Make every mother and child count

In 2005, as every year, the World Health Day (WHD) was marked on 7 April. The theme of this year is mother and child health with the slogan: "Make every mother and child count".

In the North Caucasus, recognition of the World Health Day is particularly vital, as Ingushetia and Chechnya are among the regions of the Russian Federation with the highest rate of maternal and infant morbidity and mortality and birthrate.

On 7 April WHO facilitated and organized in three republics of the North Caucasus a number of activities, including:

- Distribution of WHO World Health Day toolkits to interested health organizations and information material on mother and child healthcare to the MoH of Chechnya and Ingushetia;
- Lectures on legal aspects of protecting human life by representatives of state health facilities and school teachers;
- Round table discussions with participation of MoH officials, WHO representatives and leading MCH specialists, focusing on strengthening the provision of mother and child healthcare in the region;
- Airing TV episodes, recognizing the main theme of 2005 World Health Day, etc.

On the same day, the newly reconstructed surgery unit of the Republican clinical hospital in North Ossetia-Alania and a new Republican centre for adolescents' rehabilitation "Kind Heart", were opened, and a conference on first aid assistance in emergency situations facilitated by the Ministry of Health and State medical academy, was held in Vladikavkaz.

Information about WHD can be found on the WHO website [www.who.int/world-health-day](http://www.who.int/world-health-day).

WHO missions to Chechnya

Nozhaï-Yurt and Vedeno Districts

In April and May 2005, WHO visited health facilities in Nozhaï-yurt and Vedeno districts. Facilities in both districts incurred significant damage during military activities in 1999-2000. The central district hospital in Vedeno was fully destroyed and the majority of ambulatory and FAP are seriously damaged.

Health facilities in Nozhaï-Yurt are supported by MDM. Three district hospitals, two ambulatory centres and nine FAPs receive regular drugs, consumables and selected medical equipment.

WFP carries out school-feeding programme in 53 schools and 3 kindergartens as well as some food-for-work projects.

Vedeno district is supported by MSF-Holland providing essential drugs and medical consumables to the central district hospital in Vedeno and district hospital in Mahkety villages.

WHO assessed the central district hospital (CDH) in Vedeno village, the FAP in Tsa-Vedeno village, the ambulatory in Elistanzhi, Khattuni, Tevzini villages and the district hospital in Mahkety village.

Full report is available from WHO Moscow.
Humanitarian assistance in Ingushetia and Chechnya

2002-2005

WHO compared information on health services provided by humanitarian organisations in Ingushetia and Chechnya between 2002 and 2005 years. In 2002 there were 30 organisations operating in the health sector and in 2005 still 24. Main humanitarian activities were focused on support of state and non-state health posts, operation of mobile medical teams, drugs and medical equipment distribution, individual medical assistance, psychosocial rehabilitation and capacity building components, including various training courses.

In 2002 all health posts supported by humanitarian organisations (10) were located in Ingushetia, with only one organisation maintaining its health post in Chechnya. In 2005, six organisations support health posts in Chechnya and five in Ingushetia.

Three organisations operate mobile medical teams in Chechnya; in Ingushetia seven organisations in 2002 and four in 2005.

The number of organisations involved in drug distribution in Ingushetia reduced as well (from 12 in 2002 to 9 in 2005). In Chechnya drugs are distributed by ten organisations in 2005 as in 2002.

Seven (in 2003 ten) humanitarian organisations deliver medical equipment to Chechen facilities and five deliver to Ingushetia.

The number of organisations providing individual medical assistance as well as reference for out-of-town treatment has changed from six in 2002 to two in 2005 for Ingushetia and seven to four for Chechnya.

Psychosocial rehabilitation projects have been traditionally popular and equally represented in both Republics with their reduction in Ingushetia (from 10 in 2002 to 7 in 2005) and 12 organisations running such activities in Chechnya. The main difference is that Chechen projects were initially implemented mainly by local Chechen NGOs, while at present they are run also by international humanitarian organisations.

Capacity building projects including various training courses for health and non-health experts have been growing and expanding in both republics. There is a definite prioritisation by humanitarian organisations to couple aid delivery with strengthening local capacity building. In 2002 there were four organisations involved in capacity building programmes; 12 in 2005 for Ingushetia and six in 2002 and 15 in 2005 for Chechnya.

WHO continues distribution of WFP food commodities to the Republican TB service in Ingushetia. In April-May a total of 200 people received food assistance.

WHO funded participation of four Chechen and Ingush TB and HIV state experts in the scientific and practical conference “TB in HIV infected patients” taking place in Moscow, on 25-26 May, 2005. The conference was organised by the Russian Ministry of Health and Social Development, Federal AIDS Centre, Federal TB/HIV Centre in cooperation with international organizations and with support from Open Health Institute and World Health Organization.

IMC carries out educational learning sessions on TB issues in Ingushetia. The programme covers 30 settlements in Nazran and Sunzha districts where IDPs are tested for TB and also receive TB information material.
Health situation

MoH of Chechnya reports serious problems in implementation of the latest federal law N122 on payment of monetary compensation (“Benefits law”) in the Republic. An assortment of some 350 various drugs is available in Chechnya with 250 of them distributed to assigned 7 state pharmacies in Grozny and 14 in rural areas. Lack of computers and computerised network required for drugs distribution registration is one of the main constraints. Another problem is the absence a complete list of people in need of federal and republican drugs assistance.

Grozny city administration reports numerous sites in Chechnya containing radioactive waste with possible long-term health implications for the general population.

Emercom requests equipment for detection and training courses on diseases related to radioactive environment.

Health assistance

IRC supplements 550 children in 10 IRC-supported schools in Ingushetia and 1377 children in 5 schools in Chechnya with iron tablets and carried out follow-up haemoglobin testing on all children taking iron-supplements. IRC conducted awareness trainings on nutrition and hygiene in relation to helminthes and anaemia prevention in all their schools.

In addition to regular supply of medicines and medical consumables to ten hospitals in Chechnya, one in Ingushetia and one in Dagestan, ICRC provided in April a wide range of medical (Kurchaloi and Urus-Martan regional hospitals) and laboratory (Gudermes and Nadterechny regional hospitals) equipment. As well, ICRC donated over 900 vials of insulin to ten policlincs of ICRC-assisted hospitals. The Republican Blood Bank in Grozny received the 2nd quarter supply of medical donations. ICRC made a special donation of emergency assistance for the flood victims in Dagestan to two ambulatory in the Khasavyurt region of the republic.

MDM continued monthly assistance programme within its “rural medicine” project in Nozhai-Yurt district of Chechnya. Each of the assisted district health facilities (14) received required instruments and equipment (scales, fridges, growth measures, etc.) Three district hospitals received generators, dentist equipment and other instruments.

18-25 May IMC organized a training course on first aid assistance for 24 doctors from Grozny-Selsky and Achkhoi-Martan districts of Chechnya in Nazran.

World Vision published 1000 booklets on acute respiratory infections treatment for distribution in Chechnya.

Epidemiology and immunization

SES of Russia issued a decree to carry out an additional polio and measles immunisation in Chechnya and Ingushetia in April-May 2005.

UNICEF procured and distributed to 17 district and city hospitals in Chechnya and eight hospitals in Ingushetia 153,000 disposable syringes to facilitate the implementation of routine vaccination activities. As well, UNICEF initiated procurement of cold chain equipment for primary and secondary health care facilities in both republics.

HIV/AIDS

Chechnya

The Republican AIDS centre in Chechnya reports 116 new cases registered in 2004. According to the latest information, there are 493 HIV cases reported in Chechnya, including 78 women and 27 children, registered in the period from 1989 to 2005. The majority of registered HIV infected patients is drug-users.

Out of 27 children, 17 were born from HIV-positive mothers.

There were 31 mortality cases, including one woman and seven children since 1989. The main mortality causes among HIV/AIDS infected people are tuberculosis and cardiovascular diseases.
60 Chechen people are in need of antiretroviral treatment. 21 HIV infected people suffer from co-infection with TB and 18 persons – from hepatitis B and C.

Federal funding is not sufficient for test-systems, laboratory equipment and the planned expansion into rural areas.

**Ingushetia**

452 HIV infected people were registered in Ingushetia from 1999 to April 2005. In 2005 (January- April) eight new HIV cases were detected.

The most common HIV transmission route is through intravenous drug use and a growing number of sexually-transmitted cases. It is estimated that 45% of registered drug users are HIV infected.

The number of HIV infected women has remained the same (21,4%) in 2003 and 2004. In 2005 no new cases among women have been registered yet.

There were 24 mortality cases 1999-2004. The funding situation is critical – allocated federal and local budgets are insufficient and there is a strong need for treatment, care and prevention activities.

On 18 May, the **International Memory Day**, commemorating the victims of AIDS, the NGO Nizam and CPCD conducted, with UNICEF’ support, a variety of activities, including lectures, drawing contests, concerts and a tree planting campaign, with the involvement of students, senior schoolchildren, local authorities, social and health care providers both in Ingushetia and Chechnya.

**UNICEF** continues its programme on raising the awareness on HIV/AIDS and promoting healthier life styles among young people and teenagers in Chechnya and Ingushetia. Youth Information Centres and Youth Friendly Clinics were established in Achkhoi-Martan and Grozny (Chechnya) and in Malgobek (Ingushetia).

**WHO** published 5000 copies of a booklet on HIV prevention, prepared by PIN. The booklets were delivered to the Anti-Aids Centres in Ingushetia and Chechnya for further distribution to adolescent population.

**WHO** donated baby food to the Republican AIDS centres in Grozny and Nazran for further distribution among HIV infected mothers.

**IRC** conducted six trainings on HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness, targeting youth population in Ingushetia.

**Mother and child health**

**UNICEF** continues to implement its Mother Empowerment Programme in partnership with **HF**. Two training teams of health professionals targeted pregnant women, lactating mothers and mothers with children under five on breastfeeding, adequate nutrition, immunization, early treatment of common childhood illnesses and HIV/STI prevention. In May, sessions were held in TACs addressing 36 beneficiaries daily. In Ingushetia, 30 IDP women from Galashki village received similar training.

In April-May **IRC** continued its Safe Motherhood groups in Grozny, where 48 pregnant women received 8-hours of training each month on pre- and post-natal care. Safe motherhood kits were provided to women ending the course. Individual psychosocial counselling on request was offered to the participants.

**Action contre la faim (ACF)** provides hygienic kits to newborn and to pregnant women, participating in regular training courses run by a local Chechen NGO “**Sintem**” on the basis of Care
Canada centres, and also to women in maternity wards in Grozny.
The NGO published 1000 booklets on mother and childcare for distribution in rural areas of Chechnya.

IMC carried out a training course on family planning and reproductive health for 38 health staff, including 14 from MoH of Ingushetia, in Nazran.

MSF-France sponsored participation of three Chechen doctors from the central maternity hospital in Grozny in a one month certified course in Moscow.

Water and sanitation

UNICEF/PHO water purification and distribution in Grozny reached the capacity of 751 cubic metres daily, following the installation in April/May of eleven new water bladders. About 105,000 residents of Grozny are regularly served with potable water by 20 trucks through 263 water distribution points. The quality of water, as well as disinfection and technical maintenance of the machinery and equipment, is regularly checked by the Sanitary Epidemiological Service (SES).

UNICEF continues hygiene and sanitation education activities, in cooperation with the City Education Department of Grozny and the republican SES, promoting safer hygiene practices and healthier life styles. Teachers and SES specialists work with children in 51 schools and kindergartens in Grozny, as well as with families and communities in TACs, targeting totally 30,000 school and pre-school children and 12,320 TAC residents.

IRC continues to provide water and sanitation services to the war-affected community in Ingushetia and in Chechnya, and to remove garbage and sewage. An additional water tank and several garbage containers were installed in Ingushetia in April. In Chechnya, IRC was engaged also in disinfection of water tanks and conducting pest control in several hospitals, as well as distribution of hygienic kits to population.

Beslan update

According to the MoH and MoE of North Ossetia as of end of May, 58 children have been diagnosed as ‘disabled’, with different degrees of severity, following the injuries received during the Beslan events of 1-3 September 2004. Other 275 children are considered to have received various internal lesions, injuries, psychosocial trauma, etc.
The MoE of North Ossetia and the Republican Psycho-social Rehabilitation Centre in Vladikavkaz continue the implementation of UNICEF-supported psycho-social rehabilitation project. In April, 25 traumatised children received individual counselling sessions, 25 families from Beslan received information material on the availability of psychosocial services. Five psychologists from the Moscow-based “Broken Flower” organized a two-week counselling session for children from three schools and one kindergarten in Beslan. On 17-22 May, specialists from R. Wallenberg’s international university ensured the monitoring/supervision of the work of the Centre’s psychologists, providing 40 hours of ad-hoc counselling for trainers involved in the rehabilitation and recovery programme. They also assisted parents and teachers of affected children through 12 out-reach counselling sessions and 4 parents’ meetings.
A group of the most traumatized children has been sent to Saint Petersburg for a two-week rehabilitation programme.

On 15 May the Russian Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent opened a psychosocial rehabilitation centre in Beslan. The new centre is part of the programme “We are together”, planned to be operational until summer 2006. Furthermore, the RRC handed over a microscope for otolaryngological surgery, an artificial lung ventilation machine and a specialized surgery table to the Central Clinical Hospital in Beslan. This equipment will allow carrying out complicated surgeries, avoiding sending patients to other regions of Russia.
Mental health

WHO completed a comparative analysis of 2002 and 2004 surveys on psychosocial conditions of Chechen population in long-term emergencies. Both surveys covered four regions of Chechnya: Grozny, Gudermes, Urus-Martan, Achkhoi-Martan and a control group from the less war-affected Nadterechny district during the 2nd survey. The outcomes of the analysis showed that: prevalence of psychic disorders among adult Chechen population decreased (75.7% in 2004 versus 86.3% in 2002) as well as the level of distress in senior pupils (46.6% in 2002 to 31.4% in 2004) and the number of senior pupils, having experienced psycho traumatic events (69.3% in 2002 and 36% in 2004).

Anxious disorders and social dysfunction are the predominant mental problem of today. Chechen population is increasingly using tranquilizers and other psychoactive medicines (35% men and 5.5% women in 2004 versus 28% and 2.2% in 2002). Psycho-somatic complaints among patients of territorial policlincs are much higher in 2004 (1.32) than in 2002 (1.04).

MSF-Holland’s programme of psychosocial assistance in Chechnya continued along the three following lines: emergency assistance in two hospitals in Grozny and Achkhoi-Martan, psychosocial assistance in six TACs in Grozny and in TB departments of three hospitals in Gudermes, Shali and Nadterechny. Psychologists also carry out regular individual and groups sessions, providing help to patients, their relatives, medical personnel, etc. In TACs, MSF-H operates a mobile team, visiting once a week each of the TACs, also conducting individual and group sessions. In the TB departments, a counsellor assists patients, their relatives and medical staff. In Ingushetia, MSF-H covers 23 IDP settlements in Sunzha district. Mobile counselling teams work once a week in each settlement, conducting individual and group sessions. Those in need of psychosocial assistance can also apply for help to the inpatient clinic, opened by MSH-H in the Central Republican Hospital, where the counsellors work four times a week.

IRC continues implementing its psychosocial programs, providing counselling for war-affected families and teachers. In Ingushetia psychosocial support was provided to 300 children, 67 parents and 30 teachers. In Chechnya, 342 children, 71 parents and 76 teachers received psychosocial counselling.

36 disabled children received psychosocial support at the Psychosocial Rehabilitation Centre in Grozny, supported by UNICEF, through LSG, in April. Treatment included various therapies, aimed to help children improve their self-esteem and decrease aggression and uncertainty. LSG psychologists also provide outreach counselling sessions for parents.

Twenty-two CPCD staff members finished training in the Chechen State University.

In April CPCD organized the seminar on “Art therapy and clownery” in “Assa” hotel in Nazran. 70 CPCD staff and people from other NGOs participated in two seminar sessions.

DENAL experts held two trainings on psychological issues. e.g. Adequate communication and care for distressed children and Development of communication skills with children for preschool teachers from the NGOs Denal, Berkat and Open Continent in Nazran. There were 20 participants in each course.
**Assistance to the disabled**

24-28 May **ICRC** conducted its regular annual training course on emergency surgery for 27 regional experts from Chechnya in Sochi.

On 26-28 April **Handicap International** held in Nazran a three-day's training course on cerebral palsy for 20 health specialists from 9 assisted facilities. A similar course was held in May for parents of children, having cerebral palsy.

**List of abbreviations:**

- **DRC:** Danish Refugee Council
- **EPI:** Expanded Programme on Immunization
- **FAP:** Feldsher/obstetric post
- **GP:** General practitioner
- **HI:** Handicap International
- **ICRC:** International Committee of the Red Cross
- **IDPs:** Internally displaced persons
- **IMC:** International Medical Corps
- **IMSM:** International Management System for Mine Action
- **IR:** Islamic Relief
- **IRC:** International Rescue Committee
- **LSG:** Lets Save the Generation
- **MDM:** Médecins du Monde
- **MoH I:** Ministry of Health of the Republic of Ingushetia
- **MoH RF:** Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation
- **MoH Ch:** Ministry of Health of Chechnya
- **MSF-B:** Médecins sans Frontières-Belgium
- **MSF-F:** Médecins sans Frontières-France
- **MSF-H:** Médecins sans Frontières-Holland
- **PHO:** Polish Humanitarian Organization
- **PTSD:** Post-traumatic stress disorder
- **OCHA:** United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
- **SARC:** Saudi Red Crescent Society
- **SES:** Sanitary Epidemiological Surveillance
- **TAG:** Temporary accommodation centre
- **UNICEF:** United Nations Children's Fund
- **UXO:** Unexploded ordnance
- **VOM:** Voice of the Mountains
- **WHO:** World Health Organization

**Other news**

**WHO** distributed April and May 2005 editions of the “Bulletin for health care managers in Russia”, prepared by WHO Zdravinform health data base project and WHO Documentation centre in Moscow. The topics of the issues were Drug policy and Quality of health care services. The bulletin can be obtained at [http://zdravinform.ru](http://zdravinform.ru)