

# Factors of Social and Economic Development of the Chernobyl Affected Territories\*

## Executive summary

The report examines social and economic challenges for the development of the Chernobyl-affected territories in three most affected countries: Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.

Following a review of the economic losses incurred in the aftermath of the April 26, 1986 Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant catastrophe in each of the three most affected countries, the first three stages of mitigating its results are discussed, i.e. (i) the Emergency Response Stage, (ii) the Short-Term Recovery Stage and (iii) the Long-Term Recovery Stage. It is noted that what must have been the only way of delivering the necessary assistance, and of containment of a nuclear explosion in stage (i), and what in stage (ii), in 1991-2001, must have been the top priority in the affected territories – i.e. the mitigating of human consequences of the catastrophe and responding to the unfolding public health crisis became a serious impediment to social and economic recovery which became a source of social apathy and psychological and inter-personal traumas for many Chernobyl sufferers, Chernobyl re-settlers and their new neighbours.

The essence of stage (iii) was the recognition, by the respective governments, non government organizations, the UN agencies involved in combating the Chernobyl accident, and by the donor community at large, that radiation being no longer the greatest detriment to economic and social development in the area, the most important challenge became the overcoming of relative underdevelopment of the affected territories, continuous inadequacy of their economic and social infrastructure, of business opportunities and business culture, inadequate local government financing and often poor local government capacities. The essence of the new policy paradigm for Chernobyl reflected a the shift from humanitarian assistance, heavy reliance of the population on social benefits system, and from culture of assistance dependency, to the forward-looking approach, rethinking of economic and social rehabilitation programs and reorientation of health spending. The general principles underlying the new paradigm, with the implied policy recommendations, as well as the already achieved results are discussed in the Report (and documented in its Annex).

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Notwithstanding the achievements which paved the way to long-term social and economic development in all three countries under consideration, in its final part the Report discusses stage (iv) of overcoming the aftermath of the catastrophe, i.e. Laying Foundations to Social and Economic Development for Future Generations. Among the greatest challenges which the three most affected countries presently face in consolidating those foundations, the Report names:

- Regular reviewing the status of settlements recognised as Chernobyl-affected (i.e. of their zoning status) and lifting its limitations on economic activities and investments (where they continue to exist) in order to foster employment opportunities and economic development. Revision of the zoning system and, interlinked with it, the system of social protection and economic bans and limitations, is of critical importance for fostering future development.
- Securing consistency and integrity of regional development plans put forward at national, regional and local levels. Changing attitudes of the affected populations must imply their increasing participation in decision making processes and leaving ever greater room for their own initiatives and local development schemes that would bring together local governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders. This in turn requires increasing their financial potential and their public accountability.
- The risk that countermeasures applied in order to prevent possible transfer of radio nuclides from the soils into the food products can be reduced or altogether discontinued because of political instability, economic crises, or poverty of the respective land-owners.
- For all three countries reforestation and effective forest management at the territories where radiation remains high would improve economic activities on the radioactively polluted areas and – at the same time - mitigate the ensuing climate change. Moreover, for local communities the benefit of higher levels of biodiversity at the affected areas remains unused.
- Finally, the present success of the new Chernobyl policy paradigm being largely dependant on heavy financial involvement of the donor community at large and on far improved targeting of assistance projects focusing on development planning, capacity building and changing people life styles and attitudes. The great challenge that the donor community faces in this respect is its continued financial support, which becomes especially difficult in the face of mounting problems following the world financial and economic crisis which is still affecting many individual donor countries.

# 1. Introduction

On April 26 1986, the most tragic accident in the history of the nuclear industry occurred at unit 4 of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in the former Ukrainian Republic of the Soviet Union, near the present borders of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Major releases of radionuclide from the unit's reactor continued for ten days following the reactor's explosion. These included radioactive gases, condensed aerosols and a large amount of fuel particles. More than 200,000 square kilometres of Europe were contaminated with levels of  $^{137}\text{Cs}$  over  $40 \text{ kBq/m}^2$ , significantly above safety norms. Over 70 percent of this area was in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. The deposition varied, depending on local weather conditions. Most of the strontium and plutonium radioisotopes were deposited within 100 km of the destroyed reactor due to larger particle sizes. As of April 2011, in most of the settlements subjected to radioactive contamination as a result of Chernobyl accident, the air dose rate above solid surfaces has long returned to the background level predating the accident.<sup>1</sup> Thus, most of the affected areas are safe for living.

Following the accident, the government of the Soviet Union undertook far-reaching and costly emergency measures that successfully secured the reactor, evacuated hundreds of thousands of people, and developed radiation monitoring and protection system. Immediately after the accident some 116,000 people were evacuated from the area surrounding the nuclear reactor, including the city of Pripyat. Another 220,000 people were resettled in subsequent years. Moreover, many measures were undertaken to minimize radiation exposure, help resettled populations restart new lives in their new locations through the construction of new housing and infrastructure, and the provisioning of a wide range of benefits and privileges. In the agricultural sector, which was the worst-hit area of the economy and where large parts of land were removed from service, remediation measures have been developed to make farming safe.

However, the initial response to the Chernobyl catastrophe was not without its flaws and limitations. Prophylactic iodine was not administered in time nor on a sufficient scale, sheltering was barely used, no replacement of contaminated milk with "clean" milk, information to the public about the accident was delayed and restrictive, particularly immediately after the accident, which gave rise to mistrust surrounding the official statements on radiation that continues until present. Insufficient public participation in decision making and neglect of individual rights were other important deficiencies in the Soviet system approach to handling the catastrophe.

Moreover, many measures that aimed at minimizing radiation exposure contained the seeds of future problems, particularly with respect to prospects of social and economic development for the affected communities. In particular, commitments undertaken to help resettled people and provide them with social compensation and benefits to offset incurred losses were an

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<sup>1</sup> 'Conclusions and Recommendations' of the International Conference: Twenty Years after the Chernobyl Accident – Future Outlook', Kyiv, 24-26 April 2006.

important factor which gave rise to the development of both the Chernobyl stigma as well as the 'Chernobyl victim' and dependency culture. 'Resettlement, whether mandatory or voluntary, proved a traumatic experience, and those who remained in (or returned to) their homes have coped better psychologically than those who were moved to other areas. Especially with hindsight, the later waves of resettlement, particularly after 1991, often appear to have been unnecessary'.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibidem. In Belarus, for instance, many settlements of the Mahileu region were resettled in 1991-92, although some of those territories until present have the status of the "exclusion zone".

## 2. Economic losses of the Chernobyl nuclear accident

Chernobyl aftermath, including radiological contamination, has resulted in immediate plant and farm closures, forced or voluntary resettlements, and the initiation of radiological controls that restricted domestic sales and exports of local products from the area. All this has significantly undercut local and regional business opportunities in the Chernobyl-affected areas and severely reduced household incomes in rural communities where food production and food processing are a single source of income. Farm incomes fell, some categories of production were stopped, and entire enterprises were shut down. Moreover, development of gas supplies to replace local heating systems, provisioning of safe water supplies and other infrastructure in the affected territories incurred additional capital outlays. Coping with the impact of the accident necessitated therefore huge burden on national budgets, first of the Soviet Union, and since 1991 on national budgets of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine respectively.

Estimating direct losses due to the Chernobyl accident is rather complex and imprecise in each of the three countries and for all of them as a whole, as well as in type of incurred loss cross-sections. It is even more complex than one may think since the price systems used at the time of the accident, and going forward, the estimates did not always reflect opportunity costs or market prices. Nevertheless, inexact as those estimates are, they show the volume of direct or implied financial burden of the catastrophe.

Direct and indirect losses caused by the Chernobyl catastrophe in the territory of the Republic of Belarus, already incurred and those only expected by the end of 2015, are estimated at about USD 235 billion, of which missed profits and investment opportunities stand at USD 13.6 billion (5.8% of the total). Losses associated with the alienation of agricultural lands and other productive capacities - at USD 29.6 million (12.6%), and the remaining USD 191.8 billion (81.6%) represents actual cost of large-scale investments into industrial production and the expense of social protection measures.<sup>3</sup>

The government of Belarus spending related to Chernobyl amounted to 22.3 percent of the national budget in 1991, 10.9 percent in 1996, declining gradually to about 6 percent in 2002 and onwards.<sup>4</sup> According to the 'Government Program of the Republic of Belarus of Overcoming the Consequences of the Chernobyl NPP in the years 2011-2015 and until 2010' 6830,2 billion Belarus rubbles (i.e. USD 2.24 billion), of which for agriculture USD 0.2 billion will be spent in 2011-2010, and another USD 0.2 billion in 2016-2020.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See 'Reviving our Homeland', special edition for the 24-th anniversary of the Chernobyl catastrophe, Ministry for Emergency Situations in the Republic of Belarus, Minsk 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Estimates of the Institute of Economics of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Belarus see UNDP/ICRIN Database, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> See Government of Belarus Resolution No 1922 of 31 December 2010, pp. 11 and 27 respectively. For a more detailed account of actions of the Republic of Belarus aimed at mitigation of the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe and their results, see: 'Reviving our Homeland', special edition for the 24-th anniversary of the Chernobyl catastrophe, Ministry for Emergency Situations in the Republic of Belarus, Minsk 2010.

According to Ukrainian experts, by 2010 economic losses of Ukraine reached USD 201 billion. Between 1991 and 2005 Ukraine spent a total of US\$ 8 billion on Chernobyl-related benefits and other programs (including spending on the construction of a new “shelter” around the damaged reactor). In 1996 the Chernobyl related expenses (except for confinement) represented 15 percent of the Ukraine’s budget, to gradually decline to about 6 percent in 1999 and remain at approximately that level ever since. The lion’s share of expenditures (excluding the new confinement) went to social benefits for some 7 million Chernobyl victims and liquidators, while the share spent on capital investments has sharply declined. This spending has created an unsustainable fiscal burden (in 2001 the total value of Ukrainian GDP was USD 37 billion only). Ukraine’s State budget expenses on social protection and additional payments for the Chernobyl affected population in 2008 were USD 767 million, USD 827 million in 2009, USD 933 million in 2010, and USD 984 million are planned for 2011.<sup>6</sup> This represented 2.5 percent of total budget expenditures in 2008, 3.4 percent in 2009, 3.1 percent in 2010, and 3.3 percent planned for 2011.

In the Russian Federation the catastrophe made about 3 million people exposed to radioactive contamination. More than 56 thousand inhabitants of settlements located on the most contaminated areas in the Bryansk region were resettled or they left voluntarily. About 200 thousand Russians took part in the liquidation of the accident.<sup>7</sup> The Government Resolution (No 1582, of 18 December 1997) named over 4 thousand settlements with a status of radioactively contaminated. They were inhabited at the time by about 1,8 million people.

Between 1992 and 1998 total Chernobyl related expenditures of the Russian Federation budget represented USD 3.8 billion, of which USD 3 billion were benefits and compensation to victims of the Chernobyl accident and liquidators of its aftermath. Capital investments towards social and economic rehabilitation of the Chernobyl affected areas in the Russian Federation in 1992-2005 alone are estimated at USD 1,6 billion.<sup>8</sup> Investment outlays, however, represented only a small fraction of total Russian Federation budget spending, in 2006-2010 representing merely USD 24.1 million.<sup>9</sup>

Specific information on the Chernobyl related budget expenses are given in tables 1-3 below.

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<sup>6</sup> In terms of UAH (as reported in the annual Government Reports on budget implementation) they were: UAH 5947.1 million in 2008, UAH 6553.3 million in 2009, UAH 7445.2 million in 2010, and UAH 7777.1 million budgeted for 2011.

<sup>7</sup> See the website of Ministry of Emergencies of the Russian Federation, put up in relation to the commemoration of the XXV anniversary of the catastrophe, [http://www.mchs.gov.ru/news/detail.php?ID=16634&phrase\\_id=1891331](http://www.mchs.gov.ru/news/detail.php?ID=16634&phrase_id=1891331) (availability as of March 22 .2011).

<sup>8</sup> See *20 Years after the Chernobyl Catastrophe: the consequences in the Russian Federation and their overcoming. National report*, Moscow 2006, p. 62.

<sup>9</sup> According to the Government of the Russian Federation ‘Target Program of Overcoming the Consequences of Radioactive Accidents until 2010’, the Chernobyl related capital outlays between 2006 and 2010 amounted to Rb 670.7 million (see Tab. 1.1 of the Target Program, Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation No 125 of 29 January 2011, the implied average rate of exchange for the period being Rb 27.83 to 1 USD).

Table 1. Summary of direct and indirect losses following the Chernobyl accident (in USD billion)

<b>Belarus</b>	<b>Russian Federation</b>	<b>Ukraine</b>
Direct and indirect losses by end 2015 estimated at USD 235 billion Government expenditure in percent of total budget expenditure: 22.3 percent in 1991, 10.9 percent in 1996, About 6 percent since 2002	Between 1992 and 1998 total Chernobyl related expenditure reached USD 3.8 billion, of which USD 3 billion were benefits and compensation to victims of the Chernobyl accident and liquidators of its aftermath.	By 2010 economic losses reached USD 201 billion.  Government expenditure in percent of total budget expenditure):  15 percent in 1996 about 6 percent since 1999

Sources: As given in the main body of the Report.

Table 2. Chernobyl affected of population in Ukraine <sup>a</sup>

<b>Category</b>		<b>Numbers of the affected (in ths)</b>
Liquidators of the accident		260,8
Chernobyl-affected (general population)	Adult	1993,7
	Children	495,4
Wives / husbands of those who died due to Chernobyl accident		26,9
Participants of other nuclear accidents		5,8

<sup>a</sup> The total number of people who continue to live in the Chernobyl-affected territories of Ukraine is 2.2 million.

Source: Department of the social protection of population affected by the Chernobyl accident, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of Ukraine as of 1.01.2011

Table 3. Chernobyl related construction outlays, 1986 –2000 (in natural terms)

<b>Type of construction outlays</b>	<b>Belarus</b>	<b>Russia</b>	<b>Ukraine</b>	<b>Total</b>
Houses and flats	64 836	36 779	28 692	130307
Schools (number of places)	44 072	18 373	48 847	111 292
Kindergartens (number of places)	18 470	3 850	11 155	33 475
Outpatient health Centres (visits/day)	20 922	8 295	9 564	38 781
Hospitals (beds)	4 160	2 669	4 391	11 220

Source: *Chernobyl's Legacy: Health, Environmental and Socio-Economic Impacts, and Recommendations to the Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. The Chernobyl Forum: 2003–2005* [http://www-ns.iaea.org/meetings/rw-summaries/chernobyl\\_forum.htm#2](http://www-ns.iaea.org/meetings/rw-summaries/chernobyl_forum.htm#2)

### **3. Three first stages of handling the Chernobyl Catastrophe**

#### Emergency response

Immediately after the ChNPP catastrophe in April 1986, until 1991, the response was first priority was given to preventing new explosions, sealing off the area of greatest contamination, evacuating the town of Prypyat and the neighbouring settlements, to resettlement of the victims and providing medical and social protection for them, cleaning up of nuclear contamination, as well as protecting the population against the use of contaminated food, water and air, and against a spill over of such contamination. A thorough system of medical surveillance, screening analysis, and treatment was implemented, and a complex system of financial, medical, and social support for the approximately 5.5-6 million people, defined as its 'victims' (in the three countries taken together) was also established. Given the magnitude of the 1986 disaster and the long-term nature of radiation contamination, it should come as no surprise that all these operations required extraordinary measures and massive humanitarian aid, and that their delivery in its early stages was in many ways a 'top-down' quasi-military operation. However, what must have been the only way of delivery the necessary assistance, and of containment a radioactive release from the destroyed reactor in the first period after the catastrophe, became a serious impediment to social and economic recovery and a source of social apathy and psychological and interpersonal traumas for many Chernobyl sufferers, Chernobyl re-settlers and their new neighbours.

#### Short-term recovery

In the second stage of handling the aftermath of the explosion, in 1991-2001, the first priority was to mitigate social and environmental consequences of the ChNPP catastrophe, and to respond to unfolding economic and social crisis that caused many problems in the public healthcare system. Also, the present legal and institutional framework for handling the disaster was then established. At the beginning of 1990-ies the three most-affected countries: Belarus, Russian Federation and Ukraine have introduced legislation that defined different categories of contamination for affected territories. Scientific grounds for introducing the zoning depends on their contamination intake, i.e., (i) exclusion zone, (ii) zone of obligatory resettlement, (iii) zone of voluntary resettlement and (iv) zone of regular radiological control, were developed before the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, they are similar in all three countries. Initially over 150 thousands of square kilometres were classified as Chernobyl-affected territories.

However, the unrestrained recognition of all territories as equally Chernobyl-affected, due to inefficient information provisioning and conflicting experts' opinions gave rise to a welfare dependent culture, to social and economic underdevelopment finding reflection in a Chernobyl victim syndrome and a dependency mentality. The latter (as well as the

phenomenon of Chernobyl stigma), while rooted in the already mentioned shortcomings and mistakes of the early stages of handling the catastrophe, especially with regard to inadequate information on its consequences for the population and on the risks involved, gave an unprecedented rise to more than elsewhere unhealthy lifestyles and a feeling of decaying life. Those attitudes were strengthened by lack of employment opportunities, regional relative poverty, as well as pressure on resettlement even where and when unnecessary.<sup>10</sup>

### Long-term recovery

The third stage started in 2002, following the recognition, by national authorities in all three countries, the UN agencies involved in combating the Chernobyl accident, and by the donor community at large, that the most important challenge in the affected territories was the overcoming of their relative underdevelopment. Although financing of countermeasures to prevent possible transfer of radio nuclides from the soils into food products and thus increasing health risks in the affected territories should be continued, other non-radiation factors become core determinants of economic and social development in the area.<sup>11</sup> They were then, and still are: the continuous inadequacy of economic and social infrastructure, of business opportunities and business culture, inadequate local government financing and often poor local government capacities. At the same time it must be recognized that before the 1986 Chernobyl accident Polissia territories were mainly agricultural and nature-dependant,<sup>12</sup> relatively poor, undernourished, with underdeveloped public services, large migration, and low standards of living. Because of the strategic nature of nuclear power facilities, in the former Soviet Union, they were located as a rule 'in the middle of nowhere'. Were it not for the military troops which prior to the catastrophe were stationed there, Polissia's human development opportunities would be like those of many other economically heavily depressed regions.

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<sup>10</sup> For more on those attitudes, fears and traumas, see an analytical study 'On some consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe', Institute of Sociology of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, Kyiv 2011 (in Russian).

<sup>11</sup> According to the 2008 Report of the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 'at present time, and provided that a healthy lifestyle is maintained concurrently with compliance with sanitary-hygienic rules, and that guidelines for a safe lifestyle are followed, people living in territories damaged by the Chernobyl accident have no reasons to fear that the accident will have negative consequences for their health or the health of their children. The health conditions of people in Chernobyl-damaged territories are more influenced by living conditions and lifestyle than by the accident's consequences' (p. 86).

<sup>12</sup> Nature-dependent communities are especially vulnerable to environmental disasters as their income depends heavily on locally produced output. For example, in Rivne region in Ukraine, the annual income of population from forest products, irrespective of formal zone-related bans and restrictions, was still over 5 percent in 2010.

#### 4. Essence of the new policy paradigm for the Chernobyl affected territories

Transfer from humanitarian to developmental policy paradigm started with a report commissioned by UNDP and UNICEF, with support of UN-OCHA and WHO<sup>13</sup> following which in 2005 coordination responsibilities for the Chernobyl issues were transferred from the UN Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs to the UN Development Program. This shift in responsibility was in recognition that challenges facing the communities of Chernobyl required focusing on socio-economic development issues and the creation of new livelihood opportunities rather than on the provision of emergency humanitarian aid. In his statement to mark the XX Anniversary of the Chernobyl Catastrophe, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan declared that: 'the best way for the international community to pay homage to those who suffered from Chernobyl is to provide generous support to programs designed to help traumatized communities regain self-sufficiency, and affected families resume normal, healthy lives'.

Since 2006, the UN agencies have been engaged in the *Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions (2006-2016)*. Implementing the UN General Assembly resolution 62/9, the United Nations Development Program prepared a 'UN Action Plan until 2016' as a practical framework for cooperation on Chernobyl in that period. The program recognized that social and economic consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe continued to negatively influence the affected area, and that communities still required support. Young people have been leaving the region, investment was scarce and fear of radiation made local products difficult to market. Therefore, the UN continued support to Governments in the affected region needed to address not only the problems of overcoming barriers to economic and social rehabilitation of the affected territories, but also overcoming the Chernobyl stigma, assisting local communities in taking an active role in local development, and starting to take control of their lives.<sup>14</sup>

In implementing the 'UN Action Plan on Chernobyl until 2016', in each of the three most affected countries the UN country teams pursue a developmental approach to Chernobyl programs, activities of which fall into nine main categories: (a) reactor safety and nuclear waste management; (b) information provisioning, (c) policy advice; (d) health; (e) radiation mitigation and standard setting; (f) community-based development; (g) infrastructure; (h) emergency preparedness; and (i) environmental security.

The **new policy paradigm** for Chernobyl goes beyond minimizing the consequences of the catastrophe, and aims at social and economic recovery and sustainable human development of the affected population and territories. The new strategy stresses the need to put the Chernobyl affected communities and individuals on the road from welfare dependence to

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<sup>13</sup> See the UN Report: 'Human Consequences of the Chernobyl Nuclear Accident: A Strategy for Recovery', 2 February 2002.

<sup>14</sup> See the UN Secretary General Report to the General Assembly on 'Optimizing the international effort to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster', 1 September 2010.

social and economic growth through mobilizing and supporting the people of the affected communities to organize themselves into self-governing structures to take the lead in planning, managing, and implementing their own social, economic, and ecological rehabilitation and development. The new policy paradigm requires revision of economic and social policy priorities, and a medium-term concept for policy change on Chernobyl to reflect the move from humanitarian assistance, from heavy reliance of the population on social benefits system and from culture of assistance dependency, to the forward-looking approach, rethinking of economic and social rehabilitation programs and reorientation of health spending.

Following the conclusions of the 2006 Vienna Forum,<sup>15</sup> and of the respective national reports of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine: *20 Years after Chernobyl Accident: Future Outlook*,<sup>16</sup> five general principles underlie the new paradigm:

- Chernobyl accident-related needs should be addressed in a holistic framework, within which the needs of the individuals and communities concerned as well as those of the society as a whole, will all be embedded.
- Moving away from a dependency culture in the affected areas, to policy paradigm that would aim to help individuals and communities to take control of their own future.
- Efficient use of resources that would focus on the most affected people and communities and, at the same time, would account for limited budgetary resources at respective governments' disposal.
- Seeking changes that are sustainable and long term, and are based on a developmental approach.
- The international effort can only be effective if it supports, amplifies and acts as a lever for change in the far broader efforts made by local and national government agencies, and by voluntary sector in the three countries.

Those general principles gave rise to elaborating foundations of some specific policy recommendations that will be only briefly summarized here.<sup>17</sup>

First considering the importance of the Chernobyl stigma and Chernobyl victim syndromes, which developed in the affected territories, in particular due to insufficient information and lack of its credibility, it was recommended to establish **new ways and standards of information policy**.

High levels of mistrust towards state authorities and experts, caused by delays and misinformation in the first days immediately after the accident remains high. To overcome it, significant efforts are needed to initiate the community development process and to provide

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<sup>15</sup> See: <http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Booklets/Chernobyl/chernobyl.pdf>; see also UN General Assembly Resolution No 62/9 of 18 December 2007, on 'Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster'.

<sup>16</sup>See: [http://www.chernobyl.gov.by/index.php?option=com\\_remository&Itemid=&func=download&id=115&chk=d028cb75414f49322c6b406ddaf785f6](http://www.chernobyl.gov.by/index.php?option=com_remository&Itemid=&func=download&id=115&chk=d028cb75414f49322c6b406ddaf785f6), [http://www.ibrae.ac.ru/images/stories/ibrae/chernobyl/natrep\\_2006.pdf](http://www.ibrae.ac.ru/images/stories/ibrae/chernobyl/natrep_2006.pdf) and [http://www.mns.gov.ua/chornobyl/20\\_year/03/n\\_report\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.mns.gov.ua/chornobyl/20_year/03/n_report_ENG.pdf), respectively.

<sup>17</sup> See UNDP/ICRIN Database for media training, 2010 for their detailed discussion.

information through local trustworthy groups such as: medical health workers, local authorities, teachers and local media.

Moreover, although most of the earlier radiation affected territories are safe for living for several years now, people are still concerned about the negative affects of living in contaminated territory and eating local food while neglecting, at the same time, far more negative influences of harmful habits and life-style.

Finding new and innovative ways of informing the public, and thereby increasing their knowledge on how to live safely in environments that have suffered radioactive contamination as well as reassuring people who live in areas where radiation exposure no longer poses any real threat to health and well-being, was highlighted in this context, as was targeting of specific audiences and developing information packages that are needed by them. Moreover, new information policy should be comprehensive in promoting healthy lifestyles, and not simply focus on radiation hazards. Health education aiming at reducing internal and external radiation should be just one part of health promotion policies and interventions that aim at reducing the main causes of disease and rising mortality that affect Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.

The main vehicle towards supporting the new information policy was the establishment, on 24 April 2009, of the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network designed to help disseminate the findings of the Chernobyl Forum on the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident, including practical advice on healthy and productive lifestyles to the residents of Chernobyl-affected areas in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. This three-year initiative, with a budget of \$2.5 million, is supported by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, and is implemented by IAEA, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Dissemination of the latest research findings on the effects of the accident on health and the environment helps to dispel misconceptions and empower the communities to maximize social and economic recovery of the region.

Second, it was recommended that **attention is focused on most affected localities, and government programs on Chernobyl accordingly streamlined, refocused and differentiated according to radiation levels**, as problems are different between zones. Programs should shift towards supporting opportunity, promoting local initiatives, involving the people and spurring their confidence in shaping their destinies. To achieve these targets, the Chernobyl-related programs should align programs with new objectives; prevent establishment of perverse incentives, and match the mandates with available resources.

Third, the new approach to social and economic development of the affected territories recommended that it would contribute to the **elaboration of economic and social strategies, plans and initiatives that aim at making the Chernobyl-affected communities economically and socially viable in the medium and long-term**. The proposed measures included:

- Improvement of business climate, encouragement of investment and supporting private sector development. Appropriate national policies need to be supplemented by a proactive approach to stimulating economic development at regional and local levels.
- Support of initiatives promoting investment, domestic and international, at the regional level, promoting employment and creating positive image for the areas concerned. There is a need to establish and develop a network of intermediary organisations (such as local development agencies) that would be sensitive to local conditions and act as an interface with national and international development bodies and donors.
- Encouragement of the creation and growth of small and medium-size enterprises in the affected areas and in the adjacent towns and cities using the available business support techniques that have been tried and tested in other parts of the world. Particular efforts are needed to promote indigenous agricultural and food processing businesses by supporting growth of existing enterprises (whatever their ownership status), and through new ventures.
- Examples of good practice in the three countries and abroad, including community based solutions such as credit unions and producer and consumer cooperatives, should be adapted to special characteristics of the affected areas. Appropriate legal and organisational framework should be developed to ensure that such businesses get the support that they need.
- High priority to be given to supporting micro-scale business development at local level, including village level enterprise clusters, to boost incomes of the poorest households. Such initiatives should be sensitive to special problems affecting communities that largely depend on food production in areas suffering from radioactive contamination.
- Rebuilding of community structures to replace those that were lost in the process of evacuation and as a result of the break up of the Soviet Union should be given high priority. Initiatives specifically designed to strengthen social interactions and promote community and economic leadership in towns and villages are needed to underpin sustainable recovery.
- Specialized ecological tourism and maximising the contribution that these areas can make to the preservation of international biodiversity should be promoted. The territories could be used to exploit the reduction of human disturbance to the ecosystems and cultural landscape and towards implementation of national plans for biodiversity protection and cultural preservation, and thereby assist meeting the three countries' international obligations on the protection of biodiversity.

## 5. First results of Chernobyl new policy paradigm deployment

Following the conceptual reprioritizing of the Chernobyl policy paradigm, since 2006 there was a significant shift in national programs on Chernobyl in all three countries, from rehabilitation measures towards improving the social and economic potential of affected regions, also ensuring sustainable development albeit taking into account their different institutional settings and appropriate policy instruments. In Belarus and the Russian Federation the key role in devising new government programs was played by central and regional government administrations, with participation of international donor community. In Ukraine, in addition, relatively greater role was played by local self-government structures, civil society organizations and other stakeholders.

**In Belarus**, the 2002 President's Decree (No. 16, of 12 July) gave the foundation for revising the Chernobyl legislation. However the most significant changes were introduced in the '2006-2010 State Program for Overcoming the Consequences of the Chernobyl Disaster' which was implemented together with the Program of Joint Activities within the framework of the Belarus-Russian Federation Union State Agreement for 2006-2010. These measures involved providing social protection for the affected people, reducing the risk of negative effects on their health and protecting the population from radiation exposure and achieving the social and economic rehabilitation of the contaminated areas. At the same time, Belarus has attached great importance to improving public awareness. Some 50 information Centres have been established in the affected areas, including 19 information and action agencies that focus on radiation protection and basic safety in everyday life. An electronic information database has been established for specialists working in the most seriously affected parts of the country. Moreover, under the above mentioned Belarus-Russian Federation Program of Joint Activities, a Belarus-Russian Federation information centre on Chernobyl-related matters was established,<sup>18</sup> with branches in Moscow and Minsk and a published atlas showing the current and projected (until 2056) effects of the Chernobyl accident in Belarus and the Russian Federation.

**In the Russian Federation**, initial priority was given to minimizing the effects of the Chernobyl catastrophe through refining the medical support given to those living in the affected areas, to post-disaster emergency workers and their children, improving their standards of living, and through restoring agriculture and forestry to economic viability. The extent of social assistance varies according to the status of the individual, in accordance with the 'Act of the Russian Federation for the social protection of citizens exposed to radiation caused by the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant'. The Act provides for (i) annually indexed monthly payments, (ii) for the supply of accommodation to those in need of improved living conditions, (iii) for advantageous rates for accommodation and communal services, (iv) for extra paid leave, (v) for monthly compensatory payments for the damage to

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<sup>18</sup> See <http://rbic.ibrae.ru/>

health caused by radiation, (vi) for assistance in acquiring food supplies and for other forms of social assistance.

The Act is a measure to implement the Russian Federation special program: 'Dealing with the consequences of radiation accidents up to the year 2010', which in fact aims by 2011 to largely complete the social and economic rehabilitation of the affected territories and the protection of the population from radiation, as well as to the return of radiation-contaminated areas to normal use (that is, without radiation-related restrictions) for human habitation and economic activity. At the same time, the program provides for establishing infrastructure needed for safe habitation in the contaminated areas and for providing support in the form of information and social-psychological rehabilitation for individuals living there.

Although the goals set in the Russian Federation program are likely to be achieved by 2011, the long-term nature and the scale of consequences of the Chernobyl disaster make it impossible to speak of complete resolution of all socially significant problematic issues, admits the report of the Russian Federation.<sup>19</sup>

It should also be noted that in 2009 an on-line information system for the promotion of safe living practices in contaminated areas was introduced in four regions of the Russian Federation. The system greatly increased availability of information to the affected population (pilot project provides up to 4000 hits a day). The information points are located at the premises of the Oblast Administrations of Tula, Bryansk, Orel and Kaluga regions.

**In Ukraine**, pursuant to the 'Act on the national program to overcome the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster for 2006-2010', the Government focused on the integrated medical and socio-psychological rehabilitation of the affected population, their social protection and the establishment of safe living conditions in areas contaminated by radiation. The first priority of Ukraine's national policy became the social and economic regeneration of population Centres and areas exposed to radioactive contamination.

The Ukrainian Ministry of Emergencies is effectively satisfying information needs of the population of Kyiv and Zhytomyr regions through a network of five Centres of Psycho-Social Rehabilitation and Information Provision on Chernobyl, in Borodianka, Boyarka, Ivankiv, Korosten and Slavutych.<sup>20</sup> Those Centres, originally developed with the support of UN and operating within the Ministry's structure, are raising awareness on healthy lifestyle, safe living and are mitigating psychological consequences of the accident. Unfortunately, there is no such Centre in the northern part of Rivne and Volyn regions where cases of higher levels of internal radiation are still observed.

In keeping with the aims and goals of the national program for 2006-2010, and with the Ukrainian Act on the status and social protection of citizens who are Chernobyl disaster victims, Ukraine gives much attention to international cooperation on health-care issues,

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<sup>19</sup> See the UN Secretary General Report to the General Assembly on 'Optimizing the international effort to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster', 1 September 2010, Annex 2, p. 18.

<sup>20</sup> For more information about Centres of Psycho-Social Rehabilitation see:  
<http://crdp.org.ua/main/en/publication/content/516.htm>

social and radiation protection, and making use of the global experience available. For many years the Government of Ukraine has been cooperating with the Chernobyl Recovery and Development Program implemented by the United Nations Development Program and aimed at reducing the long-term socio-economic and ecological impact of the disaster, creating favorable living conditions for residents of the contaminated areas and increasing their social engagement and responsibility for their lives. Among other achievements, partnership between local and state authorities, community organizations and private entrepreneurs was developed within the project.

At the end of 2009 the UNICEF project 'Improving the health of children living in territories affected by Chernobyl' conducted a number of training seminars for medical workers and provided basic medical equipment. In partnership with local authorities and communities UNICEF has established centres where families with children have improved access to medical, social and information services

For the Government of Ukraine, of special concern is the successful decommissioning of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and converting the shelter which is located on Ukraine's territory. Solving those problems largely depends on timely completion of facility infrastructure which includes the construction of the spent fuel storage facility, the liquid radioactive waste reprocessing facility, and the industrial complex for solid radioactive waste. Presently these facilities are at different stages of construction on the nuclear power plant site. Their untimely completion is causing delays in the construction of the new protective cover over the shelter and in the decommissioning of the nuclear power plant.

**A sub-regional initiative** was launched in 2009: the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network, which is implemented in Belarus, Russian Federation and Ukraine. It led to a significant improvement in distributing reliable information among the affected population on safe residence and healthy lifestyle in the areas contaminated by radiation, and helping local communities to 'return to normal life'.

## 6. The UN agencies and donor community involvement in delivery of new development policy paradigm

For all three countries **cooperation with the donor community** in advancing new policy approach to overcome the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe was of paramount importance. In Ukraine, especially important was cooperation within the UNDP Chernobyl Recovery and Development Program (CRDP, 2002-2010), and in Belarus - the project: Cooperation for Rehabilitation of Living Conditions in Chernobyl Affected Areas (CORE, 2003-2008) and Area Based Development of the Chernobyl-Affected Areas of Belarus (ABD, 2009-2010). Since 2009 all three countries cooperate tightly within the ICRIN framework.

**The area-based development** has been practiced in Ukraine and Belarus. The success of area-based development in Chernobyl-affected areas was acknowledged in the respective UN General Assembly resolutions in 2005 and 2007. The community development process ensures cooperation between communities', local and regional authorities, and business on practical issues and was proven to contribute to the rebuilding of trust between communities and to the authorities as well as to better awareness on safe living at the affected areas [<sup>21</sup>].

- In Ukraine, within CRDP, the principle of partnership between community organisations and authorities for recovery and development resulted in forming 279 community organisations (COs) in 192 villages (involving over 20,000 community members). COs resolve important socio-economic problems in villages, e.g. they reconstruct water pipe-lines and provide gasification; reconstruct schools, bathes, village health centres, and ambulatories; create youth, public and service centres etc. Community organisations implemented more than 191 recovery and development projects totalling over USD 3,2 million, of which USD 1,3 million was contributed by CRDP. Nearly 200,000 people benefited from community-driven development projects supported by UNDP/CRDP. Community organisations successfully mobilised significant financial resources for implementing their own priority projects. On average, for the implementation of one project, a community organisation contributed up to 20% of the total cost, local village and rayon authorities 40%, CRDP 30%, and other sponsors 10%.
- CRDP has developed a model Youth Centre - an institution specially designed to respond to young people's needs. The Youth Centre is composed of a gym, computer equipment with access to the Internet, as well as a meeting room for self-organised trainings, classes, etc. It has become both a human resource centre and a social enterprise for the village. During 2004-2008, CRDP supported the establishment of 35 Youth Centres in Chernobyl-affected areas.

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<sup>21</sup> See Sayenko Y., Pryvalov Y., Khodorivska N, Recovery and Development of Chernobyl Communities: Sociological Analysis, Social Consequences of Chernobyl: Time for Recovery, Institute of Sociology of Ukraine, 2011.

- In Belarus, CORE programme has been implemented in the four most-affected regions: Brahin and Chechersk districts of the Gomel region, Slavgorod district of the Mohyliov region, and Stolin district of the Brest region. The priorities for the initiatives were defined by communities. During the community development process 80 community projects out of 146 submitted were supported. The total budget for implemented projects amounted to 4,3mIn Euro (i.e. USD 6.2 million).
- Sixty one community-driven projects in rural localities of Vetka, Buda-Kosheliovo, Zhitkovichi and Khoiniki districts were implemented by the Area-Based Development project<sup>22</sup> during 2009-2010 in Belarus. The project focused on building the developmental capacity of local communities and empowering the population to participate in the social and economic recovery of their settlements. The project supported mutually beneficial cooperation between the rural communities and local authorities, aiming to resolve socio-economic problems of the Chernobyl-affected areas. For example, in 2009 it brought to full renovation of children's playground near a 60-apartment house located in the Centre of the town of Vetka (Gomel Region).

### **Economic development**

- Since 2005 CRDP initiated Annual Chernobyl Economic Development Forum - an effective platform for elaboration of strategies for recovery and sustainable development of the affected territories, attracting investments into the region, and creating partnerships between businesses, local authorities and communities.
- Eight Regional Economic Development Agencies were established, 3 in rayons of Zhytomyr oblast (Brusyliv, Korosten and Ovruch), 2 in Kyiv oblast (Borodyanka and Ivankiv), 2 in Rivne oblast (Rokytno and Dubrovysya) and 1 in Chernihiv oblast (Ripky rayon). Agencies of Regional Economic Development provide everyday consultation to private entrepreneurship and those active citizens who want to establish private business, organise life-long education for various groups of people at the affected areas. Agencies ensure equal opportunities for everybody regardless gender, age and race.
- In Russia, UNDP in cooperation with Ministry of Emergencies has established Centres for Local Economic Development in Briansk Region and supported the design of the Strategy for Economic Development.

### **Information provisioning**

- In Ukraine with the support of CRDP over 20 volumes of information materials (brochures, booklets, films, posters, CDs) were published on the Chernobyl catastrophe consequences and conditions for secure living at contaminated territories. They were prepared and distributed by CRDP in cooperation with leading research institutions. Trainings for teachers and medical workers on radiation safety

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<sup>22</sup> See, Project 00062457: Area Based Development of the Chernobyl-Affected Areas of Belarus, [www.undp.by](http://www.undp.by).

and healthy life styles were conducted. CRDP also developed the film 'Alphabet of Understanding' and published a 'Teachers Guidebook on the Chernobyl Accident', both of which were supported by the Ministry of Emergencies for mass production and dissemination in 2007.<sup>23</sup>

- UNICEF is working on the improvement of health-care services for mothers and children and supports a public information campaign on good parenting in the Chernobyl-affected regions of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. In Belarus, a four-year project on life skills and healthy lifestyle helped to develop educational programs and manuals. Eleven newly established information resource Centres in the Luninets district of the Brest region provide Chernobyl-related materials as well as publications on healthy lifestyles. In Ukraine, more than 300 health-care workers have been trained in effective prenatal, neonatal and paediatric care and infection control. Fifteen regional hospitals have been certified as "baby and family friendly", and lifesaving equipment for infants has been provided to 10 regional hospitals.
- In Ukraine, with the support of IAEA and UNDP, the cooperation of Ukrainian local authorities and the European Group of Local Authorities with Nuclear Facilities in Europe (GMF) was facilitated. As a result, Ukrainian municipalities were officially invited to become full member of the European association. Involvement of local authorities in emergency preparation and mitigation of nuclear accidents is of high importance for effective recovery.
- Within the ICRIN project a number of specific target groups: medical workers, forestry specialists, teachers and media are trained on mitigation of consequences of Chernobyl accident:
  - IAEA and WHO have conducted trainings for medical workers. IAEA has also performed a number of educational activities with foresters and local authorities to improve awareness about possible danger of forest products gathered at the contaminated areas.
  - Four UN Agencies have organized three training sessions for media representatives and journalists that took place in Ukraine in 2009, in the Russian Federation in 2010 and in Belarus in March 2011. Participating journalists from Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine were trained by leading experts from IAEA, UNDP, UNICEF and WHO. Implementation of small-scale community-based initiatives and training unhealthy lifestyles started in 2010.
  - IAEA, UNDP, UNICEF and WHO have developed an information package on the socio-economic, health radiation contamination of the affected areas, impact of Chernobyl, current challenges faced by communities, the area's

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<sup>23</sup> For more on CRDP achievements, see the 2009 CRDP Annual Report.

opportunities and solutions that work on the ground. During 2009-2010, eight information and communications technology (ICT) access points were established in rural areas of Ukraine and by five in the Russian Federation and in Belarus.

- An innovative approach introduced by ICRIN foresees improving awareness of safe living through the use of internet resources. The web-portal [Chernobyl.info](http://Chernobyl.info) modernized with the support of ICRIN project allows any person at the affected areas or abroad to learn about the Chernobyl accident, safe living, and possible consequences for human health.
- In Russia, a number of training seminars have been conducted on social marketing and social development. They also provide information provision through UNDP projects which support development of strategy for the recovery of Chernobyl-affected areas.
- In March 2008 UNICEF has launched a special edition of its publication, Facts for Life on Chernobyl, which was developed in cooperation with UNDP and IAEA. They subsequently distributed 35,000 copies in Chernobyl-affected communities in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.<sup>24</sup> 13 posters with essential information from the Facts for Life special edition were printed and disseminated in 2009. The posters offer information on radiation safety, family planning, safe motherhood, early child development and nutrition, assistance to disabled children and to mothers in the prenatal period, and prevention of child trauma and HIV infection. Disseminating information on radiation safety, family planning and safe motherhood is of special importance since the question - "whether I can have a healthy child while living in the Chernobyl-affected areas?" - is still of great concern for majority of mothers in the affected areas. UNICEF also conducted a survey of knowledge about childcare and development among families in the Chernobyl-affected areas and cleared up numerous Chernobyl-related misconceptions, especially with regard to breast-feeding milk to their infants.
- Since 2006, UNICEF has made the introduction of universal salt iodization one of the key elements in its advocacy efforts. In October 2007, the Parliament of Belarus adopted an iodine deficiency disorders/universal salt iodization amendment to its law on food safety. National legislation was revised to comply with the provisions of the law; as a result, national monitoring of the quality of iodized salt and its availability in the retail trade is now in place. UNICEF efforts contributed to a wider recognition that iodine deficiency has an impact on child development. In Ukraine, local iodine deficiency prevention programs have been adopted in Rivne and Vinnitsa regions and a program is under preparation in Chernihiv region.

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<sup>24</sup> The edition was co-published by UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and the International Organization for Migration. For more information, see UN General Assembly Report of 1 September 2010, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

## **Environmental Recovery**

- Also, in Belarus, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA started implementation of a three-year initiative (2010-2013) aimed at enhancing human security in the Chernobyl-affected communities of Slavgorod, Chechersk, Bragin, Stolin and Luninets districts. Supported by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, the project aims at increasing the incomes of farmers by adopting agricultural innovations and ensuring that the radiation levels in their produce comply with radiation safety standards. Health issues are addressed by the promotion of healthy lifestyles among pregnant women, new mothers and their families. In addition, there is a focus on early diagnosis of breast cancer and improving the expertise of local health workers with regard to healthy maternity, paternity and childhood. The project already enabled organization of a training session on breast examination techniques for local health workers, as well as procurement of ultrasound equipment and modern training models. This will allow, in 2011, to identify women most at-risk of breast cancer, to conduct additional examinations, and to increase breast cancer prevention activities among women aged 40-69 of the Čačersk and Brahın districts. Within the project there are 10 local radiation monitoring Centres, 3 information Centres on radiation safety counselling and training, and 11 peer support groups for pregnant women in order for new mothers and their family members to will be established and equipped according to the needs of the local population.

## **Health improvement initiatives**

- In 2008, in Belarus a joint project of UNDP and the United States Agency for International Development, 'Family Health', was launched in Pinsk. Its main objective (over a two-year period) was to improve health of the population in the Stolin district (Brest region) by raising the awareness of the target groups regarding healthy maternity, fatherhood, upbringing and development of children as well as safe living in the affected territories. The target groups comprised healthcare experts, pregnant and childbearing age women, nursing mothers, future fathers, high school teachers and students. Thus raising the knowledge and responsibility of young people for reproductive health and radiation safety is very topical in the region.
- Also in Ukraine, UNICEF is supporting the establishment of family Centres that deliver comprehensive basic services for vulnerable families and families with children that have special needs. A school for fathers has been organized as part of the family Centres in order to bring about the broader involvement of fathers in the care and upbringing of children. A youth-friendly clinic, established in the city of Chernihiv, now serves around 1,000 adolescents per year. By the end of 2010, five new clinics will be providing health-care services for youth from the Chernobyl-affected regions of Ukraine.

- Finally, in Belarus, under the European Commission-funded project 'Children of Chernobyl', medical equipment will be delivered to 15 central hospitals in a number of districts and oblasts. Five youth-friendly health Centres have been opened, improving access to medical and counselling services. More than 100 social, medical workers and teachers from six Chernobyl-affected areas received training in "working with families to prevent child abandonment".

Large involvement of the UN family agencies and the donor community in organizational and capacity-building support to affected population plays critical importance for the achievements of the Chernobyl new policy paradigm.

## 7. Chernobyl new policy paradigm revisited

Modern theory of disaster recovery distinguishes its four stages: emergency response, short-term recovery, long term recovery and reducing influence on future generations. With regard to the Chernobyl catastrophe the first three have already been discussed and it is time now to turn to stage four (i.e. laying foundations to social and economic development for future generations): What are the greatest challenges which the three most affected countries presently face in laying and consolidating those foundations?

Many successes of the Chernobyl new policy approach in all three countries under examination are well documented, as is their heavy reliance on continued donor community financing. The success is mainly due to better understanding of local needs and specificity, integration of local and regional initiatives with central government priorities and development strategies. However, with mounting problems of external financing several UN founded projects are discontinued, local initiatives lose its support, and desirable changes in human mentality of the Chernobyl affected population wade away. At the same time, as it was already noted, many of the social benefits and compensations disappear from annual national budgets, which are investments that are needed for improvement of infrastructure, continuous rehabilitation of arable land, supporting local industry and agriculture, and providing foundations for sustainable social and economic development.

The common root of the problem is the established categories of affected communities introduced immediately after the accident and the legislation related to it. The zoning system provides institutional and legal foundation of rather complex systems of social benefits and compensations. They include:

- (i) Chernobyl accident liquidators, who are not numerous and whose benefits and privileges must continue;
- (ii) Chernobyl invalids, whose number is also low and whose benefits also must continue;
- (iii) People who presently live in the radiation affected territories in each country and thereby are entitled to various compensations. While the value of the single average entitlement is small, it is the number of beneficiaries (rising with time) that makes the respective volumes of budget spending not only unsustainable, but also largely unfounded since the radiological justification of those benefits hardly exists any more. It is with respect to this category of beneficiaries that various proposals concerning revising the zone status and reducing the budget expenses were made in the past, but hardly implemented.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> See, e.g. Osiatynski J., Ukrainian Chernobyl National Programs Enhancement: An Analytical Study, UNDP Ukraine, Kyiv 2005; see also 'Conclusions and Recommendations of the International Conference to Commemorate the XX Anniversary of the Chernobyl Catastrophe', Kyiv, 24-26 April 2006.

Formally speaking, any revision in the zone status that would reduce the scope of government spending must not be of retroactive nature, nor may it include the actual liquidators (category i), nor invalids (category ii), and may therefore refer only to category (iii) of beneficiaries. Yet, although the respective radiation levels in most of affected territories are within limits and involve no longer any health or other risks to local populations if only countermeasures are regularly applied, any initiatives revising the zone status in Ukraine gives rise to political pressures and vehement opposition.

At the same time, the zoning sets limits and bans to investments and various forms of economic activity in the affected territories thus undermining potential development opportunities. Reduced investments cause a reduction in new jobs and employment opportunities and smaller household incomes, and hence the stronger opposition of reducing benefits and compensation which are often the single income source for many who presently live in the zoned territories. Thus the vicious circle is set in motion.

In each country the problem of revisiting of the present zoning system and of conceptual redesigning its essence and legal implications is handled differently, with greatest difficulties encountered in Ukraine. Although there is President's Decree (No 937/2010, of 11 October 2010) which speaks of a 'revision of the established borders of the areas contaminated by the Chernobyl disaster in accordance with the established order based on the expert opinions of the National Commission for Radiation Protection of Ukraine, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, and the relevant central authorities'.

The situation appears most straightforward in Belarus. Following the aforementioned Presidential Decree No. 16 (of 12 July 2002), borders of the zone of obligatory resettlement are reviewed every five years there based on the radioactive contamination checks conducted by authorized state institutions. On the basis of proven radioactivity indicators, settlements are to remain within the zone borders and thereby maintain their zone status. According to Mr. Shablovsky, the Head of Administration of the Zone of Resettlement in Belorussia, in 2009 only this procedure allowed lifting the zone status, and subsequently to rehabilitate 35 thousand hectares of the formerly radiation affected land.<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, the new Belarus law on 'Social Protection of Citizens Affected by the Catastrophe on the Chernobyl NPP' (enacted on 16 June 2009) revised the philosophy of provisioning benefits to the population affected by Chernobyl accident. Following the new law, benefits are paid no longer on the basis of potential risks related to radiation damage to human health, but those eligible for benefits are defined on the basis of actual damage to health they incurred.

At the same time, large investments were made in Belarus to improve social and business infrastructure in the most contaminated territories in accordance with priorities listed by the authorized government structures. Those investments included mainly gasification, water pipelines, and health and education projects. In addition, in the course of implementing the

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<sup>26</sup> See Rehabilitating Our National Land, No. 1 (18), January-February 20112, [http://www.rbic.by/images/stories/articles/files/bulleten\\_1\\_2011.pdf](http://www.rbic.by/images/stories/articles/files/bulleten_1_2011.pdf), (in Russian).

'State Program for Overcoming the Consequences of the Accident on the Chernobyl NPP for 2006-2010' starting new businesses in the affected territories was allowed and efforts were made to bring back into operation buildings and other productive capacities of earlier decommissioned enterprises through an auctioning process. This resulted, in 2006-2010 in the affected districts having 19 boiling stations \ launched, 106 social facilities were thermo-renovated, 240 energy efficient lighting posts were installed, 3045 houses were gasified, and 106.6 km of gas pipelines were built.

Also in the Russian Federation the zone status and the implied consequences for social benefits and compensations, as well as limits to and bans of new investments and economic operations, are decided by government authorities. In accordance with the 'Law on social protection of citizens exposed to radiation as a result of the Chernobyl disaster' the Russian Government reviews the lists of settlements included into each zone of contamination at least once every five years. With time, thanks to the undertaken radiation protective measures and to the natural decay of radioactive elements, contamination in the Chernobyl affected territories considerably lessened.

The Federal Law of 22 August 2004 (No 122-FZ) significantly revised legislation that regulated social protection of those who suffered from radiation exposure, streamlining benefits and compensations previously provided to individuals. The new law abandoned outdated or long unused norms of radioactive contamination, and it introduced a new concept of 'social support' to Chernobyl legislation. Starting with January 1, 2005 many in kind benefits were replaced by monthly cash payments. This measure, on the one hand, increased the freedom of choice of beneficiaries (in difference to rigorously targeted in-kind benefits that could be received only by those to whom they were addressed). On the other hand, the amount of cash payments did not fully compensate for benefits withdrawn or for natural services no longer provided, thus worsening the financial situation of beneficiaries.

In Ukraine, in turn, any revision of zoning proved more complex. The law requires that any revision must be requested by the regional council of deputies; following which, the decision has to be taken by the Cabinet of Ministers. Next it must be endorsed by the National Committee of Radiation Protection, by a number of central government agencies and research institutions, and finally approved by the Parliament. The process cannot start without a formal request from regional authorities but the latter has not been to date interested in initiating any such revisions because lifting of the zoning would entail loss of benefits by at least some of those who presently live in the territory falling into one of the contamination zone categories (i.e. about 1.5 million people in Ukraine as a whole for who the entitlement results from potential risk of category (iii) of beneficiaries).

At one stage a trade-off between a large discount of legally founded claims on overdue social benefits and compensations (which were commonly known to be illusory and unlikely to be ever paid), combined with lifting bans and restrictions on economic activities in the radiation affected territories on the one hand, and additional investments allocated for those territories

that would stimulate social and economic development of those territories on the other hand, seemed within reach.<sup>27</sup> However, since budget constraint and other factors effectively prevented any inflow of investments of meaningful volume to the affected, rural territories in Ukraine, irrespective of their zone status, in fact local communities faced a choice between illusory benefits guaranteed by law on the one hand, and illusory investments not guaranteed by anyone on the other hand.

Another practical option at the local community level, that might facilitate practical advancement from humanitarian assistance strategy to one of fostering social and economic development could be to redirect the social benefit funds to be paid to category (iii) of beneficiaries – once the zone status was lifted – to local budgets and allowing their spending for improvement on local social and communal infrastructure. That option was not only of conceptual nature, but was piloted in several villages of the Rivne region. Clearly, success of the project critically depended on credit of confidence between central and local government administration and other stakeholders. Although in the piloted villages additional investment outlays were promised for a number of years, they were paid only in the first year of the pilot scheme and then discontinued. Needless to say, this only added to a long-built distrust of local communities, which initially have been misinformed about the scope of the catastrophe and its consequences, next promised resettlement which for many never happened, then promised benefits (which in category (iii) were far too generous for future budget stability) that many of them never received, and then agreed to transform their ‘virtual’ benefits into actual investments to local infrastructure - and again they were soon left empty handed.

However, most recent developments in Ukraine may bring a revision of the position of local authorities, communities and politicians to the zoning system, and willy-nilly make them accept its unavoidable changes. Although developments that gave rise to that position revising were long forecast, they came as a surprise for local and central government authorities. The roots of those developments is the vicious circle of financially unsustainable social commitments of the state budget on the one hand, and the legally enforceable (and Constitution guaranteed) government pledges on the other hand.<sup>28</sup>

The last two years saw a rising number of court cases in the Zhytomyr and Rivne oblasts in the course of which UAH 2 billion (i.e. USD 250 million) of social benefits and compensations were court-enforced against local governments. Another UAH 2 billion is under court procedure and will most likely produce the same result. Court decisions are subject to immediate execution. However, since the value of enforceable claims far exceeds local government budgets, current accounts of involved municipalities and districts are arrested,

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<sup>27</sup> See Osiatynski, *Ukrainian Chernobyl National Programs Enhancement ...*, ed. cit.

<sup>28</sup> Already in 2005 it was noted that ‘financially over ambitious targets have been set not only in each and every round of deciding priorities and targets of the Government of Ukraine’s Chernobyl programs ever since 1991 but, moreover, the full volumes of assistance and privileges granted by laws, were reconfirmed by the Constitution of Ukraine. Its Articles 16 and 22 taken together make benefits and privileges once granted by any law irrevocable, which opens way for only too easy but effective political demagoguery, without any respect for financial constrains. Consequently, the vicious circle of inadequate means and irrevocable commitments offers no chances of effective overcoming not only of economic consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe, but – no less important – its social consequences’ (Osiatynski, *Ukrainian Chernobyl National Programs Enhancement*, ed. cit., pp. 1-2).

thus effectively stopping any payments to local government employees and other spending. It is not surprising then that local government administration of both oblasts are in a panic and applying pressure on national authorities to take immediate action to resolve the problem through revising the relevant legislation, postpone and reschedule the payment of the court-enforced benefits, and a corresponding reductions of tax payments, etc. It is also suggested that government bonds are issued to meet the ensuing government obligations.<sup>29</sup>

The experience of the three countries discussed above shows a clear negative correlation between new jobs, rising household incomes, improvement in public services, infrastructure, etc. on the one hand, and the dependency and Chernobyl victim syndromes on the other hand. Areas where large investments are made into basic public services, infrastructure and housing where agricultural lands are continuously rehabilitated, and where bans and limits on economic operations are systematically adjusted to declining radiation, standards of living increase, poverty declines and some inflow of young migrants, attracted by extra incentives can be observed (as in the Gomel oblast in Belarus). On the other hand, in a market economy environment and where local self-governments play a large role with other stakeholders, in implementing its regulatory functions the state must see that the local business environment attracts private investors and induces them to accept risks involved in their commercial operations. Moreover, at the same time the state must continue public investments into public utilities, infrastructure, land rehabilitation, etc., lest – as in the case of most districts of the five most affected oblast in Ukraine, due to a lack of public resources land liming was discontinued resulting in the radiation indicators returning to levels above the norm. Preconditions for overcoming poverty and underdevelopment in the Chernobyl-affected territories are public investment in infrastructure, public utilities, and land and other natural resources rehabilitation, as well as support of private business and local initiatives there.

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<sup>29</sup> See Vetheslav Potapenko, О законодательных изменениях статуса территорий пострадавших от аварии на Чернобыльской АЭС с целью их социально-экономического возрождения (On legislation revisions of the nature of territories affected by the Chernobyl NPS Accident and required by their social and economic rehabilitation), National Institute of Strategic Research at Chancellery of the President of Ukraine.

## 8. Concluding Recommendations

Accomplishments of the new policy approach to rehabilitating the Chernobyl-affected territories in all three countries under examination are beyond doubt and evidenced by many success stories exemplified in the Annex to this report. Yet, we are only at an early stage of the process of securing, at least in the medium term, foundations for sustainable social and economic development of the area. In all three countries that presently house the affected lands and people, determination in continued heavy infrastructural investments, provisioning of basic public utilities and assisting the creation of new jobs is badly needed. The actual economic and social policy measures and instruments in each country have to be adjusted to its different institutional and political decision making process and system. Nevertheless, in all three countries, as is the case of any local and regional development policy making, new jobs in a competitive environment, as well as social and economic development opportunities, depend in turn on investment into new technologies and new products and market expansion as much as in human development and investment in health, education and training. Continuation of the present investment drive in the affected territories in Belarus, their acceleration and possibly improved targeting in Russia, and eliminating the factors that deter them in Ukraine is one the challenges of further success of economic and social development of the respective regions.

The other challenge relates to consistency and integrity of regional development plans put forward at national, regional and local levels. Changing attitudes of the affected populations must imply their increasing participation in decision making and leaving ever greater room for their own initiatives and local development schemes that would bring together local governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders. This in turn requires increasing their financial potential and their public accountability.

In addition, and this is of special relevance for Ukraine, revision of the present zoning system and, interlinked with it, the system of social protection and economic bans and limitations, is of critical importance for fostering future development. Every month of its delay results in undermining local and regional development opportunities and – following the current court decisions mentioned above – threatens to paralyze daily operations of local governments.

For all three countries, reforestation and effective forest management at the territories where radiation remains high is a feasible option to improve economic activities on the radioactively polluted areas and, at the same time, mitigate the ensuing climate changes. Moreover, for local communities the benefit of higher levels of biodiversity at the affected areas remains unused.

It is important that people outside of Chernobyl-affected areas in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine and in other countries have sound information about the current situation of the affected areas and do not disseminate false myths about health consequences or the effects of radiation for the population. Negative myths and inadequate treatment of affected population

is supporting stigmatization and restricts full recovery of the affected population. In addition, using the experiences gained in overcoming the negative consequences of Chernobyl will spur the recovery process. It is important that these experiences gained by Chernobyl-affected population are shared to educate people living in the close vicinity to nuclear objects worldwide, especially those who are currently managing the nuclear accident in Japan.

The present success of the new Chernobyl policy paradigm largely depends on heavy financial involvement of the donor community at large and, at the same time, on far improved targeting of assistance projects and their focusing on development planning, capacity building and changing people's life styles and attitudes. The great challenge that the donor community faces now in this respect is its continued financial support, which becomes especially difficult in the face of mounting problems following the world financial and economic crisis which continues in individual donor countries. However, should many of the presently UN and other donor founded projects be discontinued, local initiatives will die out, as already seen in some cases, and the achieved positive changes in human mentality of the Chernobyl affected population would wade away. Moreover, if countermeasures are not applied regularly, as already seen in some of the affected territories, the radiation levels of arable land and food produced on it might increase again due to increased levels of radiation intake. Persistency in continued rehabilitation of the affected populations, as well as lands and other assets, is yet another challenge that needs to be squared lest social and human development comes to a halt and recent changes in life styles and attitudes are discontinued.

## SUCCESS STORIES IN THE CHERNOBYL–AFFECTED LOCALITIES IN OVERCOMING THE STIGMA AND MAKING THEM DEVELOP<sup>30</sup>

### BELARUS

#### The evolution of human consciousness: from passivity to activity

Good examples of rising the civil initiative is implementation of the Support Project for the “Cooperation for Rehabilitation” (CORE) Programme in areas affected by Chernobyl which was launched in 2004 and aimed at supporting development of private farms in Stolin district. The project came to the villages Bielavuşa, Haradnaya, Cierabiažoŭ and Almany, when people had ceased to feel necessity to receive humanitarian assistance because of being victims of the Chernobyl tragedy. People wanted to develop, were interested how to create new business strategies, increase personal efficiency, improve the profits and reduce the costs.

Initially there was a need for a specialist who could consult local entrepreneurs, give advice in the fields of agronomy and economics. Later this idea turned into the new organization, which should continue the project plans - supporting private agricultural production and other initiatives of rural people. So, in April 2006 with the assistance of local authorities the Foundation “Centre for Rural Development and Entrepreneurship”<sup>31</sup> appeared in Stolin. This resulted in collecting best practices and knowledge, which were created by local communities, government authorities, UNDP and other international organizations.

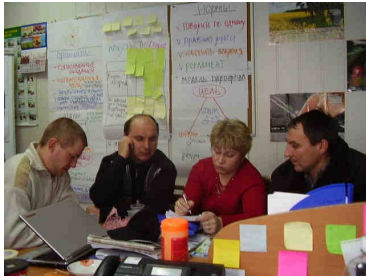
For 5 years Stolin centre has realized more than 20 projects to support the initiatives of the residents of affected region. These projects:

- solved the environmental problems in greenhouse production of vegetables;
- improved water supply system in rural areas;
- reduced energy consumption in school of village Haradnaya and local farms;
- in 2010 experts from the Centre held 182 consultations for private farmers;
- trip to the international agricultural exhibitions in Ukraine and France were organized;
- cleaned and landscaped wells in the courtyards of rural residents in village Almany.

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<sup>30</sup> All information in this Annex comes from UNDP/ICRIN Database for media training, 2010. The Annex was prepared with assistance of Ms Dzvenka Kachur, Chernobyl Recovery and Development Program, UNDP Ukraine.

<sup>31</sup> *The Centre was created within the framework of UNDP Support Project to the CORE Programme with financial support of the UN Office on the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) and methodological guidance of the French Association FERT.*



Today the Centre continues establishing partnership relations with different market players, providing information how to work with banks and other financial organizations and how to attract inner and foreign investments.

### Private story



Several years ago a countryman Sergey Sen (village Bielavuša, Stolin region) began to grow cucumbers in greenhouses on 5 hundreds square meters. Stolin Centre for Rural Development and Entrepreneurship in cooperation with the International Research Foundation for Development (IFRD) provided the information about new breeds, insecticides, effective artificial irrigation systems; he was able to take micro-credit. Today he has more than 20 hundreds square meters of greenhouses and 3 hectares of leased area and a new tractor. Moreover, he supports the relatives and neighbors by offering them jobs. It's a good example of so-called "peculiar cooperative". Other villagers are successfully engaged in cow farming, production of hard cheese.

## RUSSIAN FEDERATION

### Micro-financing projects

The micro-financing of local business project was launched by UNDP in 2006, in Bryansk region. The project was managed by "Novy Mir" ("The New World") Foundation. In 2007 the Foundation made 151 loans out of which 81 was returned. Among those successful projects are Hiratake mushroom planting farm, pig and rabbit farms. After closure of financing in 2008 the project has proved its sustainability and the Regional and Federal authorities decided to develop this initiative further. The Micro Financing programme got State support only in Bryansk region.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> For more information on the project, see: <http://business32.ru/>.

## **Micro financing in within the framework of the State business support program for small and medium size firms**

To continue the micro financing work in the Bryansk region and support small and medium business initiatives Bryansk authorities decided to allocate for this purpose 5 million Russian rubbles in the Bryansk region's budget. Additional financing was allocated by the Federal Ministry of Economic Development. In 2009 "Novy Mir" Foundation received a Federal and Regional financing as part of the Federal counter-recession program, which was developed by the Federal Ministry of Economic Development. As a result of supply of financial resources from the budget of the Bryansk region and Federal Budgets the interest rates nearly halved (from 19% down to 10%) and the Foundation could offer to prompt credit payers partial compensation on already paid interest. Therefore the loans made by the "Novy Mir" Foundation became more attractive and accessible. No doubt, the programme of micro financing and investments from the Federal and regional budgets for development of small business helped to solve a problem of self-employment in the Bryansk region.

Among the advantages of the work with the Foundation is allocation of loans to individuals and to groups of entrepreneurs. If an individual entrepreneur is not able to provide sufficient loan security he/she will be offered to establish a "credit group" with other entrepreneurs, which are planning to develop their business in the same area. This practice is being used in order to share the risks related with repayment of a loan.



From the very beginning the Foundation works in the close cooperation with "Farmers of Bryanshina" organization (Bryansk region) which helps to identify the directions of work with farmers of the region. One of the good examples of work with farmers is cooperation with a resident of Knevichi village of Bryansk region. The Head of the small farm enterprise Ms. Svetlana Elanskaya applied to the Foundation and got a loan for the development of the private part-owner unit. On the loan funds, Ms. Elanskaya procured all necessary equipment for crop husbandry. In the nearest future Ms. Elanskaya and her husband are planning to start the potato planting. Farmers are breeding the livestock in their farmhouse and selling the meat and milk in the local market. The farmers' family is happy that they applied in the "Novy Mir" Foundation and got a chance to start and develop own business as their previous experience of work with banks has proved that it is extremely difficult and sometimes impossible to get a loan in the bank for such a small business.

Clearly, the micro financing programme resulted in the increase of economic activity in the region, it enhanced consumers opportunities of local residents and increased personal and family incomes.

## Pig farm in Shelomy settlement (Novozybkov rayon, Bryansk region)

A pig farm in Shelomy settlement started operating in 1979. It was constructed by several collective farms as a joint venture. Collective farms delivered piglets weighting 20-25 kg to the pig farm for further fattening. In 1984 the farm had 13.500 pigs. In early 1990s the feed prices grew up sharply and profitability of the business deteriorated. That resulted in reduction of the pig stock first to 7-8 thousand, and to zero in 1995. The farm stopped functioning for several years. Thanks to efforts of local administration several small projects were carried out. That made possible to maintain the farm facilities and keep part of the personnel employed.

In 2001 investors from Moscow started to restore the pig farm notwithstanding high risk as at that stage the farm buildings were in poor condition. Investors formed a new venture – ZAO 'BIO-M', repaired the facilities, provided gas supply and acquired sows. In the first three years the production was at a commercial loss. However, new technologies (the farm possesses artificial inseminator, the only one in the Bryansk region, and the farm equipment meets European standards), better selection of feed and breeds proved a success. In 2005 the farm produced 520 tons of meet and earned good profit. At the beginning of 2006 the pig stock was over 6300 heads (about one quarter of the pig stock in all farms of the Bryansk region, pigs held in households excluding), and 7000 in 2008, with meat production increased to 760 tons.

The farm provides 130 jobs and the work conditions are good. The modern pig farm has little in common with those of the former collective farms. Its facilities are clean, sanitary regime is strict, workers have to get a shower before starting their work and use special clothes. Labor organization and discipline at working places are high. Half of workers are local people from Shelomy settlement, others come from the town of Novozybkov – the rayon Centre. The director general of ZAO 'BIO-M' moved to Novozybkov from Moscow and brought his family with him. Staff recruitment was not easy, especially in the beginning. The pig farm was short of qualified specialists. After difficult start, among others due to large worker's turnover, in 2009 the Chief Executive Officer of ZAO 'BIO-M' believes the farm business operations stabilized for several years now thereby bringing economic stability in the region. In his opinion, to improve the situation in the affected territories first, people have to desire to work, and second, access to bank credits at 'normal' interest rates (instead of as high as 25% which banks required) is needed.

## **UKRAINE**

As a part of area development approach UNDP has supported community development process in the affected areas. A large number of rural community organisations have grown up to the level when they are registered as NGO and can independently apply for grants, although the management of NGO requires lots of expertise and a very strong leadership is

needed to run a community organisation. To make the community development process more sustainable UNDP has supported creation of NGOs at the district level which are more expert-organisation and cooperate with community organisations to support the grant development. Local NGOs are capable to establish and maintain partnership between local authorities, community organisations, and business as well as attract financial resources to satisfy needs of local population, The story of Lystvyn village and Ripky district NGOs are described below.

## Village of Lystvyn in the Process of Revitalization and Development

The village of Lystvyn is situated 40 km to the west from the city of Ovruch, Zhytomyr Region, which belongs to the 3-d zone of radiological contamination – Zone of Voluntary Resettlement. The population of the village is over 1,500.

During the 1990s, the existing infrastructure of the village, which includes a school, an agricultural enterprise, a post office, a kindergarten, forestry, and a Culture Centre (Budynok Kultury), were heavily underfinanced, thus resulting in the eventual decay. Lystvyn also suffered from such after-effects of the Chernobyl accident as: high levels of migration, a decline in agricultural production and negative branding of Chernobyl-affected areas, which led to a reduction in potential investments.

In May 2003, the village Lystvyn started cooperation with the UNDP Chernobyl Recovery and Development Programme in Ukraine (CRDP<sup>33</sup>). Village residents decided to improve their life through the process of self-organisation. The Community Organisation (CO) was founded to address socio-economic issues. At the general meeting CO has defined priorities for the local development and set up an organizational committee. Since 2005 CO is legally registered as NGO that gave it the right to hold a bank account and a seal, two legal requirements for cooperating with different national and international donors. This in turn helped to develop projects of larger scale and achieve better results.

Community organization in cooperation with local and district authorities, business and CRDP have successfully implemented a number of projects: reconstructed local bath, equipped and rebuild ambulatory centre, established youth centre.

These projects improve life in the settlement. For example, the youth centre gives the local community the chance to gain basic knowledge of using a computer, study other subjects and foreign languages with the help of computer programmes, type and print documents, print a local information bulletin, copy and scan documents. The Gym and resource centre gives an opportunity for physical trainings, conducting lectures, group training sessions in journalism, embroidery and knitting. There is even a “Village Cinema” with the use of a Multimedia Projector.

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<sup>33</sup> UNDP Chernobyl Recovery and Development Programme [www.crdp.org.ua](http://www.crdp.org.ua)

On average, the centre's services are used by 25 people from Lystvyn and nearby villages' on a daily basis. During the first year after the centre was opened, more than 700 people have used its services. In total, only in the first year locals visited the centre more than 6,500 times.

The Association implemented 3 projects with the help of grants and 7 projects with their own resources. It actively cooperates with local governments and donor organisations. In 2007, the Association submitted a grant proposal "Water Purification System" to the Embassy of Japan with the total budget USD31 683. The community organisation of Lystvyn competed with other NGO's from all over Ukraine. Earlier experience in preparing the grant proposal helped in their efforts and the community organization successfully implemented the project.

Lystvyn is as a positive example of development and improving of living conditions for neighboring villages and through sharing their experience with other communities in the region it assists the development of the entire region.

### Centre for Economic and Social development of the Ripky Region

NGO "Centre for Economic and Social development of the Ripky Region" was founded on December 18, 2007 and consists of ten members who specialize in areas of business, education, law, and government in an attempt to ensure comprehensive skills for creating and implementing development projects. The aim of the Ripky NGO is to promote the growth of small and medium businesses, general economic growth, and the protection of social, cultural, and economic interests of community members in their dealings with authorities, government, businesses, and other organisations.

The Ripky Economic Development Centre have been trained by UNDP on how to write grant proposals, assess needs, prioritise activities, communicate your goals, manage conflicts, etc.

Thus already in 2009 the Ripky NGO has got a grant from the International Renaissance Foundation and supported 9 community projects in 8 villages of the district.

In addition, the NGO succeeded in competition for USAID grants. They have conducted a number of surveys, designed and discussed through public hearings the regional Strategic Development Plan. As result the key areas for development were defined, the plan was approved by the District authorities and is implementing. During 2011 the Ripky NGO is successfully managing ICT centre and conducts classes on computer literacy, has planted a park in Ripky town and supported renovation of sport ground in Oleshnia village. At the moment they are working on the project to improve local hospital and medical treatment in remote villages.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> For more information about the organization, see: [www.ripkyrgo.blogspot.com](http://www.ripkyrgo.blogspot.com).

## Korosten city and the role of local authorities in overcoming the consequences of the Chernobyl accident

Korosten, situated in the Zhytomyr region in the north of Ukraine, is the biggest settlement in Ukraine that was affected by radioactive fallout (72 thousand inhabitants in 1986, ranked to the 3<sup>rd</sup> zone of radioactivity). Under the management of the Mayor of the City (elected in 1998), with the support of team of professionals, the city of Korosten has managed to overcome majority of consequences of Chernobyl accident.

### ***Chernobyl accident effects on Korosten***

From the first hours after the Chernobyl accident 2.5 thousands of Korosten its citizens of different occupations voluntary participated in radioactivity neutralizing operations, with almost every family members involved in them. Proximity to the Chernobyl NPS and lack of information on the consequences of the accident gave rise to a number of psychological, social and economic problems in the city. The status of Zone of Voluntary Resettlement supported resettlement of people from the city, following which by mid 1990s the number of inhabitants shrunk to 62 thousands people. As for 1 January 2008 the number of population recognized as Chernobyl-affected and eligible for subsidies was 62 thousands, of which 1016 were liquidators, 2192 – handicapped due to Chernobyl accident, and over 13 thousands were children. Deterioration of demographic parameters, negative birth rate, and high levels of migration – all these factors negatively affected human potential of the city.

### ***Strategy applied by local authorities to improve socio-economic position of the city***

- 1. Partnership building:** One of the first recovery activities was to build partnership between local authorities, business, and communities for city development. This included favourable regulatory policy (37 regulatory decisions promoting the development of business were approved) and more effective problem-solution dialog. In addition, the town strengthened links with those citizens of Korosten who worked at regional and state level administration or were deputies to the Supreme and Regional councils, to lobby interest of the city and help to solve Chernobyl problems.
- 2. Strategic plan for development** of the city until 2014 was developed and approved (August 2005). It enabled to plan the city expenditures program-target budgeting.
- 3. Development of international cooperation.** City council started cooperation with a number of international organizations that supported its development projects, such as: UNDP Ukraine, the Dutch VNG project, the Ukraine-USA Foundation, US AID, the Swiss Agency of Cooperation and Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland, American Welfare Fund, and Mak Arturov.

4. Korosten concluded **twinning agreements** with many cities to exchange experience on local development, self-management, community development, democratization, government decentralization, quality improvement of municipal services, encouragement of investment projects and improvement of business climate. Presently Korosten has twin-city partnerships in Germany, Italy, Poland, Netherlands and Lithuania. Next to this, the city invited experts from many other countries (including France, Germany, Poland, USA, Belarus, Russia, Israel, and Italy) to share experience on crisis management.

*Examples of successful measures in Korosten*

**a) In the area of lessening of psychological and social stress**

- In 1990 the Interregional Diagnostic Centre rendering medical services to Korosten citizens opened with the support of the Government of Japan.
- In 1999 Information Department of the City Council (with support of Kingdom of the Netherlands) established Information and Advisory Centre on Social Issues.
- In 2000, the Centre for Social and Psychological Rehabilitation was established (with support of the UNDP Ukraine). The Centre employs 20 professional psychologists, social workers, trainers, and PR-specialists, and it offers individual consultation for children, teenagers and adults on different problems; psycho-diagnosis; psychotherapeutic and modifying group studies; trainings; lectures, seminars, etc. On average, the Centre is attended by 20 thousands people per annum.
- Improvement of city recreational facilities through building local recreational park, installment of monuments to local heroes (Kniaz Mal and Kniahynia Olga), and opening the museum of World War II, "Skelia".

**b) Supporting economic development:**

- The City Council was among the initiators of adapting of the Law of Ukraine 'On the Special Regime of Investment Activities in the Priority Development Territories in Zhytomyr Oblast' (December 29, 1999) that helps improve investment activities in the rayon.
- In 2005, with the support of UNDP Chernobyl Recovery and Development Programme, the Korosten Economic Development Agency was established. It associates entrepreneurs of the city and supports improvement of business environment.
- In 2006 Korosten hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chernobyl Forum on Economic Development;
- In 2007 the city initiated the establishment of "Technopark", i.e. a separate territory that will have all communication and sanitations facilities needed to "plug in" industrial establishments.

## **Summary of results**

By 2009 Korosten became a desired livelihood, ranked second in terms of industrial output in the region and often visited by tourists. Due to dynamic social and economic development the city was repeatedly a winner in different domestic and international competitions. The vision of city's development is outlined in the *Strategic Plan of Development of Korosten City by 2014*: 'attractive and comfortable city, offering high standards of living for its inhabitants, a well-off and active community'. Employment opportunities, high wage rates, pleasant atmosphere in the city, all these factors contribute to rising population of Korosten, which is presently 67 thousands (according to data of the Korosten City Council as for 1 January 2009).<sup>35</sup>

### **Business opportunities of Polissia: success case of an export oriented enterprise in the Ovruch rayon of the Zhytomyr oblast**

Traditionally, Ovruch rayon was the mushroom Centre of Zhytomyr, Polissia. However, after the Chernobyl accident Polissia forest non-timber products had no demand at the national market because of widespread radiation phobia. Local mushrooms and berries processing collapsed. Many qualified workers lost their jobs. Pieter Verhasselt, a Belgium businessman, started up his firm Champilz in Slovechne village, Ovruch district of Zhytomyr oblast, in 2007. Mr. Verhasselt bought a bankrupted cannery and invested in modern equipment for brine, blanching mushrooms and deep-frozen ones. Now Champilz employs more than 10 workers on permanent basis, provides 20 seasonal jobs and offers additional income for hundreds of local people who collect mushrooms and berries and sell them for factory processing. Champilz is one of the largest taxpayers in the Ovruch rayon.

Annually Champilz exports to Europe, mainly to Germany, up to 500 tone of forest mushrooms and berries in brine and deep-frozen, and is the leader among Ukrainian exporters of non-timber forest products. Mr. Verhasselt plans to expand his business in the Polissia region by establishing new canning factories and to send to Europe products ready for direct consumption.

Of course, as everywhere, some problems do arise. But there is good understanding and cooperation with local authorities, workers and suppliers, which helps to solve them with goodwill on all sides. "I must not try to change Ukrainian lows, habits and mentality. I must adapt myself" says Mr. Verhasselt.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> For more information see: <http://korosten.osp-ua.info/>

<sup>36</sup> Champilz Mushroom&Berries Ukraine, Zhytomyr region, Ovruch district, s.Slovechne, 30, Zhovtneva str. 11122 Tel/fax: (3804148) 51855; e-mail: [champilz@inbox.ru](mailto:champilz@inbox.ru)

## The Chernobyl Economic Development Forum

*The Chernobyl Economic Development Forum (ChEDF)*, initiated by the UNDP, was launched in 2005 by the representatives of central and regional authorities, local self-governance authorities, businesses, international and national governmental and non-governmental organizations. The ChEDF's activities are directed to contributing to economic recovery, creating conditions to elaborate a successive strategy of economic development for affected territories, drawing the investments, strengthening and developing civil society.

Each of the ChEDF's meeting was devoted to different aspects of economic development:

- First ChEDF meeting has been conducted on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2005 in Chernihiv and targeted to discuss the idea of the concept and format of the forum;
- Second ChEDF, 4-5 of October 2006 in Korosten (Zhytomyr region) discussed foreign investments and economic development;
- Third ChEDF, 2-3 of November 2007 in Borodianka (Kyiv region) looked at innovative business practices, corporate social responsibilities and strategic planning;
- Forth ChEDF 27<sup>th</sup> of November in Kyiv was devoted to the perspective outlooks of effective lands-use in Chernobyl affected territories;
- Sixth ChEDF 25<sup>th</sup> November in Korosten promoted best practices on attracting investments in Polissia area, in particular the established industrial park and positive branding of areas.

Among those who presented their experience at ChEDF were heads of central and local bodies of executive authorities, self-governance; representative of businesses, investment and consulting companies, potential investors, especially companies-members of the UN Global Compact in Ukraine as well as representatives of the embassies of Canada, Poland, Switzerland, delegation of the European Commission in Ukraine, leading experts in the field of socio-economic development, trade missions of Italy and Japan, representatives of foreign and national NGOs, community organisations and mass media.

The forum provides an opportunity for business, local authorities, NGOs and community members to discuss their vision of development and to negotiate possible solutions to existing problems. For example, the presentation of successful waste management project at ChEDF in Borodianka has been used by Korosten town and less then in six months the Korosten city has started waste management programme.