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Kremlin Asks Officials to 'Get Creative' for Women's Day

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TASS

The Kremlin is urging Russia's regional governors to harness their creativity in their bid to celebrate International Women's Day on March 8.

Instead of a few solemn words in the local press, politicians have been unofficially asked by the presidential administration to take a more playful approach to the occasion, the Kommersant newspaper reported Tuesday.

Valery Shantsev, the governor of the Nizhny Novgorod region, was one of those who heard the call, creating his own take on 2016's biggest social media craze, the mannequin challenge, for the special day.

"A woman is a riddle and a mystery," he said, "[but men] "are ready to solve [that puzzle] every day." He also urged women to "shine, enchant and inspire."

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Kirov Governor Igor Vasiliev also tried to showcase his artistic skills, reciting a poem of his composition during an event at the Kirov Theater on March 6.

The short poem – which saw Russian phrase *до небес* (to the heavens) creatively rhymed with English words "the best" – also celebrated the region's woodland heritage.

"In Russia, we have forests which stretch to the heavens/ Our oaks and maples reach higher than all others/ In Russia, everything Russian is "the best"/ In Russia, all which is ours is simply awesome," the poem declared.

A more high-tech celebration will be taking place in Russia's southern Krasnodar, where lucky ladies will be able to create computer generated images of themselves with local governor Veniamin Kondratiev - and get his virtual autograph.

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March 8, or International Women's Day, has been celebrated in Russia since 1913.

While many countries use the occasion to champion women's rights, the Russian holiday is a closer equivalent to Mother's Day or Valentine's Day. The festivities usually see men present gifts of candy and flowers to their wives, girlfriends, or mothers.

Only four of Russia's 85 regional governors are women. They are the Murmansk region's Maria Kovtun, the Vladimir region's Svetlana Orlova, Natalya Komarova from the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous region, and Natalia Zhdanova from Zabaykalsky Krai.

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