

## **GCC Health Committee Cites Progress in Eliminating Micronutrient Malnutrition**

In February 1997, Russian Federation Minister of Health Tatyana Dmitrieva and US Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala signed a joint statement agreeing to seek solutions to eliminate micronutrient malnutrition as part of the activities of the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission (GCC) Health Committee.

Last September, committee members reviewed their progress in combating iron, iodine, fluoride and selenium deficiencies in Russia at a semi-annual GCC meeting in Moscow. Members cited several milestones reached during the initiative's first seven months:

- \* Last May, the Russian Deputy Minister of Health and the Chief Sanitary Physician for Russia issued a decree on iodine deficiency prevention that prohibited the importation of non-iodized salt.
- \* Russian "national action plans" to address the four nutrients were developed in June following a Moscow workshop that drew representatives from government, non-governmental organizations and private industry.
- \* An agreement between the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Kiwanis International was finalized to provide more than \$250,000 toward updating salt iodization equipment in Russia's main salt plants.
- \* Pilot demonstration sites are being selected for water fluoridation and bread and cereal fortification efforts.
- \* Russia is re-examining its existing iodization standards to check their compliance with international standards so that salt trade within the NIS can be facilitated.