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On 8 April, the Secretary-General announced that he was sending Ján Kubiš, UNECE Executive Secretary, as special envoy to Kyrgyzstan following the violence that had erupted in the country in previous days. The Secretary-General had just concluded his visit to Central Asia, including to Kyrgyzstan, where he had delivered several direct messages to the

authorities, both publicly and privately, speaking "forcefully" about democracy.

Ján Kubiš arrived in Kyrgyzstan on 10 April. He left for New York on 14 April to report to the Secretary-General.

The following elements are a summary of the transcript of the press briefing he held at headquarters on 16 April.

In order to defuse the political crisis and constitutional stalemate and to prevent further escalation of the conflict, he regularly met with the Chairman of the provisional government, Roza Isakovna Otunbayeva, and other leading members of the provisional government, with constitutional representatives of the country and with relevant political forces and civil society representatives. As the only representative of the international community, he maintained regular contacts with deposed President Bakiev and his supporters. He spoke twice by telephone with Mr. Bakiev, who had, by that time, retreated to his home village in the south of the country. For a period, Ján Kubiš was the only conduit for communication between the provisional government and the outgoing President. Later on, the provisional government started to work with Mr. Bakiev, including through contacts with other international actors

During his mission, Ján Kubiš worked closely with special envoys of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which Kazakhstan currently chairs, and the European Union, as well as with delegates from the Collective Security Treaty Organization, of which Kyrgyzstan is a member. He also met with representatives of neighbouring countries and diplomats accredited to the country.

In Kyrgyzstan, he used his "conflict prevention mandate", not only to understand the situation and how it developed,

UPDATE ON THE FACT FINDING MISSION OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY IN KYRGYZSTAN

but also to press upon both sides - the opposition and civil society groups on the one hand and the Government on the other - not to use arms or confrontation but instead to tone down their activities and not allow any excesses. He worked to defuse the constitutional conflict in a manner that would give impetus to the country's future democratic development, better governance and law and order, which were still frequently challenged by rioters and different criminal groups.

Agreement was eventually reached, whereby the chairman of the provisional government, Roza Isakovna Otunbayeva guaranteed immunity for President Bakiev and his family on the basis of the country's Constitution,



and, in turn, the President decided to voluntarily leave the country. The President signed his resignation as he boarded the plane that would take him out of the country.

"I would say with the hot stage of the standoff over, that my mission has been basically accomplished. Now it is for others, notably the United Nations Regional Centre for Conflict Prevention in Central Asia taking over," he said, adding that the head of that office, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Miroslav Jenca, would be traveling soon to Kyrgyzstan. □

WORK STARTS ON A FACILITATIVE IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM FOR THE WATER CONVENTION

The Legal Board of the UNECE Water Convention began its work last week on a challenging new task – drawing up a proposal for an institutional and procedural mechanism to facilitate and support implementation and compliance, for possible adoption at the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties in 2012.



The mandate to work on such a mechanism stems from the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties (November 2009), which adopted the Guide to Implementing the Water Convention. Developed by the Legal Board with the support of water experts, the Guide explains legal issues related to the Convention and describes good practices that Parties have developed since the Convention was signed 18 years ago.

At the fifth session, Parties recognized the value of the Guide as a practical tool that can be applied in many different situations; however, many emphasized the need for assistance and advice for individual Parties facing difficulties in the application of the Convention on a case-by-case basis. Such assistance, tailored to meet specific needs, could, for instance, help facilitate technology transfer and capacity-building when the lack of these hinders implementation.

While the overall objective and scope of such a mechanism are still to be negotiated, its main objective is to provide the Convention with a tool to help Parties solve implementation problems and prevent or settle differences regarding the interpretation and application of the Convention, taking into account countries' needs and the distinctive cooperative spirit of the Convention. A small drafting group will continue working on possible options and a proposal for consideration at the next meeting of the Legal Board in early 2011.

In other action, the Legal Board started its work on the application of the principles of the Convention to transboundary groundwater. Delegations underlined the strategic importance of groundwater and the existing gaps in cooperation. As a first step, they decided to prepare an explanatory compilation of UNECE regulatory language addressing groundwater so as to be in a better position to evaluate further measures needed in this area. □

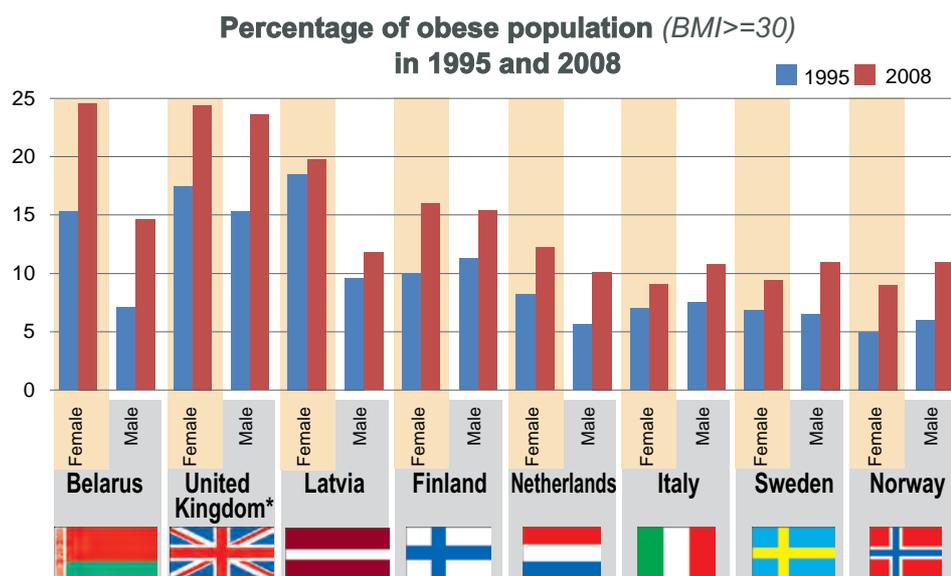
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FACTS AND FIGURES

OBESITY, A HEALTH THREAT FOR BOTH SEXES

Over the last few decades obesity has become a growing global epidemic and manifestly one of the most overlooked health problems, in particular in the developing economies where inadequate food intake and poor nutrition leading to undernutrition remains an important health challenge. However, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) obesity is a complex condition, one with serious social and psychological dimensions, which affects virtually all ages and socioeconomic groups and threatens to overwhelm both developed and developing countries. For instance, between 1995 and 2000, the number of obese adults has increased by 50 per cent worldwide and nearly half of them suffer from obesity-related problems. This sets the global stage for a major risk of diet-related non-communicable diseases such as diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, stroke and certain forms of cancer.

The graph shows an important rise in percentage of obese population for both sexes in selected UNECE countries. In 2008, nearly a quarter of the female population in United Kingdom and Belarus fell in the obese category. In the latter country, the share of the female obese population increased very rapidly (by 9.3 percentage points) from 1995 to 2008, while in Latvia the change was much less noticeable (1.3 percentage points). At the same time, the rise in share of male obese population ranged from 2.2 to 8.3 percentage points in Latvia and the United Kingdom respectively. □



Source: UNECE Statistical Database (www.unece.org/stats/data).

Note: Body Mass Index (BMI in kg/sqm) is the ratio of the weight of a person (in kg) divided by the square of the person's height (in m), an international standard, for measuring underweight (BMI < 18.5), overweight (BMI = 25-30), and obesity (BMI >= 30).

*Data for United Kingdom refer to 2007.