

# Joyful day of seventh billion

UN initiative proclaims October 31st the day on which the Earth's seven billionth resident is born



Commemorative certificate of Earth's seven billionth human awarded to mother of newborn Minsker Stanislav Borisevich

By Irina Borovikova

It's difficult to determine in which country the baby — long-awaited — has been born, but the UN decided not to choose a specific person for the honour, as they did in 1999, when Adnan Mević from Bosnia was proclaimed the Earth's six billionth person. Of course, Russians, Philipians and Hindus are all keen to claim the baby as their own. However, as two or three babies are born worldwide every second, it's actually impossi-

ble to give a real answer.

Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary General, stresses that the jubilee gives us a chance to assess our progress and to meet the future with hope and determination, facing our problems with a positive outlook. Without dispute, population growth is especially concerning in countries where poverty and instability reign, creating a challenge for humanity.

Can our world ever achieve peace? It's a huge question. Nevertheless, our problems never de-

tract from the joy of a new arrival, in whichever corner of the world it occurs. Every country is sure to celebrate in its own way. Belarus has chosen to honour all who have become mothers on October 31st.

Young Natalia Borisevich received congratulations from the UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative, Antonius Broek, from Belarus' First Deputy Healthcare Minister, Igor Pinevich, and from the Deputy Minister for Labour and Social Protection, Dmitry Starovoitov. She has been

awarded a certificate and gifts: everything needed to care for a baby. She had no idea that the birth would attract so much attention. Stanislav — a strong, apple-cheeked boy weighing 3.62kg — was born around 11am, immediately becoming a 'star'.

While the baby snuffled quietly in his cot, his mother chatted to journalists. She delivered at one of Belarus' top maternity departments: the Republican Mother and Child Scientific and Practical Centre. She feels well, having been

cared for by qualified and benevolent doctors. "This is our second child and we're now thinking about a third baby!" she smiled, hardly able to take her eyes off the new family member.

Tatiana Shtil, who gave birth to Albert, also received congratulations, as did Yelena Papkovskaya, with her daughter Alisa. Around 300 children are to receive congratulatory certificates countrywide.

Sergey SHCHERBOV, the head of a research group studying population dynamics and forecasting, at the Austrian Academy of Sciences' Vienna Demography Institute, tells us:

*When will the Earth's eight or nine billionth person be born? Any demographic forecast will show that no one knows for sure. In my opinion, the arrival of the seven billionth human is symbolic. At present, no single demographer is exactly aware of the number of people living on the planet.*

## The MT reference:

Jubilee babies have been said to be born in the Balkans until now, with the Earth's five billionth resident appearing in Zagreb in 1987. In 1999, in Sarajevo, the planet's six billionth person was born. UN experts believe that, by 2050, there will be 9.3 billion people on the Earth while their number will exceed ten billion by the end of the century.

# Census to ascertain real truth about level of unemployment countrywide

By Irina Vakulenko

## National Statistical Committee of Belarus to learn true picture regarding employment

World practice uses a survey of a representative sample to receive objective data and, from 2012, Belarus is to try the same method. The Deputy Chair of the National Statistical Committee of Belarus, Yelena Kukharevich, explains, "Research will be conducted every quarter, polling 7,000 households across all social layers and age categories. Families with children, couples and pensioners are to be included by random selection. To satisfy international practice, around 15 percent of respondents must stay with the survey for a full year, enabling us to survey around 25,000 each year."

The questionnaire has already been developed, comprising 62 questions. These cover gender, age, education, marital status and financial condition, plus questions on whether citizens are job seeking, studying or have moved abroad to find employment. Moreover, the research should give a better picture of labour migration. For example, at present, the correlation between those employed in the construction and transport spheres and those dismissed stands at 80 percent. However, no further information exists on those who are of employable age but are not



Employment fair becomes a lively venue for job seekers

currently registered among the economically active population. About 400,000 people are unaccounted for, with no information available on their location or why they have no desire to find a job.

Ms. Kukharevich stresses that personal data (such as names and addresses) collected by the National Statistical Committee won't be made public and everyone conducting the survey will sign a non-disclosure agreement. By December 2011, the list of households taking part will be

agreed, with official letters sent requesting participation, signed by the Chairman of the National Statistical Committee. A hotline is also being launched for the survey.

The new system is to be initially trialed in 700 households, with some questions likely to be adjusted in view of results. The full survey will then be launched in 2012, with data from the first 7,000 households available by late April. This will show information on the number of employed and the level of actual unemployment, with

more detailed information appearing later in the year regarding the share of women and men not working, their age and education. Their places of living are to be studied, alongside what their current occupation is.

Such detailed information is required to develop the state population employment programme, helping us see where jobs are needed and in which spheres. Moreover, it should become clear how far the official level of unemployment differs from reality.

# Participants discussing prospects for interaction

## Beijing hosts State and Prospects of Chinese-Belarusian Relations round table discussion, dedicated to 20th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between Belarus and China

The participants presented reports on various aspects of Belarus-China co-operation, confirming interest in strengthening relations and sharing plans for further interaction. Belarusian and Chinese experts exchanged viewpoints on a range of issues, including those relating to the international arena, and Belarus-China liaisons in the political, economic and humanitarian sectors. The forum aimed to promote closer contacts between expert communities from our two countries and the further efficient development of relationships. Taking part were employees of Belarus' Presidential Administration, the Security Council of Belarus and the Belarusian Embassy to the People's Republic of China. Members of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, of the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, of the Chinese Association of International Understanding, of the China Institute of International Studies, of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and of the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations also joined the forum.