

International Development Assistance - New Direction of Russia's Foreign Policy



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- The Concept of the Russian Federation Participation in International Development Assistance (IDA) published by Russian MFA on June 25.

The Concept declares the Russian Federation intentions to increase the amount of its participation in IDA up to USD 400–500 m per year within the next few years. The final goal set in the document is to assign for the IDA no less than 0,7% of gross national product, as recommended by the UN.

If in 2003 the amount of the Russian assistance was USD 50 m, in 2006 it grew up to USD 215 m due to Russian presidency in the Group of 8, when it undertook the obligations that would correspond to its full-scale membership in the G8.

Russia's intentions concerning the IDA should be considered as logical continuation of the general state policy to assert its position of a large state and competent participant of the G8 (instead of "G7 plus 1", which for some reason sounds offensive to Russia). In the same time it corresponds to the new Russia's foreign policy doctrine, proclaimed by Vladimir Putin in June 2006. One of the key ideas of the doctrine is the statement that "Russia should take responsibility for socio-economic and general global development in keeping with its place and its possibilities¹" (that is Russia has to bring its political influence in the world in line with its economic potential demonstrated these years).

Russian noted international relations scholar Alexei Bogaturov attributes Putin's doctrine to the "third generation of Russian foreign-policy concepts", as it testifies "the reverse turn of the Russian elite to the thinking in global terms".²

It is indicative that Russian Federation's shift to qualitatively new level of participation in IDA, according to the Concept, is pre-conditioned by "cardinal upturn of the country's economy and substantial growth of its financial capacities" as well as "profit of [Russian] federal budget since the year 2000". These facts are used as the arguments for the broadening of Russia's world influence.

It's worth mentioning that unlike the G8, which focuses its attention on the assistance mainly to African states, Russia points out the assistance to the CIS countries, and particularly to the members of the Common Economic Space and Eurasian Economic Community (EEC) (though the countries of Africa, Asia-Pacific Region, Latin America and Middle East are mentioned as well).

¹ President of Russia. Speech at Meeting with the Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives of the Russian Federation. June 27, 2006. Moscow. P. 1 (<http://www.kremlin.ru/text/appears/2006/06/107802/shtml>).

² A. Bogaturov. Three Generations of Russia's Foreign Policy Doctrines // International Trends, Volume 5. № 1 (13). January-April 2007.

According to Russian deputy minister of finance Sergey Storchak, among the CIS countries the priority is given to Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The criteria for the priority assistance to these countries are their lagging behind the average economic development of the CIS countries, common borders with Russia, and their participation in the EEC.

Playing the role of donor country on both regional and global levels, Russia intends to further promote its leadership, counting on dividends in political and propagandistic rather than in economic field.

In short, the main idea of the Concept is to demonstrate that today Russia has enough resources to invest into its international image, asserting itself as a country that actively participates "in the shaping of the world agenda as well as in its implementation".³

³ Russian MFA. The Russian Federation Foreign Policy Overview. March 28,2007. Moscow.