

Full Version

Republic of Moldova

Common Country Assessment



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Introduction

A Common Country Assessment (CCA) is elaborated by the UN member countries in accordance with the UN Secretary – General's reform program aiming to prepare the United Nations for the challenges of the 21st century.¹ This program re-emphasizes the need for a common approach by the UN system to ensure optimal support in assisting the countries to realize their national development tasks. It also takes into consideration the requirements formulated by the major World Conferences and the General Assembly resolutions.²

The development of a common approach is done through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) showing the complimentary ways in which the United Nations will support a given country. The first step in this work is the preparation of the CCA. It provides, in a summary form, a comprehensive picture of the socio-economic situation in the country, based on the compilation and review of a common set of indicators.

The preparation of the CCA in Moldova is in line with the ongoing efforts to enhance collaboration of the UN system with the government and civil society – NGOs, research institutions, women's organizations, local communities, professional associations, groups of common interests and others. It is intended that it will be used as a key input in the formulation of the UNDAF for Moldova.

In compliance with the above objectives, the United Nations Country Team, under the supervision of the Resident Coordinator, has worked out the structure of the CCA-Moldova, compiled the required information and invited for collaboration experts in such areas as governance, human rights, healthcare, education, gender consensus, poverty eradication, environmental sustainability, regional disparities, etc.

An important step in coordinating the preparation of the CCA was taken in March and June, 2000, during the UN inter-agency Heads' meetings, where the key issues of human development in the country, as well as the methodology and problems of the CCA-Moldova were discussed. Later, in September – November, several working groups' sessions on a number of priority issues for the collaborative programming took place.

The intention was that the CCA-Moldova 2000 would, on the one hand, clearly reveal the national targets, key areas for joint efforts to be applied by the UN family and the Moldavian Government, and on the other hand, contain a set of indicators that could be used in the measurement of progress towards the goals and objectives contained in the declarations and action plans adopted at the UN conferences.

The CCA – Republic of Moldova was prepared by the United Nations country Team under the UN Resident Coordinator's supervision on the basis of the ideas and reports of different UN Agencies in Moldova (UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNESCO, UNFPA, WHO, FAO and ILO), as well as on the papers and statistical data of various state bodies, NGOs and different think-tanks.

¹ The Report of the Secretary- General "Renewing the United Nations: A Program for Reform"

² GA Resolution 47/199, 50/120, 50/227 and 53/192.

Executive summary

Now, stepping into the 21st century the Republic of Moldova realizes the second wave of reforms. With this in view, the “National Strategy for Sustainable Development – Moldova 21” under the aegis of the Supreme Economic Council under the Presidency of Moldova and UNDP was elaborated. After the first phase of the reform when the main goals were democratization of society and affirmation of human freedoms, macro-stabilization, privatization and liberalization of the economy, now the social issues, real sector development, structural reforms, improvement of the legal and justice system are brought to the foreground.

Proceeding from social-economic situation emerged in the Republic of Moldova, results and lessons of the transition decade, as well the experience of UN-Agencies activity in this country, one could conclude that the main problems that are supposed to be settled by the Government, now and in the near future, and which are the domains for particular international cooperation, are as follows.

Quality of governance. The efforts should be focused on building capacity of the central Government and the local administration, preparing and making decisions, control of their enforcement; decentralization of the state functions, by partial commissioning to local governments; carrying out anti-corruption measures, enhancing the involvement of civil society institutions in decision-making; implementation of the strategy on sustainable development.

Economic growth. It is the real sector that must contribute to the solution of social problems. In order to do this, structural reforms, stirring up of SME, investments and stimulating of export are necessary.

Poverty alleviation. The main attention should be paid to two aspects of addressing this problem: (i) insure employment and incomes raising, based on the private sector development, post-privatization restructuring in industrial and agri-sectors, stimulating investments and export promotion; (ii) social assistance for poorest segments of the population.

Human resources enhancement. It is urgently needed create a viable system of human rights protection, as a key factor of a democratic society. A target should be designed to overcome the negative trends in demographic processes, by carrying out an active health policy and health system reform. To provide for Moldovan society's and outputs competitiveness, through updated cultural and educational policies and due attitude.

Gender equality. Continue activities of the Government and civil society institutes aimed at insuring equal possibilities for both women and men, to participate in social-economic and family life; use the competencies, skills and talents of each and every citizen in building society, solving problems and preparing the future.

Environment protection. Efforts should be targeted to creating an ecologically harmless environment for life and health, as well as harmless food and household items. The key problems for the country are preserving its main asset – fertile soils - and settlement of the qualitative drinking water. A particular importance in this densely populated country, with intensive negative impact of the man-caused factors, should be to restore the ecological equilibrium.

By assisting in addressing these problems, activity of UN agencies in the Republic of Moldova is directed towards increasing responsibility of citizens for the real state of public relationships and of democratic institutions, for development of local public administrations, a network of NGOs, and involvement of the population in settling the burning problems of the society. UN agencies in Moldova should construct their activities, based on the assumptions, that participation of the population is extremely important, in improving governance and enhancing its involvement in decision-making. Taking into consideration this fact, for Moldova fighting corruption is an absolute necessity by both legal and administrative methods, by way of uniting the efforts of the Government, business and groups within civil society.

Poverty alleviation is an urging problem for Moldovan population now. UN Agencies' field of activity can be coordinated with other international organizations. Anti-poverty policies should

be part of a social strategy, which is built on a concept of sustainable human development. Particular attention, in this case, should be paid to placing the Government on the “driver’s seat”.

It is necessary to ensure a society-wide consensus with respect to the content of reforms. Political stability and viable economic transformation can only be sustainable if supported by the population. The country requires a strong and effective Government that is able to enforce law and to maintain institutions, norms and practices essential for genuine market economy and human development. In the course of transition from centrally planned to market economy, the state has retained its social responsibilities. Management methods in the area of social security, however, need to be changed. Of primary importance for Moldova are now the issues of poverty eradication, reform of social insurance system, health care reform, education and labor market formation. The principal difficulty associated with the social sector reform lies in the need for the new arrangements to be both socially just and economically balanced.

The leitmotif of the forthcoming years should be improving the quality of governance in the country and shifting from the tactics of surviving towards a strategy of long-term sustainable development.

Both the Government and the population have become aware that the way towards a free society and well-being will not be short. The question has emerged about the need for a new policy for Moldova that would better fit the interests of sustainable human development. That’s a holistic process in realization of which the United Nations’ assistance is crucially needed.

1. Methodology

The United Nations has always emphasized the need to put people at the center of the development process and give them a voice in the decisions that affect their lives.

In the line of this, the UN concept of human development comprises four essential components: equity which relates to equitable access to opportunities; sustainability which refers to the responsibility toward future generations which should have the same chances for development as the current generation does; productivity which relates to investment in human resources and in creating a macro-economic environment that will enable individuals to search their maximum potential; and empowerment, in the sense that people should reach a level of individual development that will allow them to exercise choices based on their own will from among an enlarged number of opportunities facing them.

In the modern world a new group of countries - countries in transition – emerged. They are characterized by many peculiarities in terms of human development, which should be considered in the CCA/UNDAF documents as they determine the priorities and strategies of the UN cooperation.

The Republic of Moldova is one of these countries. At the dawn of a new millennium, the Southeast-Eastern Europe, including Moldova, reflects the realities of the latest experiment in the social engineering. Again, people are the objects rather than participants in shaping policies that affect their daily lives.³

The transition is a lengthy process involving many different spheres of human activity. The main argument in favor of transition lies with the desire to put the countries undergoing it on the path to democracy, market economy and sustainable development.

Indeed, in the 90s, during the transition period, the countries like Moldova obtained a number of attributes of democracy - multi-party elections, free press, emerging civil society institutions and much greater respect towards the freedom and human rights. With the regard to transformation of the economic system the expected efficiency has not been attained. Moreover, it was in social sphere where the problems appeared.⁴

In terms of methodology, while developing the CCA Moldova –2000, it was taken into consideration that with the beginning of the transition the state and the population at large were

³ Human Development Report for Central and Eastern Europe & CIS. Transition. 1999, p.111.

⁴ National Human Security Report / Transition and Human security. Republic of Moldova, 1999.

faced with the new tasks: democratization of governance, property reform – privatization of enterprises, land and housing, social and administrative-territorial reforms.

Most of the problems relating to human development that emerged in Moldova were due to the weakening of the state and civil society. As a result of the mistakes in the socio-economic policy, the liberalization of prices led to the high levels of poverty, with a huge gap between the incomes of the “new rich” and “new poor” continuing to widen; the reduced state support to the education and health sectors diminished the access of population to them; the mass privatization had a low social and economic efficiency, shadow economy spread sharply, etc.

Why is all of the above so dangerous for Moldova? The experience of the other countries shows that in places where there are multiple problems of personal, economic, political and environmental security, there is a risk of the national breakdown. Identifying potential crisis problems is an essential part of the preventive analytical work and the active policy to be carried out by the state involving the civil society institutions.

The CCA Moldova - 2000 was elaborated on the basis of the methodology and recommendations of the United Nations CCA Guidelines and pertaining to the content, format, data and information collection, in making assessment and analysis and list of indicators.

The objective of the CCA Moldova – 2000 is to achieve common understanding of key development challenges among the UN partners, based on the joint analysis of the development situation in the country. It was also important to evaluate the internal and external risk for sustainability of the development process, identify contingencies and the recovery and rehabilitation needs as may be appropriate.

The Common Country Assessment addresses: (i) national priorities and needs; (ii) the status of coordinated follow-up to the UN conferences and the implementation of the UN conventions and declarations.

Taking into consideration the issues indicated in the CCA Guidelines as well as the realities of the Republic of Moldova, it was agreed to address the following areas:

- a) Governance, democracy and participation;
- b) Sustainable economic growth for poverty reduction;
- c) Access and quality of the basic social services – health care and education, cultural development;
- d) Human rights issues; promotion of women’s role in the society and gender equity; protection of children’s rights;
- e) Environmental and natural resources conservation.

While analyzing the above issues it was considered necessary to take into consideration certain regional aspects, which appeared in the course of the implementation of the territorial-administrative reform. There are problematic regions, where the discrepancy between rural and urban access to education and health service, public utilities and information is rapidly growing.

The CCA document contains the main findings of the assessment of the key development issues, focusing on the crosscutting themes. Special attention was given to the data on the achievements of the country in the implementation of decisions of major international conferences as well as to the additional country-specific indicators pertaining to the national priorities and needs.

The CCA Moldova – 2000 indicators can be used for the measurement of progress in the situation of a large number of development concerns. Therefore, the indicators will be needed for at least two points in time, or preferably time trend - say at 5 or 10 years intervals. This will enable changes in the level or quality of development progress to be measured through changes in the values of the indicators.

The preparation of the CCA required a close inter-agency cooperation within the UN system as well as working together with the national counterparts under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator. It also implied compilation by the Central working team of sectors-covering reports and general data. This team has prepared the CCA Moldova - 2000, having ensured a cross-sector analysis and a comprehensive overview of Moldova’s human development as a basis for defining common priorities in assisting the country.

In line with all of the above considerations, the CCA for the Republic of Moldova contains the following components:

- A holistic and analytical summary of the current level of national development;
- Identification of trends in the improvement or deterioration of the relevant indicators;
- Proposed priority areas for joint assistance from the United Nation system;
- Recommendations on improving the CCA process and its outputs and on creation of a common database of key indicators, to be regularly updated.

Following the completion of the CCA, the United Nation system in Moldova will embark on the development of the *United Nation Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)* wherein individual agencies and programs will define common strategies addressing the priority areas.

2. Overview of the Development Situation in Moldova

2.1. Advantages and drawbacks of transition

It has been now 10 years since the time when the newly-independent Republic of Moldova adopted the course towards transformation of its political and socio-economic system. The principal goal of reform efforts is to ensure transition from an authoritarian political system and command economy to a democratic state with a free market economy and civil society. The country met a considerable number of difficulties on this way and transition has produced only partial success.

Most of the positive results are in the area of economic and political freedoms—openness of the country, democratization of public life (multi-party elections, freedom of religion, mass-media, NGOs, etc), liberalization of the prices, enterprise operations, internal and external trade, etc.

Social costs of transition, on the other hand, have been dramatic: reduction of the country's resources for education and health services, a sharp rise of the discrepancy of incomes, spread of poverty, growth of corruption and organized crime. In such situation transition has brought a great deal of disappointment for population, and this has contributed but to the narrowing of the social base of support for reforms.

In this respect, the UN system, as well as other international organizations and bilateral donors collaborating with Moldova helps the country to solve its social problems and to remove the legal, institutional and structural impediments for the sustainable human development.

The application of market economy principles in the Republic of Moldova had as purpose the creation of conditions for shifting from command administrative economy to the liberalized one. The background of this process was the radical changing of ownership and structure of the national economy. The United Nations Agencies, IMF, WB, EBRD, TACIS and countries-donors, each one in its field, should grant assistance while the national economy goes through the difficult restructuring period.

First "Program of Transition to the Regulated Market Economy" was adopted in by the Parliament in 1990. Its authors were supposing "the hard way of transition to market economy is assumed to be through in a shortest period of time, of approximately 1,5 - 2 years." This unrealistic program remained merely a declaration of intentions.

However, already in the early 90s a series of important events took place: liberalization of prices, commerce and enterprise operations, adoption of the first set of laws oriented towards the market economy (laws regarding ownership, privatization, Land Code, etc.). To mention is, that 1993-1995 were the years of the "big bang" in the transition from one model of social, political and economic development to another. Together with joining the economic union of the CIS, the Republic of Moldova was the first of the post-soviet countries that has been accepted in the Council of Europe, and in November 1994 signed a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the European Union.

Although the reform in the key for the country agrarian sector was suspended and the support to the private sector was insignificant, in this period, according to the annual estimates of the IMF, WB and EBRD, Moldova was ranked higher as compared to the most of CIS countries and to its neighbors – Romania, Ukraine and Bulgaria. The quotation of the respected magazine “The Economist” (March 1995) is very significant: “Moldova is a model of correct reform, and the fact that it is a small country, transforms it into a perfect laboratory for running reforms”.

Creating, in general, the legal and institutional basis of the market economy and carrying out a macroeconomic stabilization (reduced inflation, stable national currency, budget deficit under control), Moldova nevertheless failed to enter a period of economic growth. The break in the implementation of the reforms, decided by both Parliament and Government, had a negative impact – foreign loans were used for consumption, structural reforms were postponed, political issues prevailed upon economic ones. The situation of the economy from 1996 to the first half of 1998 could be described as a “stable depression” which, under the impact of external and internal pressures, led to the crisis. Unfortunately, in the Autumn of 1998 Moldova fell under the “shade” of the financial collapse in Russia which, *inter alia*, generated pressures on the banking sector, blocked exports from Moldova to the East (with the consequent budget losses), and caused a rise in the prices of energy products imported from Russia.

A general awareness has been growing in the country of the real threat to the positive results of the reforms. The need for a new social and economic policy for Moldova is determined by the main fact that a real threat has emerged for the human security: most indicators, both economic and social are at a critical level.

What happened? Why didn't Moldova become a prosperous model laboratory of reforms? Nowadays, analyzing the events and the trends of the cycle “crisis of 1991/92 – crisis of 1998/99”, the following lessons are evident from the early stage of transformations of the country:

- Positive results - property reform has been implemented, a broad legal and institutional basis has been created for market economy, the private sector produces not less than 60%, prices have been liberalized, as have internal and external trade and enterprise operations, the capital, labor and real estate markets have been established, and a viable banking system was consolidated. All these changes in market economy orientation can really be considered irreversible. However, on this way too many impediments have been encountered and mistakes have been made.
- The economic reform has been carried out under strong influence of the “political cycles”, and at the same time without a national strategy for development. Thus, the continuity of those 9 governments' actions during 1991-2000 was not assured. There are instability of political support for the reforms introduced by Parliament, irrational waste of financial resources and slowing down in the activity of the executive and legislative powers during the frequent electoral periods (1990, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1998, 1999 and 2000 – all those being election years!). Three electoral campaigns have taken place every four years, all that in conditions of unconsolidated statehood and of an economy with many risk factors.
- Fragmentation of legislation in the economic domain: the Parliament has not approved yet a Civil Code oriented towards the market economy, most of the laws that regulate the activity of the financial sector (banking sector, stock market, Fiscal Code) are based on the Anglo-Saxon model, whereas the legislation regarding enterprise bankruptcy, foreign investments, etc. is based on the European continental one. Law enforcement is very poor.
- Lack of coordination regarding the maintenance of macroeconomic, financial stability and structural reforms in the key sectors – energy, industry, agribusiness, social sphere. Low social and economic efficiency of mass privatization for patrimonial bonds, lack of real owners in most enterprises after their privatization, lack of conditions for attracting foreign investors. Lack of a real support by the state to entrepreneurs. The shadow economy provides at least 30% of jobs and approximately 40-45% of population incomes, which compensates for the state's economic inefficiency.
- The problem of Transnistria has not been resolved on the basis of European standards for local self-administration; the political status of Gagauzia was determined (territorial

autonomy), yet, in terms of social-economic aspects, the region is hardly viable, the subsidies from the central state being crucial for its development.

- Lack of constructive character of the social policy, which for a long time was limited only to cutting budget expenditures; delaying of reforms of the basic branches of the social sphere, as well as of the implementation of the pension system.

For these reasons, opinion polls and of the results of the last parliament elections show that at least 40% of the population perceives the economic reforms in a negative manner. The most criticized aspects are the inefficiency and equalizing nature of the social protection system.

Striving not to hurt anybody, including the “new rich”, the state in the end hurts the most needy.

Turning now to the causes of the current social-economic situation in Moldova, one can conclude, that they result from the attempt to manage the market economy “as in capitalism”, and to have a social sphere and general employment rate “as in socialism” (with paucity of financial means), trying to imitate countries with socially oriented market economies. As for the financial resources and technical assistance which the country receives from abroad, they need to be used for promoting real reforms and not for imitating them.

The most obvious conclusion of recent decade is that the transition includes a combination of political, institutional, economic and social processes that, if they take place in an uncoordinated and inconsequential fashion, can considerably delay the reform process and have a negative impact upon human development and the living conditions of the population. In the context of unfavorable trends of transition period a predominantly attention on human development issue is required. Human being and its basic needs should be placed in the center of policy makers’ attention, and to be considered as a major objective of the reforms.

2.2. Human Development Index (HDI)

According to the concept of UNDP Human Development Reports, countries – members of the United Nations are subdivided into three groups, according to their level of human development: respectively countries with high ($HDI > 0.8$), medium ($0.5 < HDI < 0.8$) and low ($HDI < 0.5$) levels of human development. Most of the transition countries are medium level countries. Only Slovenia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland, with $HDI > 0.8$, belong to the category of high human development countries.

Table 2.1
Human Development Indices for the Countries of Europe and FSU

	Life expectancy index	Education index	GDP index at PPP	HDI	Placement of states by HDI
Whole world	0,70	0,74	0,70	0,712	...
Industrially developed countries	0,86	0,94	0,89	0,893	...
Eastern Europe and CIS	0,73	0,91	0,69	0,777	...
Countries in transition	0,66	0,68	0,58	0,642	...
Countries of high human development ($HDI \geq 0,800$)	0,87	0,96	0,90	0,908	...
Of which:					
Canada	0,90	0,99	0,91	0,935	1
Norway	0,89	0,98	0,93	0,934	2
USA	0,86	0,97	0,95	0,929	3
Australia	0,89	0,99	0,90	0,929	4
Hungary	0,77	0,91	0,77	0,817	43
Poland	0,80	0,92	0,72	0,814	44
Countries of medium human development ($0,500 \leq HDI \leq 0,799$)	0,70	0,73	0,59	0,673	...
Of which:					
Belarus	0,72	0,93	0,69	0,781	57
Bulgaria	0,77	0,90	0,69	0,772	60
Russian Federation	0,69	0,92	0,70	0,771	62
Romania	0,75	0,88	0,67	0,770	64
Georgia	0,80	0,90	0,59	0,762	70
Kazakhstan	0,72	0,92	0,63	0,754	73

Ukraine	0,73	0,92	0,58	0,744	78
Azerbaijan	0,75	0,90	0,51	0,722	90
Armenia	0,76	0,90	0,51	0,721	93
Kyrgyzstan	0,72	0,88	0,52	0,706	98
Turkmenistan	0,68	0,89	0,54	0,704	100
Moldova	0,71	0,89	0,50	0,700	102
Uzbekistan	0,71	0,84	0,50	0,686	106
Tajikistan	0,71	0,89	0,39	0,663	110
Countries of low human development (HDI < 0,500)	0,43	0,45	0,38	0,421	...

Source: UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 2000, p157-160

In the majority of the countries in transition, largely due to inertia, the level of education and health care remains relatively high. And it is their unfavorable economic situation that prevents these countries from achieving higher human development indices. In the long term the values of the indices of life expectancy and of education may be expected to decline if the economic problems remain as severe as they are at present.

Table 2.2

Trend of HDI in the Republic of Moldova

Years	Indices			
	Life expectancy	Access to education	Welfare	HDPI
1993	0,708	0,881	0,564	0,718
1994	0,685	0,877	0,566	0,709
1995	0,680	0,880	0,508	0,689
1996	0,695	0,882	0,510	0,696
1997	0,693	0,886	0,517	0,699
1998	0,700	0,887	0,503	0,697
1999	0,713	0,880	0,500	0,700

Source: *Human Development Reports of the Republic of Moldova, 1995-1998; DSSA*.

The Human Development Index for the Republic of Moldova shows a negative trend during the transition period. Decreasing of GDP *per capita* has had a particularly strong negative impact on the overall trend of the HDI. However, taking into account the cumulative effect of poverty, which reached about 50% of the country's population, one could expect that, in the future, the two other components of HDI (life expectancy and literacy) will also have a negative influence on its value.

Table 2.3

Human Development Index Components

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
GDP per capita in:							
- lei, current prices	505	1313	1798	2167	2441	2498	3346
- US dollars at purchasing power parity	2935	2975	2105	2128	2207	2087	2033
Adult population literacy degree (%)	96,4	96,4	96,4	96,4	96,4	96,4	96,4
Education coverage gross degree (%)	71,7	70,2	71,1	71,8	72,9	73,4	71,2
Life expectancy at birth (years)	67,5	66,1	65,8	66,7	66,6	67,8	67,8
Index of							
- gross domestic product	0,564	0,566	0,518	0,510	0,517	0,507	0,507
- education	0,881	0,877	0,880	0,882	0,886	0,887	0,880
- life expectancy	0,708	0,685	0,680	0,695	0,693	0,713	0,713
Human Development Index (HDI)	0,718	0,709	0,689	0,696	0,699	0,702	0,700

Thus, according to human development index, Moldova ranked among the 174 surveyed countries as follows: 75 in 1994, 81 in 1995, 98 in 1996, 110 in 1997, 113 in 1998, and 102 in 1999.

Human Development Index for the Republic of Moldova, according to the last estimations (2000) of the Department of Statistical Analysis and Sociology, was equal to 0.700 (in 1993 it was 0.718). The main components of HDI for Moldova today are: global domestic product per capita at purchasing power parity – US\$ 2,033; life expectancy at birth – 67.8 years; literacy for adult population – 96.4%. The Republic of Moldova, in spite of the worsening of HDI in the last years, still remains within the group of states with a “medium level of human development”.

The conclusion is obvious: the human costs of transition for the population of Moldova have proved to be too high. Hence, this implies the necessity for the state to increase its responsibility and to introduce some corrections to the reform policy in order to move towards a more secure and viable society. United Nations activity in Moldova is aimed on realizations of a series of policy measures that need to be taken in order to reverse the decline in human development.

3. Demography and Health

3.1. Demographic indicators

The demography of population reflects quality and level of its living. Transitional period considerably changed demographical image of Moldova. The latest available basic demographic indicators are summarized in the table below.

Table 3.1.

Key demographic indicators for Moldova*

Indicator	Value	Year
Population estimate, total (thousands)	3,650	end of 1998
Average population density, per sq.km.	126.7	1999
Sex structure	Male – 47.9%, female – 52.1%	end of 1998
% of population aged 0–14 years	24.7	end of 1998
% of population aged 65+ years	9.3	end of 1998
Rural/urban population ratio	Urban – 42.0%, rural – 58.0%	end of 1998
Number of live births per 1000	10.1	1999
Crude death rate per 1000	11.4	1999
Natural increase, per 1000	– 1.3	1999
Total fertility rate	1.67	1997
Adult population literacy rate (age 15+), %	97.4	1997

*excluding Transnistria

Source: *WHO Health For All Statistical Database, January 2000*.

Since 1991 there has been a continuous population loss in Moldova (from 4,366,300 inhabitants in January 1991 to 4,281,500 in January 2000)⁵. The depopulation was caused in part by natural loss, but more particularly by outward migration. According to local sources, however, it is considered that approximately 600.000 people have left the country over recent years.

The majority of the Moldovan population lives in rural areas (58% as of January 1999) and the female to male ratio is 52% to 48%, a ratio that has remained constant since 1990. Children under 15 make up about a quarter of the population (24.7% as of January 1999). Of the entire male population 26.3% are under 15, and of the entire female population 23.2% are under 15.

Although the average life expectancy among women in Moldova is increasing (70.3 years in 1997 and 71.5 in 1999) it remains the shortest in Europe⁶. The proportion of elderly people within the entire population is increasing. The demographic aging rate (the number of persons over 60 per 100 inhabitants) has grown from 9.7 in 1970 to 13.5 in 1998⁷. The demographic

⁵ This figure refers to the overall country. Nevertheless, figures are related to the population living on the right side of the Republic of Moldova, in the non-recognized “republic” of Transnistria. (3,650,000 inhabitants, without Transnistria). The last census was held in 1989.

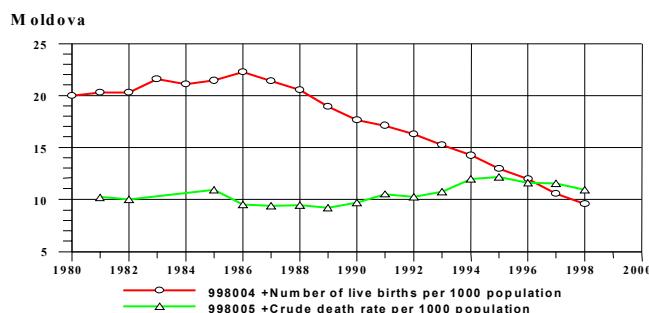
⁶ *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report, No.6, 1999, UNICEF*.

⁷ This exceeds the value of 12 that, according to the Bojio-Gamier scale, constitutes “demographic aging”.

aging of the population is caused by two major factors: a lowering birthrate and migration. The migration factor can be further sub-divided; immigration to Moldova of elderly people during the Soviet period and emigration from Moldova of many of the young population during the post-soviet period. However despite the process of demographic aging Moldova remains one of the youngest countries in Europe with 29.5% of its population under 18 (Albania has 35.5% and Macedonia 30.0%)⁸.

Fig. 3.1.

Crude birth and death rates in Moldova, time trend 1980-1998, per 1000



Source: WHO Health For All Statistical Database, January 2000.

The transition process has given rise to large-scale demographic change. From 1990 to 1999, the birthrate sank from 17.7 to 10.1 per 1,000 inhabitants, while the death rate grew to 11.4 per 1,000 inhabitants, resulting in negative natural growth (a population decline). In this period the population dropped from 4.37 million at the beginning of 1991 to 4.28 at the beginning of 2000 largely caused by lowering birth rates and migration.

The number of live births was highest in the mid 1980s (its highest level was 94,700). It then lowered to 51,900 in 1996, and reached 38,500 in 1999⁹.

Although the total fertility rate is still high, it has been declining since 1990: from 2.39 in 1990 to 1.39 in 1999. Since 1994, the total fertility rate has been below the level required to keep population numbers constant. The average age of mothers in this period has remained constant at about 25 years, while the average age of first-birth women lowered to 22.2 years in 1996. The average figure of children per family is now 2.2 children¹⁰.

The decreased birthrate is mainly caused by the economic difficulties and social crisis of the post-1991 transition, but is also influenced by changes in marital behavior. These changes have given rise to new types of family (single-person households, cohabiting households, etc.).

Unlike the birthrate, which has been in decline during the last 30 years, the mortality rate in the Republic of Moldova has grown (from 6.4 deceased per 1,000 inhabitants in 1960 to 9.7 deceased per 1,000 inhabitants in 1990) and has remained fixed at a ratio of approximately 11 deceased per 1,000 inhabitants during the 1990s. This figure is in common with most Central and Eastern European countries. The principal causes of death remain circulatory disturbances, malignant growths, accidents, poisonings, and injuries.

3.2. Major health indicators and health status trends

The dramatic social, political and economic changes that Moldova has undergone in recent years have had a grave effect on the healthcare system and on the health status of the population. Major negative trends in the health status can be characterized by:

- High infant mortality rate and maternal mortality ratio, which are 1.5-2 times higher than the average European indicators;

⁸ *The Progress of Nations*, UNICEF, 1999.

⁹ The 1999 data does not cover the left bank of the Nistru and the municipality of Bender.

¹⁰ *Reproductive Health Survey In Moldova*, Final Report, Moldovan Ministry of Health, CDC Atlanta, UNFPA, USAID, UNICEF, 1997.

- Increase of chronic non-contagious morbidity (cardiovascular, gastrointestinal and oncological diseases);
- Substantial rise of infectious diseases and “social illnesses”, such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS;
- Considerable increase of malnutrition cases and other diet related problems, which affect not only low-income families but also those with middle incomes;
- An increase of alcoholism rates, drug abuse and smoking (especially among women and teenagers), which are clear signs of a growing social crisis.

Table 3.2.
Selected basic health indicators, 1998

Indicator	Value
Life expectancy at birth, in years, total	67.9
Life expectancy at birth, in years, male	64.2
Life expectancy at birth, in years, female	71.6
Infant mortality rate, per 1000 live births	17.9
Maternal deaths, all causes, per 100000 live births	36.3
Probability of dying before 5 years of age, per 1000 population	22.0
Standardized death rate (SDR), all causes, all ages, per 100,000 population	1427.2
SDR, diseases of circulatory system, age 0–64, per 100 000 population	172.1
SDR, malignant neoplasms, all ages per 100 000 population	101.4
Number / incidence (per 100,000) of new HIV cases	155 / 3.58
Number of hospital beds, per 100 000 population	1084
Number of physicians, per 100 000 population	350
Total health expenditure as % of GDP (1997)	6.4

Source: WHO Health For All Statistical Database, January 2000.

Fig. 3.2. Life expectancy at birth in years, both sexes, 1980-1998, Moldova in comparison with European averages

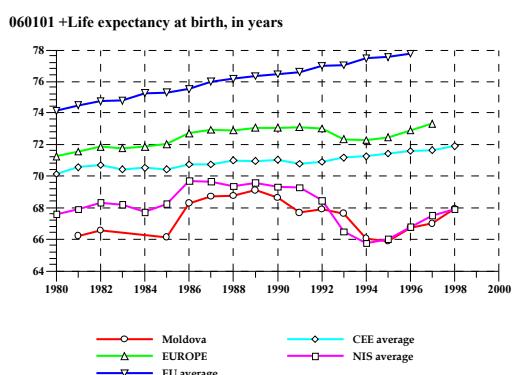
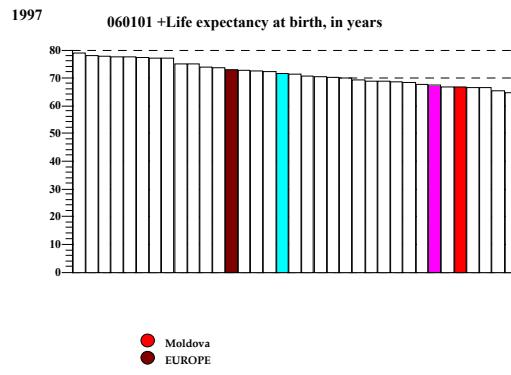


Fig. 3.3. Life expectancy at birth (years), 1997, Moldova in comparison with European countries



Source: WHO Health For All Statistical Database, January 2000.

While visible improvements had been achieved by 1990, there has been no or little improvement in infant mortality over the following years. Perinatal mortality accounts for its major part, being above NIS average. The other main causes of deaths during the early years of life are acute respiratory infections and congenital anomalies.

Apart from direct, or immediate, causes of infant and perinatal mortality, there are also some underlying factors that indirectly contribute to high infant mortality rates. These indirect influences can be attributed to the health status of the mother and child, family and community environment and quality of healthcare services. Being mainly conditioned by inadequate nutrition, such diseases as anemia, malnutrition and rickets contribute to high rate of infant mortality. As regards to the mother, chronic pathologies during pregnancy, birth spacing of less than 2 years, unacceptable working conditions and inadequate nutrition are only a few factors that indirectly contribute to infant deaths. It is worth mentioning that low levels of parental knowledge of general health issues foster their inability to ensure proper care of both healthy and

sick children. Furthermore, such parents possess little or no knowledge of danger signs, which can delay a crucially timed visit to the doctor.

Table 3.3.
Major Causes of Infant Mortality in Moldova from 1995 through 1999

Year	Perinatal Pathology	Congenital Malformations	Respiratory Diseases	Infectious Diseases	Trauma, Accidents
1995 per 1,000 live births %	7.8 36.4	4.5 21.3	5.1 23.9	1.2 5.9	1.3 6.3
1996 per 1,000 live births %	6.6 32.9	4.7 23.4	4.8 23.9	1.4 7	1.3 6.6
1997 per 1,000 live births %	6.3 30.8	4.5 22.2	5.3 26.1	1.7 8.2	1.7 8.3
1998 per 1,000 live births %	5.9 33.8	4.3 24.4	3.9 21.9	1.21 6.9	1.4 8.1
1999 per 1,000 live births %	5.8 31.7	4.3 23.5	4.7 26.1	0.8 4.3	1.4 7.8

Source: The Center for Public Health and Health Management

A complex of problems influencing pregnancy and childbirth accounts for high maternal morbidity and mortality. Maternal mortality rates vary between 35 and 50 per 100,000 live births and are 2 times higher than the European average and 4 times – than the EU average.

Table 3.4.
Maternal Deaths due to Direct Obstetrical Causes (1997-1999)

Causes of death	1997	1998	1999
<i>Post-abortion complications</i>	4	5	1
<i>Massive hemorrhage</i>	2	1	1
<i>Trombo-embolism of pulmonary artery</i>	4	1	1
<i>Embolism with amniotic liquid</i>	3	1	2
<i>Puerperal infections</i>	1	1	-
<i>Eclampsia</i>	1	1	-
<i>Extra-uterine pregnancy</i>	1	-	-
<i>Total</i>	14	11	5

(Source: The Institute of Mother and Child Health Care)

Table 3.5.
Maternal Deaths due to Indirect Obstetrical Causes (1997-1999)

Causes of death	1997	1998	1999
<i>Infection</i>	-	-	1
<i>Aortic aneurysm</i>	-	1	-
<i>Viral hepatitis</i>	2	1	1
<i>Myocardial infarction</i>	-	-	1
<i>Meningitis, encephalitis</i>	-	1	-
<i>Cancer</i>	-	-	3
<i>Pulmonary tuberculosis</i>	1	-	-
<i>Rh diseases associated with valvulopathy</i>	2	1	-
<i>Congenital heart-diseases</i>	1	-	-
<i>Post-anesthesia complication</i>	1	-	-
<i>Diabetes mellitus</i>	1	-	-
<i>Total</i>	7	4	6

(Source: The Institute of Mother and Child Health Care)

Maternal morbidity and mortality is influenced by the reproductive health status and nutrition since childhood and during pregnancy, women's knowledge and awareness, the access and quality of health services, as well as the behavior and attitude of women, families and the entire community towards health issues and the status of women in society, most of which will be described in the following sections of the chapter.

The overall standardized death rates are very high; the HFA database ranks Moldova the worst in Europe for 1997 (year of most complete country data).

Fig. 3.4. Standardized death rate (SDR), all causes, all ages (per 100,000), Moldova in comparison with European averages

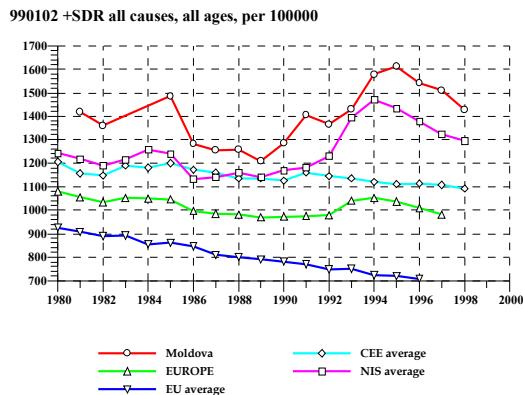
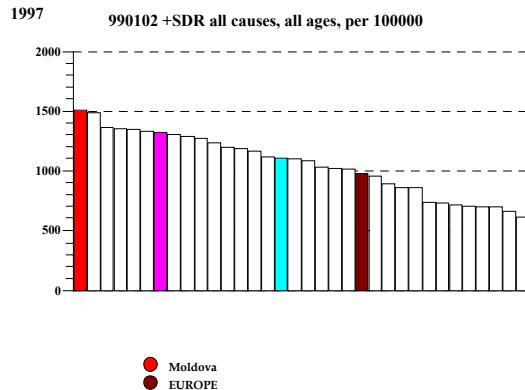


Fig. 3.5. SDR, all causes, all ages (per 100,000), 1997, Moldova in comparison with European countries



Source: WHO Health For All Statistical Database, January 2000.

Mortality from all major cardiovascular diseases is increasing. Moldova has one of the highest rates of cerebrovascular incidents in Europe. As in many NIS, deaths due to external causes (including homicide) have significantly increased since 1990. The rate of death from cancer in the younger population is on the rise, e.g. to the neoplasms of digestive tract.

Special attention should be given to diseases of the digestive system. Mortality from these is extremely high and exceeds by 2–3 times the other regional averages. By morbidity of and deaths from chronic liver disease, Moldova is traditionally the worst country in Europe. Worrisome is the situation with other non-communicable diseases, e.g. diabetes.

Indicative of social distress is the increase of mental disorders reported over the last 5–6 years. However, the absolute figures should be looked upon with caution, since there are yet no unique methodologies and approaches in psychiatry that fully comply with internationally approved standards.

Like most NIS, the country has experienced the re-emergence of infectious diseases. There were outbreaks of diphtheria (1994–1995) and cholera (1995); the incidence of measles, pertussis and mumps is still significant.

The national government has been making efforts to implement an effective immunization programme. With the assistance of international donors, mass vaccinations were performed in 1994–1996, improving coverage and reducing the number of cases of the above-mentioned diseases. At the same time, national self-reliance in immunization has not been yet achieved and the late 1998 crisis required assistance from the international community.

The Evolution of Vaccine Preventable Diseases in Moldova, 1994-1999

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
<i>Diphtheria</i>	376	418	94	46	11	11
<i>Pertussis</i>	871	123	78	327	182	38
<i>Tetanus</i>	0	3	1	0	1	0
<i>Poliomyelitis</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Measles</i>	3,951	1,174	344	364	673	245
<i>Hepatitis B</i>	2,166	1,770	1,304	1,102	983	789

(Source: The National Center of Preventive Medicine)

Tuberculosis has become a major public health problem. Though the coverage with vaccinations is maintained high, the incidence of new cases, e.g. of respiratory destructive forms has been increasing since 1992, mainly due to improper identification and treatment of active TB patients and a shortage of effective anti-TB drugs. The WHO-developed DOTS strategy has no

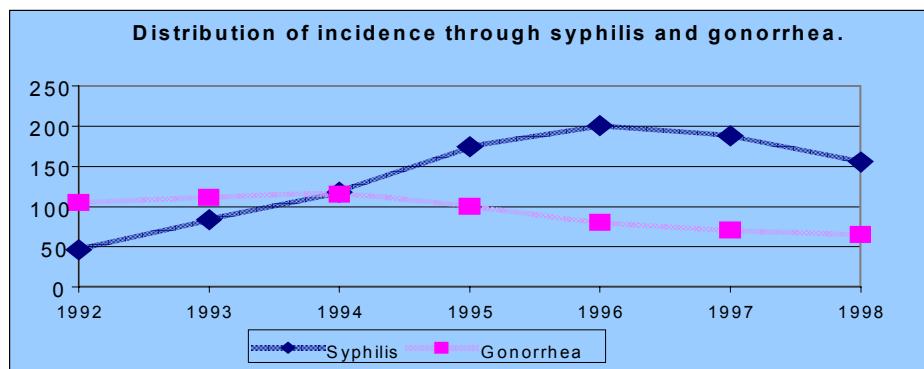
application in the country. The old structure of medical institutions dealing with TB, highly relying on in-patient long-term treatments, is still in place but critical shortages of drugs and funds for hospital maintenance compromise its effectiveness and diminish the quality of care and surveillance.

To be noted is the fact that the national data for some indicators is absent or hardly reliable, e.g. those concerning lifestyles and environment, due to an inadequate national surveillance system, especially when there is a need for collaboration with sectors other than health. For example, there are apparent and increasing problems with alcohol consumption and tobacco smoking; however, the official data do not demonstrate it (HFA database tells that the annual consumption of alcohol in Moldova is 3.0 liters per person per year (1996), which is one of the lowest regional levels and hardly credible since alcohol consumption in Moldova is substantial).

3.3. Sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS

One of the objectives stipulated in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, Egypt, September 1994) is to prevent, reduce the spread of and ensure the treatment of the Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS. As the other countries of Eastern Europe, Moldova has witnessed a significant growth in sexually transmitted diseases. Between 1989-1999, the rate of syphilis infection grew 25 times from 7.1 to 200.1 per 100,000 of population. A slight decrease of incidence was recorded in 2000 where the incidence in average amounts to 115,9 to 100.000 population. According to the official data of the Republican Dermatovenerologic Dispenser, the decrease of the morbidity index during last years (1999-2000) is partially caused by decrease of testing volumes of the population to syphilis from 1259,8 thou. person in 1996 to 653,3 thou. person in 1999. Distribution of incidence through syphilis and gonorrhea per 100000 habitants for 1992-1998 is presented in figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6.



The presented data on morbidity are based on the current national statistics and reflect only cases officially reported with the health authorities. In the Republic of Moldova reporting on HIV, syphilis and gonorrhea is mandatory according to the legislation in force, this is why the statistics show only data related to patients that request medical assistance at state institutions, no data are available regarding patients avoiding treatment at state institutions and practicing self-treatment, persons with asymptomatic STDs, patients with limited access to medical assistance and persons that benefit from the services of the private sector. Moreover, some STDs are reported partially even with state institutions as the laboratories are limited in possibilities and there were registered cases of laboratories not being able to held basic tests (for instance, testing for chlamydeous trachoma, mycoplasma hominy and others is held only in some labs).

A specific situation is the share of morbidity through syphilis and gonorrhea based on the sex and age categories. It should be noted that the share of morbidity through syphilis at the age frame of 20-29 years is the highest and represents 372,5 to 100.000 at men and 146,2 to 100.000 at women. In 1999, the incidence of syphilis among adolescents (15-19 years old) made up 100.9% of cases among boys and 146.2% among girls, while gonorrhoea made up 130.6% of

cases among boys and 116.4% among girls. At average per Republic the incidence of syphilis reaches the figure of 154,6 cases to 100.000 population in urban areas and 75,5 cases to 100.000 population in rural areas (Table 3.7).

The reported morbidity through gonorrhea showed a continuous drop. Thus, in 1999 only 2641 new cases of gonorrhea have been reported, 5,5% less than in 1998. In comparative analyses in 1990 to a case of syphilis there were registered 6,4 cases of gonorrhea, in 1999 a reversal in the proportions of reported syphilis and gonorrhea has been reported with 2 cases of syphilis registered to one case of gonorrhea. The comparative analyses proves that

Table 3.7. Rate of morbidity through syphilis and gonorrhea to 100.000 population based on sex and age, 1999.

		Total	Including				Urban	Rural
			15/19 years	20/ 29 years	30 /39 years	40 and more		
Sifilis	Men	109,9	100,5	372,5	171	58,8	154,6	75,5
	Women	104,9	146,2	374,3	123,4	41,5		
Gonoree	Men	74,4	130,6	319,1	72,3	16,1	79,4	32,5
	Women	43,0	116,4	153,6	41,4	14,8		

underreporting of gonorrhea cases is more pronounced than underreporting of syphilis. This can be explained by the fact that patients with gonorrhea are more inclined to self-treatment or seek for treatment at private clinics that do not always report cases to the surveillance system.

The Republican Dermatovenerological Dispenser systematically carries out sentinel surveillances studies among pregnant women, blood donors and somatic patients. In 1999 the study was held on a sample of 44142 pregnant women and 48592 blood donors. Thus, it was revealed that the incidence of syphilis in the sample of pregnant women constituted 308,0 to 100.000 pregnant women and 257,2 to 100.000 blood donors. The discrepancy between the rate of officially registered incidence in 1999 (115,9) and the rate obtained from sentinel surveillance studies (308,0 at pregnant women and 257,2 at blood donors) discloses the launch of a serious epidemics of STDs.

A critical aspect in the epidemiology of STDs is the synergistic effect they can have upon each other. Thus, STDs can exacerbate HIV transmission, while HIV infection and associated immunodeficiencies can increase the sensitivity towards other STDs. This is especially important in the context of growing HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The country is at the onset of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The situation is further complicated by the lack of consensus on ways to manage this problem, including anonymous diagnosis, medical care and social adaptation of HIV-infected and AIDS patients.

Since 1987, 1034 citizens of Moldova have been registered as HIV-infected, 26 of them manifested clinical signs of AIDS and 20 died (Table 3.8). Cases occurred in all administrative territories. Rural areas are less affected, but municipalities Baltsi, Chisinau and Tiraspol are territories of the high risk of spreading the disease where the indices greatly exceed the overall incidence and are 300.1, 49.0 and 28.6 respectively. The majority of new HIV-seropositive cases are injectable drug users (IDUs). About 75% cases are registered of 15-29 years age group.

Table 3.8.

New local cases of HIV and clinical AIDS, 1990–1999

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
HIV	1	0	2	3	4	7	47	404	408	155
AIDS	0	0	2	2	0	2	1	10	4	5

Source: WHO Health For All Statistical Database, January 2000, and Ministry of Health (for 1999)

HIV infection incidence per 100,000 population in 1999 was 3.63 compared to 9.47 in 1998. From epidemiological point of view, it does not represent a real improvement because of the “saturation effect” among the most affected group of IDUs and the future perspective of HIV spread in the population primarily by the heterosexual way of transmission. In addition, the following negative factors are present and will contribute to the HIV/AIDS expansion:

- High rate and increase of illicit drug use among teenagers and young people;
- Consistently high rates of sexually transmitted diseases and tuberculosis;
- Growing unemployment, worsening standards of living and moral values and prostitution;
- High migration of people of reproductive age in search of jobs and commercial sex into other countries, e.g. those with high prevalence of HIV/AIDS;
- Possible growth of number of children from HIV-positive

The most affected group of population by STDs/HIV/AIDS are young people/adolescents. This is determined by the risks related to the beginning of the sexual life, smoking, alcohol and drug use.

The major consequences of such behaviour include:

- The growing number of pregnancies and abortions among adolescents;
- High rates of the sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS;
- The growing number of drug-addicts and alcohol-addicts;
- Exposure to greater violence/abuse (sexual, physical, psychic);
- A greater number of psychosocial problems.

Early beginning of sexual life is reflected in wanted or unwanted pregnancy among adolescents. At present, there are no official statistics related to the rate of pregnancies and births within this age group. However, there is data on the number of abortions among adolescents (Table 3.9). While the general rate of abortions continued to decline over the last years, the rate of abortions among adolescents remains almost the same.

Table 3.9.

The Evolution of Abortions among Adolescents (1996-1999)

AGE	1996	1997	1998	1999
Under 15	71	47	48	56
15-19 Years	3182	3629	2777	2864
Total	3253	3676	2825	2920

Source: The Institute of Mother and Child Health Care

Early pregnancy is usually a consequence of the poor knowledge on sexual life and contraception, as well as limited access of youth to modern contraceptives. Thus, according to the Reproductive Health Survey in the Republic of Moldova (1997), only 12.8% of all adolescents used a condom during their first sexual encounter. This represents a major danger in terms of rapid spread of HIV/AIDS and STDs in the country, which can shortly reach the size of a national catastrophe, thus affecting not only health but also economic development of the country, as it already happened in other parts of the world.

The predominant way of HIV/AIDS transmission in the Republic of Moldova is intravenous drug injection. However, the situation might change in the nearest future because of the HIV diffusion beyond the IDUs community. As mentioned above the fact that most adolescents practice unsafe sex, sexual transmission of the HIV could become the leading one.

Table 3.10.

The Number of Drug-Addicts and Drug-Users, 1995-1998

Years	Total Number of Registered Cases			New Cases		
	Total	Drug-Addicts	Consumers	Total	Drug-Addicts	Consumers
1995	129	29	100	96	25	71
1996	274	85	189	225	51	174
1997	199	106	193	147	33	94
1998	641	77	464	356	56	300

Source: The Republican Narcological Dispensary

Growing number of drug users among adolescents is becoming a critical problem. According to the data of the National Narcological Dispensary, the number of drug-addicts and drug-users among adolescents is continually increasing (Table 3.10). About of 120-140 of drug users die annually as a result of overdosing, most of them being from 15 to 25 years old. Yet, the number of the registered cases does not correspond to the reality, which is much higher.

Although adolescents face many problems, they seldom consult a doctor. This fact is often explained by the lack of confidentiality and respect on the part of health services, fear of being condemned and disapproved, lack of knowledge about their own body, a strict family code of conduct and limited access to health services. Consequently, an important direction of health system development should include the development of youth-friendly services that would adequately satisfy adolescents' rising health needs. This should be done together with information, education and communication activities among youth and adolescents.

An extremely negative incidence is the growing number of children born to HIV-positive mothers. As of June 2000, 18 such children were registered, 13 were less than 3 years old.

Another important contributor to the spread of STDs and HIV/AIDS remain denial and the underestimation of personal risks related to contracting STDs and HIV/AIDS. According to a UNAIDS report, if no adequate preventive measures are taken within the next five years by the government or educational programs implemented concerning the spread of drug addiction, sexually transmitted diseases, and HIV/AIDS, the HIV/AIDS epidemic situation will create a serious problem for the public health and the security of the country. The forecast for real HIV contagion in Moldova, according to the Ministry of Health, ranges from a minimum of 11,900 cases per year to a maximum of 42,500 estimated cases, which would constitute a national disaster.

The Government recognized early the seriousness of the AIDS epidemic and implemented a number of measures with this regard, including establishment of the National Centre for AIDS Prevention and Control HIV testing laboratory, passing the Law on Prevention of AIDS passed followed by a number of sub-legislative and regulative acts. There have been a number social mobilization and training activities, including health professionals, mass media and NGOs.

3.4. Health policy development and health system reform

The Government of Moldova expressed its commitment to develop the National Health Policy (NHP) in 1997 asking the World Health Organization for relevant activities to be included in the collaboration programme. On 26 August 1998, a meeting entitled "National Health Policy: a Challenge for Sustainable Development" took place in Chisinau and was attended by the President, Chairman of the Parliament, representatives of the government, MoH and other relevant ministries and departments, and representative from trade unions, professional associations and the mass media. The participants agreed to cooperate in the development of a national health policy document and adopted the meeting Statement and preliminary Action Plan.

Having acted as initiator and coordinator of the process, the Ministry of Health launched negotiations on implementation of the reached agreements. The activities include the compilation of thematic reports on priority health issues by the working groups, which will then be reviewed and endorsed by the National Commission. Broad public consultations are foreseen before the last draft of the policy document is presented to Parliament for adoption.

The major challenges of the initiative are promotion of intersectoral cooperation and active involvement of the population in action for health, both evidently very insufficient so far. The process has been further complicated by organizational instability caused by the recent economic crisis. As a result, some of the planned activities are already behind schedule, which puts into question the feasibility of adopting the NHP document before the year 2001.

During the Soviet era, the health care services in Moldova possessed features common to the Semashko model, namely total state authority and control, significant centralization of administration, planning and financing and free-of-charge medical assistance at the point of delivery. Emphasis was placed on the development of inpatient and specialized services (secondary and tertiary care). Presently, the old system cannot function effectively because central planning and administration have collapsed and the allocation of funds from the state budget is too small and irregular. It has led to a critical shortage of drugs and diagnostic substances and inability to maintain facilities and renew equipment and supplies. Health care

providers receive very low salaries resulting in poor motivation and morale; professional discipline disorder, malpractice and substantial under-the-counter payments are widespread causing public pessimism and distrust.

It is generally felt that the overall health sector financing is insufficient. In addition, financial commitments of the central and local governments are not always actualized or the funds are released with delays. Due to financial crisis and lack of external financing, the real-value health care budget for 1998 was reduced by around 32,5% compared to 1997 and for 2000 - was reduced by around 53,3% compared to same period.

At the same time, the available resources are not rationally used. The system is very hospital-oriented. In recent years, up to 85% of funds were utilized in inpatient care and only 15% in outpatient and primary sector. The number of hospital beds and duration of stay in acute care hospitals are the highest across the European Region (Figures 3.7 and 3.8).

Fig. 3.7. Number of hospital beds (per 100,000), Moldova in comparison with European averages

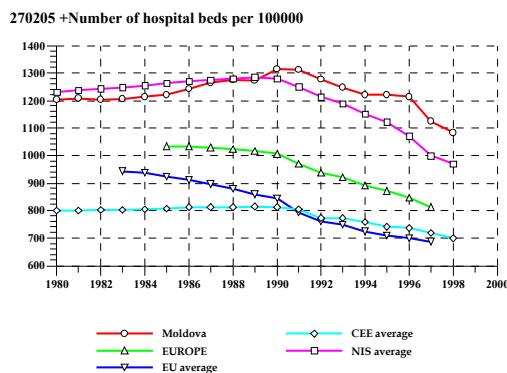
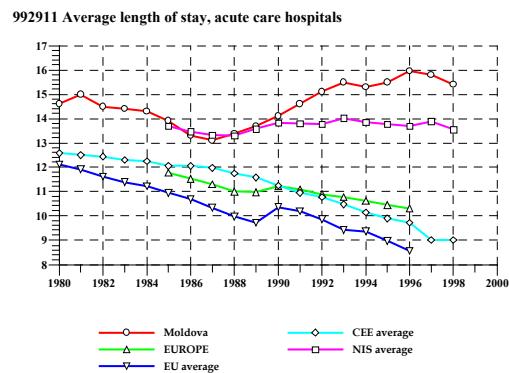


Fig. 3.8. Average length of stay in acute care hospitals (days), Moldova in comparison with European averages



Source: WHO Health For All Statistical Database, January 2000.

Students at the Medical University and medical doctors are lacking proper information on current researches and advanced knowledge on medical curricular. Due to this, newly graduated students have lack proper training and skills on modern treatment practices.

The numbers of different categories of health care professionals are above regional averages. There are no reliable mechanisms for human resource planning. This has led to imbalances in specialties and territorial distribution and to increasing unemployment among health care workers.

Access to healthcare services. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (Module on the Accessibility of Health Care Services), 15,4% of households from the Republic of Moldova had always to forego the necessary treatment due to financial constraints. Other 40,3% of households, at least once, had to renounce or interrupt their treatment for the same reason (Table 3.11).

It is worth mentioning substantial increase in renouncements by socio-economic status of the households. Thus, the rate of renouncements ranges from 7,8 percent in the richest quintile to 28,2 percent in the poorest one is very large.

There are also differences by region and urban-rural. Households from the West are more likely to forego medical treatment (16,7 percent) when compared to the households from Transnistria (8,4 percent). In urban areas, households have fewer chances to renounce a necessary treatment (11,9 percent) than rural households (18,1 percent).

The country has embarked on a major reform of its health sector. It places emphasis on the development of the primary care level, restructuring of the health services based on sound financing and allocation, introduction of new forms of management such as the Social Health Insurance, effective intersectoral action and public participation, decentralization and appropriate quality of care. These principles were postulated in the “Strategy for Health Care System Reform and Development in the Republic of Moldova for years 1997–2003” adopted by the national government in July 1997. The health services reform is perceived as the top priority for

Table 3.11.**Treatment renunciations' rates due to financial constraints**

Variables		Renouncement		
		no	partially or at least once	always
Regions	Republic of Moldova, West	42,4	40,9	16,7
	Republic of Moldova, Transnistria	54,7	37,0	8,4
	Urban	48,2	39,9	11,9
	Rural	41,3	40,6	18,1
Wealth	Poorest	28,1	43,7	28,2
Index	Second	38,9	43,7	17,4
Quintiles	Middle	53,0	36,2	10,8
	Forth	47,4	39,8	12,8
	Richest	54,0	38,2	7,8
Total		44,3	40,3	15,4

the MoH's strategic plans and ongoing activities. As listed in the Strategy document, the future health care system will:

- Be based on sound financing, management and delivery of services able to provide necessary, accessible and cost-efficient care.
- Be oriented towards primary health care (PHC) and effectively coordinated between primary, secondary and tertiary services.
- Focus on the quality of delivered care, use progressive technology and be clearly targeted at health gain.
- Imply that patients in various forms pay for the received care. At the same time, it will preserve universal access to the basic package of health services to all citizens free of charge.
- Rely on the personal responsibility of an individual for his/her own health.
- Listen to the citizens' voice, encourage their most active participation in its functioning, and will render them freedom to choose providers and services.
- Be operated using multisectoral approach, actively supported by decision makers, executive authorities, communities, other involved organizations and will expect that health is given priority in the society as an important prerequisite of the nation's successful development.
- Ensure that health workers possess necessary competency and skills, respect professional ethics, provide appropriate care, are socially secure and adequately remunerated basing on the amount and quality of their work.

Several initiatives have been accomplished to meet the above objectives. The basic law on health care ("Law on Medicine") was adopted in 1995, postulating the need for reforms and introduction of other than existing forms of financing and administration of services (e.g. private and insurance-based). A number of laws, decisions and regulative acts have been adopted in the areas of public health (e.g. sanitary and epidemiological services), pharmaceuticals and other sectors:

- The structure and functions of the MoH have been constantly undergoing changes to strengthen its capacity to deal with the reform, e.g. creation of the new Department of Health Care Reforms (1997)
- In 1997, the National Center for Public Health and Health Management was established by the MoH to provide evidence, advocacy and legislative support for decision-making in the health sector and its reformation

- National Programme on Primary Health Care (1997) stating the need of priority development of primary sector, including shifting resources from in-patient care and introduction of general/family practice
- Health manpower policies have been reviewed to better correspond to the present needs, including changing curricula of the Medical University (with bigger attention to GP training) and nursing colleges
- Law on Mandatory Health Insurance (February 1998) presuming step-by-step introduction of the insurance system through state National Health Insurance Company with territorial branches
- The MoH developed the Basic package of services to be guaranteed by the state to all citizens (currently the set is being negotiated with other governmental structures to be implemented starting next year)
- MoH has been successful in negotiations to change some of the existing inadequate mechanisms of health system administration. From instance as of 1999, the old principle of allocation according to bed-days and number of outpatient visits will be replaced by global budget for hospitals and per-capita allocation in primary care.
- A number of other specific laws, government decisions, regulations and National Programmes have been developed and approved over the recent years to alleviate the worsening health situation in the country.

However, the progress of the reforms is restrained by several negative factors, primarily the worsening of the economic situation and further cuts of health care budget. This endangers success of the measures that have been designed (postponing introduction of health insurance has already been considered) and calls for temporary, often palliative steps to maintaining the system such as the introduction of “cashier offices” at the hospitals to receive direct payments from patients for services. Also obvious is the lack of consensus among decision-makers (including parliamentarians) on major reform directions and weak intersectoral cooperation.

The efforts listed above are intended to raise awareness and understanding in the society, first and foremost among decision-making bodies, about the importance of the health issues of concern and need for coordinated and reliable actions to tackle these problems. However, in most cases, implementation of these decisions is insufficient. Immunization serves as a case in point. During recent years, the needs for effective immunization programme were covered by 70% or more by external donations of vaccines. In 1998, the government committed itself to providing all necessary funds for vaccinations as a priority health activity. However, the fulfillment of these obligations was insufficient and resulted in a critical shortage of vaccines stocks by autumn. Moreover, the health care budget reduction for 1999 caused the MoH to launch once again appeals to international donor community to help the country with vaccines to ensure adequate immunization next year.

3.5. International partnerships in the health sector

A number of international agencies (United Nations family, intergovernmental organizations, bilateral assistance, NGOs) are active in the health sector in the country, providing help by ways of technical assistance, training and donations. MoH has been active in establishing reliable mechanisms for coordination of external aid, including technical assistance, where the leading role would belong to national authorities. A brief description of activities of international partners is listed below.

- *UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)*. Although the mandate of UNDP does not directly include health issues, working in a broader context of sustainable human development, UNDP addresses, in the framework of its development projects, some issues like environment and poverty that have a direct impact on the situation in the health sector. In more concrete terms, UNDP, during one year, supported financially and operationally the work of the Theme Group on Health and Development that pooled expertise from most of the UN Agencies present in Moldova. The major objective of the Group was to provide assistance

to development of National Health Policy, through supporting the NHP working groups and providing a forum for discussions on the paper. Other tasks of the groups included enhancing information exchange and communication network in health and increasing national capacity in resource mobilization for health-related programs. Finally mention should be made of the recently started UNDP/UNAIDS Project on the National Strategic Planning on HIV/AIDS and Implementation of Prevention and Information Activities co-funded and implemented by UNDP.

- *UNFPA (United Nations Populations Fund)*. United Nations Populations Fund started its activities in 1994 by providing training in Family Planning and Reproductive Health to family doctors, general practitioners, and district reproductive health coordinators. In collaboration with the MoH and UNICEF, it carried out the Reproductive Health Survey (1997). UNFPA also organized the distribution of free-of-charge contraceptives and supported creation of RH/FP Center in the Northern part of Moldova. In the near future, UNFPA intends to create another RH/FP Center that would be located in the Southern part of the country. The expected final result of the programme is to develop a network of three Referral Centers located in the Central, Northern and Southern parts of the Republic of Moldova.
- *UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund)*. The agency has been actively involved in the health sector over the past 5 years programme estimated at US\$ 3,000,000. A number of activities such as donations of vaccines and other support to the national immunization programme, development and implementation of the programme focused on strengthening perinatal care and development of strategies on child nutrition. With the technical assistance of WHO over the last several years training in CDD/ARI (control of diarrhoeal diseases and acute respiratory infections) and IMCI (integrated management of childhood illness) country activities have been implemented. UNICEF is actively involved in developing the health reform agenda. Assistance to the government in such areas as PHC (demonstration project in Lapusna Judet, including analysis of expenditure and assessment of basic health care packages, development of essential drugs needs at the district level), information technologies and public health, surveillance (co-sponsoring development of district network's data collection and research) is being provided.
- *WHO (World Health Organization)*. The agency provides technical assistance to the national government in health sector priority areas, such as health policy, health system reform, health of women and children, control of communicable diseases, promotion of healthy lifestyles and environmental health. During 2000-2001, WHO will render increased budget allocations to the country programme as Moldova has been ranked among the 6 countries in greatest need in the WHO European Region. The ongoing programme is specifically focusing on the development of health policy framework, health system reform with emphasis on PHC (e.g. general practitioners' training via modern communication technologies), human resource planning, tuberculosis control (implementation of the DOTS strategy), and strengthening of the national health communication network.
- *United Nations Theme Group on HIV/AIDS*. Since its establishment in January 1996, the United Nations Theme Group on HIV/AIDS in Moldova has assumed the main responsibility within the UN system for helping the country strengthen the capacity to cope with the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The objectives of the Theme Group include: strengthening the capacity of the national Government to develop comprehensive national strategies and implement effective HIV/AIDS activities at the country level, including dissemination of information, media campaigns, promoting broad political and social mobilization to prevent and respond to HIV/AIDS within the country, ensuring that the national response involves a wide range of sectors and institutions and advocating greater political commitment in responding to the epidemic at the country level, including mobilization and allocation of adequate resources for HIV/AIDS related activities. Prevention programmes for prisons' staff and inmates, assessments on access to drugs, behavior studies among drug users, information and education of youth on HIV and STD, training on HIV/AIDS for health professionals, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health, media contests, etc have been the major

activities supported by the members of UNAIDS. The important activity of the Theme Group nowadays is the joint elaboration with the Government of the HIV/AIDS Strategic Planning Development Framework (SPDF).

- *UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for refugees)*. In response to the request from the Central Government of Moldova and in close cooperation with both the Ministry of Health and Chisinau Municipality Department of Health, UNHCR assists medical institutions and provides technical assistance in the health sector. Since its establishment (1998), the Branch Office has in the framework of its assistance to IDPs (internal displaced person), reviewed a number of requests to rehabilitate medical institutions that are considered as a priority by the Ministry of Health.

In the initial stage (1999) a number of UNHCR rehabilitation projects were supported to the sum of US\$ 118.000 (e.g. rehabilitation of Pneumological Clinic (TB disease), Child's Hospital No.3, District Clinic in Rezina, District Hospital in Criuleni and Central Emergency Hospital in the capital city of Chisinau). For the year of 2000 UNHCR started an assistance programme amounting to US\$ 50.000. The major objectives of the programme are rehabilitation of the National Center for HIV/AIDS prevention (in cooperation with UNICEF), as well as more repairs to the Pneumological Clinic and Child's Hospital No.3.

- *WB (The World Bank)* is starting a programme on restructuring of the health care system of US\$ 20 million (composed half-by-half by a loan and a grant, the latter predominantly from the Dutch Government). The major objectives of the project are to develop tools and options for matching the infrastructure to the current shortage of state health care budget, with the emphasis on reorienting resources towards primary care. At the initial stage (2000-2002), the project will focus on strengthening the primary health care and emergency services in the Central (Chisinau) Judet and the capital city of Chisinau, establishment of the Health Investment Fund (HIF), with the further consolidation of the hospital sector. Particular emphasis will be placed on reform of TB and HIV/AIDS control services in cooperation with other international agencies involved. The project is currently pending for the final approval by the National Government and the Parliament.

WB (The World Bank) is starting a program on restructuring of the health care system of US\$20 million (composed half-by half by a loan and a grant, the latter predominantly from Dutch Government). The major objective are to develop tools and options for matching the infrastructure to the current shortage of state health care budget, with the emphasis on reorientation resources toward primary care. The Health Investment Fund Project aims to improve the health status of the Moldovan population, and to increase the quality and efficiency of the public health sector by improving access to essential services for the poor. At the initial stage (2000-2002), the project will focus on strengthening the primary health care and emergency services in the Central (Chisinau) County and the capital city of Chisinau, establishment of the Health Investment Fund (HIF), with the further consolidation of the hospital sector. The project will also include support to strategic work aimed at controlling the TB and HIV/AIDS epidemics.

- *EU/TACIS Programme*. Assisted in developing the National PHC programme in 1996/97 (technical assistance project implemented by a French consulting company); negotiations with the national authorities are in progress on EU assistance in selected areas of health care financing and infrastructure, to start in September – October 2000.
- *JICA (Japanese International Cooperation Agency)*. Has released a grant of US\$ 8 million for equipment and supplies for mother and child services and US\$ 1,5 million for immunization in 1999/2000. Meeting the MoH requests, confirmed its commitment on the future involvement in primary care activities (e.g. equipping GP offices) during the following years.
- *Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation)*. Provides assistance to health institutions by sponsoring training in selected specialties, donations of equipment, computerization and information exchange. Soros Foundation is promoting development of the countrywide information system, where it actively collaborates with UNICEF and WHO. The recently

started project is devoted to health communication network development. The pipe-line foundation's programmes are focused on further strengthening of the public health sector.

- *USAID (United States Agency for International Development)*. By sponsoring a number of its affiliates, has been active in the field of reproductive health and family planning for a number of years. In addition, AIHA (American International Health Alliance) has been cooperating with Moldova with national institutions through partnerships in the areas of PHC/GP training, nursing, emergency medicine, medical education, MCH, donations to selected services.
- Other agencies involved in health assistance action are *International Federation of Red Cross Societies* (donations, social aid, tuberculosis), *Pharmacists Without Borders* (drug donations), *Caritas Luxembourg* (TB control in prisons), *Peace Corps* (public health education), and some others.

Following the initiative of the UN agencies involved in the health sector, the establishment of the country-based Task Force on Health Care Reforms is under way, to consist of representatives of national authorities (MoH, National Center for Public Health and Health Management, relevant chairs of the Medical University) and international agencies (WHO, WB, UNICEF, EU/TACIS) with the scope to coordinate effectively international assistance in the field.

3.6. Challenges for the future health system development

It is felt that the following set of measures should be undertaken by the National Government to alleviate the existing crisis of the health system:

1. *Elaboration and implementation of the National Health Policy* as a tool to prioritize health in the society's agenda and ensure commitment of decision makers of proper and coordinated health action. The NHP should be adopted by the Parliament and rely on intersectoral cooperation, responsibility, effective communication and active involvement of the population in solving health problems. The policy document must be complemented by a functional plan of actions for its implementation.
2. *Ensure financing by the Government of a rational Basic Package of Health Services based on the public health priorities.*
3. *Adoption of relevant legislation and mechanism of enforcement* in the health sector, including that on HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, alcohol and tobacco control. It must be clear, realistic and supported by practical agreements among the main players, e.g. financial coverage.
4. *Strengthening of relations between the center and the regions.* Functions and responsibilities of the Ministry of Health, other central institutions and judet health boards must be clearly defined. The emphasis should be placed on decentralization and increasing the operational capacity of judet authorities. At the same time, the Ministry of Health should revise its functions and structure to be able to play a strong policy and "stewardship" role. An effective programme of training in management should be implemented.
5. *Speeding up of the health care services reform.* The health gain must be strongly included in the scope of the reform. The Government should finalize preparations for the planned reform activities and reinforce their application. The major issues to be addressed are rationalization of the use of available resources, sustainable financing of essential areas (primary health care, immunization, TB, etc.), priority development of the primary level with gradual consolidation of the over-capacitated hospital sector, access to and reliable quality of care, manpower planning and remuneration mechanisms.
6. *Development of public health.* Immediate attention should be paid to the public health functions, since it would allow for better tackling of major health determinants, improve performance of prevention activities and control of chronic diseases. The Ministry of Health should establish relevant structures (e.g. Institute of Public Health) and start training in the area.

7. *Improvement of care of vulnerable population groups*, including the elderly and disabled. Especially important is to strengthen policies and structures that deal with family planning, childbirth, infants, small children and adolescents. Functional programmes should be developed that facilitate improvement of nutrition, healthy settings in schools and stress management.
8. *Strengthening control of communicable diseases*, including strong Government's financial commitment for priority issues like immunization and TB treatment.
9. *Improvement of management information system*. It is of special importance in conditions of decentralization and emergence of new services such as general practice and public health.
10. *Introduction of essential technologies concept*. It should apply to supply of drugs, equipment and also staffing issues and be compliant with the actual funding constraints.
11. *Implementation of environment and health policies*. Environmental factors very strongly influence the health status. The Government must materialize its commitment to address the problem and implement the National Environment and Health Action Plan (NEHAP), e.g. by means of active external fund raising.
12. *Improvement of coordination of external assistance and resource mobilization*. The Government (Ministry of Health) must play a central and fully responsible role in coordination and fund raising. It should review the present procedures to be able to ensure that the donors' contribution is in line with national priorities and the health policies and strategies that are adopted and promoted by national authorities.
13. *Improvement of health information and communication strategies*. Significant effort is required to deliver important messages to and through the main groups of communicators, including official structures, mass media, non-governmental organizations, professional bodies, etc. The Ministry of Health should lead and coordinate the process. Successful communication would allow to promote major decisions, e.g. health policy and health care reform issues.

4. Poverty levels

4.1. Poverty Domain

In 90's, during the transition to a market economy Moldova living standards deteriorated considerably. Delayed payment of salaries, pensions and social benefits, liberalization of prices and inefficient use of labor resulted in growing unemployment, distortions in the distribution of income and a growing number of people living below the poverty line. The growing number of people living under the poverty line during transition required a series of measures aiming at protecting the vulnerable groups of the population.

In order to evaluate the poverty level in the Republic of Moldova the results of the Household Budget Survey, carried out by the Department of Statistics with the technical and financial assistance of the World Bank and UNDP, were used. According to World Bank research "Evaluation of Poverty", the absolute poverty line in 1997 was estimated at approximately 82.1 lei per month (\$17.6). For 1999 the absolute poverty line by the assessment of independent experts from Center of Market Problems was estimated about 120 lei (\$11.5) due to inflation process.

According to National Poverty Alleviation Strategy for Moldova (UNDP, 1997) the poor population was divided in two groups: the extremely poor population and the relatively poor population. The poverty line has been established in a certain proportion to the subsistence minimum (233.1 lei). It has been considered rational to use four poverty lines - respectively 30%, 40%, 50% and 100% of the subsistence minimum, which constitutes in cash equivalent 70 lei (1-st line), 92.3 lei (2-nd line), 116.6 lei (3-rd line) and 233.1 lei (4-th line). The disposable income of 76.8% of the surveyed population is inferior to the subsistence minimum, and 21% of the population has an income smaller than 70 lei, that is to say that practically each fifth citizen is in a situation of extreme poverty. There are poorest groups of population, including having

many children families, declining years peoples (pensioners) and peasants, which don't have a agricultural land in property.

Unfortunately, Moldova did not officially approve the method for assessing the poverty line up to the present moment. Consequently, there is no official estimate of the national poverty line, which would enable to identify the poverty level. The practice of "administrative" estimation of poverty is widely used, whereas the state institutions, responsible for the implementation of the social policy, were awarding, without sufficient grounds, the poverty status to separate categories of the population with the highest risk of impoverishment (families with many children, pensioners, lonely mothers, etc). This arbitrary identification of poverty distorts substantially the real situation to the benefit of political goals.

The analysis based on the results of the Household Survey of Moldova, indicated the poverty dimension in Moldova is bigger than in European CIS countries and Western European Countries in transition. In 1999 the number of people living below the absolute poverty line amounted to 58.5%, while in 1997 this indicator reached 37%. It is means that at present more then half of the Moldovan population lives in extreme material conditions. Today more than 787 thousand pensioners have become the most vulnerable and marginalized social group, who can survival only with the support of their children. More than 150,000 handicapped people are living below the poverty line; these are totally dependent on state institutions offering social protection.

The impoverishment of the population has taken an unprecedented character, making poverty one of the most serious problems in Moldova. The measures, undertaken recently in the social field, do not focus sufficiently on ensuring the right of every citizen of the country to protection against poverty. As a result, poverty is becoming a serious threat to the individual dignity, health and well-being. The pauper cannot exercise fully many of his/her constitutional freedoms and rights.

4.2. Income Polarization

As a result of transition period hardship, the hopes and expectations of people for the improvement of their well-being did not materialize. This is shown by the fact that the nominal cash income per capita amounted to 1,800 lei per year (less than USD 160), placing Moldova on the last place in Europe on this indicator.

The difference of income polarization of the population is significant. If in 1997, 20% of the poorest people received 4.3% of the population's income, while 20% of the richest accumulated 48.7%, then in 1999 these indicators changed to 4.5% and 49.0% respectively. The quintile differentiation coefficient exceeded 11, while the widely used Gini coefficient, the increase of which indicates the increase in income differentiation, reached 0.44. The distribution of income is determined first of all by the variation of cash income. Their abrupt differentiation smoothes to a certain extent a more even distribution of in-kind income. According to international classification, if the Gini coefficient of the country exceeds 0.35, it is considered a country with high level of income differentiation. This relates to a large extent to Moldova, where income polarization exceeds the established limits.

Table 4.1.
Distribution of population's income according to income quintiles, %

Year	Total	Income Quintile					Income concentration coefficient (Gini)	The ratio of income of the poorest 20% to the richest 20% of the population
		I	II	III	IV	V		
1997	100.0	4.3	9.8	14.8	22.5	48.7	0.44	11.5
1998	100.0	3.9	9.7	15.0	22.6	48.8	0.44	12.6
1999	100.0	4.5	9.8	14.7	22.0	49.0	0.44	11.0

Income polarization in Moldova in an obvious fact: at one end a small group of relatively well-to-do people have high and very high income, which, as a rule, are not based on salary, and on the other end – an incomparably huge group of poor people, who are seriously limited in their

possibilities to ensure an appropriate level of life. The country displays the characteristics of the Latino-American development model, whereas the middle class is missing and the society is divided into the rich minority and the very poor majority.

Income polarization is accompanied by worsening of the social atmosphere in the society. A big part of the population considers the established economic system to be socially unfair, which creates a benign environment for income generation only for new entrepreneurs, bankers, and representatives of the shadow economy to the detriment of the material interests of the other part of the population.

4.3. Unemployment

Under the conditions of general crisis in the country, considerable reduction of output, decrease in the number of jobs and labor demand, the situation on the labor market has exacerbated, the level of unemployment in the country is growing quickly.

According to the data of the Department of Statistics there were around 208 thousand unemployed in 1999, classified as such according to the International Labor Organization (ILO) methodology. Unemployment reached 11.5% and was higher among men and in urban areas. Besides, the employment agencies registered 57.8 thousand unemployed, making 27.9% of the actual number of unemployed. In comparison with 1995 the number of registered unemployed increased by 27.5%, while every second unemployed was laid off from enterprises on staff reduction grounds. The official unemployment level is 2.0%.

An alarming development is the increase in the long-term and chronic unemployment, meaning unemployment lasting more than 6 months and 1 year, accordingly. 55.0% of the officially unemployed are women, whose employment is problematic due to their reduced mobility in comparison with men. Women with small children are in a difficult situation as regards their professional-qualification adaptation to the market conditions. Their reduced competitiveness is maintained for the entire period from the birth of the child till his/her first school year.

Most registered unemployed are people of 30-44 years, or people with high working potential. The negative factor is that the share of young people of 29 years among unemployed exceeds 30%. From the point of view of the labor market the main problem of young people is their initial employment, which applies to those with education and specialty, as well as to those without them.

In 1999 the average unemployment benefit was 101.00 lei, which exceeds 2.1 times the average benefit received in 1995. Nonetheless, during this period the ratio of this unemployment benefit to the average monthly salary practically did not change, making up only one third. When the unemployment benefit is below the minimal subsistence level, the worker's right to protection against unemployment is violated. The imposition of various conditions granting the right to receive the unemployment benefits, which excludes many unemployed from receiving this sort of benefit, is considered a violation. Slightly over 43% of the total number of unemployed has the possibility to receive unemployment benefits.

Table 4.2
The dynamics of registered unemployment in the Republic of Moldova

	1995	1997	1999
The number of unemployed	45365	49518	57834
Registered unemployment, %	1.4	1.5	2.0
Share of unemployed women, %	54.7	53.6	55.0
Number of unemployed receiving unemployment benefits	19747	18180	25315
Ratio of unemployed receiving benefits to the number of unemployed, %	43.5	36.7	43.8
Average unemployment benefit, lei	47.88	80.98	101.00
Ratio of the monthly unemployment benefits to salaries, %	33.4	36.8	33.3

The situation is worsened to a large extend by the arrears in unemployment benefits payment. The amount of unemployment benefit arrears reaches 11.2 million lei. Taking into account that the benefit is intended to support an unemployed person without any money, this

situation is unbearable. The unemployment of able population does not necessarily mean that the particular individual lives below the poverty line. Among the officially registered unemployed, only 79.7% are facing limitations, while 20.3% are well-to-do individuals.

The economic sources ensuring the daily existence of families, whose members are not considered officially unemployed, are the land plots or gardens, providing the most necessary food products, and their participation in the shadow economy, reaching 50-60% of the GDP.

Another alternative solution to the daily problems is employment abroad or emigration to other countries with stable social and economic structures. There are no precise statistical data on the number of people emigrating abroad for temporary employment. According to the data of the Department of Statistics for the forth quarter of 1999, more than 62 thousand people were employed abroad. According the data of the Information and Security Service, this number is more than 600 thousand people.

4.4. Rural Poverty

On the background of increasing poverty in the country, rural population is in the most disadvantageous situation. The analysis of the results of the Household Survey of 1999 has shown that rural impoverishment is caused by very low disposable income of the rural population, making up only 66.2% of the income of urban population, as well as by its unfavorable structure. The main component of rural income is in kind, while cash income does not reach even 32% of the total income. Moreover, the poorest 20% of families receive only 19% of their income in cash. This reduces tremendously the solvency of the rural population, which does not allow them to satisfy the basic needs of normal human development.

The meager salaries of the employees of the agricultural sector have a negative impact on the poverty level. The employees in agricultural enterprises face the highest risk of impoverishment. These are often poorly qualified workers, whose salaries are well below those in other sectors of the economy. The current high salary arrears in the agricultural sector contribute to the worsening of the material situation of the agricultural employees and confer the impoverishment process a stagnant character. The incomplete economic reforms, undertaken in the country, delay of basic market transformations in the agricultural sector caused the farmers to become part of the poor layer of the society.

The main source of income of poor village families is related to the agricultural activities, undertaken by these families. This particular type of activity secures the important survival means for almost 60% of the poor people and remains the main source of income for 32.9% of people living above the poverty line.

The in-kind income of rural families takes the form of agricultural goods, cultivated by the families on their own land and received by family members as salary. As a result, most of the products are not processed and require additional time for their preparation and cooking. Moreover, the poor variety of goods produced by the families does not ensure a balanced diet of basic food products for poor villagers.

It is common that poor families have many children, which worsens their material situation. A particular alarming fact is that poverty is spread among people of 30 and 50 years, an age when under normal conditions the economic possibilities of family breeders reach the maximum, thus allowing the rural family to save for future and to make investments (high education for their children, housing, etc).

The vast majority of rural population does not have the necessary survival means, it is isolated from modern life style related to comfort at home and at work. Lack of basic living conditions in rural houses, insufficient number of trade and communal services in rural areas, long working hours and unavailability of normal leisure facilities, hard working conditions – these are the factors contributing to their current situation.

Due to limited electricity supply to rural areas, the villagers cannot regularly have access to radio and television and their impoverishment decreases their access to other sources of mass information.

As a result of low solvency of rural paupers, they do not have sufficient supplies of coal, needed for heating during cold periods of the year. In this situation, illicit cutting of trees and bushes has become a widely spread practice, which has a negative impact on environment.

The differences in access to social services among rural population have intensified, including access to medical care and education, which generates a painful reaction among rural inhabitants. It is the poor families that are mostly affected by the introduction of payment for services, which were provided in the past either free of charge or for a reduced price. Most of these families cannot afford additional expenses for medicine, healthcare, education and kindergarten.

4.5. Nutrition and Food Security

The World Food Summit (Rome, 1996) adapted the Declaration on World Food Security and the Action Plan. This forum has restated “the right of every person to nutritious and inoffensive food, composed of appropriate products and the fundamental right of every individual to protection against famine”. Somewhat earlier the International Conference on Nutrition (Rome, 1992) pointed out the specific character of solution of the food security problem in the different regions. In 90's to them countries in transition (including Moldova) were added.

The Republic of Moldova is predominantly an agrarian country. Agricultural output is continuously and substantially decreasing in the last 10 years. Since 1990 the consumption of food products per capita is constantly decreasing, mainly due to low purchasing power of the population, rather than the supply of the population with food products.

Table 4.3.

The consumption of food products per capita, kg/year

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Meat and meat products	58	56	46	35	30.1	23	25.3	25	26.7
Milk and dairy products	303	258.6	198	174	163	165.2	161.4	154.5	155.5
Eggs, number	203	194	166	130	100	107.2	116	121	121
Sugar	48.9	41.2	30.5	30	22.3	21	22.5	21.2	21
Vegetal oil	14.1	11.6	8.5	7.8	8	8	8.2	7.6	7
Potatoes	69	68	66.5	95	84	67.8	71	68.8	65.1
Fruit, berries and grapes	79	78.9	63	80	68	59.7	59.3	77.5	47.7

According to the latest available figures, the consumption of food per capita as compared with 1990 decreased almost for all products: for meat products – by 47%, for milk and dairy products – by 49%, for fish and fish products – by 75%, for vegetable oil – by 54%, and for vegetables – by 38%.

FAO has developed several criteria for determining the minimum level of food consumption. In case the consumption per capita is below this level, the country or the respective social group is considered disadvantaged as regards food supply. FAO considers unfavorable the situation when the lower limit, equal to the food level assuring the basic metabolism of human body, is exceeded. In countries with mild climate, the limit is 2100 calories, corresponding to the consumption norms of vitamins, mineral salts, albumin and determines the appropriate quantitative consumption level and the structure of food products. Moreover, FAO specialists consider 2500 calories per day as the average level of consumption assuring a normal vital activity.

According to 1998 data, the average consumption per capita in the Republic of Moldova is 1980 calories this indicator being net inferior to the admissible daily consumption of 2100 calories, as determined by FAO. It is estimated that the energy inputs in Moldova are lower than in Europe, displaying a continuous downward trend.

According to the data of the Household Budget Survey, less than 10% of the populations (the most well-to-do categories) could maintain the same consumption level as in 1990. At the

same time, around 10% of the population consume less than 1500 calories, which is the maximum malnutrition limit, according to FAO.

The UNICEF Food Intake Survey conducted in spring, 1998 has established however, that overall the average energy consumption in adults (18-45 years) is sufficient corresponding to 2646 Kcal/day. Although 51% are covering their energy needs, there are 28% of adults which are covering less than 80% of needs and another 19%, which are consummating more than 130% of the needs. This distribution is very much in line with the distribution of income and also corresponds to the anthropometry data. Thus 18.5% of the population are suffering from chronic energy deficiency according to the BMI (Body Mass Index) and almost 50% of population are either overweighed or obese.

The WB Survey "Poverty Assessment" based on the poverty threshold, caused by food insufficiency, has depicted that number of vulnerable people is increasing. The study has used FAO criteria of 2100 calories per day in order to evaluate the poverty level of the population from the point of view of food security. The study confirmed that at the end of 1997 around 24.2% of the entire population lived below the food poverty line. No additional evaluations in this field were conducted, but as the estimates show, according to the method of the preceding study, around 33% of the population was below the poverty line in 1999.

According to data of FAOSTAT, which reflect the nutritional inputs by type of products, it is obvious that the nutritional input in the republic is different from that in European countries. In the Republic of Moldova the caloric needs are satisfied by bread and farinaceous products, rather than meat, fruit, vegetables, etc, which is opposite to the situation in Europe. This fact can explain the inadequate structure of nutritional intake and the deficiency of iodine, iron and calcium in food. The insufficiency of iodine is one of the main causes of pulmonary diseases and mental retardation; still, it is not widely spread, being insignificant in the northern and southern regions of the republic.

According to the Nutrition and Food Intake Survey conducted by UNICEF and the MoH 28% of the children under 5 and 20% of women of reproductive age were anemic. However, the most affected children were those from 6 to 12 months, which in 47% of cases had anemia. The major cause of anemia is iron deficiency. Circa 46% of children under 5 years and 46% of women between 18 and 45 years are covering less than 80% of their needs in iron. In 20% of the children under two years old, the research detected clinical and radiological signs of rickets. On the whole, no signs of acute malnutrition have been found in children under 5. In spite of this, 8-10% of the children under 5 and 8-9% of those aged 5 to 12 proved to be exposed to stunting, which is regarded as a sign of chronic malnutrition.

According to the Survey the general nutritional status of Moldovan population is characterized by the coexistence of general caloric excesses with the tendency of overweight and obesity problems that appear in childhood and tend to be aggravated in adulthood. The multiple microelement deficiencies, in particular iron, iodine and vitamin D, have a strong impact on physical development of the child. The study has shown that fruit and vegetables are not consumed frequently, not even during their season. Meat products are consumed only by half of population, while 10-15% of poor families never consume fish and cheese products.

In these circumstances, when the most disadvantaged groups of the population from the nutrition point of view are children and declining years people, the total responsibility for the life of these groups belongs to the Government of the country. This requires that state bodies undertake a series of actions to redress the situation and to minimize the negative impact of the transition on the most vulnerable groups of the society.

4.6. Housing and sanitation

Housing. UN Conference on Human Settlement (Istanbul, 1996) pointed out possible ways of solution of the housing problem.

The statistical data on housing in Moldova is not alarming. From the available housing space, there are 20.4 m² per capita. However, existing differentiation of housing availability between urban and rural population is preserved – 17.7 m² and 22.4 m² per capita accordingly.

An average urban family has an apartment with 2.2 rooms, while a rural family has a more spacious house – 3.1 rooms. In urban areas an average of 1.4 people live in one room, while in rural area – 1.0 people.

At the same time, there are many people in Moldova who live in unfavorable conditions. In cities, especially in Chisinau, quite a lot of families have to live in one-room apartment, which is often rather small. There are families with children who live for many years, even decades in hostels. Every third urban family is waiting in line to improve their living conditions; every tenth of these families is waiting more than 10 years.

As a result of drastic decline in the number of commissioned state housing premises and due to unlimited increase of poverty, which considerably decreased the capacity of the population to purchase apartments and to build houses, the access of the Moldova's population to housing reduced significantly. The indicator of the access to housing in Chisinau, calculated as a ratio of the price of urban housing to income generated by a family from all sources, is 13.0. This means that a family living in Chisinau will need 13 years to save for an apartment, completely excluding other necessary expenses. The access of city inhabitants to housing is far below that of transition countries (which is on average 12.0 and varying from 15.0 in Moscow and 7.7 in Budapest), and of developing countries (such as Uganda and Bolivia).

The difficult financial situation of most households is the main cause of worsening quality of housing fund. A considerable part of this fund is dilapidated and wrecked. The analysis of the results of the Household Survey indicated the poor level of communal endowment of houses, especially in rural areas. If practically all the houses in rural areas have electricity, then only 0.9% of these houses has sewage and running water. Houses in rural areas do not have showers and baths; only half of them have gas, still its use is minimal, due to high prices for cylindered gas. The most families' use stove heating during cold season.

Table 4.4.
The structure of families with houses endowed with commodities, average per residence, 1999, in %

	Total	Urban	Rural
Total of families with houses endowed with:			
Electric lightening	99.0	99.5	98.7
Water:			
- Aqueduct	31.1	76.1	0.9
- Water pump	6.0	9.6	3.5
- Well	62.9	14.3	95.5
- Spring	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sewage	31.1	76.1	0.9
Bath or shower placed in the house	28.9	71.8	0.0
Gas:			
- central network	28.8	63.9	4.8
- gas cylinder	42.4	25.5	53.8
Heating:			
- central	32.3	75.8	3.1
- local	67.7	24.4	96.9
Telephone	36.8	65.5	17.5

Lately, especially after the financial crisis of 1998, which caused considerable depreciation of the national currency, the indicator of access of the population to housing-communal services has drastically decreased.

Sanitation. The sanitary situation of the population of Moldova worsened considerably in the last years, which had a negative impact on the working, living and leisure conditions. As a result, this impeded the maintenance and strengthening the health of the population.

Various other production and working process factors have an unfavorable influence on the health of population. The characteristics of microclimate do not correspond to hygienic norms at 28% industrial enterprises, 39% communal household, and 58% agricultural enterprises (Table 4.5). The bad sanitary-hygienic conditions of agricultural enterprises is caused by other

factors: the noise level and lightening do not correspond to standards at 27.5% and 28.8% agricultural enterprises respectively.

Table 4.5.
Sanitary-Hygienic situation at enterprises and institutions in 1999, %

Enterprises and institutions	The enterprises, from the total examined, that do not correspond to the following hygienic norm:			
	Noise level	Microclimate	Lightening	Ionizing radiation
Total, of which:	24.1	40.7	33.6	0.0
- industrial	24.5	28.4	21.5	0.0
- agricultural	27.5	58.4	28.8	-
- communal	20.9	39.6	19.1	-
- children, teenage institutions, schools, special schools, etc	18.1	48.1	47.5	-
- others	35.4	49.1	10.1	-

Environment pollution had a negative impact on people as well. Pollution of urban environment is particularly harmful for the health of the population: 26.7% of tests revealed excess of dust norms, 26.5% - nitrogen, 15.4% - carbon monoxide, 14.8% - formaldehyde. In some sectors of Chisinau located near busy highways, the pollution level exceeds the possibilities of city ventilation systems. Provision of water to rural areas is unsatisfactory. The main source of drinking water is wells, of which 14.9% do not correspond to sanitary norms and rules and 31.1% do not correspond to microbiological norms.

The problem of individual hygiene is becoming serious. It is caused by increased poverty, which makes it difficult for people to buy the necessary sanitary and hygienic products, by poor supply of hot water in cities and by closing down of baths, accessible to the population in money terms. The system of cheap baths is not operating in cities and villages for several years already, while only one municipal bath is open in Chisinau, a city with 750 thousand inhabitants. As a result, the epidemiological situation is worsening: the long forgotten pediculosis is turning into a mass phenomenon (more than 26 thousand patients during 1999). This disease is mostly spread among children (106 of 10 thousand examined children are suffering from this disease, while in special schools 418 cases were discovered). Tuberculosis of breathing organs remains widely spread, 51 of 100 thousand inhabitants are suffering from it, in comparison with 49 cases in 1998.

4.7. Poverty Overcome Assistance

The drastic increase in the number of people living in poverty requires concrete measures, which would protect the most vulnerable groups of the population. In this respect, it is utmost important to identify poverty, to develop a method for its assessment and to determine poverty characteristics.

The first attempts to determine poverty characteristics and the quantitative indicator of various poverty characteristics of different social groups were undertaken within the National Poverty Alleviation Strategy of the Republic of Moldova, developed in 1997-1998 with the financial and technical support of UNDP. The strategy has been developed in accordance with the methodology and conceptual basis of the Guidelines of the Social-Economic Development of the Republic of Moldova till 2005. It stipulates the objectives, stages, main tasks and specific activities intended to alleviate poverty in the country. On the base of mentioned Strategy at May 2000 the Government has adopted the State Poverty Reduction Program.

There was also implemented a WB Survey "Poverty Assessment". Relying on these researches it would be expedient to provide regular monitoring of poverty in the country.

This situation calls for concrete measures, intended to eradicate poverty in Moldova, which should be considered a primary social, political and economic task. At the same time, the priorities for UN agencies, which are working in Moldova, should be set as follows:

- resume economic growth is the first element to reduce poverty. More systematic implementation of structural reforms is needed;
- to create a normative base to identify poverty, develop criteria, methods and approaches to define the poverty line and food poverty line, which would also reflect the UN recommendations in this field; to monitor of poverty in the country (including rural and urban poverty, malnutrition, housing and sanitation);
- to estimate poverty by counties (judets) and to develop National State Program of poverty reduction for counties. With this aim to create Social Cohesion Fund;
- to create a state system of social guarantees as a basis for satisfying the minimum material requirements of the population and for ensuring equal access of the population to social services;
- to assist of Government to create effective employment and to decrease the risk of the population able to work to live below the poverty line;
- to create a targeted social protection system for the most vulnerable groups of the population, which would take into account the budgetary and administrative possibilities of the country. Special efforts should be made in breaking the vicious circle of poverty by designing and implementing programmes oriented on early childhood care and development, development and health of adolescents and strengthening the social protection of the child, which is one of the most affected group of population.
- to strengthen monitoring system of Government activities in poverty reduction area.

Taking into consideration the scope of absolute poverty that covered more than half of the population, a priority attention should be given to the eradication of this social illness.

Poverty reduction and social protection of most vulnerable groups of population might be the main concern of decision makers for short run period. Policies in this sense could combine two elements: active and passive measures. In the first case the accent will be placed on promoting the economic opportunities to the poor through job creation and diversifying social infrastructure. This could expand the possibilities of using more productively the only asset the poor have in abundance-their cheap labor force. In the second case a significant progress could be achieved by using more efficiently the social security net. Providing basic social services (access to elementary education, primary health care, and targeted indemnities and compensations) should lessen to some extent the burden of social costs on vulnerable groups. For the passive policy and especially for the social aid (cash or in kind) it is important to provide them on a means-testing basis improving the address ability of social benefits.

Simultaneously with measures of poverty eradication it is necessary to intensify actions of reforming social sphere, and firstly to relock pension program reform, and reform of education and health care system. The efforts should be centered on the rationalization of social expenditure, improving administrative capabilities of social institutions, and adjusting the portfolio of social services. This will allow to cushion to some extent social stress and to restore public confidence in reform.

5. Governance and Civil Society

Quality of governance – is the key issue, which draws attention of UN agencies in Moldova. This problem is extremely complex and emerges through the macroeconomic framework of the country, the protection of human rights, the delimitation of responsibilities of central and local administrations. The process of formation of civil society, fight against corruption and organized crime are of extreme urgency.

5.1. Macroeconomic aspects

Economic transformation in Moldova comprised three major processes – macro-economic stabilization, property reform and liberalization of enterprises. The initial stage of this process is characterized by high rate of inflation and massively decreasing production. After liberalization of administrative prices in 1992, prices skyrocketed, leading to hyperinflation (in

1992 – 1280%). In such environment, the so needed budget deficit reduction, along with reforms in real sector, have not been started. Moreover, the deficit was financed by extensive money printing, as well as preferential centralized loans, which ultimately generated a non-productive consumption, since the loans were frequently absorbed by inefficient state enterprises that should have been either restructured or bankrupted.

Table 5. 1.

Main Macroeconomic Indicators for the Republic of Moldova						
Population (1999): 3.65 mil*	Population growth rate (1994-2000): -0.3% p.a.					
GDP (2000): 1.28 bln USD	GDP per head at market exchange rates (2000): USD 350					
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000/
Real GDP growth (%)	-1.4	-7.8	1.6	-6.5	-4.4	0
Unemployment (% of labour force)**	1.4	1.5	1.5	9.2	11.6	11.5
Average inflation rate	30.2	23.5	11.8	7.7	39.3	31.3
Consumption/GDP (%)	82.9	94.3	97.4	100.9	87.8	95.8
Budget deficit/GDP (%)	-6.7	-7.6	-7.8	-3.3	-3.2	-4.1
Broad money change, % (end of year)	66	15.6	34	-9	42.7	39.8
External state debt, USD million	825.7	1040.9	1216.7	1360.1	1344.7	1330
External state debt/GDP (%)	57.2	62.5	63.0	80.5	116.0	103.7
Exchange rate average (MDL/US\$)	4.5	4.6	4.6	5.4	10.5	12.3

* Excluding Transnistria

** Up to 1998 - inregistered unemployment, from 1998 - according to ILO methodology

Source: Government of Moldova, NBM

In June 1991 the Parliament of Moldova approved the banking laws, which established the basis of the actual 2-tier banking system, the National Bank of Moldova (NBM) being the sole money issuance authority of the state - drawing up and implementing monetary, credit, and foreign exchange policies, setting the regulatory framework for commercial banks and supervising their activity, as well as assurance of national currency stability. Consequently NBM put in place prudential regulations for all banks, which set standards for the Moldovan banking system compatible with international standards (the Basle provisions). By 1999, 22 commercial banks were operating in Moldova, all this banks are in private sector.

The currency stabilization environment had to be created after the declaration of independence of Moldova. Foreign exchange reserves were inexistent, and there was neither a foreign exchange market, nor even a central bank of the state. The Moldovan leu (MLD) – new national currency was introduced on November 29, 1993, a tight monetary policy being implemented with a managed floating currency regime. The IMF through stand-by arrangements supported the program of financial stabilization and structural reforms. The program also sought to advance economic restructuring through the liberalization of domestic and international trade and payments systems and the introduction of key structural reforms.

Starting with 1993, the main type of credit allocation was credit auctions held at the NBM. The annual refinancing rate, established at auctions, rose continuously until it peaked 377% in February 1994. The rate of inflation (end of period) decreased from over 2000% in 1993 to 105% in 1994, falling to 11.2% in 1997 and rising to 43.8% in 1999 after Russia crisis. The auction rate began to drop along with inflation, becoming positive in real terms starting with January 1994. By the end of 1997 the refinancing rate reached its lowest level of 16%. Simultaneously average interest rates in the banking system have declined continuously, showing a widening of spreads between rates on deposits and loans, indicating lack of a real competition between banks, as well as the fact that some banks tried to increase their profits granting risky loans.

High real interest rates in the banking system were caused by high borrowing requirements of the Government combined with low supply of domestic savings. High country risk rating for Moldova resulted in significant risk premiums and interest rates well above the world level. High interest rates on T-bills induced an increase in the opportunity cost of lending, crowding out credit investments to the private sector. Besides, high systemic risk, driven by the

weakness of court and legal environment (for instance lack of legal basis for land collateral and mortgage loans) further reduced the incentives for search for profitable lending opportunities.

The analysis of banks' crediting activity reveals the problem of availability and cost of credit, partly resulting from insufficient development and limited competition in the commercial banking sector, under-capitalization. At the same time lenders are not allowed to borrow abroad, due to the capital account restriction imposed by the central bank.

Because of great risks (economic instability and imperfection of collateral mechanisms), commercial banks refuse to make long-term investments in national economy and cannot provide long-term loans having a mainly short-term deposit base. The portfolio of major part of banks consisted mainly of profitable and relatively risk-free government securities. On the other hand lack of efficient investment projects and small number of solvent economic entities, which could efficiently use the credits and reimburse them in due time causes the shortage of credits.

Fiscal policy in Moldova can be characterized by inertia and pressure from groups of interest with a slow pace of structural reforms and the general weakness of the state. Loose fiscal policy reduced the determination in reforming the state structures. Arrears and netting-out operations led to the development of a non-payment culture. At macroeconomic level, expansionary fiscal policy led to high absorption in the economy, stimulating imports, deteriorating the trade balance. At the same time, capital inflows necessary to finance the budget deficit, combined with domestic restrictive monetary policy, prevented the depreciation of the currency. The ultimate result of the policy mix was the rapid accumulation of external debt and expenditure arrears. The unsustainability of both internal and external position of the state led to the inevitable financial crisis.

Macroeconomic developments in Moldova in last years' exhibits striking contrast between consequent tight monetary policy and loose, arguably unsustainable fiscal policy. While inflation and monetary aggregates show an impressive dynamics, not yet achieved even by the most advanced transition economies, budget deficit share in GDP exhibited almost double-digit values. Starting 1994 the non-financial balance of the governmental sector was at exceeding a negative 15% of GDP, being around a negative 40% of disposable GNP.

In Moldova, internal imbalances have been persistently converted into external problems. The domination of demand over supply of goods has not produced inflation, as it was settled through imports. Budget deficit was financed without monetarization through foreign capital inflows.

The share of final consumption in GDP was steadily growing and increased from 80% of GDP in 1995 up to 102% of GDP in 1998. Nevertheless, the rate of investment in the economy stayed at approximately 25% of GDP. This was possible only through substantial external borrowings that offset domestic dis-saving. The trading partners significantly credited Moldova, trade deficit increasing from 8% in 1995, to 28% in 1998. Such trade imbalance induced an extreme risk to the external position of Moldova and made it very vulnerable to changes in the pattern of capital flows. Private consumption was rapidly growing, and reached 85% of GDP in 1998. Public consumption remained relatively stable at 27% of GDP until 1997, but it dropped sharply in 1998.

In Moldova, direct NBM credits to the Government represented the main source of deficit financing in 1992 and 1993 – circa 6 % of GDP, but decreased slightly afterwards. In 1998-1999 the Budget Law prohibited explicitly such a procedure, but in practice, NBM provides direct credits to the government for short-term coverage of its financial needs, but such credits must be in the form of T-bills purchase by NBM. In September-October 1998 NBM was forced to credit the government in order to avoid its default on treasury securities, which resulted in a very high ratio of credits to GDP (9.3%). In the spring of 1999 NBM granted 75 million lei for the agriculture works. In general the role of direct NBM credits for deficit financing was mainly determined by the availability of cheap international financing.

As consumption is the main cause of debt accumulation, the share of FDI in capital inflow is insignificant. Moldova faces an unfavorable structure of the debt. Since 1994 the debt towards bilateral creditors has been fairly constant. However, the most important and least controllable source of debt accumulation is the energy sector debt. Lack of restructuring in this

sector resulted in a large debt towards Gazprom (US\$140 million in form of T-bills and US\$300 million, including interest). Taking in consideration the energy arrears, the total external governmental debt amounts to 1.3 billion USD.

The dependence on external financing undermined the macroeconomic stability because of vulnerability to changes in perceived creditworthiness. The risk of devaluation is extremely high when the external debt is high, leading to an explosion of the public debt. Therefore, the financial adjustment burden for Moldova was getting higher and higher.

The growth potential of Moldovan economy was not enhanced, as the funds were not directed to productive investments, but to the inefficient state sector. Borrowed money was not spent on structural reforms that would have limited the primary deficit of the budget. Externally financed government consumption possibilities undermined the incentives for reform implementation. Such a policy led to increasing difficulties of debt servicing. The cost of servicing the debt increased to 17% in 1999 from 7% in 1997.

The 1998 crisis had deep roots in the lack of structural reforms, and slow pace of privatization and restructuring – indicating a permanent weakness of the state with respect to its public finances. After failing to achieve the conditionality criteria, IMF stopped disbursements in the mid 1997 and the World Bank suspended its Structural Adjustment Loan-II. It speeded up the collapse of the fragile monetary stabilization. The capital account losses (capital flight) brought the country to the verge of default. On the other hand, a dramatic and probably persistent loss of major export markets, a situation that may affect the real economic activity over a longer time period, hit Moldova.

A deep impact on the pace of macroeconomic process had the property reform. As of 2000 about 60 % of the economy and 74 % of employees are in the private sector. In the country there are about 190 thou operating businesses (SMEs), employing over 700 thou people.

As a small open economy, Moldova is very sensitive to changes in its current account developments and international terms of trade. The country's exposure increased in recent years, as one partner – Russia – intensifies its domination on foreign trade. The exports to Russia accounted for more than half of total Moldovan exports. This is a direct consequence of lack of efforts to diversify the export markets and of deterioration of the terms of trade.

Together with other international institutions (IMF, WB, EBRD), UN agencies in Moldova are actively involved in the elaboration of the social and economic policy, oriented in the long run to the transition towards sustainable human development.

5. 2. Supremacy of the law

In the course of transition to a democratic society a number of reforms were undertaken in the Republic of Moldova applying to such domains as economy, social sphere and law. However, the main objective of any reform is to create a legal state capable of placing an individual at the core of its ample attention. The life of any society bearing on the principles of democracy cannot be deemed without existence of a well-established legal order and certain arrangements based on the following:

- Firstly, on the Supremacy of the law and on existence of certain unified legal standards, efficient and mandatory for all real and legal entities of the society;
- Secondly, under conditions of a legal state, observance of these rules shall be ensured through the activities displayed by genuinely independent judicial and legislative institutions enjoying credit with the population and guided by the law exclusively.

Necessity to overcome the totalitarian criteria and to promote democratic principle as supremacy of the law is deemed by the Republic of Moldova as an objective of prime importance.

This principle was elaborated in ample detail under the new Constitution of the Republic of Moldova adopted on July 29, 1994, establishing in its Art. 3 par.(3) that the Republic of Moldova is a legal democratic state in which human self-respect, free development of human rights and freedoms, justice and political pluralism represent supreme values and therefore are being guaranteed.

It is worthy to notice that establishing certain constitutional principles and displaying them through the text of many other special laws at present fails to guarantee to the society a real governance of the law due to the following reasons:

- lack of financial support required for the proper implementation of the laws, especially the material ones (for example, the Law on ensuring state pensions was adopted without any material support in mind, introduced into the text of law were categories of pensioners benefiting from premature pensions, as well as different categories of persons benefiting from privileges at establishing size of pension. Lack of material support, alongside with the economical crisis resulted in failure to respect provisions set forth under the law, more so, it was necessary to change the whole concept of state social assistance and to adopt a new law in the domain, which sets a much more drastic conditions for the insurance of state pensions);
- inflation of legislative acts. With the scope of ensuring reforms within the period of 1991 through 1999 enormous amounts of normative acts were adopted. On many occasions these were contradicting ones, which has lead to inflation of normative acts;
- non-correlation of norms set forth under different normative acts of the old legislation and these of the new one, same as laws related to different branches, and even the laws related to the same domain resulted in failure to respect, or just selective observance of the normative acts by the population and by the state authorities;
- elaboration of certain imperfect or tough acts, resulting in evasion from observance of the requirements set by law (for example, conditions set forth by tax legislation being too tough and diversified imply with the enterprises a desire to evade from tax payment, with the risk of sanctions application being much below the size of certain exaggerated taxes).

Thus, in the Republic of Moldova there is a seeming demand for the unification and systemization of the normative acts, as well as respective correlation between these, ensuring their executions through the enforcement exerted by the state, which may pivot the process towards the real governance of the law.

5.3 Human rights and access to justice

Legal international commitments on Human rights. The Republic of Moldova, together with other countries in transition, is pursuing political, economic and democratic transformations. At present Moldovan society, face three fundamental problems: Democracy, Development, and Human Rights – problems of utmost importance and of special actuality, which require rapid and efficient resolution.

Immediately after its creation, the Republic of Moldova has joined the most important legal international instruments related to human rights, has become a member of UN, OSCE, Council of Europe and other international organizations, has adopted its own Constitution, which not only guarantees the supremacy of international laws on human rights treaties (Art. 4(2)), but provides that in case of conflicting with international treaties which Moldova is party to, the Constitution shall be revised (Art.8 (2)). The Republic of Moldova is one of more than 90 states that have introduced the Ombudsman institution, known for ten years in highly democratic countries. While creation of the Ombudsman Office is positive, its low efficiencies and incompetence should be mentioned as well.

From the multiple treaties in the field of human rights, adopted within the framework of UN and specialized institutions, especially UNESCO and ILO, six treaties are considered the nucleus of the United Nations in the field of human rights. The Republic of Moldova has ratified:

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESC) dated 1966;
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) dated 1996;
- International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination dated 1965;
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women dated 1979;
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatments or Punishments dated (CAT) 1984;
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) dated 1989.

All the treaties stipulate a mandatory report writing procedure, on the basis of which the participant states should submit periodically reports on the adopted measures intended to apply effectively the rights recognized in the respective treaty. These reports should also indicate the difficulties affecting the implementation of treaty provisions. Regretfully, the Republic of Moldova submitted its reports on CEDAW this year and its report on CRC was under preparation. Because central state authorities have not paid enough attention to this problem, a working group of national experts was not created and financial assistance and training of these experts was not provided.

Up to the present moment the Republic of Moldova did not ratify the facultative Protocol of the Pact on civil and political rights. For this reason, the citizens of the Republic of Moldova, as well as other individuals under state jurisdiction do not have the right to submit a complaint on the violation of human rights by state authorities to an independent international organization, UN Committee on human rights.

Only the procedures regulating the submission of complaints to international bodies enable the international monitoring bodies to interpret uniformly the legislative standards, to which the internal bodies have to align while fulfilling their primary function of implementation of these norms. The fact that a plaintiff presents a complaint to an international body against the decision of that court, pushes the respective judges to take the appropriate obligations imposed by international law seriously.

Since the Republic of Moldova has joined the Council of Europe and has ratified the European Convention for Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention of Human Rights or ECHR), accepting the procedure of individual complaints presentation to the European Court, it would be necessary to ratify without delay the respective treaty, accepting the facultative procedure of complaints presentation.

Universal ratification and legality of collective action in case of nonconformity is an essential condition for the creation of a global culture of human rights. Given this fact, the Republic of Moldova would have to ratify other international treaties in the field of human rights, such as:

- Convention on the Status of Refugees dated 1951 and the Protocol on the Status of Refugees dated 1967;
- Convention on the suppression of human traffic and exploitation of peer prostitution dated 1950;
- Convention on protection of cultural goods in case of armed conflicts dated 1954 and others.

Respect of human rights and legality becomes a necessary condition for the creation of a state of law in the Republic of Moldova, prevention of any abuses, strengthening of the spirit of justice, which has to be always present in the consciousness of country's leaders and ordinary citizens. It is obvious that democracy cannot be obtained without observance of rights, freedoms and obligations. These should be known, respected and understood by every member of the society. It is the public authorities who have to ensure access to information to all citizens, according to their skills, to make them aware about their rights and obligations.

Both the citizens' right to information and the authority's obligation to inform citizens are stipulated in the Constitution, but are not fully observed. It would be necessary to publish the international treaties in the field of human rights as separate brochures, accompanied by application commentaries and distributed for free to the population, especially in rural areas. The WWW site on human rights protection in the Republic of Moldova should be created, where all the necessary information could be obtained and questions answered.

Thus, education in the field of human rights is necessary and indispensable, an education that should be a real guarantee and a guardianship for human awareness, enabling everybody to become responsible for his/her own dignity. In this respect, little was done in the Republic of Moldova: the human rights course is not taught in schools and high education establishments; international documents in the field of human rights are known only by specialists: scientists in the field of public human rights are scarce, the majority of them are teaching.

A special problems emerging in the internal and international arena - protection of human rights in the eastern region of the Republic of Moldova. The structures of the self-proclaimed

Transnistrian Moldovan Republic have been created by using anti-constitutional, anti-democratic and violent means. Their application has caused human losses (not less than one thousand people have died in the armed conflict in the summer of 1992, including civil persons), thus violating the fundamental human rights of many people. The specifics of the eastern region are described by non-observance of the Constitution and Legislation of the Republic of Moldova for a more than eight years and the tendency, at least in statements, towards the formation of an independent state. The officials of the self-proclaimed republic advance this idea in the form of state ideology, using the means of a totalitarian military regime, which seriously violates fundamental human rights and freedoms.

Access to justice. Equality of citizen's rights is a constitutional principle, according to which all the citizens, irrespective of race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, sex, opinion or political adherence, wealth or social origin, can exercise equally all the rights envisaged in the Constitution and the Law, can participate equally, in economic, political, social and cultural life, without privileges and discrimination. Public authorities and foreigners treat them equally. This means equal justice for all – a principle highlighting the important permissions, on which a veritable creation of a state of law is based.

Constitutional stipulations express not only the attachment to the international regulations, but also to the openness of the Republic of Moldova towards Europe and international Community. Justice has become one of the guarantees for the effective exercise of human rights and freedoms; all the persons have access to justice, including stateless people and foreigners. Justice is used for the protection of legitimate rights, freedoms and legitimate interests via direct methods, or via other procedural methods.

This principle stipulated in the Constitution and the Law on juridical organization was transposed in legal norms applicable to all people awarded the same rights; norms in form of orders regulating all the phases of criminal and civil lawsuits. There are no court privileges awarded to certain categories of citizens, all being judged by the same courts, following the same procedure.

The courts have the obligation, which they rigorously observe, to award the same rights to parties in the lawsuit, thus assuring equilibrium of forces. All the parties have to be aware of the rights, in order to cite them under conditions envisaged in the law and can enjoy the equal possibility to defend their rights.

The equality of parties in front of justice is realized with the utilization of the right to defense, which encompasses all the rights and procedural rules that offer the person the possibility of defense against accusations presented to him/her, to appeal the charges and to uncover their innocence. In civil, commercial, labor and administrative lawsuits, the right to defense, as a total of procedural rights and rules, offer the parties the possibility to capitalize the claims or to show the groundlessness of the adversary's claims. This includes the right to submit requests, to read the case, to propose evidence, to challenge the judges, to speak up during the trial, to exercise the contentious means, envisaged by the law. In its limited acceptability, the right to defense encompasses only the possibility to use a lawyer, however, most of the population cannot afford services of lawyers. There are lawsuits, when the assistance of a lawyer is obligatory, a situation when the competent public authority names a lawyer, who would defend the respective person (minors, arrested people, accused persons, militaries on duties, etc).

Another principle guaranteeing the equality of justice is that the citizens of national minorities, as well as persons who do not understand the Moldovan (Romanian) language, have the right to all the acts and papers of the case, to speak up in the court and to speak via an interpreter; in criminal lawsuits this right is exercised for free.

These are just a few aspects, which show free access to justice for any person wanting to defend his/her legal right, freedoms and interests, as well as justice under the conditions of real independence and impartiality. All of this represents strong guarantees for the satisfaction of the requirements of the state of law and for the realization of equal justice for all members of the society.

The effective guarantee of rights and freedoms and free access to justice implies a democratic political system, which gives the civil society its own space for manifestation. An

important role in the efficient protection of individuals is attributed to non-governmental organizations, trade unions, church, mass media and other institutions apart from public authorities, whose sphere of activities and sometimes means are legally recognized and guaranteed. And not lastly, the principle of independence of judicial authorities from legislative and executive powers is particularly important, especially in light of free access to justice, a right guaranteed to all legal subjects, without any discrimination. Besides, there are new legal institutions, like the parliamentary lawyer (Ombudsman) or the control of the constitutionality of laws by a specialized body – Constitutional Court.

Fair administration of justice. With its creation, the Republic of Moldova has taken the road of democracy, freedom and human dignity, state of law, based on political pluralism, free election, and observance of human rights and freedoms.

Nonetheless, people are not satisfied with the behavior and the activity of some public officials, the frequent inefficiency of the decision makers from local and central administration, they feel abandoned and exasperated, having the perception of “without money you die with justice in your hand”. Faced by bureaucracy and obstacles in their attempt to exercise their rights, people are inclined to think that institutions are mutually supporting each other in hiding corruption, which penetrated the police, justice and administration, while policy makers use their position only to obtain personal gains. Justice was always an expression of primary need for order and equilibrium, the need based on the effective conditions of communal life and coexistence of freedoms.

In order to exercise their legal rights and interests, people often have to appeal to courts. The huge number of cases examined by the courts indicates that justice has become a public service of primary importance. In this respect, the quality of the court services is of concern for the judicial power, as well as for the society in general.

People react differently when receiving the court order. The institution parliamentary advocate (Ombudsman) receives daily letters and complains from people on the resolution of cases by the court and non-execution of court orders. In many cases there can be observed a feeling of dissatisfaction with the court decisions or with the relative slow resolution of claims. These facts throw an unfavorable light on the general image of the state of law in the Republic of Moldova and, in particular, on the fundamental human right of access to fair justice.

The Economic Court System (including execution of courts' decisions) is extremely inefficient and non-transparent. There are no specialized bankruptcy courts. Cases are generally audited in the economic courts for an average of six months in large cities. However, some cases are examined for several years. Decisions are also taken within six months, on average. So far seven commercial banks have been bankrupted. During the “Intreprinzbank” investigation 137 legal lawsuits were initiated in April-June 1997, out of which only five were finalized. Courts took decisions on banks' debt reimbursements for a total amount of 41.4 million lei, but till present the executors could not recover the due amounts.

Important court decisions are not usually published. Judicial review of administrative actions is not yet established. For the legal, public and administrative bodies to exercise with competence and impartially the functions assigned by the society in the field, they need to know all the regulations stipulated in international instruments joined by our state.

In this respect, it is required to complete the legal reform, to create a department of court executors for both civil and economic cases, which would have all the information on the financial and economic situation of all the economic entities. Only this kind of organization would assure free access to justice and fair administration to all citizens, including execution of legal decisions.

Individual freedom and security. Individual freedom and security are inviolable, according to the Constitution. Protection of individual freedom and security involves control of criminal legality and respect of general guarantees, such as: the principle of legality of offenses and punishments; the presumption of innocence and the right to an equitable lawsuit, together with other guarantees related to search of persons, houses, preventive detention and arrest.

The Republic of Moldova, part of the most important international treaties in the field of human rights, is committed to respect these provisions.

In case these individual freedoms and security are violated, the guilty agents (officials) and the state are held responsible for that. The Criminal Code punishes the officials, who have committed illegal detentions, arrests and abusive investigations (art. 192); coerced to provide testimony (art. 193); constrained the witness or the injured party, the interpreter and the expert to testify falsely (art. 194), and others.

For these persons to receive the due punishments, the intention of the state agent is to be proven, which is in most cases very difficult, sometimes impossible. According to the European Convention on Human Rights, any person who becomes the victim of arrest or detention under conditions other than those specified in article 5 has the right to demand compensation. This right is subject to prove of the above-mentioned violations.

Although article 53, par. (2) of the Constitution envisages that the state bears material responsibility for any damages caused by mistake during criminal trials, this may not come into effect without a clear system controlling this right. Our internal legislation as regards compensations for the damages caused to any person whose freedoms have been violated is very weak. Given this fact, the state should regulate strictly this field related to the relationship between authority and freedom.

The respect of physical integrity of any person implies that nobody's physical integrity can, in principle, be violated by a third party or by the state, unless this is legally allowed for the common good. The criminal and international law prosecute illegal violations of physical integrity.

The internal and international juridical systems pay a specific attention to such violations as torture, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment, forced and mandatory work, slavery and servitude. Of course, these cases are found in various families, at some enterprises, state institutions, etc. Lack of informational framework, autonomous centers for depicting these cases, their non-publication in press, disables us to provide further details. The limited character does not allow us to detail and characterize other individual freedoms.

Up to the present day, a series of measures, legislative acts were adopted with the intention to create the framework necessary to ensure the right to life, human dignity, freedom and personal security. Death penalty was abolished, the provisions defining and forbidding torture, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishments were adapted.

Unfortunately, there are discover cases when police officers and prison employees abuse the prisoners and convicts, do not respect the Convention against Torture and Other Inhuman and Degrading Punishments and Treatment as of 1984, ratified by the Republic of Moldova in 1995. These cases represent a disgrace for the state and those applying the Law, for they are transformed from defenders into offenders. Moreover, a state of law should not register such cases. Police officers should know the provisions of the Behavior Code as regards their responsibilities in the application of the laws dated 1979. All the minimal rules on the treatment of convicts adopted in 1977 should be applied to detained or imprisoned persons; these rule are imposed on the Republic of Moldova as a member of the UN and as a state of law.

Today more than 10 000 convicts are detained in penitentiary institutions, which are in a deplorable condition. Only 21.2 million lei (USD 1.7 million) were allocated in 1999, which makes only 30% of the necessary minimum. The daily food diet of a convict is limited to 0.43 lei (USD 0.03), and only 1.37 lei (USD 0.11) are allocated for medical care per day. The number of convicts, whose criminal cases are not examined more than 6,9,12 months is growing, thus violating the stipulations of the laws.

Refugees. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established in the Republic of Moldova in 1997 to help the Government introduce legislative and procedural structures required to assist persons in need of international protection pursuant to international standards. The Co-operation Agreement signed with the Government in December 1998 specifies principles of UNHCR protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs) with a view of securing durable solutions. In May 1999 UNHCR's presence was upgraded to full Branch Office status.

In its first year, UNHCR focused its activities on introducing concepts, training and provision of technical equipment to the Department for Migration, Ministry of Labor, Social

Protection and Family. Approximately 60.000 USD were spent on the establishment of a Central Data Bank on legislation, returnees, IDPs and labor migrants.

In 1998 UNHCR Office expanded its program to assist IDPs who moved to Government-controlled territories after the military conflict in Transnistria. The first projects allowed to reconstruct an abandoned apartment block for 12 IDP families and to rehabilitate a primary school, which was damaged in 1992 in Dorotscaia, a village on the left bank of the river Nistru. In 1999, UNHCR focused on the rehabilitation of hospitals and educational institutions in Chisinau and in areas affected by the 1992 conflict.

By the end of 1999 out of 275 cases registered, 83 were administratively closed (spontaneous departures), 38 were rejected (did not meet criteria of refugee definition), and 4 received refugee status. Over 31 different countries are represented, but most are from Afghanistan, the Russian Federation (Chechnya), Iraq, and Sudan. Persons of concern were issued protection letters, legal assistance was provided to register them with the authorities and to obtain release from detention. On a good offices basis, UNHCR also assisted a number of individuals to immigrate, naturalize or settle their family status in Moldova.

In the year 2000 UNHCR will continue to provide indirect assistance to IDPs. Emphasis will continue to be laid on projects that aim to reconcile divided communities, to promote the right to return and to prevent new outflows. Given the Government's declared intention to introduce legislation (drafting work started in a Parliamentary Working Group) and to accede to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, provision will also be made to provide the yet to be established Central authority with the necessary material support and training opportunities. Given the number of destitute applicants for refugee status, consideration will also be given to the establishment of a Reception Center.

In support of the promotion of democracy in Moldova UNHCR also co-funded the publication of international treaties and conventions, provided support to establish legal libraries, published books on Human Rights in Moldova, on famous Moldovan refugees and supported the publication of the legal monthly Avocatul Poporului (Ombudsman). UNHCR also regularly liaises with other international organizations active in Moldova (e.g. OSCE, UNDP, UNICEF, CoE, EU-TACIS, IFRC, etc.), often in the form of joint projects. A number of NGOs benefit from UNHCR capacity-building efforts, including the newly created "Charity Refugee Center". Excellent co-operation has also been established with the Moldovan Social Investment Fund supported by the World Bank.

UNHCR put into practice technical support to relevant Government departments includes training for officials, judges, border guards, social workers and lawyers, allowing all to be better acquainted with potential durable solutions to the refugee problem. UNHCR is also pleased that two Universities have agreed to include refugee law lectures into their curricula, and that State University will start the Refugee Section in the Legal Clinics project.

In spite of subscribing to the CISCONF Program of Action, the Republic of Moldova is the only country in Europe that has neither signed the 1951 Convention/1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, nor promulgated national legislation. In 1999 a Parliamentary Working Group concluded that it was desirable to adopt legislation and to explore the question of accession to the 1951 Convention and the Moldovan delegation to EXCOM assured the HC that the Parliamentary process would commence in 2000. Changes of Government and an intense power struggle diverted pre-requisite attention of the executive and effectively impeded the process.

The first beneficiary population (refugees and asylum-seekers) depends on international protection from UNHCR. The second beneficiary population (IDPs) either need assistance to return in safety and dignity to their homes, or to be fully integrated. UNHCR's focused on measures designed to ameliorate fermenting displacement pressures and to promote tolerance. The other main theme to be pursued will be statelessness. Institution/capacity building is an overarching activity, which permeates all sectors of UNHCR activity.

While the relationship between UNHCR and the Central authorities developed favorably *vis-a-vis* refugee issues and the draft Refugee Law was submitted to the Parliament, no clear Government policy emerged on refugee or IDP issues and a central authority responsible for

asylum related questions is absent. Many continue to believe that Moldova must tend to the needs of its citizens first and cannot therefore grant asylum. Accumulating difficulties were eclipsed by immediate economic considerations, which led to postponing remedial action and effectively "exporting" the problem to neighboring countries. As no national asylum system can emerge without political will and concerted Government action, international involvement and support through UNHCR remained crucial. At the same time it became obvious that a commitment to a functional asylum system is unlikely to emerge unless EU States express more concern about the vacuum. Patience and effort will also be required to promote the adoption of related domestic legislation as the Parliamentary agenda is already overflowing. In order to promote refugee law and to protect refugees, UNHCR must take the lead to impart both theoretical and practical knowledge and skills through seminars, courses, round tables and conferences, drawing attention of all concerned that the current status quo is counterproductive. In addition to direct funding UNHCR will also need to provide extensive technical assistance and training to introduce status determination procedures. Authorities targeted for capacity building include the Ministries of Interior, Justice, Foreign Affairs and the Commission for Granting Citizenship and Political Asylum.

IDPs. The civil war commenced soon after independence in 1991 and resulted in the proclamation of the "Moldovan Trans-Dniestrian Republic" (not recognised by other countries) which today controls 14 % of Moldova's territory and 780,000 inhabitants (of 4.3 mil). Trans-Dniestria straddles the eastern border with Ukraine along the Nistru river. Several border control and custom points are established between the territories under the control of Chisinau and Trans-Dniestrian authorities to restrict freedom of movement.

As a result of the 1992 civil war, some 130,000 persons (51,000 IDPs) were displaced¹¹. Although the majority have either settled elsewhere or returned to their homes, unregistered small-scale irregular movements continue (e.g. draft evaders, political opponents). At the same time, several thousand individuals among those who have already found *interim* solutions may still wish to return to their homes once it is safe. Including this item on the agenda of negotiations on the overall political settlement is a sensitive question due to the fact that most of the returns would probably be to Trans-Dniestria. An estimated 1,000 persons have no durable solution.

Moldova does not regulate the situation of IDPs comprehensively and the administrative legal base dates back to 1992. The original Republican commission for IDPs "Commission for the Liquidation of the Consequences of the Armed Conflict in Transnistria", which could perform the role of a central authority tasked with addressing the residual problem in a consistent manner was liquidated in 1995. Up to now there is no Central Government authority responsible for IDPs. The Confederation of IDPs (*Confederation of Organizations of participants in the war for the territorial integrity and suverainty of the Republic of Moldova and of participants at other wars*) representing 10 different organisations and over 10,000 individuals deals with a limited scope of subjects and is plagued by infighting.

An unanswered question is the dimension of continued irregular flows of persons from Trans-Dniestria (usually Moldovan by ethnicity, even though there are also members of the Russian community who depart irregularly). The OSCE sponsored negotiations attempting to settle the problem are ongoing.

A preliminary statistical survey on IDPs in Moldova commissioned by UNHCR in January 1998 arrived at a figure of 1,278 IDPs who await durable solutions and are registered with the local authorities as refugees. An unknown number have left Trans-Dniestria but have never registered and an additional group has been classified as evacuees (e.g. teachers and students of the Tiraspol University).

The profile of those who have not returned or who continue to arrive tends to indicate that most are former law enforcement or local authority officials and members of the intelligentsia. The most commonly quoted grounds that prevent return are the destruction or

¹¹ Data on IDPs are incomplete and in many respects extrapolated. This is due to the fact that no registration since 1992 has captured fluctuations caused by some integrating while others arrive.

confiscation of homes, fear of reprisals and political pressure. It is estimated that thousands of individuals who have found *interim* solutions still harbour the hope to be able to return to their homes once it is safe. Many are, however, losing hope fast and integrating in their new surroundings. Negotiations on the overall political settlement have hitherto not reviewed the question of return.

The question of finding durable solutions for IDPs remained a matter in the competency of the Government and the problems encountered fall into two categories. The first is residual in character, *i.e.* integrating those who have been displaced and opted to live in Government controlled territories. In this regard the Government managed to facilitate solutions for a majority of the persons concerned (allocated housing, registration and integration into new communities) but its efforts have stopped short in some respects. The second issue is connected with the inability of some IDPs to return to their homes as a consequence of well-founded fears for their physical security and integrity. There are no firm statistics for this segment of the IDP population, but estimates are in the range of several thousand persons. Some cases were reported that IDPs were arrested when they attempted to return to the area. In particular, former fighters fear criminal prosecution/ intimidation. Returns are also impeded by the loss of property or titles to housing. “Abandoned” apartments and houses have usually been given to newly arrived Russians pursuant to court decisions. Additional factors that preclude return or constitute pressures for more persons to leave Trans-Dniestria are following: police harassment of politically active individuals; call-ups for military service to what many consider to be unconstitutional military units; isolation/feeling of being taken hostage (*e.g.* inhabitants of some villages must cross separatist controlled territory and endure “customs” and border controls/harassment); citizenship/registration related issues such as no right to vote in central elections; economic pressures including dismissal from employment; attempts to isolate Trans-Dniestria from Moldova (*e.g.* denial of permission to trade, and various levies and duties); and, the lack of mother tongue education for Moldovan speakers in Trans-Dniestria.

Conclusions. Among the main problems, which impede the development of the Republic of Moldova, is the necessity of protection of basic human rights. Although Moldova ratified a number of international pacts and Agreements related to protection of human rights in the country, *de facto* there is not a really independent judiciary system in the country. The access to justice is limited for the population with low incomes, which makes the majority of population. The execution of courts’ decisions is inefficient and non-transparent. There are numerous cases of violation of basic human rights, especially among the population on the left side of the Nistru and refugees.

5.4 Local Public Administration

As decentralization and local autonomy represent support to any democracy, it becomes clear that local authorities play an important role in transformation of entire political and economic system. As they are closest to the daily needs and concerns of the citizens, local governments are compelled to prove advanced management competence, receptivity and efficiency in their activities. The way the people perceive success and nature of democratization of the society will be influenced to a big extent by the local public authorities’ ability to apply democratic principles in daily routine. Thus, the entire burden to interpret, explain and implement reforms rests with the local authorities. This means existence of public institutions created in a democratic manner and invested with a large autonomy regarding competencies and decision-making processes.

Local public administration in the Republic of Moldova has not got an old democratic tradition. Similar to other former Soviet states, Moldova inherited a highly politicized administrative system, with a high degree of bureaucracy and strictly hierarchical. Local authorities being placed at the bottom of central planning pyramid serve as mechanic executors of directives and decisions adopted by the central agencies. They used to be absolutely financially dependent on subsidies and transfers from the central budget.

Local public administration reform was unnecessarily tergiversated in Moldova. For more than 5 years (1990-1995) the local authorities were treated as a secondary element in social transformations. The only concern when “modifying” local administration used to be mechanical reduction of financial costs and number of public officers. It all led to the situation when in the middle 90s Moldova had an extremely fragmented and incoherent system of local public administration: 40 territorial administrative units (raions), each with average area of about 0.8 thousand ha and population of about 76,000 people; 69 towns and 925 communes.

After that Moldova became member of Council of Europe, and Parliament signed a European Charter “Autonomous Exercise of Local Government” in May 1996. This to some extent gave an impetus to promotion of administrative reform. Shortly after that, the Parliament adopted a set of laws meant to facilitate creation of a good local government, based on principles of decentralization and local autonomy.

The Law on Territorial and Administrative Organization (Dec. 1998) stipulated creation of a new structure of public administration, which had 2 levels: communes and towns (municipalities), at the first level; Judets, Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia and Chișinău Municipality at the second level. 14 towns acquired status of municipality, and namely: Baltsi, Tighina, Cahul, Causheni, Chișinău, Comrat, Dubasari, Edinets, Hyncheshti, Orhei, Rybnitsa, Soroca, Tiraspol and Ungheni. 11 judets were created: Baltsi, Cahul, Chișinău, Edinets, Lapushna, Orhei, Soroca, Tighina, Ungheni, Taraclia. Thus, this law marked the way towards decentralization of public services.

Laws on Local Public Administration (Nov. 98), Local Public Finance and Public Property of Administrative-Territorial Units (July 99) specified relations, competencies and responsibilities of local authorities regarding public services and their financial and material support. The authorities within public administration to exercise local autonomy are considered local councils (legislative authorities) and mayors (executive authorities). At the same time, the Government appoints a prefect in each county, Territorial Administrative Unit of Gagauzia and Chișinău Municipality, who represents the Government at local level and manages public services for the institutions subordinate to the central authorities and placed in the locality, and monitors observation of the national legislation at the local level.

Approval of local authorities' right to create institutions and economic agents to serve the local interests, to lease out or to rent public goods, as well as to contribute goods and resources as share in the equity capital of commercial companies can be regarded as a real progress. Offer of public services on contract basis will extend the range of such services, increasing thus economic efficiency of public financial resources. Though, to some extent conventionally, one can affirm that tax basis of local authorities became more explicit. Communes and judets have a larger competence now in what regards creation of their budget system. Now they only need to be more insistent and to manifest more perseverance and entrepreneurial spirit in creation and management of local public finance.

The Law on Local Representative (March 2000) elucidates relations between the public officers and politicians within the local public authorities. It is necessary to mention that in order to avoid destabilization of local agencies, as well as to maintain continuity and consecution of service to the local communities, it foresees to render a professional status to a public officer, providing him an adequate social protection.

Problems. Although the set of laws so far adopted is a promising contribution to the legal framework of autonomy and decentralization, reforms in public administration can remain an illusory goal until the local authorities have institutions capable of serving the community equitably, qualitatively and efficiently. Success in achieving this goal can be impeded by the following problems, which still persist in the field of local public administration:

- Imperfect legislation, which sometimes contradicts principles of European Charter;
- Unclear relations between the competencies and responsibilities of the levels one and two of local administration;
- Lack of clarity in relations between prefect, mayor and local council;
- Lack of a clear strategic vision on development of local economy;
- Weak participation of community in the affairs of the local authorities;

- Inefficient public management, lack of transparency and reporting to the community;
- Insufficient knowledge of strategic planning, tax management and public assets.

Contribution of UNDP Moldova. UNDP Moldova addresses the above-mentioned problems of Public Administration through its projects. The projects are targeted at promotion of fundamental principles of a democratic state: decentralization, local autonomy, transparency, efficiency and professionalism in activities of public officers; development of efficient democratic institutions of local governance through transfer of knowledge and experience.

The Project Consolidation of Local Public Administration I (implemented in January 1996 - June 1998) facilitated administrative decentralization by consolidating efficiency and capacity of the local public administration (local governments) in the priority directions (PA management, local development, strategic planning). The Project carried out activities focused upon creation of institutional framework of public administration at the county level, and offered as well technical assistance in order to create a communication network between the administrative territorial units and central/national government.

The Project Consolidation of Local Public Administration II (implemented in February 2000 - December 2001) continues efforts of consolidation of capacities of public authorities at the levels II and I, and solution of problems faced by them. Priority activities of the project are implemented in the administrative territorial units of I level: villages and communes.

Training of local public officers in order to render professional status to their activities; facilitation and consolidation of relations of co-operation and partnership between administrative territorial units of Moldova and the ones overseas; development and implementation of development strategy of public administration on basis of a pilot county (a development model); application of information technologies in activities and functions of Public Administration through development of communication networks between the county, local and central governments.

The Center for Strategic Investigations and Reforms (*CISR*), within the UNDP/ WB Project „Strategy for Development” developed a concept and various aspects of regional policy, which was reflected both in the reports of the *CISR*, and Activity Programs for the governments, prepared with participation of UNDP, and a middle-term forecast prepared with participation of the Center: “*Strategic Guidelines for Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Moldova Till the Year 2005*”, approved through Government decision (Nov. 1998).

Conclusions. Decentralization and a good governance supposes (i) a high degree of tax autonomy, (ii) efficient administration and (iii) democratic governance. Practical implementation of the principles of decentralization and autonomy of local public administration represents priority objectives, which in order to make them viable requires time, human and financial resources.

The UNDP can contribute, also in future, to implementation of reforms in Public Administration of the Republic of Moldova by supporting efforts aimed at:

- Consolidation of capacity of the institutions of local public administration, a major condition of implementation by the local public officers of their responsibilities and commitments;
- Encouragement of participation of community, NGOs and mayors' associations in decision-making and development of local communities;
- Strengthening management of public services and local public assets (assistance is required to the local authorities in efficient administration of local assets);
- Support to NGOs in their efforts to develop and to become efficient and viable/reliable partners in their relations with Public Administration;
- Training to public officers in the fields relevant to their needs;
- Development of co-operation relations and exchange of experience in the PA field.

5.5 Civil Society

The maturity of the civil society as a “third sector” (separate from the government and the entrepreneurship) is an important index of democratization of the state. UN agencies in

Moldova are actively involved in the processes of stimulation of the democracy through the freedom of the press, the enlargement of non-governmental and other social organizations' system, allowing the citizens to participate in the determination and solution of the problems actual for the state.

Mass media. The radio and television are playing the leading role as the main important sources of information for a majority of the country population. The national TV and radio is covering the biggest part of the territory of the Republic of Moldova. The Moldovan Television (TVM) is a part of the "Teleradio Moldova" Company and acts on the bases of its own status that stipulates that the national TV "is a public institution of the audiovisual and can not be privatized". In reality the "Teleradio Moldova" is financed almost entirely from the state budget and is still practically owned by the state. Previous political campaigns experience proved once again that "Whoever controls television controls the people". Being the most efficient tool in the political competition, especially the elections the control over the TVM is often the subject of struggle between the leading political forces.

The majority of air and cable local stations are privately owned and broadcast within the area of the main cities and regional centers. Being focused mostly on the commercial aspect of their activity these electronic mass media usually deliver low quality programs. With few exceptions new TV and radio stations need considerable improvement of their activity from the informational and professional point of view. The private TV and radio stations usually are focused on the current political and economic events delivering the information useful for the person or a grouping that finance the station. Media owners are often also politicians actively involved in the political fray and use their properties on behalf of their ambitions.

But maybe the main problem is the low access to TV, especially in rural areas. The urban television spectators have the large choice of local and trans-national channel (according the latest statistic data more than 60 percent of the Chisinau population is connected to the channel television whose owner is the private company SunTV). The rural population has access to the programs of two channels of Moldovan TV, two of Russian TV, one Romanian and one Ukrainian TV. The practice of frequent power disconnections makes the access to TV even more problematic.

Over the past years the importance of the written press as the main source of information for population has diminished considerably. The absolute majority of the periodicals is with commercial or party orientation and with small exceptions have a low circulation. Their owners impose their point of view to the readers through these publications or to attract more potential supporters or to exercise the pressure in different socially and politically important issues. There are two newspapers that still financed and supported by the state and are considered Governmental: "Moldova Suverana" (Sovereign Moldova) and "Nezavisimaia Moldova" (Independent Moldova) (in Russian language). The owners often use these periodicals to create a positive image to the Government and Presidency. The party newspapers like "Dialog", "Tsara" (The Motherland), "Communist" etc. are directly financed by the respective political organizations. The others like "Flux", "Saptamina", "Tineretul Moldovei", "Glasul Natiunii", "Moldavskie Vedomosti", which are interested to keep the image of independent press, are in reality affiliated to different political organizations and are financed through publications of commercials and political publicity (especially during the electorate campaigns). There are more than 200 independent publications registered in Moldova but the country inhabitants still get most of their news from state electronic sources. State media are still perceived as the most legitimate source of news.

The Constitution and the Law on Press ensure the legal protections for press freedom. The adoption of this law has been aimed at protection and strengthening of democracy in Moldova. There are no legal penalties for libeling officials or for "irresponsible" journalism. An official person, a politician or a private person who considers that has been offended by calumnious or incorrect publication, radio or TV programs can request the excuses and compensation of moral prejudices through the court. The court is the final institution that decides what is calumnious or incorrect publication or radio, TV program. In separate cases the National Commission for Audiovisual can take a decision regarding the moral aspect of the mass media

production and even to cancel/postpone the respective company license.

The majority of discussions in Moldovan society concerning the independent mass media are focused on its role in the democratization process. Being at the initial stage of the democratic transformation the public needs time to understand the leading role of the media in ensuring transparency of the governance, free access to the information and freedom of speech. At the same time there is a little understanding among the media community of the real nature of the independence that can be ensured only with financial independence of the concrete publication and by its ability to make profit. The lasting economic crises and the low purchasing power of the population mean *de facto* the reduced financial source for sustainable development of the written press. It creates a vicious circle. The financial and economic independence of the mass media cannot be ensured as long as it is unable to make profit on the poor informational market. It is one of the main causes of the absence in Moldova of the independent press and of the low quality of the biggest part of the existing periodicals. Financial assistance for independent media remains crucial in Moldova and money wasted represents a setback in the fight for greater freedom and plurality.

Non-government organizations. The nonprofit sector is steadily re-emerging in Moldova as an important part of democratic society after more than eight years of abandonment of totalitarian past. Like other newly independent states Moldova inherited a society with completely destroyed associative sector, whose population proved unprepared and incapable to use the social non-governmental mechanisms to solve its problems, without experience of self-organization. At the same time profound political, economic and social crises caused by unfinished democratic and market oriented reforms presents challenges to the development of a strong, indigenous nonprofit sector. These challenges include limited internal resources, inadequate legal framework, ideological remnants of communism, and attitudes of skepticism toward charitable endeavors and volunteer activity.

The Constitution offers the citizens the right to create socio-political organizations, but it does not mention anything about the right to create non-governmental organizations. The Law on Public Associations (1997) and the Law on Foundations (1999) are the basic documents for the regulatory environment for the institutions and organizations of the third sector. They are stipulating the legal rights of a NGO as a legal entity. However, there is no additional governmental regulation on the NGOs activity but the registration procedures, periodical reports, re-registration do not make easier the third sector organizations existence. It is necessary to have a proper legal framework for supporting NGOs capacity building to work more on anti-corruption issues. There is no concept of NGOs in the legislation, only of Public Associations. The NGOs concept could be introduced in order to specify more exactly the nature of these organizations and to differentiate them from other organizations from Civil Society.

The improvement of legal and regulatory environment is still in the center of attention of some of the NGOs. It is focused on the relationship between the sponsors and recipients of financial support as well as on clarification of their rights in cooperation with the governmental structures.

The transition process from a communist/totalitarian state to a democratic/free market based society requires a radical and rapid change of mentality and behavior of the majority of the population. For successful transformations practically in all the spheres of activity of individuals it is necessary increasing public participation in national economic, social and political issues. A large part of the society is still not ready to accept new democratic principles, especially since the reforms did not improve the living standards and poverty alleviation is still one of the most urgent problems. The majority of population still believes that the state and its representatives – central and local public administration can be the only guarantor and responsible of their well-being and have to satisfy their human needs. Many people do not realize that their own participation and efforts are needed to ensure the normal functioning of the community and state.

Despite the fact that the number of officially registered NGOs is not entirely relevant for the Civil Society their quantity can serve as an important indicator of the population's participation. In 1999 at the Ministry of Justice more than 1400 non-governmental organizations have been registered. The proportion of national and regional/local NGOs is 83.5 to 16.5 percent.

There are several charitable/nonprofit organizations that are sponsoring the associative sector. The most efficient are: the Soros Foundation Moldova, the Euro-Asia Foundation, the Rotary International Club of Chisinau and the Philanthropy Foundation. The World Bank and the United States Information Service are also active in supporting the NGO sector. There are modest local efforts to increase philanthropy and voluntarism that are focused mostly on the humanitarian aid and children care. There is no available statistic data regarding the proportion of the population active in private voluntary activity.

One of the main problems of the emerging Civil Society in Moldova is the efficiency of the NGO community and their impact on the society life. The associative sector organizations have big problems to establish sustainable co-operation with the Government and the Parliament that are still fragmented and permanently in a institutional crises generated by the struggle between the executive and legislature for more influence and power. As explained in the 1998 National Human Development Report there is no sound co-operation between the basic democratic institutions. This unsatisfactory co-operation is partly due to "the deficiencies in the system of organization, separation and co-operation between the state institutions as laid down in the Constitution". For the moment the relations between the state, represented by the President, the Parliament and the Government, and the Civil Society are not very well developed. There is no permanent and constructive dialog between them. The organizations of the associative sector are not treated, as equal partner therefore there is not an efficient mechanism to implement this potential partnership.

The biggest problem of NGOs is financial stability and sustainability. So far, neither the Government, nor the private sector provides real financial assistance to the NGOs. Majority of these organizations that finished their activity has done it mainly because of lack of funding. The NGOs have to disclose the revenue sources in their financial reports. There do not exist government procurement opportunities for non-profit providers of services. The NGOs have the right to act as economic agents with a condition that the profit from such an activity would be used exclusively for its statutory goals.

After almost ten years of democratization in Moldova one can come to the conclusion that a strong civil society is impossible in a nation that has no middle-class, where the rich have no sense of *noblesse oblige* and the poor are too tired, disillusioned and powerless to act. The impoverished post-communist country cannot have a robust voluntary culture during the difficult economic transitions inherent in the process of defining a new democratic society.

Without doubt the non-governmental organizations provide a significant first step towards the creation of a civil society. But on the other hand, efficient political organizations singularly strengthen and improve associations for common purposes of the community. In other words, there can be no meaningful civil society without political involvement by the citizenry. Even if a certain number of civil society organizations and institutions are created, it is not necessarily a guarantee of a strong democratic government. Another reason is that a civil society is hardly possible without two elements: a moral consensus and a collective self-consciousness. Today, Moldova appears to be at the beginning of its way toward consensus society and clear national identity. Despite all these difficulties and contradictions of the transition period the Republic of Moldova makes considerable efforts to overcome the crisis situation, to accelerate its economic and social development, which are the necessary prerequisites for the creation of decent conditions for existence for millions of Moldovan citizens, sustainable human development and efficient Civil Society.

Conclusions. The degree of the maturity of the civil society depends on a series of objective and subjective factors: attaining certain democratic traditions, culture, education, psychology, national dignity, social and political situation. There are numerous cases when abuse of power is treated as a cultural "norm". It is rather unrealistic to expect a high degree of self-consciousness of its power from a society that for a long time has been subject to political and other kinds of repressions. This situation is a characteristic of all former autocratic states, in which a bureaucratic hierarchy of norms has existed for a long time along with a preponderance of vertical relations of domination-subordination over the ones based on horizontal links and trust. In countries where for many years a strong state dominated a weak economy, and the civil

society manifested relatively meager participation in political life, where the authority of a single party or cult dominated, and corruption was a form of survival, where the ethic and religious identity of the society was destroyed, corruption overcomes the weak resistance of the newly formed civil society much easier. Formation of an integral civil society is a continuous and absolutely necessary process. Given that the transitional countries have to go through a "condensed" version to democratize, external assistance to mass-media and NGOs becomes vital. A special role in strengthening of civil society belongs to NGOs, especially when they are involved at the grass-root reorganization. For that NGOs must be completely independent of state structures, although in practice this is not always the case.

5.6 Governance and corruption

The United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Corruption in 1997, as well as the Lima Declaration of the International Conference against Corruption (September, 1997) stresses the threat of corruption for the human development. Corruption became a main concern of global policy in recent years. In 1999 alone several international forums took place including Global Forum on Fighting Corruption (February, Washington, hosted by Vice-President of US Al Gore), The IX International Anti-Corruption Conference (September, Durban, South Africa, Transparency International), the Annual Meeting on fighting Corruption (November, Istanbul, OECD), as well as local anti-corruption conferences (November, Budapest, Central European University; November, Riga, USAID), etc. "UNDP considers corruption as a problem of poor governance. Good governance is participatory, transparent and accountable – its social, political and economic priorities are reached by consensus and the poorest and most vulnerable have their say in matters affecting their well-being and the allocation of development resources. Bad governance, rife with bribery, corruption and mal-administration, has the opposite effect"¹².

The Republic of Moldova as a new state is sharply in need of improvement of quality of the governance. Lack of experience in governing a sovereign state, weakness of legal base and juridical system, lack of understanding and support on behalf of the population, and last but not least, the realization that the average "life" of the governments so far has been too short to allow for significant changes, all together have lead to poorer level of governance in the country. A corruption nobody deters emerged in the country; it's dangerous because of that it: weakens the social confidence for the state and reforms, abruptly raises the costs and risks for the entrepreneurship, causes merging of state structures and organized crime. Causes of corruption in Moldova are economic, institutional, political, social and moral. The *economic* ones include: unlivable budget, low wages for state employees, delays in payment of wages. The *institutional* ones are: lack of real will to fight corruption, lack of strategy in this field, high level of discretion in the work of legal bodies, an inadequate accounting system, lack of transparency in the legal system, weak state policy generating rent-seeking, career promotion without real performance. *Political* causes are: transformation of fighting corruption into fighting political opponents, interest of some political groups in the economic and financial collapse of the state, thus willing to return to the old dictatorial system, import of corruption. *Social and moral* causes: demoralization of the society, ethical values erosion due to corruption amongst the top level employees, insufficient information of population, insufficient work of mass-media, public tolerance.

Transparency International places Moldova on the 75th place on the scale of corruption among 99 countries. However, there are some other evaluations of the quality of governance and the spread of corruption. In a joint study by the EBRD and the World Bank an opinion poll of about 3000 managers from 20 countries in transition was carried out (about 115 enterprises in every country, with a larger sample in Ukraine and Russia). The questionnaire included direct and indirect questions in order to evaluate the impact of corruption and poor governance on the private firms' activity and economic development of the whole country. Firms were asked if they were satisfied with basic services of the government for the proper functioning of markets.

¹² Fighting Corruption to Improve Governance, UNDP, February 1999

These services were grouped in four large blocks: *law and order* (judiciary, corruption, street crime, organized crime), *microeconomic governance* (taxes and regulations), *macroeconomic governance* (policy instability, inflation, exchange rate), and *real infrastructure*.

Data from the poll show that amongst those 20 countries in transition Moldova ranks 15th from the top in terms of microeconomic governance (the index being equal to 0.52 out of a maximum of 3.0), last in terms of quality of macroeconomic governance (the index being 0.35), the last in terms of infrastructure (index being 1.42), and the last but one in terms of law enforcement (index being 1.1).

Table 5. 2.

Quality of governance index				
	Micro-measures	Macro-measures	Infrastructure	Law and order
Hungary	0.92	1.72	2.42	2.34
Slovenia	1.17	1.73	2.26	2.23
Estonia	1.25	1.74	2.38	2.17
Uzbekistan	1.4	1.44	2.11	2.16
Armenia	0.55	1.15	2.21	2.32
Poland	0.96	1.53	2.37	1.82
Slovak Republic	0.88	1.68	2.11	1.7
Czech Republic	0.8	1.35	1.57	1.97
Belarus	0.67	0.77	2.18	2.25
Lithuania	0.69	1.7	2.19	1.48
Azerbaijan	1.02	1.59	1.73	1.56
Croatia	0.67	1.18	2.13	1.62
Bulgaria	0.9	1.25	1.77	1.49
Kazakhstan	0.75	0.72	1.85	1.68
Georgia	0.67	0.93	1.78	1.47
Ukraine	0.34	0.77	1.76	1.68
Russia	0.47	0.65	1.91	1.54
Romania	0.45	0.6	1.49	1.48
Kyrgyzstan	0.46	0.48	1.85	0.98
Moldova	0.52	0.35	1.42	1.1

Source: EBRD, *Transition Report, 1999*

According to the aggregated quality of governance index, Moldova ranks last, with an index of 0.82. It is difficult to evaluate how objective this evaluation is, since the interviewees came from different cultural and psychological backgrounds. This means that the attitude of the respondents towards such notions as "corruption", bribe, public servants ethics and integrity differs from country to country.

In spite of the fact that these evaluations could not be entirely objective, is clear that position of Moldova in these terms is unfavorable. Thus, about three quarters of Moldovan firms mentioned that legal system does not protect their property rights and managers of enterprises spend 17% of their total working time with public officials. This is the biggest share amongst countries in transition.

Data of the Survey on Identifying Impediments to Development of Private Farming Enterprises and Related Small Rural Business in Moldova carried out by the Center for Strategic Studies and Reforms in collaboration with Corana Corporation show that auditing bodies create obstacles for the development of private business by frequent extortion of money. Thus, in 1998-1999 25 farms were

	Percentage of firms bribing frequently	Average bribe tax as % of annual revenues
Armenia	40.3	6.8
Azerbaijan	59.3	6.6
Belarus	14.2	3.1
Bulgaria	23.9	3.5
Croatia	17.7	2.1
Estonia	12.9	2.8
Georgia	36.8	8.1
Kazakhstan	23.7	4.7
Kyrgyzstan	26.9	5.5
Lithuania	23.2	4.2
Moldova	33.3	6.1
Poland	32.7	2.5
Czech Republic	26.3	4.5
Romania	50.9	4
Russia	29.2	4.1
Slovak Republic	34.6	3.7
Slovenia	7.7	3.4
Ukraine	35.3	6.5
Hungary	31.3	3.5
Uzbekistan	46.6	5.7

Source: *Transition Report, 1999, EBRD*

visited 12 times by the fiscal inspector, 12 of the entrepreneurs having been visited as frequently as 15 to 20 times. One entrepreneur complained that he was visited 50 times by the fiscal inspector in one year. Nine entrepreneurs were visited by the fire inspector over 11 times during one year, one visited 30 times. Visits of the electric nets inspectors are not less frequent:

32 companies were visited 12 times, 10 companies - between 16 to 100 times.

State Capture Index proposed by the EBRD Transition Report, 1999 stands at 46% for Moldova. Only Ukraine and Armenia face a more difficult situation than Moldova in this respect. According to the data from the above-mentioned poll, about one third of Moldovan firms pay bribes very often. According to this indicator, Moldova ranks in the middle among all transition countries. Regarding the relative scale of bribe in comparison with total annual income, Moldova ranks among the first five countries.

Although it is difficult to evaluate objectively the spread of corruption in the country, it could be assessed on the base of estimation of its economic consequences.

The estimation of the Center for Strategic Studies and Reforms show that the *shadow economy* reaches a big proportion in the national economy. Its share in the formal economy amounts around 50-60%. Tax evasion grew from 4% of the consolidated budget income in 1994 to 30% in 1998, and fell down to 22% in 1999 due to the inflation effects.

The available large underground sector gives *rise to an excessive tax burden*. The state budget is dependent for its income on formal economic activities. However, most of budget expenses also serve the interests of those people who are not paying taxes (such as subsidies in energy bills, use of public services, etc.).

Corruption causes *enormous increase in state debts*. Probably, the biggest corrupt transactions take place in the energy sector. Moldova's debts for energy grow by an average annual US\$ 60 million, while the country continues to risk a total lack of energy resources. On Moldova's borders there is no natural gas metering system installed, the only meters being on the territory of the neighboring Ukraine (which has considerably bigger debts for gas and is accused by Russia in theft of about 1/3 of consumed gas), and the losses of gas are estimated arbitrarily. These losses were estimated at US\$ 20 million during 1995-97. The fact that GDP declined three-fold during 1990-1999, and consumption of gas was relatively stable till 1998, suggests the idea that considerable amount of gas was not really consumed on the territory of Moldova, thus, an essential part of the country's debt (including penalties) being created synthetically.

Illegal export-import. The problem of illegal exports and imports has expanded in alarming proportions. In 1996-98 the practice of under-selling of exports resulted in lei 500 million according to the estimates by the Chamber of Accounts.

An accomplishment of a cross-checking of Moldovan and Ukrainian information regarding Moldovan exports to Ukraine shows that the data from the Ukrainian side is almost double. This cannot be explained solely by the Transnistrian "factor". The same situation takes place in the relationships with Russia. It is little probable that workers of the Ukrainian and Russian custom services are likely to be more honest than those from Moldova, therefore the real distortions could be even greater.

Transnistrian problem entails additional losses to the state budget of the Republic of Moldova. In 1997-98 more goods were imported to Transnistria than to the rest of the territory, with respectively 1.7 and 3.1 times more spirits, 9.7 and 19.4 times more alcoholic beverages and 252 and 90 times more cigarettes. This is particularly remarkable given that the population of Transnistria makes up a mere 12-15% of the total population of Moldova. Then it should be clear that the main consumption of the imported goods takes place in the mainland (the right side of the river Nistru), but without any contribution to the state budget by way of paying the due imports duties.

One of the manifestations of the economic impact of corruption are the *increasing costs of transactions*, particularly in carrying out small business activities and diminishing the competitiveness of the products and services. According to some estimates, the additional payments to obtain licenses, for so-called "protection", and for an expeditious settlement of formalities by state officials amount to 40% of the turnover.

The combined impact of corruption, shadow economy and crime is manifested by the *macro-economic instability and the country's vulnerability to financial crisis*. The annual narco-business turnover (including drug traffic) in Moldova is estimated at US\$ 200-250 million,

which is 3.5–4 times higher than the annual foreign direct investments in Moldova, and than the amount of foreign currency reserves in the National Bank of Moldova.

Another effect of shadow economy and corruption lies in its *adverse impact on consumers by providing them with low quality goods and services*. The findings of a production quality inspection on a network of trade outlets conducted by the National Standards, Measurement and Certification Center show that breaching the standards/infringements ranges from about 40% of the total food products to 70% of goods for children. In imported goods the rate is as high as 79%.

The shadow economy and corruption generates additional income for the participants and members of their families, and sometimes it is the only source of their living. This sector's existence in parallel with the formal economy, in fact, generates 60% of additional income. This income is, however, unequally distributed among the population and the gap between the rich and the poor is actually greater than that stated in the official records. Hence, the consumption of meat in families officially stated as having the same level of income is on average 60% higher for those employed in the private agricultural sector, where the level of informal activities is higher than it is for those engaged in the public sector.

The vulnerable layers of society are the most severely affected by social inequity, which is in turn worsened by protectionism. With no political influence, the vulnerable layers of the population are often subject to increased social pressures. Thus, according to the Household Budgets Survey carried out by the Department of Statistical and Sociological Analysis with the financial assistance of the World Bank, in 1997 the social benefits received by each member of the families at the highest level of income (level V by disposable income is about five times higher than those received by families at the lowest level of income (level I). *An inequitable social system* inevitably appears where layers of population earning a higher income enjoy most of the social benefits. An unfair social system is thus created.

The implementation of a *policy for fighting corruption* needs concentration of forces of Government, private sector and civil society. It needs extensive reforms in legislation, as part of the institutional reforms, and improvement of the system of regulation of fiscal audits. This is possible to achieve only with the participation of all related international organizations.

In recent years the Council of Europe (CE) has addressed its efforts to creating a comprehensive policy to combat corruption, based in the interdisciplinary approach. The Multidisciplinary Group on Corruption (MGC) which has been functioning since March 1995 in accordance with the recommendations of the Conference of European Ministers of Justice (Malta, 1994). On 17 January 1999 in Strasbourg, on the occasion of the winter session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the CE, a Criminal Law Convention on Corruption was opened for signature. The implementation of this Convention after its enforcement shall be monitored by the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO). On 9 September 1999, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a Civil Law Convention on Corruption and decided to open it for signature on 4 November 1999, at the 105th session of the Committee of Ministers. The Civil Convention on Corruption is open for signature by the member States of the Council of Europe and by non-Member States that have participated in its elaboration and by the European Community. The Second Joint program of the European Commission and Council of Europe Octopus II, aimed at assisting 16 member States of the Council of Europe (countries in transition) in the fight against corruption and organized crime, was launched in 1999.

Unfortunately, until present the Republic of Moldova has adhered only the Strasbourg Criminal Convention on Corruption (1999).

In November 1999 the State Program for Fighting Crime, Corruption and Protectionism for 1999-2002 was adopted. As this program was adopted in a rush, it does not contain measures regarding nepotism, and needs to be improved. But, in principle, adopting this program could be interpreted as a positive sign for international donor organizations. Whether this program will be implemented by the new government remains to be followed. The Program includes eight parts: legal assurance, perfecting the mechanism of fighting crime, international collaboration in fighting crime and corruption, actions for curbing corruption and ameliorating the control system, economic actions, crime prophylaxis, technical assistance of legal bodies.

The Program foresees adopting the Law on combating organized crime, Law on curbing shadow economy, Law on combating terrorism, Law on combating traffic of human beings, as well as the mechanism of functioning of a number of laws. It also foresees elaboration of stimulating mechanism, as well as assuring security for persons collaborating with police and prosecution bodies, creation of an institute of criminology.

Conclusions: The main indicator of bad governance is presence of a large corrupted sector. Corruption impedes economic, political, democratic, social and ecologic development of the country. Any efforts in combating corruption can only be effective if the country enjoys a sufficient degree of democracy. A mutual respect and acceptability between the society and the elected state is essential in this regard. Fighting corruption in a single transition country is difficult if not impossible. Informational and financial support from democratic countries as well as international organizations is needed.

5.7 Crime prevention and drug control

Crime prevention. The processes that took place in late 80's, as well as the situation the society found itself in, contributed to the worsening of the criminal environment throughout the country. Statistical data for the period 1980-1989 testify to a considerable increase of the total number of recorded crimes (from 15468 in 1980 to 40862 in 1989), as well as of grave ones (from 15468 in 1980 to 40862 in 1989, robberies and frauds in particular).

With reference to the above-mentioned crimes, 6098 felonies were registered in 1990, while in 1999 the number of crimes raised to 9260, showing also an increase of economic financial crimes from 2569 to 3483 in the same period of time. The latter are mostly related to illegal appropriation of assets and funds that used to be the state property. In 1990 crimes against property accounted for 66.5% of the total number of recorded offends, while in 1999 these crimes accounted for 70.9%, the rate of these crimes starting to increase in 1992 when the unemployment became real due to the decrease of production. From the total number of offenders, the share of unemployed increased from 19% in 1985 to 80.4% in 1999.

As a result, the criminal situation aggravated and acquired specific aspects. The specific aspect is expressed by the fact that though the total number of crimes recorded between 1990-1999 stays at the level of about 40 thousand crimes, the number of grave crimes, economic financial crimes, crimes against property increased. It is easy to draw the conclusion that either many of the crimes are not recorded, or the population do not trust legal authorities and address them only in cases of serious crimes, or legal authorities do not always record claims coming from the population. Practice shows that in reality both things take place. The rate of criminality for 100,000 people is as follows: in 1997-1092; 1998 - 992; 1999 - 1078.

After proclaiming Moldova's independence, one of the actions taken to improve criminal situation was and still is adjustment of national legislation to the international requirements and legal reform. Certain activities were carried out but they were far from being sufficient to stop the breakdown of national economy. Legislation and potential of legal authorities are lagging behind the processes of transition to a market economy. In reality, having declared market oriented economic development, the country continues to live according to the old legal norms, the new ones being adopted with delay or in contradiction with international requirements. For example, penalties for counterfeit, which is the basis for many criminal offense, in particular against property or economic crimes, are so far rather symbolical; the law on corruption and protectionism was passed not earlier than in 1996 and it is not lucrative because its enforcement mechanism is missing; so far the law on money laundering has not been passed as well as amendments stipulating penalties for illegal circulation of psychotropic substances (except contraband); in conformity with current legislation many categories of public officers enjoy immunity rights which hamper exposure of corrupted persons, etc.

After the military conflict in Transnistria in 1992, the number of crimes involving firearms and explosives considerably increased and reached 404 registered cases in 1994, however, in 1999 it declined to 275.

Usually, the source of firearms, munitions and explosives are military conflicts, in the first place the Transnistrian military conflict of 1992, stocks of armaments and munitions

belonging to the 14th Army of Russian Federation located in Transnistrian region, as well as stock houses of armaments and munitions belonging to the same army created in the process of withdrawal of military formations of the former USSR from the former socialist states (Poland, Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia). According to the estimates about 38 thousand tones of armaments, explosives and munitions are stockpiled in these stock houses. Due to improper supervision these stocks became a source of armament and explosives on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, as well as on the territories of other countries. Spreading of armaments involve persons directly responsible for storing them. For example, one of the criminal cases was opened for the chief of stock houses, deputy commander of peace making troops in Transnistria, other persons who, between 1995-1997, secretly accomplished from the stock houses of the Russian army and illegally sold armament and munitions to local criminals and abroad. During the search performed in the group 2 missiles "ground-air", 3 "Igla" type devices, more than 50 kilos of explosive substance of "ГП-74" type, automated pistols with telescopic sights of "SVD" type. Members of the group were selling these arms to criminal elements in Odesa, Lvov, Vinita, Nicolaev, Ukraine.

The armaments are being spread in regions engaged in conflicts, among persons with criminal experience, in particular, to members of organized crime groups. Only in 1999, 978 pieces of arms, 100 grenades and mines, 6401 munitions were retrieved from illegal circulation on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, and in two months of the current year 45 criminal cases were opened in the Republic of Moldova, pertaining to illegal circulation of fire arms and explosives. 23 firearms, 44 grenades, 9 mines, over 3200 bullets, explosive substances and other kinds of explosives were withdrawn from circulation. This is one of the main reasons to explain the increased number of crimes committed with the use of firearms and explosives.

Another important factor which contributed to worsening of criminal situation in the country, besides the one mentioned regarding the presence of the 14th Army of the Russian Federation and spreading of armaments from its store houses, is proclaiming and de-facto creation of the phantom Transnistrian Republic. It occupies the territory between the left bank of the rivers Nistru and Moldova's borders with the Ukraine (military formations of the 14th Army are also located here). By the end of 1998 public opinion was informed that it was from the arsenals of the Russian army that Transnistrian military formations received 16 tanks T-64, 46 armored vehicles, 9 systems of "Igla" type, 16 missile devices of "Grad" type and 15 thousands machine-guns and automated pistols, an enormous quantity of munitions and other military things. More than that, in Tighina and Tiraspol towns unacknowledged authorities of Transnistria started illegal production of new types of armament, including modified devices of BM-21 "Grad" type, grenade cup discharges, automated pistols of "UZI" type, and other. This armament is being sold to local criminal structures and in the countries with military conflicts.

Due to the fact that the territory of Transnistria and about 150 km. of the border with the Ukraine are not controlled by the lawful authorities of the Republic of Moldova, are used by criminal organizations for various illegal activities, mostly trafficking of arms, munitions, explosives, drugs, people, stolen cars, contraband (alcoholic drinks, tobacco products, oil products), money laundering, etc. This territory is used as a place to hide for criminals who committed crimes on the territory of the Republic of Moldova and other states. In such a way conditions were created to facilitate spreading of organized crime on the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova.

Criminal situation worsened so badly that the authorities of the Republic of Moldova and Transnistria arrived to an agreement to cooperate in crime control activities, though the political aspects of Transnistrian problem have not been resolved so far. So, the Agreement "On basic interaction of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Moldova and management of the internal affairs authorities of the Transnistria" was signed on January 26, 1999 in Tiraspol, and the "Complex program of joint control of organized crime, illegal circulation of arms and drugs" was signed on July 13, 1999 in Chisinau. These two documents serve as legal basis for police cooperation of the two parties inside one state. The police cooperation is only at the beginning of its way and so far is slightly emphasized.

Drugs control. Proceeding from the level and tendencies of criminal situation described above, let's dwell on the problem of drugs circulation and its control in the Republic of Moldova.

Geographically, the Republic of Moldova is situated on the crossroads of the well-known routes of transiting narcotic substances, mainly from Asia to Western Europe. For this reason heroin and raw opium begin to spread more widely in Moldova. Such narcotic and psychotropic substances widely spread in the world as cocaine, LSD, amphetamine products commonly known as "ecstasy", etc., which previously (prior to the '90) were scarcely found in the Republic of Moldova are now in circulation.

According to the statistical data of the National Narcology Center of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Moldova, in the period between 1990-1999 the number of drug addicts increased from 669 in 1990 to 4434 in 1999.

At present supervision of legal circulation of drugs on the territory of the Republic of Moldova is being effected by the Drugs Control Committee of the Republic of Moldova created within the Ministry of Health in 1995 after adhering of the Republic of Moldova to the UNO conventions: Common Convention on narcotic substances as of 1961 with amendments stated in 1972 Protocol, Convention on psychotropic substances as of 1971, United Nations Organization Convention on control of illegal circulation narcotic and psychotropic substances as of 1988.

After the adhering of the Republic of Moldova to the UNO Conventions, it was only on May 6, 1999 that the Law on circulation of narcotic and psychotropic substances and their precursors was passed (precursors are substances frequently used to illegally produce narcotic and psychotropic substances), which acknowledged classification of substances and set certain restrictions to their circulation, acknowledged the Permanent Committee of Drugs Control within the Ministry of Health, Inter-ministerial Commission of Drug Addiction and Drug Industry Control, as well as the order of issuing and retrieving authorizations to persons involved in activities implying drugs circulation. In spite of the fact that this law had been passed, the lists of substances approved by the Committee, circulation of which is restricted and is under control on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, are still valid. These documents are in obvious contradiction to the UNO Conventions mentioned above. For example, in documents developed by the Committee, a number of psychotropic substances are classified as narcotic substances, the same substances being classified as both narcotic and psychotropic, lists of "toxic substances, substances with drastic action", were approved with reference to the UNO Conventions. These documents have drawbacks, which obviously do not comply with the requirements of the conventions mentioned above. Other drawbacks of the same character were revealed in the recently passed law mentioned above.

It is rather worrying that most drugs were withdrawn at the level of possession and not at the level of trafficking, such drugs as cocaine, LSD, ecstasy, etc., widely spread in Europe and in the world, frequently and in big amounts transited on various routes, were not seized. Data provided by the Interpol O.I.P.C. testify to the trafficking of narcotic and psychotropic substances through the territory of the Republic of Moldova. Drugs are being transited from Asia to the Western Europe on the well-known Balcanic route, as well as on the new route from Asia to the Western Europe through Russia, Ukraine, and Moldova. These conclusions were confirmed by the incidents of retention of 10,250 kg of heroine at Leusheni customs control station in November 1997 (the drugs were trafficked from Greek Republic, another load – from Turkey to Moscow), the case of retention of 2,5 kg of cocaine in Budapest airport in 1998, transported on the route Bogota (Columbia) - Paris (France) - Budapest (Hungary) with destination Chisinau (Republic of Moldova). Confiscation of 14 kg of heroine, over 6000 kg hashish, 624 kg cocaine, 250 kg coca paste on the territory of the Ukraine in the period between 1997-1998, as well as other seizures of drugs were reported on the territory of Romania and of other states on way of the Balcanic route.

At present Moldova faces a paradoxical situation: circulation of both narcotic and psychotropic substances, as well as their precursors are subject to control on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, while the Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova stipulates criminal responsibility for the illegal circulation of narcotic substances only and not for the psychotropic

substances (excepting contraband) and of precursors. At the same time, according to the Code of administrative contravention, illegal procurement and storing with no selling purpose of narcotic and psychotropic substances with no medical prescription entail administrative penalties.

Due to the non-existence of penalties for illegal circulation of psychotropic substances (excepting contraband), and moreover, of precursors, persons involved in such kind of activities cannot be criminally charged. Such situation is a shame, because practice proves illegal circulation of these substances. For example, in June 1998, a tentative of illegal import from Romania of 4000 kg of piperonil metilcetone (3,4-metilendioxifenil propanon-2) having a value of 300.000 US dollars to a firm in Chisinau with a final destination in Cyprus was ceased, an example that indicates that the purpose of illegal trafficking of forerunners is possible on the territory of the republic of Moldova due to drawbacks in legislation. Various amounts of ephedrine constitute permanent imports into the Republic of Moldova, being frequently used for production of ephedrone (methcatinon) in home conditions.

Wide expansion of drugs on the territory of the Republic of Moldova was the reason for creation in 1999 under the Ministry of Interior, of an independent service for illegal circulation of drugs control, trafficking in particular. The results of its activity are described above.

The facts mentioned above indicate that legal authorities of the Republic of Moldova involved in illegal circulation of drugs control face a number of impediments which hamper the revealing and withdrawal of narcotic, psychotropic substances, precursors, and especially control of their trafficking. Some of these impediments are:

- Non-compliance of Moldovan legislation with international conventions to which the Republic of Moldova is a part;
- Poor equipment and insufficient financing of customs control stations and competent legal authorities;
- Poor professional skills of the officers effecting control of illegal circulation of drugs;
- Lack of control on the territory of Transnistria and 150 km. of border between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine;
- Corrupted legal authorities and customs officers;
- Scattering of efforts made by the legal authorities and poor coordination of activity of competent authorities;
- Improper legislation regarding misuse of drugs at individual level
- Lack of awareness-raising activities regarding drug abuse.

Aiming at prevention and control of drug addiction, on March 30, 2000 the Government of the Republic of Moldova adopted the "Program on drug addiction and drug industry control for the period 2000-2001". This program stipulates undertaking by the competent authorities of a number of additional actions aimed at prevention and control of drug addiction and illegal circulation of drugs, emphasizing the importance of prophylaxis. However, it is easy to forget about primary prevention, when speaking about drugs. It is often easier to they to affect what you see. In Moldova, there is hardly any awareness raising among young persons in order to give them information about drugs.

As recommendation for drug prevention in the Republic of Moldova the following could be mentioned:

- Strengthen the legal framework regarding drug control and drug abuse;
- Create a drug intelligence service unit;
- Strengthen the capacity of the police and custom to prevent trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors;
- Provide the police with training and equipment for early intervention among young drug abusers;
- Enhance the coordination between authorities;
- Facilitate access to treatment and ameliorate the quality of treatment;
- Raise the awareness among youths about drugs and their possible danger to health.

Conclusions. A weak newly formed state, the war in Transnistria, the presence of the foreign troops, as well as the lack of protected border in the eastern part of the country caused an

expansion of crime, drug trafficking, and abuse of illegal arms in Moldova and neighbor countries, and what is more important - a big scale of illegal, uncontrolled professional production of weapon, which is used in problematic regions of Europe and Asia. The assistance of international community in this area could lie in contributing to the withdrawal of the foreign troops, dislocation of neutral peacekeepers, and establishment of a genuine state border and custom service in the East part of the country. In the area of drug control creation of a specialized, well trained, equipped, transparent and accountable unit is needed.

6. Education

The competitiveness of Moldova in the future will mostly depend on the quality of the human resources, therefore the government should emphasize its attention on a more comprehensive reproduction of the intellectual constituent of the social wealth.

6.1. Literacy levels

Proceeding from the UN concept on the sustainable human development, literacy level predetermines the social-economic development of the society. According to last census, carried out in the Republic of Moldova in 1989, literacy indicator of the population was satisfactory - 96,4%. Yet, material hardships entailed by the omissions, admitted towards the educational sphere since the early '90s, started to generate illiteracy. According to 1999 Household Budget Survey, in the Republic were registered 10,8% of illiterate (7,8% in the urban and 12,5% in the rural area). The share of specialists with university education in the structure of the population education is very insignificant (Table 6.1).

In the Republic of Moldova, in the recent decade, investments into educational sector were totally ignored, resources meant for this field having been considerably eroded, virtually in all regards.

It is commonly known that the quality of educational services depends directly of the level of teaching staff salaries, yet, in the Republic of Moldova, the teaching staff is the least paid social category. In 1999 their average monthly salary was worth 190 lei (18\$). It is 50% less than the average in the national economy.

Pursuant to erroneous policies promoted by previous governments this intellectual labor gradually became most disadvantageous field for activity. During 1995-1999 almost 20710 teachers quit teaching, being in search for alternative sources of survival. Young graduate-teachers are reluctant to involve in practicing their profession. In 1998 from 2.7 thou graduates of pedagogic universities only 2 thou jobs were offered, of that only 31% were taken; in 1999 respectively 1537 young specialists were offered jobs, of whom only 23% went to schools.

If we take also into account that the segments of population having only pre-school (11,2%), primary (16,6%) and elementary education (23,8%) are still big, the citizens with university education accounting for only 7% of the total, it is obvious that human potential of the Republic of Moldova has been affected hardly.

However, Household Budget Survey unveils that even during the period of economic crisis, on average, individuals with university degree and secondary special education have at least twice more wages than those with lower educational levels; of the total number of unemployed registered at the Labor Force Office in 1998 only 8,5% were university graduates.

Table 6.1
Educational level within household structure, in % (1998)

Level	Urban	Rural	Total
University degree	13,9	3,1	7,0
Uncompleted higher education	2,4	0,4	1,2
Special secondary education	24,2	11,0	15,8
Elementary education	23,8	21,7	22,5
Secondary education	8,4	18,7	14,9
Primary education	10,8	19,9	16,6
Pre-school education	8,7	12,7	11,2
Illiterate	7,8	12,5	10,8
Total	100	100	100

Hard material state of the households drive to increasing number of school abandons. Of 71321 children enrolled in 1994 in the first grade, in 1998 - 5,6% of them had abandoned the school, and, of 67158 pupils who in 1993 were in the V-th grade 12,1% of them abandoned the school until the IX-th grade, in 1998. In 1998, vs. 1989, Moldova has registered a decline of the school population by 28,4%. The share of first grade pupils declined from 72,9 thou in 1995 to 62,6 thou in 1998 (by 14,1%).

More and more secondary education graduates wish to get university degree. The increasing number of universities, mainly private ones, displays this fact. Since 1995 to 1998 their number increased from 20 to 38. During the same period the number of university students increased from 137 thou to 199 thou, and those of university correspondence trainees increased from 15,3 to 21,9 thou. This occurrence has been traced regardless to the fact that university courses are mostly for fees. Such increase of university students is mostly entailed by the will of the parents to provide education to their children in order to insure "a better" future. However, a considerable part of university graduates are compelled to look for jobs abroad.

6.2. Access to education: tendencies and barriers

The Constitution of the Republic of Moldova stipulates the right to education as being "insured through mandatory secondary education, lyceum (lower-secondary) education and gymnasium (upper-secondary) education, as well as through other forms of training and professional improvement" (Art. 35). The "Law on Education" adopted in 1995 declares the education a national priority. Also, during the years, the Republic of Moldova adhered to: (i) Convention on fighting discrimination in education, (Paris, December 1960), based on Parliament resolution nr. 707-XII dated 10.09.1992 (enforced in Moldova since 1993), (ii) Convention on recognizing qualifications with regard to studies from European Region, (Lisbon, 1997), and (iii) European Convention on Diplomas' Equation (Paris, December 1953), both of them ratified in Moldova in 1999.

By the end of the '90s in Moldova large differentiation of the society occurred in terms of incomes and an unequal access to education of various layers of population. Children aged less than 7 years are eligible for pre-school education; in the 1996-1997 school year, only 55.8% of children aged 5 and 6 years attended pre-school educational institutions, due to increasing explicit and implicit costs of attendance. If in 1990 number of kindergartens was 2322, in 1999 they diminished to 1201, or by 48%.

Preschool education has been affected by the economic crisis *more severely than any other level of education*. The kindergarten network has also been considerably reduced.

At a rapid pace and without any discernment criteria, kindergartens are shut down. At best, they are kept within the education network, being transformed into private primary schools or "kindergarten/primary school" educational complexes. Many kindergartens were privatized or rented and now are being used for non-educational purposes. The majority of operational kindergartens stops working in winter for 3-6 months due to financial difficulties, shortage of heating, and also because the responsibility for kindergartens is delegated to local authorities and is not controlled by the Ministry of Education.

Table 6.2.
Preschool Institutions, Children, Staff

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Number of Preschool Institutions	1680	1596	1497	1399	1201
Number of Children, (thousands)	161.3	146.9	138.8	126.0	101.0
% of the Number of Children between the ages of 1-6(7)	45	43	43	40	33
Didactic staff (thousands)	17.6	15.0	14.7	13.2	9.8

Source: *The Department of Statistical and Sociological Analysis of the Republic of Moldova, 2000*

The process of closing kindergartens has primarily affected preschool education institutions in rural areas. This has aggravated social inequity by limiting access to education for children from villages, who at the moment constitute the majority of the preschool-age children.

The Government decision on “Compulsory Preparation of Children Aged 5-7 for School” (August 1996) focused on the organization of preschool education only for children aged 5-7. Since this decision, the access of younger children to educational services offered by kindergarten remains at the discretion of local authorities. Therefore, approximately 80% of children aged 1-5 currently remain at home and the family serves as the principle teacher.

Though the preparation for school is declared compulsory, the attendance of children in preparatory groups is poor: 56.8% in 1999 compared with 63.1% in 1998. Many of these groups were organized at local schools and do not meet the hygienic and psycho-pedagogical requirements set for activities peculiar to this category of children. Thus, the preparation of children aged 5-7 for successful integration into the social and school environments is inadequate and considerably affects their future schooling.

The monitoring trips within UNICEF education projects discovered lack of preparatory groups in many of rural areas. Due to the situation existing in preschool education, a considerable part of the children enrolled in the 1st grade is not prepared for school (54% in 1998, as compared to 20% in 1992). Even the two-year program of “compulsory preparation for school” (age group 5-7) is inadequate as the most important period in the child’s life (age 0-5) is ignored.

Yet, the above-mentioned legal stipulations are extremely hard to resolve, first of all due to economic reasons. Due to parents’ impossibility to purchase clothing and school belongings the number of non-enrolled children keeps growing. During 1994-2000 the number thereof increased by 56% (from 4700 to 7317).

The general enrollment rate of non-poor children is around by 5 percent higher than of their poor counterparts. In Chisinau, enrollment rates of poor children are by over 20 percent lower than those of non-poor children; in other cities this difference is around 12 percent. Poor people aged 17-24 years have an enrollment rate of just 14.1 percent – a third of the enrollment rate of their non-poor counterparts (40.1 percent).

In 1998, at primary level, in rural area, of the total children from that segment 97,5% go to school by foot; about 30% of them walk distances from 1 to 3 and more km. Approximately the same situation exists in the urban area (26%). Yet, if to take in consideration availability of the urban public transport in big cities, the children from the rural area are in a big disadvantage in this sense too.

In terms of enrolment rates in rural vs. urban, the children in the rural side have much less access to education. Although the enrollment rate in the respective (54%) prevails on the urban population (46%), enrolment displays an inversely proportional picture; at primary and gymnasium levels respectively 39% and 31% of them account for the rural area.

During transitional period the public spending from the consolidated budget on education considerably shrank, which does not fully comply with the constitutional statement on education as a national priority: in 1994 it was spent 7,5% of the GDP, in 1999 this item shrank to 4% of the GDP. Better-off households are offsetting this shortage by resorting more to private education. There is an increasing divergence in terms of both quantity and quality of education received by the poor and wealthy.

In some rural localities, up to 85% of the local budgets are allocated only for supporting the native village school. In real terms this amount is so little, that it cannot cover at least public utilities and electricity consumption. In May 1999 the debts of the Ministry of Education to the Moldovan Energetics Department were worth 6.658.000 MDL (573965,5\$). At 1999 of 638 educational institutions - 111 were disconnected from electricity supply, 3 – sued, 43 were not disconnected because guarantees were provided and 9 were not disconnected because it was forbidden. At least 120 of the 1,469 secondary level schools funded by local authorities may close during the winter months 2000-2001 because of the energy crisis. These schools neither have fuels nor funds to warm the rooms, nor did not succeed to repair the buildings and utilities.

Making a retrospect of the social-economic policies after 1994, due to various reasons this field was not paid due attention. Neither a mechanism of long-term lending was developed for getting university degree, which might constitute the educational “pillar” in republic.

Improper attitude of state towards education is reflected also in the rating of the latter within the erroneous system of social values. According to an opinion poll conducted by the Department of Statistical and Sociological Analysis of the Republic of Moldova in March 1999, comprising 1060 respondents – 65% of them regard the problem no. 1 of the current situation – fighting poverty; 55% - improving the medical care; 53% - creating new jobs; 40% - fighting corruption, and only the 5th was ranked the problem of educational institutions piecemeal functioning, by only 27% of the respondents; the last problem defined (by 26%) was that of public security insurance, which should be a matter-of-course.

Since 1998 UNHCR has been requested by the Government to focus on assistance to IDPs (internal displaced person) by supporting educational institutions, especially in zones of former conflict and in the TransDniestrian region (TD).

Currently, there are only seven schools (c/a 5378 pupils) that follow the curricula of the Moldovan Ministry of Education, while another 77 schools in areas controlled by the separatist regime do not teach in the mother tongue. The prohibition in the TD region of the Latin script (Romanian language) results in constraints on education Moldovans and the disrespect for human right standards. Cases of intimidation of the teachers and pupils in Moldovan schools have been reported, including dismissal for political reasons have been documented in several of the localities on the left bank of the Dniester river, including Dubasari, Tighina, Ribnitsa and Grigoriopol.

Taking into account the above-mentioned facts, the Ministry of Education considers it a priority for the near future to assist in the rehabilitation of the Dubasari (650 pupils), Tighina (2014 pupils) and Ribnitsa (760 pupils) schools. As regard the last one, this major component entails rehabilitation works in a locality where the TD authorities are ready to promote coexistence through the concept of a “joint school”.

Diminishing access to education for a considerable part of the population, being below the poverty line, is caused by:

- Spreading practice of charging fees for education (both formally in private schools and informal in public ones).
- Continuous pauperization of the population.
- Sub-nutrition, that affects also children very much, and their learning abilities.
- Precarious technical and material state of the educational institutions.
- Insufficiency of modern didactic materials.

Increasing the efficiency of public education expenditures is of a primary importance.

6.3. Educational system reform

Although the Law on education in the Republic of Moldova was passed in 1995, which was followed by a series of legal acts, such as: Concept on Education Development, Law on Evaluation and Accreditation of Educational Institutions, etc., the educational system continued to remain for many years just a declared „priority”.

Recently the Government made certain efforts in providing budget funding of education. High percentage of funding during 1994-1997, varying from 7,5 to 8,9% from GDP was possible due to considerable shares of foreign borrowings. Since 1998 the situation in public finance changed utterly. In the draft Budget Law–2000 the share to education accounted for less than 4%, which is commensurable with Central and Western countries.

The public spending on education obviously is not enough for meeting the terms of the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995). The on-going increasing share of children un-enrolled in educational institutions displays this factor first of all. All together, in Moldova 11,2% of children aged 6 to 16 do not attend the school.

In order to support the secondary education the WB launched the General Education Project. The project's main focus is the implementation of reforms in general education, where needs and potential social returns are highest. The project has the following components: (i) Curriculum development to help change general education curricula; (ii) teacher retraining to

improve teaching skills in support of the new general education curricula; (iii) development of a learning assessment system to measure learning outcome and effectiveness of the educational system; and (iv) textbooks and teaching materials production to support implementation of the revised general education curricula. The State Program for Education Development for 1999-2005 is another effort on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Science, whose main purpose is to elaborate the strategic bases, instruments and mechanisms for implementing the principles of state educational policy, reflected in the legislation on education.

Yet, lack of a clear policy in terms of sharing responsibilities, including those beyond the Ministry of Education and Science, in the future may complicate the situation even more.

Currently, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Moldova, through the state program on education development for 1999-2005, determines the following key facets of the educational system: (i) role of the state in education; (ii) relationship between the educational sector and labor market; (iii) organization of funding mechanism; (iv) control of overall educational system efficiency.

In line with the training process there still exist, though very hardly, certain extra-school educational components: artistic, sports and technical education.

- Artistic education includes the music and fine arts schools. Currently quite a few of them are being closed, particularly in the rural side; those in the urban area can hardly withstand the austerity conditions;
- With regard to sports school, only those at the republican level still exist, all the others were closed. Ministry of Education undertakes measures to reanimate them but without any tangible results;
- In the cities and small towns, there used to be young technicians' clubs. Currently all of them are closed;
- Special education is provided in special schools, which are divided in accordance with the requirements of the children with special needs.

Yet, taken as a whole, regardless to how well the initiatives of the Ministry of Education and Science are grounded and how big the efforts thereof are aimed at stalling off the decline of the educational system, the results will be minimal without due attention on behalf of the other decision-making bodies of the state.

In Moldova university curriculums also need a considerable reforms. While curriculums of higher education institutions in highly developed countries comprises 3,4 or maximum 5 mandatory subjects per semester, the educational system of the Republic of Moldova includes respectively 9 to 10 subjects per semester. The minimum load of the students per week comprises 36 academic hours. Positives are that most students speak three languages. Teaching certain subjects in foreign languages is practiced extensively. This is why, approval by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova of the draft resolution on "Ratification of the European Convention on Diplomas Equalizing for Entering the Universities" and of the "Convention on Recognizing the Qualifications Regarding Higher Education from the European Region" is very opportune.

However, one of central issues, which are supposed to be resolved within shortest time period, is orientation towards establishing collaboration mechanism of all agencies in working out and implementing educational policies adjusted to European standards.

It is obvious more and more the will of the young to attain upper-secondary education and go right to the university. The number of correspondence students at university level also increased from 15,3 to 21,9 thousand, or by 30,1%. During 1995-1998 the number females accounted for 57% at colleges and 55% at universities.

The trends in the education prove that even if the HDI of the Republic of Moldova on 1999 is still "satisfactory", particularly due to educational indices in Moldova (96,4 literacy rate and 73,4 enrollment rate), in the near future it may collapse.

Conclusion. Therefore one of the main activities of the UN family should be focused on human recourses as a key component of the social-economic growth factor for societies in transition, and Moldova in particular. First of all, UN agencies in Moldova should help to Government to ensure children's right to education that is guaranteed by the Constitution and

the Law on Education. There are manifests the compulsory and free education for children aged between 5 to 16 (preschool/preparatory level, primary school, and gymnasium - 0/1-9 grades). Government's education policy should be aimed to increase enrollment in basic and secondary education.

At the moment there is a polarization of education resulting from widespread impoverishment. Access of children from poor families to all levels of education is limited. Lower access to education for children from rural zones presents a real risk of amplifying poverty in the future, as the majority of the school aged children live in villages. These disparities can lead to greater polarization of society in future as well as increasing social risks for the majority of the population. UN agencies in Moldova should pay special attention to *reduce access to education for poor families* with two or more children, and particularly in rural areas.

6.4. Children's Rights Protection

The Republic of Moldova adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1993. The national legislation of Moldova recognizes the civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights of the child. The Constitution of the Republic of Moldova provides the framework for the rights of the family, mother and child in terms of aid and special protection. In 1994, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted a Law on the Rights of the Child establishing the juridical status of the child as an independent subject, and provides for assurance of physical and spiritual health, paying special attention to the social protection of the children who are temporally or permanently deprived of family or under difficult conditions. However, a viable plan of action, financially supported to the benefit of the child was not formulated and therefore its stipulations remain in a large measure declarative.

The Law on Youth, adopted in February 1999, defines the policy in the domain of youth by creating the necessary social, economic and organizational prerequisites for youth development and establishes priorities for directions of state policy regarding young people. This law, however, has no real implementation mechanisms and has become subject of contradictory discussions since its adoption.

Ten years after the beginning of the country's transition process, no considerable modifications in the institutional system for child protection have taken place. In the absence of an integrated executive structure directly responsible for this area, every ministry involved is addressing only a narrow part of the problem. Distinct elements of the same social problems fall under the jurisdiction of many different public bodies. As a result, the whole spectrum of institutional problems is not fully focused on or represented.

In order to overcome these difficulties, the Government created in 1998 the National Council for Protection of the Rights of the Child. Its purpose is to monitor and ensure the observance of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to implement the provisions of the Law of the Rights of the Child in Republic of Moldova. The Council is a co-ordination body responsible for various social sectors and is headed by a vice-prime minister. The activity of the National Council for Protection of the Rights of the Child, which was designed to ensure the co-ordination of activities of all institutions, was delayed for a considerable time due to fluctuations of its members due to the changes of power within the government.

Institutionalized Children. The difficult economic situation increases the risk of child abandonment and institutionalization. The Republic of Moldova inherited, from the Soviet period, a great number of institutions where orphans, abandoned children, children with mental or physical disabilities and children from families with complex social problems were cared for. Nowadays, about 12,344 children in residential care in 67 state institutions. These institutions fall under three ministries: the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection. Individual departmental interests complicated by the absence of a national strategy and policy on des-institutionalization has lead to the situation, that no new services have been promoted; a eventual system designed for reintegrating children into families has yet to be set up.

Each institution hosts from 34 to 746 children. Up to 80% of these children have parents, who are unable to carry out their parenting duties due to critical financial situation. Moreover, the general education system rejects children with minor disabilities by placing them into similar institutions. If in the past these institutions offered a minimum standard care for children, during the last 5-6 years lack of finances have resulted in their physical degradation and poverty.

A monitoring Study of the Situation of Institutionalized Children (initiated by UNICEF in 1999) conducted by an inter-ministerial team in all 67 institutions was carried out. Between 1996 and 2000, the main problem faced by these institutions was related to the very limited allocation of funds. In 1999, the budget allocated for child expenses only covered approximately 30% of the actual needs. The physical conditions of institutional buildings were considered 'disastrous' for nearly 50% of the institutions visited by the inter-ministerial group that carried out a study and 'unsatisfactory' for the remaining 50%. Under these conditions, the situation of institutionalized children became an emergency:

- The nutrition of institutionalized children decreased both in quality and quantity. The daily food allowance for a child is 4.65 lei (\$0.37), which is far from ensuring a normal physical and mental development for a growing child. Their diet mainly consists of pasta, cereals (70%), soups, and beans. Meat, eggs, fish, cheese, vegetables and fruits are often lacking or are only rarely offered. Food intake offers less than a half of the daily caloric need and leads to the weakening of the immune system, development of mental and physical retardation (about 30%), and chronic diseases of digestive system (35%).
- Medical care is very poor within institutions, especially in those with disabled children. Lack of drugs and qualified health services, together with the inability to cover costs of medical examinations and treatments led to an increased morbidity, of between 150%-200% in 1999. In addition, the deterioration of hygienic conditions led to the proliferation of parasitic diseases. Institutions do not have disinfectants, soap, detergents and parasitic diseases are detected in almost all institutions visited by the inter-departmental group. About 50% of children had pediculosis, 30% - scabies, and 10% - helminthiasis. Virtually all children have bouts of respiratory ailments 5-6 times a year. There is a very high frequency of renal, cardiovascular and pulmonary chronic diseases.
- Living conditions in institutions are appalling. Sewage and water supply systems are malfunctioning and heating is often problematic. During wintertime, it is very cold in most institutions and physicians report many cases of children with frostbite. During the last few years the electricity was often disconnected. The bedrooms are damp and overpopulated, with 8-12 children per room. In the majority of institutions children do not have privacy, nor personal belongings, toys, or clothes.
- The staff structure does not meet the children education and rehabilitation needs. Staff has not been paid for 5-9 months, leading to lack of motivation and inappropriate performance of duties. The education process is performed at a very low level in most institutions. There are no teaching and educational aids.
- Children are isolated from families and from community social life. This leads to serious behavioral deviations and has a lasting impact throughout life.

The situation for children with special needs is even more critical. There is a lack of qualified personnel, such as: psychopedagogues, speech therapists, defectologists, social workers, physiotherapists, and pediatricians. There is no system to provide educational, medical and social assistance for different types of disabilities and corresponding to levels of complexity. In 1998 a total of 14,147 children with different disabilities were registered between the ages of 0 to 16 years, of which 70% have a neurological or psychiatric disability. Of this group 35% are in institutions.

Abandoned Children. Between 1995 and 1998, the number of abandoned children increased in Moldova. In 1995 there were 1,266 orphans and abandoned children registered, while in 1998 there were 1,549. The protection of orphans and abandoned children is carried out

by the state through placing them into residential institutions, organizing local and international adoption and placing them within guardian families.

Children with Disabilities. There has been an evident increase in the number of children with disabilities, rising from 12,400 in 1995 to 14,000 in 1999. When correlated to 1000 children, the rate of disablement is presently 12.9 compared to 11.1 in 1996. There are two orphans' homes, in Orhei (boys) and Hincesti (girls), for 530 children with severe mental deficiencies, while 32 auxiliary schools with special internal regimes are hosting 4,300 children mentally retarded. In addition, 1,600 children with disabilities and sensory deficiencies (blind or with weak sight, deaf or with impaired hearing and children with locomotion deficiencies) are placed in special residential institutions. The number of children with retarded physical development admitted into special "leveling" groups in general secondary schools has increased to 742 in 1999, while in 1996 was only 122. The number is still very small compared to the total number of children with disabilities. Integration of children with minor disabilities into normal schools is still not carried out in Moldova. This stems from a resistance of the system of general education, which, as well as the whole society, is not ready to accept disabled children. The dominant mentality still favors social isolation of the disabled.

Street Children. The phenomenon of street children appeared in Moldova in 1995-1996 and has been constantly growing ever since. The population of street children is primarily present in the cities, with the largest number in the capital, Chisinau. The study "Street children in Chisinau," carried out in July 1999 by the Resource Center for Social Work of the State University, supported by UNICEF, shows that there is an estimated number of 400 street children in the capital alone. Police reports provide a larger figure of almost 1,000 vagabonds being annually detained by the police and committed to the Center of Grouping of Juveniles.

Abused and Neglected Children. The presence of abused and neglected children has not been recognized by Moldovan society until recently. Since competent studies and viable mechanisms of documentation do not exist, it is difficult to make the society aware of the problem. Denial of the problem has produced a series of precedents where abusers were not charged and punished due to imperfections in legal and social assistance systems. Thus, children and victims of various forms of abuse have not benefited from necessary psychological and social assistance.

The social and economic crisis generated by Moldova's transition period has seriously increased the level of tension and conflict among a large number of families. A study conducted in 1997 by the Department of Social Management of the Academy of Economic Studies on request of UNICEF was based on a sample of 1,404 families and 500 children aged between 11-17. The study demonstrated that the risk of family mistreatment constitutes 17.2% in socially-at-risk families and 4.4% in well-off families. Abuse against children generates major physical, psychological, emotional, and social traumas. Aggressiveness, isolation, loss of trust, inability of the family to protect their child and apathy are some of the consequences together with juvenile delinquency, school drop out and lack of social integration.

Children and Adolescents in Conflict with the Law. The total number of adolescents and young people aged between 14-17 who committed offences and crimes has increased from 2,193 in 1996 to 2,442 in 1999. Of all adolescents and young people involved in crimes during the first 4 months of 2000 about 86% did not work or study. Every 5th adolescent who committed a crime was alcohol-impaired. The study of qualitative parameters of juvenile delinquency proves that delinquency has become more organized, with emphasis on felony and a definite orientation towards crimes against property, robbery and banditry. The number of children involved in repeated crime has also increased. Since 1998, a growth in the number of violent crimes, homicide, grievous bodily harm, and rape, has been registered. The more frequent involvement of children in drug-related crimes is another alarming tendency.

In 1999, the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family, supported by UNICEF, drew up the Project of National Strategy Regarding Social Protection of Family and Child, which sets the principles, criteria, mechanisms and measures to optimize the state-community-family-child relationship. The project was prepared in order to assure social, economic and moral conditions in favor of the comprehensive development of families and children.

UN agencies should help to Government in the area of Children's Rights Protection via following directions:

1. *Development of legislation in the domain of family and child protection.* From the CRC viewpoint, the legislative acts containing provisions for children need massive revision and need to be geared more in the interest of the child. At this time, current provisions regarding the rights of children in specific situations are stipulated by more than 20 different laws. Many procedures regarding child protection are established by governmental decisions. Local legislation should be approximate to CRC requirements.
2. *Speed up of institutional reform of the social protection system.* The prevention capacity of the present system is underdeveloped. The institutional system is staffed mostly by administrative personnel and only partially by specialists trained in the domain of social assistance, social policy, psychosocial therapy, and social service management. The low capacity to propose and test alternatives is caused by an entrenched bureaucratic structure and low professionalism. The development of professional procedures and standards is slow. The delegation of responsibilities among different state structures together with departmental procedures does not allow the adoption of an integrated approach to the needs of children. In fact, these factors create difficulties for the reform of the social protection system for the family and child.
3. *Development of social assistance* offered to families and children through the training of social workers and the development of needed services.

6.5. Culture

Concept of the *culture for development* has appeared recently, having evolved from the will of a restricted circle of mankind to make human existence more noble and find some efficient solutions of development in the future. “A great deal of confusion arises in both academic and political discourse when culture in the humanistic sense is not distinguished from “culture” in its anthropological senses, notably culture as the total and distinctive way of life of a people or society. From the letter point of view it is meaningless to talk of “the relation between culture and economy”, since the economy is part of a people’s culture...”¹³

The Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development mentioned above is just one of the important models on the way of establishing a viable connection between culture and development.

World Commission for culture and development (WCCD) was formed in December 1992 on the initiative of the UN General Secretary and UNESCO General Director, because efforts of sensitization of the world community to the role of culture for sustainable development realized by UNESCO during many years, were appreciated unanimously by the United Nations.

Resolution of the UNESCO General Conference, November 1991, through which the Mandate of WCCD as an independent organization was established, empowers the latter to concentrate in its activity on some urgent problems of sustainable development in the view of correlation between culture and development.

Power of Culture Conference, 8/9 November 1996 (Amsterdam, The Netherlands) that discussed first report of WCCD “Our Creative Diversity” pointed out even more the power of culture for sustainable development.

In spite of many important actions, implemented by the UNESCO as a specialized UN institution, namely creation of the *Culture link Network*, a whole series of conferences, seminars, meetings at the highest level, etc., culture still is a stepdaughter deprived of rights in the family of material values, and discussion on the creation of *New Global Ethics* initiated recently, in which the dimension of “culture” could really gain the deserved role, still is on the way of its realization.

¹³ Marshall Sahlins “Our creative diversity”, *The Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development*, UNESCO publishing/Oxford, 1995

We hope that the new Cultural Report of WCCD “*Cultural diversity, conflict and pluralism*”, which might be out this month in English, will shed more light on multiple aspects of the role of the culture in the sustainable development.

From this point of view, one can mention “*UNESCO’s new programme on cultural policies for development*” as well that includes three well-structured compartments: monitoring, collection and dissemination of policy-relevant knowledge and information; promotion of capacity-building in Member States; reinforcement of advocacy and reflection on cultural policies for development.

UNESCO Executive Council, during its 160th meeting on October 26, 2000, determined the following priorities in the field of the culture: “development of legal instruments; protection of cultural diversity and encouragement of pluralism and intercultural dialogue; consolidation of connections between the culture and development. Towards this end, Council recommends that a special attention should be paid to the protection of oral and immaterial inheritance, live cultures, traditions and linguistic diversity (*UNESCOPRESS, N 2000-107, Le Conseil Executif trace les priorités et activités futures de l’UNESCO*).

Implementation of the concept of Culture development in the Republic of Moldova. UNESCO instruments afoot.

Stockholm action plan in particular pointed to the importance of the cultural property for a sustainable development. Many UNESCO conventions and recommendations on the protection of the cultural property and establishment of the international norms, on the basis of which national legislations and international treaties should be elaborated.

Three existing Conventions – Convention on the protection of the world cultural and natural property, Convention of the Hague on the protection of the cultural values in case of an armed conflict and its first Protocol, Convention on the measures that are supposed to be undertaken with a view to ban and prevent illegal import, export and transfer of property on the cultural values were supplemented by the Second Protocol of the Hague that contains many clauses of major importance.

Stage of joining of the Republic of Moldova to the international instruments

Through the ratification of the Conventions mentioned above, the Republic of Moldova would contribute to consolidation of ideas of the culture as well as to those of the sustainable development in the national and international terms. At present, the situation in this regard is as follows:

- Convention on the protection of the cultural values in case of an armed conflict (Hague, 1954) as well as the Protocol to this Convention came into effect for the Republic of Moldova as from March 9, 2000.
- European Cultural Convention (Paris, 1954), ratified on May 24, 1994.
- Convention on salvation and preservation of the cultural property of Europe (Granada, 1985), ratified on May 14, 1998.
- European Convention on the protection of the archeological property, ratified on May 14, 1998.

From this point of view, the Republic of Moldova as a member of the UN and UNESCO is to bring national legislation in conformity with the international one, creating practically a new national legislation. At present, the following standard acts regarding the subject under discussion were passed in the Republic of Moldova:

- *Law on the Protection of Monuments of June 22, 1993;*
- *Law on the Archival Fund of the Republic of Moldova of January 22, 1992;*
- *Law on Libraries of November 16, 1994;*
- *Law on the Publishing Activities of April 20, 2000;*
- *Law on the Audio-Visual Means of October 3, 1995;*
- *Law on Intellectual Property Rights and Indirect Rights of November 23, 1994;*
- *Law on Patents for Inventions of May 18, 1995;*

- *Law on the Protection of Industrial Drawings and Models of October 15, 1996;*
- *Law on the Advertising of June 27, 1997;*
- *Law on Rights of a Child of December 15, 1994;*
- *Law on the Education of July 21, 1995;*
- *Law on the Tourism of February 11, 2000;*
- *Law on the Physical Training and Sport of March 25, 1999;*
- *Law on the Philanthropy and Sponsorship of July 7, 1995;*
- *Law on the Local Public Administration of November 6, 1998;*
- *Law on Public Associations of May 17, 1996.*

With all inherent imperfection of a number of acts elaborated and adopted by several legislatures without much experience, which can be explained by our state's youth, these acts are evidence of the incontestable fact that the Republic of Moldova passes through the difficult stage of transition with clear tendencies of joining to the general human values.

Period of transition and reforms in the field of culture

Crisis of identity, common for all post-communist countries, is a key phenomenon in the relations between the culture and the power in the Republic of Moldova, though the important role of the culture in the determination of our national and spiritual identity gradually becomes more and more known.

In spite of the efforts to consolidate legal basis, a characteristic trait for all countries in transition, when respectively a strategy of development and implementation of reforms in all fields of the activity, including that of the culture, is looked for, real processes witness that the most difficult problems appear when the matter concerns a reevaluation of the values, which existed in the period of soviet regime domination. It is known that in conditions of a market economy there are completely different mechanisms of administration, management and protection of the cultural values than in countries with a centralized economy.

But if our country chose option of the market economy, the majority of old mechanisms can not function anymore the fact that points out need of the elaboration of a new cultural policy that would determine new norms regarding: relations between the state bodies and the culture; creation of new *administrative capacities* that would develop the importance of the culture in the new conditions; creation of conditions that would *facilitate the access of the masses to the cultural values*.

Some actions were proposed by the Ministry of Culture within the State Program "Development and protection of culture and art in the Republic of Moldova for years 1997-1998", which was prolonged till 2005.

The Program, among other, provides for realization of a plan of concrete actions, with the priority given to the preservation of the cultural heritage as a factor of ethical and moral consolidation of the society; support of all forms and types of creative and cultural work, provision of a broad access of the population to the values of the national and universal culture; support of all forms of auto-association and cultural initiative of the citizens; strict evidence of the most valuable objects of the cultural property and consolidation of technical and material basis of the main cultural institutions; support in the different ways of the state and private cultural institutions, common activity and cooperation in the field of culture of decision-making organs, art unions and associations of people of culture and art, elaboration by those of common programs on the development and support of the culture; creation of the legislation and structure necessary for the protection of property, for the proper functioning of cultural and arts institutions; popularization of our country's culture abroad through extension of the international collaboration; application of new technologies; abolition of stereotypes in the organization of artistic life and reformation of the dramatic art to diminish negative effects of the transformation process of the socio-economic reality. Thus, there are the following indices regarding the culture for development in the Republic of Moldova:

Financing from the central budget. In the conditions of economic crisis, allocations from the state budget meant for the culture decrease from year to year. State budgetary funds for the culture constituted 19,6 mil lei in 1996, in 1997-22,7, in 1998-20,3, in 1999-21,0, or respectively 0,26, 0,25, 0,23 and 0,18 % of GDP.

Financing from the local budget. It constituted 21,5 mil lei in 1996, 27,9 mil lei – in 1997, 26,6 mil lei in 1998 and 21,9 mil lei in 1999, which represents respectively 0,28, 0,31, 0,30 and 0,18 of GDP. All the mentioned above confirms lack of financial funds allocated into the consolidated budget of the Ministry of Culture that satisfy *about 35-38 % of needs of culture financing and with no doubt have to be changed, but without producing of considerable losses as regards existing cultural values.*

It is known that even in the developed countries with old traditions of existence in the conditions of the market economy, large sums of budget money are not allotted, being aimed at addressed assistance of urgent priorities of the state and of a citizen. These are the causes explaining why correlation between the culture and the development appeared so late. They will be the more insufficient in the conditions of a state with an economy in transition when old bodies already have been or are being dismantled while the new ones are only forming.

Cultural institutions network of the country. Promotion of the cultural values in the country depends to a big extent on the existence of institutions that could be able to support and promote them. Before the reformatory tendencies emerged in the Republic of Moldova, there was a strictly hierarchic structure directed by the center, well known to the specialists, characteristic for all former soviet republics. At that time, as it is known the whole cultural structure was financed from the budget.

Traditionally, centers of culture in villages (libraries, dramatic and concert complexes, formations of amateur artists, extracurricular artistic circles, associations of popular craftsmen) constituted a point of attraction for the population, creating a certain cultural environment, the fact that is confirmed by high actual achievements of our folklore collectives and popular craftsmen on the international scene.

In 1998, under the burden of the economic crisis the budget financing decreased. In 2000, only 12% of immovable property of cultural institutions is in a satisfactory situation and exodus of specialists from the field of culture gained larger proportions. The majority of these 12% immovable property of cultural centers of the country, practically, lost their cultural meaning, transforming into centers and clubs of clear business nature.

Legal mechanisms of decentralization and establishment of new relations between central and local bodies are provided for in the State Program “Development and protection of culture and art in the Republic of Moldova”. In fact, a new form of management of culture is being established, the priority being granted to horizontal structures.

Conclusion. State bodies made certain efforts to ameliorate transition processes, creating legislation corresponding the present situation, but processes of the old system dismantling created an acute crisis in the field of culture: only 12 out of total cultural centers have kept their material property, but it is often used in other than cultural purposes. With large reserves, only 12 out of total of the virtual cultural material potential related to cultural social living (having in view that these cultural informational space, especially outside the capital, is *the only source of general human esthetic and moral values*). Creation of a new generation of cultural managers that could find a use for this material property (which is almost lost but can be restored in the conformity with the current legislation) is necessary.

Information network as a source and a means of culture development. The role of mass information organizations as sources and means of culture development in the context of a sustainable development is incontestable. Not accidentally, UNESCO, elaborating a new subprogram named “Environments, information and society” in the framework of Great program IV – *Towards a society of information and communication for all*.

Here we will dwell only on the informational issue as a source and a means of culture development: the one of public libraries.

Previous paragraph (see cultural institutions in the country) entirely refers to the public libraries, which are a component part of the first ones. There are, though, some specific moments regarding book fund.

Specificity of this paragraph consists in the fact that almost *95% of the book fund that existed in Moldova before the independence could not be used any longer* (from the ideological or linguistic considerations – in the Republic of Moldova Latin alphabet was introduced in place of the Cyrillic one).

Quantitative indices of book funds in libraries that still exist (many of preceding libraries do not exist any more or are on the verge of disappearance) reproduce the real state of things very precisely, though certain steps were made in the direction of amelioration of the situation. Thus, during the period of 1995-2000 some libraries, including two public libraries: the National Library and the National Library for Children were provided with equipment and software (integrated system of libraries TINLIB). These libraries as well as those that have a more restricted public access – the university and scientific ones, but introduced the TINLIB system, created local networks, biographic and special databases, which contain more than 700.000 titles. Financing for automation of library processes was realized (with little exceptions) by the Soros Foundation – Moldova. During the period 1991-2000 the state did not support financially this program.

Libraries covered by the TINLIB system, in fact, are the only ones that possess a significant number of books, but only the National Library for Children “Ion Creangă” renders services completely for free, the others tend to lose their status as public libraries introducing paid services the fact that leads to the limitation of access to the information of the people. Other libraries – especially those in the rural – that are under the local administration’s jurisdiction, though are rendering free services, do not have a book fund that could satisfy increasing needs of readers, especially in Romanian (annually public libraries are visited by more than 1 mil 100 thou readers, which requested 53,4% publications in Romanian). Conclusion: In the last 10 years public libraries in country had essential changes. Was closed thousand of libraries, majority lost their offices, books collection and services wasn’t develop, the personal qualification falls, all this effects negative public libraries management. At this time in Moldova we haven’t possibility to satisfy completely the right for obtaining access to information. Actual public libraries model can’t be considered as a center of society information. Don’t exist one strategy for public libraries development and modernization. Central structure initiatives aren’t supported by local administration non-being understandable and respectable.

National heritage: immobile and nonmaterial

Unfortunately, people common property: immobile and nonmaterial, which is under the influence of Propriety International Convention, in Republic Moldova and is in heavy situation as a result of last transformation, in the same time existence of the some legal instruments, which in case of implementation by central authorities, will not provoke the disasters in actual proportion.

Material Cultural property includes a large number of immobile of real value, in which are included: archeological excavation, living houses, fortress, monastery, church, work of monumental art, monuments and technical installations in the same time construction ensemble – squares, streets, blocks, villages and urban centers or ethnographic zones with traditional architecture.

For their resection and protection have been adopted Law for historical monuments protection from 22 June 1993 and Register of historical monuments protected by State from 23 June 1993. Under the law influence from 22 June 1993 are mobile monuments and no mobile. Register of monuments is done at the base of multidisciplinary investigations. Mobile cultural property is placed in 66 museums in the republic.

The right of the state immobile possession can be passed by the Parliament in correspondence with actual law. The Government can cede right of management of a state immovable object in the conformity with the same law.

Unfortunately, budget financing of foreground programs of the national cultural heritage protection has become impossible. In order to ameliorate the situation, the Ministry of Culture initiated creation of an off-budget Fund for support of protection activities of the cultural heritage, but it has no much success.

The state continues to be the only actor that is engaged with this complex activity that the protection of the material movable and immovable heritage is.

Conclusions. To order to ameliorate the disastrous situation in the field of protection of the material movable and immovable heritage with regard to the negative factors in this field, it is necessary to encourage: construction of a viable civil society that would take care of the heritage that it was historically granted with as a value of identity and dignity; creation of a new generation of managers that would be able to put into circulation these values using experience of their colleagues from countries with old traditions of the market economy.

National immaterial heritage.

In the UNESCO vision one crucial important initiative in the modern context, it's a save guarding of the national immaterial wealth. We'll present same essential data, from our point of view, for understanding the essence of the problem specific for Republic Moldova.

In 1912, the native made up 95 percent of the population in the region; in 1918 their number dropped to 75 percent; in 1979, the native represented 64 percent; in 1989, according to the latest census, they made up only 63,5 percent of the total population. The immigrants settled especially in the cities and they have been and still are speakers of the Russian language. Gradually, they became the majority in the urban areas, substituting the language of the natives from the everyday use.

In MSSR, Russian has been the official language; it carried out all social function (in education, cultural and politic life, in trade, transportation etc.). The place of the banned Romanian language and literature has been taken by the "Moldovan language and literature" and the Cyrillic script.

Urged by the circumstances, the MSSR authorities were compelled to partially yield. Thus, on August 31, 1989, the Supreme Soviet of the MSSR adopted three linguistic laws:

- Regarding the official language,
- Regarding the functioning of the spoken languages on the Republic's territory, and
- Regarding the enactment of the Latin script.

The first democratic transformations in Republic Moldova, as it's known, has been marked through slogans returning to origins and recovered national identity.

The problem of the language functioning.

The issue regarding the state of the language of the native majority population, which was declared the official language in Republic of Moldova, seems to be one of the most acute problems in the context of and with respect to the national cultural values.

Until now the official language of Republic of Moldova did not succeed to cope with the competition imposed by the language of communication of the former state – the Russian language – and did not gain its natural position in a sovereign and independent state as the prevailing means of communication.

Objectives:

- Creation of the legal framework regarding culture and patrimony correlated with the existing international documentation;
- Facilitation of ratification and implementation of the existing international Conventions, particularly of the Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Patrimony (Paris, 16 November 1972), Convention on Protection of Material Property in case of armed conflict (Haag, 14 May 1954), the First and Second Protocols of the nominated Convention (Haag, 26 March 1999), Convention on Measures that are supposed to be undertaken with a view to ban and prevent illegal import, export and transfer of property on the cultural values (the Hague, May 14, 1970);

- Strengthening of the human capacity at the national and local level by organizing trainings in the domains of management and administration of cultural institutions, identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of the natural and cultural patrimony;
- Continuous development of the Foundation of Books and its equipment with new informational technologies;
- Promotion of non-material national values, encouraging organization of courses of the state language by the national minorities, promotion of traditions and arts as forms of consolidation of cultural diversity, dialog between nations, and cultural tourism;
- Support of culture as a mean to eradicate poverty and marginality.

7. Gender Equality

7.1 Women's advancement

The concept of gender equality may be formally defined as equal possibility for both men and women to participate in social, economic and family life. But this does not necessarily mean that in order to obtain gender equality it is enough to achieve a strong proportion of men and women in every section of economic and social life. Gender equality is a more complicated, delicate, and sensible problem. In our opinion, it cannot be described better than it is done in “Gender Mainstreaming: Conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices”¹⁴. In their vision, gender is the social design of a biological sex, determined by the conception tasks; functions and roles attributed to women and men in society and private life. Gender is not only a socially constructed definition of women and men; it is a socially constructed definition of the relationship between the sexes. Gender equality means accepting and valuing equality the differences between women and men and the diverse roles they play in society. Gender includes the right to be different. The problem is gender hierarchy, not women. It is question of using the competencies, skills and talents of each and every citizen, of involving both women and men in building society, solving problems and preparing the future.

Gender equality is a problem of *human rights* of both women and men. It is a problem of *democracy*, because the under-representation of women in decision-making system often implies infringement of democratic principles and does not take into consideration the special needs of about a half of the total population. Gender equality implies *economic independence*; because only a relative economic independence assures possibilities to choose, develop the talents and vocations. Gender equality is an educational problem, because only equality in *education* serves as a base for the economic independence. It is also a question of *shared responsibilities*, because without sharing responsibilities, especially in families, equal rights would remain a formal declaration. *De jure* equal rights will be proclaimed, *de facto* there will be nothing done with respect to gender development.

Gender equality is a *culture-specific definition of femininity and masculinity and therefore varies in time and space*. It is a global problem; therefore there is a growing awareness of the need and willingness to promote gender equality all over the world. The main international acts on protection of both women's and men's rights are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted and proclaimed through the Resolution 217 A (3) of the General Assembly of UN, 10 December, 1948), European Convention for Protecting of Human Rights and Basic Freedom (4 November 1950, Rome, ratified by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova on 25 July 1997), Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (adopted on 18 December 1979 and ratified by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova according to the Decision nr. 87-XII on 28 April 1994), Beijing Declaration (Fourth World Conference on Women, 4-15 September, 1995).

¹⁴ Gender Mainstreaming: Conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices, Final Report of Activities of the Group of Specialists on Mainstreaming (EG-S-MS), Strasbourg, May 1998

The Government and Parliament of the Republic of Moldova undertook a set of measures to support the gender development in the country after the Beijing conference in 1995. A Committee on women and family issues, aligned to the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova, was established through the Presidential Decree in 1999. A Subcommittee on Equal Opportunities within the Committee on Human Rights in the Parliament was established. A Committee on women's issues, a consultative and coordinating body, was established. A Gender Unit within the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family, as well as Gender Focal Points within all Ministries were set up.

Non-governmental organizations are playing an active role in this regard. As an immediate follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Woman, the Gender in Development Project created a network called the "Beijing Group", which helped to unite 18 key women's organizations in Moldova. The group aims to continue the spirit of the teamwork and collaboration created at the NGO Forum in Beijing, through information sharing and community-building projects. A Women's Forum has been called, which focuses on the improvement of the situation of women in Moldova in socio-economic, cultural and educational spheres.

In 1997 the UNDP Gender in Development Project in collaboration with "Beijing Group" initiated the pilot project "The role and place of women in politics". The objective was to encourage political party leaders to include more female candidates on their election lists.

Two political party leaders have met with the working committee on the "Beijing Group". These meetings sensitized the political party leaders to the need to promote women in political parties and to increase the number of women in Parliament. Leaders of some political parties promised to take efforts to eliminate discriminatory practices against women, pursuant to the 1994 Convention of Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. As a result, the total number of women candidates for Parliamentary elections has risen from 90 in 1994 to 193 in 1998.

All these measures are obviously a step towards the obtaining gender equality in the country. Nevertheless there is still much to be done. The discrepancy *de jure* vs. *de facto* maintains.

Moldova's report to CEDAW Committee in the summer of 2000 reveals an open attitude towards successes and failures. For instance, Moldova reported that there is no mechanism that ensures adequate monitoring in the situation and improvements in the situation of women. Also, there is no legal definition of discrimination against women. In fact, when considering Moldova's report, it is clear that there are a number of issues pertaining to the Convention that may be considered as a basis for technical assistance.

7.2 Women in Politics

Women's participation in ruling bodies at all levels cannot be considered a whim of fashion. When women represent more than a half of the population (52%), they must participate in the decision making process, and their influence should be a factor of stability, democracy and conciliation in this period of global transformations.

By adhering to the Convention on eliminating All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), a series of states have proclaimed gender equality worldwide. The Republic of Moldova has ratified this document in 1994. The Convention has not only defined women's rights, but also recommended that all states work together on implementing gender equality. According to the present legislation, women's status in the Republic of Moldova, does not represent an obstacle to women's presence and advancement in the new democratic institutions set up after independence was declared on August 27, 1991. Therefore, the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, adopted on July, 1994, in the foundation of state legislation: "All the citizens of the Republic of Moldova are equally liable before the law, irrespective of their race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, size, opinion, political views, property or social origin".

There are a number of other normative acts that contain regulations providing for the equality of all citizens: the Criminal Code, the Civil Code, and the Family code. Women's rights represent a constructive part of human rights regulation. By virtue of the constitutional declarations, the policy of equal rights and responsibilities in Moldova is an integral part of national policy.

By ratifying the conventions regarding the women's political rights (effective in Moldova since April, 1994) the country has expressed its adherence to the principles of these conventions. This is the situation de jure, de facto situation of gender presentation in the legal bodies of the country is different.

Although they represent more than a half of the total population, women hold only 8 seats out of 101 (8%) in the Parliament; however, there is an increase in women's share if compared with the former Parliament (where women represented only 4.9%). The number of female mayors in villages and towns is increasing. Still, there are heads of departments, and one is the head of high educational institution.

Even a superficial analysis of the structure of members of Parliament reveals a clear picture about the chances women have when it comes to their participation in political activities and solving various problems related to them and the family. This example confirms the fact that the challenge of promoting women to decision-making bodies is still topical. The latest information proves that the role of women in society continues to increase mainly due to their own efforts and attempts.

Data of numerous opinion polls show that it seems that women are not much interested in politics. About 78% of respondents mentioned that they are not too much or not at all interested in politics. As the main impediment for Moldovan women to take a more active part in the socio-political life 83.42% of respondents mentioned unbearable house and family problems. In their opinion, women's and men's equal right to work are reflected only in the public sector. In the private life, men are placed in the women's care. The lack of partnership education in the family, when the privileged is offered to the men, concerning their free time as well as the continuing preservation of the traditional roles in a family – the husband being the head of the family and the wife – the "labor instrument" – leads to the fact that the women are often mistreated in families and society. In average a Moldovan women has to work weekly 6 hours more than a woman in Russia, and about 20 hours more than women in developed countries (see chapter 7.4). These indicators prove one more time the presence of traditional stereotypes, when a woman able to maintain and support the family is not accepted professionally as an equal.

The idea of promoting women should become an essential component of a real democratic system. The decision-making structures have become aware that women's participation is essential for a political framework of equality as well as promotion and insurance of human rights. It has been decided to set up within the Ministry of Labor, Social Care and the Family the Division for Family Protection, which would promote directly the principle of equality between genders. A state schedule, which defines the main actions that have to be taken in order to improve the situation of the woman within society, has also been established.

The legislative body has created a parliamentary subcommittee that deals with the issue of equal opportunities. On May 10 1999, a Presidential Decree of the Republic of Moldova about the establishment of a committee on Women and Family Issues beside the Presidency of the Republic was signed. This validates attempts to implement the declared rights and equalities. In addition, the public administrations have started to meet more frequently with non-governmental organizations; during these meetings the issues related to women's rights in the Republic of Moldova are addressed.

The 4th World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) has drawn the attention of the international public opinion to woman's problems. This represents, for Moldova, a catalyst to the establishment of a legal basis for ensuring women's rights attracting women into the public decision-making process.

The world Conference in Beijing declared that the Women's Rights are the same Human Rights. The participation of the Republic of Moldova at the Beijing Conference was a very

important event regarding the continued assessment of the national policy of women's status within society.

Along with other countries, the Republic of Moldova undertook to promote women's rights by approving the Action Program, which is the final document on activities to be performed during the next ten years. After this political event of international importance, there has been an acceleration of forces that pledge for equal opportunities.

In order to empower women politicians, women at decision-making levels and members of civil society, in 1999 a pilot project "Women, Society and Politics" was initiated. It was financed by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The "Building Parity Democracy- towards partnership between women and men in politics for the future in Moldova" project was implemented by Women Caring for Children.

Given the continuing patriarchal mentality in society and factors impeding the participation of women in the development of the country, a number of related pilot initiatives were developed. Among these is a project for training women candidates for local elections with support from SIDA. In addition, a new Resource Center with a Library Collection on Gender and Women's Studies and Women's Issues, with the Open Society Institute/Soros Foundation.

Conclusion. Established *de jure*, women's equality with men has not been achieved *de facto*. Although women represent a majority of total employees, they are a minority among those who are in ruling position. The main reasons of this are not lower education or professional skills, but patriarchal attitude to women forcing them to work daily additionally about 4 hours of unpaid homework. This "drives out" any will to undertake some participation in the socio-politic life of the country.

7.3 Gender Equality in Education

The degree of a nation's development is to a large degree determined by its education system. In this regard, in order to make a maximal contribution to social cohesion and harmony in the country the Moldovan education system focuses in several principles, such as: guaranteed right to education regardless of sex, nationality, race, age, social origin and status; preparing the child for the responsibilities of life he/she will have to take in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality between sexes, etc.

The Constitution of the Republic of Moldova and the legislation on education provide for equal education opportunities for all citizens regardless of their sex¹⁵. As a consequence of this, the literacy levels in 1995 were 99% for men and 94% for women. In 1997, the quota of educated women between 15-24 years, in comparison with the total number of women was the same as for men - 99.6%. This is an important point since the literacy level (or the level of education) of a nation is one of the major indicators of a society's development. Generally, boys and girls have access to all levels of education as per statistics from the Ministry of Education and Science. In the 1997-1998 66 thousand girls and 72 thousand boys attended academic year pre-school institutions.

The educational process and the curricula do not differentiate between students by sex, (i.e. special subjects separately for girls and boys). Only the areas of education that deal with health care, technology, physical education, etc, are the activities aimed at specific gender.

According to the Ministry of Education and Science, as the number of fees in schools increases for subjects and activities, fewer and fewer children have access to quality education. As more and more people drop below the poverty line, more and more children become homeless and turn to begging. The majority of these children are girls, since they have fewer opportunities to find employment.

A positive aspect of the new economic conditions is the increased prestige of higher education. Female students represent 55% in the entire education system, and 57% in vocational schools.

¹⁵ Status of Women in the Republic of Moldova, UNDP, Gender in Development project, 1999

Statistics show that about 50% of higher-education graduates every year are women. According to data from the Department of Statistical and Sociological Analysis, in 1998 alone 4336 young women received university diplomas, the total number of university graduates being 7732. Numbers are impressive at a first sight. However, according to *Opinia polling service*, on average only 1 in 10 higher-educated female graduates finds a job. Thus, very few of the young educated professionals follow a career, manage companies or institutions, get promoted, etc. According to some selected data, only 4% of higher-education female graduates are self-described as successful.

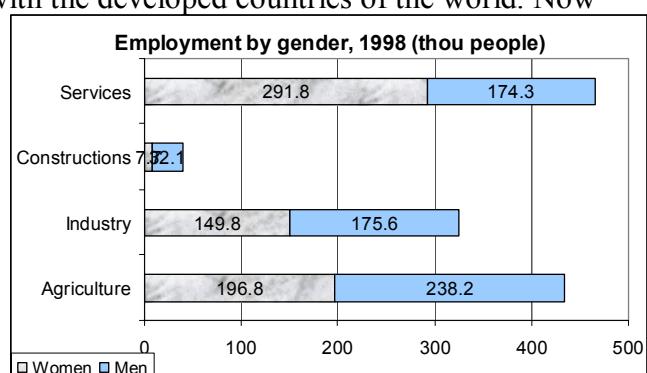
The share of women in the number of scientific personnel declined from 50% in 1990 to 45% in 1997. However, the proportion of women having post-graduate studies is smaller. The share of doctors of sciences and bachelors of sciences diminishes, consequently, 29 and 12% in 1990, respectively, 32 and 11% in 1998. Difficult economic situation gives rise to the emigration process. In eight years (1990-1998) the number of female doctors in sciences in the country declined by one third, from 1025 to 751 in 1998. The share of women amongst total number of bachelors of sciences declined from 14% in 1995 to 11% in 1998, as for doctors in sciences, the share of women grew slightly from 30% in 1995 to 32% in 1998.

One of the causes of the small share of women having post-graduate studies is that young couples gives birth to their first child at earlier ages (about 21 years vs. about 28 in France). Usually women do their best to finish their graduate studies, as for tertiary education, it is much more difficult to start it having a baby. The density of single women is higher among people having tertiary education.

Conclusion. Formally, the gender equality in education is guaranteed by the legislation of the Republic of Moldova. In primary and secondary education this equality practically takes place. As for the tertiary and post-graduate education, the situation changes to the disadvantage of women. The explanation of this is traditional assumption that the major part of unpaid homework is in the responsibility of women.

7.4 Employment

In the early '90s the level of women's activity in Moldova was nearly at the level of labor activity of men and was higher when compared with the developed countries of the world. Now days women occupy a considerable numerical share of the total population – 52%, employed population - 52%, as well as in the number of officially registered unemployed - 68%. It seems paradoxical, but since the advent of democracy there has been a reduction in women's participation in governmental bodies, including the Parliament: down from 35% in 1995 to almost 9% in 1999. In the economy women are more concentrated in services (45%) and agriculture (30%). Men are mostly working in agriculture (38%), industry (28.3%), and services (28%).



Source: Department of Statistical and Sociologic Analysis

A special case for employment is small private business. Not long ago business activity belonged to men. During the last decade, however, women, distinct personalities with energy and a spirit of initiative, have more and more become active as business people. Despite low levels of participation in business and among managers of enterprises – 5%, the number is steadily increasing. Approximately 2% of women managers run big enterprises, 10% are in mid-sized enterprises, 40% in small enterprises and the others 48% are in micro-enterprises.

Monthly Incomes of Women and Men Related to Educational Level (Lei)

	Women	Men
Higher Education	327.43	374.59
Uncompleted Higher Education	276.23	287.90
Secondary Specialty	221.62	291.64
Secondary	171.67	232.89

Source: HBS, 1998

According to data provided at the conference “Small Business – A Way to Progress” (May, 1999) organized by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, one in five firms run by men survives, but three of five run by women continue to operate after establishment. It is very interesting as well that firms in which the second person involved is a woman are also more likely to survive, in comparison with others. This phenomenon was explained by an inborn intuitive capability, knowledge of the domestic market, risk aversiveness, productive managerial styles, and a higher level of education (38% of women at the age of 20-40 years have higher education or special studies as opposed to 30% of men of the same age). On the average, Moldovan women invest approximately 4 times more time perfecting a level of proficiency.

The rise of women’s participation in business represents a specific alternative to unpaid family work and unemployment, and is at the same time an efficient utilization of labor resources. With the same level of training as men, women compose three-quarters of the unpaid labor force and, when paid, are paid at 70-80% of men’s salary levels¹⁶. Among negative aspects of hiring is the unequal position accorded men and women from a professional and qualifications point of view: an average evaluation of women is 1.5 to 2 categories lower than that of men; the number of women found among workers in categories 1 and 2 is 60-70% of those workers, but among those in categories 5 and 6 women register 10-15% of those workers.

Table 7.1.

Population distribution according to gender and types of economic activities

	1994			1998 (beginning of the year)		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total population	3608	1713.8	1876.2	3594	1725.1	1868.9
As % of total population	100	48	52	100	48	52
Economically active population	1699	866.5	832.5	1686	859.6	826.4
As % of total population	100	51	49	100	51	49
Among the economically active population: paid employees	1353	622.4	730.6	1187.5	569.8	617.7
As % of paid employees	100	46	54	100	48	52
Registered unemployed	20.6	7.7	12.9	23.4	7.5	15.9
As % of unemployed	100	37.3	62.7	100	32	68
Entrepreneurs and self-employed	326	237	89	475.1	282.3	133.1
As % of entrepreneurs and self-employed	100	72.6	27.4	100	59.4	40.6

Source: The Statistical Annual Report, 1998

Approximately three-quarters of workers who do not formally have a professional category are women. In agriculture, the percentage of women with a category is 3 times lower than that of men. As a result, women’s salaries are in average 70-80% of men’s salaries.

Amongst the population loosing the job every year the number of women is three times higher than of men. In 1999 the ratio of officially registered unemployed women to men is 1.083. This might be explained by the fact that women have a more informal attitude to the possibility to find job via labor registry offices. Statistics shows that job placement in 1997 was more likely in favor of men (49% of men and only 37% of women found job), even if women attend training

¹⁶ Status of Women in the Republic of Moldova, UNDP, 1999

courses almost twice more often (17.5% of the registered unemployed women and 9% of men). However, women seem to be more favored while receiving unemployment aid (50% of women and 22% of men).

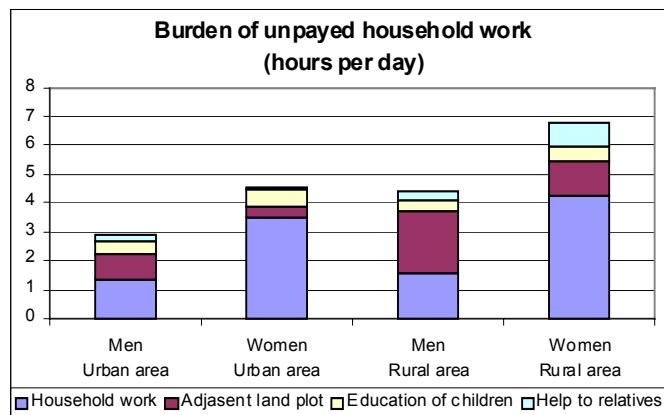
The average duration of unemployment for women is almost one and a half times longer than for men (in 1998 it reached 6.9 months for women and 4.8 months for men). The educational level of the average unemployed woman is higher than for man.

Accumulating a specific “marital-specific capital, women get into a vicious circle, when the discrimination in the labor market forces them to specialize in household work, this in its turn shrinks their chances in the labor market, and strengthens their dependence in family.

A survey on time usage conducted by the Department of Statistics and Sociological Analysis shows that the burden of unpaid labor in housekeeping chores falls considerably differently between men and women. Women spend daily 12 minutes less on paid work, while for unpaid work the home women spend 1.64 times more time than men in urban areas (4 hours 26 minutes) and 1.44 times in rural areas (5 hours 55 minutes). The members of rural households have less free time as compared with those of urban households. The men have at their disposal 170 minutes per day; women have 111 minutes. Women engaged in rural housekeeping have at their disposal 28% less time than engaged in urban housekeeping and 34.8% less time than men involved in rural housekeeping.

Fig. 7.1.

It is interesting that in average a Moldovan woman weekly spends on job (including time taken to get to work place) and household work 6 hours more than, for example, in Russia, and 20 hours more than women in Western Europe. The magnitude of this difference is explained by the fact that in Moldova women usually preserve big amounts of fruits and vegetables, even in cities many women have gardens outside the city line, where they have to carry water for watering the land plots. Fast foods, carpet cleaning, remodeling, babysitting, custom tailoring services are not accessible for the majority of population and have to be done by housewives. In the main part of families the laundering machines are not automatic and need a lot of preliminary handwork. Another time-consuming procedure is the “tradition” to make purchases almost everyday (some of foods have short storage time).



Conclusion. Difficult social consequences of the economic decline impacted both men and women. Despite the expectations, the transition to the market did not imply that a high share of women would prefer to stay “happy housewives”. Their share in the labor force did not diminish. The situation of women on the labor market is worsening, pushing out the women from market of jobs requiring high education, skills, and intellectual work, concentrating women in the branches of unstable and legally unprotected informal work. A share of women in politics shrinks.

7.5 Violence

The period of transition to market economy is characterized by a number of negative social phenomena, such as high unemployment rate, scarcity of financial resources, devaluation of savings, etc. All these elements seriously affect people, but most of all they affect the relations in the family. These negative trends in society lead to an increase in alcohol abuse, domestic violence, and other kinds of violent, deviant behaviors.

Crime. An analysis of crimes shows that women comprise about 8% of the total number of offenders. Amongst the persons serving their sentences women's share is growing slightly

(from 3% in 1994 to 3.8% in 1998), and it varies depending on the crime. Their share in total murders and murderous assault is 16%, body injury cases - 22%, 32% of bribe-taking, rapes – 1%, 18% - drug trafficking, 5% of total thefts. As for victims of crimes they makes up to 30% in the total number of murders, 18% of the total number of body injuries, 93% of rapes, 54.6% of thefts, and 39% of robberies.

Family violence directed against women and children has grown alarmingly. Family offenses are difficult to control, since in the majority of cases the violence is either not reported to the police or reported only when there are serious consequences. This occurs in spite of the Criminal Code provides for drastic penalties in such cases.

An examination of forensic medical files of family violence cases, which were confirmed by a preliminary investigation, has shown that women are the main victims of aggression (63%). Alcohol consumption as a primary factor triggering violence in a family can be observed both in case of the aggressor as well as the victim, who sometimes may even provoke the crime.

The break-down of the total number of family murders in which women were victims (70 cases) is as follows: 40 wives murdered by their husbands, 16 women murdered by their partners, 9 mothers murdered by their sons and two adult daughters murdered by the father or the mother. Men are murdered by their wives in 32.5% of cases, by their partner in 22.5% of cases, by their grown-up sons in 25% of the case, and by father or brother in 20% of the cases. In family violence most of the women become victims of crimes committed by the husband or the partner, while wives of female partners have assaulted their partners only in 5.5% of the cases.

Sexual violence. The data presented below are estimated based on information obtained from personal interviews. Due to certain psychological or practical reasons, and in order to observe confidentiality, many of the interviewed women preferred to not disclose all the details of their abusive relationships. Therefore, the information presented here may underestimate the real scale of physical and sexual types of abuse.

Thus, the percentage of recent abusive encounters is inversely proportional to the level of education of the partner, ranging from a maximum of 19% of the women whose partners have not completed secondary school to 8% among the women whose partners have completed university education. The percentage is higher in families with low socio-economic status (21%), if compared to families with high socio-economic status (8%).

Out of the 14% of the women who in the previous year were victims of violence perpetrated by their partners, 33% ended up with bodily injuries. Moreover, in 7% of these women the lesion were so severe that they required medical help, while in 4% of the cases the victims needed hospitalization. Women from urban areas are more likely to suffer injuries as a result of family violence (37%). Among these are divorced or separated women, those who have one or more living children, women with little education and low socio-economic status. The severity of the injury and the need for medical assistance of hospitalization does not vary significantly across various categories of women.

Despite the seriousness of the problem of family violence (one third of abused women were injured), women are unwilling to report abuse, due to fear or shame. Only 30% of the abused women were talked to a member of the family or to the friend about what happened, and only 9% saw a doctor. The majority of family violence cases are not being recorded with the police, ad only 2% of the women seek psychological counseling.

Prostitution and trading in women is a new problem. This social problem has shown a steep upward trend. While in 1997 the police had files on 151 prostitutes, this year the number exceeded 241. One contributing factor is the ads in newspapers, placed by private forms, which provide various services, and provide stable jobs in prostitution.

Republic of Moldova is a state-source of women and girls, which are transported for women traffic through Romania, Serbia-Montenegro and Albania in Greece and Italy, is stated in the annual report concerning human rights respecting in the world under the USA State Department. According to the report, in Republic of Moldova does not exist a law that would forbid this traffic. "The Government does not have laws and this allow traffickers, who in fact do not commit any crimes on state's territory to perform their activity. The significant revenues

resulted from this business allow traffickers to exploit the possibilities of officials' corruption", is stated in the cited document.

Not all the women practicing prostitution are kidnapped; some are duped by promises of jobs abroad. It is easy to trick a naive young woman from a poverty-stricken no-hope town in Moldova or Romania into believing that there is an escape route from desolation if they accept the offer of a job as a babysitter or waitress in Italy, Belgium or London. There are also some women who willingly opt to become prostitutes, seeing it as their only chance to avoid a life of grinding poverty, and they mistakenly believe they will be able at least to store up the money they make. The reality is different; they are rarely paid for their sexual services. Almost all the women - whether kidnapped, conned or consenting - are usually raped, beaten and psychologically tortured for weeks before being sold on to pimps, brothel-owners or perverts who can afford to buy a woman for their own use.

The sex-slave mafia trade is in women from the former Soviet republic of Moldova, Romania, Kosovo, or Albania, where the hub of the trade is centered. The victims are then often taken by car or force-marched along remote mountain paths for days to Tirana or the Albanian coast. Many are dispatched on flimsy dinghies across the Adriatic to Italy, from where they are passed on to the red-light areas of West European capitals. Others are forced to work in Albania, Greece, or in the newest market for sex-traders – Kosovo. For some women, their forced journeys end in death - either at the hands of the Mafiosi if they prove to be more trouble than they are worth. Or they fail to survive the rigors of their transportation.

The Republic of Moldova has ratified a number of international conventions, joining to the acts which authorize international tribunals to consider receive claims from individuals to the Commission for Human Rights, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, International League for Human Rights, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, International Service for Human Rights, International women's Rights Action Group, European Court of Human Rights.

The main non Government organization for protection of women's right in Moldova are the Center for Human Rights of Moldova, Women's Health Center, Legal Clinic, Family Planning Association, Public Association "Woman today", National Women with University Education Association, Association of Women of the Republic of Moldova.

Conclusion. The economic decline caused a growth of violence in the country in all its forms. The most affected are the relation in the family, where a big part of women are continuously supposed to violence. But the biggest shame of the society that can be solved only with the aid of international organizations is women traffic.

8. Environment

Viable human development is inconceivable unless there is a healthy environment. The environmental condition in the Republic of Moldova, as well as in other countries, is adversely affected by economic activities, by inadequate use of natural resources, outdated natural and technical infrastructure and by cross-border pollution.

Resources conservation and environmental protection have become imminent objectives in the economic, social and moral development of the human community. New concepts also involve the use of new environmental management techniques: the ownership of the resources and state's role; the legal framework (legislation); economic, technical and regulatory mechanisms, education tools, etc.

The most significant achievements are noted in the establishment of a legal framework required for environmental conservation and protection. Overall, the effective laws are aimed at specifying the protective environmental actions and measures to preserve conditions favorable to human's health, preventive measures to avoid resources' pollution and depletion and preserve biodiversity, as well as ensuring consistency with relevant international conventions and projects. A new generation of relevant legal statements is in the process of development, most of them cover, in particular, the use of resources in such sectors as agriculture, industry, transportation, human localities, and etc. The economic tools designed to influence

environmental interests and behavior of economic entities (resource conservation, environment protection, waste recovery, use of adequate technologies) are limited to charging taxes on the use (consumption) of resources. The attention and support environmental issues have received over the last years, and the way international institutions address environmental problem in the Republic of Moldova has notably helped achieve awareness and trigger political action.

Environmental legislation. Moldova has a comprehensive corpus of environmental laws and regulations, which is being supplemented, regularly, by the addition of new laws. There is a general consensus that the existing body of laws is a sufficient base for effective environmental action to manage the serious environmental difficulties faced by Moldova. There are four major problems, however, in translating legal requirements into effective action. These are: weak enforcement; ineffective penalties; structure / content of the laws; and conflict between laws.

To a great extent the first two problems are a phenomenon, probably temporary, of the economic and political transition which is under way. The last two difficulties are of structural weakness in both the style of law-making and coordination within and between ministries and department. Overall, these problems affect the ability to respond to obligations the country task by signing the international environmental conventions.

The problems faced by Moldova in a time of economic transition and gradual incorporation into the international legal framework for environmental management have posed considerable difficulties for the Ministry of Environment and Territory Develop and other organizations. They are faced with rapid changes and the need to cope with rapid changes and the need to cope with these changes often requires an appropriate legal framework. Unfortunately, the speed of change, and the identification of specific problems, has resulted in a “fire-fighting” approach. There is a discernible tendency to deal with problems by drafting, quickly, a targeted law or laws. Passing laws has to some extent been a priority to the detriment of successful implementation of activities to deal with the problems. The speed at which new laws, and amendments to existing laws, are produced is astonishing. Unfortunately “quantity” is being achieved at the expense of “quality”.

Moldova now has a comprehensive legal and policy framework for environmental management. The significant policy documents are:

- The Environmental Protection Concept (1995)
- The National Strategic Action Programme for Environmental Protection 1995-2020, 1995 (NSAPEP);
- The National Environmental Action Plan 1995-1998 (although mostly focused on identifying specific projects for implementation and requiring international financial assistance), 1996 (NEAP);
- National Action Plan on the Hygiene of the Environment of the Republic of Moldova
- Two older documents are still consulted as well: Territorial Scheme for Environmental Protection and Rational Use of Natural Resources of the Republic of Moldova 1991-2010, 1991; and
- The Comprehensive Long -Term Programme for Environmental Protection and rational use of Natural Resources in the Republic of Moldova 1987-2005, 1987.

For environmental protection, the Republic of Moldova established relations with international bodies, and governmental (e.g. UNECE, OECD, UNDP, Council of Europe) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from different countries.

Its environmental policy aims among other things to link up with international activities by:

- Improving international cooperation on environmental protection at the regional and European levels;
- Internationally harmonizing newly legislated instruments;
- Drawing up national programmes and setting up mechanisms for the implementation of conventions;
- Implementing bilateral agreements and participating in regional programmes (Black Sea, Danube).

The State strategy concerning international relations in environmental protection is based on the following principles:

- Adherence to international conventions on environmental protection;
- Signing of bilateral and multilateral agreements at regional and international level;
- Participation in international programmes and projects;
- Establishment of permanent consultative ties with international organizations and representatives from different countries (governmental, NGOs);
- Establishment of relations with potential sponsors, banks and financial organizations.

International agreements ratified by Moldova:

1. Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern, 1979) in June 1993.
2. Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo, 1991) in June 1993.
3. Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Helsinki, 1992) in June 1993.
4. Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Helsinki, 1992) in June 1993.
5. Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) in May 1995.
6. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (New York, 1992) in March 1995.
7. Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (Geneva, 1979) in July 1995.
8. Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (Vienna, 1985) in July 1996. Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987) in July 1996.
9. Convention concerning the control and Transborder Transportation of Dangerous wastes and their neutralization (Basel, 1989), in March 1998;
10. UN Convention on the Fight against Desertification in Countries Affected by Drought, in December 1998;
11. Cooperative Convention for protection and usage of Danube River (Sofia, 1994), in March 1999;
12. Convention on the Access to Information, Participation of the People in Decision-Making and Access to Justice regarding Environment Issues (Aarhus, 29 June 1998), in April 1999;
13. Convention on the warm zones of international Importance, especially the Biotopes of water birds (Rasmar, 1971), in July 1999
14. Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn, 1979), Agreement on Preservation of Bats from Europe and Agreement on Preservation of African Euro-Asiatic Migrant Water Birds) in September, 2000.
15. Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Wild Species of the Fauna and Flora (CITES), in September 2000.

Waste problems. While not heavily industrialized, the Republic of Moldova encounters, as do other countries, all the problems of waste accumulation. Storage, preservation and use of wastes are still matters of discussion, analysis and intentions, or even projects without any adequate practical solution. The Republic does not have a ground available for toxic waste disposal. Part of these wastes is stored outside the allowed and appropriately equipped areas. Another part is evacuated, without the authorization of appropriate authorities, to household waste dumps. According to IES evidence, about 13 thousand tons of toxic wastes have accumulated in the country, which is 3.3 kg/inhabitant. Only half of this (49%) is buried.

Inconsistent agricultural privatization resulted in the loss of control over the chemical waste management within former collective farms. Warehouses were left without owners (have not been privatized), some of which have been ruined, others demolished. The existing ones require capital repairs and an appropriate outfit which is impossible due to the lack of funds. A special government resolution in 1997 on collecting and storing unusable and prohibited pesticides can be enforced with practically no financial support from international institutions.

An equally delicate situation is also anticipated with regard to household wastes. Most of the grounds are used up, and the extent of their use equals or exceeds the acceptable limits. Not only does the lack of funds make the construction of new dumps impossible, but the land deficiency as well. There are 1348 household dumps in the country taking up 1144.3 ha or 31

square meters/inhabitant, where 29,4 million cubic meters of garbage is deposited, or 6.8 cubic meters /inhabitant. It does not include the refuse which is deposited into unauthorized places – pits, former blocks, on the bank of rivers and lakes, etc. Since the mayoralties do not have transportation and fuel available to ensure waste evacuation, in many villages unauthorized dumps appear spontaneously. Separate collection of scrap metal, glass, scrap paper, etc, and their recycling is at the stage of testing.

Toxic waste is becoming a priority in Moldova, mainly because of obsolete pesticides and the storage of other chemicals. There is no information on transboundary movements of waste. Moldova accede to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, as mentioned in the Law on Hazardous Substances and Product Management. The Department for Statistics is improving its accounting system of wastes, including hazardous wastes. Article 77 of the Law on Environmental Protection prohibits the import for any purpose (including transit) of wastes or their residuals. Some steps towards controlling transboundary movements of hazardous wastes have also been taken at the regional level. In April 1996, Moldova signed an agreement with CIS on this subject.

Although Moldova does not produce any nuclear energy, nuclear safety is an issue of concern. Moldova is surrounded by eight nuclear reactors, all of them located within 150 km of its borders. The Programme on Strengthening Radioactive and Nuclear Safety of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) includes projects concerning Moldova's situation. The country was also affected by the radioactive fallout from the Chernobyl accident.

Climate change Moldova ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in March 1995. Moldova has been assisted by GEF/UNDP to prepared its national communication concerning the greenhouse gas inventory and policies to deal with them, which has been presented in November 2000.

Biodiversity and nature protection. Although there are different governmental decisions, Moldova does not have a specific law on biological and/or landscape diversity, but a law on protected areas has been approved (February 1998). It includes lists of protected species and protected areas (existing and new ones), as well as requirements for management plans. Protected areas are classified according to the IUCN classification. The law also includes the first list of soil protection areas and a list of protected wetlands. The identification of possible Ramsar sites (internationally important wetlands) and the establishment of biosphere reserves are foreseen. Moldova signed the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992 and ratified it in May 1995. In June 1993, Moldova ratified the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats. The requirements of those conventions are taken into account in the relevant policy and other documents.

In 2000, Moldova worked out the Biodiversity Strategy Development (done by the WB) for protection and sustainable use of bio-diversity, in implementing Articles 6 and 8 of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The draft strategy is based on the National Strategic Action Plan for Environmental Protection and the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy. The strategic part sets out goals, directions, principles, and ex situ and in situ conservation strategies. The Action Plan contains short-, medium-, and long-term actions, as well as the respective responsible organizations and time frames.

The goals to be achieved are: minimization or elimination of negative impacts on biodiversity, sustaining the recovery capacity of biological and landscape diversity, economic integration of territories, as well as public participation in the conservation of biological diversity. The draft strategy should be approved by the Cabinet of Ministers or by Parliament.

Follow-up to LWCED. Moldova took part in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) and signed its final documents. In 1998, project "Moldova 21" was proposed by UNDP within the framework of the Capacity 21 programme. Through Capacity 21, UNDP assisted the Government of Moldova in a range of activities:

- Institution and capacity building favoring the implementation of Agenda 21;
- Identification of technical assistance needs related to Agenda 21 and promotion of environmentally sound projects;
- Incorporation of public participation in the application of sustainable development principles.

The project will mainly focus on strengthening the existing High Economic Council to the President in order to promote sustainable development and Agenda 21 issues in Moldova. Particular attention will be paid to the identification and promotion of local initiatives as regards pilot projects on sustainable development issues.

Air quality. Overall, on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, the amount of pollutants released into the atmosphere was estimated at 273 thousand tons. Its ratio to the number inhabitants is lower than that in neighboring countries, currently being 64 kg/inhabitant /year (1998). The sharp decline in industrial output during the period of transition along with the increase in the number of motorcars changed the nature of released pollutants as compared to the '80s. In 1998, the proportion of mobile sources of pollution exceeded the average percentage on the globe (60%), reaching 83% (226.4 thousand tons). The proportion held by transportation in the city pollution reaches 92% for Chișinău, 95% - Bălți, 96% - Cahul, etc.

Permanent sources make up 17% (47.6 thousand tons) of total releases. Of this quantity, 79% are released by heat and electricity companies and boiling installations. The largest share in the total pollutants released is accounted for by: hydrocarbons (15 %) released by road transportation, oxide and nitrogen dioxide (14%), sulfur dioxide released by road transportation and heat and electricity stations, and carbon monoxide (8%) by road transportation, and a small portion released by industrial enterprises.

The cross border pollution consists primarily of sulfur oxides and nitrogen oxides. The degree of pollution caused by precipitation coming from west Northwest (Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany) and from east Northeast (Ukraine) is 4 times higher than internal pollution by sulfur oxides and 1.5 times higher than local nitrogen oxides pollution.

Water quality. The quality of water in 1998 in the Nistru and Prut rivers was qualified as moderately polluted, and therefore, drinkable, while that of water in internal rivers is polluted and degraded. Over the last decade, there have been noted a decline in the river flows of degraded water and an increase in those of drinkable water. This development indicates decline in emissions due to the reduction in the extent of industrial and agricultural activities, and to some more comprehensive measures of water quality protection than those previously taken. The unsatisfactory quality of underground waters still persists, in some cases due to pollution, while in other cases due to the geological environment. In some areas underground waters are characterized by high concentrations of fluorine. In other areas these waters show high concentrations of hydrogen sulfide, methane or are completely mineralized. Over recent years, a sharp growth was evidenced in nitrogen and ammonia components in ground waters, especially, in Telenesti, Florești, Orhei, Ungeni, Comrat areas. In most of the wells an excessive concentration of nitrates and sulfates has been found.

The problem of the quality of water consumed by the population has been discussed over a long period of time, but apart from general statements, nothing substantial has been done so far, although there have been some projects and programs. Until now, information on the share of the population with access to clean water has not been determined. There is neither registration nor monitoring of small sources of water or proper information provided to the population.

Soil quality. In terms of natural properties, the soils in the Republic of Moldova are classified with the most valuable soils in the temperate zone. The soil is exposed to the effects of different injurious natural and anthropogenic processes and phenomena. The depreciation of the soils' inherent ability to regenerate, as in other countries, is caused by irrational use, inappropriate irrigation, and intensive technologies applied over the last 50 years. Today, the soil's erosion and degradation directly threaten the economic and social security of the country.

The total area of eroded soil is increasing at an annual rate of 1.5% (10 thousand ha) and currently is constitutes 32.2% of agricultural land. Thousands of hectares are destroyed through landslide and in ravines. Agricultural land has been exposed to various harmful occurrences: water erosion, phosphorus and nitrogen deficiency, excessive acidity, texture compression, pesticide pollution, salts and other degrading factors. Although procedures to preserve soils' natural fertility are known, there is inertia and numerous barriers of political, economic,

institutional and social nature in the country. These barriers ultimately block the implementation of energetic and adequate steps in this field.

Forest quality is affected by some inappropriate management policies from previous periods, when the quantities of wood harvested exceeded the usable potential of forests confined within the forest tracts. The forests often are exposed to pests and diseases. The forest quality is seriously harmed by illegal cuts and livestock pasture. Most forests in Moldova originate not from seeds but from copse (3-5-8th generations of cuts), which is why their structure and functions are degraded. Trees are aging quickly, and their resistance to negative factors of the environment is reduced. The forest ecosystem is deteriorated and fragile.

In the area of international cooperation as a whole, Moldova has taken a consistent general approach, which is being implemented in its broad lines. This is certainly an asset in the current circumstances. At the same time, the availability of a general approach does not provide clear guidelines for all practical aspects. For example, the commitment to closer ties with the European Union does not entail an action plan that could be instrumental to this end. Also, as environmental protection has been "de-selected" from the priority list for international cooperation, this could discourage initiatives from partners which cannot offer cooperation in other fields.

Conclusion:

- METD capacities for project management, including cooperation with international funding partners, need strengthening. Among the necessary remedial measures, staff should receive the possibility to utilize the new methodology and modern technology, as well as intensive training in substantive aspects of environmental policy, management and enforcement.
- The environmental administration has to consolidate all capacities for complex treatment of the inter – sectoral level problems, international cooperation problems, related to national policy and management programmes. Training should not only assimilate foreign experiences, but needs to adopt sustainable development principals, including poverty eradication policies, through environment rehabilitation activity management and enforcement measures. It would also be helpful for negotiation procedure preparation, and final projects implementation.
- For whole environment problems maintaining the country and society need productively inter- sectoral and inter – ministry cooperation.
- The special courses elaboration for the primary and secondary school for new generation education capable to solve existing and future environmental problems.
- Resources efficient and sustainable utilization in the unitary concept (in conditions of demand satisfaction and ecological equilibrium protection).

9. Conclusions

Quality of governance – is the key issue, which draws attention of UN agencies in the Republic of Moldova. The country which in the early '90 was considered a "laboratory for correct reforms", now turned into one of poorest countries of Europe, and now the question is raised: "Can Moldova get worse?", in essence – if this is a viable country at all.

Unfortunately the process of strengthening the statehood and political culture was tergiversated. The reforms have been carried out under strong influence of the "political cycles", and at the same time without a jointly approved National Strategy for Development. Thus, the continuity of those 9 governments' actions during 1991-2000 was not insured. There are instability of political support for the reforms introduced by Parliament, irrational waste of financial resources and slowing down in the activity of the executive and legislative powers during the frequent electoral periods (1990, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1998, 1999 and 2000 – all those being election years!). Three electoral campaigns have taken place every four years, all that in conditions of unconsolidated statehood and of an economy with many risk factors.

The negative aspects of the governing quality are very various: Fragmentation of legislation - thus, the Parliament has not approved yet a Civil Code. Many of the laws providing for the rights of the citizens, including related to entrepreneurship are perfunctory, the legislative

system is inefficient; The process of civil society establishment is running slowly, including involvement of the population in decision-making. Commissioning part of the state functions to regional and local levels. The problem of Transnistria has not been resolved on the basis of European standards for local self-administration; the political status of Gagauzia was determined (territorial autonomy), yet, in terms of social-economic aspects, the region, as all the other counties, is hardly viable, the subsidies from the central state being crucial for their development; Poor coordination regarding the maintenance of the macroeconomic stability, structural reforms and social transformations. Low social and economic efficiency of property reform, both in urban and rural areas, engendered the problems for creating a viable private sector, attracting investments and fostering exports. The shadow economy segment is unjustifiably big; Lack of constructive character of the social policy, which for a long time was limited only to cutting budget expenditures; delaying of reforms of the basic branches of the social sphere, as well as of the implementation of the new pension system, education and health care reforms.

For these reasons, opinion polls and of the results of the last parliament elections show that at least 40% of the population perceives the reforms in a negative manner. The most criticized aspects are: quality of governance and inefficiency and equalizing nature of the social protection system.

Turning now to the causes of the current social-economic situation in Moldova, one can conclude, that they result from the attempt to manage the market economy “as in capitalism”, and to have a social sphere and general employment rate “as in socialism” (with paucity of financial means), trying to imitate countries with socially oriented market economies. As for the financial resources and technical assistance which the country receives from abroad, it should be used for promoting real comprehensive reforms rather than imitating them.

The most obvious conclusion of recent years is that the transition represents a combination of political, institutional, social and economic processes. If reforms take place in an uncoordinated and inconsequential fashion, they can considerably delay reaching the results and have a negative impact upon human development and the living conditions of the population. In the context of unfavorable trends of transition period a predominantly attention on human development issue is required. Human being and its basic needs should be placed in the center of policy makers’ attention, and to be considered as a major objective of the country’s cooperation with international organizations.

Proceeding from social-economic situation emerged in the Republic of Moldova, results and lessons of the transition period, as well the experience of UN-Agencies activity in this country, one could conclude that the main problems that are supposed to be settled by the Government, now and in the near future, and which are the domains for particular international cooperation, are as follows: *Governance quality; Poverty alleviation and economic growth; Human resources enhancement; Gender equality; and Environment protection.*

After the first wave of the reform when the main goals were democratization of society and affirmation of human freedoms, macrostabilization, privatization and liberalization of the economy, now the social issues, real sector development, structural reforms, improvement of the legal and justice system are brought to the foreground. *The core of the forthcoming years should be the improvement of the quality of governance in the country and shifting from the tactics of surviving towards a strategy of long-term sustainable human development.*

By assisting in addressing these problems, activity of UN agencies in the Republic of Moldova is directed towards increasing responsibility of citizens for the real state of public relationships and of democratic institutions, for development of local public administrations, a network of NGOs, and involvement of the population in settling the burning problems of the society. UN agencies in Moldova should construct their activities, based on the assumptions, that participation of the population is extremely important, in improving governance and enhancing its involvement in decision-making.

10. Common Country Assessment Indicators

Indicators	Period									
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Income-Poverty										
<i>Reduced poverty levels</i>										
Poverty headcount ratio (% of population below \$1 dollar a day)								59.2	73.9	92.8
Poverty headcount ratio (% of population below national poverty line)								37		58.5
Poverty gap ratio										
Poorest fifth's share of national consumption (%)								4.3	4.4	4.5
Food Security and Nutrition										
<i>Improved child nutrition</i>										
% of children under age 5 suffering from malnutrition (chronic malnutrition, "stunting" or low-height-for-age)									8-10	
% of children under age 5 suffering from anemia (potentially caused by insufficient nutritional intake)									28	
<i>Increased Food Security</i>										
% population below food poverty line								24.2		33-est.
% of household income spent on food for poorest quintile								80	86.6	

Health and Mortality		1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Improved Health Care											
% population with access to primary health care services		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Reduction in Levels of HIV/AIDS											
Estimated HIV adult prevalence rate (total # of HIV+)		1	1	3	6	10	17	64	468	876	1031
HIV prevalence in pregnant women under 25 who receive antenatal care in capital cities/major urban areas		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reduced Infant Mortality											
Infant Mortality rate (per thousand live births)		19	19.8	18.4	21.5	22.6	21.2	20.2	20.2	18.1	19.4
Reduced Child Mortality											
Under 5 mortality rate (per thousand live births)		28	29.1	27.3	26.4	26.5	22.8	23.6-est
Reproductive Health											
Improved Maternal Health and Reduced Maternal Mortality											
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)		51.9	48.4	51.3	51.8	25.8	40.8	40.2	48.3	36.3	28.6-est
% of birth attended by skilled health personnel		99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
Increased Access to Family Planning											
Contraceptive prevalence rate (%)		23.7	20.1	21	21.8	22.2	22.5	23.6	27.3	27	28.3
Child Health and Welfare											
Improved Child Health											
% of 1 year old children immunized against measles		93.8	93	92	92	95	98	98.4	98.9	99.2	98.8
Reduced Child Labor											
% children < age 15 who are working											

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Education										
Increased Access to Basic Education										
Net primary enrollment ration									87	
% of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5								94.4		
Increased Literacy										
Adult literacy rate (%)					96.4	96.4	96.4	96.4	96.4	
Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds										
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment										
Gender Equality in Education										
Ratio of girls to boys in secondary education (%)					49.7	49.7	49.7	49.7	49.9	
General Equality in Employment										
Females share (%) of paid employment in non-agricultural activities					57.59	55.95	55.95			
Women's Political Empowerment										
% of seats held by women in national government, including parliament					4.9	4.9	4.9	4.9	9	9
Employment and Sustainable Livelihood										
Creation of Full Employment										
Employment to popul. of working age ratio (%)								70.3	75.1	74.5-est
Unemployment rate									9.2	11.6
Informal sector employment as % of total									40	

Housing and Basic Household Amenities and Facilities		1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Adequate Shelter for All											
No. of persons per room										1.2	1.2
Average floor area per person (m ²)						19.9	20.1	20	20.4	20.5	
Improved Access to Safe Drinking Water											
% of population with (sustainable) access to safe drinking water											
Improved Access to Safe Sanitation											
% of population with access to adequate sanitation											
including the sewage system											
Environment											
Improved Environment											
Carbon dioxide emission (metric tons per capita)											
Biodiversity: Land area protected (% of total)							1.36	1.36	1.96	1.96	2.8
GDP per unit of energy use (USD/Ton of oil equivalent)							405	471	584	555	395
Arable land (ha) per capita		0.398	0.399	0.403	0.402	0.404	0.049	0.411	0.415	0.418	0.422
% change in km ² of forest in past ten years		-0.625	-0.539	-0.436	-0.314	-0.134	0.005	0.060	0.477	0.060	
% of population relying on traditional fuels for energy use											12.8-est

Drug Control and Crime Prevention	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Improved Drug Control										
Area under illegal cultivation of coca, opium poppy and cannabis									0.88	1.85
Seizures of illicit drugs										
poppy straw (kg)				249,7	4506,2	2264	598	401	706	
opium (kg)				0,1	3,1	27	20	13,828(solution)		
cannabis (kg)				30,7	230,5	906	435	211	478	
ephedrine (methcatinon) (ml)				0,003	0,009	-	2607	-	105	
heroin (kg)				-	0,006	-	10,250	-	-	
codeine (pills)				283	30	1,9 kg	1000	1460	682	
morphine (ampoules)				-	-	-	31	-	-	
ephedrine (pills)				-	-	6 kg	10140	-	9,134 kg	
glutetimid (pills)				-	-	-	-	-	321	
Prevalence of registered drug abuse (persons)	668	765	883	1079	1409	1737	2197	3170	3966	4434
Prevalence of registered drug abuse (%)							0.12	0.15	0.16	est
Improved Crime Prevention										
No. of crimes per 100.000 inhabitants				1028	1034	1066	968	1092	992	1078 est

Contextual Indicators	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Demographics										
Population size (Thousand people)*				3607	3608	3604	3599	3654	3650	3650 est
Total fertility rate	2.39					1.76	1.6	1.67		
Life expectancy at birth	68.5	67.7	68	67.5	66.1	65.8	66.7	66.6	67	
life expectancy at birth (female)	71.8	71	71.9	70.9	69.8	69.7	70.4	70.3	70.7	
life expectancy at birth (male)	65	64.3	63.9	63.9	62.3	61.8	62.9	62.9	63.2	
Economy										
GDP per capita (\$US)					322	400	463	538	470	323
GDP per capita (\$US at purchasing power parity)				2935	2975	2105	2128	2207	2087	2033
External state debt (excl. energy) as % of GDP					53	46	48	54	58	77
Gross domestic savings as % of GDP							14	14		
Share of merchandise exports in GDP, %					53	51	49	46	38	40
Share of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows in GDP						1.5	5.1	1.4	3.7	5.1
Public expend. on social services as % of GDP				17.3	14.8	17.3	16.4	14.6	14.6	10.9

* excluding Transnistria

11. Global Conferences and the Republic of Moldova

1. World Summit for Children, New York, September 1990

On 29-30 September 1990, 71 heads of states and governments participated in the World Summit for Children. Participants established a series of activities and objectives, to be accomplished by the year 2000, aimed at giving the situation of mother and child a highest priority. The World declaration on the survival, Protection and Development of Children and the Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration have been endorsed by the participants. The Declaration establishes a set of goals to be achieved by year 2000. The goals have been formulated through extensive consultation in various international forums attended by virtually all Governments, the relevant UN agencies including WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO, UNDP, IBRD and a large number of NGOs.

There are major goals, such as reduction of Infant Mortality Rate and Under 5 Mortality Rate by 1/3, reduction of Maternal Mortality Ratio, reduction of malnutrition, universal access to drinking water, universal access to universal education, reduction of adult illiteracy and improved protection of children in especially difficult circumstances. A set of supporting/sectoral goals has been established as well within the following areas: women's health and education, nutrition, child health, water and sanitation, basic education and children in difficult circumstances.

On 29 September 1993 the President of the Republic of Moldova has signed the Declaration of the World Summit for Children, thus initiating the implementation of activities aiming the accomplishment of the Decade Goals. From 1995, the Republic of Moldova has been receiving assistance from UNICEF in establishing a plan of action and a country program with the objectives of insuring the best interest of the child. The regular five year program, which was signed between UNICEF and the Government of Moldova in 1997 have the goal of improving the state of children, women and vulnerable groups for better development and protection during the transition period. The three sectoral programs designed within the Master Plan of Operations (Primary Health Care, Education and Planning and Social Statistics) aim to achieving the Summit Goals and promotion of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (see annex).

Over the past years the Government of Moldova has promoted the implementation of this program through developing a set of national strategies and programs in the area of child protection. The most noteworthy documents would be: the Approval of the Moldovan Law on the Rights of the Child and the State Program for Ensuring the Rights of the Child, the National Programs on Perinatal Care, Nutrition, Expanded Program of Immunization, etc.

Being supported by UNICEF within projects on control Acute Respiratory Infections and Diarrhoeal Diseases, Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses, Immunizations and epidemiological surveillance, perinatal care, prevention of STDs and HIV/AIDS, micronutrient deficiencies and promotion of breastfeeding, pre-school education, young people development, institutionalized children the country has achieved some progress towards the Summit Goals.

Although the country report on assessing the progress towards summit goals will be ready by November 2000 (a national multi indicator cluster survey is being conducted now), some indicators such as IMR, MMR have been reduced comparing to 1995. Some sectoral goals such as immunization coverage, rate of breastfeeding have shown some improvement. (see Table) No or very little progress has been achieved in the area of micronutrient deficiencies.

Unfortunately because of rapid deterioration of economic situation and decrease of access to basic social services such as health care and education these trends are not sustainable.

Some indicators relevant to the Goals of the World Summit for Children

INDICATOR	1995	1999
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000	21.2	18.2
Under % Mortality Rate per 1,000	28,0	23,6
Maternal Mortality Ratio per 100,000 live-births	40,8	28,6
Infant Mortality Rate due to perinatal causes, per	7,8	5,8

1,000		
Infant Mortality rate due to ARI, per 1,000	5,1	4,7
Perinatal Mortality Rate, per 1,000	16,2	13,8
Immunization Coverage for 6 antigens, (%)	>95	>95
Predominant Breastfeeding Rate, up to 3 months, (%)	78,5 (1996)	83,6 (1998)
Predominant Breastfeeding Rate, up to 6 months, (%)	57,7 (1996)	65,7 (1998)
Anemia in women, (%)	20 (1996)	NA
Anemia in children under 5, (%)	28 (1996)	NA
Anemia in pregnant women, (%)	41,1	47,8(1998)
Stunting in children under 5, (%)	11 (1996)	NA

2. UN Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, June 1992

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio, 1992) stated a number of objectives aimed at protection of air, water and forests as an element of sustainable development of mankind.

It was a turning – point in international negotiations on issues of environment and development. The primary goal of the Summit was to find an equitable balance between the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations and to lay the foundation for a global partnership between developed and developing countries as well as between Governments and sectors of civil society based on common understanding of shared needs and interests.

In Rio 172 Governments adopted three major agreements to guide future work: Agenda 21 – a global plan of action to promote sustainable development; the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development – a set of principles defining the rights and obligations of States; and a Statement of Forest Principles – to guide more sustainable management of the world's forests.

In addition, two legally binding Conventions, one on Climate Change and the other on Biological Diversity, were opened for signature at the Earth Summit. At the same time, negotiations got under way for Convention to Combat Desertification.

The draft Strategy “Moldova-21” is the first complex document which represents an attempt to prove the imminence of our republic involvement in the global process of mankind transition to Sustainable Development principles, set forth at worldwide level in the Actions Plan for the III-rd Millennium, commonly known under the title “Agenda-21”. The project provides details on sectoral strategies for the following 20 years – a period when the society of the Republic of Moldova will have to affirm its capacity of normalizing its further development - stability beneficial for its progress and social security.

The objectives of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Moldova derive from the “Agenda-21”:

- Maintaining a stable level of economic growth and jobs creation.
- Social progress and access of each citizen to alternative options.
- Environment protection, conservation and sustainable utilization of the natural resources.

The Strategy will be followed by an Action Plan, which will specify the forms, the responsible and terms of objectives implementation, based on a proper informational system of sustainable development indicators, that would provide for correct decision making. The Strategy will have to become a national ideology, for realization of which the efforts should be joined of all public authorities, all social layers, entrepreneurship, political parties, NGOs and the public at large.

Long term Objective: Strengthen Moldova's capacity to develop its own way to the 21st century, leading to a sustainable economic growth as well as the solution of social problems and sound use of natural resources. Short term Objectives: develop the program of actions for Moldova's Sustainable Transition to the 21st century (Moldova 21), as an instrument integrating

all economic, social and environmental strategies and programs. Work out a mechanism for the Moldova 21 implementation.

Moldova, as many other countries in transition, pays a large price for damage done in the past to its environment. From the beginning of its independence Moldova attaches great importance to the solution of environmental issues. The Earth Summit on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 1992, has influenced considerably the environmental policy of the country with Moldova having taken an active part in the process "Environment for Europe". As a result Moldova was among a few countries which came up with a long-term National Strategic Action Program presented at the European Ministerial Conference on Environment in Sofia, 1995. Based on it, a National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) was elaborated addressing short-term priority objectives. In order to help the country to surpass the possible difficulties in the implementation of NEAP, UNDP launched a project "Building Capacity for the Implementation of the National Environmental Action Plan". The project aims at supporting the development of local environmental actions plans and development of mechanisms for their implementation through the identification and promotion of projects fitting the NEAP provisions. A NEAP Implementation Unit has been established within the Ministry of Environment.

Conventions, one on Climate Change: Republic of Moldova signed the convention on 12 – Jun – 1992 and ratified it on 09-Jun – 1995. The Convention entered into force on 07- Sep – 1995. Objective: facilitate the process of taking climate change-related issues increasingly into account in Moldova, thus facilitating the country to deal with the climate change and its adverse impacts.

Sustainable Development: Strategy for Development. The Center for Strategic Studies and Reforms (UNDP). The project is designed to assist Moldova in elaborating a Strategy for Economic Development that will guide the country into the 21st Century. Sustainable Development Networking Program in Moldova (UNDP). The project objective is to assist the Government and other relevant institutions by providing direct access to information and information exchange by electronic and other means.

Water Management: Environmental program for Danube River Basin (UNDP). This regional program was designed to create a framework for a long-term solution for environmental pollution in the Danube River Basin. Development of Water Management Strategy (World Bank and the Government of Japan). The project objective is to develop a system for cost-effective irrigation and water supply.

Energy: Energy Conservation Programs at National and Local Levels (EU TACIS). Provides basis for comprehensive energy strategy, supports energy efficiency activities, strengthens dissemination of information on saving energy. Policy Support to the State Department of Energy (EU TACIS). Elaborates scenarios to diversify the energy supply, risk assessment and cost/benefit analysis.

Power Plant Combustion Efficiency and Environmental Controls (US AID). Provides services and equipment to improve boiler efficiency at Chisinau CHP Plants 1 and 2, fosters improved management by implementing low-cost efficiency improvements, identified through audits, and provides training.

Energy Project - I (World Bank financing with technical assistance from USAID). Project improves the metering of gas consumption, and the efficiency of electricity production and gas distribution. It also supports the implementation of a framework for ensuring the financial viability of the energy companies.

World Health Organization adopted Health Strategy for Everybody recognizing human health dependence on a vast range of environment factors, and defined direction of priority actions aimed for environment and health by formulating main targets of human health in relation with environment. One of the basic principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development stipulates, "The right to development must be exercised to ensure an honest satisfaction of current and future generations' requirements of development and environment". To reduce the negative impact on the natural resources and especially, decay of land reserves, the Government approved through its decision in April of the current year "The National Program of

Actions to Combat Desertification" aimed at providing a legal framework for rational use of the country's land reserves.

Environment protection is priority problem worldwide. Efforts of international organizations in the field of environment protection through implementation of national programs of actions and making official agencies of different countries aware of environment protection are essential. Remarkable is the assistance rendered by the United Nations Development Program through its project "Consolidation of Capacities for Implementation of the National Plan of Actions in the field of Environment Protection in the Republic of Moldova". This is an essential impetus to strengthening the efforts of official agencies aimed at environment protection, launching a program of specific actions at central and local level. Taking into consideration economic situation in the Republic of Moldova, however, as well as growing requirements to environment protection advanced by the international community, technical assistance in this field on behalf of international organizations and, especially, from the United Nations, will remain essential for the Republic of Moldova.

3. International Conference on Nutrition, Rome, December 1992

The International Conference on Nutrition (Rome, 1992) pointed out the specific character of solution of the food security problem in the different regions. In 90's to them countries in transition were added.

The food security problem in Moldova was examined within the UNDP project "Poverty Alleviation" and the WB Survey "Poverty Assessment". At the same time "The National Poverty Alleviation Strategy for Moldova" was developed with the support of UNDP.

The objective of the project is threefold: (i) to elaborate the measurements, criteria, definition and indicators for determining the extent and distribution of poverty in the country, (ii) to carry out an assessment of poverty in the country and the efforts being made to improve the situation, and (iii) to formulate a National Poverty Alleviation Strategy, the implementation of which would in an efficient manner and in the shortest time reduce the gravest forms of poverty. An additional objective under the project was to conduct a campaign aimed at increasing public awareness of poverty related issues and thus encouraging broad participation in identifying measures for their solution.

At this stage a development priority of the country is to stop the fast deterioration of living standards of the population and reduce the gravest forms of poverty. The main objective of the project is to develop a strategy aimed at poverty alleviation in specified time frames and thus fully corresponds to the national scale of priorities.

In 1996, with support from UNDP, the government launched a program to formulate a national poverty alleviation strategy that emphasizes redirecting assistance and allowing beneficiaries more say in the design of program.

The first step has been providing support and training to specialists and policy-makers to develop a new methodology for measuring poverty. With assistance from the World Bank, the government used this methodology to guide a poverty assessment and Household Budget Survey in 1997, producing the first picture of poverty and of the coverage of social protection.

The results show that more than a fifth of Moldovans are extremely poor. They also reveal that government social protection has been misdirected. Of all expenditures on social support – including pensions, direct transfers to households, and subsidies for rent, medicine and transportation – the poorest 20 % of households receive only about 5%, the wealthiest 20% about 37%.

The government held three regional conferences to discuss the results consider policy options and make recommendations. All these informed the National Poverty Alleviation Strategy, approved in 1997. The Strategy has two phases. Recognizing current resource limitations, plans for the first phase (1998-2000) focus on preventing poverty from worsening and on redirecting social assistance to the neediest groups. Plans for the second phase (2001 onwards) take a more active approach, assuming that growth will have recovered. By then, the

objective will be to overhaul the system of social protection and provide targeted assistance to the poor.

The project promotes sustainability of human development by ensuring opportunities for development and access to education and health care for all people, in particular for the poorest that are being targeted by the project.

The gender-differentiated needs of the target groups were identified by tailoring the instruments for the survey, by emphasizing the gender - poverty related issues in the working papers and gender-differentiated models of action are part of the strategy.

4. World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, June 1993

Immediately after its creation, the Republic of Moldova has joined the most important legal international instruments related to human rights, has became a member of UN, OSCE, European Council and other international organizations, has adopted its own Constitution, which stipulates the supremacy of international laws on human rights (Art. 4). The Republic of Moldova is one of more than 90 states that have introduced the Ombudsman institution, known for ten years in highly democratic countries.

On the basis of the Vienna Conference it is necessary to create and promote action plans for human rights protection. The Center for Human Rights should provide State with technical and financial assistance upon request, including the elaboration and attainment of coherent and comprehensive plans of action. As a result of the conference, UNDP organized the Second International Workshop on Ombudsman-type Institutions and Human Rights. The conference involved UNDP headquarters, Office of the UN High Commission for Human Rights (UNHCR) and UNDP/Moldova. Attention to this area was also provided by the April 1997 National Workshop on the Examination of the Law on the Establishment and Functioning of the Independent Human Rights Institution, which is expected to facilitate the creation of the Center for Human Rights.

The Center for Human Rights in Moldova was established in 1998 and has definitely taken shape since then. The Center has adopted guidelines on complaints handling, elaborated job descriptions of the staff and initiated a number of programs to disseminate information and provide human rights education to the public.

The Center, which is still one of the few similar institutions functioning in the former Soviet Union states, is an independent entity, which is not subordinated to any state body is governed solely by the provisions of Law.

During 1999, 1,368 requests and petitions were processed by the Center, these having been signed by 4,692 citizens of Moldova. Personal consultations were offered to 1,749 persons. For the first time, experts of the Center started what was called „field consultations" when they traveled to different parts of Moldova and met people whose rights had been violated. This way, assistance was granted to 390 citizens. This latter form of the Center's activity was very much appreciated, especially by those who live in the rural areas and find it difficult to travel to Chisinau. Field visits were also important in terms of educating people outside the capital city on their rights and freedoms and ways to protect these. The analysis of the petitions/requests addressed to the Center in 1999 shows that most of them dealt with the violations of the right for private property, social security, free access to justice and information, personal security, possibility to get a job, among some others.

Experts of the Center organized a series of seminars, including on the rights of the elderly, on children's rights (together with UNICEF), on the rights of refugees (jointly with UNHCR), on the right to education and others. Trainings were also conducted for people selected from various professional groups dealing with human rights matters on the daily basis: teachers, journalists, representatives local public administration, and NGOs. All the above-mentioned seminars and trainings not only contributed to the better understanding by Moldovans' of the mandate and functions of the Center but also opened up opportunities for a continuous dialogue between all parties involved in the HR promotion and protection. Following the same objective of increasing the awareness of people of their rights, the Center launched several

publications, e.g. " The Center for Human Rights of Moldova", "How to submit a complaint to the Center for Human Rights", "Parliamentary Advocate", "The Right of the Elderly People for Social Protection", "The Right of Children for the Protection against Abuse" and " I am a Woman. Who will protect me?" With the help of the Internet Access Training Program (US Embassy Project) the Center developed its own Web page.

The Republic of Moldova has ratified:

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESC) dated 1966;
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) dated 1996, together with two facultative Protocols to this Covenant;
- International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination dated 1965;
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women dated 1979;
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatments or Punishments dated (CAT) 1984;
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) dated 1989.

All the treaties stipulate a mandatory report writing procedure, on the basis of which the participant states should submit periodically reports on the adopted measures intended to apply effectively the rights recognized in the respective treaty. These reports should also indicate the difficulties affecting the implementation of treaty provisions. Regretfully, the Republic of Moldova submitted its reports on CEDAW this year and its report on CRC was under preparation.

Up to the present moment the Republic of Moldova did not ratify the facultative Protocol of the Pact on civil and political rights. For this reason, the citizens of the Republic of Moldova, as well as other individuals under state jurisdiction do not have the right to submit a complaint on the violation of human rights by state authorities to an independent international organization, UN Committee on human rights.

In support of the promotion of democracy in Moldova UNHCR also co-funded the publication of international treaties and conventions, provided support to establish legal libraries, published books on Human Rights in Moldova, on famous Moldovan refugees and supported the publication of the legal monthly *Avocatul Poporului* (Ombudsman).

In spite of subscribing to the CISCONF Program of Action, the Republic of Moldova is the only country in Europe that has neither signed the 1951 Convention/1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, nor promulgated national legislation. In 1999 a Parliamentary Working Group concluded that it was desirable to adopt legislation and to explore the question of accession to the 1951 Convention and the Moldovan delegation to EXCOM assured the HC that the Parliamentary process would commence in 2000.

Human right to a healthy environment is confirmed in the Article 37 of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, which stipulates the following: "Each person has right to an environment ecologically harmless for life and health, as well as to harmless food and household items". Determined in its intention to integrate into spiritual and economic space of Europe, the Republic of Moldova makes considerable efforts to adjust its legislative and administrative framework to the legal requirements applied in Europe. At present, the legislative framework concerning environment contains over 30 legislative acts addressing various aspects of environment protection.

In order to meet international requirements for environment protection the Government approved the National Strategic Plan of Actions aimed at environment protection for 1995-1997 and Strategic Program of Actions aimed at environment protection for 1995 - 1997 regarding applications of provisions of Vienna Convention and Protocol for 2010 – 2020. Also, a decision was taken on protection of ozone stratum.

5. International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), Cairo, September 1994

Resulting documents: ICPD Programme of Action.

This conference was an event of major importance for the future of social development. The Action Program for Population and Development was adopted by delegates of 179 states and established for the forthcoming 20 years a new strategy based on connection between the population and development.

The Program of Action recommends to the international community a set of important population and development objectives, including both qualitative goals that are mutually supportive and are of critical importance to these objectives. Among these objectives and goals are: sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development; education, especially for girls; gender equity and equality; infant, child and maternal mortality reduction; and the provision of universal access to reproductive health services, including family planning and sexual health.

The Program of Action recognizes that over the next 20 years Governments are not expected to meet the goals and objectives of the ICPD single-handedly. All members of and groups in society have the right, and indeed the responsibility, to play an active part in efforts to reach those goals. The principles reaffirm that human beings are at the center of concerns for sustainable development, since people are the most important and valuable resource of any nation.

Through *gender equality, equity and increasing of the role of women*, equal treatment of boys and girls as regards alimentation, health care, education, etc is anticipated. A number of studies regarding reproduction, institutionalized children, alimentation of mother and child, etc. was elaborated.

Right for reproduction and reproduction health. UNICEF helps the Government in implementation of some projects in this field. Thus, „Strengthening of Perinatal Assistance” has as its object regionalization of perinatal care, strengthening of post-natal assistance and its integration into practice of family doctors, implementation of a number of cost-effective technologies, all of them ensuring sure environment for the maternity. Involving of the community into the decision-making and management of the medical assistance is an important goal of Primary Health Care Reform Project. UNICEF also focuses on the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/SIDA with the orientation towards teenagers. The Republic of Moldova adhered to the Action Program, thus committing to reach a series of targets, particularly that on shrinking death rate among population, newly-born and children, universal access to reproductive health care services, including a variety of reliable and efficient methods of family planning.

Understanding the importance of the family planning for the mothers and children health amelioration, at 1994 Ministry of Health elaborated one republican service of the family planning and reproduction health: was decides to create the Republican Center of reproduction health and family planning, opening specialized offices for family planning in all women consultations in republic. At the Ministry of Health was instituted coordination of family planning office.

During 1994-1998 was organized conferences and seminars for medical personal training and pedagogic personal linked with family planning, was issued booklets, fliers, the radio and TV programs elaborated with family planning topic.

In 1997 in Moldova the Ministry of Health has done an analysis of reproduction health. The analysis result shows, that the level of woman's knowledge are insufficient in the modern contraceptive methods. In 1999 was adopted “National Program of family planning assistance and health reproduction protection” for a new structure creation for family planning assistance.

Health, morbidity and mortality. UNICEF Programme for Moldova has as its major objectives reduction of maternal and infant mortality, which are coordinated with the Cairo Action Plan. The Government receives assistance in the analysis of causes of the maternal and infant mortality and extension within the primary health care network of integrated services of reproductive health and pediatrics, including maternity without risks.

Beginning from 1996 at the command of MoH and with the support of UNICEF, annual meetings of the working group on the reproduction health are organized. Herewith actively cooperate MoH, UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO in the realization of the above mentioned activities.

As a result of the conference, an in-country meeting took place one month after the Conference. Two project documents were prepared: 1) Family Planning and Sexual Education; and 2) Reproductive Health. These efforts were coordinated by UNFPA with the participation of UNDP, UNICEF and WHO. The projects included public relations campaigns for AIDS, sexually transmitted disease, unwanted pregnancy and contraception.

During the period after Cairo, some progresses have been made, but currently, to or regret, more problems are encountered than achievements in the field. The Government of the Republic of Moldova needs to assess the level of national resources and of the necessary international assistance, and capitalize it to the benefit of the nation. The level of population health is an extremely important dimension of the social development.

As for the follow-up to other major UN Conferences, the UN support mainly consisted in facilitating the situation analysis in the respective areas and policy dialogue. As an example, reference should be made to the organization by UNFPA of the national conference "Cairo +5: Opportunities and Perspectives in the Republic of Moldova." The participants of this two-day conference, whose main objective was to review the progress Moldova had achieved in the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development and plans for the future, discussed such issues as the promotion of modern practices of family planning in Moldova, sexual education of the youth, the right for reproduction in the context of the universal human rights, the situation of women in Moldova, and opportunities for future cooperation with the civil society in the field of family planning and reproductive health. On the basis of the discussions held a Declaration of the Conference was prepared which, among others, recommended the creation in Moldova of the Youth Centers, the re-introduction of the Family Life classes in to the secondary school curriculum, the refection of the reproductive health sector's needs in the state budget for 2000 and others.

During the conference, special thanks were conveyed to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) for the lead it had been providing in the progressive follow-up to the Cairo Conference. The highlights of the respective UNFPA activity in Moldova included the establishment of the "Anti-Violence and Anti-Abuse" Education Center, organization of the Family Planning and the Anti-Violence Weeks, a substantial number of capacity building initiatives and the production and distribution of the many educational and promotional information materials.

One of the objectives stipulated in the Programme of Action of the ICPD is to prevent, reduce the spread of and ensure the treatment of the Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS. The Government implemented a number of measures with this regard, including establishment of the National Center for AIDS Prevention and Control HIV testing laboratory, passing the Law on Prevention of AIDS passed followed by a number of sub-legislative and regulative acts. There have been a number social mobilization and training activities, including health professionals, mass media and NGOs.

United Nations Theme Group on HIV/AIDS. Since its establishment in January 1996, the United Nations Theme Group on HIV/AIDS in Moldova has assumed the main responsibility within the UN system for helping the country strengthen the capacity to cope with the HIV/AIDS epidemic. It constitutes the joint policy and strategic decision-making body for the country-based UN system and some other organizations and bilateral donors that are active in this area. The objectives of the Theme Group include: strengthening the capacity of the national Government to develop comprehensive national strategies and implement effective HIV/AIDS activities at the country level, including dissemination of information, media campaigns, promoting broad political and social mobilization to prevent and respond to HIV/AIDS within the country, ensuring that the national response involves a wide range of sectors and institutions and advocating greater political commitment in responding to the epidemic at the country level, including mobilization and allocation of adequate resources for HIV/AIDS related activities. The

UN Theme Group on HIV/AIDS is functional in the country with participation of country offices of the United Nations Agencies involved.

The recent assessment of the Theme Group activities Moldova showed visible progress achieved since its establishment. This includes prevention programmes for prisons' staff and inmates, assessments on access to drugs, behavior studies among drug users, information and education of youth on HIV and STD, training on HIV/AIDS for health professionals, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health, media contests, etc. The important activity of the Theme Group nowadays is the joint elaboration with the Government of the HIV/AIDS Strategic Planning Development Framework (SPDF).

6. World Summit for Social Development (WSSD), Copenhagen, March 1995

Resulting documents: Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action. As a result of the summit, the Government asked UNDP to assist in formulating a poverty alleviation program, which was started in 1996. Further poverty alleviation efforts are being continued in conjunction with the World Bank Social Investment Fund pilot project and accompanying technical assistance.

The current situation in Moldova should be assessed from the positions of the World Summit for Social Development. Unfortunately transformations, which occurred, did not meet people's expectations. On the contrary, they resulted in a dramatic deterioration of living standards, increasing inequality, fragmentation of society and lack of social cohesion. The poverty problem is the major concern in United Nations activities in Moldova. The number of people living below the subsistence level was about 1,7 mil at the end of 1999 or 45% of the total population.

In the context of unfavorable trends of transition period a predominantly attention on human development issue is required. Human being and its basic needs should be placed in the center of policy makers' attention, and to be considered as a major objective of the economic reforms.

Encouraged by the provisions both of the World Summit for Social Development Program of Action as well as of the Program of Action adopted at the Women's Conference (in Beijing) and recognizing the urgent need for taking drastic measures aimed at alleviating poverty, which is viewed as an indispensable foundation for the realization of social and people-centered sustainable development, the Government of Moldova has strongly supported the UNDP Poverty Eradication Initiative. Therefore, the establishment of whatever state support possible for ensuring better living conditions for the population has necessarily to be the main direction of the Moldovan state social policy during the current socio-economic crisis. However, the Government's support will be principally through the creation of material, financial and organizational conditions for the encouragement of entrepreneurship, leading to employment generation. The end objective of the latter policy is oriented towards the establishment of the conditions for every able-bodied person to support his/her family and himself/herself through pursuing an entrepreneurship activity. Nonetheless, given that not all layers of the population can be directly involved in entrepreneurship, the creation of sound mechanisms of social protection of vulnerable groups of the population is also envisaged. Various NGOs and CBO's are also beginning to establish, at the grassroots level, the foundations to support the Government.

In the long-term perspective (2000 - 2005), when the economic growth will stabilize, the material and financial potential of the country will increase; the basis for an active poverty alleviation strategy will be created, the main task being elimination of the causes of poverty. The achievement of this objective would allow to reduce considerably by 2005 the dimensions of poverty and the poverty gap in the Republic of Moldova.

The Strategy presupposes that the alleviation of poverty is possible only in conditions of a developed national economy, which is the basis for the solution of social problems including the problem of poverty. As a result the incomes in real terms of the population living below the poverty line, the salaries of employees and the incomes of the small business will increase. The

general economic growth would have a positive impact on the potential of the social infrastructure, ensuring the access of the poor to its services. The sources for financing the Social fund will improve contributing to the financial stabilization of the budget and allowing to considerably increase pensions and benefits.

The economic growth represents an indispensable but insufficient condition for orienting bigger financial and material resources for the objectives of alleviating poverty in the country. A cardinal reform of the social policy is necessary which would concentrate on solving the gravest poverty related problems. New principles are to be developed for implementing measures aimed at poverty alleviation allowing to rationally use the financial and material resources.

National Poverty Alleviation Strategy for Moldova (UNDP, 1997)

The first attempts to determine poverty characteristics and the quantitative indicator of various poverty characteristics of different social groups were undertaken within the National Poverty Alleviation Strategy of the Republic of Moldova, developed in 1997-1998 with the financial and technical support of UNDP.

Republic of Moldova, developed in 1997-1998 with the financial and technical support of UNDP. The strategy has been developed in accordance with the methodology and conceptual basis of the Guidelines of the Social-Economic Development of the Republic of Moldova till 2005. It stipulates the objectives, stages, main tasks and specific activities intended to alleviate poverty in the country. On the base of mentioned Strategy at May 2000 the Government has adopted the State Poverty Reduction Program.

There was also implemented a WB Survey "Poverty Assessment". Relying on these researches it would be expedient to provide regular monitoring of poverty in the country.

This situation calls for concrete measures, intended to eradicate poverty in Moldova, which should be considered a primary social, political and economic task. At the same time, the priorities for UN agencies, which are working in Moldova, should be set as follows:

- resume economic growth is the first element to reduce poverty. More systematic implementation of structural reforms is needed;
- to create a normative base to identify poverty, develop criteria, methods and approaches to define the poverty line and food poverty line, which would also reflect the UN recommendations in this field; to monitor of poverty in the country (including rural and urban poverty, malnutrition, housing and sanitation);
- to estimate poverty by counties (judets) and to develop National State Programm of poverty reduction for counties. With this aim to create Social Cohesion Fund;
- to create a state system of social guarantees as a basis for satisfying the minimum material requirements of the population and for ensuring equal access of the population to social services;
- to assist of Government to create effective employment and to decrease the risk of the population able to work to live below the poverty line;
- to create a targeted social protection system for the most vulnerable groups of the population, which would take into account the budgetary and administrative possibilities of the country. Special efforts should be made in breaking the vicious circle of poverty by designing and implementing programmes oriented on early childhood care and development, development and health of adolescents and strengthening the social protection of the child, which is one of the most affected group of population.
- to strengthen monitoring system of Government activities in poverty reduction area.

7. Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW), Beijing, September 1995

The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China, 4-15 September 1995, represents a new watershed in the movement for securing equality, development and peace for all women everywhere in the world. With the unanimous adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by representatives from 189 countries, it gave the world a new

comprehensive plan of action to enhance the social, economic and political empowerment of women.

The Platform for Action is a powerful agenda for the empowerment of women. It calls for the integration of gender perspectives in all policies and programs.

The Government and Parliament of the Republic of Moldova undertook a set of measures to support the gender development in the country. A Committee on women and family issues, aligned to the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova, was established through the Presidential Decree in 1999. A Subcommittee on Equal Opportunities within the Committee on Human Rights in the Parliament was established. A Committee on women's issues, a consultative and coordinating body, was established. A Gender Unit within the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family, as well as Gender Focal Points within all Ministries were set up.

Non-governmental organizations are playing an active role in this regard. As an immediate follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Woman, the Gender in Development Project created a network called the "Beijing Group", which helped to unite 18 key women's organizations in Moldova. The group aims to continue the spirit of the teamwork and collaboration created at the NGO Forum in Beijing, through information sharing and community-building projects. A Women's Forum has been called, which focuses on the improvement of the situation of women in Moldova in socio-economic, cultural and educational spheres.

By adhering to the Convention on eliminating All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), a series of states have proclaimed gender equality worldwide. The Republic of Moldova has ratified this document in 1994.

By ratifying the conventions regarding the women's political rights (effective in Moldova since April, 1994) the country has expressed its adherence to the principles of these conventions. This is the situation *de jure*, *de facto* situation of gender presentation in the legal bodies of the country is different.

In 1997 the UNDP Gender in Development Project in collaboration with "Beijing Group" initiated the pilot project "The role and place of women in politics". The objective was to encourage political party leaders to include more female candidates on their election lists.

Two political party leaders have met with the working committee on the "Beijing Group". These meetings sensitized the political party leaders to the need to promote women in political parties and to increase the number of women in Parliament. Leaders of some political parties promised to take efforts to eliminate discriminatory practices against women, pursuant to the 1994 Convention of Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. As a result, the total number of women candidates for Parliamentary elections has risen from 90 in 1994 to 193 in 1998.

All these measures are obviously a step towards the obtaining a gender equality in the country. Nevertheless there is still much to be done. The discrepancy *de jure* vs. *de facto* maintains.

Moldova's report to CEDAW Committee in the summer of 2000 reveals an open attitude towards successes and failures. For instance, Moldova reported that there is no mechanism that ensures adequate monitoring in the situation and improvements in the situation of women. Also, there is no legal definition of discrimination against women. In fact, when considering Moldova's report, it is clear that there are a number of issues pertaining to the Convention that may be considered as a basis for technical assistance.

The legislative body has created a parliamentary subcommittee that deals with the issue of equal opportunities. On May 10 1999, a Presidential Decree of the Republic of Moldova about the establishment of a committee on Women and Family Issues beside the Presidency of the Republic was signed. This validates attempts to implement the declared rights and equalities. In addition, the public administrations have started to meet more frequently with non-governmental organizations; during these meetings the issues related to women's rights in the Republic of Moldova are addressed.

Along with other countries, the Republic of Moldova undertook to promote women's rights by approving the Action Program, which is the final document on activities to be

performed during the next ten years. After this political event of international importance, there has been an acceleration of forces that pledge for equal opportunities.

In order to empower women politicians, women at decision-making levels and members of civil society, in 1999 a pilot project "Women, Society and Politics" was initiated. It was financed by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The "Building Parity Democracy-towards partnership between women and men in politics for the future in Moldova" project was implemented by Women Caring for Children. Project for training women candidates for local elections with support from SIDA. In addition, a new Resource Center with a Library Collection on Gender and Women's Studies and Women's Issues, with the Open Society Institute/Soros Foundation.

The participation of the Republic of Moldova at the Beijing Conference was a very important event regarding the continued assessment of the national policy of women's status within society.

8. UNCTAD IX, Midrand, April-May 1996

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is the primary international forum for analysis, discussion and consensus –building on policies designed to achieve sustainable development in all regions and to accelerate growth in weaker economies. UNCTAD deals with virtually all components of the economy – trade, investment, finance, services, and technology. Its distinctive feature lies in its approach, centered on development. UNCTAD's membership stands at 190 countries.

Entitled „A Partnership for Growth and Development”, the final document resulted in: - a refined, and more focused, work program; - a streamlined intergovernmental machinery; - a complete restructuring of the secretariat; - a slimmed down administrative and management structure; - closer involvement of civil society in the organization's work; - improved coordination with other organizations. Moldova is member of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and member of the Trade and Development Board of the (UNCTAD)

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) cooperated with UNDP in the framework of the project "International Financial Markets and Debt Management". Two consultancy missions, fielded by UNCTAD trained the staff of the Ministry of Finance and National Bank of Moldova in the use of the Debt Management and Financial Analysis System.

Objective

1. To improve the capacity of the Ministry of Finance, the National Bank and the Ministry of Economy, to identify and evaluate different financial sources for the financing of the investment program. Specifically, so that trainees will have good knowledge of international financial markets.
2. To provide assistance to establish the technological conditions in the relevant government institutions to efficiently manage Moldova's debt.
3. To strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Finance and the National Bank to record, monitor, create reports, analyze external debt and develop debt strategies.

Long-term objective

To provide assistance to Moldova's external debt management and strengthen the institutional framework and capacity to access more diversified external financing in international financial markets, to increase the capacity of the Ministry of Finance and national Bank of Moldova to identify the most appropriate financial markets and financial instruments for future indebtedness and to record, monitor and analyze Moldova's foreign debt using UNCTAD's computerized Debt Management and Financial Analysis System (DMFAS).

9. UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, May-June 1996

Habitat II is one in an extraordinary series of world conferences held under the auspices of the United Nations over the past five years. All addressed important issues of people-centered

sustainable development, including sustained economic growth and equity, for which successful implementation requires action at all levels, particularly the local level. Strategies on social, economic, environmental, disaster reduction, population, disability and gender issues will have to be implemented in urban and rural areas - in particular, where the problems are acute and generate tension.

At Habitat II, Governments at all levels, the community and the private sector have considered how the achievement of the two principal goals of "Adequate shelter for all" and "Sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world" can be furthered at the local level through an enabling process in which individuals, families and their communities play a central role. This is what is special about the global plan of action of Habitat II and the strategies for its implementation. Implementation of these measures will need to be adapted to the specific situation of each country and community.

The strategy of the global plan of action is based on enablement, transparency and participation. Under this strategy, government efforts are based on establishing legislative, institutional and financial frameworks that will enable the private sector, non-governmental organizations and community groups to fully contribute to the achievement of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development and enable all women and men to work with each other and in their communities with Governments at all levels to determine their future collectively, decide on priorities for action, identify and allocate resources fairly and build partnerships to achieve common goals.

Governments have the primary responsibility for implementing the Habitat Agenda. Governments as enabling partners should create and strengthen effective partnerships with women, youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, indigenous people and communities, local authorities, the private sector and non-governmental organizations in each country. National mechanisms should be established or improved, as appropriate, to coordinate actions at all relevant government levels that have an impact on human settlements and to assess this impact prior to governmental actions. Local authorities should be supported in their efforts towards implementing the Habitat Agenda inasmuch as local action is required. All appropriate participatory mechanisms, including local Agenda 21 initiatives, should be developed and employed. Governments may wish to coordinate the implementation of their national plans of action through enhanced cooperation and partnerships with sub-regional, regional and international organizations, *inter alia*, the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, which have a very important role to play in a number of countries.

The Report submitted for UN Habitat II Conference is the first output of the activity of the National Committee for Habitat created in the Republic of Moldova on 24 July 1995. The report comprises a general presentation of the Republic of Moldova and of its elaboration process, where process is characterized of localities and housing development during the recent 30 to 35 years, current state assessment and priority problems definitions. Most important of them are typical for the transition period the Republic of Moldova goes through and pertain to missing institutional mechanisms, legal framework, system of technical normatives and methodological experience proper to new social-economic conditions. Those problems are aggravated by the fact that in the respective period the economy of the Republic of Moldova and respectively localities, experienced an extensive development, based on irrational utilization of resources.

On the basis of those assessments the National Action Plan was established. The measures and actions of the plan were imposed by the need to simultaneous settlement of two general problems: formation of localities' management mechanism, based on principles of a democratic society and market economy and gradual implementation of the sustainable development principles. Also, in the Plan are set forth the intentions of the Republic of Moldova with regard to its international cooperation in the field of localities development.

The main objective of the plan is to stall off the acute crisis, the localities ran into, upkeep positive results in urbanistic development during the last 30 years, diminish the consequences of the extensive growth and wasteful consumption in the same period and create

premises for shifting to sustainable development principles. The main components are as follows:

- making aware the public opinion and political circles of the importance of the problem of localities and inter-relations thereof with the problems of sustainable development of the state and nation;
- working out the legal framework for new conditions and reform the state system regarding the regulation of the processes of localities development;
- creating organizing mechanisms of investing into the housing constructions and urbanistic infrastructure of the localities;
- preparing the staff in the field of urban management;
- working out the methodological basis of the urbanistic projecting, by taking into account the conserving exigencies of resources and sustainable development;
- transforming the constructions industry, working out technical solutions with regard to reconstructing the available housing stock and construction of new housing by using local resources and efficient construction materials.

UN Conference on Human Settlement pointed out possible ways of solution of the housing problem.

The statistical data on housing in Moldova is not alarming. From the available housing space, there are 20.4 m² per capita. However, existing differentiation of housing availability between urban and rural population is preserved – 17.7 m² and 22.4 m² per capita accordingly. An average urban family has an apartment with 2.2 rooms, while a rural family has a more spacious house – 3.1 rooms. In urban areas an average of 1.4 people live in one room, while in rural area – 1.0 people.

The difficult financial situation of most households is the main cause of worsening quality of housing fund. A considerable part of this fund is dilapidated and wrecked. The analysis of the results of the Household Survey indicated the poor level of communal endowment of houses, especially in rural areas. If practically all the houses in rural areas have electricity, then only 0.9% of these houses has sewage and running water. Houses in rural areas do not have showers and baths; only half of them have gas, still its use is minimal, due to high prices for cylindered gas. The most families use stove heating during cold season.

A considerable part of measures regarded formation of the necessary legal and technical-normative framework, formation of organizational mechanisms and perfecting the methodology of resolving the problems. This is a necessary and unavoidable stage of development in the current conditions.

Most participants in working out the strategy represent state ministries and departments, the Government decisions being the guaranty factor of these obligations implementation.

10. World Food Summit, Rome, November 1996

The World Food Summit (Rome, 1996) adapted the Declaration on World Food Security and the Action Plan. This forum has restated “the right of every person to nutritious and inoffensive food, composed of appropriate products and the fundamental right of every individual to protection against famine”. The Rome Declaration calls upon us to reduce by half the number of chronically undernourished people on the Earth by the year 2015.

Seven commitments were therefore negotiated to ensure that “all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food”.

The food security problem in Moldova was examined within the UNDP project “Poverty Alleviation” and the WB Project “Poverty Assessment”. At the same time “The National Poverty Alleviation Strategy for Moldova” was developed with the support of UNDP.

All the studies conducted to the present moment suggest that children are the most vulnerable group of the population as regards nutrition. Though on the general background of the Republic of Moldova with no discovered cases of malnutrition, the situation does not seem to be catastrophically, the estimates show that approximately 10% of children up to 5 years of age suffer from chronic malnutrition. Up to the present

moment, no study on the situation of children of different ages living in state institutions (institutionalized children) was conducted.

In these circumstances, when the most disadvantaged groups of the population from the nutrition point of view are children and adult people, the total responsibility for the life of these groups belongs to the Government of the country. This requires that state bodies undertake a series of actions to redress the situation and to minimize the negative impact of the transition on the most vulnerable groups of the society.

FAO started activity in Moldova in 1996, by initiating two important projects within Technical Assistance Program, signed between the Republic of Moldova and FAO. The aim of the first project was to develop horticulture and promote agrarian reform, and the second project was designed to provide assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture and Processing Industry in working out the cereals sector in Moldova.

At present FAO implements two main projects in Moldova: "Program on Fighting Leaves Pests Damaging the Woods in the Republic of Moldova" and "Support for Creating the National Committee Codex Alimentarius".

The purpose of the project "Program on Fighting Leaves Pests Damaging the Woods in the Republic of Moldova" is to fight the leaves pests and improve conditions of the Moldovan woods. In this regard, FAO provided equipment for air sprinkling of over 10 000 ha of woods, trained the staff in applying the technology and offered institutional support to State Association "Moldsilva".

The main purpose of the project "Support for Creating the National Committee Codex Alimentarius" is to provide for a basis for setting up an efficient system of standardization and food security, consumer protection and access to markets through consolidating the National Committee Codex Alimentarius and its functions and responsibilities.

Related to drug abuse:

At present supervision of legal circulation of drugs on the territory of the Republic of Moldova is being effected by the Drugs Control Committee of the Republic of Moldova created within the Ministry of Health in 1995 after adhering of the Republic of Moldova to the UNO conventions: Common Convention on narcotic substances as of 1961 with amendments stated in 1972 Protocol, Convention on psychotropic substances as of 1971, United Nations Organization Convention on control of illegal circulation narcotic and psychotropic substances as of 1988.

After the adhering of the Republic of Moldova to the UNO Conventions, it was only on May 6, 1999 that the Law on circulation of narcotic and psychotropic substances and their precursors was passed (precursors are substances frequently used to illegally produce narcotic and psychotropic substances), which acknowledged classification of substances and set certain restrictions to their circulation, acknowledged the Permanent Committee of Drugs Control within the Ministry of Health, Inter-ministerial Commission of Drug Addiction and Drug Industry Control, as well as the order of issuing and retrieving authorizations to persons involved in activities implying drugs circulation. In spite of the fact that this law had been passed, the lists of substances approved by the Committee, circulation of which is restricted and is under control on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, are still valid. These documents are in obvious contradiction to the UNO Conventions mentioned above. For example, in documents developed by the Committee, a number of psychotropic substances are classified as narcotic substances, the same substances being classified as both narcotic and psychotropic, lists of "toxic substances, substances with drastic action", were approved with reference to the UNO Conventions. These documents have drawbacks, which obviously do not comply with the requirements of the conventions mentioned above. Other drawbacks of the same character were revealed in the recently passed law mentioned above.

Wide expansion of drugs on the territory of the Republic of Moldova was the reason for creation in 1999 under the Ministry of Interior, of an independent service for illegal circulation of drugs control, trafficking in particular.

Aiming at prevention and control of drug addiction, on March 30, 2000 the Government of the Republic of Moldova adopted the "Program on drug addiction and drug industry control for the period 2000-2001".

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