

## The United Nations and Chernobyl



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## A unified message of hope for Chernobyl-affected communities

In line with a shift in strategy from humanitarian assistance to development aid, [UNDP](#) assumed responsibility for UN-wide coordination of Chernobyl issues in 2004.

This site is a UN platform for international cooperation on Chernobyl. It contains a depository of UN official documents on Chernobyl nuclear accident as well as the updates from UN Coordinator of international cooperation on Chernobyl.

The UNDP approach is largely based on the findings and recommendations of the 2002 report, [Human Consequences of the Chernobyl Nuclear Accident: A Strategy for Recovery](#), which outlines a shift from humanitarian to development assistance and emphasizes the need to overcome a culture of dependency that has emerged in the affected communities.

UNDP's outlook on Chernobyl is also consistent with the findings and recommendations of the UN Chernobyl Forum, a platform established in 2003 by [IAEA](#) in cooperation with UNDP, [WHO](#), [UNEP](#), [UN-OCHA](#), [UNSCLEAR](#), [FAO](#) and the [World Bank](#) as well as the authorities of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. The findings support the notion that, at the community level, poverty and lack of socio-economic opportunity are the biggest danger for the Chernobyl-affected areas of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

The concluding conference of the Chernobyl Forum (held in Vienna in September 2005) endorsed UNDP recommendations for an adjustment of broader economic and social policies that will spur economic development of the region. The proposed solutions will tackle the priority problems faced by affected countries, communities and individuals and will be implemented on the Chernobyl-affected territories of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. These solutions, which build both on fieldwork in Chernobyl-affected communities and UNDP's development experience worldwide, will address the following three areas.

**1. Information.** Recent research has shown that people in the Chernobyl region still lack the information they need to lead healthy, productive lives. Information itself is not in short supply; what is missing are creative ways of disseminating information in a way that induces people to change their behavior. Moreover, propagation of healthy lifestyles is at least as important as providing information on living safely with low-dose radiation. To improve the population's mental health and ease fears, community activists will be mobilized to deliver truthful and reassuring messages to dispel the misconceptions surrounding Chernobyl.

**2. Policy advice.** In an effort to facilitate a reorientation in spending on Chernobyl, UNDP offers recommendations on policy change to the governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. These efforts will focus on overcoming the culture of dependency that has developed among many affected communities, and on targeting scarce funds to the truly needy as well as to investments that promote growth and new jobs. Specific policy proposals include an overhaul of zoning definitions and regulations to reflect conditions now recognized to be safe for habitation and commercial activity; a reorientation of health care spending towards better primary and preventive care; and a radical overhaul of Chernobyl benefits and privileges, so that the needy are covered by an efficient mainstream social welfare programme covering the entire population.

**3. Community development.** UNDP's experience in applying a holistic "area-based development" approach aimed at restoring a sense of community self-reliance by showing local residents that they themselves hold the key to their own recovery, will serve as a template for community-based efforts across the region. Expanding early successes in Ukraine to Belarus and the Russian Federation, this effort will emphasize community empowerment, building a spirit of activism, and helping overcome "victims' syndrome," as residents re-build basic infrastructure and meet other urgent needs. Cross-border linkages will build on the opportunities that such cooperation can bring for the people of the three Chernobyl-affected countries.

As a result of UNDP's assumption from OCHA of responsibility for UN-wide coordination of Chernobyl efforts, the UNDP Administrator became the UN Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl. Under his leadership, UNDP is working on promoting synergies in development work and ensuring communication, coordination and cooperation among many agencies involved in Chernobyl recovery efforts. For more information, including on [UN Coordinators](#) and [history of the UN and Chernobyl](#), click on any of the links above.

### Key Events

**International Conference "Twenty-five Years after Chernobyl Accident. Safety for the Future"**  
*Kiev, 20-22 April 2011* – For more details visit the UN in Ukraine [website](#).

**Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl**  
*New York, 26 January 2011* – The United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl took place today in New York.

**General Assembly Adopts Resolution on Minimizing Effects of Chernobyl Disaster**  
*New York, 15 December 2010* – General Assembly adopted today a Resolution on strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster ([document A/65/L.25](#)).

**Maria Sharapova gives \$250,000 for UNDP Chernobyl projects**  
*Gomel, Belarus, 2 July 2010* – During a two day visit to Chernobyl-affected areas of Belarus, Maria Sharapova [announced](#) a personal contribution of \$250,000 to expand a UNDP-supported programme that provides sports and physical activities for youth in the region

**Maria Sharapova heads to Belarus to visit youth**  
*Geneva/New York, 24 June 2010* – UNDP Goodwill Ambassador Maria Sharapova will head from the 2010 Wimbledon tournament to Belarus to visit Chernobyl-affected areas. [Go to Press Release](#)

**24th anniversary**  
*New York, 26 April 2010* – A meeting to commemorate the 24th anniversary of Chernobyl featured a presentation by EBRD on safe shelter construction. UNDP Associate Administrator read a [statement](#) attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General

**New UNDP documentary**  
*New York, 24 April 2009* – UNDP produced a [documentary](#) on Chernobyl-affected communities 23 years after the accident.

**Archive of Chernobyl News** [more...](#)