

**The interview**  
**by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the UN**  
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**EER: *What are the economic priorities of Russia in co-operation with the UN?***

– An undisputable priority for Russia in the work of the UN in the sphere of economics is the complete revealing of the UN organisations' potential, while meeting the specific socio – economical challenges facing the world community.

Today it is evident for everybody that humanity has reached a new phase of its development, it is the era of globalisation. Each country of the world without exceptions realizes the most critical task – not to allow a situation when prosperity, wealth and technological progress of some countries are next to poverty and underdevelopment of the majority. As a permanent member of the Security Council and one of the leaders of world community Russia must – and this is its historical mission – facilitate to discovering of efficient and correct political solutions in matters of development, environmental protection, social progress.

**EER: *What are the main socio-economic activities of the UN?***

– In the area of poverty extirpation and implementation of the sustainable development concept, the goals formulated in the Declaration of the Millennium – ‘The Goals of Development at the Turn of the Century,’ adopted in 2000, have become a strategic guideline for international cooperation under the UN auspices, as well as resolutions of such important global forums as the International Convention for Financing of Development in Monterrey (2002) and the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (2002).

Taking place in September ‘Summit 2005’ is the key activity of the UN. Its aim is to observe the realisation of these solutions. A final document of the Summit is destined to present

a detailed program of specific measures to solve the actual socio-economical problems of contemporaneity on the international and national levels.

The 'Big Eight' Summit in Gleneagles, UK contributed a lot to consensus building in the forthcoming steps. The package of large-scale solutions was adopted during this meeting. These solutions were destined to make progress in fighting poverty and development, in the first instance in Africa.

The 'Eight' group came to agreement to write off the stale debts completely for some Heavily Indebted Poor Countries with the highest level of debts to International Monetary Fund, International Development Association and African Development Fund. The 'Eight' decided to provide with additional resources in order to prevent the descending of financial potential of International Financial Institutes. The 'Big Eight' group's and other donors' contributions will have resulted by the year 2010 in the growth of official aid to Africa Development in \$25 bln annually, which is twice as much as in 2004.

As far as Russia was concerned it wrote off and assumed obligations to write off the debts of African countries for the sum of \$11.3 bln, including the \$2.2 bln within the framework of Heavily Indebted Poor Countries program. Besides that the Russian Federation is viewing the opportunity to write off completely the debts of the poorest countries with huge indebtedness. These countries do not suite the criterion of official aid for development. As a result the indebtedness of these countries will drop for the sum of \$750 ml.

***EER: In what spheres does the RF have practical co-operation with the UN and organisations within the UN System?***

– One of our main tasks in the UN is the effectiveness of the work of its organisations, engaged in operations. They are its funds and programmes. We work actively in managing departments and closely and effectively cooperate with its secretariat.

Besides that the Russian Federation has been getting and gets from the UN evidently helpful technical assistance, aiming to fight through the transitional period to market economy, integration into world economy, our social problems solution.

The assistance of the UN through its organizations (UN Development Program, UN Children's Fund, UN Population Fund, etc.) has some prominent advantages. It bears a voluntary non-political character, and it is we who determine its objects and scope of functionality in accordance to established priorities of national development. The UN possesses high-level technical expertise, has the opportunity to react quickly on the aid requests, worked-out technique of donors' search and investors' attraction.

It is a matter of fact that the financial possibilities of the organizations entering UN are reasonably limited. In our opinion it is not the sum of allotment what matters but its catalytical influence. Thus for example, a relatively small sum on the scale of our country \$700 000 – \$800 000, annually received from Program of Development of the UN, has allowed to attract donor funds of \$40 mln in total from different sources from the Russia projects in the spheres of infrastructure development ('Contribution to the marine ports' development in Russia'), environmental protection (' Preservation of biodiversity of water – drilling lands in Lower Volga. '), management streamlining ('Support of justice effectuation concerning juvenile delinquency'), small and medium-sized enterprises support ('Competitive recovery of small and medium-sized Russian enterprises'). It is very important that the UN tends to be oriented on national realisation of projects, meaning that primarily Russian specialists are engaged in projects (more than 90 % of projects of Programme of Development of the UN in Russia are realised by Russian specialists).

Speaking about practical cooperation with organisations of the UN I would like to mention that alongside with the acceleration in the rates of socio-economical development of Russia our country actively starts to play a role of a donor (we kept on being a donor during the period of receiving aid).

**EER: *What role does the UN play in humanitarian problem solving?***

– The humanitarian direction is one of the foreground problems in the UN order-paper. More and more attention is given to cure of effects of natural and technogenic catastrophes, solving the refugees and displaced persons problems, food aid to distressed population.

Recollecting the recent catastrophic tsunami in the south and south-Eastern Asia, we can not help noting effectiveness and efficiency of unprecedented humanitarian operation held under the auspices of the UN. Starting from the first days of catastrophe the UN actively managed the coordination of international cooperation in rendering of humanitarian assistance for suffered countries.

We did not stand aside from all these high-souled efforts as well. Up to the present moment the total sum allotted this is \$30 mln approximately.

Currently one of the main tasks for the world community and primarily for the UN is to draw a lesson from the tsunami and work out necessary measures determined to prevent natural catastrophes after effects and improve the readiness of the countries to overcome aftermaths.

**EER: *And lastly, What does the UN undertake in the sphere of environmental protection and sustainable development?***

– It is difficult to overestimate the contribution of the UN into transformation of sustainable development concept into working ideology of international co-operation aiming to provide all countries of the world with worthy living conditions and socio-economical progress while preserving the nature. This conception was born in the UN during the UN Conference on the environment and development in Rio de Janeiro. Currently the UN realises in practice the solutions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development of the year 2002 in Johannesburg. The Commission of Sustainable Development plays the leading role in that process. In the order paper of that commission there are phased political solutions aiming on comprehensive and complete realisations and international conformal objects in such fields important for socio-economical development as fresh water supply, sanitary, population aggregate development, energetic, climate etc.

The UN Environmental Program which is an ‘ecological conscience’ of humanity in reality is very important. Its objects are a timely revelation of ecological challenge and elaboration of preventive measures.

More and more actively works the UN Forest Forum, which is practically important for the Russian Federation. Under its aegis the problem of sustainable management of all types of forests is thrashed over. The majority of global environmental – oriented conventions (climate, biological diversity, desertification, ozone screen protection etc.) are worked out and realised under the UN aegis.

It goes without saying that Russia is actively contributing to this work.