RUSSIANS ABOUT DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Findings of Public Opinion Research:
In-Depth Interviews with Opinion Leaders

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SURVEY DESCRIPTION

PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY

This report presents the findings of the qualitative phase of an integrated study, “Russia as a Donor Country.” The objective of this phase of the study was to find out how opinion leaders and experts in a variety of socially significant spheres view Russia's role as an international donor.

METHODOLOGY

An in-depth interview method was chosen for the project, which allowed for underlying attitudes and nuanced opinions of respondents to emerge throughout the discussion. The interviewers were the staff of the Levada Center. The interview guide was initially designed by the Client and was approved after consultations with the Levada Center. At the start of the interviews, conditions of anonymity and confidentiality were explained, and the respondents were asked for their permission for the interviews to be recorded. The duration of the interviews ranged from 20 minutes to 55 minutes, depending upon the time availability of the respondents. The average length of each interview was approximately 40 minutes.

SAMPLING AND RECRUITMENT METHODS

Experts for the survey were selected from the following areas (described in accordance with the World Bank’s business correspondence terminology):

- Science and Education (Academia);
- Business (Business);
- Government Agencies (Government);
- Mass Media (Media);
- Non-Governmental Sector (NGO); and
- Expert Centers (Policy).

The positions of the experts ranged from chief executives to second-through-fourth level managers to leading specialists. As part of the recruitment, the experts were sent a general letter of appeal signed by the Acting World Bank Country Director for Russia and the Director of the Department of the Ministry of Finance of Russia. The experts (25 persons in total) were selected and recruited by the Levada Center. For most of the respondents, development aid was not the core area of their expertise.

The interviews were conducted in the following four cities:

- Moscow (the capital);
- Krasnoyarsk (a major communication, cultural and economic center in the eastern part of Russia, in the hinterland);
- St. Petersburg (a major communication, cultural and economic center in the western part of Russia, in the state border area); and
- Rostov (a major communication, cultural and economic center in the southern part of Russia, in the state border area).
The break-down of the respondents (in accordance with the classifications provided by the World Bank) was as follows:

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In total, 25 experts took part in the survey: 10 in Moscow, 8 in Krasnoyarsk, 4 in St Petersburg, and 3 in Rostov.

**ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

The nature of the survey questions and sample composition made it particularly important to take measures to secure the anonymity and confidentiality of the interviewees. The majority of the respondents gave their consent to be interviewed only under these conditions. The names of the respondents and their personal data were not included in the report and were not provided to the Client. Verbatim statements and opinions of the respondents quoted in this report are unattributed.
STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Since all interviews were based on a single questionnaire, the structure of the report follows the structure of the questionnaire. For ease of reading, the heading of each section is presented in question form, mirroring the question asked to the respondents during the interview. Following in italics are extracts – verbatim statements – of the respondents’ answers to that question. These statements represent the responses that most clearly express the experts’ opinions and views. At the conclusion of each section is a summary of the experts’ opinions. For the reader’s convenience, these summaries are provided in a list form in the Appendix A at the end of the report (p. 26).

In addition to answering the open-ended qualitative questions, respondents were asked to express their agreement or disagreement with each of 11 propositions relating to the key themes of the interview. The table of the agreement/disagreement distribution of the respondents in different cities appears in the Appendix (p.28).

Key findings of the survey are presented at the beginning of the report (p.5).
KEY FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. The experts welcomed Russia’s move toward modernizing the economy and revising its narrow orientation on raw-materials. At the same time, they noted the obstacles that monopolism and lack of competition present for modernization efforts, as well as problems with government intervention and the underdevelopment of some of the current institutions. These characteristics are attributed to the nature of the political system and the current state of Russian society.

2. In the social sphere, the experts noted the lack of both rights and freedoms and civil society institutions. They also pointed out the high stratification and polarization of income, and low social and geographic mobility.

3. On many of the main points, the opinions of the experts and community leaders elicited in the individual interviews matched the views of ordinary citizens who were interviewed through focus groups. In particular, similarities were found on the following key points: First, that Russia is a rich country but its people are poor. And secondly, that Russia identifies itself as a world power. It is these two perspectives that largely determined the experts’ answers on Russia’s role as a donor.

4. Virtually all the experts and opinion leaders agreed that Russia will have to play a more active role in assisting developing countries. They attributed this to the fact that if Russia seeks to further establish itself as a world power, involvement in foreign aid programs will be a necessary component. It is noteworthy that even those who did not consider this choice to be the best for Russia did not disagree with this view.

5. One of the frequently expressed opinions was that there would likely be resistance to Russia's growing role as a donor country, in particular when the amount of assistance shows a significant increase. External resistance was expected from competitor countries as well as from geopolitical rivals who would want to prevent the rise of Russia. Internal resistance was expected from some sectors of the general public, including those who point out the inappropriateness of such expenditures in a country where there are so many unresolved internal problems. Virtually all the experts understood that the main argument against the expansion of aid would be the fact there are people in the same – if not greater – need of assistance in Russia.

6. One possible resolution of this contradiction was the view that the Russia’s role as a great power requires sacrifice and that the government will commit to this sacrifice. Another, less common view was that the investment of Russia as a donor would eventually pay off and lead to increased welfare of its citizens.

7. Of the possible forms of foreign assistance, all the experts without exception mentioned emergency aid provided by the Ministry of Emergency (EMERCOM) in disaster situations. This aid was referred to as mandatory, and often as the preferred or primary type of aid. They considered emergency aid to be well-tested and developed in Russia, being at – or even beyond – the levels of emergency aid provided by other leading countries.

8. One of the other most frequently mentioned areas for focusing foreign aid was assistance to the former Soviet republics, beginning with those on the southern borders of the country. This is the zone of “historic responsibility” of Russia, the experts said. Russia’s security considerations require the maintenance of peace and stability in those countries. The experts proposed that it would be preferable to build relations with those countries on a bilateral basis. The notion of providing assistance to countries that pose a threat to global security, particularly to Afghanistan, was also supported, although to a lesser extent. Assistance to countries in Africa and Latin America was also considered to be less of a priority. The general sentiment was that this kind of aid should be provided
within the framework of international development assistance programs coordinated by the World Bank and other international organizations.

9. **Training programs for specialists in developing countries** were considered by almost all those interviewed to be the most effective form of aid. It was felt that Russia could effectively participate in local educational development programs. (Fewer interviewees said the same about health care.) Sending Russian experts and providing aid to construction projects in developing countries were also mentioned as important forms of assistance. Direct financial aid to governments was considered to be the least effective and improper type of aid. Such aid was associated with high levels of corruption and theft in the recipient countries.

10. **The experts referred to the role of the World Bank and other international organizations in aid coordination as crucial.** Some interviewees appreciated the know-how of these institutions, while others valued their strict controls as safeguards against corruption. Russia’s cooperation with the World Bank and other international organizations was considered to be both appropriate and necessary with respect to Russia’s orientation as one of the leading world powers.

11. Most of those interviewed did not know the size of Russian assistance. It can be concluded that at the time of the survey this issue was not of immediate importance, not only for the general public, but also for opinion leaders and other stakeholders.

12. Several experts expressed the view that **Russia, in fact, had already been providing considerable assistance in one form or another (mainly to the CIS countries)**, and that in this sense it had long been a major international donor. However, there is no centralized record system and no international recognition of this assistance.

13. The experts agreed that **Russia should play a more active role** in providing international development assistance. They expressed an understanding that in the longer term the amount of aid would be increased.

14. Respondents did not demonstrate familiarity with the Concept developed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Finance. Most experts believed that **the strategic goals of Russia’s participation in development assistance were not yet determined**. They thought it might be useful to have a dedicated national agency for matters related to Russia's participation in international aid and the relevant national programs.

15. Many experts said **they wanted to receive information** on Russia’s activities as a donor. Many would like to get this data from international organizations such as the UN, IBRD, UNDP, World Bank, etc. Domestic sources for this information should include the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the aid agency (if established), as well as specialized NGOs.

16. Most experts agreed that it is necessary to **inform the public about Russia’s role as a donor**. While currently the government can implement aid policies with no regard for public opinion, in future such public support would be necessary. This will require regular public information and outreach efforts. According to the experts, it should be the top country officials who bring the matter to the attention of the population and who explain both the goals and interests of Russia in international development aid. Among the key channels of information for the general public, Russian television and the Internet (especially for the urban population and youth) were identified. Few respondents considered providing information through schools or work with local communities to be of use.
ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS WITH EXPERTS

IS RUSSIA GOING IN THE RIGHT OR WRONG DIRECTION?

The interviews started with a set of fairly general questions on the situation in Russia. The experts were asked to provide their opinions regarding Russia’s economic and political development and whether or not the country is going in the right direction in these areas. The answers fell into several groups.

Some experts gave positive assessments, though always with some reservations:
– As for the general economic situation, we have managed well through the current phase of the crisis. The budget policy of the Ministry of Finance was adequate, and it is appreciated by all the economists. However, if we take a longer term perspective on economic development, then, in my opinion, we do not effectively use the resources that a market economy could provide for a country like Russia.

Other experts expressed a “skeptical optimism” view:
– Well, I think everything is fine with us... There is power (state authority). There is no people power, of course, but there is authority and this is good enough. (It means) stability and order. So the situation is neither good nor bad.

It was clear that many experts support the recently expressed intentions and declarations of the Russia’s top leaders:
– The officially declared course is right, but, in my opinion, the fact is that there is not much being done and little achieved (to support this course).

Most positive opinions related mainly to foreign policy:
– Speaking of external affairs: how Russia is presented to the world stage, how its image is being promoted in general, and what are the opportunities for influence – from the point of view of a common person, things are much better now and Russia’s opportunities and influence have significantly improved. Russia is integrating into the global community.

The experts from Siberia pointed out some international conflicts:
– (The country’s course) is good enough. The situation is complicated, especially in terms of interaction with other countries. Russia demonstrates the newly emerging claim to become one of the world leaders – so, it is then natural that there are more and more opponents to this and there is a growing pressure on the part of the international community. First of all, on the part of the Western countries, of course. On the other hand, there are also some proposals for cooperation, first of all from Iran. Pakistan is also emerging as partner.

The most commonly shared view was that there are some contradictory trends in Russia’s development and various conflicting outcomes. The experts saw economic policy as being correct, but felt that the policy on social and civic problems is wrong:
– Talking about the economic development, the country is in general on the right course.
Speaking about the political development, the degree of democratization should be of course increased and a more open society, a more democratic society, a more pluralistic society should be formed.

A number of experts criticized both the general situation and the economic policy:
– The situation is very complicated. I would assess it as strategically unfavorable. First of all, from the point of view of social and economic tendencies, there is every indication that there is a very serious degradation of the economy due to the financial crisis. The country was not prepared for the crisis and the favorable 2000s situation was not properly taken advantage of – not at all. Neither for
the transformation of the economy, nor for its modernization. Good intentions of both the President and the prime minister have proved nothing but wishful thinking.

It is noteworthy that the lead economists regarded the absence or – more often – the phasing down of the democratic institutes as the key obstacle to the country’s development:
– In some instances it is right; in other instances it’s absolutely wrong. This year’s dynamics are moderate compared to all the preceding years, but [the economy] is moving forward. It is healthier. There is no overheating, no debt increase. But further development will be confronted by the institutional limitations, and here we can definitely see a complete failure of the institutions that have emerged since 2004-2005.

In this regard, the economists’ opinions matched other experts’ opinions:
– Of course, it is wrong. The direction is exactly opposite to my views. We have no fundamental base for democracy, we have no elections, and we have no freedom of speech, freedom of assembly.

MAJOR CHALLENGES FACING RUSSIA

The conclusion that unresolved institutional problems present the main obstacle to the development of Russia was reconfirmed during the discussion of the major issues and challenges facing the country:
- Russia is facing a broad range of problems: this includes its backward economy – the country has not yet reached the post-industrial stage of development – and its undeveloped institutions, such as the courts, police, army, media, and television.

Various experts welcomed the modernization, but they believed that the time for it had been lost:
- The country is facing a challenge of reforms needed for modernization – economic, social – and I do not see many opportunities left for them ... Now [the situation] is much worse, and even if you start the modernization reforms now, it will be extremely painful. But nobody has even attempted to start them yet.

The experts pointed to the inadequacy of the governance systems:
- It is our political system that prevents change. In particular, change in the economic sphere.

Human rights were once again mentioned as one of the key problems:
- First and foremost, it observance and respect of the constitutional rights of the citizens. The situation with human rights is not all right in Russia.

The business community representatives in the regions said the following:
- We cannot find a common language with [the authorities]. It is possible they are trying to help, but more often than not their support ends up creating additional barriers to promoting our products.

The experts from the education sector said the following:
- In some areas we do lack qualified personnel; on the other hand, a significant number of qualified specialists trained in the Soviet period find little demand for their skills.

The question arose as to which strata of the society should be supported by the state in order to ensure not just a short-term political stability, but a long-term development of the country:
- There is clearly insufficient investment in education and development and establishment of leadership qualities of future generations. This is because priority is given to achieving social stability and reducing the potential for unrest through investment in pension reform.
The experts and opinion leaders gave particular attention to the problem of corruption. It is notable that they saw the causes of corruption within the Russian bureaucracy and the lack of democratic controls in all areas of life:

- It is corruption, of course. Lack of democratic institutions, lack of public participation – these are the major problems. There is no public control over the activities of the government. For some reason, the State positions itself as knowing-it-all and that it can manage our taxes without any accounting to the public.

The experts supported the course on modernization. They noted the achievements in foreign policy; however, they expressed serious concerns over the lack of progress in the development of a modern institutional environment, including the institutions of rights and freedoms.

THE STATE OF THE RUSSIAN ECONOMY

The following view of a leading economist on different growth potential for different sized-businesses is worth noting:

- First, there is the level of large structures, such as Gazprom, that live in a world of their own. These are by no means market systems; they have their own close connections, privileges and obligations. This is a universe in and of itself and it is better not to touch it (it is not worth the effort of reforming it): it will never grow, and it will never become an engine of growth.

- Small business is a feudal-type environment in which there is a very similar type of relationship with the boss. There is no particular competition there because the local policemen or firemen would not let outsiders into the region. There is no access to the financial system, there is no access to legal protection – everything is solved at the level of feudal relations.

Most frequently, the experts and opinion leaders talked about the backwardness of the Russian economy and its dependence on the production of raw materials:

- I think it is very backward. This is evident from the structure of imports and exports where the share of minerals and primary products and the share of high-level processing have not changed in the last hundred years. That means it is a very backward economy, and all its advantages and disadvantages are associated with its raw materials-based nature.

One interviewee made note of an alarming sign:

- A month ago, the data on the stabilization fund were classified as secret. They disappeared from the website of the Ministry of Finance and now any person who reveals any information about the stabilization fund will face criminal liability. And this is the taxpayers' money, it is our money. That means the money in the treasury is running low. Most likely, there is either very little or zero money left there. Of course, these data were classified to prevent an outburst of unrest.

The key obstacles to progress are the resource-based economy with no incentives to upgrade, the excessive concentration of capital, and the government’s interference in the economic processes.

WHAT COUNTRIES WOULD YOU COMPARE RUSSIA TO?

One of the most frequent answers was there was no comparison:

– Not to any other country. It is completely unique.

– The closest, but still a very rough comparison, would be the oil monarchies of the Arab world.

The experts explained what countries Russia has NOT much, or little in common with:
– We are fundamentally different from the economies of Western Europe and the United States, and we are quite different from those in Southeast Asia, such as South Korea, and Japan, naturally, in the first group. We strongly differ from South Korea, Taiwan and others who made strong emphasis on the high-tech industry, though more on its production than development.

Some of the experts compared Russia to Latin American countries, and in particular - with Argentina when it failed to maintain its economic momentum:
– In terms of the development trend, Russia is similar to Argentina. I would like to remind you that in the 1920s-1940s, Argentina was among the top ten most developed countries and in terms of its GDP per capita it was competing with the United States. In 60 years, it has slipped down to the 64th or 68th place and is losing the regional competition to Brazil, even though it used to be considered an elite country, a metropolitan center of Ibero-America.

While comparisons to other countries yielded little agreement, there was some consensus that Russia shared certain characteristics with the Latin American countries, and in particular Argentina in its inability to hold on to the strong economic position it enjoyed in the earlier part of the previous century.

**IS THERE A “PROBLEM OF POVERTY” IN RUSSIA?**

Many interviewees agreed that a poverty problem exists:
- Both absolute poverty and relative poverty, both poverty as a mode of life and poverty as a basis that defines the attitude to everything and all. Of course, there is such a problem.

A majority of experts acknowledged the poverty problem in Russia, emphasizing that it was a matter of sharp differentiation and stratification of the society:
– It is not just poverty; it is also the distance (gap) between the regions – Moscow, St. Petersburg – and (the rest of) Russia – and the distance (gap) between the different population groups... And the situation, in my view, is only changing for the worse.

However, some of those interviewed did not consider poverty to be a problem in Russia:
– No, it is not a problem and it is not applicable to Russia. We are relatively well off. It is the Russian mentality that should be changed. To put it simply, our population is in the habit of thinking of themselves as being poor and this should be taken into consideration while developing the course on conservatism.

– Poverty is a problem in any country even if we are caught up with the poverty measuring problem (and the poverty assessment methodologies have been changing for the last several years). Nowadays, poverty is measured by the number of people living below the subsistence level. In Russia it is from 15% to 20%. The situation is neither bad not good. We are about normal at the moment.

There is poverty in Russia; however, it is the high degree of income and social stratification, low mobility, and the resulting absence of the middle class that are the key problems in the country.

**CAN RUSSIA BE CONSIDERED TO BE AMONG THE “POOR COUNTRIES”?**

Typically, experts gave a mixed response to the question of whether or not Russia should be a poor nation.
– I am having some internal conflict. With all those factors that are commonly known [to be associated with poverty], it is difficult to categorize Russia as a poor country.
One of the experts characterized the situation as a “paradox of the Russian poverty.” 
– I do not consider Russia to be a poor country. It is absolutely not true. Moreover, I believe that Russia has never been a poor country, because it has always had quite a wealth of various resources. The resources that have been very poorly managed…this should be called a “paradox of the Russian poverty.”

This paradox was expressed in similar terms by many other interviewees:
– No, Russia is a very rich country. With very poor people.
– As a state (Russia) is rich enough, but speaking of the society, about the population – then yes, it is poor.

It is worth noting that opinion leaders’ viewpoints on the topic, in both their meaning and their language, coincided with the “popular” opinion revealed in the focus groups. This fact, as well as the rich-poor paradox stated above, seems to be worth paying close attention to. It is the root of the inherently contradictory stand taken by both the Russian ordinary people and the Russian elite when defining Russia's role as a donor. As "a country with poor people" Russia cannot afford to spend money helping others, but as a rich state it cannot but help others.

The experts dismissed the view that Russia can be classified as a “poor country.” They point to the “paradox of the Russian poverty:” Russia is a rich country with poor people.

CAUSES /NATURE OF POVERTY IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES NEIGHBORING RUSSIA AND POOR COUNTRIES IN AFRICA, LATIN AMERICA, OR SOUTH ASIA

The most commonly expressed view was that the nature and causes of poverty vary from country to country. Respondents primarily contrasted the former Soviet countries where poverty has recently developed to African countries, where the poverty is “genuine” and “persisting”:
– There are countries where, relatively speaking, there has never been anything besides poverty, like those in Africa. There has been nothing else there ever at all. And there are countries with an ancient culture and with millennia of state development, but they still found themselves in a terrible condition due to their inability to change and evolve.
– Different. Definitely different. I would not say that the poor in the former Soviet Union are poor in the sense that those in African or some Latin American countries are poor. After all, the Soviet period, despite all its shortcomings, raised all the populations to the medium-level standard, thus ensuring the absence of marginal poverty.

Experts tended to see significant differences between these groups of countries:
- I think we need to distinguish between them not just because of the typological differences, but due to the fact that the historic relationship between Russia and [former Soviet states] is fundamentally different. I would remind you that the 500 years of the empire, well, 300 at least, created a special history of relations between Russia and its neighboring countries. This is a so-called empire of the border type.

However, in some cases, respondents pointed to a common characteristic of poverty in different parts of the world, i.e., poverty’s close correlation with non-democratic forms of government. Notably, experts with different professional backgrounds from different cities expressed a similar opinion:
- I think the root of poverty, and it is the same with us [in Russia], lies in a lack of democracy. The less democracy, the poorer are the people. Totalitarian regimes ...are a problem of all poor countries, and they always go hand-in-hand with poverty.
The neighboring ex-Soviet countries have become poorer after the Soviet Union’s collapse yet still maintain a strong, historic relationship with Russia, while poverty in other countries has been there from time immemorial.

ARE THERE ANY COUNTRIES OR REGIONS WHERE AID TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IS USED MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN IN OTHERS?

Some respondents were convinced that there was no difference:
- Exactly the same. And indeed, the prerogative of bureaucratic apparatus anywhere is to steal. If they offer you (bribes) – you have to take them ... cronyism is the same everywhere. Those who are in power will be enriched. The system itself makes one raise their own clan, work for it and steal for it. And they do not care how others will survive.

Most respondents were certain that there were differences, but found it difficult to give concrete examples. In fact, it was difficult for the interviewees to name the countries where aid was used more effectively. Instead, they mainly stated the reasons for the differences.
- As a rule, [aid is most effective] in those countries where aid and funds disbursement are under the control of those organizations that provide the aid.

Some respondents were able to give examples of effective use of aid:
- I would say that, as an example, aid was used quite reasonably in Russia. When we used to get it in the nineties, all of it was used quite effectively.

- Talking of good examples in the last 50-60 years it would be some third world countries that have achieved a breakthrough. Those include ones in Southeast Asia. Now, within the last decade, it is Malaysia, Taiwan ... You can talk about various (success) stories in Africa and Latin America.

Other respondents provided specific reasons for ineffective use of aid:
- I think the major portion of aid is used "unreasonably." And often this is due to the lack of control over the disbursement of funds. In the countries with totalitarian regime, it is nearly impossible to implement such control – and there, of course, the money is just stolen and is not used to achieve the desired goals...

- There is an inherent and irresolvable conflict within the UN: most of the authoritarian regimes that have a lot of votes in the General Assembly say: do not meddle in our internal affairs – and they are not going to trust anybody with international aid disbursement. They intend to spend it according to their own notion of efficiency following their own objectives and interests.

The forms of Russian participation in aid programs can be defined depending on where the aid is directed:
- If this happens in Guatemala or Africa, Russia should act on a par with the world community, within the framework of the UN, EU, and American programs, following a common international approach. Special attention and specific policies should be applied in those regions of post-Soviet space.

The experts’ expectations were that in the countries receiving aid – including Russia's neighbors – there would be high levels of corruption and that the aid would not be properly used.

SHOULD RUSSIA PLAY A MORE PROMINENT ROLE IN PROVIDING AID TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES?

Some of the respondents gave a direct positive answer:
We must provide more aid than we do now. We had a period when we provided little aid, but now we are doing more and more of it. This is a good trend and we should increase aid.

I am sure we should... simply because Russia is quite an influential and big country and it should play this role to match its potential. Another point is that this role should not be limited to economic or financial aid.

We should support our neighbors – the former parts of the USSR. And there are two reasons for that: firstly, they are our neighbors, with whom it is possible to maintain or re-establish ties, and secondly, there is a large Russian-speaking population there. Thus it will be both a geopolitical and socio-cultural move.

However, the majority of the respondents had contradictory sentiments when asked the above question. The nature of “the Russian poverty paradox” was previously discussed:

On the one hand, if we take the lower-end sector of the [Russian] economy and think of how many problems we have there – how can we help anybody [else]? On the other hand, how can we not act? If not us, who will do it?

In the area of aid, we should not compete with the countries that are economically more advanced than us. It will be at the expense of our population and will contribute to significant destabilization of the situation in our country. It would be better to provide aid to those countries that are in our traditional [historic] area of influence and do so [only] to the extent that it would not harm our economy.

Based on Russia’s history in the area of foreign aid, some of the experts were unsupportive of Russia taking a more prominent role in providing aid to developing countries:

This a disputable question. At some point, foreign economic aid was seen by Moscow as an instrument of political influence over third world countries. It was made in different ways – economic aid, financial aid, including grants – to some CIS countries – that was conditional to their political loyalty. The second approach is economic aid, including financial aid that was provided to some remote countries that were not directly connected to us with any particular political obligations – as an act of political propaganda. With this knowledge, myself as a citizen, I fear this kind of generosity in the future.

The prevailing view was that Russia should provide aid and play a more prominent role in the process. However, respondents believed that the aid strategy was not yet developed and that the goals of aid were not yet set.

WHAT ARE THE KEY REASONS THAT RUSSIA MUST SUPPORT THE POOR COUNTRIES?

An expert formulated the following three lines of arguments:

Usually, there are three objectives: purely political, humanitarian and economic. Russia can pursue all three objectives in other countries.

The respondents also mentioned improving the image of Russia and increasing security at its borders:

The most powerful arguments will be those that have the most pragmatic value for Russia. Strengthening the role and position of our state, its perception in the eyes of foreign countries and foreign nationals. And the struggle for markets, the competition ... There are a lot of this kind of argument ... The most backward countries ... are always a potential threat. Take Afghanistan or Iraq. They are also the suppliers of drugs, and poverty is the main supplier of militants.
The experts believed that participation in assistance programs can help Russia pursue its geopolitical and economic interests and solve humanitarian problems as befits a world power.

**WHAT ARE THE MAIN REASONS (RISKS) WHY RUSSIA SHOULD NOT SUPPORT IMPOVERISHED COUNTRIES?**

The most common answers were quite simple:

— We first need to sort out our internal problems. Our people need support to be able to live at normal standards.

— Diversion of resources from domestic problems. Growing discontent among the population, if there is too much aid provided while ignoring the problems at home.

Some specific arguments were brought forward by specialists with narrow fields of expertise, but they are related to broader social and political issues:

— There are risks for the non-governmental sector, the third sector of Russia. A country that will provide donor aid will stop being an aid recipient. Many donors have already left and the remaining ones will also leave.

The respondents pointed out the important political aspects of aid:

— The primary risk is that we will support, not the people of those countries, but the corrupt regimes there, as well as terrorist regimes. Hamas, and not the Palestinians. Kyrgyz authorities, and not the people of Kyrgyzstan. In addition, it is often just politics and not a humanitarian mission. The purpose is to make friends with a regime.

Many experts believed that the money allocated for help would not reach the goal. And this was an argument against providing the funds.

- There are many arguments [against help]. First, we have a budget deficit. Second, these funds are very easy to steal. Third, they can be spent inefficiently. Let us assume the goal is to strengthen the government’s position but that the funding will be used to support some criminal tasks.

The key argument against Russia’s involvement in the aid programs is the unmet needs of Russia’s own population. Additional problems include the possibility of ineffective aid, the risk of the aid becoming highly politicized, and the lack of flexibility if Russia is operating as part of international aid programs.

**WILL THERE BE RESISTANCE AGAINST RUSSIA PLAYING A MORE PROMINENT ROLE AS A DONOR?**

Nearly all the respondents anticipated some resistance inside Russia based on the reasoning that public opinion would likely follow their own logic: If we do not help our own people, why are we going to help strangers?

External resistance was anticipated due to Russia’s being seen as a competitor by other countries or because of fears of a stronger Russia and the growing authority of Russia.

- Externally, not everybody is interested in Russia’s growing status and improved image ... Those countries that are Russia’s competitors ... Some European Union countries, the NATO countries. Internally, too, there are certainly many different factions. There will be somebody who will lose because of this financial support – the budget is limited – not everybody can be served...
If Russia develops and promulgates such a program, the biggest hotbed of resistance will be at home because a country acting as an international donor suggests that most of its internal problems have been solved. Or there will have to be some [donor] priorities that will be acceptable to the public. In this sense, assistance to the CIS countries, in my opinion, could be a reasonable compromise and it could be accepted by the public.

However, there were other arguments. The following was brought forward by the human rights activists:

- If Russia should declare that it wants to support other states as a donor, do you know what can happen? Many foreign donors may withdraw from Russia, saying, “We are sorry, once you support other states, we will not be able to support your organizations anymore,” and that will cause a surge of negative emotions in the public. And I do not know who [else in Russia would be as dedicated to looking after the disabled in the way that non-governmental organizations do]. [And], externally, probably nobody would like Russia to become a strong power so long as human rights are not the key value in Russia.

Here is the opinion of an expert who claimed to be knowledgeable of attitudes in the upper echelons:

- I think [the resistance can come] from certain economic circles in the country – from the experts who are able to assess the impact of the [aid] increase, including those in the Russian government who are responsible for particular budget lines management. And from the people who do not have the relevant expertise, the political elite, but who can more or less adequately assess the situation. As for the foreigners, I think they would not care much. There are very few people abroad who are interested in our financial problems.

Resistance inside Russia is possible because of objections to helping others while there are not enough resources to assist people in need internally. Resistance outside of the country might arise because of views of Russia as a competitor and concerns about Russia’s increasing power.

**WHAT SHOULD RUSSIA’S KEY OBJECTIVES BE IN PROVIDING SUPPORT TO OTHER COUNTRIES?**

The survey demonstrated that “ensuring a friendly attitude toward Russia” was considered the key objective, but opinions about the most appropriate ways and means to distribute aid varied.

- Russia really wants to develop friendly relationships with the states that it intends to support. And I suppose there is also another goal – the ability to influence decisions being pursued in those states.

The experts consider the political objective – to ensure a favorable attitude toward Russia – to be the main objective of foreign aid.

**APPROACHES TO AID AND SITUATIONS WHERE RUSSIA COULD PROVIDE ASSISTANCE**

Most the respondents considered it necessary to provide assistance to countries in disaster situations, but they differed in their reasons for such aid.

- In Russia, emergency assistance is very well organized through the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES). In certain aspects, we may have exceeded the traditional lifesaving services capacities. We should definitely take pride in it and do it [i.e., provide emergency help], asserting our capabilities as a lead qualified rescuer.

There was a dissenting view that it is not necessary to take part in emergency assistance because of its very large inefficiencies:
- Definitively not the first priority. Our Swiss partners have visited two recent [emergency] sites, including Chile. And what they tell us – it's just a nightmare. The world’s money is spent there so ineffectively ... that I don’t have the heart to talk about it.

The effectiveness of the responsible Russian organizations was questioned:
- When our MES flies to Somalia, sends mobile hospitals, and does just 4 surgeries – as a doctor I would question this. Or in Chile they did just 11 operations! Efficiency and quality is a huge issue. And the cost of all this...

- The priority is to help our neighboring countries. Kyrgyzstan was part of our empire, and to a great extent, all that happened there followed what happened to us in our capitals, in the Russian territory.

- We are responsible for those whom we tamed. We have our traditional friends, people who speak the Russian language, and have similar culture – it is logical to continue maintaining relations with them.

Many respondents were thinking of the interests of the Russian-speaking population:
- It is necessary to improve the life of the people there, particularly of the Russian speaking population.

With regards to the assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan as places of global threat, many respondents expressed doubt:
- Well, I would say that countries like Afghanistan should not be the object of assistance, but the object of international control.

Other experts believed that once other donors were already active there, there was no place for Russia:
- Others help Afghanistan already. For economic and geopolitical reasons, Afghanistan is occupied by Americans, whose interests go far beyond fighting terrorism.

In contrast to the above, the third opinion was to join the existing missions:
- We must engage with those states that have already taken the responsibility, i.e. we must help them. Not necessarily financially – our help includes providing an air corridor for planes, etc. Here we must help because instability in those countries is also not in our interests and when the global organizations – be it the NATO or particularly those under the auspices of the UN – [provide assistance], we must help them because we are also not interested in the continuing threat posed by those countries. In this case, we are on the same side of the barricades with the developed countries.

On rare occasion, the experts mentioned the remote poor regions (Africa, Latin America), saying, “This is none of our business.”
- “Countries with persistent poverty” – Other developed countries have been active there for a long time and they have much more experience and better understanding of those regions.

The experts supported emergency aid, with the next most important priority being assistance to the former Soviet countries, followed by aid to African and Latin American countries within the international programs.

WHAT ARE THE AREAS RUSSIA SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON IN ITS PURSUIT TO PROVIDE AID TO DEVELOPING AND POOR COUNTRIES?

The general opinion expressed:
- We should avoid working in the areas where inevitably we will be ineffective...
A donor must retain control over how aid is used. When we received aid from IMF their representatives were always here and they kept everything under their control.

I would consider that [in the first place] it is helping resolve problems of different social and cultural nature for the Russian population in those countries. Russia could quite reasonably play a more active role there. This is a very clear priority. As for the rest – I do not know for sure, it is difficult to prioritize.

Aid in the area of education was actively supported by the education experts:

You will probably not be surprised if I choose education, the area where Russia could do much more than it is doing now in the ex-Soviet Union. First of all, there is still quite a substantial Russian-speaking population there, and, secondly, the level of the educational system in Russia is still higher than in the majority of the former USSR countries. The educational role of Russia could be much more significant. And through education there is a general cultural influence.

With respect to the question of whether it would be better to provide training and education in the recipient countries or in Russia, both options found support with the experts:

Of course, we should provide training here [in Russia]. It is only the other countries themselves who can change the situation in their own countries.

It does not matter [where to provide training]. It can be here, it can be there, it can be sending consultants there. Possibly, it would be even more effective to provide it locally, with the consideration of the local factors.

I would say it should be health sector, because we are interested in having a good sanitary environment.

The “third sector” representatives expressed a different view:

All areas should be supported equally. But you did not mention human rights. That made me wary. I am for including human rights, because safeguarding human and civil rights and freedoms is a basis for building a democratic society in those countries.

The experts believed that projects aimed at developing infrastructure was an effective form of aid, however, on the condition that they would be combined with the institutional reforms in the countries receiving aid. It was felt that the areas where Russia could provide aid most effectively are training of specialists and health care systems development.

WHAT KIND OF AID TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES FROM THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT COULD BE THE LEAST EFFECTIVE?

The experts were unanimous that the worst form of assistance was to provide money to governments.

Simply providing money to governments is the most inefficient form. This is sheer corruption; there is no way to control performance effectiveness, no way to keep track of anything at all.

Potential for corruption was mentioned also in other forms of aid:

From the point of view of corruption, I have faith only in (assisting in) training of future engineers and so on. As for all the rest, I see the corruption potential there.

The experts are against financial aid (budget support) to the governments of poor countries. On the other hand, project aid in those countries is supported.
THE ROLE OF THE WORLD BANK

Many respondents supported the idea of coordinating Russian foreign aid efforts with the World Bank:
- Coordinated support to poor countries through combining the resources of the Russian government, the World Bank and other international organizations is the most logical approach of all those mentioned.

A number of respondents pointed out that the World Bank and other international organizations could act as guarantors against corruption in the projects.
- I think, and my personal experience suggests, that the rules of law are better [within those international organizations] than here, and that there is less corruption.

The respondents also suggested combined bi-lateral and multi-lateral approaches:
- Bilateral relationships should go first, of course. They will provide the basis for developing the management systems that could [then] integrate multiple countries or entities with the support of the World Bank or other organizations...

Some experts preferred to see the Bank operate at a distance:
- The Bank can help with advice. Consultations. Resolve conflicts between our country and the aid recipients. As an arbitrator.

Some respondents criticized the Bank’s bureaucracy:
- The World Bank is also quite a bureaucratic structure. The dogmas that dominate there, they are not always (good)... So it is better to leave it all to smaller organizations.

It was suggested that in addition to its participation in international aid, Russia should develop its own specialized aid agency:
- I think it is necessary to institutionalize our aid policy and create something like USAID where we will have a centralized policy and will be able to make decisions.

Another expert commented on Russia’s current minor role in the international aid community:
- I think that [when it comes to] international organizations, unfortunately, Russia is currently not sufficiently involved in their strategies development and its role as a member has not been significant. Therefore it cannot define policies there.

Russia's participation in international programs was welcomed by the experts. They generally trusted the World Bank, valued its experience in aid management and considered its involvement as a factor reducing corruption. The experts recommended establishing a specialized national aid agency in charge of all assistance-related matters.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT AMOUNT OF RUSSIAN AID?

Most respondents said that they did not know the amount of foreign aid provided by Russia:
- There is no information available. I do not have even the slightest idea.

However, most experts supported the aid volume or were in favor of its extension:
- [The funding level] is unknown. But, I think that it is low.
- Maybe it is not that high, but apparently sufficient for now.
- I do not know how much we spend on it, but if it is aid to some distant allies, it could be increased, if it were invested as part of a long-term plan.
Following are the opinions of the experts who have some idea of the aid amount:
- Russian aid has mainly been in writing off debts. Clearly, we will not get those debts back – we have forgotten about them. As far as I know, the scale of this aid is simply not comparable to what AvtoVAZ gets as a [state] support. Therefore, [aid] can be increased without problems. Moreover, Russia is sometimes among the top ten in terms of its GDP depending on the exchange rate. It is in and out [of the top ten], but anyway it is one and a half trillion dollars – so aid can be increased. With a reservation that it should be managed properly.

One very experienced expert proposed to be moderate (on aid) until such time as Russia is not fully involved in the management of aid distribution:
- As far as I know, Russia is gradually increasing its presence. To the best of my knowledge, Mr. Kudrin announced that next year we would spend a billion. I think that at this stage it is more than enough. When we are not just giving out money allocated under the "Assistance" heading and are engaged in this process, managing it, and understanding what the impact is ... only then should we think about more significant investments.

Very few of the experts interviewed knew the level of aid provided by Russia, but they generally endorsed it or would support its expansion. They felt that it was necessary to control aid disbursement and ensure that funds not be wasted.

WHAT SOURCES OF NEWS AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE GLOBAL PROBLEMS AND PROBLEMS OF RUSSIA DO YOU TRUST THE MOST?

Television is the main – and often the only – source of information for much of the population. But only one respondent identified it as a reliable information source “for him/herself.”
- Newspapers, the Internet, publications … I check the news headlines on Yandex, Rambler and such. And also local sources. You can’t go through everything. M: Which ones do you trust the most? – Television.

Some named the Internet as their the main source of information.
- Around 90% [of information] comes from specialized web sources. Also news portals – the local sources, as they cover international affairs too – and the news. Channel 1 sometimes, Channel 2... Also – the web and forums.

Often respondents emphasized that they did not use national TV channels as main sources of information regarding serious world issues, because they did not trust them.
- Definitely not Channel 1. Euronews, BBC – on the Internet. From paper media – I am quite disappointed with the “Kommersant.” In the“Vedomosti” I only read the page where they publish the readers’ opinions. [I also read] the “Novaya Gazeta,” however, you can feel how it is being politically influenced.

Almost all of the respondents said that they used the Internet. Some also referred to the radio and newspapers of general political nature.

Some identified primary sources, not mass media, as their main sources of news:
- Most [people] trust our information agencies: Interfax, RIA-Novosti, some reputable newspapers like the “Kommersant,” the“Echo Moskvi” radio station, reputable Western press, and also information that we get through our own sources directly from the newsmakers.
– From speaking with international and Russian experts, I am an expert in a certain field, so I don’t read everything, that’s why I try to make the most out of discussions with my formal, informal and other contacts.

A significant majority of the respondents referred to specialized sources when looking for information regarding economic and external affairs:
– Mainstream media: our national mass media and also information websites, and from the business community through personal contacts, Russian business media like “Kommersant” or “Izvestiya”… Today mainly electronic sources… I used to research some publications from the UN, UNESCO when I was looking for details about their programs.

– If checking everyday news [you can find] any financial information and indicators [on Bloomberg], [but I also use] just regular Internet. Talking about fundamental scientific issues, then it is the IMF publications and publications of all major international organizations.

Experts use a wide range of sources of information – from mass media and regular Internet to the internal agency information and publications of international organizations.

_**TO WHAT EXTENT DO INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE LIKE YOU RECEIVE SUFFICIENT / INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION AND FACTS REGARDING THE ROLE OF RUSSIA IN PROVIDING AID TO POOR COUNTRIES? WHAT SHOULD BE THE SOURCES AND ON WHOSE BEHALF SHOULD THIS KIND OF INFORMATION BE PROVIDED?**_

Some experts stated that if they needed to, they could find such information on their own.
– For general development, perhaps, I would once a year have a look… at the World Bank’s website where certain things can be found… In addition to that, it should really be in the budget – the Russian budget. It should include a budget line for this… there are three thousand pages there. If required, I would be able to find it. Everything is explained in a lot of detail in it.

Over half of all experts said that they would want to have more information regarding development issues.
– Yes, certainly. It’s interesting and we need the information. I would like this information to be objective, with some statistical analysis, some economics publications… or directly from the experts I respect, who are considered rather influential and objective. It doesn’t matter what publications or channels though.

When asked about what sources provide the information regarding how Russia develops and implements its policy in this area, the answers given varied dramatically:
– From some departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, possibly from the Audit Chamber, from those who deal with the budget, perhaps the Budget Committee. If there is an agency that deals with such issues, it should provide this kind of information.

– It is a difficult question, but I think that the prime minister should voice such issues. What channels?
– The mass media.

– I would like to be able to obtain information from several sources… comparable information about how it is done, through what channels and the volumes… I think this should be mainly a function of the World Bank… the information about what projects are being carried out, what rules exist there, the politics involved – I would like to be able to get such information from an appropriate Russian government body which, to the best of my knowledge does not exist just yet.
A majority of the respondents would be interested in receiving information on aid. They would like to get information on aid provided by Russia from authoritative sources, including high level state officials.

**SHOULD THE RUSSIAN POPULATION BE INFORMED ABOUT THE ROLE OF RUSSIA AS A DONOR? TO WHAT EXTENT? HOW CAN PUBLIC SUPPORT BE ENSURED? TO WHAT EXTENT IS THIS SUPPORT NECESSARY?**

These questions proved to be rather challenging for the experts. By the end of the interview, respondents agreed that government policy would very likely lead to an expansion of Russian foreign aid, and that top officials would make such decisions without any consultation with the public. Therefore, respondents only discussed whether or not it would make sense to inform the public about the current policies. Furthermore, it was acknowledged that the Russian government commonly restricts information when it anticipates public disapproval. As reported above, many experts said the population was already "about to take to the streets" to protest poverty and income inequality, leading respondents to believe that additional information about foreign aid expenditures would especially perturb Russian citizens.

The majority of the experts did not tend to entirely support the authoritarian line (i.e., completely ignoring public opinion). Ultimately, they considered the solution to be in supporting a populist discourse by seeking public approval after the decision has been made. They searched for arguments that could help "sell" the current policies to the society.

The arguments were of two kinds:

- The first concerned how an increase in Russian foreign aid activity would result in an increase in the credibility of Russian power, its international prestige, etc. The experts based this on the premise that the Russian public is now very sensitive to this argument and would agree to make sacrifices for the sake of the above goals.

- The second focused more on the material benefits that Russia would get from its involvement in aid programs, with special emphasis on the potential benefits for Russian business concerns.

Some of the experts felt that informing the public was not needed.

- *Until the civil society has developed, the people would, of course, not be willing to take an active part in this kind of decision.*

- *It is, perhaps, difficult and unnecessary to count on public support every time before taking a decision.*

One expert believed that the issue of providing information should be addressed in different ways with respect to the general public and expert community:

- *In terms of the general democratic principles (thinking not of today, but of tomorrow), the population has the right to know. ...On the other hand, I think it is not advisable to pursue an active information policy in this area, in order not to invoke uncontrolled reactions. But the expert community, in a rather broad sense, not in the narrow sense of the word, should be informed to understand [the issue] and to influence the decision-making. It's a very specific question and it will be necessary to minimize the possible damage from providing aid.*

At the same time, there was an opposite opinion about the necessity of informing the public on the government’s decisions, arguing that the authorities should be accountable to the public.

- *It is necessary to explain why such decisions are made. Strategically, we are interested in making people feel they are citizens, they are the taxpayers on behalf of whom the government manages their*
money. And the government, like any manager, must be accountable for what it spends money on. Therefore, it has, if you wish, an educational function.

Another expert saw an educational aspect in this information as well, but in a different light:
- *It is necessary (to provide the information on aid).* This gives – even to the common people – a sense of pride for their country. People will feel they have a communion with their country. We do not have a national idea, and it must somehow be bred. And we need to define our priorities. While in the Soviet times we used to have them, now they are blurred.

The third opinion was the conviction that while the people should be informed, at the same time it would likely not be done:
- *It should be clearly explained what goals and objectives are pursued by the state.* This is characteristic of developed countries, the capitalist countries. And with us, the information is a source of power in itself. [However,] in our feudal state, they would not share the information.

- *No (public) support is needed, for citizens' opinions are not taken into account in our country.* Hence the question of how to inform the public is meaningless. Generally speaking, it would be useful that citizens knew about it, but as the authorities do not need to ask for their opinion, it will make no difference.

Experts believed that it was imperative to inform the public through a strategic communications campaign about the benefits this policy would bring to Russia:
- *Probably, it is necessary (to provide the information)*, but with the explanation on what benefits it will provide. In the framework of a competent information campaign. Because if we just provide the information that Russia gave the money to somebody, it could be perceived negatively.

- *In the long term* - probably yes. Public opinion does not have any influence on the funds’ disbursement… If there were programs with the participation of Russian companies similar to Lend-Lease, the U.S. programs, then both businesses and their employees could see the prospects. They would understand that it is about the new markets – the money will go there, but indirectly it will also be invested in the Russian interests.

- *Yes, though gradually. But this is not likely to happen at these early stages.* Now, if there are already some results achieved within these programs it would be advisable to talk about them on the key television channels...

An expert from the Rostov Region indicates the "duality" both of the situation and of his/her view. (The nature of this duality was noted above in the "paradox of the Russian poverty" discussion):
- *I am of two minds about it.* On the one hand, I think if it is a really sizable amount and it is spent on publicly understood humanitarian actions supported by Russia, it could produce a positive effect in terms of patriotism and pride for Russia. With this purpose and in such context, [the information] could be disseminated and so on. But on the other hand, this information may cause a wave of anger and social tension when people compare these figures with the budget of their own region, with a budget on health care and so on.

An expert from the Krasnoyarsk Region also talked about the two sides of the situation:
- *I think there will be two reactions to it.* Let us now go to a village 50 kilometers away [from a regional center]. Any village. It will be immediately clear who needs help. And let us drive farther north, to the indigenous peoples. When they hear that we are providing assistance to Somalia while their own children die without basic medical care, the question will arise: Who does this country need most of all? This is an absolutely real thing… M: So do you think aid support is possible at all? - Probably, yes – when the problem is clearly formulated, and the tasks and implementation mechanisms are clear, as well as the expected result.
An expert from Moscow also spoke about the possible differing reactions:
- Two polar opposite reactions of the people to the development of such programs are possible. The first one: we are facing shortages and yet they are spending money somewhere else. And the second one: that we are a powerful and responsible country and we are leading others, not only developing ourselves.

An expert from St. Petersburg expressed similar thinking:
- With regard to obtaining public support, it would be a good thing to do. If there were an understanding that now we can help them, and tomorrow they will help us – in general, this is normal. But I think only the minority of the population will react positively to this, because the [prevailing] thinking will be: OK, we give them money, but what about our own needs?...
- It is necessary to use very pragmatic arguments, showing that if we do not do this, then we will then have to send troops to Tajikistan, and after that, perhaps, to Afghanistan. Better to send money and tractors there, build something there and get benefits from it and jobs today, than coffins tomorrow.

Another expert described an ideal scenario:
- I am for assistance that is open, transparent and pursues a good course, and once it is a good course, once it is [moving forward] with good intentions, it should involve the NGOs, civil society, etc. All this will create a more transparent environment for relationships. The goals should be good. And then everybody will support them.

One should take a professional approach to the course of informing the public on aid to developing countries and ensuring public support. With a low standard of living for large parts of the country's population, this issue may cause dissatisfaction. However, according to the experts, competent advocacy can make such support possible.

**WHAT INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PROVIDE INFORMATION TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC ON RUSSIA AS A DONOR COUNTRY?**

According to the experts, information on international development aid should flow from the very top. The president and/or prime minister are seen as the most authoritative source, and their involvement would demonstrate a commitment at the highest level government to foreign aid programs.
- If Russia pursues some goals as an international donor there could be an address from the President to the Federal Assembly.
- Probably, [in this area] one could not succeed without the key people in the country. In any case, the President must declare the political will [of top officials].
  - From the top leaders of the State.
  - From the officials. From the government representatives. Or at least from the federal organizations or associations that have the appropriate status. Maybe even from the Public Chamber.

Some experts believed that it should be the government, ministries and ministers who should provide the information:
- Basically, it should be the government. Not individual parties fighting for votes. It should be the government – with an increased level of trust to the government.
- From the persons and entities authorized to make decisions on aid. In no other way, I guess. If it is the MES-managed emergency aid it must be Mr. Shoigu (the Minister of Emergency).
- It is certainly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ... and the Ministry for Economic Development. The Ministry of Finance is in the same position as the MFA since it shall be all counted...

As for the information channels, the majority suggested the use of television.
- In Russia you can get the support of citizens only through two channels. "First" and "RTR." These are exactly the channels used by the government.

For the most engaged part of the population, the experts recommended using the Internet and social networks:
- For the urban population, Internet should be added.

- The young generation – they are being shaped by the web, and they live in the web. In the social networks. By all means it is necessary to use electronic and social networks. As for other audiences – it should be newspapers and magazines; they [still] continue to be published with a reasonable regularity.

- The general public mainly uses two channels – the television and Internet. As for the expert community, we get information firsthand or from the newspapers. This is the difference.

- School? This is also possible. However, taking into consideration the current state of our education system, where not everything is clear and not everything has settled, that might be difficult – also with the scale of our country and the peripheral peculiarities of our education. But on the whole, it should be possible.

One expert felt that any news outlet would suffice:
- Through any mass media. Just introduce the topic in a public channel and discuss it.

The business representatives suggested that it should be necessary not only to inform the public, but to seek public opinion on aid measures and involve business in the discussions of aid.

Overall, public information should be provided through mass media and the Internet. High level state officials should inform the public on the Russian aid policy.
APPENDIX

A. SUMMARY OF THE EXPERTS’ RESPONSES

1. The experts supported the course on modernization. They noted the achievements in foreign policy; however, they expressed serious concerns over the lack of progress in the development of a modern institutional environment, including the institutions of rights and freedoms.

2. The key obstacles to progress are the resource-based economy with no incentives to upgrade, the excessive concentration of capital, and the government’s interference in the economic processes.

3. While comparisons to other countries yielded little agreement, there was some consensus that Russia shared certain characteristics with the Latin American countries, and in particular Argentina in its inability to hold onto the strong economic position it enjoyed in the earlier part of the previous century.

4. There is poverty in Russia; however, it is the high degree of income and social stratification, low mobility, and the resulting absence of the middle class that are the key problems in the country.

5. The experts dismissed the view that Russia can be classified as a “poor country.” They point to the “paradox of the Russian poverty;” Russia is a rich country with poor people.

6. The neighboring ex-Soviet countries have become poorer after the Soviet Union’s collapse yet still maintain a strong, historic relationship with Russia, while poverty in other countries has been there from time immemorial.

7. The experts’ expectations were that in the countries receiving aid – including Russia's neighbors – there would be high levels of corruption and that the aid would not be properly used.

8. The prevailing view was that Russia should provide aid and play a more prominent role in the process. However, respondents believed that the aid strategy was not yet developed and that the goals of aid were not yet set.

9. The experts believed that participation in assistance programs can help Russia pursue its geopolitical and economic interests and solve humanitarian problems as befits a world power.

10. The key argument against Russia’s involvement in the aid programs is the unmet needs of Russia’s own population. Additional problems include the possibility of ineffective aid, the risk of the aid becoming highly politicized, and the lack of flexibility if Russia is operating as part of international aid programs.

11. Resistance inside Russia is possible because of objections to helping others while there are not enough resources to assist people in need internally. Resistance outside of the country might arise because of views of Russia as a competitor and concerns about Russia’s increasing power.

12. The experts consider the political objective – to ensure a favorable attitude toward Russia – to be the main objective of foreign aid.
13. The experts supported emergency aid, with the next most important priority being assistance to the former Soviet countries, followed by aid to African and Latin American countries within the international programs.

14. The experts believed that projects aimed at developing infrastructure were an effective form of aid, however, on the condition that they would be combined with the institutional reforms in the countries receiving aid. It was felt that the areas where Russia could provide aid most effectively are training of specialists and health care systems development.

15. The experts are against financial aid (budget support) to the governments of poor countries. On the other hand, project aid in those countries is supported.

16. Russia's participation in international programs was welcomed by the experts. They generally trusted the World Bank, valued its experience in aid management and considered its involvement as a factor reducing corruption. The experts recommended establishing a specialized national aid agency in charge of all assistance-related matters.

17. Very few of the experts interviewed knew the level of aid provided by Russia, but they generally endorsed it or would support its expansion. They felt that it was necessary to control aid disbursement and ensure that funds not be wasted.

18. Experts use a wide range of sources of information – from mass media and regular Internet to the internal agency information and publications of international organizations.

19. A majority of the respondents would be interested in receiving information on aid. They would like to get information on aid provided by Russia from authoritative sources, including high level state officials.

20. One should take a professional approach to the course of informing the public on aid to developing countries and ensuring public support. With a low standard of living for large parts of the country's population, this issue may cause dissatisfaction. However, according to the experts, competent advocacy can make such support possible.

21. Overall, public information should be provided through mass media and the Internet. High level state officials should inform the public on the Russian aid policy.
### B. EXPERTS’ RESPONSES TO THE CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Moscow</th>
<th>Krasnoyarsk</th>
<th>Rostov</th>
<th>St. Petersburg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I agree (+), I do not agree (-)</td>
<td>+ -</td>
<td>+ -</td>
<td>+ -</td>
<td>+ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia must contribute to providing aid to developing countries because it is the right thing to do for a rich country like Russia to help the poor (including from the moral point of view)</td>
<td>8 2</td>
<td>5 3</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>3 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instead of attempting to help people in other countries, Russia should concentrate its resources on solving the problems of its own people living within Russia’s own boundaries</td>
<td>9 1</td>
<td>4 4</td>
<td>1 2</td>
<td>2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Russia wants to help developing countries these should be our neighboring countries because we share many more values and cultural traditions with them than with countries in other regions, such as Africa and Asia</td>
<td>6 4</td>
<td>7 1</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>3 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of the features of a developed and modern country is the resources that it provides to poor countries</td>
<td>8 2</td>
<td>2 6</td>
<td>1 2</td>
<td>2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia must provide aid to those developing countries that a pose threat to world security – such as Pakistan and Afghanistan</td>
<td>3 7</td>
<td>4 4</td>
<td>0 3</td>
<td>1 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia must cooperate with other developed countries in providing aid to poor countries</td>
<td>6 4</td>
<td>3 5</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>3 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the course of providing aid to developing countries Russia must cooperate with organizations like the World Bank, UNDP and EU</td>
<td>7 3</td>
<td>6 2</td>
<td>3 0</td>
<td>4 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any decisions on resources distribution should be based on Russia’s own strategic objectives</td>
<td>7 3</td>
<td>8 0</td>
<td>3 0</td>
<td>2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First of all, Russia should render help to its neighboring countries, such as Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, because their problems can very quickly become our problems</td>
<td>5 5</td>
<td>6 2</td>
<td>1 2</td>
<td>3 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia must help poor countries, for this will contribute to promoting Russian business’ interests in those countries.</td>
<td>9 1</td>
<td>8 0</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>4 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia should concentrate on the problems of ecology in poor countries because they can become global problems</td>
<td>4 6</td>
<td>6 2</td>
<td>1 2</td>
<td>3 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>