

Address to Readers

It becomes more apparent year by year that human development and its quality are now the determining factors for success of social and economic transformation in any country of the world. The 10th National Human Development Report looks at the most important objectives in this field for Russia and the world at large in the conceptual framework of the Millennium Development Goals, which were put forward by the UN for the benefit of humanity, and approved by the global community and by Russia.

As many of the MDGs are intended primarily for developing countries, the authors of the Russian Report had to answer difficult questions: How could these MDGs be interpreted for our country? What are the proper targets for their achievement? What could constitute indicators of relevant progress?

These questions can only be answered by analyzing a wide range of problems that are topical for Russia. These problems include: increasing income levels and eradicating poverty; improvement of people's health and the acute demographic situation; reform of all levels of education; environmental protection; and Russia's place in the global partnership of nations.

I would like to draw attention in particular to the methods and approaches used in this Report. Following practice of the Millennium Development Goals, the Report on Russia makes extensive use of the triad "goals-targets-indicators". A similar conceptual approach is employed in programme documents of the Russian Government, for example in the Consolidated Report "Goals, Targets and Indicators for Activities of the Subjects of Budgetary Planning (i.e. Federal Ministries, and Federal Agencies and Services managed by the Government of the Russian Federation)" (2004).

In the Consolidated Report all government goals are grouped into four main blocks: "Increasing the level and quality of life of the population"; "Increasing the level of national security"; "Securing high rates of sustainable economic growth"; and "Creating potential for future development". We were guided in choosing many of these goals by international experience, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The "goal-target" approach is increasingly used for design of local socio-economic programmes in Russian regions. Another merit of the Report is its attempt to offer a scenario for Russia's development up to the year 2015.

I am pleased to note that Report authors have liaised closely with state representatives, experts from the Centre of Strategic Development, and Government officials. Fruitfulness of the discussions and meetings, which have taken place, is reflected both in Chapters of the Report and in boxes and inserts prepared by specialists in Russian ministries and agencies.

This Report is a creative and innovative work for Russia, and one might take issue with some of the goals and indicators, which it describes. But value of the Report's professional analysis of social and economic problems, its forecasts and development scenarios for different situations, is beyond doubt. I am convinced that this Report is a good basis for further discussions in society, the Government and the scientific community aimed at development of goals for human development and ways of achieving them in Russia.



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Deputy Chairman
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Dear Readers!

I am proud to present to you the 10th annual edition of the Russian National Human Development Report – a publication produced jointly by the United Nations Development Program, the United Nations Country Team in Russia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia. In 2005, the report is special in a number of ways. First, as the title “Russia towards 2015: development goals and policy priorities” suggests, it discusses the strategic outlook for the country’s development – an ambitious task in itself. Second, the report tries for the first time to relate the human development dimension to the Government’s development priorities through the lens of the customized Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Third, while remaining the product of a group of independent national experts, it has been produced through a highly participatory exercise with contributions from various UN agencies working in Russia and from Government structures.

The report includes an in-depth analysis of the so called “MDG+” agenda for the Russian Federation. MDG+ is a concept developed to enable adaptation of the MDGs to each country’s particular context, which in the case of the middle-income countries implies setting goals and targets beyond the global goals. Each chapter of the Report is dedicated to one of the key human development challenges Russia is facing today and proposes an interpretation and a formulation of the goal/indicator relevant for Russia.

The key issues include regional income differentiation and remaining pockets of deep poverty, unequal access to education and some of the basic social services, persistent gender stereotypes, alarming rates of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis prevalence as well as low life expectancy rate

aggravated by behavioral, social and environmental patterns. These among other aspects of socio-economic development are looked at in the context of the current economic situation, ongoing policy processes inside the country and from the viewpoint of international experience. The authors analyze positive as well as negative trends, and assess possible future scenarios.

Furthermore, the Report also looks at Russia’s emerging role as donor and provider of technical assistance. In the context of the MDG+5 Summit in New York in September 2005 and Russia’s Presidency of the G-8 in 2006 the Report highlights Russia’s unique challenge to continue coping with internal development issues while becoming one of the driving forces in the global fight against poverty.

I trust the Report represents a valuable analytical tool for decision makers, civil society and the expert community and will thus serve the purpose of furthering Russia’s human development potential.



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