



**United Nations Trust Fund
for Human Security**

Belarus

Enhancing Human Security in the Chernobyl Affected Areas of Belarus

Background information

The Chernobyl nuclear disaster and its aftermath affected myriad aspects of life for Belarusian citizens. The radioactive fallout disrupted agricultural production, leading to the closure of farms and enterprises in heavily contaminated areas, causing significant job loss and increased poverty levels in affected regions. Concerns around public health indicators in affected areas such as cancer incidence has increased the sense of insecurity among the population. This is compounded by a general lack of knowledge on how to live safely in conditions of low-dose radiation exposure, including how to navigate potential contamination of food which is particularly important in remote rural areas.

Goals and objectives

The overall goal of the programme is to comprehensively enhance human security in the Chernobyl-affected communities of the Stolin, Čačersk, Slaŭharad, Brahın and Luniniec Districts. The key objectives of the programme are to: (i) strengthen economic security of vulnerable communities through innovative farming practices and improved access to markets; (ii) promote health-related good practices among pregnant women, new mothers, and their families; (iii) improve prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer; (iv) enhance radiation safety knowledge and skills among children and youth; (v) reduce the consumption of radioactively contaminated food at the community level.



DURATION

November 2009 – January 2013



UN IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES
UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA



OTHER KEY PARTNERS

Ministry of Emergencies; FERT Association Office in Belarus; Brest and Mogilev Branches of the Institute of Radiology; International Sakharov Environmental University; Republican Scientific and Research Centre of Radiation Medicine and Human Ecology; Executive Committees of the Stolin, Chechersk, Slavgorod, Bragin and Luninets districts; Rural Development Centre in Stolin; Bragin and Chechersk Territorial Medical Amalgamations; local communities; civil society groups

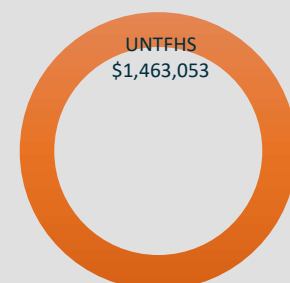


BENEFICIARIES
50,000



TOTAL BUDGET
US\$ 1,463,053

POOLING OF RESOURCES



Beneficiaries

The programme reaches 50,000 residents of Chernobyl-affected communities in the districts of Slavgorod, Chechersk, Bragin, Stolin and Luninets, who will benefit from enhanced livelihood opportunities and strengthened health security. In addition, the entire population of the five target districts indirectly benefit from improved economic, health, and food security.

Applying the Human Security approach

With the impacts from the nuclear accident touching nearly every aspect of life of affected communities, it is essential to take a comprehensive approach that is based on local realities as well as people's perceptions of insecurity. To this end, while enhancing access to income-generating activities for vulnerable communities, the programme also strengthens health security through improved access to health services and empowers communities through knowledge and awareness raising about the actual risks and how to navigate them.

The economic consequences of the disaster, particularly on agricultural production and food safety are highly complex. As such, the programme addresses the full continuum from production to safety to consumption. It supports rural communities to build their capacities to enhance agricultural productivity of unaffected areas, strengthens cooperation across agro-businesses, and ensures better access to markets, particularly for small farmers. These activities are combined with training on radiation safety standards and community campaigns to inform local communities of these practices to ensure safe food production and consumption. Newly established radiation monitoring centers and enhanced access to testing services ensures that communities, especially children and youth, are able to recognize radioactively contaminated foods.

Similarly, the programme empowers Chernobyl-affected communities by providing them with tools to regain control over their health, with a particular emphasis on women and children. It does so by strengthening their knowledge and skills on health protection while improving access to preventive care at the community level. As such, peer support groups led by local community leaders and nurses are organized to build the capacity of pregnant women and new mothers.

By adopting the human security lens, the programme can understand the specific vulnerabilities of the most marginalized sub-groups as well as identify cross-cutting entry points to address multiple areas of insecurity for the community at large. As such, the programme addresses the most pervasive needs and vulnerabilities of rural women while also leveraging the essential role they play in social and economic development. By strengthening rural women's economic and health security and empowering them as agents of change, the overall living conditions and prospects for revitalized development at the local level are improved.



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