

Published by UN DESA

World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) is a joint product of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNCTAD and the five UN regional commissions.

The 2009 report analyzes in detail the evolution of the global financial crisis during 2008 and the more fundamental factors that led to its build-up. It further assesses the impact on global economic activity, especially in developing countries. The report also reviews the policy actions so far taken worldwide in response to the global financial crisis and recommends more forceful fiscal policy stimuli need to be taken in an internationally concerted manner in order to prevent the world economy from falling into a much deeper and more prolonged recession.



Methodical guide: «How to establish regional and sector-specific associations of exporters in Uzbekistan»

Published by: UNDP/ Chamber of Commerce and Industry, January 2009

According to experts, one of the effective instruments of promoting small and private sector goods and services in foreign markets and expanding business contacts with the foreign partners is considered to be creation of the regional and sector-specific associations of exporters. This manual is developed to provide exporters with necessary and relevant information related to establishing and effective organization of associations of exporters in Uzbekistan. Authors expect that this guide will become an instrumental in the establishment of the associations of exporters in Uzbekistan and enhancing export potential of domestic economy.

New Generation of Volunteers for Millennium Development Goals

On February 26th volunteers of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Youth Network with great commitments they have undertaken for themselves in supporting the MDGs in Uzbekistan through their own led initiatives, organized an interactive event on MDGs at school № 31 in Tashkent.

The main objectives of the event were:

- To raise-awareness of schoolchildren on the MDGs;
- To establish and facilitate open dialogue using peer to peer education methods and other interactive tools;
- To bring up a new generation of youth who are open to disseminate knowledge on MDGs among their peers and in the future make their own contributions to MDG' progress;

As soon as the volunteers made a first step to the school, they have been pleasantly surprised by the level of preparation of schoolchildren and their high interest in different cultures and international relations. In spite of the fact that the majority of participating schoolchildren were from grades 4 and 5, they have tried to show customs, traditions and national cuisine of different countries of the world based on their own knowledge and research made. Moreover, all country presentations along with performances and dances have been prepared in English.



Schoolchildren tried to present South Korea, Great Britain, Russia, the United States of America and certainly, Uzbekistan, in all magnificence of their national features. The geographical facts, dances, poems, national ceremonies, songs – all these has been presented through children's eyes and minds.

After that concert the MDG network volunteers full of admiration and thrilled by children's imagination, showed their knowledge and talents through a special interactive game. The game is well-known and played widely among all generations-tic-tac-toe. The volunteers have creatively substituted the field for tic-tac-toe to the nationalized MDG logos for each goal. More than 40 schoolchildren were divided into two teams and took turns in "achieving the MDGs". After they were introduced into origins and description of each MDG through child-friendly presentations highlighting significant socio-economic development trends in the world, each team had to go through some kind of competition. As part of the competitions the volunteers have prepared all sorts of team building activities for each of the eight goals - drawing posters, formulating mottos, acting or asking tricky questions. All these activities were considered by a team of judges consisting of school teachers and volunteers. The main principles of selecting the best team were familiarity with the MDGs and the UN, friendly team work and participation of every team member, creativity and imagination in contributing to the ambitious MDGs. And although the teams have shared a victory, the main idea of uniting children in a noble goal of providing their own contributions was reached.

During this fun game it was comforting to observe the participation of younger generation in achieving the MDGs, starting with small gradual actions. In fact, this was the main purpose of the game - to provide information and look for possible roles children can play in achieving the goals through their daily lives.



"This game and interaction with volunteers inspired me and I'll surely try to organize environmental and other community service projects with my schoolmates," said Abduazim Kadirov, one of the participants of the event. Indeed the game has helped children to understand the development priorities with some fun, and role models of MDG volunteers will hopefully bring in new generations of followers striving to achieve the MDGs in Uzbekistan.



UN CALENDAR

2009



7 April	World Health Day
3 May	World Press Freedom Day
15 May	International Day of Families
21 May	World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development
22 May	International Day for Biological Diversity
31 May	World No-Tobacco Day

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