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Field visits

Report on the field visit to Ukraine*

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* The collection of data required to present the Executive Board with the most current information has delayed submission of the present document.

I. Introduction

1. A delegation of the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA composed of representatives of El Salvador, Eritrea¹, Gambia, Indonesia, Japan, Peru², Romania, the Russian Federation and Yemen, accompanied by officials from the secretariat of the UNDP and UNFPA, visited Ukraine from 10 to 16 May 2004 (see the annex for a detailed list of participants).
2. The purpose of the Executive Board field visit was to see first hand the extent to which assistance of the United Nations system is making a difference in the lives of the Ukrainian people, particularly with respect to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Ukraine.
3. During the week-long mission, the delegation met with several high-level government officials, including H.E. Ivan Kyrylenko, Vice-Prime Minister for the agricultural sector; H.E. Mykola Invanovych Derkach, Minister of Economy and European Integration; H.E. Valerii Tantsiura, Deputy Minister of Family, Children and Youth; H.E. Andriy Pidaev, Minister of Health; H.E. Valerii Kyrychenko, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs; H.E. Viktor Kotsemyr, Governor of Vinnitsa Oblast (Region) State Administration. Discussions with the United Nations team were followed by field visits to project sites supported by UNDP and UNFPA, including the Listvin village and community affected by the Chernobyl nuclear plant disaster and the Military Humanitarian Institute in connection with the training of military cadets in HIV/AIDS prevention and safe behaviour. These visits provided the delegation with valuable insights into the role and work of UNDP and UNFPA in Ukraine.
4. The delegation wishes to thank the Government and the people of Ukraine for their generous hospitality and for the extensive, candid discussions. The delegation would also like to express its sincere appreciation to the staff of UNDP and UNFPA, as well as their civil society counterparts, for the excellent preparation of the visits. Special thanks go to UNDP Resident Representative, a.i., Manoj Basnyat and UNFPA Assistant Representative Borys Vornyk.

II. Background on Ukraine

5. Ukraine, which borders with seven other Eastern European countries and the Black Sea in the south, is commonly referred to as the 'geographic centre of Europe'. It is one of the largest countries in Europe in terms of territory and the second highest in population (49 million). Ukraine is richly endowed with natural mineral resources, having numerous rivers, lakes, forests and plains, and extremely fertile soil. It is a country with an ancient culture and tradition.
6. The year 2001, which brought real, positive change in economic growth, was a turning point in the history of Ukraine as an independent nation which had been experiencing great difficulties as an economy in transition during the previous ten

¹ Mr. Tesfa Alem Seyoum, Counsellor/Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations, was selected rapporteur of the mission

² Mr. Marco Balarezo, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Peru to the United Nations, was selected team leader of the mission

years. Since 1992, the United Nations system has been building partnerships for poverty alleviation, democratic governance, energy and the environment to tackle some of the fundamental challenges of Ukrainian life.

III. Political and socio-economic context

7. The tremendous change that has taken place in Ukraine over the past 11 years as it moved through its triple transition to statehood, democracy and a market economy is commendable. There has been marked progress towards the Ukrainian vision of a modern society progressing towards European standards. Successful reform policies led to an economic turnaround in 2001 marked by significant growth, productivity increases, reasonable inflation, and a nearly balanced budget.

8. The real gross domestic product (GDP) of Ukraine grew by about 8 per cent in 2003, marking a fourth consecutive year of economic growth. The fastest growth was registered in manufacturing, housing, wholesale and retail trade and transportation. This progress was underpinned by a prudent demand management strategy, strong fiscal and monetary policies, a considerable improvement in the trade and services balance, and accelerated privatization.

9. Sustainable efforts are under way to further advance structural reforms, maintain a sound macroeconomic policy, strengthen the tax system, improve the investment climate and create an enabling environment for the private sector. Notwithstanding these efforts, significant challenges still persist for Ukraine to achieve its vision for the future:

- (a) Poverty, affecting 25 to 30 per cent of the population;
- (b) Diminishing access to key social services such as health care;
- (c) Severe pressures on the natural environment;
- (d) A rapidly spreading HIV epidemic, especially among young people between 15 and 29 years of age;
- (e) Mass hidden and disguised unemployment;
- (f) Depopulation resulting from a mortality rate higher than the birth rate.

10. While Ukraine possesses an extraordinary pool of human capital and natural resources, the root issue that will determine the speed and success of forward movement will be the adaptation and reform of institutions, policies and human resources – including the gender perspective – that are needed for Ukraine to reach its expressed vision. The country faces a rising HIV/AIDS rate and environmental problems remain a great challenge. Sustainable human development is hindered by the long-term consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, which diverts considerable national resources from social and economic spending.

IV. Ukraine and the Millennium Development Goals

11. Ukraine is deeply committed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In the different meetings that took place during the visit, the delegation of the Executive Board observed a firm, high-level political commitment to the MDGs on the part of the Government and civil society. This commitment has been demonstrated by the delivery on 23 September 2003, in New York, of its first Millennium Development Goals report (MDGR) from President Leonid Kuchma to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

12. Ukraine has adapted the MDGs to its own circumstances and national strategies; and this is having a positive impact on policy planning and citizens' priority setting. In 2003, the Government, with the support of the United Nations country team (UNCT) and other partners, launched a comprehensive strategy document entitled *Millennium Development Goals for Ukraine*, which projects human development in the country to the year 2015.

13. Importantly, the comprehensive set of targets and indicators in that document are tailored to the national development circumstances and, in some ways, they seem to aim higher than do the global MDGs. This proactive approach is further evidence of how Ukraine sees its commitments under the Millennium Declaration and other international agreements as a national priority.

14. Ukraine is among the leaders in the regional MDGs promotion campaign. Furthermore, the MDGs have been incorporated into many policy documents at the national and regional levels, including the economic and social development strategy up to 2011 which was recently adopted by Presidential decree. The principal aim is to convert the achievement of stable economic growth into growth in income and a higher standard of living for the average citizen and the full development of human capital.

15. The Ukrainian MDGR has become not only a tool to focus domestic action and to present the challenges facing the country to the international community, but also a common platform for discussing the development of Ukraine for the 'key players' in the country. It is encouraging to note that the MDGs have elicited wide interest among young people. In the First All-Ukrainian Youth Summit held in October 2003, participants expressed ownership of the Ukrainian MDGs and adopted recommendations on what needs to be done to achieve them. Towards that end, youth MDGs networks have been set up all over the country.

16. As a country whose economy is in transition, Ukraine attaches particular significance to Goal 8 of the MDGs, "Develop a global partnership for development", since it is a primary vehicle to full integration into the world economy and equitable access to the international trade and financial systems. To that end, Ukraine is pursuing two global partnership goals: integration into the European Union and accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

V. The ‘European choice’

17. Ukrainian authorities attach primary importance to the development of a strategic partnership with the European Union. A policy document entitled, “European choice: fundamentals of the strategy of economic and social development in Ukraine for 2002-2011” defines Ukraine’s integration in the European Union as a strategic objective for the country and prioritizes the establishment of conditions conducive to its attainment. This objective has been accepted virtually across the political spectrum and represents the collective and current Ukrainian vision.

18. Ukraine has combined the attainment of the European standard with the achievement of the Ukrainian MDGs. In this way Ukraine would be able to achieve both goals at the same time. This would also clear the way for its membership in WTO, which is part of its vision.

VI. United Nations development assistance framework for Ukraine

19. Guided by national goals, the global commitments of the Government of Ukraine – including the MDGs – and analysis undertaken in the United Nations common country assessment (CCA), the United Nations development assistance framework (UNDAF) for Ukraine identifies priority areas for assistance.

20. The strategy of the United Nations system is to concentrate efforts on adapting the human capacities of the country to meet the needs of a modern economy, and on the further development of institutions that govern and provide services to meet the needs of the people most efficiently. The UNDAF represents the blueprint that has been agreed with the Government of Ukraine for United Nations support. The UNDAF is the broad basis for individual United Nations organizations to use in their subsequent programming exercises to support Ukraine in reaching its many national goals, including the MDGs.

VII. Ownership

21. Ownership of programmes is at the centre of this process. The Government of Ukraine indeed ‘owns’ all UNDP- and UNFPA-supported programmes and projects in the country. The Executive Board delegation was pleased to note that the Government consults UNDP and UNFPA every step of the way in the development and implementation of its programmes.

VIII. Partnership and coordination

22. The Government of Ukraine expressed its appreciation of UNDP and UNFPA activities, stressing their effectiveness, transparency and responsiveness to the

priorities of the Government. Good interactions with the UNCT as a whole were also highlighted.

23. Both UNDP and UNFPA have excellent communication and strong working relationships and with the Government and civil society in the country. UNDP and UNFPA enjoy strong partnerships with all the government agencies whose projects they support. These healthy partnerships have contributed tremendously to the effectiveness of United Nations work in Ukraine.

24. The Government has also a number of bilateral partners which assist in different sectoral projects involving the United Nations system. The Government of Ukraine greatly appreciates the advocacy and coordination role of UNDP and relies on it to achieve common understanding among all partners about priorities and interventions. As was expressed by various officials, the Government of Ukraine believes in 'the neutrality of the blue flag' to coordinate development assistance.

25. The resident coordinator system is working effectively in Ukraine. In this regard, HIV/AIDS has proved to be a unifying issue between the Government, the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the United Nations system.

The business centre

26. The establishment of business or service provision capacities in UNDP offices to facilitate client-responsive, country-specific delivery of operational support services has been a major area of innovation. In Ukraine, the business centre has been an integral part of the UNDP office since November 2001. It combines functions of the programme support unit and operations, thus becoming the central service provider for clients. The business centre in Ukraine now functions as a decentralized, high-quality, effective and timely service provider.

IX. Cost sharing

27. Several Ukrainian officials expressed the view that cost sharing allows the Government to be fully involved and to make implementation of the programmes and projects more efficient and effective.

28. The delegation of the Executive Board noted that UNDP had been successful in developing partnerships with the Government, non-government, private sector and international donor communities for each of its programmes and projects. It has used its core resources effectively to provide the platform for coordination as well to channel donor resources. The cost sharing ratio for 2003 was 1:4 (for every dollar from the core, another \$4 was mobilized). With approximately 12 bilaterals, the European Commission and the World Bank, around \$8 was delivered for every dollar from the core in 2003. This demonstrates the increasing trust and confidence of the Government and international donor community in using UNDP to channel support to priority and critical programmes and projects. During the meetings with Government officials, the delegation of the Executive Board noted the significant role played by UNDP in coordinating technical assistance.

X. The contribution of UNDP

29. UNDP activities in Ukraine started in 1992 subsequent to the formal independence of the country in 1991. The Executive Board adopted the second country cooperation framework (CCF) for Ukraine (2002-2005) during the first regular session in February 2002. For the three-year period, an estimated \$4.8 million will be made available from UNDP core resources. An additional \$10 million should be mobilized from non-core resources. UNDP support in Ukraine will focus on three interrelated and mutually reinforcing programme areas: (a) strengthening democratic governance; (b) promoting human security and development; and (c) enhancing environmental protection and sustainable development. Gender mainstreaming will be an integral part of all these activities.

30. The review of the first CCF, which was completed in 2000, noted that despite limited financial resources UNDP has been an important development partner in Ukraine. Since it enjoys the confidence of the Government, civil society and donors alike, UNDP has been successful in helping the authorities build national capacity and respond to both the immediate and long-term needs of Ukrainian society.

31. UNDP priorities in Ukraine are to help achieve the MDGs and pursue the 'European choice' for the country by supporting the transition to a democratic system of government and a market-driven economy, maximizing the social well-being of the people. The objective is to generate sustainable growth that promotes human development.

32. While the major work of UNDP – promoting the country's reform process – is long-term in nature, a number of significant short-term results towards that end have been achieved in 2003:

(a) Completion of the country's first UNDG report, which in effect opened possibilities for UNDP to partner with the World Bank and other United Nations organizations in common programming and donor coordination.

(b) The UNDP agriculture policy team provided strategic input in a number of key areas: credit mechanisms; commodity exchange; land management; and support to the WTO negotiations. These changes created a positive environment for the Ukrainian farmers.

(c) Two flagship projects in Crimea and Chernobyl helped promote local self-governance, attracting broad-based donor support and contributing to knowledge sharing in the region. They also provided a platform for the development of small and medium enterprises, which will be a primary target in 2004. Support in the Crimea is directed at maintaining peace, social harmony and development; it can be studied as an example how UNDP is working to prevent multi-national conflicts.

(d) The UNDP commitment to strengthening democracy, human rights and accountable governance is evident from its support of the transformation and development of youth as future citizens of a democratic society. UNDP is supporting the transformation of municipal authorities by ensuring citizen participation and provision of public services. This work is being done through the UNDP-assisted projects for peer education, municipal sustainable development, Rivne energy efficiency and participatory governance. The delegation had the opportunity to visit the energy project in Rivne.

(e) UNDP Ukraine has established the image of a knowledge-based organization among the Government, donors and other partners. The country office witnessed the impact of the 2003 release of four strategic UNDP documents on key sectors: the national human development report (NHDR) on decentralization; a special edition NHDR on HIV/AIDS; a gender analysis; and an e-readiness assessment.

(f) The spread of HIV/AIDS is a danger to which Ukrainian society needs to be alerted. UNDP is at the centre of this effort and has been instrumental in mobilizing leaders behind national efforts to minimize new infections and respect the rights of those living with the virus.

33. In 2004, UNDP's assistance to Ukraine focuses on six areas:

Participatory governance

34. The country faces the challenge of further developing political, legal, and judicial systems that respond efficiently to the needs of citizens. UNDP is responding to these priorities through support to human development policies, the development of participatory governance, and strengthening integrity through transparency, accountability and respect for human rights.

Prosperity through poverty alleviation

35. Ukraine has been experiencing economic growth since 2000, and this trend is expected to continue. Nevertheless, 25 to 30 per cent of the population continues to live in poverty, and the majority of families face difficulty in meeting food needs (although Ukraine does not suffer from the kind of extreme poverty typical of low-income countries). UNDP is responding by supporting the Government in implementing its national poverty reduction strategy, which was launched in August 2001. These efforts include helping to develop strategies and policies on social and economic development with the Ministry of Economy and European Integration (utilizing the UMDG framework); promoting agricultural reform and development; advancing economic opportunities for the poor; and working with the Ministry of Education on the curricula and skills needed to support a modern economy.

Crisis prevention and recovery

36. The Government continues to face human security challenges. In the Crimea Autonomous Republic, support for the resettlement, integration and development of about 260,000 formerly deported persons is still needed. In the Chernobyl region, around 400,000 people continue to face the enormous challenge of overcoming the social, economic, ecological and human consequences of the nuclear catastrophe. UNDP is responding to these priorities by promoting the integration of the multi-ethnic community through social and economic initiatives in the Crimea, and by helping the communities in Chernobyl-affected areas towards social, economic and

ecological recovery. Another activity is preparation for destruction of PFM (butterfly) landmines.

Information and communication technologies

37. Only 10 per cent of Ukrainians currently have access to the Internet. To address this problem, UNDP is supporting Government efforts to develop information and communication technologies (ICT) through policy interventions and rural access. These interventions include: e-readiness assessment; e-policy and ICT development; private sector development; and enhancement of access to e-services. The ICT work of UNDP in both policy and field efforts will improve opportunities for foreign direct investment in this sector; enable e-access for 80 to 100 per cent of rural areas; and widely expand ICT use in schools.

HIV/AIDS

38. With approximately 1 per cent of the population between the ages of 15 and 49 infected, Ukraine is on the threshold of a nationwide HIV epidemic. The rate of spread of HIV cases is the highest in Europe, with a 20-fold increase over the past five years. If the problem is not addressed urgently, some 1.44 million people could be infected by 2010. The United Nations system has developed the *Act Now* programme in response to the Government's own HIV/AIDS prevention initiative. UNDP is helping the Government craft policies and implement care and prevention initiatives.

Energy and the environment

39. Ukraine produces about 6 per cent of global carbon dioxide emissions, primarily due to inefficient industrial technology and energy systems. It has the highest emission level per unit of GDP of any country in the Commonwealth Independent States. It should be noted in this regard that earlier in 2004 Ukraine ratified the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. UNDP is responding through the development of sustainable development policies, biodiversity conservation in the Prypiat region, and urban environment governance. In 2004, UNDP Ukraine is focusing on maximum tapping of the Global Environment Facility resources for climate change, biodiversity and international waters. UNDP will support the Government in conducting an assessment of the national capacity to implement international environmental conventions; creating a sustainable niche for 'wing' farms in the south; and addressing the high level of greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency pilot programmes in Rivne, landfill efforts in Odessa, and the sustainable management of forest resources in the Carpathian region.

XI. Activities of UNFPA in Ukraine

40. UNFPA has been active in Ukraine since 1997, when it initiated its first project in support of the national family planning programme. Since then, UNFPA has been able to achieve substantial positive results with limited funding and has become a well-recognized agency in the country despite its small representation. The UNFPA experience in Ukraine demonstrates that when resources are well targeted and respond to specific country needs the impact can be great, even if the funding is small. At present, UNFPA does not have a full-fledged country programme of assistance for Ukraine; it operates through a set of projects covering a variety of programme areas.

41. In line with the new country office typology approved by the Executive Board in 2002, the Ukraine country office became a type II office with 3 regular posts. There are also 6 project staff members. The UNFPA representative in Romania serves as the country director for Ukraine.

42. UNFPA works closely with other United Nations agencies, including the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). As a member of the UNCT, UNFPA actively participated in the preparation of the first CCA/UNDAF, which will end in 2004. A new CCA/UNDAF process has started in 2004, and the second UNDAF will start in 2005. The Fund is participating in joint United Nations initiatives to support the achievement of the Ukrainian MDGs. In particular, UNFPA-supported programmes address the MDGs related to maternal health, child health and HIV/AIDS. The Fund is also involved in UNCT efforts to promote United Nations reform, simplification and harmonization, and improved coordination between United Nations organizations. Programme stakeholders include the State Statistics Committee, and the ministries of health; education; children, family and youth; the interior; and defense, as well as NGOs and community-based organizations. The following are key areas of UNFPA programme support:

Reproductive health

43. *Developing reproductive and sexual health care services.* UNFPA supports the implementation of national strategies in reproductive and sexual health by providing technical support to the ministry of health and specialized health care facilities. The Fund has provided technical assistance to enable the Ukraine public services to provide medicine and counseling in this area. The Fund supports the integration of reproductive and sexual health services into primary health care services to scale up the quality and accessibility of services in all regions of the country. It has supported the development of a national strategy for reproductive health commodity security. Under the national programme for family planning and reproductive health, contraceptives provided by UNFPA have helped cover the country's needs over the past three years. As a result of expanded support for reproductive health and family planning services during the past few years, major reproductive health indicators such as maternal and infant mortality and morbidity and the number of induced abortions are on the decrease.

44. *Promoting reproductive health and reproductive rights.* UNFPA provided training during 2000-2002 to national medical and social service providers on reproductive rights, including promotional, educational and communication materials in every region of Ukraine. About 100 journalists were trained with the support of UNFPA in media coverage of reproductive health and reproductive rights.

45. *Improving the reproductive health of refugees.* The Fund collaborates with UNHCR to provide quality reproductive health services to refugees from other countries living in Ukraine. NGOs working with refugees have received UNFPA-supported training.

46. *Promoting safe behaviour among adolescents and youth.* During 2000-2003, in collaboration with UNICEF, UNFPA provided support to develop and establish a youth NGO network known as 'Krona'. Training in strategic planning, fundraising, peer education and behaviour-changing communication has been provided to these NGOs. The Fund continues to work with youth organizations and universities and has provided inputs to their summits and conferences. It has also supported a series of lectures on reproductive and sexual health for students of the journalism department of the National Taras Shevchenko University of Kyiv.

47. *Combating the spread of HIV infection.* UNFPA is an active player in the joint United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS prevention in Ukraine known as *ACT NOW* and the integrated work plan of United Nations agencies on HIV/AIDS. Several UNFPA-supported projects are specifically aimed at preventing HIV infections. UNAIDS has provided funding for a number of UNFPA-supported HIV prevention activities. UNFPA is supporting preparatory activities to introduce condom 'social marketing' in Ukraine so as to increase condom use for the prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS. The Fund supports HIV-prevention activities focusing on vulnerable groups, including injecting drug users and commercial sex workers. The Fund, jointly with UNICEF, supports activities focusing on male involvement in reproductive and sexual health promotion. UNFPA activities, along with the efforts of UNAIDS, UNICEF and other institutions, have raised the level of understanding of this epidemic in the general public, especially among women and youth.

48. *Preventing STI/HIV.* Since 1999, UNFPA has implemented a series of successful education projects to prevent STI/HIV infection and promote safe behavior in the Ukrainian armed forces and internal forces, with a special focus on peacekeepers. Project activities have been replicated in other countries of the region, namely, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Turkey. A similar project is being implemented for the police force, with special attention to human rights education. UNFPA has helped promote partnerships among the uniformed services for comprehensive and coordinated STI/HIV prevention coverage of personnel, including staff from the ministry of defense, the ministry of the interior, the State security service, the tax police and the border guards.

49. *Addressing the special needs of people in Chernobyl-affected areas and in the Crimea.* UNFPA provides support, jointly with UNDP and UNESCO, to address the reproductive health needs of people in the Chernobyl nuclear blast-affected areas and in the Crimea (the Crimean reintegration programme for formerly deported persons of Crimean-Tatar origin). Specifically, UNFPA provides training on reproductive and sexual health for social workers from special state-run Chernobyl rehabilitation centres providing services to the victims. In the Crimea, UNFPA

supports youth NGOs of Crimean Tatars to promote safe reproductive health behaviour, knowledge and skills. Tatar community-based organizations and NGOs are part of the UNFPA/UNICEF-supported network.

Population and development

50. In the area of population and development strategies for Ukraine, UNFPA provided technical assistance to the ministry of health for preparation of the national programmes on family planning (1997-2000) and reproductive health (2001-2005). The state statistics committee utilized UNFPA technical support and expertise to organize and conduct the 2001 national census. The national management information system on reproductive health indicators was developed and introduced with the support of UNFPA.

Gender

51. *Promoting gender equality and preventing human trafficking and violence against girls and women.* In 1998, UNFPA supported a national survey on violence towards girls and women and conducted a series of training workshops on assisting victims of violence and sexual abuse. In this connection, appropriate Independent Electoral Commission materials were produced. During the period 1998-2000, UNFPA organized workshops on gender equality for women's NGOs. UNFPA closely collaborates with the International Organization for Migration, UNHCR and La Strada – an international NGO – to promote the reproductive and sexual health of migrants and trafficked persons.

XII. Observations and recommendations

52. The Executive Board delegation traveled by road outside the capital, Kyiv, to five administrative regions known as *oblasts* to visit a number of UNDP- and UNFPA-supported projects that deal with health care, community development, governance and agriculture. The regions were Vinnitsa in the South, Chernobyl (the location of the nuclear accident) in the North, Zhytomyr and Rivne in the Northwest, and Kyiv. The Rivne visit involved an overnight stay. During the week-long visit to Ukraine, members of the Board met with 14 high-level government delegations, exchanged views with five civil society audiences and conferred in a roundtable with leading NGOs in the capital city of Kyiv. The delegation conducted two formal briefings, one at the beginning and one at the end of the visit, with local UNDP and UNFPA staff.

Observations

53. The mission to Ukraine was without a doubt a valuable and revealing experience. However, it would have been useful to spend more time to appreciate the full extent and impact of the work of UNDP and UNFPA. The delegation felt that it would have been appropriate to allocate more time for interaction with the UNCT. The inclusion in the programme of debriefing sessions on the results of the day was very helpful. It allowed members of the delegation to exchange views, enhance their common perspective of the activities of UNDP and UNFPA and arrive at shared observations and conclusions that provided guidance and input to the report on daily basis.

54. The delegation of the Executive Board witnessed the importance and value of UNDP and UNFPA assistance to Ukraine as a country with its economy in transition showing signs of economic growth and macro-economic stability. In this context, the mission would like to highlight, first and foremost, the catalytic nature of such assistance and the coordination role of the United Nations organizations, which are of special value to countries such as Ukraine that possess high-quality human resources and great development potential.

55. Using small programming resources, the UNDP and UNFPA country teams manage to mobilize substantial extra-budgetary funding for programme activities which correspond to their respective mandates and to the national developmental priorities of the country. The relevance of such assistance is substantiated by the high level of international expertise, neutrality, transparency, timeliness and quality of response. All these factors contribute to high demand for UNDP and UNFPA cooperation, as was observed by the visiting delegation.

56. From discussions with government officials and civil society, especially the young, the Executive Board delegation observed the expressed determination of the Ukrainian people to change things for the better, focusing on their future gains rather than their past losses. They are fully committed to achieving the MDGs within the framework of the "Fundamentals of the strategy of economic and social development of Ukraine for 2000-2011", encompassed in the 'European choice'.

57. The delegation was pleased to witness a strong partnership between UNDP, UNFPA and the Government at all levels: national, regional and local. This working relationship has not only given UNDP and UNFPA a positive image, but has brought respect for the United Nations as a whole. The Government and Ukrainian society have a high regard for and trust in the United Nations. The delegation also noted the important role of the involvement of the Parliament in the achievement of the MDGs.

58. In the Chernobyl-affected region, the delegation learned that around 400 000 people continue to face serious challenges of overcoming the social, ecological and medical consequences of the 1986 nuclear power accident. Seven per cent of the national budget goes to financing activities aimed at mitigating these consequences. UNDP is responding to these priorities by helping the affected communities to achieve social, economic and ecological recovery. Despair is gradually changing to hope, self-reliance and self-governance. The United Nations and donor countries are working together, but much remains to be done. In particular, there is a need for continued international support in focused areas of health, environmental protection,

socio-economic rehabilitation of the affected populations and regions, and research and information gathering.

59. The visit highlighted the importance of national ownership and national capacity for effective implementation of UNDP and UNFPA projects. In this regard, the delegation noted the high human capacity pool in the country. Ukraine also has a very good medical, social and information infrastructure whose effective usefulness could be further maximized. Availability of this infrastructure has made it possible for UNFPA projects to integrate medical, social and informational or educational services related to reproductive and sexual health, as well as youth networking promotion activities.

60. The delegation noted that the country office is almost a non-core programme, with only 40 per cent of its activities funded from the regular budget. Sixty per cent of its funds for programmes in the country have to be sought from elsewhere. It also noted the success achieved by UNDP in developing partnerships as well as in mobilizing non-core resources. The UNDP country programme is largely non-core-based. In this regard, the mission encourages UNDP to mobilize additional non-core resources in support of the objectives of the country cooperation framework (CCF).

Recommendations

61. Given the positive reputation that UNDP and UNFPA have as organizations of the United Nations, considered reliable and valuable partners for development, the delegation believes that the United Nations should continue to strengthen its advocacy, catalytic and coordination roles to overcome the different challenges that the country faces, and to harmonize and mobilize future increased international support. For example,

(a) The country's human capital, history and culture, and natural resources are powerful springboards for development. The strategy of the United Nations system should concentrate its efforts on adapting the human capacities of the country to meet the needs of a modern economy and further develop institutions that govern and provide services to efficiently meet the needs of the Ukrainian people.

(b) Taking into account the recent transfer of coordination functions for United Nations Chernobyl-related activities from OCHA to UNDP, resource mobilization is of critical importance to future work of the programme in this field.

(c) UNDP and UNFPA should consider possibilities for utilization of high quality expertise and technical know-how and experience available in Ukraine for UNDP and UNFPA programmes and projects in developing countries and economies in transition.

(d) UNDP and the Resident Coordinator should be encouraged to maintain their commendable partnership with the Government and the excellent coordination role exhibited so far.

62. The results achieved by UNFPA in Ukraine, including the impact on the reproductive and sexual health of the people, as well as the high level of interaction between the Government and UNFPA are highly commendable. Given the demographic challenges that Ukraine faces, including, inter alia, negative

population growth rates and low fertility, a more programmatic approach is recommended. The delegation, therefore, recommends that UNFPA:

- (a) Could consider the possibility of developing a country programme for Ukraine;
- (b) Should strengthen its commendable work in integrating medical, social and information/education services related to reproductive and sexual health, as well as youth networking and promotion activities.
- (c) Should strengthen its efforts to assist the Government in addressing the issue of low fertility and depopulation, including by continuing to promote reproductive health policies and healthy life styles.
- (d) Is commended for its work with the uniformed services and is encouraged to continue to share the lessons learned with countries in other regions.

Annex

List of participants UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board field visit to Ukraine 10 to 16 May 2004

Regional group Country	Name and title	Previous participation, if any
Western Europe and other States Japan	Ms. Yuko Ishizawa Second Secretary Permanent Mission	
African States Eritrea Gambia	Mr. Tesfa Alem Seyoum Counsellor/Deputy Permanent Representative Permanent Mission Mr. Lamin Faati First Secretary Permanent Mission	
Asian and Pacific States Yemen Indonesia	H.E. Mr. Ahmed Al-Haddad Ambassador Permanent Mission Ms. Nina S. Djajaprawira First Secretary Permanent Mission	Senegal (February 2002)
Latin American and Caribbean States Peru El Salvador	Mr. Marco Balarezo Deputy Permanent Representative Permanent Mission Ms. Vanessa Interiano Counsellor Permanent Mission	Ecuador (May 2003)
Eastern European States Romania Russian Federation	Ms. Cristina Răduță Third Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr. Evgeny Stanislavov Senior Counsellor Permanent Mission	Honduras (March 2001) Guatemala (March 2004 on behalf of the UNICEF Executive Board)

Note: The team was accompanied by Ms. Ranjana Dikhit, UNFPA Senior Reports Officer and Ms. Marcela Romero, Executive Board Associate