

UN in Russia – joint activities in 2010 and perspective for 2011

Background

The traditional technical assistance-based cooperation between the Russian Federation (RF) and the UN initiated in the face of the 1990's crisis, and somehow exceptional in the country's history, has come to an end. The transition to market economy is now over, and the country's indicators have returned to their pre-crisis levels. On the global stage, beyond its permanent membership in the UN SC, and within the new global governance architecture, the RF has been increasingly asserting its role in development, financial, environmental and security matters. Accordingly, the country has started to recalibrate its relationships with a number of partners, including the UN. From a recipient of assistance, it has become an emerging donor whose international development policy prioritizes multilateral organizations for aid delivery, CEECIS and emergency operations as beneficiaries, and support to the MDGs. The adaptation of global norms and access to international good practices are key strategies for the country and the backbone of an evolving partnership with the UN agencies, as honest, credible and neutral facilitators.

Highlights of UN in Russia joint efforts in 2010 were determined by the following developments:

The 2010 joint UN in Russia efforts were implemented in the spirit of the Millennium Declaration in the areas of high relevance and added-value for the host country. Emphasis was put on increased coherence and efficiency of UNCT work aimed at strategic review and planning in the changing operational environment. At the same time special attention was paid to the activities implemented at regional level.

Human rights based approach remained at the core of the UN's activities. It was ensured inter alia by the presence of an OHCHR human rights advisor to the UNCT.

The bulk of joint efforts were undertaken by the UN theme/working groups, to which the Office of the RC provides on-demand support.

Key areas of joint cooperation included, but were not limited to the following:

1. Support to national efforts towards **promotion of human development** in Russia through inclusion - Joint UN in Russia efforts towards early ratification of the UN Convention on rights of persons with disabilities by Russia. Particular attention was paid to promotion of e-accessibility standards among policy makers, public/private stakeholders, etc.
2. Support to national efforts towards **sustainable and equitable regional development** - Joint efforts aimed at sustainable integration and recovery in the North Caucasus. Regional media development. Promoting responsible private investment in the regions.
3. Support to **gender equality** - The Theme Group on Gender strengthens its efforts towards becoming a bridge between the civil society and official stakeholders on gender related aspects. Russia's CEDAW report was reviewed by the Commission, conclusions and observations are available and widely used by the TG promoting the idea and measure for re-establishing national gender mechanism.

Perspectives for 2011

Taking into consideration the new format of the UNCT in Russia in the absence of the Resident Coordinator and due to very limited funding available, the Team agreed to focus on efficiency of internal coordination mechanism, as well as to outline key topics as cross-cutting and corresponding to the priorities of the host country. The key aspects of the workplan 2011 include:

- Joint events (and the international year of youth as a key motive) on gender, human rights, rights of persons with disabilities (e-accessibility)
- Internal coordination and planning
- Strengthened UN joint communications efforts
- Awareness raising of UN staff in Russia (learning opportunities; social events - "green" initiative around the international year of forests)
- Increased operational efficiency (common services/premises)